

Clark University

## Clark Digital Commons

---

Undergraduate Student Research Festivals

Winter Fest 2021

---

Jan 7th, 12:00 AM

### Interning with MA State Rep David LeBoeuf

Sam Segal

Clark University, sasegal@clarku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.clarku.edu/asdff>

---

Segal, Sam, "Interning with MA State Rep David LeBoeuf" (2021). *Undergraduate Student Research Festivals*. 20.

[https://commons.clarku.edu/asdff/winter\\_fest\\_2021/winterfest2021/20](https://commons.clarku.edu/asdff/winter_fest_2021/winterfest2021/20)

This Open Access Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conference Proceedings at Clark Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Student Research Festivals by an authorized administrator of Clark Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [mkrikonis@clarku.edu](mailto:mkrikonis@clarku.edu), [jodolan@clarku.edu](mailto:jodolan@clarku.edu), [dlutz@clarku.edu](mailto:dlutz@clarku.edu).

## Position

This Summer, I learned that collaboration is the key to ensuring a quality education reaches even some of the most excluded members of our community. I spent my time working for a local State Rep., David LeBoeuf, on a bill he is proposing that will improve education for foster children in the Commonwealth. There is extensive data on the achievement gap between foster students and non-foster students: just to illustrate the point, only 3% of all foster students graduate from higher education, even though 80% desire to graduate from college. So, it is clear that the achievement gap is not because foster youth do not want to do well in school, but rather, it lies in how we take care of those we as a society have been tasked with caring for. Throughout our research, we learned that the lack of a streamlined communication process between those that serve foster students creates insurmountable barriers for students in several ways. The bill we developed aims to create a comprehensive data system that every stakeholder that serve foster youth can access and engage with, so any student that wishes to do well in school can do so, regardless of who they live with. We found that making sure that everyone involved is on the same page is essential to getting foster students the quality education and services they need to thrive.

## Responsibilities

My project required a lot more responsibilities than I anticipated. I assumed that, based on past experiences, the job would entail mostly administrative duties, like scheduling meetings and organizing documents. While some of my duties included that, a large portion of my duties also included facilitating discussions with stakeholders, drafting interview questions, and developing updated policy drafts on our research findings. While it was a bit overwhelming at first to navigate the varying tasks, I found myself becoming a lot more comfortable with my responsibilities and my communications with my supervisors. Along with the comfort I gained, I also gained more confidence in my abilities to carry out the tasks assigned to me. So, while I took on a lot more responsibility than I expected, I managed to find comfort in my duties.

## Interning with MA State Rep. David LeBoeuf

*Sam Segal '21: (ClarkConnect Sponsor: David Brenerman '73)*

### Policy Report Project

While working for Rep. LeBoeuf, I needed to organize our research findings to present to their congressional subcommittee. I was tasked with updating a policy report that had been presented to the committee several years prior. My role was to gather all the information we gained this Summer through our policy research and discussions with several officials across the country, and format it into a comprehensive policy report to be reviewed by the committee. I was a little unsure of myself when I was first given the assignment, since I had never written a policy report before. I felt clueless about what my bosses were looking for in terms of my writing or formatting. Luckily, my supervisor gave great advice later on about using any notes I gathered and creating sections that I felt were needed. I was fortunate enough to have pages of notes to base my report off that I had compiled during our different talks with officials and existing policies we analyzed. Thanks to my bosses' providing guidance and independence, I was able to create a detailed policy report that was based on weeks of note-taking I had gathered throughout the Summer, which Rep. LeBoeuf intends to present to the committee.

*ClarkConnect Summer Internship Program*



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

### Lessons Learned about Politics

Working for Rep. LeBoeuf this summer taught me local politics is an extremely difficult job, but it is also incredibly rewarding. I can think of several instances where Rep. LeBoeuf needed to reschedule a meeting because he had to spend much of the day and night speaking with constituents or officials about pressing issues. It is clear the Representative was exhausted a lot of days from his work, but that seems the way it how it ought to be. Rep. LeBoeuf must answer to thousands of constituents and stakeholders who, in many cases, depend on him to improve their employment conditions, health care, family's education, and just about every other aspect of their publicly influenced life. While it is clearly an exhausting task to advocate for all these issues, it was also apparent that that same advocacy is what kept my supervisors driven to give their best effort every workday, because they knew people's lives depended on it. I found myself motivated every shift to do what I could to help their work because I understood any potential bill would change people's lives, and the degree to which their conditions changed depended on our quality of work. This internship made clear to me that when done right, politics is a deeply impactful and rewarding field.

## Lessons Learned About Myself

Given the heightened responsibility I had to take on compared to what I had expected, I had to make a couple adjustments with my work to keep going forward. First, I learned that it is essential to ask questions when I didn't know the answer, no matter how dumb I might have thought it made me seem. In most cases, I found that they were actually the right question to ask, and even if they weren't, I learned new information that allowed me to develop my thoughts, and in some cases ask even more relevant follow-up questions that have been critical to my research. I also learned to push myself to ask officials clarifying questions when I had the chance, even when I didn't know that they were necessary because it would make me grow as a fairly shy person to ask people with higher job titles questions. In addition, I learned that when I had a thought or idea that someone else had not mentioned, it could be helpful to myself and the team to mention it to everyone. While it wasn't always included in a final markup, it was still important to offer a new perspective and make my voice heard to gain confidence within myself and from my supervisors. Therefore, asking questions, putting myself out there, and making my ideas known were all helpful lessons that I worked on to become better acclimated to my job responsibilities, and I believe they all helped me in growing as a person as well.

### Going Forward

My time with Rep. LeBoeuf affirmed for me the value of serving my community as a career. Going into my internship, I felt skeptically precautious of my high expectations. However, my experience this summer has proven to me working to improve my community is my ultimate professional goal. I am unsure whether this goal will come to fruition in politics, law, education, or community development, but I am sure I am going to seek it out as long as I see work that must be done in my community. While I always aspired to do work that would attempt to meaningfully impact societal conditions, actively experiencing those efforts have forever confirmed my initial draw to it. This summer was one of the first times I felt motivated to carry out administrative tasks, no matter how big or small, because I knew I played, however minor, a role in improving the world around me. Understanding that impact affirmed for me that whatever I end up doing after Clark, I will aspire to make it positively affect those around me.