



# The Weekly Page

VOLUME 9 ISSUE 11

MARCH 29, 2013

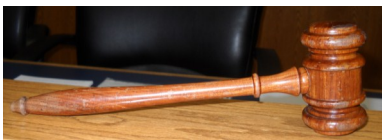
## Pages Learn About Legislature



### 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



Pages worked individually or in small groups to write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. Criteria for making a legislative solution work was discussed before students selected issues to research and develop. Then they used bill templates on class computers to formulate official-looking documents in preparation for a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Some topics for policy bills included welfare fraud using EBT cards, second-hand smoke in cars, sleep deprived teens, and dangerous food additives. Pages read their bills and “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.

### Reps make labeling changes to sodas and ban some food dyes

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Abby Ashcraft and Emily Ashcraft introduced House Bill 1515, which addresses the issue of dangerous food additives.



“The bill is a good one because it will improve the health of citizens in Washington,” said Rep. Abby Ashcraft. The sugar substitute aspartame and certain food dyes are especially unhealthy, according to the lawmakers. Red dye #40 and yellow dyes #5 and #6 have been consistently linked to hyperactivity in children. “Aspartame, which is found in almost all diet sodas, is equally dangerous and has been linked to strokes, brain tumors, and mental retardation,” said Rep. Emily Ashcraft. This bill will ban the three food dyes mentioned, as well as blue dye #1. In addition, the legislature will require all diet sodas to have a health warning label on the outside of the packaging no less than 1 1/2 inches square. “Although this may affect some people’s eating and drinking habits, this would protect society at larger and preserve the health of future generations of Washingtonians,” said Rep. Abby Ashcraft.

### While adults smoke, children choke

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Victoria Hackett and Molly Sullivan introduced House Bill 1235, which addresses the issue of secondhand smoke in vehicles. “The bill is a good one because it will provide a healthier environment for children riding in cars,” said Rep. Sullivan. Secondhand smoke is toxic, is associated with long-term health effects including lung cancer and heart disease deaths, and young passengers in a vehicle cannot escape exposure. “Children are more at risk than adults for adverse health effects of secondhand smoke, ranging from ear infections to asthma and bronchitis,” said Rep. Hackett. If this bill becomes law, smoking in cars with passengers under the age of 18 will be prohibited. “We are starting this idea out as a secondary law because we want adults to gradually get use to the new law,” explained Rep. Sullivan.



### Legislature cuts fraudulent EBT withdraws



Olympia – Senate Bill 6282 was introduced yesterday by Senators Michael Phillips, Kayla Ramez and

Andrew Ramez. “This bill addresses the issue of welfare recipients fraudulently using Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards and will save the state millions of dollars,” said Sen. Phillips. Welfare recipients collectively withdrew over \$2 million at ATM machines in casinos in the past few years. In addition, recipients are selling EBT cards on Craigslist and trading them to drug dealers on the streets. If this bill becomes a law, picture I.D. will be required on EBT cards and money will not be allowed to be withdrawn from ATMs with them. Welfare recipients will only be able to receive one replacement card per year. “Last year more than 20,000 people had their EBT cards replaced three or more times, and they were replaced on the spot, with no questions asked. This is not going to keep happening if this bill is passed,” said Sen. Kayla Ramez.

### Teenagers deprived of sleep no more

Olympia – Senate Bill 7872 was introduced yesterday by Senators J. J. Henderson, Ryan Oda, Zain Natha, and Elizabeth Myers. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprived high schoolers and will improve the health and academic success of teenagers,” said Sen. Natha. A recent poll showed that 60 percent of children under the age of 18 complained of being tired during the day. An adolescent’s biological clock is set to go to sleep and wake up at much later times than adults or young children, so the current early high school start times are negatively affecting them, according to the lawmakers. This bill will require public high schools to start no earlier than 10 a.m. “With this later schedule in operation, teenagers will be able to focus on their learning, and with more sleep, can reduce anxiety, depression, irritability and somatic complaints,” said Sen. Henderson.



