



The Weekly Page

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Pages Learn About The Legislature



Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: governing is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day. As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

Pages write bills, hold mock hearings



During the first three days of their week, pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. They discussed the criteria for making a legislative solution work before selecting issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates on class computers to formulate official-looking documents in preparation for mock committee hearings on Thursday. Topics for policy bills included pets, plastic bag pollution, welfare fraud, and homeless youth. Pages read their bills and class “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

Students rejoice as bill for later high school start times earns hearing in the Washington State Legislature



Olympia – House Bill 1044 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Danielle Smith and Erin Demir. This bill addresses the issue of high school start times. “The bill will make teen-

agers healthier and help them to get a better education in an environment more geared towards learning,” said Rep. Smith. A recent study that teenagers sleep patterns are biologically determined to be from around 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Today students do not get enough sleep, which leads to depression, lower grades and attendance rates, higher risk of auto accidents, and even heart problems as teenagers become more and more dependent on dangerous high caffeine beverages. Later start times will help to alleviate these issues.

Watch us live at TVW.org

Search for “Page School” in the Archives to watch yourself in the committee hearings.

EBT cards are being used illegally

Olympia – Senate Bill 6666 was introduced yesterday by Senators Brady Barker, Chris Chen, and Haylee Mynatt. “This bill addresses the issue of social services fraud. The bill will solve the issue of people selling their EBT cards illegally online,” said Sen. Chen. This bill will require the name of the user on it as well as a photo ID to prove he/she is the real owner of the EBT card. “This would save the government hundreds of thousands of dollars as people would no longer be able to sell their EBT cards to other people in exchange for either cash or drugs,” said Senator Chen. Evidence has shown that instead of using their EBT cards for what they were made to be used for, people often will sell their EBT card at a low price for either cash or in many cases drugs. As the issue goes on, it’s only going to get worse as it is currently very hard to tell if the card is either stolen or sold. What makes this worse is that EBT cards are very easy to get, because there isn’t a real limit to the many you can get in a year. Evidence has shown that in 2010, 27,000 EBT cards were replaced each month which demonstrates the immense problem that this abuse of EBT usage causes.



Reduce, reuse, plastic bags!

Olympia – House Bill 2525 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Heather Johnson and Alex Howell. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bags. The bill will impose a small tax on consumers using plastic bags and create recycling centers to keep them out of landfills,” said Rep. Johnson. Roughly, 100,000 whales, seals, turtles, etc. are killed by plastic bags annually. Therefore we plan to impose a tax and create recycling centers that will cut down on our usage of plastic bags. Washington alone uses more than 2 billion plastic bags each year. That is over 200,000 plastic bags every hour! Our tax would help to reduce that number and to save 1,000s of animals from dying.



Sleep deprivation impacts teens’ education

Olympia – The issue of teen sleep deprivation was considered in committee hearings yesterday when Senators Derek Ralph and Andrew Pollard introduced Senate Bill 6665. “Our bill will ensure that teens will get all of the sleep they need,” said Sen.



Ralph. Schools will be required to move their start times to a minimum of 8:00 A.M. to allow the teens the amount of sleep they need for their developing brains. This will reduce the amount of teens with early depression, increase their test scores, and increase their overall awareness.

Bill regulates electronic cigarettes

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Jacen Bartlett, Alden Allport, and Tyler Cushing introduced House Bill 1042, which



addresses the issue of Electronic Cigarettes. “The bill is a good one because it will keep electronic cigarettes out of the hands of minors,” said Rep. Bartlett. Electronic cigarettes are dangerous

and harmful to children; their contents (liquid nicotine) are especially harmful in liquid form. If only one third of an ounce is consumed by a child it can be fatal. It will be regulating the sale of electronic cigarettes. It will be prohibiting free samples of the liquid nicotine and electronic cigarettes for minors, as well as prohibiting the use of electronic cigarettes in public places.

Truly bringing justice to the justice system

Olympia – Senate Bill 5999 was introduced yesterday by Senators Cole Mason, Stephen Vogan, and Samuel Neunzig. “This bill addresses the issue of removing some of the DNA restrictions. The bill will provide an easier and more accurate proofing system,” said Sen. Cole Mason.



