



The Weekly Page

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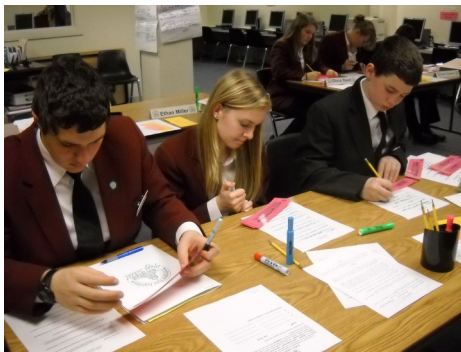
FEBRUARY 1, 2013

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 abortion, gun violence, wolf attacks in Eastern Washington, and smoking in cars when children are passengers. 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.

Farmers biting back against wolf depredation



Olympia – Senate Bill 5001 was introduced yesterday by Senators Johnathan Bjerk, Nicole Jones, and Samantha Burbee. “This bill addresses

the issue of wolf attacks in Eastern Washington and will reduce livestock depredation,” said Sen. Jones. Currently it is illegal for ranchers to defend their livestock by eliminating the wolves, which are an endangered species in the state and protected by law. “The Diamond M Ranch in North Stephens county reported a loss of more than 40 heard of cattle to wolves last year,” said Sen. Bjerk. By law ranchers are paid for livestock lost, but this is costing a lot of money, according to the lawmakers. This legislation will allow farmers to defend livestock on their property by shooting wolves on site if they appear to be threatening animals. “This will not only reduce the compensations for killed livestock but will also protect the interests of farmers,” said Sen. Burbee.

Lawmakers set credit card company limits on college campuses

Olympia – House Bill 2052 was introduced yesterday in the Higher Education committee by Representatives Ethan Miller and Austin Grandon. “This bill addresses the issue of aggressive credit card companies on university campuses and will help students manage their finances,” said Rep. Grandon. Too often on college and university campuses, young students are being taken advantage of by the aggressive tactics of overly predatory credit card companies, according to the legislators. This bill will set limits on company marketing tactics used on college campuses, require a 20 percent interest cap, and place a \$500 spending limit on cards.



Smoking in vehicles prohibited when children present



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Anna Brooks and Maggie Ugelstad introduced House Bill 3997, which addresses the issue of children exposed to secondhand smoke in vehicles. “The

bill is a good one because it ensures the safety of our vulnerable young people,” said Rep. Ugelstad. Tests have shown that air pollution in smokers’ cars can reach levels nearly 10 times the hazardous levels set by the Environmental Protection Agency. Studies also indicate children are more at risk than adults for adverse health effects of secondhand smoke, ranging from ear infections to asthma and bronchitis. This bill prohibits adult drivers from smoking while in a moving vehicle when a child age 13 or younger is a passenger. “The secondary offense will carry a \$101 fine; and after three violations, offenders may have their license suspended and a higher fine,” said Rep. Brooks.

Senators fight for lives of the unborn

Olympia – Senate Bill 5327 was introduced yesterday in the Law and Justice committee by Senators Kailey Jones and Kari Johnson. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion and will save the lives



of more unborn children,” said Sen. Jones. While most states require counseling, a waiting period and/or parental consent, Washington does not, according to the legislators. “In our state there were more than 20,000 abortions in 2011; and in 2010, 1,253 abortions were performed on children under the age of 18,” said Sen. Johnson. This bill requires parental consent before any child under the age of 18 gets an abortion. “Our intent is to reduce the number of abortions and promote the sanctity of life. Studies in other states have shown that parental involvement laws cut abortion rate by up to 50 percent,” said Sen. Jones.

Local farms to provide healthy produce for school lunches



Olympia – Yesterday in the Early Learning & K-12 Education committee, Senators Will Lewis and Julian Kral introduced Senate Bill 6999, which addresses the

issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it will encourage a healthy lifestyle for our adolescents and improve the farm economy in our state,” said Sen. Kral. The bill will require public schooling districts to buy produce from local Washington farms, incorporating healthier food choices into the lunch programs. The state spends \$1.3 billion on obesity-related health issues every year. The obesity rate in children aged 2-19 has tripled since 1980. “These staggering numbers will continue to grow, unless a change is incorporated into the lives of Washington’s children,” said Sen. Lewis. “This is a win-win situation—better health for our children, more business to local farmers, and lower health costs for the state.”

Legislators drop the call on young drivers

Olympia – House Bill 1333 was introduced yesterday in the Transportation committee by Representatives Bandhanjit Singh,



Jon Michael Halvorson, and Caden Wilhelmsen. “This bill addresses the issue of cell phone use by new drivers and will result in fewer accidents on our roadways,” said Rep. Singh. In America every year about 2.1 million car crashes are caused due to talking on cell phones and texting. “Most of these crashes are caused by people between the ages of 16 and 21,” said Rep. Wilhelmsen. If this bill becomes a law, it will bump up the age of the all-cell-phone ban while driving to 21. According to scientific research, the human brain does not reach full maturity until at least the mid-20s. “The brain isn’t fully mature at 16, when we are allowed to drive; or at 18, when we are allowed to vote; or at 21, when we are allowed to drink, but closer to 25 when we are allowed to rent a car,” said Rep. Halvorson.

Legislature endorses sleeping in

Olympia—Senators Quinn Weber, Miller White and Naseem Tirhi introduced Senate Bill 5202 yesterday in committee hear-



ings. “This bill addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and will improve the health and academic success of our high schoolers,” said Sen. White. Research shows that early school start times are hindering the ability of students to learn and be fully aware during school hours. Biological development in teens prevents them from going to sleep at early hours, so current average school start times do not allow for them to get the full amount of sleep they need, according to the lawmakers. If this bill passes into law, public high schools will be required to start no earlier than 9 a.m. “Where pushing back start times by 30 to 60 minutes has occurred, there were improvements in attendance, daytime alertness, and better moods of students,” said Sen. Tirhi.

