



The Weekly Page

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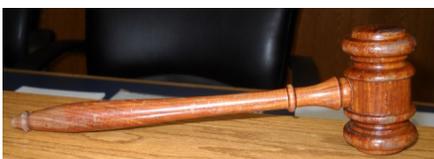
Pages Learn About Legislature



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. Topics for policy bills included wolf attacks in Eastern Washington, the dangers of metal baseball bats, abortion regulations, and elderly drivers. 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.

cannot escape exposure,” said Sen. Armstrong. The bill bans smoking in cars where children are present.

Legislature takes the metal out of the swing



Olympia – Senate Bill 6543 was introduced yesterday by Senator Alex Evenson in the Early Learning & K-12 Education committee. “This bill addresses the issue of injuries caused by metal bats and will ban them from the game of baseball at the high school level,” said Sen. Evenson. Metal bats are danger-

ous. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recently reported that eight deaths were caused by non-wood bats from 1991-2000. “A ball can leave a bat at 1.15 to 1.20 times the speed of the ball thrown at the batter. This can result in balls accelerating at speeds of over 100 miles an hour,” said Sen. Evenson. This bill proposes to ban all metal bats in public high school baseball games. The cost of switching over to wood bats will be the responsibility of the high school sports teams. Umpires in games will enforce the new law.

Lawmakers demand qualified teachers



Olympia – Senate Bill 7431 was introduced yesterday by Senators Taylor Main, Nicole Nelson, and Molly Dillon. “This bill addresses the issue of the lack of high

school math and science skills and will increase success in those subjects for high school students in Washington State,” said Sen. Nelson. Thirty percent of high school students drop out before graduation, and another 50 percent won’t finish college. “This lack of skills places them at a disadvantage for future global jobs,” said Sen. Dillon. The legislators also report that, among U.S. high school physical science teachers, over half—55 percent—do not have at least a minor in any of the physical sciences. In response to this problem, the Legislature will require teachers to have at least a minor in the high school subject they teach. In addition, they will be given an incentive to get advanced degrees in math or science through state college credits. They will earn the credits by the number of hours they spend tutoring high school students after school who need help in these subjects. “The state will lose a generation of kids if the problem is not fixed soon,” said Sen. Main.

Bill proposes regulations for elderly drivers



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Emily Frost and Nathan Dills introduced Senate Bill 6315, which addresses the issue of elderly drivers. “The bill is a

good one because it will make the roads safer for everyone,” said Sen. Frost. Measured by miles driven, crash rates of older drivers begins to climb in the 70s with a sharper jump at age 80. The oldest drivers, those 85 and up, still have the highest rate of deadly crashes per mile. “With the exception of teenage drivers, seniors have the highest probability of death resulting from an auto-related accident of any age group,” said Sen. Dills. If this bill becomes law, the roads will be a safer place to drive. The new law will require drivers 70 years and older to take a physical driving test. To cover the hiring of additional license exam-

iners, a 25 cent increase to license tabs will be levied. This will raise an estimated \$2 million.

Plastic or Paper? Neither!



Olympia – House Bill 3496 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Aubrey Gelpieryn, Sheyanne Lewis, and Davin McKin-

ley. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic and paper bag pollution and will create a cleaner environment,” said Rep. Gelpieryn. Washington State consumes over 2 billion plastic bags annually and less than five percent are recycled, according to the lawmakers. International environmental groups report that marine animals like whales, seals, and turtles are killed by plastic bags every year because they think they are food when they see them floating in the water. HB 3496 will require a \$1 tax on plastic bags and a 50 cent tax on paper bags provided by retail and grocery stores. The revenue from these taxes will used to help save the animals and habitats suffering from pollution.

Food Additives: Exposed!

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Kayla Bryson and Annie Stracener introduced House Bill 3998, which ad-



addresses the issue of the dangers of harmful food additives. “The bill is a good one because it will educate the citizens of our state and help them make better food choices,” said Rep. Bryson. Many common food additives are harmful to our health. For example, consuming too much MSG can lead to headaches, tightness in the chest, and a burning sensation in the back of the arms and neck. Aspartame has been linked to mental retardation. HB 3998 requires that foods produced and processed in Washington State have clear labels that indicate any unnatural additives found in the product. The label must also include the address to an informative website explaining the dangers of these additives and the risks of consumption.

