Michigan State University senior Mitchell Rivard earns D.C. internship with Nancy Pelosi

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By Shannon Murphy | The Bay City Times

BAY CITY — Mitchell Rivard isn’t sure yet if he wants run for political office one day, but the Michigan State University senior knows who he does want running.

“I’m interested in making sure we have the right leaders elected to office,” said Rivard, 21, of Frankenlust Township. “I have a deep-seated passion for getting women elected to office.”

Rivard’s summer internship — working in the press office of U.S. Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., — is a major step toward his goals.

“Nancy Pelosi was the first woman Speaker of the House,” said Rivard, who also worked for Michigan’s first female governor, Jennifer Granholm. “I’ll continue working for women that break those glass ceilings.”

Rivard’s eight-week internship is part of the Victory Congressional Internship program, a new program from the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute that provides outstanding, young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered leaders with a summer experience on Capitol Hill.

Rivard, who is gay, is one of six students nationwide to receive the internship. He was chosen from a pool of nearly 500 applicants.

His internship begins Monday and runs through the end of July. In December, Rivard, a 2008 graduate of Bay City Western High School, attends a training program through the Gay & Lesbian Leadership Institute.

Rivard’s parents Troy and Wendy Rivard said their son has always been involved in politics and his mother credits his passion to a Bay City Commission meeting he attended as a youngster.

“Ever since he was little, people said he’d be the president of the United States,” Wendy Rivard said. “He’s very outspoken and not afraid to take a stand on something.”

Mitchell Rivard graduates from MSU in December with a bachelor’s degree in social relations and policy.
He said he’s excited to spend the summer in Washington, D.C., and learn more about national politics. He’s enjoyed working behind the scenes with campaigns and Granholm’s press office.

“I got involved with politics because I want to make a difference,” he said.

Rivard also wants to bring more opinions to politics — not just with female leaders, but with gay and lesbian leaders.

“We need to elect more people than just old white men,” he said. “People who have different opinions and understand and respect the value of everyone in America. Not that old white men can’t, but having all those people seated at the table really makes a difference.”

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