

Application Package for Ortiz Nomination to United States Congressional Page Program

Overview

Congressman Solomon Ortiz is seeking applications from South Texans in the 27th District of Texas for the United States Congressional Page Program. Candidates will be screened by a committee of judges and scored. Ortiz' office will announce the winner in mid-July.

The qualifications are stringent; a page candidate must be:

- 16 years old on Sept. 2, 2007, (applicant must provide a copy of their birth certificate as proof of age),
- A Junior in High School and in good physical health,
- A United States citizen and a resident of TX27,
- A 3.0 GPA, (applicant must provide a copy of their High School transcript),
- Supported by their parents/guardian to be a Congressional Page through signed consent, and
- Applicants must provide an application package to Ortiz' office by June 27, 2007.
- **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THESE RULES**

Page applicants should fill out this application with your parents/guardian (or a counselor from school or your church). Your parents are a large part of your decision to be part of the Page program, and without their support you may not apply. Remember you are 16 years old; only your parents or guardian may give permission by signing this application.

Highlights for students/parents to know:

What this opportunity means: Pages for the House of Representatives have the ultimate chance of a lifetime for a firsthand look inside the Halls of Congress, and the House Chamber, where debates are held, votes are called, and laws are made in the United States.

There is no better way to learn about government but to live it. The people Congressional Pages meet here will be the movers and shakers in the country for the rest of his/her life. Washington is an exciting place and every Page who leaves the program here tells us the experience profoundly changed their life.

The experience will demand a young person be in excellent physical health, as there will be LOTS of errands running back and forth between the Capitol and the House and Senate office buildings for Pages, so families need to consider that when making this decision.

The Congressional Page Program has incredibly strict guidelines pages must meet; Pages must be of the highest moral fiber. Educational standards are very high.

The days are grueling. A Page's day begins at 5am (or earlier) and their school day is from 6 a.m.-9:45 a.m. Their workday begins at 10:00 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m. or until the House adjourns the business for the day. The House frequently adjourns the day's business well into the evening, after which tired pages go to their dorms to do homework/study for classes the next morning.

Families and prospective pages must bear in mind that this time in Washington, D.C., Pages will miss the regular activities of their life at home and school (birthdays, sports/homecoming, family trips, Fall dances/social events, etc.) during the time they are here.

Going home is hard ... it's expensive and hard to get away with the House schedule, which is always wildly unpredictable, though nearly all Pages go home for Christmas – and most go home for Thanksgiving and other times as well.

Costs to the Page family:

While the position is salaried, there is an initial cost to the family. The minimum cost to a family is about \$800-\$1,000 for families (detailed below), but if the committee chooses a candidate to be a Page, and the cost is beyond what your family can afford, you will have time to raise the money (see note below).

- Plane ticket: (roughly \$500 or less if reservations are made in lots of time; can go up to well over \$1,000 if not made in advance)
- Clothes: the Congressional Page program has a strict dress code (gray pants, white shirts/blouses, and blazers; there will be more specific instructions in the programs' papers), will probably need to buy clothes (in TX) ... can be as expensive or as inexpensive as you can find them
- Security deposit of \$100 for dorm
- Spending \$ - suggest pages bring \$250 in travelers checks to cover expenses of the first month like lunch weekend activities and other expenses
- Other travel expenses (additional trips home, etc. will drive the cost up)

Salary: Monthly, around \$1,500 minus taxes (state and federal), and Social Security, and minus residence fees (\$400 per month, which includes breakfast, lunch and supper 5 days a week, and suppers on weekends)

NOTE:

If your family cannot afford the associated costs of participating in the Page program – and that is the only factor preventing your participation – be aware that while our Congressional office is prohibited from soliciting funds, we can direct you to somebody to guide you in soliciting the funds yourself and getting donations of plane tickets to and from Washington, D.C., and donations of clothes for the Page uniform.

PART I: Personal Information

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

CELL PHONE, (If applicable): _____

DATE OF BIRTH: _____

(Include a birth certificate as proof of age, all Pages must be 16 years old on September 2, 2007.)

