



# The Weekly Page

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 9

MARCH 13, 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.

### GMO's? GM-No's!

Olympia – Senate Bill 7188 was introduced yesterday by Senators Laurel Schley and Emma Kilcup. This bill addresses the issue of GMO labeling. “This bill will mandate the labeling of all foods containing genetically modified organisms,” said Sen. Schley. Documents in prior “Center for Food Safety” litigations show that the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) found that these foods pose serious health risks. This proves that consumers should be the sole judges on whether or not they wish to take the risk of eating such foods.

“Every citizen is entitled to know what they are consuming, just as they know the ingredients and amount of calories. It’s not just a potential health risk;

it’s a risk to the personal rights of every citizen,” said Sen. Kilcup. Over 64 countries worldwide require the labeling of GMO products, while the FDA relies solely upon the information that companies using GMO’s provides. “John Adams said that ‘liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people.’ As of right now, consumers do not have this knowledge about GMO’s and this is threatening to their rights,” said Sen. Schley.



### Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Isaac Placzek and Luke Placzek. “This bill addresses the issue of drone accountability.” The bill will create accountability for all drone users, including law enforcement,” said Rep. Placzek.



The purpose of this bill is to protect civilians on a day to day basis from privacy infringement. In order to make

drone users accountable to a higher authority, the Legislature will require all law enforcement to procure a warrant to collect personal information with the drones. All non-government users must get a permit before the use of the drone, so that it gives security to the civilians.

### Penalty of Death to the Death Penalty

Olympia – The issue of the death penalty was considered in committee hearings yesterday when Senators Clyde Twitty and Rahul Chandra introduced Senate Bill 7127. “Our bill will ban the death penalty in the state of Washington,” said Sen. Twitty.

The death penalty is not an effective means of punishment. The executions can be inhumane and the lethal injections are actually a very painful way to die.

Another problem with the death penalty is its cost. A recent Seattle University study found that death penalty cases in the state cost \$1 million more than similar cases where capital punishment is not sought. Finally, the death penalty can kill innocent people before they have a chance to be proven that they aren't guilty. For example, from the years 1973-2008, 129 people on death row have been exonerated and set free.



### Get the Food, Change the Mood

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Sara Ronen and Nicola Orlovsky introduced Senate Bill 6543 which is a progressive bill to address the issue of hunger in our children in Washington State. The free and reduced lunch program has reduced hunger immensely for our students, but according to the Food Research and Action Center and the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, only 15% of children who got free and reduced lunch during the school year received free meals during the summer. Therefore, the Legislature plans to work with local food banks to have food care packages delivered during the school year through school officials.



It will also have meals delivered to government buildings in the summer months. Parents will sign up and register at public schools during the school year to pick up lunches at government funded locations, such as libraries, schools, and police stations during the summer. Parents will finally be able to register their sons and daughters to have access to food easily during the summer. This bill will help stop hunger for the children of Washington State.

### Obese Children

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Laura Ferrer and Anacarey Clark introduced House Bill 1799 which addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “This bill is a good one because it shows that childhood activity affects all children. It also emphasizes that physical activity is a very good factor in helping to reduce obese children,” said Rep. Ferrer and Rep. Clark. Our bill will require physical activity classes in schools. Between



ages 6-11 years old, medical research shows that childhood obesity could increase several health problems, including high blood pressure, diabetes, colon cancer, and heart diseases.

### Light Up, Butt Out

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Nina Baker and Keisha Ensey introduced House Bill 1914 which addresses the issue of second hand smoking. “This bill is a good one because it keeps



citizens under the age of 18 safe from inhaling the smoke which could cause serious problems to their organs,” said

Rep. Ensey and Rep. Baker. This bill makes second hand smoking a primary offense in vehicles when a child under the age of 18 is present in the car. Air pollution in the car is up ten times the hazards level set by the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, chemicals in the smoke when inhaled can cause problems ranging from ear infections and asthma, to diseases and organ failure. We can’t completely stop people from smoking in the cars, but we can definitely reduce it.

### Helping the Homeless

Olympia – Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senators Natalie Eldridge, Alaina Duskin, and Emily Harris. “This bill addresses the issue of homeless youth. The bill will identify and assist the students who are undertaking strenuous stages in their life,” said Sen. Duskin. The rate of students in poverty has

grown tremendously. According to the Tacoma News Tribune, in just five years, the rate of



children and teens without homes has increased fifty percent. Unfortunately, less than 25 percent of students who are on the streets graduate from high school. Those who are struggling at home are usually provided free or discounted lunches at school, but receive nothing to help them in the summertime. To solve this issue, help centers should be open throughout the summer to provide non-perishable foods for the children who seek a little bit of extra help.

