

# Working on Capitol Hill



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# CHAPTER 1

## WORK ON THE HILL

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The opportunities on the Hill for lawyers and law students are numerous and multifaceted. However, as the actual work on Capitol Hill is often conducted in small, autonomous personal and committee offices, obtaining a position requires more networking and persistence than some other types of legal employment.

This guide will try to decode this process for you. First, it provides descriptions of five employment areas in DC involved in federal legislation and policy. Next, it offers job hunting advice for Capitol Hill job seekers. Chapter 2 provides online, print, and human resources that may prove helpful in your search. Finally, the narratives in Chapter 3, submitted by YLS students and alumni with Hill experience, provide an insider's view of various positions and up-to-date guidance on how to storm "The Hill."

Law students and graduates interested in federal legislation and policy should consider employment with: the personal offices of representatives in the House and Senate; the committees in both bodies; the Democratic and Republican Parties; the congressional administration; and the Executive Offices. Remember that although the job titles or locations might be different, the actual duties may be highly similar. For example, because it is not uncommon for a committee chair to informally merge his personal staff and committee staff, the work performed by counsel in each type of office might be identical. Thorough job research is necessary to classify the type of work. Staffers on the Hill, especially counsel and legal advisers, tend to perform a combination of legal, policy, and political work.

*It is great work: it will change how you think about law and society in general and, sometimes, give you a great sense of fulfillment. It is, however, work that you should do when you're young: it is often long hours, difficult working conditions, and relatively low pay. But where else can you get such a chance to make a difference?*

**TIMOTHY WESTMORELAND '96**  
**Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**  
**Investigator in Health Policy**  
**Visiting Professor of Law**  
**Georgetown University**

### A. Political Positions on the Hill

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#### 1. Personal Offices

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Members of Congress have the dual responsibility of maintaining a presence in Washington, where they serve as legislators, and serving the specific needs of their constituents. For this task, members have extensive personal offices whose staffs serve both to advise and assist the member on legislative matters, and to respond to the needs of constituents. The staff size of a personal office varies widely.

In the House of Representatives, Members are authorized (as part of their Member's Representational Allowance) to employ no more than 18 permanent persons and up to 4 additional staff at any one time. In the Senate, a Member is authorized a staff allowance according to the size of the state's population. There are no restrictions on the number of staff a

Senator may hire. The average House staff size is 14. The average Senate staff size is 35, although the range in the Senate is from around 32 to as many as 45. These figures exclude voluntary interns and congressional fellows.<sup>1</sup>

The staff is divided between Washington, DC and home offices. The average number of Washington, DC staff is 8.2 for members of the House, and 22.4 for members of the Senate.<sup>2</sup> Because each member of Congress is assigned a budget to manage his or her personal office and members can divide the sum as they see fit to pay staff salaries, salaries of employees in equal positions with different personal offices can vary widely.

Typically a personal staff will include a staff assistant and legislative correspondents, who will handle administrative matters and constituent services and correspondence. Legislative assistants (LAs) research and advise the member regarding legislative issues. Each LA is usually given certain issues in which to develop expertise. On a personal staff, the LA may be expected to follow a broader range of issues than a committee staff person, but is usually not required to do as much writing on the issues as committee staff. The personal office LA advises the member on the issues to be considered by the committee and what the member might do during consideration of legislation. He or she is usually responsible for meeting with lobbyists and other advocates, with constituents, and with other Hill staff. The ability to summarize complex material is a useful skill.

The legislative director directs and oversees the efforts of the legislative correspondents and legislative assistants and is responsible for all legislative matters. The chief of staff or administrative assistant is typically the head of the office and the main staff advisor of the member. In addition, the office may employ a communications director and communications assistants, a deputy chief of staff, a systems administrator (computer specialist), and others.

Although the structures of House and Senate personal staffs are quite similar, some differences exist. Typically Senate staffs will be larger and more formal and will allow more opportunity for specialization. The House staffs are more cozy and informal, allowing greater interaction with the member. The speed of business tends to be quicker in the House.

### ***The Facts of Life in a Personal Office***

The wide variety of positions available within (especially large) personal offices creates ample opportunity for satisfying employment. However, for those YLS students or alumni seeking permanent employment with personal offices, whether for policy or legal positions, certain caveats apply.

- A position with a personal office can be uncertain and extremely insecure, as House members are up for reelection every two years and Senate members every six. Those YLS students graduating in May of an election year should be aware that House and Senate members running in contested races may be unlikely to make any new hires prior to the November elections.
- Advancement within a personal office can be rapid. The flip side is that some personal offices do not hire individuals for advanced positions unless those candidates have spent time in a lower position within the office. Again, you should research individual office policies.

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<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress: Congressional Member Office Operations*, Order Code RL30807 (Updated December 21, 2004) p. CRS-3. This is the most recent report available at time of printing.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at page CRS-5.

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## 2. Committee Work

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Unlike personal offices, committee offices rarely, if ever, deal directly with constituent requests.<sup>3</sup> Rather, the committee office is the location for most of the actual legislative work being performed on the Hill. It is in committee that hearings on pending legislation take place, and it is in committee that executive business sessions (called “mark-ups”) take place. In these mark-ups, legislation is pored over, line-by-line, before gaining approval to make it to the floor of the House or Senate. Committee and subcommittee staff serve as information resources for committee members.

Committees have staffs for both the minority and majority sides, as does each subcommittee. Committees and subcommittees will commonly employ a chief counsel or staff director to serve as the chief staff person on the committee. The chief counsel will usually be assisted by a number of assistant counsel, professional staff members, and staff assistants. There is also a minority staff director who leads the minority staff.

A committee staff person is usually assigned a subset of the committee’s issues to be his/her portfolio of responsibilities. Committee work is made up of searching out and understanding these issues, outlining possible legislative and oversight responses to them, meeting with lobbyists and other advocates, briefing the chair and members of the committee, drafting the legislation to be considered (as chosen by the chair and the members), inviting witnesses for hearings and staffing the hearings, and drafting amendments (and counter-amendments) for that legislation. Committee staff do a great deal of writing—some of it technical statutory writing (e.g., “in subsection 3, strike ‘six’ and insert ‘seven’”), some of it broadly rhetorical (e.g., “Six is an unworkable number that will result in deadlock that will disadvantage all, but seven will produce a simple majority.”). The ability to write concisely and clearly is a valuable talent.

Committee counsel are commonly hired by and work for particular committee members. Most are hired by the chair of the committee (often from their own staff) for the majority side and the ranking member (leader of the minority party on the committee) for the minority side. However variation exists, such as subcommittee chairs assigning staff to the committee. For example, in the Senate Judiciary Committee the chair and the ranking member have the largest committee staff but other members may have committee staff as well. In the House Judiciary Committee, all staff officially work for the chair or the ranking member, but may be assigned to other representatives.

Because of the inherently political nature of committee positions, the majority staff size exceeds the staff size of the minority party to a degree reflecting the extent of the majority. And, like personal offices, committee staffs will have limited personnel budgets.

### ***The Facts of Life in a Committee Office***

- Committee staff members describe their work as very rewarding. Indeed, some committee counsel have kept their positions for upwards of 10 years, bucking the trend of high turnover pervasive in the staffs of personal offices. The average stay seems to be from two to five years.
- Positions as assistant counsel are extremely hard to obtain directly out of law school, especially depending on the committee to which one is applying. The Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Technology and Terrorism, for example, is unlikely to hire a graduating law student for an assistant counsel position, given the highly technical nature of its work. The same is true for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

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<sup>3</sup> A list of Senate and House Committees, their leadership and membership, can be found in the current version of *Congress at Your Fingertips* in the CDO library; and in *The Almanac of American Politics*, also found in the CDO library.

- Finally, be aware that some committees, such as the Armed Services and Intelligence Committees, might require background checks prior to employment.

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### 3. Party Positions

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There are numerous political positions that function as party offices and are unaffiliated with specific member offices. For example, the Senate Republican and Democratic Policy Committees serve as steering committees through which party platform issues are coordinated. The Republican and Democratic Conferences (or Caucuses, depending on party) serve similar functions. The Leadership Offices—such as those of the Majority and Minority Leader, the Speaker of the House, and the Majority and Minority Whips—often employ additional political staffers whose job it is to assist the party leaders with the political responsibilities of their positions.

Contact information for the political positions of the House and Senate is most readily available in *Congress at Your Fingertips* or *Congressional Staff Directory*, both available in CDO, or in the *Congressional Yellow Book*, available online and in the YLS library.

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### 4. Job Search Tips for Political Positions

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#### ***First, Network and Research***

Finding a permanent job on the Hill is largely a matter of effort and stamina, but the best way to get a permanent job on the Hill is to work a summer job on the Hill. This provides you with contacts, references, and experience that are priceless in your permanent job search. It may also provide you with an offer, but since openings are unpredictable this can't be assumed. Since YLS provides summer funding through the Student Public Interest Fellowship program (SPIF) to students interested in volunteering for Hill positions (but not for campaign positions), you have an enormous opportunity to obtain excellent Hill experience.

