

The end of my internship at the Cato Institute

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Hello! My name is Julianna Pasquarello and I am a rising Junior at Tulane double-majoring in Economics and Political Science. This summer, I interned at the Cato Institute, a non-partisan public policy think-tank dedicated to the principles of individual liberty, free markets, and peace. I can not believe my time at Cato is at its end.

At the beginning of the summer, I compiled learning objectives to broaden my perspective and academic horizons. During my time at Cato, I believe I have not only accomplished these objectives but surpassed them. For instance, one of my learning objectives was to improve my research skills through hands-on research experience. At Cato, I was afforded the opportunity to participate in research with, without question, some of the best scholars in the policy world. Through my work, not only am I now better able to better understand the intricacies of public policies. But I am better able to analyze data and infer the implications they hold for individual's everyday lives.

Now that I have completed my internship, I realize that I want to learn more about education policy. Working on education research projects at Cato made me realize that I enjoyed researching such policies which afford families a greater choice to choose the best-suited educational opportunities for their children. I want to continue to research education policy by pursuing research opportunities both in Washington D.C. and in New Orleans. Considering that New Orleans is the epicenter of the school choice debate and that Tulane's Department of Economics is home to some of the most prominent education research centers in the country, I know I will be very busy in the years to come!

Over my time at Cato, I have compiled a few pieces of advice to those interested in a career in public policy:

- First, you should work to develop your hard skills. If you are in public policy, it is important you are able to write, public speak, analyze data, and utilize research software.
- Second, you should be open to learning about different political ideologies. One thing I learned from my time in Washington is that the public policy debate is very partisan. If you wish to be a strong policy analyst, it is important to understand all perspectives objectively so you can thoroughly articulate your own positions on them.
- Third, you should concentrate your efforts to focus on one specific policy area. You are more employable if you have a specific focus rather than a general scope of knowledge.

My tenure at Cato gave me the opportunity to visualize the Newcomb College Institute focus on gender and social justice through the context of D.C. politics.

For instance, one way my philosophy on gender and social justice has been challenged is by the overwhelming preponderance of male senior fellows at major think-tank organizations. Since my time in Washington, D.C., I have become aware of this disparity and see it as a space for opportunity and improvement. As these disparities are apparent in many professional settings, it is important for women to work to become actively involved and be unafraid to take on leadership challenges. In consequence, not only will there be greater diversity in leadership, but academia will be improved as a whole due to a newly introduced diversity of thought.

One lesson I learned about is that being a more effective problem solver, change agent, and citizen is that it is not easy. Despite your passion for one particular public policy or another, there will always be opponents wishing to discredit your ideas. Never let opposition detract from the confidence you have in yourself. Every great change maker believes in their cause, and without your beliefs — you are nothing. Without your beliefs, you will lose your potential for change.

Thank you very much for joining me on my journey within the public policy world this past summer in Washington, D.C. I look forward to sharing my future experiences with you. Until next time!