

WASHINGTON—Fernando Chavez knew politics had a grip on him at an early age when he switched his TV channel from cartoons to CNN. His interest in politics is now taking him to Washington, D.C., where he will spend a semester in the U.S. House of Representatives Page Program.

After a competitive selection process, Chavez, 16, was recently appointed to be a House Page based on a nomination from his congressman, U.S. Rep. Ed Pastor, D-Ariz. Chavez, who started his junior year at Maryvale High School this month, will spend the fall semester attending school and working on Capitol Hill as part of the House Page Program. The honors student will return to his Phoenix home and Maryvale High at the end of January after he completes the semester-long program.

“I’ve been working for an opportunity like this my entire life,” Chavez said. “I feel I owe it all to my parents for always pushing me to work harder and harder. My hard work finally paid off.”

“We are extremely proud that Fernando has been selected to the U.S. House of Representatives Page Program,” said Maryvale High School Principal Phillip Verdugo. “Fernando is a confident young man whose focus on academic achievement and his future plans will ensure his ultimate success. We look forward to following Fernando’s journey in Washington, D.C., as a Page and look forward to his return to Maryvale High School in January.”

Pages have been serving the House of Representatives for nearly 200 years. Working as a team, Pages assist members with their legislative duties, deliver mail and small packages within the congressional complex, answer phones in the member cloakrooms and prepare the House Floor for sessions. Juniors with a GPA of 3.0 or higher in core academic subjects may apply for the program. Pages attend the House Page School and live in the Page Residence Hall a few blocks away from the Capitol. They are paid a monthly salary. To help pay for expenses upfront, Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., donated a travel voucher and expense money to Chavez, and Gary Trujillo, CEO of Be a Leader Foundation, donated funds to cover a basic health insurance plan.

“I’m proud to see Fernando will be representing Maryvale High School and Arizona in our Capitol,” Pastor said. “His deep interest in government combined with his outstanding academic

record and his involvement in extracurricular activities makes him an excellent choice for the Page Program.”

Chavez is the oldest of the four children of Claudia Ortiz and Fernando Chavez. He is Vice President of Maryvale’s Chess Club, a member of that National Honor Society, a platoon leader in the Junior ROTC, and a member of the drill team. He also volunteers teaching chess at the Maryvale Family YMCA.

He said he’ll miss his family while he’s in Washington, but he knows the Page Program will open many doors for him. He plans to pursue a law degree in college.

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