



**ON**

# **CAPITOL**

by NICK LEE

**4111**

Last January, when Clayton High School junior Henry Brown walked into the U.S. Capitol building, he had no idea that he would be spending his summer there.

Brown was on a school field trip in Washington, D.C. called “Close Up”, which was organized by history teacher Josh Meyers. Upon their arrival to the Capitol, the group of CHS students found the Senate chamber gallery to be deserted, except for three teenagers. Brown, curious, leaned over to Meyers and asked, “Who are those people? Can I do that? That’s a really cool job.”

Those three teenagers were senate pages, or high school juniors who had been appointed to assist in the correspondence between senators. Brown returned from D.C. determined to become a part of the Senate

Page Program.

Shortly after Brown submitted his application for the coming summer, he was nominated by Senator Claire McCaskill, approved by Secretary of Senate Nancy Erickson and ultimately appointed to one of the 41 summer senate page positions.

As a page, Brown’s daily life consisted of delivering mail, bills, resolutions and other federal documents. But the pages were also required to take tests over their knowledge of the government in order to determine who was the better page.

“I was one of the top ranked pages, so I was allowed to do things that other pages weren’t necessarily allowed to do,” Brown said. “I was able to deliver executive orders.”



of police officers that he had grown friendly with over the summer. One particular officer stopped all traffic at an intersection, including a representative's motorcade, allowing only the pages to pass through.

Upon arriving at the Capitol, Brown and his friends decided to relieve the page. They worked for another four hours, during which Brown remembers hearing debates over pressing issues including immigration and Israel.

Despite all of the political drama he was able to witness that night, Brown's favorite memory was a moment of solitude. "Right before we let out, I walked into the Rotunda, and no one was there," Brown said. "It was absolutely dead quiet, I just walked in there and I stopped and looked around and I got to see the most amazing room in the world, just by myself."

In addition to the memories and relationships he made, Brown believes he made a difference during his time as a page. "I was able to serve my country, and that service was probably the most rewarding thing," Brown said. 🌐

Throughout the four weeks he spent as a page, Brown's work required him to interact with many of Washington D.C.'s politicians. During these encounters, Brown said his perception of politicians changed positively.

"They're not as evil as people think they are," Brown said. "I think a lot of them truly want the best for the country."

As he encountered people with different beliefs, Brown gained a better understanding of the value in respecting different opinions. "Sometimes it's better to just listen and not talk and start an argument," he said.

Brown also acquired valuable workforce experience during his time. "When you're working, you don't matter," Brown said. "Your personal feelings don't matter, what's going on in your life doesn't matter, what matters is getting your job done effectively, and quickly."

Although the pages were required to work long hours with few breaks, Brown felt the overall experience was extremely rewarding.

The night before the senate was supposed to let out for their break, Brown was at a restaurant with some friends.

"While there, we look on the news and we see C-SPAN," Brown said. "I see that some other pages have been there for over 12 hours at that point and no food, no drink, nothing."

Brown and his friends decided to relieve the pages and so they left, running to the Capitol. Along the way, Brown saw a number



*(Left) Brown with Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill. (Right) Brown with his Senate Page Class. (Photos from Henry Brown)*