### School food gardens to curb obesity

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Esther Schaaf and Amelia Brummel introduced House Bill 3888, which



addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it will provide healthy food choices and lead to healthier lifestyles for our youth,” said Rep. Brummel. The sponsors claim that unhealthy offerings in school lunches, such as foods high in saturated fat and sodium and lacking real nutrition, contribute to the obesity epidemic in the state. HB 3888 establishes sustainable food gardens on or near middle school campuses in an effort to help students become involved in some outdoor fun and take part in their nutritional education, according to the lawmakers. Funding for the gardens will come from a grant to all public middle schools to create and cultivate the gardens, which will grow vegetables, fruit, and other edibles to be used in school lunches. A temporary 15 percent tax on school ASB cards will pay for the grants.

### Child wellness a focus for legislators



Olympia – House Bill 1403 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Bianka Parrish and Samantha Nighswonger. “This bill addresses the issue of uninsured children and will help them get the medical care they

need,” said Rep. Parrish. Currently 73,000 children in Washington State have no health insurance. When uninsured children are sick, parents often rely on hospital emergency rooms for medical help. “While visiting a doctor or dentist is expensive, a trip to the emergency room is even more costly,” said Rep. Nighswonger. A doctor’s office charge for a child with asthma is about \$163. An emergency room visit for asthma costs \$382, and hospitalization costs more than \$6,000. If the bill becomes a law, the current Apple Health program will be required to provide health insurance for all children under the age of 19. Funding for the additional medical coverage will come from increased costs for over-the-counter medicines.

### House requires concussion training for players and coaches



Olympia – House Bill 2123 was introduced yesterday in the Health Care & Wellness committee by Representatives Sara Hollar, Carter

Smith, Jacek Knudson, and Kelly Nichols. “This bill addresses the issue of high school sports head injuries and will make participation safer,” said Rep. Smith. A recent study shows that between 1.6 million and 3.8 million sports and recreation-related concussions are sustained in the United States each year. The National Athletic Trainers’ Association reports that only 34 percent of Washington high schools have access to a certified athletic trainer educated in the proper concussion care. The bill proposes requiring 2-hour concussion training for coaches, players and athletic personnel involved in contact sports. “When players and coaches fail to recognize the symptoms of a concussion, it can lead to misdiagnosed injuries. Our bill will help prevent that from happening,” said Rep. Hollar.

### Background checks for all firearm sales proposed

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Matea Ped, Max Geschwind, and Katy Hunter introduced Senate



Bill 6235, which addresses the issue of gun violence. “The bill is a good one because it will create safer communities,” said Sen. Ped. Between 1982 and 2012, 62 mass shootings have occurred in 30 states, including Washington. On May 20, 2012 Ian Stawicki, 40, gunned down four patrons at a café in Seattle, Washington. Seven people were killed and injured before he shot himself while the police closed in. “The new bill aims to avert any threats of gun violence by preventing anyone with an unstable mental state from gaining ownership of a firearm,” said Sen. Hunter. In the 62 mass shootings, a majority of the gunmen showed signs of mental instability before setting out to kill. “Several of the recent gun violence events could have been thwarted altogether if our proposed background checks were in place,” said Sen. Geschwind. Both criminal and mental health checks will be required before any purchase of a firearm, if this bill is passed into law.

### Senators hit metal bats out of ballparks

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Camren Bowes, Sydney Crichton, Hunter Crichton, and Forrest Grandorff introduced Senate Bill 5001, which addresses the issue of metal base-



ball bats. “The bill is a good one because it creates a safer playing field,” said Sen. Grandorff. Current research from 2011 shows that the higher speeds of balls hit by metal bats create an extremely high risk of injury or death. In one case, an 18-year-old pitcher who had just graduated from high school was hit by a line drive to the temple and died within a few hours from his injuries. “Over 20 deaths have resulted from metal baseball bats,” said Sen. Bowes. This bill will prohibit the use of all metal bats on Little League and high school baseball teams. School districts will be required to dispose of any metal bats currently in their possession.

