



# 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 society 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.

### House drops bill on dropout rates

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Sarah Swartz and Natalie Bartels introduced House Bill 1007, which addresses the issue of high school attendance policies. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce the high school dropout rate,” said Rep. Bartels. Currently some school districts do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences and fail a student in a class after a number of absences of any kind. “In many cases, the student had little motivation to show up to class because he or she had already failed,” said Rep. Swartz. Bill 1007 will establish a state standard for missing a reasonable number of classes with unexcused absences before it affects class credit. without affecting their grade.



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### 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 wolf control, unwanted pregnancies, high school attendance policies, hunger and recycling. 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.

### Wolves, watch out!

Olympia—Yesterday, Representative Andrew McClure introduced House Bill 3674, which addresses the issue of wolves in Eastern Washington. “The bill is a good one because it will help rural farmers and their livestock,” said Rep. McClure. The bill will limit the size of the wolf population by giving out limited permits for hunting the animals. If a wolf or wolf pack attacks a farmer or rancher, he can eliminate the offending animal. The Dept. of Fish and Wildlife will be responsible for enforcing the new law.



## Old hunting law shot down

Olympia – Senate Bill 5324 was introduced yesterday by Senator Joel Thompson. “This bill addresses the issue of hunting license age limits and will reduce the number of hunting accidents caused by young hunters,” said Sen. Thompson. A number of deaths and injuries are caused by underage hunters. Currently the state of Washington has no age requirements for obtaining a hunting license. Bill 5324 will require that all hunters under age 16 hunt with an adult. In addition, both the young hunter and the adult hunter must have hunting licenses, and they both must have taken a state-approved hunting safety course



## No more unemployment

Olympia – Senate Bill 5678 was introduced yesterday by Senator Eric Shaw. “This bill addresses the issue of unemployment and will provide a job for anyone who wants one,” said Sen.



Shaw. Over 350,000 Washington workers are currently unemployed. If this bill becomes law, the state will provide free training, housing, and medication for unemployed Washingtonians who need it. The new workers will build transportation systems, improve state infrastructure, install telecommunication upgrades, and provide research and development ideas. In order to pay for this, foreign goods will be taxed up to 50 percent. Washington state bonds will also be sold to finance the project.

## Credit cards kill future for college students

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Emily Stiles, Chace Raiter, and Richard Hubbard introduced Senate Bill 7247, which addresses



the issue of aggressive credit card companies on college campuses. “The bill is a good one because it will keep credit card companies from feeding upon

helpless, naïve students and prevent them from going into even greater debt,” said Sen. Hubbard. The increasing number of indebted students is skyrocketing, according to the senators.

“Companies lure cash-starved students with gifts of clothing and free food,” said Sen. Raiter. The bill will force companies to solicit only those students who make more than \$15,000 a year. In addition, the credit card companies must provide a class on personal financial management free of charge to all students. Colleges and universities will not be allowed to give out information about how to contact a student, and companies may not offer “free” gifts in exchange for signing up for a card.

## Hang up and drive... really!

Olympia – Senate Bill 6729 was introduced yesterday by Senators Alex Golikov and Cameron Gehrke. “This bill addresses the issue of cell phone use while driving and will prevent deaths and injuries due to distracted drivers,” said Sen. Golikov. According to the senators, research has shown that driving while talking on a cell phone makes a person as likely to cause a car accident as someone who is driving drunk. “It can be dangerous to young and experienced drivers alike. No one is hanging up his phone with the existing law and it's very hard to enforce. By changing the existing law from a secondary to a primary infraction, we will minimize accidents and save lives,” said Sen. Gehrke.



## Recycling units to be mandated in stores

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Christina Gaebel introduced Senate Bill 7326, which addresses the issue of recycling. “The bill is a good one because it will provide an additional recycling option to those who want to help conserve our resources,” said Sen. Gaebel. The bill requires at least one public recycling unit in every major shopping center and grocery store. “This way, people will have an easy way to help protect our planet by helping to keep potentially recyclable materials out of ever-rising landfills,” said Sen. Gaebel.



