

Student: Jamie Schuster
Placement: Common Cause
Program: Hatfield DC Scholars in Public Service

This summer I worked at Common Cause in the Media and Democracy department. During my ten weeks with Common Cause I worked on several written projects, and was privy to the organization's lobbying efforts at the Federal Communications Commission and Congress. I also attended numerous congressional Commerce Committee hearings regarding pressing telecommunications issues, such as the upcoming spectrum auction and Tom Wheeler's confirmation hearing. Furthermore, I received unique insights from government regulators, industry participants, and public interest advocates at weekly seminars.

I worked primarily on three projects over the course of the summer. One project was a report on nonprofit organizations' influence on state level telecommunications deregulation. For this report I researched state statutes regarding municipal broadband, voice over Internet protocol services, and cable services. After researching the statutes and nonprofit organizations' role in their passage, I completed several drafts of the report with periodic critiques from my supervisor. Additionally, I drafted a comment for filing with the FCC on behalf of Common Cause, The Leadership Conference, and several other public interest groups regarding the commission's critical information needs studies. For the comment I needed to research the past critical information needs studies, and the legal standard that the future studies will need to satisfy. Finally, I wrote and interoffice memo on the upcoming D.C. circuit court case between Verizon and the FCC. For this memo I researched precedent regarding the FCC's authority to promulgate rules regulating the Internet.

I feel lucky to have participated in this program. The overall structure with students in the private sector, public interest, and regulatory agencies provided perspective on the interplay between those respective entities. There were also many great opportunities to meet and connect with influential industry participants, whether at one of our seminars or during a meeting at the FCC. Finally, I was happy to further refine my legal research and writing skills on the several projects I worked on.