Good morning. It's hard for me to believe that today is our last day of Paging. Part of me feels like I just arrived. I still have so much to learn about our political process and there is still so much more that I want to do in DC. On the other hand, part of me feels like I've been here for years. I'm fully adjusted to dorm life, shortened class periods, and the demands of working at the Senate.

While I had dreamt of nearly every aspect of being a Page before I first stepped foot in Webster Hall, I hadn't imagined having to leave. Knowing that I'll never again have the opportunity to bring a senator a glass of water or to rush back early from dinner to open doors during a roll-call vote is disheartening, but knowing that I'll have the friendship of my fellow Pages for years to come is encouraging.

The other Pages from all around the country have enriched my experience more than anything else. And while I did learn the particulars of parliamentary procedure, the proper way to set up an easel, and how to operate on five hours of sleep a night, the most important lesson of this semester has been the value of teamwork. The bond between all of the Pages made no challenge insurmountable and made no hardship unbearable. Without that support network, I think my experience as a Page would have been very different.

As I was preparing this speech, I came across an email that I sent to my parents in the summer after my freshmen year. I described the Page Program as a "flawless utopia" in that email. After taking Advanced Composition this semester I know that my word choice, "flawless utopia," was a little redundant, but I think you get the idea – I had high expectations. I expected nothing short of an amazing experience, and my experience was nothing short of amazing.

Yet, it wouldn't have been as rewarding if it wasn't as challenging as it was. The weeks when I didn't get done with work until ten o'clock at night were the most memorable. I'll never

forget the last night of roll-call votes when the senate was in session until after midnight or the last day of legislative business when Senator Levin showed all of the Pages his favorite signatures inside the desks on the floor. I worked long hours, but it certainly didn't seem like work.

I consider this semester a gift. I feel so fortunate to have been a student in each of my teacher's classrooms, to have made so many great friends, and to have played a role in the functioning of the world's most powerful legislative body. This semester has been a gift of knowledge from my teachers, a gift of friendship from all of the other pages, and a gift of new awareness and perspective that I gained from the many responsibilities all of us Pages shared at the Senate and at Webster Hall.

Like most gifts in Washington, this one has strings attached. As former Pages, we'll have obligations that we didn't have before. Our firsthand knowledge of the legislative process obligates us to stay informed of current events, our new awareness of some of the deep injustices in the world obligates us to do what we can to address them, and our work experiences obligate us to share our many stories with friends and family.

Many people have told me that a semester of Paging is similar to the first semester of college. I can only hope that my college experience is as memorable as the last four and a half months. It has been an honor and privilege to serve with you all. I will miss you and yet I know that we are inexorably connected for a lifetime.