To pursue either a summer or permanent Hill job, realize that you do have contacts on the Hill through the YLS community that you can use to your benefit. Networking is not only a valuable aid to getting a job, it is a major research tool. Hill offices vary greatly in structure and culture. There are notorious members of Congress whose staffers are not happy employees. Other offices are wonderful places to work. Careful research—in person, online, and in print—should be done throughout a job search.

Make sure to use the student summer job evaluations and student summer employment lists to find students who have Hill experience and can help you learn the ropes. Use YLS Career Connections to find alumni on the Hill and contact them for advice and other referrals. Also use the student and alumni mentor lists provided in this guide for additional leads. Mention your interests to faculty to see if they can assist. In addition, political loyalty, campaign work, and personal friendships can be valuable resources in finding Hill jobs. If you, or your family or friends, have these experiences you have another set of contacts to pursue.

For all of your employment mentors and Hill contacts, make sure to be courteous of their time, provide them with an emailed resume (in hopes they will circulate it further), and follow up on the leads that they provide. Also, since turnover on the Hill is high, it is important to keep in touch with these contacts, updating them periodically on your progress.

In addition to educating yourself through your contacts, use other available resources. Reference books, such as *The Almanac of American Politics* or *Congressional Staff Directory*, will help you find the

committees that handle the issues that interest you, the members that are active on those committees, and the structure of the staff of the committee. You should also use these and other resources to learn more about a member for whom you would particularly like to work and about the structure of their personal staff. As always, knowledge of the employer is the key to a successful job search. It means that you need to be able to demonstrate an understanding of the member's role and his or her stance on issues. The member's personal website, the reference books and websites described in Chapter 2 of this guide, and a general web search can provide rich data.

## **Applying**

### **Summer**

To obtain a summer volunteer position on the Hill, conduct research to determine where you would like to work and approach that office. For a member's personal office, write to the chief of staff/administrative assistant (COS/AA), chief counsel, or legislative director. Do not apply to the intern coordinator since such an application is likely to result in a position given to undergraduates and not one with considerable legal exposure. Names of Congressional staffers, their biographies, and their contact information can be found in the *Congressional Staff Directory*. Remember that representatives from a district to which you can claim a connection (home, college, law school, vacations, intended home) may have a special interest in you. Make sure to point out the connection.

For committee work, you can write to the majority or minority staff director of the committee, to the COS/AA or chief counsel of the chair or ranking member (minority party leader), or to other members of the committee. Committees rarely have the same geographic or hometown restrictions as personal offices, but again, the staff director acts at the discretion of the chair. Some senators prefer staffers with state ties for their committee staff as well as their personal staff, while others have no such preference for committee staff. Research into hiring practices should be done. Tailor the cover letter and resume to the job based on your research. A political background with one party may skewer an opportunity for employment with committee staff of the other party, so a resume may need to be adapted accordingly. Always follow up in a few weeks with a phone call.

### **Permanent**

This type of outreach is also advisable for a permanent job search, however there are a few other sources of information that you will want to check. Although the positions on the Hill are not uniformly posted or advertised, both the House and Senate have placement offices that handle some job listings—permanent, temporary, paid, and unpaid. The Senate Placement Office produces a weekly *Senate Employment Bulletin* which is available online at [www.senate.gov/employment](http://www.senate.gov/employment), or can be accessed through their job hotline at (202) 228-5627. For more information, please consult the *Placement Brochure* on the Website or contact the Placement Office at (202) 224-9167.

The House of Representatives Jobline at (202) 226-4504 provides a similar service, although job descriptions are curt, generic, and incomplete. To better assess the positions, applicants can check job postings in the Longworth House Office Building, Suite B227. For a copy of the House Committee and Internships Employment Bulletin, students should email [caohumanresources@mail.house.gov](mailto:caohumanresources@mail.house.gov).

In addition, the Committee on House Administration sets up a resume drop area following House elections to facilitate the staff hiring for newly elected House members. Signage in the building will indicate where to go for that process, but you should be aware that a deluge of resumes arrive at this time. If you are unsuccessful in the flood, begin again with a personal approach in February or March.

The Committee on House Administration (CHA) website, [cha.house.gov/](http://cha.house.gov/), provides lists of House staff organizations (under *CHA Assistance* select *Congressional Staff Organizations*), some of which are open

to non-Hill employees and offer a good networking opportunity. Also, several papers (listed in the online resources section of Chapter 2) provide job announcements for Hill positions. Be forewarned that no official or unofficial site will contain all job openings on the Hill. Some are circulated by interoffice memos alone, or filled before the need to advertise arises. This reinforces the importance of keeping your Hill networks alive and growing.

Finally, on the Hill there is a useful and time honored tradition of walking from office to office leaving a resume with a junior staffer. This allows you the opportunity to inquire whether there are any vacancies or possible vacancies in the near future, learn what skills or background might be of particular interest to that office, and learn the name of the appropriate person with whom to follow up on your application. This tradition is commonly followed, and those in the building vouch for its efficacy.

Salaries are substantially less on the Hill than in the private sector. In addition, because staff salaries are not dependent on years of service (as with civil service positions), the amount earned might be considerably less than with other government legal positions, notwithstanding the long hours often worked by staffers.

### Average Salaries of Selected House and Senate Staff Positions

DC Office Positions	Salary		Tenure in Position	
	Senate	House	Senate	House
Chief of Staff/AA	\$151,767	\$134,307	3-6	5.2
Legislative Director	\$116,952	\$84,273	1-3	3.3
Legislative Aide	\$66,789	\$45,105	1-3	2.5
Legislative Correspondent	\$32,802	\$35,177	1-3	2.2

*2009 House Compensation Studies  
2006 Senate Compensation Studies*

### Working Your Way Up

Many offices will be reluctant to hire individuals for legislative director, committee counsel, or other senior positions without Hill experience. Even a summer legal internship with an office or committee can make a difference. However, with or without your summer experience, it may be necessary to apply for a lower position, such as a legislative assistant. These entry level positions not only allow you to gain experience, but also mean you will be available to apply for a higher position in the same, or another, personal office or committee at a moment's notice. Such opportunities for advancement are not rare. Although the work done by legislative and political staffers is rewarding, turnover can be high. This does not necessarily reflect job discontent, but is a product of the horizontal and vertical movement between various Hill positions.

According to an alum, "The cream rises to the top quickly here. If you take an LA job handling issues you're not too psyched about and you're a star, even if you're stuck behind people in your office who aren't leaving quickly enough, you're likely to be identified by folks on other staffs as an attractive candidate for openings in their offices. A side note: it's not so easy to travel from the House to the Senate—it's done, but in most instances you're better off taking a LA job in the Senate than a counsel job in the House if your goal is a Senate counsel slot."

It might be disheartening to take a non-counsel position upon graduation, but lower, non-legal, and certainly less well-paid positions are often prerequisites to becoming counsel.

### ***Timing***

Openings on the Hill for all permanent positions are usually for immediate needs. The number of Hill opportunities is often greatest in the summer, when many junior staffers leave, and soon after elections—particularly when a party has regained majority status in the House or Senate. Therefore, a student seeking post graduation employment might have to wait until he or she is ready to begin working to apply. It may prove a discomfoting truth that while your classmates have secured jobs well in advance of graduation, you are without an offer until graduation, or after. The nature of these positions, though, means that flexibility and persistence are crucial, as is patience.

Job hunting in an election year might prove even more difficult, as Hill offices tend to be less willing to hire an individual for a position for the few months prior to the vote. It might be necessary in such cases to pursue fallback options in Washington, DC, but also consider working on a campaign. Campaign work can not only earn you a position if your candidate wins, but can also assist you if your candidate loses, because you will have developed contacts and a reputation.

### ***Safety Nets***

Although most students have had success in obtaining summer positions on the Hill, it is a challenge to find a great, permanent Hill job right after graduation. Our sources tell us that an office may receive hundreds of resumes for each counsel opening, with 50 to 100 of them being credible applicants. This does not mean that you should give up—just that you should be persistent, broad, and realistic in your search. Some students also establish a fallback position with firms by asking a firm to hold an offer open pending a public interest Hill job search. Another fallback option might be to work for a congressional or senatorial campaign, as discussed above.

## **B. Non-Political Positions**

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### **1. House and Senate Administrative Offices**

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For those seeking non-political, non-traditional legal work on Capitol Hill, a position with the administrative staff of the Capitol might be appealing. The House and Senate offer a wide variety of positions, unaffiliated with any specific party or member.

#### ***The Offices of Legislative Counsel***

The Offices of Legislative Counsel (OLC) are non-partisan offices in each chamber that provide technical expertise in legislative drafting to members and committees. They prepare bill mark-ups and verify proposed language for consistency with the rest of the U.S. Code. These attorneys do not set the policy of the legislation on which they work. In fact, an attorney in the OLC may draft a bill for introduction and draft all of the competing amendments offered to that bill. The attorney is concerned with the legislative policy behind the bill only for the purpose of ensuring that the draft accurately reflects that policy. Because of the nonpartisan nature of the OLC, current substantial political activity may disqualify potential employees from gaining positions. Counsel in these offices will meet with members and their staffs to discuss legislative proposals; attend committee meetings; discuss the legislation with their counterparts in the House, Senate or Executive Branch; review the Congressional Record and other

materials regarding other matters in the subject area; attend floor consideration; research related prior legislation; and draft bills and amendments.