### Senators Propose Transportation Tax

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Espen Diamond and Christopher Solem introduced Senate Bill 6298 addressing the issue of modern transportation. The Legislature will require a 1.5 cent tax on every mile traveled in an electric vehicle. “This

bill is a good one because the new tax will guarantee that our roads will remain adequately funded in the next few years,”



said Sen. Diamond. With Washington State having more than 8,000 electric vehicles on the road, third in the nation, income from the 37.5 cent gas tax has dropped. The new tax, a 1.5 cent charge for every mile, would replace the gas tax that is currently not being paid by electric cars. It’s not bad news for drivers of these cars, as they will still be eligible for the state’s exemption of sales and use tax. In addition, they will have a choice on how they can pay the tax. Drivers of these electric vehicles can pay in different ways, such as a flat rate of \$250 per year for unlimited miles, or by use of a counting and reporting device in the vehicle.

### Striking Back On Police Brutality

Olympia – The issue of cops wearing cameras was considered in committee hearings yesterday when Representatives Naga

Palepu, Sean Doster, and Amir Almemar introduced House Bill 2000. “Our bill will tackle police brutality by videotaping their every encounter,” said Rep. Almemar.



The Legislature finds that police are not being held accountable for their actions while on duty which causes concerns, such as brutality and racial profiling. In addition, the body cameras should help prohibit other crimes being committed by citizens around officers with body cameras. Having body cameras can help end disputes and “he-said, she-said” situations.

## 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.

## Lawmakers Put a Stop on Abandoned Animals

Olympia – House Bill 3333 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Kaylee Jackson and Ethan Pentony. “This bill addresses the issue of abandoned animals. This bill indicates the Legislature will strongly encourage pet owners to have their animals

fixed 8-10 weeks from birth to prevent “non-expected births.” The bill also requires animal shelters to be in



better conditions,” said Rep. Pentony. By cleaning up and making animal shelters more presentable, it can make the adoption rate increase tremendously. Monthly inspections will keep the workers on their feet to keep the place well maintained and strive for improvement in the shelter itself. “The problem of unwanted and abandoned pets is as urgent as ever,” said Rep. Jackson. Shelters around the country kill 4 million animals every year. By some estimates, more than 80% of them are healthy.

## 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.

## Bill to Help End Child Nicotine Poisonings

Olympia – House Bill 1742 was introduced yesterday by Representative Eli Schuler. “This bill addresses the issue of electronic cigarettes. The bill will help prevent nicotine poisonings in children,” said Rep.

Schuler. It will require clearer and more consistent warning labels. To fall in line with current tobacco products regulations, all vapor tobacco products will be labeled the same way as other tobacco products. This will help prevent child nicotine poisonings. This will also let adults know what they are putting in their body.



## School Start Times...Push It Real Good

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Samone Watkins and Emily Anderson introduced Senate Bill 5432 which addresses the issue of school start times. “The bill is a good one because it will improve our teenagers’ health and learning,” said Senator Anderson. This bill will help give teenagers the extra sleep they need to learn

and to simply stay awake. With more rest, teenagers will be able to focus and be more alert, which could also help reduce the



amount of “fall asleep car crashes.” Schools that have pushed back their start times have seen significant increase in students’ performances. When students get more rest, there is an increase in attendance and higher grades. School start times need to be pushed back in order for our teenagers’ health and learning to improve.

Watch us live at [TVW.org](http://TVW.org)

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

### New Bill in Favor for Sheltered Animals!

Olympia – The issue of abandoned animals was considered in committee hearings yesterday when Representatives Grace Johnson and Sarah Bortel introduced House Bill 1678. “Our bill will attempt to demolish cruelty of animals and try to help shelter pets get a good and safe home to live in,” said Rep. Johnson. This bill will try to have pet shelters get background checks on pet buyers to help guarantee a safe and appropriate home living style for the pets.



### Guest Speakers Visit Page School

This week **Representative Mark Hargrove (R-47th)** and **LSS Director Kevin Pierce** joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. 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.



### Illegal to Fight Fire? Not Anymore!

Olympia – Senate Bill 6268 was introduced yesterday by Senator Nathan Rawson. “This bill addresses the issue of landowners not being able to fight fire on public or private land when the fire is threatening their personal land. When landowners have gone onto public land to protect their own property from fires, they were found liable for damages incurred. This bill will make it legal to go onto public or private land to protect someone’s own property from the devastating effect of wildfires,” said Sen. Rawson. The bill states that it would be legal to fight fires for private entities, such as private landowners, private corporations, etc. This would allow landowners to lawfully fight fires on property adjacent to their property without fear of being persecuted or penalized by government agencies.



### Cut-off Week Moves Bills Closer to Becoming Laws

This week pages spent a lot of time on the floor of either the House of Representatives or the Senate delivering amendments or other documents to legislators. Members were under pressure to get bills passed in order to send them to the opposite chamber by the cut-off known as “House of Origin Cut-off.” Hundreds of bills were introduced in the two chambers, but only about 15-20 percent will actually continue through the law-making process. Pages got a first-hand look at how parliamentary procedure is used by legislators as they discussed and voted on remaining bills. After Wednesday, March 11, all bills that have passed their original house will be transferred to the opposite chamber for hearings and deliberation. Later bills that have passed both the House and the Senate will be sent to the Governor for his approval. The 105-day session is scheduled to end by April 26, 2015.

### 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.



Thanks for a great week!



### Page Program Over 125 Years Old

The Legislature's page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served decades ago. 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 House and Senate.