### Ban on chocolate considered

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Jennifer Bjorklund, Riley Osborn and Marie Claire Sbragia introduced Senate Bill 6999, which addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it promotes healthy eating in schools which will hopefully lead to healthy lifestyle choices when the children and teenagers become adults,” said Sen. Sbragia. This bill would ban unhealthy junk food from vending machines in schools, as well as have cafeterias replace fried, sugary, fatty or other unhealthy foods with more nutritious options, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean meats. “Not only would this expose kids to healthy meal ideas, it would prevent the alarming prevalence of obesity related conditions, Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure among them,” said Sen. Bjorklund. Once seen only in adults, these diseases are now seen with alarming frequency in school age children. If stopped now, it would save Washington state an estimated \$4.165 million in health care by 2018. “Senate Bill 6999 will save not only today’s children, from life-altering health complications, but tomorrow’s as well,” said Sen. Osborn.



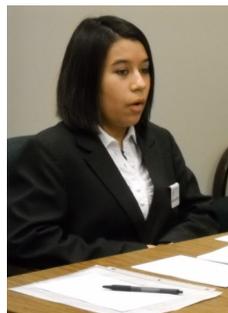
### Garbage reduction the objective of senate bill



Olympia – Senate Bill 5930 was introduced yesterday by Senator Micah Corwin. “This bill addresses the issue of the plastic bag problem in our state and will encourage the use of reusable bags said Sen. Corwin. Plastic bags are a major form of garbage. They are extremely hard to dispose of and cause 95 percent of litter on streets and highways. To encourage citizens to quit using plastic bags, the legislature will impose a 2 cent tax per bag used in grocery stores, if this bill becomes law. In

addition, grocery stores will be mandated to supply shoppers with reusable bags. “We want to encourage the use of cloth or recycled bags, and this tax should help speed that habit along,” said the senator.

### Rep. Gallegos sets hunting age



Olympia – House Bill 3005 was introduced yesterday by Representative Cassandra Gallegos. “This bill addresses the issue of hunting safety and will set a minimum age of 18 for unsupervised hunters. Hunters under the age of 18 must be supervised by a hunter with at least five years of experience,” said Rep. Gallegos. In 2008 a 14-year-old boy, hunting with his 16-year-old brother, shot and killed a hiker he mistook for a bear. “It was only a matter of time before something like this happened. Maybe, if this law had been in place, a life could have been saved,” said Rep. Gallegos.

### Charlton and O'Brien propose dropout legislation

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Daniel Charlton and William O’Brien introduced House Bill 2652, which addresses the issue of dropout prevention. “The bill is a good one because it will increase the amount of high school graduates,” said Rep. Charlton. This bill will require that students who decide to drop out of high school must finish the remaining years of schooling in another form of education that is approved by a teacher or principal and parent. For example, a student may agree to attend culinary school or take an apprenticeship in some trade. “We just want to ensure that the student will be able to make a living for himself, and statistics show that dropouts often end up in dead end jobs,” said Rep. O’Brien.



## House attempts to stop cyberbullying

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Lindsey Fagerlie introduced House Bill 1110, which addresses the issue of cyberbullying. “The bill is a good one because it stops teens from thinking that it’s OK to anonymously say something mean and hurtful and get away with it,” Rep. Fagerlie. If the bill is passed, it would require schools to educate students on the dangers of using the internet to harass others. “Teens have committed suicide after cyberbullying incidents,” said Rep. Fagerlie. “Today we have developed software that allows us to monitor the usage of social websites, such as MySpace and Facebook. With the help of these websites, we are able to put a stop to cyberbullying,” she said.



## Reps focus on hunger

Olympia – House Bill 1277 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Grace Lindsey, Brianna Hinds, and Jacqueline Beal. “This bill addresses the issue of hunger in and will make food stamps accessible to more people,” said Rep. Lindsey. Only 62 percent of Washingtonians who qualify for food stamps get them. “Our plan will allow those minimum-wage workers between 16 and 30 years old to take advantage of the state program. All homeless citizens will be eligible for food stamps, too,” said Rep. Beal.



