

Madam Chair _____ and members of the committee my name is Kerensa Loucks. That's K-E-R-E-N-S-A L-O-U-C-K-S. I am from Hamilton, Montana in Ravalli County. I am currently serving as the Montana 4-H Council Representative for the State Ambassador Team. I have been in 4-H for 9 years.

I would like to share a few experiences with my development in 4-H.

My first state 4-H event was Citizenship Seminar. I was VERY shy and didn't know anyone. On the first day I remember a leader telling us that to get THE MOST out of the week we needed to volunteer, talk to people and become involved. In the next activity, they asked for volunteers...so I timidly raised my hand and volunteered, even though I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I found that it was fun and I learned a lot!

After that I decided that I might want to try some of the other opportunities that 4-H had to offer...little did I know - this would lead me across the country.

Last summer I was privileged to be a member of the Montana Delegation to Washington D.C. We met with our senators, toured the capital, museums and memorials. I also won a State Award in Leadership and attended National 4-H Congress in Atlanta Georgia where over 1,000 4-H members were in attendance. - -

Before I experienced all of these awesome opportunities, I would have never imagined myself speaking in front of a large group, let alone being a state officer and planning a whole ambassador training.

4-H has helped me develop speaking skills, self confidence and an interest in Citizenship. Last week I served as a senate page in the Montana Legislature.

Beyond my direct experience in the political process, I have participated in many Citizenship Projects to better my community and world. Every year my club has a river clean-up day at our local access. We also participate in Crop Walk for world hunger. This year at Ambassador Training we assembled 300 "Hero Packs" which were backpacks with 4-H Bears, yo yo's, photo albums and other items. These packs were given to children with parents serving in the Military over seas.

4-H has helped me become the person I am today and the skills I have learned will continue to guide me in the future.

Thank you for your time.

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