The House Office of the Legislative Counsel (HOLC) employs 42 attorneys and often accepts several 2L summer associates. The summer associate position is paid a small stipend, and splits are possible. The 2L summer associate program is similar to the program for new attorney hires in that the summer associate is given initial training in various aspects of the work and provided an opportunity to work directly with clients on actual bills and amendments. The HOLC web page [www.house.gov/legcoun/](http://www.house.gov/legcoun/) is an excellent resource for information about the office's work and employment opportunities.

The Senate Office of Legislative Counsel (SLC) employs 30 attorneys and has a program for summer interns. The intern must be a 2L and is put in an intensive training program that is a modified form of the eight-week training that new attorney hires are given. Interns are given responsibility for drafting resolutions and other legislation. More information about the office and positions can be obtained from the SLC webpage [slc.senate.gov/](http://slc.senate.gov/).

### ***Senate Legal Counsel and House General Counsel***

Both the Senate and the House have small offices of attorneys (typically five to six) that represent the members, committees, and the entity in their institutional capacity. For example, they may represent members or committees when subpoenas are issued or represent the Congress to protect an institutional prerogative.

### ***The Library of Congress***

The Library of Congress ([www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)) serves as the research arm of Congress, as well as a national repository of information and creativity, and employs many attorneys. These are civil service jobs and therefore are not subject to the election schedule. For information about the Library of Congress and for its general employment opportunities, check [www.loc.gov/hr/employment](http://www.loc.gov/hr/employment).

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is the public policy research arm of the Library of Congress. It provides its services to the members and committees of the U.S. Congress. Within the CRS are five interdisciplinary research divisions that employ experts in a variety of fields to provide information and analysis of complex issues for Congress.

Within these divisions, the American Law Division ([www.loc.gov/crsinfo/divwork/aldwork.html](http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/divwork/aldwork.html)) is the chief employer of attorneys, employing over 40 attorneys who, upon request, research and advise members of Congress. The attorneys in this division provide written analyses and legal opinions at any stage of the legislative process. Many of the attorneys employed by the American Law Division are new graduates who came to the division through the CRS Law Recruit Program. The American Law Division also welcomes law students as summer volunteers or for externships. For more information on the CRS Law Recruit Program, contact Kevin Greely at [LawRecruit@crs.loc.gov](mailto:LawRecruit@crs.loc.gov).

## **C. Executive Offices**

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### **1. The Office of Counsel to the President (or "White House Counsel's Office")**

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Although not technically a Hill office, the Office of Counsel to the President is included in this guide because of its involvement in policy and legislation. This office advises the President on all legal issues concerning the President and the White House. The Counsel's Office is responsible for advising on all

legal aspects of policy questions as well as on ethical issues. It also oversees judicial selection, handles presidential pardons, reviews legislation and presidential statements, and serves as the White House contact for the Department of Justice.

Law students may find interesting summer work at the White House Counsel's Office. Each term this office hires two interns to assist the approximately 20 Associate Counsels with their duties. The internships are unpaid, and applications go through the White House Internship Program, which provides interns throughout the White House offices. Information on the Internship Program and application materials can be found at [www.whitehouse.gov/about/internships](http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/internships).

Candidates may apply at [www.whitehouse.gov/about/internships/apply](http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/internships/apply). Contact the personnel office at (202) 456-5979 or [intern\\_application@whitehouse.gov](mailto:intern_application@whitehouse.gov) for more information.

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## **2. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB)**

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The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) assists the President in the development and execution of his policies and programs. Although not a Hill position (OMB is in the Executive Branch), OMB has been included in the guide because it has a hand in the development and resolution of all budget, policy, legislative, regulatory, procurement, e-gov, and management issues on behalf of the President. OMB is composed of divisions organized either by agency and program area or by functional responsibilities. However, the work of OMB often requires a broad exposure to issues and programs outside of the direct area of assigned responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

Attorneys in the OMB work in the General Counsel's Office—which has six lawyers—or in other areas of OMB with non-attorneys doing public policy work. OMB has a summer intern program that takes students from a variety of graduate schools, including law. OMB accepts applications from students for unpaid internships. When funding is available interns are paid at the GS-7 level (currently \$20.22 per hour, found at [www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/html/dcb\\_h.asp](http://www.opm.gov/oca/10tables/html/dcb_h.asp)). Information about the application procedure is available at [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recruitment/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recruitment/). This site also includes advertisements for permanent positions at OMB. Applications should be emailed to [OMB\\_Recruitment@omb.eop.gov](mailto:OMB_Recruitment@omb.eop.gov).

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/organization/mission.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/organization/mission.html)

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## CHAPTER 2

## RESOURCES

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### A. Alumni Mentors

The following Yale Law School alumni are willing to speak to YLS students or other graduates regarding careers on Capitol Hill. In addition, the YLS Career Connections (CC), accessible from the CDO website [www.law.yale.edu](http://www.law.yale.edu) under *Resources*, can connect you with other interested alumni.

### B. Faculty Mentors

### C. Student Mentors

## D. Online Resources

### [congress.org](http://congress.org)

Congress.org is a nonpartisan news and information website devoted to encouraging civic participation.

### [corporate.cqrollcall.com](http://corporate.cqrollcall.com)

As a provider of congressional news, legislative tracking and advocacy services, CQ-Roll Call Group connects policy professionals and opinion leaders with the information and tools they need to understand and influence Congress. A wholly-owned subsidiary of [The Economist Group](#), CQ-Roll Call Group was formed by bringing together three companies—Congressional Quarterly, Roll Call and Capitol Advantage. This site also includes job postings of open positions on Capitol Hill.

### [thehill.com](http://thehill.com)

*The Hill*, another Capitol Hill newspaper, posts job vacancies in its classified section. From the homepage select *Employment* under the *Classifieds* menu on the left-hand sidebar.

### [www.hillzoo.com](http://www.hillzoo.com)

One of the most useful sites for job hunters, Hillzoo divides job vacancies by political party.

### [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

This website is a general source of information on representatives. The site provides links to all of the representatives' personal websites, which typically provide biographical information as well as committee appointments and staff contacts. For a list of job vacancies at the House of Representatives click on *Employment Information* on the left sidebar.

### [www.house.gov/cha](http://www.house.gov/cha)

The Committee on House Administration website provides lists of House staff organizations (select CHA Assistance, then *Congressional Staff Organizations*) of which some are open to non-Hill employees and can be a good networking opportunity.

### [www.leadershipdirectories.com](http://www.leadershipdirectories.com)

Yale Law School provides students with a subscription to the Leadership Directories, which contain biographical and contact information for people in a variety of government, nonprofit and private sector arenas.

Students using a Yale computer or connected to Yale through a VPN can access the directories without a password. Simply click on the blue login box in the upper right corner of the home page. Anyone accessing the site from an outside computer without VPN will be taken to a login screen. In that event, contact CDO at (203) 432-1676 for a username and password.

### [www.house.gov/legcoun/](http://www.house.gov/legcoun/)

If you are interested in applying for an assistant counsel position in the House Office of Legislative Counsel (HOLC), the HOLC web page is a resource for information about the work of the office. Click on *Careers* on the left sidebar for job opportunities.

### [www.loc.gov/crsinfo/](http://www.loc.gov/crsinfo/)

This website provides information on the Library of Congress Congressional Research Service and its opportunities. There is an option to register for email alerts regarding vacancy announcements.

[pac.org](http://pac.org)

The Public Affairs Council is a non-partisan, non-political association for public affairs professionals. Its mission is to advance the field of public affairs and to provide members with the training and information resources they need to achieve success while maintaining the highest ethical standards. This site includes job opportunities in Public Affairs. Click on the left side bar.

[www.pslawnet.org](http://www.pslawnet.org)

Attorney vacancies at the offices of specific representatives and senators can be found by running an *Opportunities* search on PSLawNet. Alternatively, you can learn about potential opportunities by using the *Organizations* database. For *Organization Type* select Government and for *State/Province* select District of Columbia. In searching for Hill positions, if you make your search more specific than this you run the risk of missing relevant offices.

[www.rcjobs.com](http://www.rcjobs.com)

Lists job openings, both on and off the Hill. For general political information and news, log on the *Roll Call* website, [www.rollcall.com](http://www.rollcall.com).

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

Similar to the House website, this website has links to all senators' personal websites, which provide biographical information as well as committee appointments and staff contacts.

## E. Print Resources

The Career Development Office maintains a library of resources to assist in finding employment on Capitol Hill. All entries are in the CDO library unless otherwise listed.

### **The Almanac of American Politics 2010**

This resource includes information on every senator and representative and their respective district and state. However, it does not include information on staff members.

### **The Capital Source**

This is a directory of more than 7,000 key contacts in government, media and politics. It provides organization names, key contacts, addresses, phone and fax numbers, and email and web addresses.

