

## Tigard Goes to DC



*Zack Dean and Adam LaFountain in front of the White House*

The [Tigard Youth Advisory Council](#) (TYAC) has become an important liaison between the City and our future leaders. The City is committed to providing meaningful experience for committee members. One of these experiences is a trip to the [National League of Cities \(NLC\)](#) Congressional Cities Conference in Washington, DC. In March, two Tigard High School students, Adam LaFountain and Zack Dean, represented the City and TYAC at the conference. Councilor John Goodhouse also attended the conference.

We asked that Adam and Zack respond to five prompts as a way of reflecting on the experience.

### **1. Before the trip, I was expecting.....**

**(Adam)**....to meet our state's senators and representatives, explore Washington D.C., meet high school students and city officials from different backgrounds and learn about our political system. I also expected to learn about the importance of local government and the need for citizens to become active in the community.

**(Zack)**.... to do a lot of listening at the conference sessions and meetings. I was not expecting a hands-on learning opportunity. Luckily, this was not the case.

While in DC, I sat in the seventh row for a speech by [President Obama](#), shook hands with President Obama, visited monuments and museums and participated in discussions with fellow youth delegates.

### **2. My three highlights from the trip were...**

**(Adam)**

- Meeting students from California, Maryland and South Carolina
- Navigating the DC via ride-sharing apps Uber and Lyft
- Listening to keynote speakers. Thomas Perez, Secretary of Labor, delivered an enlightening speech about jobs and the future workforce.

**(Zack)**

- Meeting youth, staff, and elected officials from throughout Oregon
- Attending a speech by President Obama
- Learning from guest speakers.

**3. In reflecting on the trip, my recommendations for visiting DC are...**



*Piece of the Berlin Wall at the Newseum*

**(Adam)....**Navigate the city using Uber or Lyft. It's cheaper and easier than fighting for a cab.

[The Newseum](#) is a must-see. It is a six-floor museum that traces the history of the media through key events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, events of 9/11 and unrest in Ferguson. The exhibits added a new perspective from what I already knew.

Arlington National Cemetery, Vietnam Memorial, Jefferson Memorial and World War II Memorial should also be on your list. Each is powerful reminder of our nation's history.



*Arlington National Cemetery*

**(Zack)**....Go to the Newseum! It was the most interesting and interactive museum that you will visit. The Newseum has exhibits with large pieces of the Berlin Wall and a powerful video about the events of 9/11.

**4. The City should continue to send students to the NLC Conference because.....**

**(Adam)**....it's a great experience for students to learn how federal policies translate on a local level. I learned the importance of getting to know your elected officials and making sure they understand your perspective.

Staff from the National League of Cities put together a tremendous experience for youth delegates. We had the same access as other conference attendees. We attended sessions and panel discussions which mayor and city officials from across the country.

**(Zach)**....it allows students to work on projects together and learn how ideas translate into policy. You can read about government in history books but it is a valuable experience to participate in hands on activities and engaging discussions.

**5. After visiting DC and interacting with elected officials, my feelings about government are.....**

**(Adam)**....that they often catch flak but they are working to improve our livelihood. Without them, our city would not be as successful. Our country would not as well positioned if not for good government. Elected officials ensure we stay true to our beliefs and what's best for the American people.

**(Zack)**....changed since the trip. I am more confident that I have a voice among our representatives. I read news articles and watch television and it sometimes feels like we do not have a voice. I felt my voice was heard while in DC. I also learned how I can have a voice in Tigard and influence other citizens participating in city and county government.