



# The Weekly Page

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 18, 2013

## Pages Learn About 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. Some topics for policy bills included



the cost of the death penalty, use of metal bats in baseball games, plastic bag pollution and teen sleep deprivation. 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.

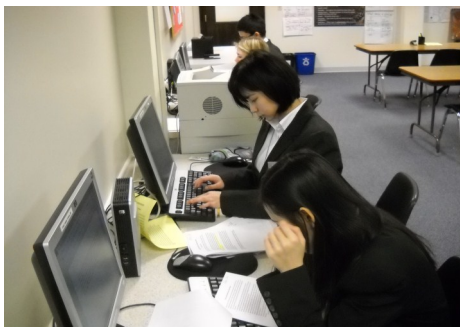
### Death penalty too costly

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## Reps want schools to start later

Olympia – House Bill 1436 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Michelle Chen and Valerie Blakeslee. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprived teenagers and will improve their health and academic progress,” said Rep. Chen. The legislation will require public school to flip the start times of elementary and high schools. “Little kids naturally get up earlier than teens because their biological clocks are set differently,” said Rep. Blakeslee. According to the representatives, recent studies show that 85 percent of teenagers get less than the 8.5 hours of sleep required for a healthy lifestyle. This solution should result in reduced tardiness and absenteeism, fewer depressed students, and improved academic success.



## Lawmakers hit metal bats out of the park

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Bridger Robinson and Antoine Maier introduced Senate Bill 6669, which addresses the issue of metal bats used by recreational and school sports teams. “The bill is a good one because it help reduce the number of injuries and fatalities in games,” said Sen. Maier. In the summer of 2007, a 12-year-old boy went into cardiac arrest after being hit in the chest by a ball propelled by a metal bat and suffered permanent brain damage after his heart stopped. “Research shows that metal bats cause something known as the trampoline effect,” said Sen. Robinson. This means that metal bats compress and allow baseballs to retain much of their energy, giving them a much higher velocity. In 2001, 17 deaths were linked to batted balls in the United States—eight from non-wood bats. This bill bans metal bats from all baseball leagues, from T-ball to college.



## Senators chime in on later school bells

Olympia – Senate Bill 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senators McKenna Schrader and Hailey Sanne. “This bill addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and will result in improved health and academic success for our high school students,” said Sen. Schrader. There is a natural tendency for teenagers to stay up later at night and wake up later in the morning due to a change in their internal biological clocks, according to scientists. Experts also suggest that teens who do not get enough sleep have worse grades, more depression, anxiety, irritability, poor attendance and a greater tendency toward delinquency and violence. The bill requires all public high schools to start no earlier than 9 a.m. After the Minneapolis Public School District changed starting times of seven high schools from 7:15 to 8:40 a.m., they found that students got five or more extra hours of sleep per week and that daytime alertness increased and students-reported depression decreased.



## Don't forget your recyclable grocery bag

Olympia—Senators Elsa Salido, Tyler Wickenhagen, and Jacob Hovde introduced Senate bill 5726 yesterday in committee hearings. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bags and will reduce pollution, decrease dependence on foreign countries for petroleum sources, and cut oil consumption,” said Sen. Hovde.



According to the senators, the impact of plastic shopping bags is far greater than most would think. Accidental burning of them releases toxins into the air, many marine animals choke on them each year when they mistake them for food in the water, and the manufacture of the bags requires large amounts of petroleum. “This bill will require all grocery and retail stores to provide their customers with bags made of biodegradable or recyclable material,” said Sen. Salido.



## Committee hearings provide education on proposed bills

Students in Page School were asked to attend a committee hearing during the week where they watched democracy in action. In hearings lawmakers heard views from experts and the public on proposed legislation. Senators and Representatives heard public opinions about creating beer/wine theater licenses, implementing changes to child support, and expanding criminal penalties for assault as well as other compelling issues. Many House committees and some Senate committees devoted the first week to work sessions, where they studied issues such as homelessness and the Department of Corrections propose budget, which might later turn into bills.

## Wake up...a little later, students!

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Lindsay Lancaster and Phoenix Roe introduced Senate Bill 5678, which addresses the issue of sleep deprivation in teenagers. “The bill is a good one because it will result in better academic performance for our high school students,” said Sen.

Roe. The bill pushes the starting times of schools to later in the morning. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, drowsiness and fatigue cause more than

100,000 traffic accidents each year--and young drivers are at the wheel in more than half of these crashes. In districts that have started this practice, they have found students with better grades, reduced absenteeism, reduced obesity, and increase endurance and coordination in sports. “When teens get more sleep, they are less irritable, more alert, and they perform better in things they are doing,” said Sen. Lancaster.

## Lawmakers search for solutions to poor performance in math and science

Olympia – Senate Bill 5921 was introduced yesterday by Senators Ellen Lamphere and Katie Jenkins in the Early Learning & K-12 Education committee. “This bill addresses the issue of low math and science skills and its impact on the future competitiveness of the United States in the global economy,” said Sen. Lamphere. Recent international test scores indicate that the U.S. is far behind other countries in these two areas. “We are

simply being out-educated, and we need to change that,” said Sen. Jenkins. Teachers’ salaries are much lower here than in other countries; and, consequently, the education of our students is suffering, according to the senators. Teachers may also be lacking in experience, making it hard for their students to learn from them. This bill will require that all math and science teachers have degrees in the subjects they teach and will require school districts to adopt teaching strategies from other countries, such as Japan,



where students score much higher. “Costs to solve this problem will be relatively low, and will be directed towards teachers salaries, and new curriculum. Students with a better math and science education will qualify for higher paying jobs than they would with a weaker education, and the economy would benefit as a result,” said Sen. Lamphere.