### **Congress at your Fingertips 2010**

This guide has contact information, dates of election, margin of victory, and photographs of all members of the House and Senate, as well as contact information for House and Senate committees and administrative positions. Additionally, the book lists the names and contact information for top staffers in each office.

### **Congressional Directory 111th Congress 2009-2010**

This directory contains biographies of senators, members of Congress, and the Judiciary. It also includes committee assignments, maps of Congressional districts, a directory of officials of executive agencies, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, web addresses, and other information.

### **Congressional Intern Handbook**

This book is a nuts and bolts guide to working in a congressional office to orient new interns.

### **The Congressional Internship Book 2009-2011**

This resource provides information regarding contact people, internships experiences, stipend availability, and application procedures for nearly 300 members of Congress, committees, and district offices.

### **Congressional Staff Directory Summer 2010**

This directory provides detailed information about office structure, staff background, and office size for personal offices, committees, and leadership offices.

### **The Insider's Guide to Research on Capitol Hill (2005)**

This guide provides information for new interns to the Hill on all available resources, as well as useful tools for approaching the difficult task of 'Congressional Research.' It contains explanations of IT resources in the House and Senate, an in-depth overview of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and research tips for interns. Some of the websites discussed are also helpful for those engaging in an employment search.

### **The U.S. Government Manual 2009-2010**

This manual details the organizational structure of the legislative branch that might be helpful in deciphering the bewildering bureaucratic complexity of the Hill. It also explains the purpose of each committee and office on Capitol Hill.

### **The Vault Guide to Capitol Hill Careers**

The guide discusses internships on Capitol Hill for undergraduates, law students, and MBA students and includes firms, general government jobs, and the classic Hill positions. Its overview of the various positions and discussion of advancing careers on the Hill and compensation are helpful.

## **F. Fellowship Funding**

The Heyman Federal Public Service Fellowship Program provides one year of funding to allow recent Yale Law graduates to work closely with high-level leaders in the federal government. Appropriate positions include high-level substantive work with the sponsoring office, agency, or commission. Positions that are not considered include judicial clerkships, entry-level positions, and work for political campaigns. In the four years since the program's inception, a number of Heyman Fellows have worked with Senators or Representatives on Capitol Hill. Two to three fellowships are awarded each year. For the 2010-11 fellowship year, the stipend was \$44,000 and included health benefits. Details on the 2011-12 stipend will be available in the fall of 2010. For more information, contact CDO at (203) 432-1676 or [cdo.law@yale.edu](mailto:cdo.law@yale.edu).

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# CHAPTER 3

## PERSONAL NARRATIVES

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### A. Alumni Narratives

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#### 1. Political Positions

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*David Dorsey '91, Congressional Fellow*

**SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY—U.S. SENATE HELP COMMITTEE  
CURRENTLY ACTING DEPUTY COMMISSIONER FOR POLICY, PLANNING AND  
BUDGET AT FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION**

I worked on the Senate HELP Committee for Senator Edward Kennedy from January 2001 through April 2009 on FDA-related issues and bioterrorism.

The Food and Drug Administration had “detailed” me to the committee, so I can’t offer much insight about how to find a job on the Hill as a regular staffer. Casual observations suggest that having previous Hill or campaign experience, knowing the right person at the right time, and being smart can be important to finding and landing a Hill job (knowing the right person at the right time worked for me). Substantive knowledge or experience can also be a plus, especially if you want a job on a committee instead of in a personal office. Except when a member is newly elected, there is generally not a regular time for hiring, so you’ll have to be willing and able to take a job when there is an opening.

I worked almost exclusively on legislation, and my experience on the HELP Committee was extremely rewarding. Several bills I worked on were signed into law. The process for getting these bills done included two formal conferences with the House, a few informal conferences before Senate action, and a few informal conferences after House and Senate action. The Senate acted on most of these bills by unanimous consent with no debate on the Senate floor, but three bills I worked on were debated at length on the Senate floor. I’ve learned from extremely experienced, committed, intelligent colleagues in my office and in others.

Many skills are important to getting a bill passed: The most important skill is to know when you can make a call yourself and when you need to talk to the boss. You also must be able to work with others on the committee—some of whom you disagree with strongly on politics or policy—to reach agreement on a bill, or it won’t move. Other skills include gathering information quickly and from different viewpoints to make informed decisions; executing policy in bill language and assessing how others have done so; including people at the right time in a process to make the conditions optimal for sufficient agreement to coalesce around a bill; and prioritizing tasks when several last-minute, apparently highly important ones land on your desk.

For me, the most challenging aspect of committee work was to evaluate all the options for moving a bill forward. What outside support would help? Is there a press strategy? Who are likely cosponsors to make the bill bipartisan and how can they be convinced to join? What are the must-haves in the bill and what can you give up?

Committee work also involves staffing hearings and constituent meetings, which requires concise written and verbal communication and knowing how to best use the forum to advance your boss’s policy objectives. The committee also monitors the agencies for which the committee is responsible and must judge when a call, letter, or other oversight is warranted.

Committees often have staff devoted to oversight, not legislation. I don't have any direct experience with intensive oversight, but it involves interviewing informants or witnesses, sending what are essentially interrogatories or document discovery requests to an agency or to private parties, such as the members of an industry under scrutiny, and pouring through the evidence to identify possible problems. These requests, which can be followed with subpoenas, can document the need for legislative reform or produce evidence of such significant malfeasance that a committee report, or news reports on the results of the investigation, can lead to significant reforms.

I generally worked until 7 or 8 at night, but have worked much later to prepare for hearings or executive sessions to mark-up bills. I more than once worked until four or five in the morning to negotiate one aspect of a bill only to resume negotiations a few hours later on another. While a bill for which I am responsible is being prepared for and on the Senate floor, I must work very long hours 7 days a week and am expected always to have the answer—I imagine it must be something like the hours and stress of real *lawyer work, such as preparing for and being in trial.*

The work can be routine and it can be frustrating. But it is often quite challenging and very rewarding, especially if a bill you have worked on passes and makes a difference for people.  
2010

*Robert Toone '95, Former Counsel*

**SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY—U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

From April 2001 to March 2005, I worked as a counsel for Senator Kennedy on the Judiciary Committee. I handled LGBT issues, crime, drugs, guns, prisons, sentencing, terrorism, related civil liberties issues, and the occasional executive or judicial nomination.

Things changed dramatically in the Senate in May 2001, when the Democrats regained majority status thanks to Senator Jim Jeffords' decision to leave the Republican party. Following the September 11th attacks, the committee focused on a range of terrorism-related issues, including the USA PATRIOT Act, military tribunals, the treatment of detainees, reorganization of the FBI, and immigration reform. The Democrats lost control of the Senate again in 2002, and the Republicans expanded their majority in the 2004 elections. (The Democrats regained control in 2006.)

Being in the minority meant that Democrats had limited ability to hold hearings and call for votes in the committees and on the Senate floor. Unlike the House of Representatives, however, the Senate strongly favors minority rights over majority rule, and little can be accomplished without strong bipartisan support. Even a single member has substantial power under the Senate's rules to slow things down, and, as we've frequently seen in recent years, a minority of 41 members can generally prevent a bill or nomination from coming to a vote at all.

For this reason, there is great incentive in the Senate to work with members of the opposite party, no matter who's in charge. Little can be accomplished without strong bipartisan support. And, in fact, I was pleasantly surprised by the ability of members from different parties and their staff to work together on some issues. For more than a year, for example, I worked on a bill to reduce the incidence of sexual assault in prisons and jails. It's an issue I care about, having spent my first four years out of law school litigating jail conditions. Approaching this problem legislatively was a very different experience. Rather than seeking, say, wholesale improvements in safety at a particular facility, we worked to achieve more modest relief for inmates across the nation, within the bounds of the federalism principles held by our Republican allies in the House and Senate, the Administration, and outside groups. The process was frustrating at times, and the final legislation was not as strong or comprehensive as many reformers would have liked. At least in the Senate, however, legislative work involves the identification of issues of bipartisan interest, compromise, and incremental change. "Big wins" seldom happen, particularly when you are in the minority.

My work on the Judiciary Committee exposed me to a fascinating range of issues and problems. In a single day, a staffer might be called on to cover issues as varying as gun control, post-*Booker* sentencing, patent legislation, gay marriage, and investigations into alleged detainee abuse. Typical work for me involved meetings and phone calls with other staffers, advocates, attorneys, and constituents; drafting and analysis of bills and amendments; memos to and meetings with my boss (often in cars or hallways); briefings, hearings, committee mark-ups, and floor debates. Working conditions bordered on the chaotic, office space was extremely limited, and there was little administrative or secretarial support. On the other hand, almost everyone returns your call, and each staffer gets a TV on his or her desk (for the stated purpose of monitoring the Committee, floor activities, and news coverage, and not, for example, watching the French Open).

On the whole, I found being a Senate staffer an extremely enjoyable, demanding, and intellectually rewarding job. I learned much from my colleagues, outside groups, and the members themselves. I was surprised by the degree to which Committee counsel are able to inform the Senators' debate and decisions. And I had the good fortune to work for one of the nation's greatest legislators.