Head injuries hound athletes



Olympia – House Bill 3737 was introduced yesterday by Representative Sam Tilford. “This bill addresses the issue of concussions sustained in contact sports and will make coaches

more accountable for their athletes,” said Rep. Tilford. Each year, between 1.6 and 3.8 million sports-and recreation-related concussions are sustained in the United States, many of which are on football fields. Former players such as Michael Zordich, have stated that after receiving a concussion, they went back into the game. Rep. Tilford cited a recent study commissioned by the National Football League which found that former players ages 30-49 were more likely than their peers to have received diagnoses of dementia and other memory-related diseases." The bill requires all schools to have equipment that meets standard in a yearly check and requires all coaches and physicians to check players who have received a head injury and clear them before they can re-enter practice or a game.

Math and science improvements will help students compete in global marketplace



Olympia – Senate Bill 6562 was introduced yesterday in the Education committee by Senators Sarah Myers and Olivia Reed. “This bill addresses the issue of math and science

education and should raise scores on standardized test,” said Sen. Myers. Currently high school students are lacking in science and math skills, placing them at a disadvantage for future global jobs, according to the lawmakers. In the 2011-2012 MSP/HSPE results, the percentile of students passing the math section was significantly lower than that of students passing the reading section. Not only are the students not easily passing

these tests, but not all of their teachers are as qualified as they should be. Nationally, among high school physical science teachers, 55 percent do not have at least a minor in any of the physical sciences. All of these problems lead to the United States being near the bottom when compared to other high schools around the world. “This bill will require that all science and math teachers be rated as highly qualified to continue teaching at the high school level and will require students to complete four science and four math classes for graduation,” said Sen. Reed. Funding will need to increase by 5 percent for the science and math departments in order to accomplish these goals. “While it may sound like an expensive solution, it will result in our next generation being able to compete in the global job market,” said Sen. Myers.

House members tackle gun violence



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Jacob LaRoque and Owen Thompson introduced House Bill 1928, which addresses the

issue of gun violence. “The bill is a good one because it will make our communities safer,” said Rep. Thompson. Sixty-two mass shootings have occurred in the U.S. in the past 30 years. Of these, 49 shooters obtained their weapons legally. In 2011, 79 people were murdered by firearms in Washington State. “Increasing controls for the possession of handguns is paramount to reducing the potential impact of this violence,” said Rep. LaRoque. If passed, this bill would impose new restrictions and limitations on handgun purchases and ammunition capacity. The representatives are proposing limiting the size of magazine clips to six rounds, increasing the tax on the sale of assault weapons and ammunition, and encouraging gun “buy back” programs in the state.

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.

High school athletes make the grade

Olympia – Yesterday in the Education committee Representatives Hannah Cummings, Anna Russell, and Rebekah



Bovenkamp introduced House Bill 2039, which addresses the issue of athletic eligibility standards. “The bill is a good one because it levels the playing field for all high school athletes,” said Rep. Russell. Currently not all high school eligibility standards are the same. While all must follow the minimum standards set by the WAI, many schools set higher requirements for their athletes. “This is not fair because some athletes work hard in school to be able to maintain the eligibility to play sports, while some athletes don’t work hard at all and are failing classes and are still eligible,” said Rep. Bovenkamp. This bill requires all public high school athletes to maintain a 2.5 grade point average for eligibility. “Holding students to higher standards will provide them with better skills for their future lives and jobs. Most students will rise to the occasion and meet whatever standard is set. High school athletes need to make the grade to be eligible to play,” said Rep. Cummings.

Doctor evaluations needed before renewing licenses of elderly drivers



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Siobhan Wells and Katy Sinn introduced Senate Bill 6082, which addresses the issue of elderly drivers. “The bill is a good one because

it will decrease the number of accidents caused by senior citizens,” said Sen. Wells. Many functions that are needed to drive safely are difficult for elderly drivers to perform, such looking to both ways before changing lanes due to arthritis or the absence of quick reaction times that comes with age. Acci-

dent rates begin to rise substantially at the age of 70 and take an even sharper jump at the age of 80. This bill proposes that doctors evaluate patients over the age of 70 every 2 1/2 years before they are issued a driver’s license. Those who are taking medications that could impede driving will have their licenses suspended until the medication is no longer needed. “In the next 20 years, there will be three times as many elderly drivers on our roads. We want to be sure those roads are safe for everyone and this bill should help,” said Sen. Sinn.

Committee hearings provide education on proposed bills

Students in Page School were asked to attend a real 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 authorizing a “guilty and mentally ill” plea in criminal court, preventing animal cruelty, the plight of runaway children, as well as other compelling issues.



Guest speakers visit Page School

Senator Mike Padden (R-Spokane Valley) from the 48th legislative district, Supreme Court Justice Debra Stephens, and Sen. Ann Rivers (R-LaCenter) from the 18th legislative district joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Each shared insightful information in regard to the legislative or judicial process. Pages were able to interact with the guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker’s questions.



Watch us live at TVW.org

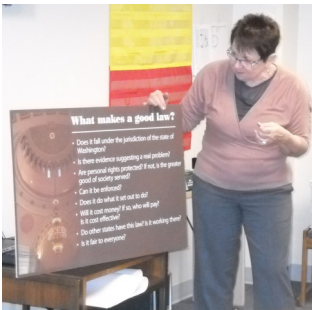
Search for Page School in the Archives to watch yourself in the committee hearings.

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.