Neuter and spay, it's the responsible way



Olympia – Senate Bill 6544 was introduced yesterday by Senators Julissa Peart and Rebekah Thornton. “This bill addresses the issue of animal abandonment. The bill will require all citizens in Washington State to spay and neuter their pets,” said Sen. Peart. Approximately seven million companion animals enter animal shelters nationwide each year and nearly four million of those animals are euthanized. The Legislature suggests that all pets be spayed and neutered, so as to rid the state of animal overpopulation.

Reps. help teens be more efficient

Olympia – The issue of, teen sleep deprivation, was considered in committee hearings yesterday when Representatives Samm McGuire, Madison Harmsworth, and Ben York introduced House Bill 3714. “Our bill will make schools start later and help teens stay healthier,” said Rep. McGuire. This bill will improve health, safety, learning, and productivity. Studies have shown that sleep and learning are intimately related. For example, sleep deprivation hinders the ability to pay attention, creativity, communication, problem solving, and decision making. Also, many symptoms of sleep deprivation are similar to, or tend to cause, symptoms of depression.



Newly presented bill on abortion education



Olympia – Senate Bill 6317 was introduced yesterday by Senators Lauren Gates and Rachael Foley. “This bill addresses the issue of Abortion. The bill will fully educate women on the process and consequences of abortion,”

said Sen. Gates. When a woman starts considering an abortion, their healthcare provider must now go through the step by step process of abortion. In addition, they must provide credible sources of women who have gone through with abortion stating what they feel mentally and physically as well as those who had decided not to complete the procedure. Whether the woman still wishes to proceed and complete the abortion is her choice.

Lawmakers to strictly enforce identification of public homeless students

Olympia – Senate Bill 6283 was introduced yesterday by Senators Ava Ikbal, Christina Pennella, and Elizabeth Sandstedt. “This bill addresses the issue of homeless students. The bill will identify all public homeless



students and provide free resources to them under the McKinney Vento Act,” said Sen. Frockt. Among the homeless children in Washington state, close to 11,000 are under six years old, about 9,500 are between kindergarten and eighth grade, and over 4,000 are in high school. The Legislature will further require every school to have a group of staff and/or PTA parents as a homeless liaison group to review students low income status, dropout rates, language proficiency, suspension and expulsion data, attendance rates, and students’ scores to identify all homeless students and offer them the help that they need with government support, under the McKinney Vento Act. The legislature will require every Washington public high school homeroom teacher to add a lesson, once every school year, about the issue of homelessness and the free resources provided in Washington State.

Page program over 125 years old

The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served in past years. The first female page served in 1937. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional and include delivering campus correspondence, helping with mailings in legislative offices, and handing out documents on the floor of the Senate and House.



Homeschoolers deserve equal opportunities for education

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Jaycelin Eyre, Travis Dillon, and Aaron Maier introduced Senate Bill 7442, which addresses the issue of homeschool funds. “The bill is necessary because it will provide needed and equal resources for homeschool students’ complete educations;



thereby, benefitting the public by helping to create successful members of society,” said Sen. Maier. SB 7442 will provide funds for homeschoolers to access tools that are currently available only through parents’ own expenditures. Because students connected to the public school system have free access to these materials, homeschoolers believe that they also should receive these kinds of benefits. It is required by the state to provide for an education for youth. This bill says that homeschoolers are included in this requirement. “We think it’s important for all students to be afforded the same financial support,” Sen. Eyre argued. Additionally, both homeschooling and public schooling families pay taxes intended to provide education for their children. This bill will fulfill that expectation and necessity by providing reimbursement for homeschool education expenses.

Experienced educators

Sharon Heath is in her second year as the Page School teacher; however, she is definitely not new to the Washington Legislature having worked nearly 20 years for the Legislature’s computer support agency. She has also earned a Master’s in Education and has taught middle school as well as college students.

Leo O’Leary has been teaching and coaching in and around Olympia for the past ten years and is in his third session as a Page School teacher.



“I really like the fact that I can help kids make their dreams come true through both education and athletics,” he said as he introduced himself on Monday.

Competitive edge results in Jeopardy win

On Friday pages tested their knowledge of the Legislative process in a spirited game of Jeopardy. Winning teams were awarded certificates and brightly colored stickers that they wore proudly for the rest of the day.



Guest speakers visit Page School

Supreme Court Justice Mary Yu, House of Representatives Civics Education Coordinator Paula Rehwaldt, and House Counsel Andrew Logerwell, joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. All guests shared insightful information about their jobs. Pages were able to ask questions and shared their own views in response to the speakers’ comments.



Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool> This newsletter has been posted there.