I'm not aware of any established procedure for applying for positions, counsel or otherwise, on Capitol Hill. Every office seems to have its own method for soliciting applications and hiring staff. As a general

rule, it helps to put your cover letter, resume, and list of references before a senior staff member (on Senate Judiciary, that usually means the chief counsels for each member), regardless of whether there is currently an open vacancy. Ideally, you should either email or drop your materials off in person, to avoid the messiness and delay that results from the anthrax screening of incoming mail.

Before doing that, however, carefully investigate the senators and representatives you are thinking about applying to. Political ideology is only one factor to consider: members with similar voting records may have very different areas of substantive interests, levels of seniority, approaches to the legislative process, methods of interacting with staff, and general temperament. And some of the most interesting and important work for lawyers in Congress can be found on committees other than Judiciary.

2010

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## 2. Non-Political Positions

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*Jody Feder '02, Legislative Attorney*

### **LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE—AMERICAN LAW DIVISION**

I graduated from Yale Law School in May 2002, and I began working as a Legislative Attorney at the American Law Division of Congressional Research Service (CRS) in September 2002. CRS is a department within the Library of Congress that provides nonpartisan advice and analysis to members of Congress and their staff. The American Law Division is one of six research divisions within CRS. While the other divisions focus primarily on policy issues, the Law Division handles all of the legal requests received from congressional staff. These inquiries span the range of legal questions that emerge from the legislative agenda, as well as questions concerning the impact on Congress of administrative and judicial developments.

For example, common questions include, “How would a court interpret the legislative language in our proposed bill?” or “Are there any constitutional problems with this legislation?” or “What does this Supreme Court decision mean?” Basically, any legal issue that is raised in news reports or congressional legislation generates requests to the American Law Division. As legislative attorneys, we respond to these requests in a variety of ways, from extensive phone conversations or in-person consultations to written reports and legal memoranda. Ultimately, we serve as a sort of institutional memory for Congress, providing them with expert, nonpartisan advice on a wide array of legal questions.

Because the work at CRS is driven by the congressional agenda, it varies constantly, and this variety is one of the best things about the job. Although most days involve research and writing, I sometimes am called upon to participate in more exciting opportunities, such as attending committee mark-ups so that I can answer any legal questions that may arise, or attending Supreme Court oral arguments when the Court is considering an important case in my issue area. In addition, because it is a government job, the benefits are excellent, and the salary, although significantly less than a law firm job, is generous for a public interest legal job. More importantly, one of the best things about the job is that it is lifestyle friendly, with a 40-hour work week and only the occasional late night.

Ultimately, I think working in the law division at CRS is one of the best legal jobs around. Unfortunately, it's not a large organization, so there are not a lot of job openings each year. Typically, the law division has the authority to hire between one and four new lawyers each year, and they tend to hire only recent graduates (i.e., third-year law students) through their Law Recruit Program, which is advertised on the CRS Employment website. On rare occasions, the law division posts positions for higher level attorneys through OPM's federal employment website.

2010

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### 3. Executive Offices

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*Lisa Epifani '97, Attorney, VanNess Feldman, FORMER Assistant Secretary of Energy, Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy and Majority Counsel*

**U.S. SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

When I graduated from YLS in 1997, I moved to New Orleans to clerk on the district court. The next year, I clerked on the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. Both experiences were extremely rewarding in a professional and social sense. Many of the friends I made while clerking are today working on the Hill or in the executive branch.

After working at a law firm as an energy associate and at the Department of Energy as a political appointee, I joined the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee as a counsel for Chairman Pete Domenici. My primary issues were electricity and natural gas policy. My job with the committee came at a time when energy policy was on the front burner of the domestic agenda.

I loved working on the Hill. Before I went to the Hill, folks told me that this was going to be the best job of my life. It was very exciting, intellectual, crazy and amazing. I believe energy policy is one of the most important issues we face from an environmental, economic, and security perspective. The opportunity to work on legislation at that time was perfect.

In 2003, the committee crafted a comprehensive energy bill. I was responsible for drafting the electricity title, which included mandatory reliability rules for the electricity grid. The August 2003 Blackout occurred about six weeks before the final vote on the energy bill. Unfortunately, the energy bill missed passing by two votes. In 2005, the committee again crafted a comprehensive energy bill. The summer of 2005 was very busy working to help move the bill off the Senate floor to Conference with the House and back to the Senate for a final vote. I think being part of a committee, as opposed to a personal office, offered a much more intense legislative experience because the chairman of a committee is usually the manager of the bill on the floor.

While there were stretches of time that consisted of 80-hour weeks, hours per week on the Hill tended to vary greatly. During recess, for example, things slow way down on the Hill. I generally held meetings throughout the day. Evenings were the main time I could do my reading or writing. Coming in on a weekend was also fairly typical.

Getting a job on the Hill is very often the result of a recommendation from a friend on or off the Hill. There is no set formula, but I would advise having some work experience in your area of interest first.

In 2006, I accepted a position at the White House's National Economic Council as Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy. I covered domestic energy issues. Working at the White House was extremely challenging and exciting. I briefed the President on a variety of energy issues, worked on his energy speeches, helped set up energy events, and traveled with him. I also work with the agencies and the Hill to promote the Administration's energy policy. Like landing a job on the Hill, a position at the White House is generally the result of a recommendation from someone already in the Administration or on the Hill.

After 18 months at the White House, the President nominated me to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Energy. I managed an office of about 30 people and acted as the Administration's key liaison to the Hill on energy matters.

After close to 8 years of government service, I accepted a position at VanNess Feldman. VanNess Feldman is an internationally recognized law firm that focuses exclusively on energy, environment, and natural resources law and public policy. Our professionals have substantial government experience, having served as Presidential appointees, senior level department and agency heads, and as senior staffers for key Members of Congress.

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## B. Student Narratives

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### 1. Political Positions

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#### **SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS—U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

*Seth Grossman '05*

For the past summer, I served as a legal intern in the office of Senator John Edwards. The position proved interesting, challenging, and educational, and it provided a valuable introduction to life as a Hill staffer.

Prior to coming to law school I had interned at the White House and worked at an independent executive agency in Washington, but I had never spent time on Capitol Hill. I viewed the summer after my first year as an ideal opportunity to gain that experience and thus sought a summer job with a senator. Because of my interests, I knew that I wanted to work for a senator on the Judiciary Committee. As a result, in early December, I emailed the chief counsels of all the Democratic senators on the Judiciary Committee to inquire about summer positions in their offices. I also contacted the people listed in YLS Career Connections working on the Hill. The alumni I spoke to were very helpful, both in giving me a sense of what working on the Hill would be like and in putting me in touch with staffers they knew on the Judiciary Committee.

Although the conventional wisdom dictates that one needs a personal connection in order to obtain a job on the Hill, I did not find that to be the case. Many of the counsels I emailed out of the blue got in touch with me and offered me an interview, including Senator Edwards' counsel. The staffers that law school alumni put me in contact with were also very responsive. Ultimately, I received offers from two offices, both at the end of January, and I decided to work for Senator Edwards.

My choice proved to be a good one. The internship offered a terrific opportunity to gain real-world experience in public policy areas of great interest to me, including judicial nominations. I worked closely with Senator Edwards' counsel on all of the nominations issues that the Judiciary Committee addressed over the course of the summer. For instance, the committee, for the first time in over 20 years, held hearings on a North Carolinian's nomination to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. This nomination was of major importance to our office, and Senator Edwards' counsel allowed me to assume numerous responsibilities relating to it. I did extensive research on the nominee and wrote the briefing memo utilized by the offices of all the Democratic members of the committee. I also served as the liaison between our office and the other Democratic offices on this nominee. In addition, I wrote all of the senator's questions for the hearings, helped prepare the senator's remarks, and assisted in the drafting of the office's press releases on the event.

Senator Edwards' office also put me in charge of civil liberties matters for the summer, with a particular focus on issues stemming from the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act. In this capacity, I monitored developments throughout the summer, wrote memos, and briefed various members of the staff, including the chief of staff and the legislative director. I also researched, proposed, and helped draft legislation related to these issues. This aspect of my job proved particularly rewarding because it allowed me to get deeply involved in a high-profile policy issue and feel as though I made a positive impact in addressing it.

One of the particularly rewarding aspects of working in Senator Edwards' office was the willingness of the staff to involve me in their work. Senator Edwards' counsel did an excellent job of taking me to meetings and introducing me to staffers in other offices and to representatives of various interest groups. Staffers were also very receptive to my ideas and my requests to take on more responsibility. As a result, I felt that my internship gave me an extremely good sense of what the experience of working on the Hill full-time actually entails.

It is hard to describe a typical day in our office because so much depended on the legislative businesses before the Judiciary Committee or the Senate on any given day. The hours in our office typically lasted from 9:00 a.m. to between 6:30 and 7:00 p.m., but that also varied based on the project that I was working on. Although the job offered none of the traditional perks of a private sector position, it did provide the unique excitement of working on cutting-edge policy and political issues. The chance to do this kind of substantive work is a great way to spend a summer in law school.

