This summer, I interned for Congressman Jim Cooper of Tennessee’s 5th district. I worked in the congressman’s Washington, D.C. office and fulfilled a wide range of duties there. Congressman Cooper’s internship program is unique on Capitol Hill as his interns were able to spend time with him each day, were required to tour the city’s monuments and museums, and were granted much independence to attend hearings, briefings, and various meetings.

Each day, we met with the Congressman and were expected to bring a news article to discuss and defend. These meetings ensured that we were up to date on current events and also helped build our speaking and analysis skills. Throughout the internship we were assigned to work with different staff members in order to experience all the operations of a congressional office. While I was assigned to work with the Congressman’s scheduler, I helped create the spreadsheet outlining the Congressman’s meetings, events, and travels of the week. When I worked with the press secretary, I attended a press conference with the Congressman to announce the “Fix Congress Now Caucus,” I represented the Congressman while meeting with constituents and took pictures of events, and attended a conference at the Washington Post. I was assigned to work with several different legislative assistants and completed a variety of projects for them. I created a spreadsheet of all the bills in a certain time frame in the House of Representatives, noting the passage or failure and how the Congressman voted. I was also able to sit in on meetings with lobbyists and constituents while working with the legislative assistants. In addition to these specific assignments, I was expected to sort the mail and papers, respond to constituent mail and calls on behalf of the Congressman, give tours of the Capitol, and I was able to attend briefings and hearings such as the hearing on the Equal Pay for Equal Work act.