



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.

DNA technology prompts death row reform



Olympia – Senate Bill 6666 was introduced yesterday by Senators Liam Moser and Grey McBride. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty and will prevent innocent victims from

wrongful convictions,” said Sen. McBride. There are a number of cases all over the country like that of Anthony Graves, who was erroneously convicted of the murder of an entire family in 1992. He remained on death row for 26 years before he was finally proven innocent through the advent of DNA testing. “The most common reasons for convictions of innocent people are mistaken eye witness testimony, false testimony of informants, incompetent lawyers, and defective scientific lab procedures,” said Sen. Moser. While the bill does not do away with capital punishment, it requires irrefutable DNA test results for a guilty verdict. In addition, it gives priority to death row appeals in order to avoid long-term imprisonment of the innocent.

Evergreen State lives up to it's name

Olympia – House Bill 3998 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Christina Carlile, Haley Jacobs, and Hannah Gaffney. “This bill addresses the issue of waste in landfills and



will go a long way to reduce the number of plastic bottles currently being dumped there,” said Rep. Gaffney. According to recent statistics, only 10 percent of bottles are recycled and the 90 percent that remain take thousands of years to decompose in landfills. Over 63 billion plastic bottles are dumped into landfills or oceans every year. To solve this problem, lawmakers are proposing a 5-cent refundable deposit on all beverage containers which would be paid by the consumer. “This could make Washington state a leader in recycling,” said Rep. Jacobs.

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. Early in the week students discussed 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 which were televised by TVW. Some topics for policy bills this week included abortion requirements, the cost and effectiveness of the death penalty, global climate change, math/science achievement, and smoking in automobiles. 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.

Lawmakers get smart, improve schools

Olympia – House Bill 3977 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Justice Ladenburg and Brit-tany Mullis. “This bill addresses the issue of math and science achievement and will improve the employ-



ability of our young people,” said Rep. Ladenburg. When 4,500 randomly-selected students took an international academic test, the United States placed 31st in math and 23rd in science. “We use to be first in the world in our educational standards, but now we’ve slipped dramatically,” said Rep. Mullis. If this bill becomes law, middle school math and science teachers will be required to have at least a minor in math and science before they can teach those classes, and the daily and yearly attendance requirements will be increased to eight hours a day and 200 days a year. An education commission will be established to seek funding from private businesses such as Boeing, Microsoft, and Amazon to help pay for the extra school days. “These companies will be motivated to give money to education because they need students who are good in math and science as their future employees,” said Rep. Ladenburg.

Senators advocate a more level playing field for athletic teams



Olympia – Senate Bill 5678 was introduced yesterday by Senators Mariel Frank and Katie Hill. “This bill addresses the issue of sports eligibility and will raise the standards of education for

high school student-athletes and make it consistent throughout schools,” said Sen. Frank. College coaches and recruits say that they typically look for athletes with at least a 3.25 GPA, but the WIAA allows high school athletes to fail one class and still play with their teams. “Having such low expectations sets students up for failure in the future, sending the wrong signal about the relative importance of studies and sports,” said Sen. Hill. While no schools can set lower standards than the WIAA allows, many school districts can and have set higher standards. The

problem is that the schools holding higher standards are sometimes at a disadvantage when playing teams that set a lower bar of eligibility, according to the senators. If this bill becomes law, all public and private school athletes will be required to maintain at least a 2.5 GPA to play on their teams. “Student-athletes will rise to the occasion and do better in their studies if they want to play. We need to put the emphasis on STUDENT-athlete,” said Sen. Frank.

Rep helps sleepy kids improve grades and health

Olympia – House Bill 1056 was introduced yesterday by Representative Charles Coleman. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprived teens and will improve high school academics and the health of our youngsters,” said Rep. Coleman. Sixty percent of high schoolers complain of being



tired during the school day, and 15 percent said they fell asleep during class, according to recent reports. “Teens that are too tired are more likely to become depressed and get in car crashes,” said Rep. Coleman. This bill will raise academic achievement and healthier kids by requiring all public high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. “When the Minneapolis Public Schools did this, they saw a big improvement in attendance, enrollment rates, and daytime alertness. They also saw a decrease in student-reported depression. I think it will work here, too,” he said.

Right to smoke in cars no longer allowed



Olympia – Senate Bill 5432 was introduced yesterday by Senators Kate Nelson and Yelena Novik. “This bill addresses the issue of smoking in cars and will help to protect young children from second-hand smoke,” said Sen. Nelson. Second-hand smoke from

adult drivers and passengers can harm young children. The level of toxins from smoking in a car can easily be 10 times the level that the same activity produces in a home. “Young children won’t always speak up about their parents smoking in cars. This bill will take that burden off their shoulders,” said Sen. Novik. The bill sets out to ban smoking in cars when passengers are under the age of 18.