One note of caution—the amount and type of work legal interns do can vary greatly from office to office. Before accepting a job in a particular office, make sure you investigate what responsibilities you would receive in that office. But if you find a good office, of which Senator Edwards' is one, you will have a very worthwhile summer experience.

*Summer 2003*

### **SENATOR RUSS FEINGOLD—U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

*Katherine Kimpel '06*

I work as a law clerk for Senator Russ Feingold on the Judiciary Committee. Currently, Senator Feingold is the ranking minority member on the Subcommittee for Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights. Our office mainly handles constitutional amendments along with bills that would have a significant impact on the judiciary system's civil rights. For example, this summer we have handled amendments that would restrict a judge's ability to interpret the First Amendment with regard to religious freedom, a flag desecration amendment, and the gay marriage issue and accompanying amendments.

September 11th still plays a major role in the types of issues and hearings that we deal with as well. Senator Feingold, in particular, has taken a lead on the U.S.A. PATRIOT Act opposition. Much of my work has centered on preparing to challenge the Administration's claims for unchecked power during oversight hearings before the full Judiciary Committee.

The depth of the work that this office, in particular, entrusts to law clerks is remarkable. Typical work for me involves the same type of work entrusted to the two members of Senator Feingold's staff who are his legal counsel. In preparation for a hearing, I have been asked to help identify and secure witnesses, compose memos for the senator briefing him on the issue, craft opening statements for the senator to give during hearings, design questions for the senator to ask the witnesses, and write the written questions that will be entered into the record following the hearing. Along with work on hearings, I also compose three- to five-page memos on significant Supreme Court decisions or other legal decisions that may lead to legislative efforts. Currently, in part because of my commitment to civil rights, I am writing the speech that the senator will give at the annual NAACP convention. I am not certain that law clerks in other offices are given the same opportunities.

In order to work for Senator Feingold, or most of the other senators on the Judiciary Committee, I would advise beginning your research in December, making initial contact with the office in late December or early January, but also realizing that the final word on positions will not come until April. In my experience, both a resume and a writing sample are required. Before sending off resumes, I would advise people to carefully research the senators and the subcommittees for which they are a ranking member, and the size of the office. I tailored my cover letters to reflect the type of work that might typically be handled

by the subcommittee on which they were a ranking member and was rewarded with more than one job offer. Also, be sure to find out how many people there are in an office—both staff and interns. The more people, the less likely law clerks will be entrusted with big projects on their own. Finally, I would note that Judiciary staff typically have separate offices from the senator and the rest of the staff. As a result, we rarely interact with anyone other than Judiciary staffers and opportunities for networking are limited.  
*Summer 2004*

**SENATOR EDWARD KENNEDY—U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**  
*Jon Donenberg '08*

During the summer of 2006, I spent three months working as a legal intern for Senator Edward M. Kennedy on the Judiciary Committee. The experience was very rewarding, and I would highly recommend spending a summer working on the Hill, and in particular, on Judiciary. The Committee is structured somewhat differently from others in the Senate in that individual Senators retain substantial staff operations beyond that of the Chairman and the Ranking Member. As such, a job with a Senator who sits on Judiciary may, in many ways, provide a more substantive experience than an internship with a Senator on another Committee who is not the Chairman or Ranking Member.

The jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee is broad—it includes constitutional issues, judicial nominations, immigration, Justice Department oversight, federal prison policy, U.S. Attorney and federal judicial nominations, and patent law, to name just a handful of the relevant areas. In addition, then-Chairman Arlen Specter was particularly adept at expanding the jurisdiction of the Committee through a liberal interpretation of its mandate, holding hearings on issues like detainee treatment and hedge fund regulation. The wide range of issues covered by the Committee makes Judiciary one of the more interesting places to work in the Senate, as does the fact that the various staffers are usually trained lawyers. Finally, each Senator's Judiciary staff is used to taking one to three law students per summer to work as legal interns, and in this sort of fluid environment it's always a good idea to take a job with an office that understands your substantive value and won't have you making photocopies or opening mail. The work I did could generally be categorized as one of four types—hearing preparation, speechwriting, drafting internal memoranda to update/advise the Senator and the permanent staff, and legislative negotiations.

As is the way with political jobs, there is no clear path to obtaining a job on the Judiciary Committee, even for a summer. Each Senator on the Committee runs their own hiring process, which generally involves soliciting resumes and references (and sometimes writing samples) and then holding onto them for an inordinate amount of time before actually making a decision. It's best to try and track down whatever information is available regarding the timetable for each Senator who sits on the Committee and is of your political party, and then apply to them all. Keep in mind that hiring decisions will be made quite late in the process by law school standards. Most 1Ls will know what jobs they will take for the summer by the end of January at the latest, and 2Ls even earlier than that. Senate offices, on the other hand, often won't even start considering applications until late February, and receiving an offer in April is not particularly unusual. Thus, if you are a 1L considering applying to work on the Committee, I would recommend not even starting to interview with alternative employers until the beginning of the Spring semester; otherwise you'll have to turn down job offers far in advance of having any idea what's going on with your applications to the Senate.

It is probably helpful to “know somebody” who works on the staff already, but that isn't a requirement to get a job. The three Yale students who worked on the Committee in the summer of 2006 were all offered jobs as a result of applying through the standard application process run by their particular Senator's office. Since the smooth functioning of these offices is somewhat dependent on things like loyalty and confidentiality, however, it never hurts to have someone who can recommend you, formally or informally, as you apply. Don't despair if you don't think you know anyone when you first start thinking

about this sort of job. The Law School itself is actually a great source for such people. There are typically several students in each class who have done a moderate to significant amount of work in politics, and many are willing to help. Searching the alumni directory or doing your own research to identify YLS alumni that currently work in the Senate is another good avenue for making connections. It's a good idea to try to sit down or talk over the phone with these people during the course of the first semester to help get a sense of the terrain before applying.

If you receive an offer, there are a few things that I think are worth considering when deciding whether or not to take a summer job working for the Senate Judiciary Committee. The first is the size and structure of the staff. Personal interaction with the Senator may be lower in the case of a large staff than with a small staff. At the same time, the Senators who retain large staffs are often among the most engaged, and the more engaged a Senator is, the more likely you are to get to work on substantive issues. In particular, an internship with a Senator who has a low rate of hearing attendance and engagement with legislation might well be less substantive. The level of formality may also be of interest to you—some Senators will wander their offices and interact with their own staff, or even the staff of like-minded legislators, very informally, while others conduct themselves in a very formal way. Finally, if you can find out, the personalities of the people you will be sharing a very small space with might be relevant to you. I was quite lucky in that Senator Kennedy's staff is very unassuming, friendly, and looking to give substantive work to their legal interns.

*Summer 2006*

### **SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN—U.S. SENATE GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE** *Mark Totten '05*

This past summer I worked on the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee for Senator Joseph Lieberman. Now on the other side of a Capitol Hill job search, I can share a few suggestions for those interested in working on the Hill. Summer jobs on the Hill for law students go by a number of names, but the job title I found most helpful in making my inquiries was “legal intern.” You do not want to ask about simply “intern” positions, since that term is reserved for the hundreds of undergraduate students who flood the Hill every summer spending their hours responding to angry constituents. (An important job, but not what you want to be doing as a law student.) You will want to make clear to any person you talk to that you are a law student, so that they know you are looking for a position that will allow you to use the many skills you learned during your first or second years of law school. Whether the attention it gives is deserved or not, you should also mention that you are a law student at Yale.

A second nuance worth knowing is that often members of Congress have two kinds of staff: personal staff and committee staff. All members have personal staff. Some of these people focus on helping constituents, and others are LAs who usually focus on two or three areas of policy. Law students can find meaningful work on the personal staff, but you will want to ask many questions and express clearly what kind of work you are seeking. College interns for the most part work for the personal staff and you will want to make clear that you want to work in a specific policy area that will allow you to use your legal skills. Working for the committee staff is a safer bet, insofar as the committee staff are focused entirely on issues of public policy. Senator Lieberman has about 12 people on his Governmental Affairs Committee staff, and more than half of them are attorneys.

In addition, it is helpful to know who to contact. If you are considering a position on the personal staff, you will want to talk probably to three people: the chief of staff, the legislative director (LD), and probably the LA assigned to that particular area. Don't worry about redundancy—the more who know your name the better. If you are applying for a position on a committee, the main people to contact are the staff director and the chief counsel. Persistence pays in any job search, but is absolutely essential in applying for a job in the House or Senate. Consider perhaps five to seven different offices to which to apply. Fax your resume and cover letter—congressional mail post-anthrax scare is far too unreliable—and

perhaps send a duplicate copy via email as an attachment. Follow up a few days later with a phone call. Although you might successfully land a job over the phone, I would suggest scheduling a trip down to DC for one or two days. I went right before the Christmas break, which seemed a very good time since the Senate was in recess and the staff members were relatively relaxed. When you finally get a phone call with your key contact, tell her that you will be in DC on such and such a date and wonder if she might have a few minutes to meet. You may leave DC having made a decision, or more likely you will hear back from those with whom you interview sometime in January or February.

