As I stood waiting to enter the meeting room where the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee was meeting on the morning of June 18, I couldn't help but wonder what the experience was going to be like. My fellow interns and I were here to watch debate on S. 349, the Reviving America’s Byways Act of 2019, a bill that Scenic America is directly responsible for helping into existence!

My eyes drifted through the hall, bouncing from one person to the next. I noticed that some of the rooms had people lined up, waiting to enter, as though they were giving something away, and other lines, like ours, were much shorter.

Getting into the building was simpler than I thought it would be. For both the House and the Senate buildings, you must go through security at the entrance. Sometimes the line will be around the block. Other times, such as today, you will be fortunate enough to have only one person waiting in front of you and enter the blissful air-conditioned building with ease.

My fellow interns arrived about 15 minutes behind me and we stood in line for another few minutes before one of the staffers unlocked the doors and let us in. There were about six of us in the line and perhaps a few stragglers that came in after we sat down.

The room was quite big, with a huge raised ceiling. I sat just taking it all in, wondering which senators would come to the meeting. The carpet was a royal blue and it reminded me of the carpet you see in photos of the White House, which I thought was very cool.

The senators flooded into the small chamber one by one, starting with Senator Barrasso. He is the EPW Chairman and sat at the head of the u-shaped desk. Senator Cardin, a co-sponsor of our bill, was one of the last senators to join the meeting.

I sat and listened to the conversation and analyzed each of the senators. I noticed that each of them had one thing in common: respectfulness. Each was so gracious for the opportunity to be sitting with one another and working toward the common goals at hand. They were extremely thoughtful and insightful.

As the meeting came to an end, our bill was moved on to the full Senate with unanimous favorability. Senator Cardin was sure to thank the committee for their support of the bill. As we left the building, gratitude fell over me. It was a great experience to witness up close our democracy in action, and especially to see a bill that I'm helping to promote move even closer to becoming law.