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# March 2014 Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow: Sangeeta Parikshak, Ph.D.

2013-2014 Federal Congressional Policy Fellow

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Throughout my graduate training in clinical child psychology, I often found myself examining the field from a systems perspective. I became acutely aware of the policy implications of psychological research and clinical practice and was eager to learn more about how I could better addre3ss children's emotional and psychological well-being with policy change.

Having the opportunity to be a SRCD Congressional Fellow in the Office of Senator Sheldon Whitehouse this year has been instrumental in introducing me to the world of policy and politics. Through this experience, I am working to understand the systems that create policy change and how they work in tandem with each other. I am using my knowledge of research and clinical care to guide my contributions to both health and early education policy, and am working to learn about the intersection of politics and procedure in creating legislation.

Thus far in my fellowship, I have worked on legislation in the areas of substance abuse recovery and hospital-acquired infections, participated in a workgroup dedicated to reauthorizing healthcare-related legislation, and prepared for congressional hearings on topics such as the roll-out of the Affordable Care Act, investing in high quality education for children, treatment options for mental health, and the markup of bills targeted to provide funding in the area of mental health.

These experiences have allowed me to see first-hand how laws are created, how important the political climate is in influencing laws that pass, and how research findings need to be crafted in order to be appropriately utilized to impact policy change. Furthermore, I have been able to experience how a psychologist's expertise can be used to influence policies at the national level.

I am very grateful to SRCD for this unique and incredible opportunity. At the end of my fellowship, I will be much more prepared to use my new understanding of health and education policy, including both the authorization and appropriations processes, to contribute to addressing policy change in specific areas related to child development.