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# 2023 SRCD Federal Congressional Policy Fellow Spotlight: Kylie Garber, Ph.D.

Kylie Garber is an SRCD Federal Congressional Policy Fellow at the Office of US Senator Tim Kaine (Democrat-Virginia).

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**In a few sentences, what is your role at the agency you work for?**

As a congressional fellow, I work as a full-time health and education staffer in the Office of US Senator Tim Kaine (Democrat-Virginia). As a staffer, I prepare briefings and policy memos, draft legislation, and conduct constituent meetings. Senator Kaine serves on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, which has also allowed me to engage with the committee hearing process by writing hearing memos and drafting questions. Through these experiences, I have engaged with the policymaking process for both my area of expertise, early care and education, and new policy areas such as substance use,

disability, and higher education.

**What interested you in becoming an SRCD Policy Fellow?**

I heard about the fellowship through former fellows from my graduate program. Pretty early on in graduate school, I knew that a traditional academic career path was not for me, and I liked how former fellows used their fellowship experience to launch a research-to-policy career. I decided to apply for a Pre-Doctoral State Policy fellowship with SRCD during my third year of graduate school in 2019-2020. I loved my experience and wanted to have a more comprehensive understanding of the research-to-policy process. That led me to apply for the Federal Policy Postdoctoral Fellowship.

**What has been the most memorable project you have completed during your time at the agency?**

I was able to help to introduce a bill that would increase funding for an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) grant program. This was a full-circle moment for me because I also worked with some IECMH initiatives at the state level through the State Policy Fellowship.

**How do you think the fellowship has helped further your career?**

The fellowship has been instrumental for my career. With my state policy experience, and now Federal experience, I feel that I understand how research can impact policy that can only be garnered by doing an immersive experience like the fellowship. Understanding policymaking processes at both levels – and how state and federal interact – helps me to understand how and when to disseminate research. There is a lot of strategy that goes into passing legislation or creating a new state initiative that most researchers are not aware of.

**What has been your favorite aspect of SRCD's fellowship? Please explain why.**

My favorite aspect has been the people! Through SRCD, and their partnership with AAAS, I have made some true friendships through the fellowship program. I have also has some incredible mentors in my office that have guided me through the fellowship. I also thoroughly enjoy meeting the constituents who are advocating for health and education issues. I learn so much every day from the people around me, and it is truly inspiring.

**Where are you from?**

I am originally from Crowley, Louisiana, the Rice Capital of America!