My experience this past summer exceeded my expectations. The first week and a half on the Hill I wrote a memo in preparation for a committee hearing giving my opinion on the scope of the fiduciary responsibilities created by a certain federal law. My staff director was careful to make sure I had constant and varied projects that made use of my legal skills, and taught me much along the way. I left the Hill with better legal research and writing abilities, but also with a sense of all the factors that weigh in to shape public policy. My main area of work was environmental law, so I often attended hearings on this subject. Likewise, a few times a week I went to briefings conducted by various government agencies. Several times, the staff director assigned a project to me based on that day's news. For example, I researched and formed an opinion on what weaknesses in the federal regulatory structure were brought to light on account of the monkeypox outbreak. As a result of my work we requested a briefing by the CDC and prepared an oversight letter. In my interview for this job, I was careful to describe the type of work I was seeking; nonetheless, I started in late May not knowing quite what to expect. I left very satisfied, however, with a sense that I had both acquired new legal skills and had a broader sense of how the legislative process works.

*Summer 2003*

## **SENATOR CHARLES SCHUMER—U.S. SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

*Rebecca Kelly '08*

I went to DC the summer after my 1L year to work for Senator Schumer (D-NY) on the Judiciary Committee. Before I describe the process of getting the job and working on the Hill, it's important to note several things: first, what the work is like and how the hiring process operates can vary tremendously from Senator to Senator; second, I think my experience on the Hill was especially anomalous because of both the specific time I was there and particularly because of the nature of my office, which is quite different from most other Hill offices. Though I imagine I would have loved my job even if those differences hadn't been true, the idiosyncrasies of my office helped provide me with the best professional and personal experience I have ever had (and possibly ever will have).

When considering summer jobs, I was fairly confident I wanted to work in government, and was particularly interested in the legislative/policy making fields. After talking to fellow YLS students, it quickly became clear to me that the best place (if not the only place) for law students to find summer work on Capitol Hill is through the Senate Judiciary Committee—many (though not all) Senators on the Committee hire one or more law students for the summer; the decisions are made by each individual office so it's best to get in touch with the various counsels to find out what their hiring plans and processes are. I also understood that having contacts in the offices is particularly valuable. I applied to Senator Schumer's office in part because I'm a native New Yorker, but mostly because I had a good friend who used to work in his office and helped me get my resume in front of the right people. I interviewed in January and was hired the following month. I began my job the day after Memorial Day.

The Committee offices of Members of the Judiciary Committee vary in both size and structure—the more senior the Member, the larger his or her Judiciary Staff. Some Senators treat their Committee staff as entirely separate from their other legislative staff; some treat them as a regular part of their legislative staff who sit in a different office. Senator Schumer falls very much into the latter category—as part of his Judiciary staff, which is made up of between two and three lawyers, one post-college assistant, and a law

student—we interacted regularly with the rest of the staff in his personal office, including other legislative staffers and press staffers. In general, Senator Schumer tends to be more hands-on than many other Senators, so we frequently spent time meeting with him in his office or over the phone to discuss pending issues and legislation (many Senators communicate primarily or exclusively with only their most senior staffers; this was not the case in our office).

As a law clerk, I reported directly to the Chief Counsel in our office. My work for him spanned a broad spectrum—I analyzed and summarized legislation, fed him interesting or important articles, generated ideas for and drafted legislation, drafted letters and statements, attended hearings and Committee meetings, met with constituents and groups, and did a variety of other work. The job was always fascinating and extremely fast paced. It was also very time consuming—I would arrive at the office between 8 and 9 in the morning, and we frequently didn't leave until after 10 or 11 p.m. I also worked many weekends. Our schedule was entirely unpredictable; I had no idea in the morning whether I'd be leaving at 7 or whether I'd be stuck in the office until midnight. In addition, even when we weren't in the office, we were almost always paying attention to the news, both print and television, and staying in touch with each other as issues progressed. For me, it was entirely worth it, but it is worthwhile to be prepared for that type of commitment.

That was the typical pattern of my work—my summer, however, was complicated by the retirement of Justice O'Connor and the process of the Supreme Court hearings. Starting in the beginning of July, I focused on pretty much nothing but hearing prep, including reviewing constitutional case law and the nominee's records and drafting questions, statements, and other material. Though DC usually becomes a ghost town in August and the Senate dies down, our August was jam-packed (I would, however, have been excited to stay through August even if it hadn't been busy because the quiet times are the only ones in which there is time to focus on new ideas and policy development). Because our Supreme Court staff was so small, and because I loved my job so much, I ended up staying on in our office for an entire year, though my original plan was to stay for twelve weeks.

I cannot speak highly enough of my experience in Washington. I learned more about the law, about policy-making, and about politics than I could have imagined, and I got an incredible first hand perspective on the legislative process. I also made terrific friends and connections on both sides of the aisle. Again, though I'm sure I would have loved working in any of the Senate offices, I think the people in and the structure of my particular office contributed tremendously to my enjoyment. For the same reason, I think it is tough to anticipate what a summer spent on the Judiciary Committee will be like for any individual. However, for someone with an interest in politics and policy, the opportunity to spend a summer on the Hill is probably invaluable.

*Summer 2005*

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## **2. Executive Offices**

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### **OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB)**

*Christopher Burrell '05*

I interned in the Budget Review Division of the Office and Management and Budget (OMB) in the Executive Offices. For anyone interested in policy, the budgeting process, the dynamic between the executive branch and federal agencies, or just federal government work generally, the OMB is the perfect place to intern. It is through the OMB that the president puts together his budget and manages federal agency policy and efficacy. As such, there are internship opportunities related to all federal government work: national security, the environment, energy, Medicare, justice, etc.

I chose to work in the Budget Review Division because I wanted hands on experience in the budgeting process. My primary responsibility was bill-tracking. I was responsible for the District of Columbia and

Legislative Branch Appropriations Bills. I went to the Hill to attend the relevant subcommittee and committee hearings and mark-ups on those bills. Then I generated memos and other work product documents detailing whether or not the bills as amended were consistent with Administration budget and policy priorities. My other major project for the summer was drafting a guide to bill-scoring—that is to say how the budget impact of appropriations provisions are recorded for a given fiscal year.

The people I worked for in my branch were very friendly and absolutely terrific about facilitating opportunities for me to see the entire workings of OMB. I was able to attend staff meetings with the branch chiefs and the OMB director. Also, I did brief rotations in the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Information and Regulatory Policy, and Energy Division. In terms of getting practical insights into how the administrative state works, this internship was perfect.

Additionally, the “perks” of the job easily rivaled the work experience. I got a tour of the West Wing, attended the Fourth of July on the South Lawn, and was able to meet and attend functions with several of the top Administration officials—Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Homeland Security, Secretary of Education, White House Press Spokesperson.

OMB interviews for summer positions throughout March, and then the individual divisions make their selections during that month and into April. They generally take about 45 interns per summer, so anyone from YLS with relevant experience should feel confident about being able to get something. Sharon Warner coordinates the program. She can be reached at [Sharon A. Warner@omb.eop.gov](mailto:Sharon.A.Warner@omb.eop.gov). For anyone who does not mind waiting until late March/early April to know where you will be working, I cannot overstate how highly I recommend interning at OMB.

*Summer 2003*

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### **3. Campaigns**

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#### **JOHN EDWARDS FOR PRESIDENT**

*Wally Adeyemo '08*

During the first semester, like the rest of my classmates, I participated in the FIP process. After careful consideration, I decided to split my summer in Washington, DC and San Francisco. To be clear, I had no plans of going to work on a presidential primary campaign. The bitter taste from spending the last days of the 2006 election cycle in Memphis was still present when my former boss sent me an email about getting involved in the presidential election. After a lot of soul searching, I decided to join the John Edwards for President Team in New Hampshire.

Most of my time on the campaign trail is spent working with the political and operations departments. The political department is primarily responsible for developing relationships with elected officials, activists, issue based voters, and organizations. The operations department is responsible for making sure that the trains run on time. Working with both departments forces me to wear multiple hats. One minute I might be sitting in a meeting about outreach to labor unions, and the next I could be on the phone negotiating language for the covenants and warranties section of a commercial lease. I also spend a significant amount of my time thinking about policy, message, voter contact, and several other aspects of the campaign.

Law students often think that they can only contribute to campaigns as a part of the policy or communications shops. This is far from the truth. Many of the skills that we learn in law school prepare us to be effective members of any campaign department. The best way to get a campaign job is to be persistent. Hundreds of qualified individuals are looking for opportunities to work on campaigns. Often the people who get jobs are those who are willing to start out as volunteers and interns. Nothing shows commitment to a candidate like being willing to work for free. While many of the senior jobs on a

campaign go to people with previous campaign experience, there is always room for smart people who are willing to work hard. The best way to learn about political opportunities is to ask around. Many of our classmates have great political connections.

While campaigns are notorious for working people to the bone, at most you will work as many hours as a first year associate. Unfortunately, campaign salaries have not caught up with first year associate salaries. An important thing to remember is that campaigns require you to be flexible—check your ego at the door. Your job description will likely shift every day. You may go from writing policy briefings to putting stamps on envelopes. Be prepared to be a team player. There is nothing on earth like a presidential campaign. Knowing that I am playing a small role in helping to determine which man or woman becomes the next leader of the free world reminds me every day why our democracy is so great.

