



The Weekly Page

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 8

MARCH 6, 2015

Pages Learn About The Legislature



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.

Criteria for writing a good bill was discussed before students selected issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates to formulate official-looking bills in preparation for a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Pages also wrote media releases for their bills which are included in this newsletter.

Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. Each bill was voted upon resulting in a “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation that determines whether the bill continues on in the legislative process. Because pages are in the Page School for only two hours a day for one week, there is not sufficient time to fully develop the final versions of their bills. However, the process of writing and presenting their own bills provides an excellent exposure to the real legislative process.

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.

Plastic Bags- Slowly Destroying Our Planet

Olympia – House Bill 2015 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Moriah Miller, Kastine Cook, and Amaya Fox. “This bill addresses the issue of the damaging effects of petroleum-based plastic bags. The bill will prevent further pollution and maintain Washington State’s economy,” said Rep. Fox. The Legislature will require all retail and grocery stores in the state of Washington to pay a recycling fee of 25 cents per bag if they wish to offer petroleum-based plastic bags. Plastic bags litter the oceans while

killing sea turtles and other marine life that mistake them for food in the Washington oceans. This affects the economy of Western Washington State since the majority of the state relies on shellfish and marine life as a primary source of income. Current research reports also estimate that almost 100 billion petroleum-based plastic bags are thrown out each year, and that only 5.2 percent of those are recovered for recycling. Nearly 5% of landfills are plastic bags, which can take up to 500-1,000 years to decompose. Plastic bags sitting in landfills offer a long lasting presence and are not extremely hospitable in regards to microbial degradation.



Homeless Need Homes

Olympia – Senate Bill 5778 was introduced yesterday by Senators Jake Hunt, Katie Hunt, and Campbell Farris. “This bill addresses the issue of too many homeless in Washington State.



The bill will put more homeless in homes,” said Sen. Jake Hunt. In Washington, it can be especially difficult for low-wage

workers to find affordable housing. A full-time worker earning minimum wage (\$9.47 per hour) in Washington would need to work close to 80 hours per week for 52 weeks a year in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent. In order to provide shelter for homeless citizens, the Legislature will require homeless shelters to be built. At the homeless shelters, homeless citizens will be helped by staff to get jobs from any place possible. This help will include being given the basic materials they need to make jobs easier to get, such as standard work clothing.

Haunting Homework

Olympia – House Bill 1420 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Zackary Whitson and Christiaan Ramos. “This bill addresses the issue of homework. The bill will liquidate homework and will increase the school day,” said Rep. Whitson. High school students should spend up to two hours on homework, yet sometimes this is doubled or even tripled. Multiple sources say

that students stay up until an average of 2:00 am working on assignments for school. With most High Schools starting between 7 and 8 am, students are left with barely enough time for 47% of their recommended amount of sleep. The Legislator will lengthen the school day by 2 hours. These extra two hours will be used to finish assignments in place of teachers assigning homework.



Lawmakers Require More STEM Classes for High School Graduation

Olympia – Senate Bill 5841 was introduced yesterday by Senators Matthew Arras, Everett Buck, and Reese Campbell. “This bill addresses the issue of insufficient STEM training for students. “The bill will successfully educate students in the STEM fields,” said Sen. Buck. The bill requires that students pass one more math and science class each to graduate. The cost for the new teachers is already covered by the new initiatives for smaller class sizes, and the new teachers will mostly be STEM teachers. “This bill will better teach math and science by requiring students take classes, such as algebra 2, physics, and chemistry. It also supports students who struggle with the required classes by requiring schools to offer remedial math and science classes that will be worth a half a credit towards the required seven credits that students need to graduate,” said Sen. Arras.



Washington Standing Up For Environment

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Alexander J. Porter and Zain Butler. “This bill addresses the issue of carbon emissions. The bill will reduce them by requiring carbon emissions tests,” said Rep. Porter. It will require emission tests for all vehicles made before 2009. The fee will cost \$15 and must be done every year. Washington’s five biggest counties are already doing this. Not only will this make our environment greener, but it will also create jobs.



