



# The Weekly Page

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 9

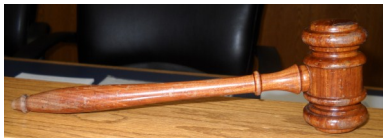
MARCH 15, 2013

## 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.

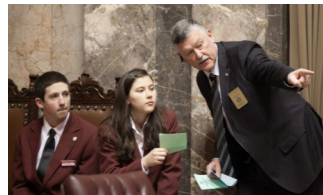


### Pages write bills, hold mock hearings

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. Topics for policy bills included 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.

### Halfway point moves bills closer to becoming laws



This Wednesday marked the cut-off for all bills from their house of origin to move to the opposite chamber. Pages spent the early part of the week working on the floor of either the House of Representatives or the Senate delivering amendments, notes from lobbyists or other documents to legislators. 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. Committees resumed their meetings on Thursday and Friday, when House bills began being scheduled for public hearings in the Senate and Senate bills began their journey in the House. 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 by April 28.

While adults smoke, kids choke



Olympia – House Bill 2817 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Olivia Weinberger and Lucas Logan. “This bill addresses the issue of smoking in cars and will protect the health of our children,”

said Rep. Logan. Exposure to second-hand smoke in youth causes diseases such as heart disease, lung cancer, or SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). The 250 chemicals found in cigarette smoke are toxic, and passengers in a vehicle cannot escape exposure. If this bill passes into law, smoking will be banned in cars when minors are present. Violators will be fined \$100.

Lawmakers call a halt to cell phone violators



Olympia – House Bill 3985 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Josh Lattin, Liam Hogan, and Robert Case. “This bill

addresses the issue of the current cell phone law and will increase compliance among drivers, as well as increase safety,” said Rep. Lattin. A recent study shows that 23 percent of all automobile accidents are caused by drivers using hand-held phones while driving, and another indicated that people who text and drive are as impaired as a person with a .16 blood-alcohol level. “Even though we have a law that prohibits using a phone while driving, many people are ignoring it,” said Rep. Hogan. The new proposal by the representatives will increase fines to \$150 and \$300 in an attempt to motivate drivers to obey the law. “After the second offense, a driver can lose his license. This is a serious problem and maybe if we hit the offender in the pocketbook, it will start to make a difference,” said Rep. Case.

Reps propose arming teachers at schools

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Jason Rowland and Sophia Whipple introduced House Bill 1514, which addresses the issue of school shootings. “The bill is a good one because it will make our schools safer,”



said Rep. Whipple. “Basic education is the paramount duty of the Legislature and basic education requires a safe learning environment,” said Rep. Rowland. School shootings are much deadlier than non-school shootings. Out of five school shootings since 1982, there was an average of 32 casualties. In the recent Sandy Hook shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, 20 elementary children under the age of 8 were killed. If this bill becomes law, teachers around the state will be allowed to carry guns in schools if they have a valid concealed weapon permit. “If teachers are armed, shooters will not only be less inclined to start shootings, but they will also be stopped before they can kill and injure people,” said Rep. Rowland.

Teens get an extra hour of sleep if bill passes



Olympia – Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senators Sophie O’Neill and Larissa Ness. “This bill addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and will improve the health and academic success of our students,” said Sen. O’Neill. Studies have shown that 85 percent of teens are getting less than the required 8.5 hours of sleep each night needed for a productive day. Teens naturally go to bed between 11 p.m. and midnight, according to the senators. This bill will order all high school to start at 9 a.m. “Beginning school at a later time will give students at least one extra hour of sleep,” said Sen. Ness.

“Beginning school at a later time will give students at least one extra hour of sleep,” said Sen. Ness.

#### Legislature requires mandatory drug testing for all companies

Olympia – Senate Bill SB 5777 was introduced yesterday by Senators Brooklyn Lynch and KayDee Weddle. “This bill addresses the issue of drug testing and will promote a safer and more productive workplace,” said Sen. Weddle. Drug testing is arbitrary and leads to low productivity and frequent workplace accidents, according to the lawmakers. Of the U.S. workers involved in a fatal workplace accident, 10-20 percent tested positive for illegal drugs. Employees who abuse drugs have more unexcused absences, are fired more often and are three times more likely to be late for work. “Most businesses do not require mandatory drug testing of their employees but they should if they want to be more successful,” said Sen. Lynch. The bill proposes mandatory pre-employment and random drug testing in the workplace. “Frequent drug testing in the work place would ensure that all employees are clean and that they are a productive member of the company versus a liability to the safety of themselves and others,” said Sen. Weddle.



#### Senators tax gas guzzlers

Olympia – Senate Bill 6442 was introduced yesterday by Senators Jason Gibbons, Treyton Howell, and Levi Hubbard. “This bill addresses the issue of carbon dioxide emissions and will create a cleaner environment,” said Sen. Gibbons. Studies show that 45 percent of greenhouse emissions come from cars and trucks. Washington state has over eight million registered vehicles. “Since one car alone can emit over 16,000 pounds of carbon dioxide, imagine how much pollution is being created by all our cars,” said Sen. Howell. This bill requires all owners of vehicles that get under 25 miles per gallon in gas to pay extra taxes. The funds will be used to pay for research for more fuel efficient vehicles.



