

EISENHOWER FELLOWSHIPS – MULTI NATION PROGRAM 2006

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Mr. Esteban Bullrich
Member of Congress
Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA

With his recent election to the National Congress, Representative Esteban Bullrich has established himself as an important leader in Argentine politics. He began his political career in 2003 when he ran for City Council for the RECREAR party and later became vice-president for the Buenos Aires District. Prior to joining politics, he had a prominent career in the Argentine private sector. In addition, he has organized and led efforts to improve his country's education system. Education reform is Esteban's passion, particularly for the youngest members of society, and he hopes to use his position in Congress to influence the education system of Argentina.

During his fellowship, Esteban met with policymakers – members of Congress, city mayors, and school superintendents– as well as practitioners, including school principals, teachers, and student counselors. Highlights in Washington, DC, included meetings at the U.S. Conference of Mayors; the Committee for Economic Development; and Pre-K Now, a public advocacy organization. In Miami, Esteban further deepened his knowledge through meetings with EF Trustee Ambassador Charles Cobb, and with David Lawrence, founder and executive director of the Children's Trust. Raleigh, NC provided an excellent laboratory for education initiatives, which included visits to the North Carolina New Schools Project and The Public Education Forum of North Carolina, as well as meetings with the Governor's Education Advisor and the Governor's Teacher Advisor. Esteban also had an excellent meeting with the president of North Carolina's community college system, which broadened his fellowship program focus.

Esteban also visited a variety of charter schools in Philadelphia, San Francisco, New York City, and Washington, DC, to compare and contrast the kinds of programs that these schools have developed for their respective student bodies. Classroom visits and discussions with principals enabled Esteban to learn what kinds of innovative programming has and has not been effective. Maritime Academy Charter School in Philadelphia; KIPP Academy in the Bronx; and the William J. Doar, Jr. Charter School in Washington, DC were all extremely valuable visits. Esteban also spent time at a number of top U.S. graduate education schools, and highlights included meetings with Professor Katherine Boles at Harvard and Professor Terry Moe at Stanford.

Esteban also met with individuals engaged in Argentine-U.S. relations, including Peter DeShazo at the Center for Strategic and International Studies; Jeffrey Puryear at the Inter-American Dialogue; and Dr. Susan Kaufman Purcell at the University of Miami. These meetings enabled him to develop his network of American analysts of Latin American affairs.

Reflecting on his fellowship experience, Esteban wrote that “the world is turning into a complex place, and citizens of tomorrow will need to have the capacity to foster dialogue and tolerance among each other. Education is the key, and I hope that I am able to advance its cause for future generations.”