New abortion regulations proposed



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Caitlin Kierum and Mandi Lye introduced Senate Bill 5996, which addresses the issue of

abortion. “The bill is a good one because it will save the lives of unborn children,” said Sen. Kierum. According to the senators, the state does not require abortion clinics to provide information to patients before they have the procedure. “The lack of information may lead women to subject themselves to life-altering risks,” said Sen. Lye. These risks include breast cancer and psychological effects such as anxiety and depression, as well as fetal pains. The bill includes a counseling session with the abortion doctor and a waiting period of 24 hours before obtaining the procedure. “With this proposal, we are not restricting a woman's right to have an abortion, but we are hoping that they choose another option after being more informed. Abortion is inhumane treatment of the fetus,” said Sen. Kierum. Finally, the bill requires all adult patients to have an ultrasound at their counseling session. Several states have adopted this policy and studies have shown that after the ultrasound, 15-17 percent of women do not come back for the procedure.

Cut-off week moves bills closer to becoming laws

This week pages spent time on the floor of either the House of Representatives or the Senate delivering amendments or other documents to legislators for their vote. Pages got a first-hand look at how parliamentary procedure is used as lawmakers considered bills which are still active. Hundreds of bills have been introduced in the two chambers since opening day on Jan. 14, but only about 15-20 percent will actually make it to the end of the law making process. In addition to handing out documents, pages were busy listening to their legislators express their views and watching the voting process. Wednesday, March 13, is the cutoff for bills in their house of origin. At that time, those bills which are still alive will be sent to the opposite chamber where the process of considering legislation for public hearings in committees will begin anew. Bills which make it out of the second chamber will be sent to the Governor for his approval. The 105-day session is scheduled to end on April 28.

Overcoming childhood obesity a priority



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Caitlin Pennington, Mary Hass, and Emily Drozynski introduced House Bill 2347, which addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it because it will require teachers to educate children about eating healthy foods and exercising more,” said Rep. Drozynski. In 2003-2004, about 17 percent of children and adolescents ages 2-19 were overweight. “The rate more than tripled since 1980,” says Rep. Haas. Predictions indicate in 2018, Washington’s obesity rate will increase from 30.4 percent to 41.6 percent. This bill will require all public schools to offer classes on healthy eating and staying active. The cost of adding health teachers to the public school system will come from a five cent increase in school lunches. “Studies show that kids age 7 months to 14 years old keep healthy habits if taught early in life,” said Rep. Pennington.

Legislature hits a home run!

Olympia – House Bill 3699 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Allina Flaata and Zoe Scuderi. “This bill addresses the issue of athletic eligibility and will ensure that all high



schools have equal eligibility standards,” said Rep. Flaata. Some local public schools require an overall 2.0 GPA to maintain eligibility. However, other districts allow students to fail subjects and continue to play. “This inequality creates disadvantages for student athletes who want to continue playing in college,” said Rep. Scuderi. The proposed legislation will raise the required GPA to a 2.5. “This isn’t a harsh requirement. Many college recruiters look for student athletes with a 3.25 or higher,” said Rep. Flaata.

Bill set to end wolves' 5-star dining



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Devon Hodge, Hunter Grandorff, and Patrick Cunningham introduced Sen-

ate Bill 6221, which addresses the issue of wolves killings livestock in Eastern Washington. “The bill is a good one because it will humanely put an end to livestock deaths due to wolf attacks,” said Sen. Cunningham. Bill McIrving, the owner of Diamond M. Ranch, suffered serious financial losses from wolves killing 40 cattle on his ranch over the years, and others have had the same problems. Between last June and the beginning of October, there has been confirmation of 10 dead cattle and five injured from wolves. This bill will mandate the Fish and Wildlife Department to use non-lethal anti-wolf prevention methods before ranchers can claim compensation from the State for the dead livestock. “New prevention methods will include the newly introduced ‘bio-fence,’ higher-standing electrified fences around ranch lands, and non-lethal ammunition,” said Sen. Grandorff. These new methods will be paid for by putting in place a “wolf tax” on meat grown on wolf-safe ranches. “Because having wolves in nature is highly beneficial to the environment, we believe people should be willing to pay to protect wolves in Washington. Best of all, this bill will satisfy both the environmentalists and the frustrated cattle ranchers without relying on continuous costly compensation programs,” said Sen. Hodge.

