



The Weekly Page

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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 juveniles charged as adults, the dangers of cheerleading, gun violence, and wolf attacks in Eastern Washington. 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.

Vouchers and education for all



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Nicole Jevons, Alicyn Sauvageau, and Zane Vanderwood introduced House Bill 2601, which addresses the issue of poor academic performance by high school graduates.

“The bill is a good one because it will increase options in the educational system and provide higher quality education programs,” said Rep. Vanderwood. The United States places 19th out of 40 countries in math scores and 16th out of 20 in science scores, according to international studies. “This is due, in part, to children who do not have the educational opportunities they should,” said Rep. Jevons. This bill introduces a voucher system to replace the current public school enrollment requirements. “Schools will actually need to compete for students and their funds, and this will motivate schools to offer high quality programs,” said Rep. Sauvageau.

Gay couples banned from adopting



Olympia— Representative Hannah Stuart introduced House Bill 1635 yesterday in the Health and Human Services committee hearings.

“This bill addresses the issue of homosexuals adopting children and will prohibit gay couples from becoming the legal guardians of any child through adoption,” said Rep. Stuart. She says that children are likely to follow in their parents’ footsteps and become homosexuals themselves, which can lead to drug abuse, mental illness, suicidal tendencies, and shorter life spans. According to the American College of Pediatricians, children need both a mother and a father because mothers and fathers parent differently and make unique contributions to the overall development of the child. “Rather than increasing the negative effects caused by gay parenting, we should protect the physical and emotional health of children. This bill will do that by prohibiting these couples from adopting,” she said.

Cheerleaders get extra bounce



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Calista Waltman, and Kimberly Myers introduced Senate Bill 7119, which addresses the issue of the dangers of cheerleading. “The bill is a good one because it will help make cheer-

leading safer,” said Sen. Waltman. In the last 25 years, cheerleading accounted for more than half of the 112 catastrophic injuries to female high school and college athletes, including three deaths. This bill requires all schools and public cheer organizations to use mats that are at least four inches thick. In addition, springboard floors must be installed to reduce injuries that are most commonly sustained on traditional wood floors. “We’re seeing more students trying skills they shouldn’t; that’s where the injuries occur,” said Sen. Myers. “We need to make sure when they fall they have a softer landing.”

Second chance for juvenile offenders



Olympia – Senate Bill 5768 was introduced yesterday by Senators Claire Cook and Ross Brooker. “This bill addresses the issue of juveniles being charged as adults in court and will help rehabilitate young offenders,” said Sen.

Cook. From 1999 to 2007, more than 1,550 Washington children were tried and sentenced as adults, the majority for robbery and assault charges. “We know that kids that are sent to adult prison are at greater risks of assault and death in adult jails and reoffend at around twice the rate of those sent to juvenile court,” said Sen. Brooker. This bill will prohibit youth under the age of 18 from being charged as adults in court. “Young people in the adult system are exposed to a toxic atmosphere, whereas young people in the juvenile system have the opportunity to rebuild their lives. In the juvenile detention centers, young offenders will get a second chance at a brighter future through the educational programs and mental health counseling offered there,” said Sen. Cook.

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 educating parents of the harmful effects of parental abduction, a concern regarding juvenile firearms and weapons crimes, and including children 14 or younger in the aggravated first degree murder provisions, as well as other compelling issues. Many House committees and some Senate committees devoted the week to work sessions, where they studied issues such as homelessness and the future higher education needs in the fields of aerospace, viticulture, and health care, which might later turn into bills.

Guest speakers visit Page School



Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn, Code Reviser Kylie Thiessen, and Rep. Larry Springer (D-Kirkland) from the 45 legislative 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.



Senators take the bang out of bullets



Olympia – Senate Bill 6936 was introduced yesterday by Senators Brandon Harbo, Daisy Ward, and Cameron Limes. “This bill addresses the issue of gun violence and will make our society safer,” said Sen. Harbo.

There were 62 mass shootings between 1982 and 2012, and 35 of the 142 weapons used were assault weapons. Sixty-eight of them were semiautomatic handguns. “After the shooting rampage at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, which left 20 students and six educators dead, we felt like we just had to do something to prevent a situation like this happening in our state,” said Sen. Ward. The lawmakers have an extensive solution to the gun violence problem. Major parts of the bill include banning the sale of assault weapons, reducing the capacity of

ammunition clips to a maximum of 16 bullets, lengthening the waiting period to six months, and encouraging counties to buy back legally purchased assault weapons. “When there is strict control on gun ownership, gun violence goes down and we have a safer community,” said Sen. Limes.