PARENTS/GUARDIAN NAMES: _____

INDICATE IF ADDRESS IS DIFFERENT: _____

PARENTS/GUARDIAN HOME PHONE: _____

PARENTS/GUARDIAN CELL PHONE, (If applicable): _____

EMAIL: _____

Select the range that reflects your GPA:

- _____ 4.0 (or higher)
- _____ 3.8-3.9
- _____ 3.5-3.7
- _____ 3.3-3.6
- _____ 3.1-3.2
- _____ 3.0

Do you intend to go to college?

Yes _____ No _____

If you are planning to go to college, will you be the first in your family to attend college?

Yes _____ No _____

Is there a member of your immediate family (mother, father/guardian, brother or sister) serving in the U.S. Military? (Includes: Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or a Reserve or Nation Guard Unit that has been activated since 2002). If yes, please provide their name, rank, and unit.

Yes _____ No _____

Name/Rank/Unit: _____

If yes, have they been deployed to either war theatre (Afghanistan or Iraq)?

Yes _____ No _____

Will you be able to keep up with the rigorous physical activity in running errands all day long?

Yes _____ No _____

Do you understand that you will literally be living in Washington from September 2 until late January ... and there will be little to no opportunity for you to return to Texas until the program is completed?

Yes _____ No _____

What's a single word that describes you? _____

List your community service activities (if you need more space, add on separate page):

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

List your school organizations (if you need more space, add on separate page):

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PART II: Essay Question:

This essay must be at least 300 words, and not longer than a single page.

How would your experience in Washington, DC, help strengthen your desire for public service to improve our South Texas community ... and prepare you for college and life?

PART III: Endorsement of parents/guardians

Parents of applicants may like to talk to members of Congressman Ortiz' staff about the opportunities – and logistics – associated with being a Page on Capitol Hill. If that is the case, we can have a meeting via teleconference – our offices in Brownsville and Corpus Christi can hook up with our DC office.

We really understand that parents will be uneasy with the prospect of sending your child to a place half a continent away at age 16, with people you don't know yet. Thing to bear in mind is that every young person in the Page program comes to this place similarly situated. Suddenly, they are all thrust together – out of sight of their parents' eyes – and on their own, but as a group.

Congressman Ortiz very much understands how difficult this decision is for parents, we are happy to talk through the opportunity if that offers any level of comfort.

Parental permission:

I/we support our child's application to be a Page. I/we understand that if our child is chosen as a Congressional Page for Fall 07, he/she will live in the House Page Dorm on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. and be closely supervised by professional staff.

I/we understand that if our child is chosen as a Congressional Page for Fall 07, the minimum cost to our family is about \$800-\$1,000 (detailed on page 2 of this application), which we can raise if that is an onerous cost for us.

I/we understand that if our child is chosen as a Congressional Page for Fall 07, they will remain in Washington until Jan. 25, 2008, only traveling home at our cost for emergencies, Thanksgiving and Christmas, and provided the Congressional Page programs approves the leave (if the House is meeting, getting leave is very difficult).

I/we understand that if our child is chosen as a Congressional Page for Fall, 2007, there will be more forms and paperwork to fill out from the page program itself; we will go through that with our child and help them fill it out.

(Mother/Guardian of Applicant)

(Father/Guardian of Applicant)

PART III: Checklist

Any application package that does not include each component listed below will not be forwarded to the committee for consideration, so go through this list very carefully before returning the application to the office of Congressman Solomon Ortiz.

Ask your parents or a counselor to help you go through it before you submit it.

- 1. Proof of age (16 years old on Sept. 2, 2007): Provide birth certificate as proof of age**
- 2. Fill out the personal information section completely (on page 3-4)**
- 3. School transcript (applicant must have at least a 3.0 GPA)**
- 4. Written essay that is at least 300 words, but not more than a single page**
- 5. Signed endorsement of parents/guardians**
- 6. Entire application package must be delivered to Ortiz' offices by mail or hand delivered to the Corpus Christi District Office or the Brownsville District Office by June 27, 2007.**