Juveniles need to be treated age-appropriately



Olympia – Senate Bill 5205 was introduced yesterday by Senators Kyle Rogers, Nicolas Dangla, and John Thornton in the

Law and Justice committee. “This bill addresses the issue of prosecuting minors as adults and will reduce the rate of youth violence,” said Sen. Thornton. Charging juveniles as adults has proven to be harmful. Minors serving in the adult prison system are denied adequate educational and social support structures that help reduce the rate of recidivism. In addition, studies show that up to 1/3 of juveniles did not comprehend the charges against them. Unfair circumstances including insufficient evidence and failure to take into account the offender's home life are also problems, according to the senators. “It isn't fair to charge juveniles as adults when their brains aren't fully developed, especially if they were born into a life of crime with no hope for a better future,” said Rep. Dangla. This bill proposes that juveniles under the age of 16 no longer be prosecuted as adults unless it is a case of first degree crimes.

State steers in a safer direction



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Mary Moeller, Melinda Andrews, and Melody Coleman introduced Senate Bill 6789, which addresses the issue of traffic safety. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce the danger from naturally impaired drivers,” said Sen. Andrews. The bill will require visual, mental, and reflex tests every five years to renew a driver's license, with the renewal time decreasing to two years with a poor grade on any of the tests. A failing grade will result in the revoking of the license with a two-week notice. “I really like this bill because it doesn't target a specific age demographic, but it will still keep elderly and other drivers who are unsafe off the road,” said Sen. Coleman. “The distribution of licenses to drive should be based on ability, not birthdays.”

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.

House bill saves infants, mothers and money



Olympia – House Bill 1835 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Matthew Jankovic and Annie Jankovic. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion access and will save the lives of innocent unborn children,

reduce psychological trauma in young mothers and fathers, and save the state thousands of dollars in revenue,” said Rep. Matt Jankovic. In 2011 doctors in the state of Washington performed 20,048 abortions. Currently the state has very few regulations surrounding the procedure. For example, potential fathers have no say in the decision to terminate a pregnancy and no counseling is necessary for women. The bill will ban abortions after the first trimester of pregnancy, except when the mother's life would be in serious danger as a result of giving birth. In addition, fathers must be notified of the planned abortion at least one week prior to the procedure. Finally, the state will no longer be allowed to provide funding for abortions. "It's a really good idea all around," said Rep. Annie Jankovic. "Lives are saved and the state saves money."

Back to the basics for the homeless

Olympia— Yesterday, Representatives Andy Ayton and Will Zike introduced House Bill 1235, which addresses the issue of the homeless. “The bill is a good one because it will combat homelessness at its core,” said Rep. Zike. This bill will educate and motivate indigent citizens, leaving them with a drive to improve their lives. By putting a small tax on big ticket purchases, mostly targeting leisure items, the state can raise the money to pay for counseling in homeless shelters, according to the lawmakers. “By finding their place as a productive citizen, homeless people will strengthen our economy as well as live a healthy life,” said Rep. Ayton.

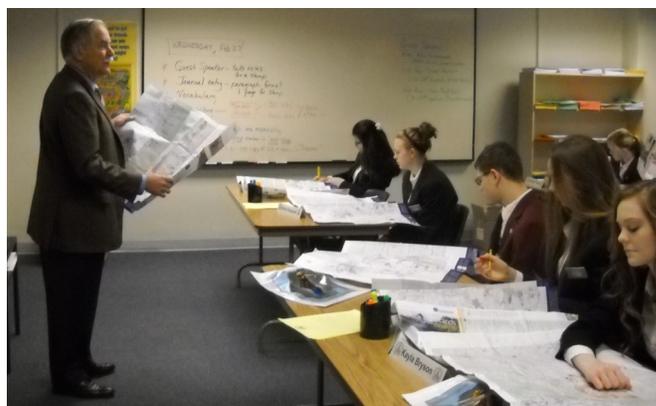


Competitive edge results in Jeopardy win

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.



Guest speakers visit Page School



Public Lands Commissioner Peter Goldmark, Rep. Drew Hansen (D-Bainbridge Island) from the 23rd district, and Rep. Chris Reykdal (D-Olympia) from the 22nd district joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. All guests shared insightful information about their jobs. Pages were able to ask questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers’ comments.

Watch us live at TVW.org

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

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 teach-



ing 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.