Help the children come home



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Tess Lally and Natasha Eldridge introduced Senate Bill 7998, which addresses the issue of homeless children. “The bill is a good one because it

will help get children off the streets and into affordable low-income homes,” said Sen. Lally. Bill 7998 will provide homeless shelters and affordable living for low-income families by taxing the citizens of Washington who earn over \$400,000 a year. More than 10,000 children under six years of age in the state do not have a permanent roof over their head, according to the senators. Washington is 25th in the nation for child homelessness. “Taxing the rich may be a bit controversial, but we are putting this money to a good cause,” said Sen. Eldridge.

Senators call for stricter background checks



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Jacob Busse and Dean Allen introduced Senate Bill 7069, which addresses the issue of gun violence. “The bill is a good one because it will help to reduce the chances of guns falling into the hands of potentially violent and dangerous individuals,” said

Sen. Busse. This bill will require all potential gun buyers to pass an enhanced background check and a mental health test. Illegal sales could result in fines up to \$5,000, depending on the type and number of weapons sold. “You will no longer be able to sell guns at state fairs, county fairs, or other such events,” said Sen. Allen. The bill is a result of the numerous mass shootings in the past 30 years throughout the United States. In the 62 mass shootings since 1982, 49 shooters obtained their guns legally. “Obviously, there is something lacking in our current requirements for buying weapons,” said Sen. Busse.

Farmers take back their livestock



Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Zac Ladd introduced House Bill 1634, which addresses the issue of predatory wolves in Eastern Washington. “The bill is a good one because it will give farmers

and ranchers the right to protect and defend their livestock,” said Rep. Ladd. In July 2012, the Wedge Pack, a group of at least eight wolves, is believed to have killed or injured at least 15 cattle from the Diamond M herd, which grazes in a large area near the Canadian border. “Dead cows have resulted in unhappy ranchers,” said Rep. Ladd. In order to stop the loss of livestock to wolves, the Legislature will permit farmers and ranchers to shoot and kill any wolf that comes within 25 yards of any of their livestock.

Life preserver thrown to college students drowning in debt



Olympia – House Bill 3472 was introduced yesterday in the Business and Financial Services committee by Representatives Emily Grahn, Jenna Gordon, and Kelly Bolma. “This bill addresses the issue of aggressive credit card companies on college campuses and will protect students from racking up huge debts they can’t pay back,” said Rep. Bolma. Seventy-five percent of college students have credit cards, some accumulating up to \$15,000 in debt before graduation. In 2004, the average undergraduate owed \$2,169 on credit cards. Two years later that number grew to four times the amount. This bill will limit college students to only one credit card, unless the student has a valid co-signer or a pre-paid card. “College students are drowning in debt, and it is our duty to send them a life preserver,” said Rep. Grahn.

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Legislators say leave children behind



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Xenon Berkeley and William Veatch introduced Senate Bill 7149, which addresses the issue of high school graduation requirements. “The bill is a good one because it will protect the educational rights of

students who are not capable of working at what is determined to be state standard,” said Sen. Berkeley. Currently Washington State has only a 76 percent graduation rate, tied for 32nd alongside California, according to the lawmakers. This bill will abolish the use of standardized tests as a determinant for graduation.

Lawmakers want to improve pot law to help medical marijuana patients



Olympia – House Bill 6984 was introduced yesterday by Senators Harry Brelsford and Kade Brackett. “This bill addresses the issue of the difficulty of obtaining medical marijuana,” said Sen. Brackett. The City of Tacoma sent letters to 19 medical marijuana dis-

pensaries last year, ordering them to stop selling to patients. According to the city, the medical marijuana law did not authorize these businesses to distribute the drug. “You can grow medical marijuana for yourself or someone else can grow it for you, but if you don’t know how to grow it or don’t know someone who does, you can’t easily get it without places like dispensaries,” said Sen. Brelsford. The new bill proposes making marijuana legal for all citizens 21 or older. “When everyone can have it, and there is a system in place for distribution, it will solve this problem,” said Sen. Brelsford.

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.

Schools must improve nutritional standards for meals



Olympia – House Bill 1717 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Sarah Harper, Alysse Normoyle, and Colin Albert. “This bill addresses the issue of childhood obesity and will eliminate unhealthy school lunches and the harmful advertising of unhealthy foods,” said Rep. Normoyle. According to the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students and staff are not healthy and fit physically, mentally, and socially. It is estimated that childhood obesity is nearing 20 percent because of the increased consumption of foods high in calories and fats. If passed, this legislation will set stricter nutritional standards for school meal programs which will include limiting the amount of sugars and fats sold in school cafeterias. All schools will be required to provide a minimum of 30 minutes per day for physical education. There will also be restrictions on advertising unhealthy food and sugar-sweetened drinks on school campuses.

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 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

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

Autographs and Stuff...