## Dust off your snooze button

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Sydnie Fenske and Lacey Retzlaff introduced House Bill 1009, which addresses the issue of sleep deprivation in teens. “The bill is a good one because it will help students get the amount of sleep they need to be successful in school,” said Rep. Retzlaff. The new bill will push start times for all high schools in Washington State to no earlier than 8 a.m. Currently, many teenage students are considered to be sleep deprived, which can cause health problems and



interfere with learning. Experts recommend that teens get 8.5-9.5 hours of sleep, only 15 percent of teens are reported to get this amount daily. Public support for this bill is very high. According to the National Sleep Foundation's 2002 poll, 80 percent of respondents said high schools should start no earlier than 8 a.m. each day. “There are many advantages to passing the bill,” said Rep. Fenske. “There is less likelihood of teenage depression, reduced tardiness in schools, reduced absenteeism, better grades, and reduced risk of teenage obesity.”

## Senators call for more unbiased information

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Katie Corwin and Lilja Voetberg introduced Senate Bill 5810, which addresses the issue of abortion. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce the number of abortions in the state,” said Sen. Voetberg. The National Cancer Institute showed that there is a 40 percent increase of cancer in women who have abortions and 150 percent increase in women who are under 18 when they have an abortion. In 2002 86,000 women under 18 had abortions in the United States. “This is deplorable,” said Sen. Corwin. If this bill becomes law, the legislature will require all Planned Parenthood organizations to give counseling to women and inform them of all the hazards and disadvantages of the surgery.



## Don’t smoke and drive when kids are present

Olympia – Senate Bill 6769 was introduced yesterday by Senator Tyler Bakken. “This bill addresses the issue of smoking while driving and will improve the health of our children,” said Sen. Bakken. If this legislation becomes law, it will be illegal to smoke in motor vehicles if children are present. “Children are more at risk than adults for adverse health effects of second-hand smoke. These include ear infections, asthma and bronchitis. Tests have also shown that air pollution in smokers’ cars can reach levels nearly 10 times the hazardous levels set by the environmental protection agency. Second-hand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer causing, as well,” said Sen. Bakken. “We need this law to protect our children.”



## Plastic bags banned

Olympia – House Bill 2607 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Jess Nyland, Katie St. John, and Alex Reed.

“This bill addresses the issue of plastic bags and will reduce pollution from these products,” said Rep. Nyland. Plastic bags that are used in retail and grocery stores create pollution and are difficult

to dispose of. Every year in Washington State, people throw away about 270,000 tons of plastic bags and wrappings. In order to decrease the use of plastic bags, there will be a fee of 25 cents everytime one is taken home from a marketing store.



## Representatives bring health reform to Olympia

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Ryan Werffeli, Tristan Rice, and William Maier introduced House Bill 3678, which addresses the issue of unvaccinated children. “The bill is a good one because it will drastically reduce the number of children



dying from preventable illness,” said Rep. Werffeli. Unvaccinated children with diseases can spread their illnesses to others who are unvaccinated, have a weak im-

mune system or are too young to receive the vaccine. Washington has one of the highest rates of preventable disease in the United States, so in order to prevent future outbreaks, the Legislature will require all children to get vaccinated. The one exemption will be for people with conflicting religious beliefs. Currently exceptions are made for religious, medical, personal or philosophical reasons.

## Senator challenges abortion policy

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Harrison Scott introduced Senate Bill 7942, which addresses the issue of abortion. “The bill is a good one because it will make it much more difficult to have the procedure done,” said Sen. Scott. The bill requires three doctors to verify that the mother’s health is in danger if she continues with the pregnancy in order for an abortion to take place. Currently the state of Washington will pay for an abortion.



## Schools violating First Amendment

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Susanna Hug, Sarah Bjorkland and Kathryn Carlson introduced Senate Bill 5372, which addresses the issue of freedom of speech in public school newspapers. “The bill is a good one because it allows students to exercise their First Amendment rights without censorship,”

Sen. Carlson emphasized. The issue involves the practice of school administrators telling students what can and cannot be reported. If



this bill becomes law, principals or supervisor who restrict students from publishing articles will be fined \$150. However, if the students publication is violating another individual’s rights, the supervisor or principal has every right to limit the publication.



### Guest speakers visit Page School



Rep. Scott White (D-46th); Rob McKenna, Attorney General; Joe Taller, State Parks Commissioner; and Rep. Dave Quall (D-40th) joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. The speakers talked about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about their jobs, the political process, and current legislative issues. Pages were able to interact with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker's questions.

### Page program 109 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. Today, their duties are a bit more professional. Pages are an integral part of the workings of the legislature, delivering important bills, messages, and sometimes a legislator's lunch!



**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.

