

# **Jamie Raskin Interview**

Written by Robert Sun

CAPA Junior Reporter Club continues to actively be engaged in the community; traveling to the heart of the nation's capital in search for insight and knowledge from the political foundation of American government. The second group of CAPA-MC's junior reporter club went to the Cannon House Building on the east side of the Capitol, interviewing House Representative Jamie Raskin.

## **Work as a representative**

Jamie Raskin serves as Maryland's 8th District in the U.S House of Representatives since 2017. Born in the Washington D.C area, Mr. Raskin inherits a vast political history and experience from his grandfather. As a law professor at American University, Jamie Raskin has huge ambitions as a House Representative to tackle climate change, reinvest in infrastructure, and help the youth be more proactive in the community. Through hard work and devotion, Mr. Raskin constantly travels around the district and attends lots of committee hearing while Congress isn't in session. "We want to maintain an affordable quality of life so people can get in, and enough housing for everybody, and we want it to be very green, and we want to be a leader in recycling, and we want the environment to be strong, and we want a thriving economy that works for our people," says Mr. Raskin, when he announced his goals for Montgomery County. It's not all focused on the environment. Cultural diversity is an important part that makes America so unique. As a strong supporter for diversity and inclusion, Mr. Raskin hopes that Montgomery County will be "a beacon for diversity and inclusion and justice...prided itself on being open to people, new immigrants, and people coming from other parts of the country."



Jamie Raskin (Audrey Li)

## **Personal story**

Lots of Mr. Raskin's political career was shaped from his personal life. A big Shakespeare fan, a campaign poster of Bobby Kennedy, and his grandfather, the first Jewish person elected to the Minnesota state legislature hangs proudly on his office walls. Although he never lived in Minnesota like his grandfather, he was still a crucial person in influencing Mr. Raskin's life; observing how his grandfather helped lots of people and solved their problems. Through his grandfather and father's legacy, it influenced Raskin's life and compelled him to follow his footsteps.

Though Raskin has been successful and has achieved many goals in his life, he also faced some setbacks. Being in the political scope of life is very tough, especially that politics involved centered firm beliefs and opinions on American policies. For Mr.

Raskin, it meant a rough time when he announced about legalizing gay marriage and abolishing the death penalty in 2006, for he was criticized on being too radical with his political approaches. However, from this experience, Mr. Raskin learned that “it’s not my ambition to be in the political center; it’s my ambition to be in the moral center, to try to find what’s right and then to bring the political center to us.” This set the path for the rest of his political career. Mr. Raskin’s political career was also driven by personal challenges. Combating cancer, Raskin found how to differentiate with misfortune and injustice. “Cancer is a terrible misfortune, but if you can’t get health insurance because you’re too poor or you have the wrong job, or because you’re married to, or you love the wrong person and you can’t get married, that’s not just a misfortune. That’s an injustice. It’s injustice ‘cause we can do something about that.” This phrase reverberates Raskin’s core belief that government should try to at least help people with misfortunes of their life.

### **Opportunities for students**

For almost every optimistic future, it always begins with the next generation. America is widely known for centering the beliefs to be engaged and get involved in the community. Out of CAPA-JRC’s curiosity, Mr. Raskin briefs information on how the youth can obtain internships, engage in the political process, and contact him for volunteer opportunities. Mr. Raskin’s offices has internships in the fall, summer, and spring, along with a self run project known as “Democracy Summer” a program training young people in the arts of political campaigning and elections. Regardless of these offerings, when starting from the ground up, Mr. Raskin advises to begin with your school’s student council and their different groups inside the school, fit for environmental impact, diversity, and inclusion. Great options also include learning as many languages as you can, work for your student newspaper, and get involved in journalism.

### **Conclusion**

Almost everyone knows the House of Representatives and politics, but there is much more hidden behind the desk and papers. Through fascinating stories and candor, House Representative Jamie Raskin unfolds the daily life, experiences, and wisdom of being involved in the complex, modern American politics. Yet the political journey in the American government is not all complicated and confusing. Sometimes, the journey begins with a heart and commitment for the people, a need to direct change, with a wonderful life story to share.



Photo by Audrey Li