



Meeting Congressman Matheson

THERE I WAS, STANDING ON THE SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF THE CAPITOL. MY MISSION: TALK TO A CONGRESSMAN. MY TARGET: CONGRESSMAN JIM MATHESON FROM UTAH.

I turned right heading to the House of Representative office buildings. After a moment of walking, I found the Longfellow building and walked in. As I was passing through security I realized that this was my chance—my chance to prove that I had the right to be here. To influence a man on a bill that would greatly influence America and the Pipeline to Health Care. The Bill: HR3618.

I was apprehensive. This was no mere voting decision - it was an actual conversation. Adding to my nervous state was some uncertainty. I had heard that the Congressman might not be available and that we would talk with a legislative assistant. At least the task would be completed, but I had a strong desire to prove that I could communicate with others in positions higher than my own and without being thought of as some ne'er do well teen.

We made it to the elevator and rode it up to the 4th floor. We stepped into a maze of marble hallways filled with heavy oak doors. Most of the doors were decorated with various flags, but the one I was looking for, navy blue beholding a golden beehive, seemed lost in the veritable sea of state ensigns. We started down the corridor and turned a corner. There it was. My flag. Underneath was a brass plate with "Jim Matheson," emblazoned on it. I was one step closer.

We stepped inside. We checked in with the secretary; who then directed us to a table in the back. I could hear debating going on. I looked up to see two TV monitors showing the House Chambers in the Capitol. There were some debates still going on from when I had been there earlier. When I visited the U.S. House of Representatives, it was empty except for two sub committees from two states debating on a National Landmark and for the Speaker of the House and everyone else below her stand. I then realized why the room was so empty. Why go to the Capitol when you can just sit in your office and listen to the exact same thing in your office?

An assistant seemed to appear from a door hidden in a small book case. She invited us in. As I walked through the door, I saw him. U.S. Representative Jim Matheson. All 6'5" of him; standing over me with a wide smile, giving me a firm handshake. His office was not the way I had imagined it to be. There were hundreds of books, cowboy boots, pictures of UTAH, and two facing couches divided by a pleasant coffee table. I was expecting a massive desk with him on one side waiting for me to discuss major business. I preferred what I was actually seeing. This made things a lot more relaxing.

We sat and started getting down to business. I explained the importance of HR3618 which is a competitive grant that would help increase the pipeline to the health professions, so that a situation like the failing banks wouldn't happen in the medical field. He seemed to be genuinely interested in what I was telling him. I then explained to him more about HOSA and how great HOSA and the chapters in Utah have become. I received a commitment from him to attend our State Leadership Conference if he is available.

Afterwards he was gracious enough to take a picture; and he then had me take another one which will be posted on his website. As we left I realized then that he is just a normal guy trying to help out his community and state in the way he knows best. I walked out of the office with my head a little taller, very happy about the situation. I felt proud that I had completed what few people in this lifetime have an opportunity to do – to meet with elected representatives and discuss issues that are important to me.



Danny Abbott with Congressman Jim Matheson

BY **Danny Abbott**
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