Health care plan for children proposed



Olympia – House Bill 1919 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Elise McCullough and Deanna Aeschliman. “This bill addresses the issue of uninsured children and will create a public

health care program for children,” said Rep. Aeschliman. Presently 73,000 children are uninsured in Washington alone. Researchers have recorded rising numbers of uninsured children. If this bill becomes a law, a state public health care system will be created for all children. The cost to provide this program will come from a 4 percent increase on tobacco and liquor products. “This is something we can’t keep ignoring and setting aside for the future, because these children are on their way to becoming our future, and we want them healthy and productive,” said Rep. McCullough.

Senator sacks plastic bag debate

Olympia – Senate Bill 5167 was introduced yesterday by Senator Nolan Conway. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution and will help clean up the environment,” said Sen. Conway. The bill aims to reduce the amount of waste in oceans and landfills by banning plastic bags in retail and grocery stores and heavily fining hospitals which fail to dispose of their plastic medical wastes properly. Over 85 billion plastic bags are produced every year in the United States alone. Thousands of marine animals die every year due to ingestion of the bags. In addition, it is estimated that it takes over 500 years for plastic bags to break down in water and landfills. “I aim to make Washington state an example of a plastic bag free state so that other states will follow our example,” said Sen. Conway.



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Lawmakers “paws” to stop animal overpopulation

Olympia – House Bill 2727 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Mckayla Hartsock and Miranda Daniels-Brown. “This bill addresses the issue of animal overpopulation and will

reduce the number of animals needing to be put down in shelters,” said Rep. Hartsock. Current research reports that every year 40,000 dogs and cats are put down due to overpopulation in Washington state alone. “Careless owners continue to let their pets produce offspring without limits,” said Rep. Daniels-Brown. A female dog and her brood, left unchecked, can have up to 67,000 in only six years. This bill will establish a limit of one litter per year for each pet. “Owners will be encouraged to have their pets spayed or neutered to prevent the problem in the first place,” said Rep. Hartsock.



Bill aims to keep kids in school

Olympia – Senate Bill 5051 was introduced yesterday by Senators Abishai Thomas, Evan Haugen, and Sarah Cruse. “This bill addresses the issue of high school drop-outs and will increase the number of graduates,” said Sen. Thomas. Many Washington schools are “dropout factories,” graduating fewer than 60 percent of the students who entered high school as freshmen. The number is even lower in schools with high minority populations, according to the senators. “This bill will establish programs to help struggling students through reaching out to families and targeting students as their grades begin to slip,” said Sen. Cruse. “We believe this is a plan for future generations to succeed and a plan to help our society improve,” said Sen. Haugen.



Aggressive credit card marketing on college campuses outlawed



Olympia – Senate Bill 5050 was introduced yesterday by Senators Nut Suwanchote and Zain Abid. “This bill addresses the issue of aggressive credit card companies on college campus and will prevent students from racking up serious debt,” said Sen. Abid. The card companies

use pressure tactics to lure students into applying for cards, which they then end up using irresponsibly, according to the senators. “They offer free gifts of clothing and food, which are attractive incentives for college students living on limited budgets; and before they know it, they have accumulated a lot of debt,” said Sen. Suwanchote. The average outstanding balance on an undergraduate credit card was \$2,169 in 2005. The bill will ban credit card companies from advertising their products on college campuses and will forbid colleges from providing banks and credit card companies with student addresses and other personal information. “I believe that a good credit card company would be one that supports the students, rather than taking advantage of them,” said Sen. Suwanchote.

Lawmakers seek correction to outrageously low eligibility standards



Olympia – Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senators Nicholas Kosierowski, Josiah Lugg, and Ben Elliot. “This bill addresses the issue of high school eligibility standards and will level the unequal playing field found in many high school athletic competitions,” said Sen. Kosierowski.

“Allowing students to play on school teams when they’re just barely making the grade academically sets them up for failure beyond school,” said Sen. Lugg. Many high school athletes think they will be playing their sport in college and even on professional teams, however, Linda Witt, UNC softball coach says she doesn’t care how much talent or skill an athlete has; he or she is no good to a college if they can’t stay eligible academically. This bill will raise the minimum standard for all high school teams to a 2.0 GPA to play sports. Schools may not set higher or lower standards for their athletes. School Athletic

Directors will enforce this law and will see that tutors are provided for any team member falling behind in their studies.

Senator introduces no-smoking bill

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Cole Paxton introduced Senate Bill 5739, which addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in cars. “The bill is a good one because it will keep Washington’s children healthy, while possibly cutting down on smoking by



their parents,” said Sen. Paxton. Second-hand smoke is toxic, and passengers in a vehicle cannot escape exposure. Several diseases are associated with second-hand smoke, including lung and heart disease, asthma, and SIDS in babies. The bill would prevent drivers of automobiles from smoking when a minor is present in the vehicle. Washington, which presently prevents foster parents from smoking when a child is in the car, would become the fifth state to enact such a law.

