

## **Office of Senator Gloria Romero Summer 08**

My internship with Senate Majority Leader Gloria Romero was a wonderful opportunity for me to obtain a more definitive impression of California's legislative process. Additionally, I was able to work on two topics that I am passionate about—public safety and education. I mainly worked under the supervision of senior staff consultant Tim Cromartie (whom, at the conclusion of the internship wrote a letter of reference on my behalf).

Originally, I was accepted with the idea that I would help prepare Cromartie for an informational hearing scheduled for November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The hearing was to cover the educational services provided to juveniles in detention centers and alternative educational programs. In order to prepare for this hearing, Cromartie scheduled several informational meetings with related contacts in the area, meetings which I was invited to join and participate in. These contacts also set up professional and on-site meetings with experts they knew in related areas and so on. In between meetings it was common that I would research those we were meeting with and the specific topics that we might cover, additionally, I took the initiative to provide Cromartie with a list of my questions specific to the expert and our hearing.

During the course of the hearing preparation, I also became involved in several alternative assignments. For example, I was asked to read a report and meet with lobbyist representing the interests of several large corporations to have harsher penalties for organized retail theft. From there I questioned the public safety committee, the district attorney's office, and law enforcement officers regarding their history, reservations, and general opinions on the lobbyists' arguments. All of this information was then summarized into a page document to be edited and approved by Cromartie and read by Romero. Similarly, I read a quarterly report of a corrections program which provides regular busing services for family and friends of inmates in the two female state prisons. Since Romero directly helped to start the program, I was responsible for assessing its effectiveness and areas that required improvement. I contacted the program director with questions and ideas for increased efficiency. Again, I summarized this information into a page to be edited by Cromartie and read by Romero. I was also asked to obtain agenda's for events as well as profiles for speakers, and journalists, that Romero might have an interest in.

Toward the end of October it became clear that Romero would not be able to host the informational hearing because the senate was scheduling other important events. Given less direction and more time, this was when my work began to blossom independently of Cromartie's. While I continued research relating to the hearing, I also began to bring conferences related to our fields, as well as news articles, teleconferences, hearings, and reports, to Cromartie's attention. I particularly remember reading a short news piece that mentioned a report release that seemed relevant to a bill Cromartie was pitching to Romero. I had the report read and summarized before noon of the same day the report was released. That same day, the legislative director requested immediate additional background to support the need for Cromartie's bill and he gratefully used the information I prepared for him.

The remainder of my internship exposed me to a broader variety of tasks. For example, Cromartie requested that I read all the opposition to a two-year alternative educational oversight bill that he was running and summarize all of the arguments. I performed this task immediately and then added suggested responses to each individual argument. Working with Jean-Paul Buchanan I also had some exposure to drafting an inmate good behavior bill that had been recommended by the governor's expert panel

on addressing the prison crisis (after attending one of the board's monthly meeting). Working with Rosanna Carracho I summarized a report that supported an inmate informant bill that Romero had introduced this year. Working with Vianey Nunez I learned more about Romero's competition for a state set.

It was an all-a-round great experience that has really furthered my interest in the state legislature. I only wish that I had 1) more opportunity to work with all of Romero's experienced and friendly staff members, 2) that I had a more well-rounded exposure to the legislative process, 3) that I had been able to stay on board past interim, and 4) that I had been more outgoing (inviting staff to lunch, etc.) early on.