



Durbin creates scholarship program for Illinois students interning in DC

September 26 2017 10:59 AM

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today announced the establishment of the Ed Greelegs Scholarship Program in honor of his former Chief of Staff who passed away in March due to complications with Parkinson’s disease. This scholarship, open to students from Illinois or those studying in Illinois, is an opportunity for the

students to receive financial assistance while obtaining a first-hand experience in Senator Durbin's Washington, D.C. office.



“Ed knew everybody in Washington by name and everybody knew Ed. From Teddy Kennedy to the elevator operator, and the men and women who cleaned our office and polished the floor. Even as parts of his memory were failing, his passion for politics

never changed. Ed is at peace now, but his influence remains with the lives he touched,” said Durbin. “I’m excited to be able to create this scholarship program in Ed’s name and honor, to carry on his love of politics to the next generation by making the incredible experience of a Washington, D.C. internship possible for any Illinois student interested, no matter their background.”

The first recipient of the Ed Greelegs Scholarship Program is Alyssa Mendez, a college student from Chicago, Illinois. Alyssa recently obtained her associates’ degree at Harold Washington Community College after spending her first year of college at American University in Washington, D.C. She is now a full-time student working towards completing her bachelor’s degree at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. as a political science major and economics minor. Her interest in politics began in Chicago where she was an intern for a local aldermanic campaign during her senior year of high school. When she transferred to Harold Washington Community College, she served as an intern for the Illinois Business and Immigration Coalition (IBIC), a bipartisan non-profit advocating for business and immigrant friendly policies. This past summer, Alyssa spent several months as an AmeriCorps VISTA member with Mercy Housing Lakefront coordinating a formal volunteer program. Alyssa is originally from the Southside of Chicago.

“It has truly been a blessing to receive the Ed Greelegs Scholarship not only for me but also for my family who have been very supportive of my educational and professional endeavors despite the costs,” said Alyssa. “I thank everyone at Senator Dick Durbin’s office for the opportunity to intern. This has been a dream of mine for a long time and receiving the award has lifted a huge financial burden off of my shoulders. I am extremely excited to begin this experience and eternally grateful for the opportunity.”

In order to be eligible for the Ed Greelegs Scholarship Program, students must be a resident of Illinois or be enrolled in an accredited college or university in Illinois; must demonstrate financial need; must not be receiving outside financial aid for their internship; and must have demonstrated an interest in public service and the legislative process.

Ed Greelegs started working for Senator Richard J. Durbin in 1990 and served as his chief of staff in the House of Representatives and Senate for a combined 17 years. Ed was a beloved member of the Capitol Hill community, and made our country better with his caring approach and dedication to public service.

Senator Durbin paid tribute to Ed shortly after his passing in March 2017. Video of his floor speech is available [here](#).