#### Bill takes aim at assault rifles



Olympia – Senate Bill 7998 was introduced yesterday by Senators Julisia Brock, Konrad Brine, Lisa

Boyle, and Olivia Banks. “This bill addresses the issue of gun violence and will make society a safer place,” said Sen. Banks. In the last 30 years(1982-2012) there have been 62 mass shootings. In those crimes, a total of 35 assault weapons were used. “In Aurora, Colorado, James Holmes slaughtered and injured 70 innocent and unfortunate people, including many children,” said Sen. Boyle. If this bill becomes a law, all military grade assault weapons and clips of ammo containing over ten bullets per rounds will be banned. People who own guns must renew their gun licensee every two years. “Gun owners who already own assault rifles can continue to own them and use them for practice shooting at firing ranges, but they cannot sell them or use them anywhere else,” said Sen. Brock.

#### Smoke clears on House bill



Olympia – House Bill 2345 was introduced yesterday in the

Transportation committee by Representatives Jack Drennen, Ben Friedman, and Keith Carlton. “This bill addresses the issue of minors exposed to second-hand smoke in vehicles and will help kids stay healthy,” said Rep. Carlton. Second-hand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer-causing and is even more serious for infants and children who come in contact with the fumes in a closed car. Lung cancer, heart disease, asthma, respiratory infections, and ear infections are just some of the ailments that result from inhaling second-hand smoke. If this bill becomes law, smoking will be banned in vehicles when minors are passengers. Violators will be fined \$250 for each minor in the vehicle. “Although some may feel their personal rights are being infringed upon, we think the health of our children is more important,” said Rep. Friedman.

### Legislators hit the snooze button for teens

Olympia – House Bill 1111 was introduced yesterday in the Education committee by Representatives Alexandra Evans



and Liat Carlyle. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprivation in teens and will promote a healthier lifestyle and academic success for our high school students,” said Rep. Evans. Studies show that 85 percent of teenagers get less than the recommended 8.5 hours of sleep each night. This results in poor academic performance, inability to pay attention and decreased motivation, according to the lawmakers. The bill proposes that all public high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m.

### Give life a chance!

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Abbey Daniels-Brown, Julia Holder, Nathan Rowland, and Kendra Crosson introduced House



Bill 3017, which addresses the issue of abortion regulations. “The bill is a good one because it will protect minors in our community from the negative impacts of abortion, as well as mandate families to communicate what’s best for everyone,” said Rep. Daniels-Brown. The bill requires counseling, listening to the fetal heartbeat, notifying the father of the baby, and the getting the consent of at least one parent before an abortion can be performed on a minor. “Giving teen mothers a chance to listen to their child’s heartbeat has shown significant success in other states. I believe it would have a positively impact in our state,” said Rep. Rowland.

### Lawmakers tighten the belt on school lunches

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Travis Kroeger and Landon Sheffels intro-



duced Senate Bill 6224, which addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it will improve the health of our youth and save money for our healthcare system in the future,” said Sen. Kroeger. Seventeen percent of American children ages 2-19 were considered obese in a 2003 study. The rate has tripled since 1980. Obesity accounts for \$147 billion of our health care budget, as well. “Many children who are overweight are poor and participate in the free and reduced price lunch program,” said Sen. Sheffels. The senators say that one step in the right direction to help promote healthier eating is to improve the school lunch offerings. This bill sets new guidelines for fats and calories in the meals provided by schools.

### Guest speakers visit Page School

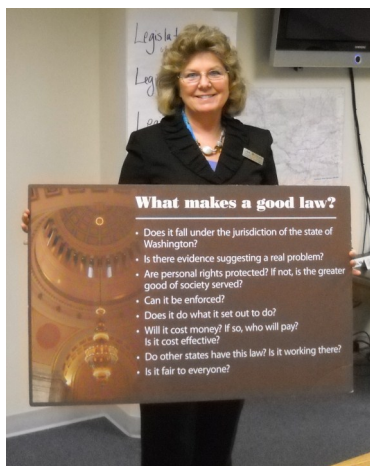


Supreme Court Justice Mary Fairhurst; Contract Lobbyist Steve Lindstrom; and Joseph Atkinson, Legislative Assistant for Rep. Linda Kochmar (R-Federal Way) from the 30th district joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. All guests shared insightful information about their jobs. Pages were able to ask questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers’ comments.

### 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.

## 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. “My favorite activities are watching committee hearings and Supreme Court cases. Seeing citizens testify at public hearings alongside experts in the field is just fascinating to me. And I love trying to figure out how the justices might vote after hearing their cases,” said Judi.



Nicole Swenson joined our class on Thursday and Friday. “I really enjoyed participating in the Mock Committee Hearing.”

## 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.

## 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)

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