State’s children to get full health coverage



Olympia – House Bill 3014 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Christina Swanson and Kaitlin Mastin. “This bill addresses the issue of uninsured children and will require all children under the age of 18

to have healthcare,” said Rep. Mastin. Presently in Washington, there are 73,000 children without health insurance. The bill provides all children under the age of 18 to be medically insured by the state. In addition, children must have a doctor’s appointment by their first birthday and must see a doctor at least once every year. State sales tax will be raised by 0.5 percent to pay for this program, according to the lawmakers. “This bill will promote the health of our future leaders and workers,” said Rep. Swanson.

Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool>

Students able to catch more “zzzz”s



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Kate Reinmuth and Jillian Shipman introduced House Bill 2743, which addresses the issue of sleep deprivation in teens. “The bill is a good one because it will give students

more hours of rest at night and will increase efficiency, focus, and achievement in school,” said Rep. Shipman. Research shows that adolescents need at least nine hours of sleep at night. Despite this, studies show 85 percent of teens get less than 8.5 hours of sleep per night. The early start times of high schools prevent this much needed rest, according to health experts. This bill will require all public high schools to begin their day no earlier than 8:30 a.m. but no later than 9:30 a.m. “This should improve a teen’s health, safety, mood, learning, appearance, relationships and productivity,” said Rep. Reinmuth.

Hanging up the death penalty for good

Olympia – Senate Bill 7654 was introduced yesterday by Senators Trevor Nesbitt, Austin Benton, Adam Anderson, and Brad Benton. “This bill addresses the issue of death penalty costs and will save the taxpayers millions of dollars,” said Sen. Brad Benton. The average cost of a capital punishment trial is \$665,500, which doesn’t include incarceration of the inmate on death row. Adding in the maintenance costs of the convict, it can cost upwards of \$125,000 per year—\$90,000 more per year than an average inmate. Currently, seven felons await execution on death row. “These costs are a burden on the state budget,” said Sen. Nesbitt. The bill will substitute the death penalty with life in prison without parole (LWOP). Those inmates currently on death row will be executed immediately.



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Reps take a stand to reduce abortions

Olympia – House Bill 1650 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Madeline Stauffacher, Audrey Audette,



Leslie Espinoza, and Leah Savage. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion and will provide the education women need in order to make a more informed decision about the procedure,” said Rep. Stauffacher. Washington State currently does not require a licensed doctor to perform abortions, nor does it require the surgery to be performed in a hospital. This bill regulates abortion procedures much more closely than they currently are. It requires women seeking an abortion to pay one fourth of the cost of the procedure and receive a counseling session beforehand. The operation must be performed by a licensed physician in a hospital and medical records are kept, allowing the number of abortions a woman can get to be limited. “This bill will not violate a woman's right to choose, but it will help protect a child's right to live,” said Rep. Savage.

Guest speakers visit Page School

Secretary of Transportation Paula Hammond, Sen. Andy Hill (R-45th), and Senate intern Alyssa McClure joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. They spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about the branch of government with which they are associated. Pages were able to interact with the guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers’ comments.





Sen. Swartz advocates elimination of “gun-free” zones at transit centers

Olympia – Senate Bill 4568 was introduced yesterday by Senator Benjamin Swartz. “This bill addresses the issue of gun-free zones at public transit centers and will lower violent crime rates in these areas,” said Sen. Swartz. Last year a series of gang-related attacks left one man dead and several others seriously injured at local transit stations. “It is not uncommon for people waiting for a bus to be attacked and robbed,” said Sen. Swartz. This bill abolishes the gun-free zones at public transit centers, making it easier for people with concealed weapons permits to defend themselves from violent crime at the centers.



Religious grounds no longer accepted for failure to treat ill children

Olympia—House Bill 2011 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Renee Cammer, Olivia Reid, and Vera Monlux. “This bill addresses the issue of medical rights of children and will prevent deaths caused by failure to treat curable diseases by parents and guardians due to religious reasons,” said Rep. Cammer. Between 1975 and 1995 there were more than 172 children who died because their parents refused to give the child medical treatment on religious grounds. “According to autopsy reports, many, if not most, children could have been



saved easily with simple antibiotics,” said Rep. Monlux. This bill would mandate parents to seek medical treatment for their children who become ill. “Parents who refuse will have to be registered as child abusers,” said Rep. Reid. On a first offense, parents will be required to take classes on how to treat their children’s injuries and the long-lasting affects of not treating their children. On a second offense, the children will be taken away from the parents and put into a safe environment.

Pages compete for *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 100 years old

The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. 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. Initially, only males were allowed into the program. The first female pages began serving in 1937.