The House Committee on Homeland Security led by Chairman Mike McCaul (TX-R), has a variety of responsibilities to ensure both the security of the United States of America from both domestic and foreign threats. Congressional interns for the committee are granted with a variety of tasks and responsibilities for the full committee and the six subcommittees: Border and Maritime Security, Counterterrorism and Intelligence; Cyber-security, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technology; Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communication; Oversight and Management Efficiency; and Transportation Security. Each Subcommittee works on their specific topics and investigations to produce and host Subcommittee hearings along with collaboration for the Full Committee hearings.

I spent most of my time working with the Oversight and Management Efficiency Subcommittee, Border and Maritime Security, and Counterterrorism and Intelligence. For the Oversight and Management Efficiency Committee, typically the least interesting for interns but with my experience in oversight work, I staffed and prepared for hearings along with oversight investigations into federal spending and budget planning. The Border and Maritime Subcommittee had a busy summer attempting to resolve the issues of the unaccompanied alien minors crossing the southwestern United States border. I worked to prepare research, write letters (including work on a letter to President Obama about the border crisis), and hearing materials for the Full Committee hearing on unaccompanied alien minors and worked to prepare documents on the Border and Maritime Subcommittee’s July field hearing in Texas. Along with work for hearings, which included preparing questions for members, talking points and general background research on the topics; the majority of the constituent calls this summer were border concerns or ISIS concerns. The Subcommittee on
Counterterrorism and Intelligence also faced a challenging summer with the emergence of the ruthless terrorist organization ISIS, which called for a strong effort from the Committee to reassure the public of the United States’ security along with producing a strategic plan to control and contain these combatants. I wrote numerous updates on the current situation in Iraq for the Deputy Chief of Staff for the Committee which were passed along to the Chairman. These reports included research from different think tanks and the press to inform the Committee and Chairman of the daily events in Syria and Iraq; which I felt served to improve my political writing and research skills.

The internship was successful in providing guidance to my political interest and which fields I am more interested to pursue. The Committee provided a variety of tasks and opportunities for the numerous interns. However, there were a few drawbacks to the internship. The program was uniquely organized where the interns were not assigned to any staffer or subcommittee but worked as freelance for any staffers that needed assistance with their work. Although this taught ambition and initiative amongst the interns, there was an inconsistency of work distributed amongst the nearly twenty interns. The Committee was facing a challenging summer with one of the largest staff changes in the recent history of the Hill, where nearly a quarter of the staff was let go placing the Committee under the scrutiny of the media along with a tense atmosphere within the office itself. Compared to previous internships on the Hill, the organization of the interns was lacking which I felt did take away from my experience and the experience of the interns around me, granted that the Committee is the youngest House Committee only founded in 2001, after the 9/11 attacks. The internship did help me learn how to manage an office setting, practice my writing and research skills, and taught me how to be competitive in my work. The Committee also helped me further my interest in international security and border issues, both are fields of work I am interested in pursuing for further internships and careers.