### Teens get more pillow time



Olympia – House Bill 1533 was introduced yesterday in the Education committee by Representatives Rachel Johnston and Emily Morris. “This bill addresses the issue of teen

sleep deprivation and will help improve teen health and academic success,” said Rep. Johnston. Experts recommend that teens get 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep, but currently 85 percent of teens are getting less than 8.5 hours of sleep per night. “Teenagers that do not get enough sleep have worse grades, more depression, anxiety, irritability, and somatic complaints; poorer attendance; and a greater tendency toward delinquency and violence,” said Rep. Morris. The bill will switch the school start times with the elementary schools. High schools will start at 10 a.m. and elementary schools will start at 7:30 a.m. “Washington should enforce the later start time in all high schools so they can also see positive changes in their students,” said Rep. Morris.

### No smoking allowed...if children present

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Brittain Cartwright and Hannah Farr introduced House Bill 7164, which



addresses the issue of second hand smoke in cars. “The bill is a good one because it will promote better health for our youth,” said Rep. Cartwright. Smoke contains more than 250 toxic chemicals that are known to cause lung cancer, heart disease and ear infections. Tests have shown that air pollution in smokers’ cars can reach levels of nearly 10 times the hazardous levels set by the EPA, according to the legislators. This bill will restrict drivers who have passengers under the age of 18 from smoking in the vehicle. Violators will pay a \$100 fine. “Arkansas, Louisiana, Maine, and California all have similar laws. We should join this health-conscious group of states,” said Rep. Farr.

### Recent fatalities show need for stricter DUI laws

Olympia – House Bill 2937 was introduced yesterday in the Transportation committee by Representatives Chris



Teller, Josh Gonzalez, and Alex Tagami. “This bill addresses the issue of drunk driving and will improve safety on our roads and save more lives,” said Rep. Gonzalez. On March 25 a couple in Seattle were killed and their daughter-in-law and new grandchild were in critical condition after a driver with his third DUI hit them. “We need to try to stop these tragedies from happening,” said Rep. Tagami. Drunk driving accounted for 32 percent of all traffic-related deaths in the United States in 2009 and presented a cost of \$51 billion to American taxpayers. Washington state is ranked 8th on the list of highest percent of DUI-related deaths at 37 percent. This bill proposes to require special colored license plates for repeat DUI offenders. “This will notify other drivers and the police that the person behind the wheel may be driving drunk,” said Rep. Teller. Drivers with more than one DUI in a span of 10 years will have to pay a fee of \$125 for the colored plates they will be required to display on their cars.

### 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 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.

Guest speakers visit Page School



House of Representatives Leadership Counsel Mike Hoover, Sen. Joe Fain (R-Auburn) from the 47th district, and contract lobbyist Steve Lindstrom joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Each spoke about what led him to his current position and shared insightful information in regard to the legislative process. Pages were able to interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker's questions.



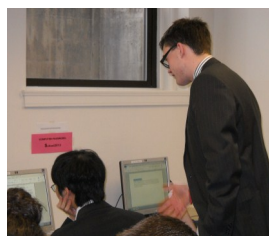
Teachers passionate about teaching civics



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.

Interns use their own writing skills to help pages with bills and media releases



Every Wednesday, like clock-work, House and Senate interns arrive in class just as instructions are being given to pages on how to craft the language in their bills. As the students

get settled in front of computers and access the templates for their bill writing activity, the college aides are poised to answer questions, help supply appropriate wording, and help edit wordy sentences. Angela Bastien and James Gutsch were joined by Zach Santos this week in the 3 p.m. page school class. "Angela and James have been so reliable this session," said Judi. "I couldn't get the newsletter even started before the end of the day, if it wasn't for their help." The two page school teachers create a souvenir newsletter for the students to take home at the end of the week. "Judi edits the media releases they write after they compose their bills and inserts them in the newsletter before she goes home on Wednesday. I add the photos that are taken during the week after our last mock committee hearing on Thursday, so it is a team project," said Lisa. Both teachers agree that the interns have a nice way of approaching the students with ideas and critiques, which makes it a win-win opportunity for all involved.

Watch us live at TVW.org

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

### 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.