*Summer 2007 and beyond*

## **JOHN EDWARDS FOR PRESIDENT**

*Monica Bell '09*

I spent seven months, from July 2007 through January 2008, serving as the South Carolina political director for the John Edwards for President Campaign. I did not spend a great deal of time thinking about whether I would join the campaign—it was a complete whirlwind. I had already planned out how I would spend my 2L summer and 3L year. I participated in FIP in September 2006 and had arranged to split my summer between two DC law firms. I had also started working as an Articles & Essays Editor on Volume 117 of *The Yale Law Journal*, a 1.5-year commitment and a job that I absolutely loved.

Yet, at some point in early April 2007, I started to feel like I needed to go work on the campaign for a variety of reasons. One was that I was starting to get a little fatigued by law school. YLS is a wonderful place because you can totally throw yourself into everything, but if you're like me and really do throw yourself into *everything*, at some point you might feel inclined to take a break. The last job I held before law school that was energizing and purposive and that really made me want to work 20 hours a day was in politics, so a campaign seemed like the perfect way to recharge my batteries. Second, I was having doubts about how I was approaching my career path. I was heading down the academic path, writing a lot and spending almost every Wednesday afternoon at a Law Teaching Series event. I loved it—and still love it—but I was starting to feel too much like I was on a track. The idea that I was spending lots of time obsessing about my ability to take a formulaic path to any job, even one that I would relish like being a law professor, was disconcerting. Finally, I'm a politico at heart and wanted to have the raucous, exciting experience of working on a presidential campaign. I didn't care what type of job I got; I would have been very happy to be a field staffer or a press assistant or to do almost anything.

One of the things people who want to work for campaigns will have to decide is, obviously, which candidate. Some people decide on a campaign based purely on their passion for the candidate, particularly when they are looking for a more entry-level position. Often, more experienced political operatives choose a few candidates for whom they would be proud to work and then talk with staff to see what kinds of opportunities are available. This is completely acceptable; many operatives talk to more than one campaign. I didn't go through a difficult calculus because the candidate for whom I was most passionate was also the candidate with whom I was offered the most substantive position. I had been a serious John Edwards supporter in 2004, traveling to other states to do Get-out-the-Vote work and contributing large chunks of my small salary to the campaign. I'd seen him speak at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, and then I wrote my personal statement for law school about it. I loved Barack Obama too, and deciding between the excitement of his campaign and my loyalty to Senator Edwards initially caused slight anguish. But after I started listening to Edwards again, hearing him passionately bring to light and offer concrete ways to address the plight of poor people in America like no candidate since Jesse Jackson, I knew I wanted to be able to say I'd worked for him, no matter the outcome.

I secured my job through pre-existing contacts. From 2003 to 2004, I had been a jack-of-all-trades on the small staff of the South Carolina Democratic Party. We put on an early primary that year and, because state law had not been changed to make the state responsible for funding and administering presidential primaries, we had to pay for it ourselves, recruit volunteer poll workers, and handle all of our own logistics. This meant an insane workload and a lot of contact with the 2004 campaign staffs. In that work, I met the chair of the SC Edwards campaign, who has since become a great friend and mentor. I knew he was chairing the SC campaign again in 2008 and so, in mid-April 2007, I emailed him to ask about campaign positions in New Hampshire or South Carolina. (New Hampshire is closer to New Haven than the other early states, so I initially wanted to work there. But I had to face the reality that as an African-American woman and South Carolina native with statewide political experience, I was probably going to be most useful in the Palmetto State, where African-Americans make up 50% of Democratic primary voters.) My boss was wonderful—he contacted me immediately and was incredibly accommodating. He was officially serving as a Senior Advisor in the campaign, so he offered to try to get me a New Hampshire job. But through our conversations it became apparent that I would have the best experience and make the most significant contributions to the campaign working for him in SC. So that’s what I did.

The only awkward thing about this whole process was making others aware of the changes of plan for 2L summer and 3L year. My boss on the Edwards campaign allowed me to start in mid-July, so I worked for one firm during the first half of the summer. The second-half firm was extremely accommodating and the attorneys seemed excited that I had such a great opportunity. I was able to postpone my offer and am working with them in the summer of 2008. Dealing with the *Yale Law Journal* issue was more difficult. I had informed some board members early on that I was thinking about campaign jobs, but I don’t think they took me seriously (probably because I appeared to be so firmly on the traditional law professor track discussed above.) In my naïveté and tendency to overcommit, and since I had already done a significant amount of editorial work on one article, I thought I could continue my work on the committee during the campaign. After I had clearance from my second-half firm and a day before I was due to accept my offer, I heard from the *Journal*. I learned that if I accepted the campaign job, not only would my job as an Articles & Essays Editor discontinue (which was quite sensible, in hindsight), but also I would not receive any masthead credit after months of work on the committee. It was upsetting to leave the work and the editorial team that I had come to love, and I felt like somewhat of a flake. But everything else seemed to suggest that I should take the campaign job. The only reason I would have turned down the job at that point would have been to have the prestige of a *Journal* editorial board position on my résumé. I decided that my sanity was more important and headed down to Columbia, SC.

As political director in a state campaign that had a significantly smaller staff than our two biggest competitors, my title didn’t matter and my job was indescribable. Over the course of the campaign, I helped with everything from crafting our SC-specific message, to meeting with and arranging meetings for political elites to gain endorsements, to planning trips of the Senator and various surrogates, to writing the SC field plan, to opening our field offices, to recruiting and coordinating volunteers, to hiring interns, to supervising other staffers, to phone-banking, to driving the Senator. There are so many small components of the work, and it was such a whirlwind, that it is honestly difficult to recall exactly *what* I was doing. Campaigns are about flexibility, flexibility, flexibility. You simply cannot care too much about the “prestige” of the work—no one has the time or interest in taking care of fragile egos. Major campaigns are about minor details and menial tasks. This is especially true when you’re on a smaller staff, because there is too much work to compartmentalize things. On every campaign, the closer you get to Election Day the less job descriptions matter. For example, our amazing domestic policy advisor spent significant time in Iowa staffing a bus and in South Carolina driving the Senator’s parents to their events. The fact that she is fine with doing whatever’s needed is what makes her a terrific political staffer.

All of that being said, internal politics in political campaigns tends to be extreme, at least as you move up the hierarchy. Everyone should be on the lookout for this. People might be gunning for favor with a particular key player, or with the candidate him or herself if you're really working in the highest levels. Some people care a lot about protecting their turf and expanding it when possible. Sometimes people will sacrifice your interests to advance themselves, just like in any other job but perhaps exacerbated because of the intensity and short duration of these jobs. Politics is a game full of passionate players, but there are also the occasional cynical people who can be difficult to work with. Remember that most people on campaigns use them for their whole livelihood, and the jobs are cyclical and insecure, and so they care a lot more than most people who are just taking a break from their regular life would about protecting their turf and currying favor with important people. They are relying on contacts from their current job to get the next job. Also, if you need a lot of feedback, you won't like working on a campaign. Usually the only time you'll be told how you did is if you made a terrible mistake.

I could not be more thrilled that I worked for the Edwards campaign. Partially it's because I'm extremely proud of my candidate, the race he ran, and what the campaign stood for. It's also because it was exactly the kind of break I needed—it was fun, passionate, hilarious, heartbreaking, frustrating, physically and emotionally exhausting, and exhilarating. I made wonderful friends. I reestablished my connections to South Carolina, and those contacts have helped me professionally at least twice, including in one way that leads me back to that traditional law professor track with which I have a love-hate relationship. Most important, the campaign reconnected me with my love for YLS. Campaigns are, if nothing else, “communit[ies] of commitment.” When Senator Edwards visited the poorest, most forgotten places in my state—places like the Blackmon Road Community near Rock Hill, SC; a completely segregated school in Summerton, SC; and a trailer park in Lancaster, SC where most of the adults had recently lost their jobs in the local textile mill—all of the passions that brought me to YLS in the first place were rekindled.

Moreover, only at YLS would students receive full support in taking time off to do this work. I highly, highly recommend campaign work, as long as you are willing to work hard and be flexible!  
*Summer 2007 and beyond*

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<b>Robyn A. Acampora</b>	Pro Bono and Information Manager
<b>Jeanine Dames</b>	Director
<b>Juliann Davis</b>	Sr. Administrative Assistant
<b>Marilyn F. Drees</b>	Director
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<b>Christine B. Severson</b>	Director, Recruitment Programs and Administration
<b>Nikitia M. Tillman</b>	Alumni Services Coordinator
<b>Kelly J. Voight</b>	Executive Director

Telephone: (203) 432-1676  
Fax: (203) 432-8423  
E-mail: [cdo.law@yale.edu](mailto:cdo.law@yale.edu)  
Website: [www.law.yale.edu/cdo](http://www.law.yale.edu/cdo)

Mailing Address: Career Development Office, Yale Law School,  
P.O. Box 208330, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-8330

Physical Address: Rutenberg Hall, Room 184, 133 Wall Street,  
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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