Watch us live at TVW.org

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

The Silver Alert System

Olympia – The issue of forming a Silver Alert System was considered in committee hearings yesterday when Senators Savanna Castro, Nicole Costa, and Rebecca Devereaux intro-



duced Senate Bill 5777. “Our bill will create a system, similar to the Amber Alert System, that will affect our citizens suffering from dementia,” said Sen. Devereaux. This system has

been successful in other states, such as Georgia, Florida, and Texas. 227 Silver Alerts have been issued over the past two years in Florida. 220 citizens were located safely and of those recoveries 36 were directly attributed to Silver Alert System. Sen. Castro said, “There is no reason to keep Silver Alert from working in our state. We should pass this bill quickly, so that our citizens are made safer.”

Police Body Cameras

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Will Rood, Cade Cochran, and Jacob Rowland introduced House Bill 2345 which addresses the issue of police cameras. “The bill is a good one because it will improve the accountability of the police in Washington, and court testaments will have solid video evidence instead of faulty witness testimony. According to the U.S.

Department of Justice, there is evidence that both officer and the general public act better



when they are being video and audio recorded. There was also a steep drop in complaints against police officers wearing cameras,” said Rep. Cade Cochran. This bill mandates police law enforcement around Washington to wear body cameras. This footage is to be used for accurate court evidence and will improvement on civilian/and officer interaction.

Self-Defense in Schools

Olympia – Senate Bill 6969 was introduced yesterday by Senators Lily Raznik, Henry Moore, and Amy Rood. “This bill addresses the issue of assault of teens and young adults. The bill will teach teens in school self-defense,” said Sen. Lily Raznik.

The program will implement self-defense lessons, such as Hapkido, into the Physical Education curriculum. It will also require a certain amount of time spent learning self-defense in one school semester. This will instill



more confidence into teenagers, since they will no longer rely on other people to protect them.

How to Save a Life

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Joy Ellis, Amy Kemp, and Josephine Akinlosotu introduced House Bill 2468, which addresses the issue that abortion is too easy to get. “The bill is a good one because it will save more lives and make parents aware of what’s going on,” said Rep. Joy Ellis. In order to prevent abortion rates

from getting higher, the Legislature will require that the baby can’t be older than 16 weeks in order for an abortion to be legal. In 19 different states, they have enforced this law. This law would allow the girl



at least four weeks to decide whether she has an abortion or not. This law would help save lives and lower abortion rates.

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.



Representatives Urge the Equal Rights of Page Workers

Olympia – The issue of legislative pages’ wages was considered in committee hearings yesterday when Representatives Vincent Walsh-Smith, Zach Lewis, and Michael Britton introduced House Bill 3069. “Our bill will give pages the equal and well deserved rights, specifically minimum wage,” said Rep. Michael Britton. We declare that legislative pages are treated equally



as workers while also earning minimum wage salaries. Pages are like butlers for the Legislature and are on their feet all day, but are getting paid a “gratuity wage” for all of their hard worked hours. Actual butlers have good benefits and get paid over minimum wage. Plus they get gratuity wages on top of their average salary.

as workers while also earning minimum wage salaries. Pages are like butlers for the Legislature and are on their feet all day, but are getting paid a “gratuity wage” for all of their hard worked hours. Actual butlers have good benefits and get paid over minimum wage. Plus they get gratuity wages on top of their average salary.

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 and group activities, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding of these concepts deepened. Class activities introduced new vocabulary words, explained legislative procedures, and explored the bill writing process. On Friday, they individually wrote about one of these “big ideas” to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.

How Do You Feel About Your Sleep?

Olympia – Senate Bill 6999 was introduced yesterday by Senators McKenna Jarrard, Haley McRae, Layla Kainber. “This bill addresses the issue of school start times. The bill will allow children and teens more sleep to improve morale, academics, and health,” said Sen. Jarrard,



McRae, and Kainber. Research conducted at the University of Kentucky shows that when a Fayette County high school delayed their start time by an hour, 50% of their students got at least 8 hours of sleep which is the recommended amount for teenagers. Before the late start, only 35.7% of the students were getting that much sleep. According to Mary Carskadon, an expert on adolescent sleep, increasing sleep time will reduce the likelihood of experiencing depressed moods, lower grades, “fall asleep” car crashes, and low metabolism.

Guest Speakers Visit Page School

This week **Attorney General Bob Ferguson, Representative Roger Goodman (D-45th), Parks Commissioner Joe Taller,**

and Legislative Assistant to Representative VanWerven, Bryan Yon joined the pages during classes. Each spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about the legislative process or other aspects of government. Pages were able to interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker’s questions.



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 fourth 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.