## Honey, I Shrank the Kids!

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Samuel Meier, Payton Manning, Aaliyah Johnson, and Melo Johnson introduced House Bill 3323, which addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it will help our children become much healthier,” said Rep. Meier. Obesity in children ages 2-19 has tripled since 1980. Nationally approximately 12.5 million young people under 20 are considered obese. “This problem will only continue to rise if we don’t educate our citizens,” said Rep. Aaliyah Johnson. All public schools will be required to provide 90 minutes

of exercise per day, if this bill becomes law. In addition, school vegetable gardens will be established to provide fresh food for school lunches. New snack guidelines will

also be established. “Millions of Washingtonians spend thousands of dollars on medical help related to obesity. If we can stop obesity at an early age, we can spend the money on other things,” said Rep. Manning.



## Washington cleans up the air

Olympia – Senate Bill 6358 was introduced yesterday in the Environment & Marine Waters committee by Senators Laura Cronin, Sonora Hetrick, and Amelia Breithaupt. “This bill addresses the issue of carbon dioxide emissions in our state and will dramatically improve the health of our citizens,” said Sen. Hetrick. Vehicles are the leading source of hazard-



ous air pollution. When cars idle, carbon emissions increase at a faster rate. This causes health problems such as reduced lung function, asthma, eye irritation, and reduced resistance to colds. The bill requires that all cars manufactured since 2000 pass a yearly vehicle emissions standard test. Cars that do not pass will need to be repaired and retested. If their cars do not pass, they have to fix the car, and the retest is free. “This bill strengthens the law that already exists by expanding emission tests to all counties,” said Sen. Breithaupt.

## Minors no longer tried as adults

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Albert Fujii and James Gardner introduced Senate Bill 5624, which addresses the issue of charging juvenile as adults in criminal courts. “The bill is a



good one because it allows juveniles who have made mistakes to have a second chance at rehabilitation,” said Sen. Fujii. An article in the *Seattle Post*

*Intelligencer* reported that Washington is among only six states that have charged children as young as 13 to life in prison without any possibility of parole. “When sentenced to adult prisons, these children receive little or no education, no mental health services or rehabilitative counseling. They reoffend at twice the

rate of those sent to juvenile courts,” said Sen. Gardner. In order to protect juveniles from the dangers of being sent to adult prisons and to deter them from re-offending, this bill will require that all children under the age of 18 be tried in a juvenile court. “Kids this young are still developing and maturing. They have trouble assessing risk, controlling impulsive behavior and engaging in moral reasoning the way an adult can. They need a chance to learn from their mistakes and they can't do that behind bars for life,” said Sen. Fujii.

## Second-hand smoke chokes young passengers

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Preston Froula, Tiana Brundage, and Josh Goodwin introduced House Bill 1249, which addresses the issue of smoking in cars where passengers are young children. “The bill is a good one because it will help save many youngsters from serious illnesses related to second-hand smoke,” said Rep. Goodwin. Cigarette smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer-causing



and the concentration of second-hand smoke in cars can exceed that in homes and bars by 10 to 100 times. Babies and children who are exposed to the smoke are at an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome, acute respiratory infections, ear infections, and more severe and frequent asthma attacks. The bill bans the smoking of pipes, cigars or cigarettes in motor vehicles where the passengers are under the age of 18. A fine of \$150 or 24 hours of community service will be the penalty for a traffic violation. “This will be a secondary traffic offense to start, but we are thinking of changing it to a primary offense in the near future,” said Rep. Froula.

## 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. Also, check out TVW.org and search for Page School in the Archives to watch yourself in the committee hearings.

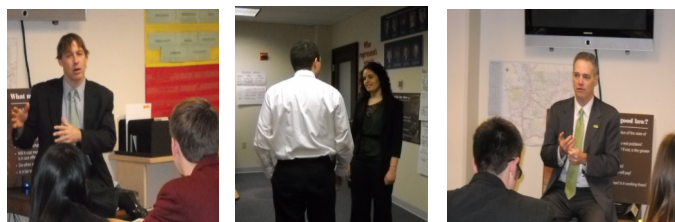


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## Guest speakers visit Page School

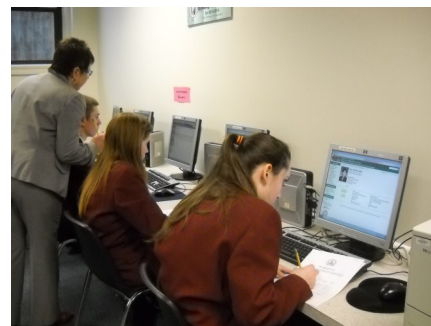
Adam Cooper, Legislative Assistant for Sen. Kohl-Welles; Julianne Behar, Voter Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Secretary of State’s office; and Representative Ross Hunter (D-Medina) from the 48th district joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Each spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information in regard to the legislative process. Pages were able to interact with the guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker’s questions.

## 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.

## Teachers passionate about civic education

The Washington State Legislature’s 2013 Page School employs certificated civics teachers Judi Orr and Lisa McGrath. Judi is a retired social studies and English teacher who taught for over 35 years in the Clover Park School District, and Lisa has been teaching over 15 years in public high schools and at the college level in North Carolina. “I just moved to Washington in November and am loving learning about my new state,” said Lisa. Both teachers enjoyed meeting students from all parts of Washington and teaching them more about how state government functions. “One of my favorite activities is watching committee hearings. Seeing citizens testify about various issues alongside experts in the field is just fascinating to me,” said Judi.



## Page program over 120 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.

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

# Autographs and Stuff...