

## GGC History Grad Worked ‘Both Sides of the Congressional Aisle’



*In Washington, D.C.*

For GGC graduate Vesna Kurspahic (2012), achievements happen in twos. She nearly earned two bachelor's degrees at GGC, with a major in history and a few courses shy of a second major in political science. She later earned two master's degrees: 1) political management from George Washington University

(2016), and 2) an M.S. in Communication from Purdue University (2018). She has worked for two representatives of the United States Congress. Most remarkably, one is a Republican and the other is a Democrat.

Kurspahic began public service with an internship in 2011 at the office of then Georgia senator Saxby Chambliss. She next started a three-year stint as a legislative aide for the Georgia General Assembly.

From 2016-2020, Kurspahic was the Constituent Services Representative and Congressional Art Competition Coordinator for the office of United States Rep. Rob Woodall (R). This meant - inter alia - oversight of inquiries on several federal agencies, including but not limited to: Social Security Administration; Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; Internal Revenue Service; Department of Family and Children's Services; Department of Community Health; Centers for Disease Control; Health and Human Services; Office of Personnel Management; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; FEMA; and the Small Business Administration.

After the 2020 election, Kurspahic was hired and promoted by U.S. Rep. Carolyn Bourdeaux (D) as a Constituent Casework Manager and Grants

Coordinator. Kurspahic oversees casework operations and manages casework for the district office. We couldn't help asking a few questions given her unique perspective and history.

### ***What are things that the public might not understand about a Congressman's life?***

The toll it takes on their families, the time spent missing events in the lives of loved ones, and the fact that the media can be inaccurate. Congressmembers are reported as on "holiday." During recess or "holiday," members of Congress are traveling through their district, meeting constituents, listening to their needs, providing their constituents with legislative and district updates, and helping through their casework operation.

### ***Is it common for congressional staffers working for one party to be hired by the opposing party when there is electoral turnover?***

I have seen more times where the opposing party hires staff from their predecessor than instances when politicians from the same party keep their predecessor's staff. Many staffers have worked for one party and now work for the other party.

### ***You have worked for politicians from both parties. What surprises you about Congress?***

I wish more people could work for both parties. We have more that binds us than separates us. In Congress are many good people who want to make a difference, who believe in bipartisanship, and most importantly, who seek to address our issues head on instead of putting on a band-aid.

### ***What did you learn at GGC to help prepare you?***

Nearly every class required an oral presentation. The more speeches I gave, the more comfortable I became. Now public speaking is easier, and I do quite a bit of it.

*By Richard Rawls*