



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.

Bicycle rider head safety urged



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Joshua Pryde and Max Wasser introduced House Bill 1111, which addresses the issue of bicycle helmet regulations. “The bill is a good one because it will encourage safety and reduce the magnitude of injuries from bicycle accidents,” said

Rep. Wasser. In a 2009 study, it was reported that there were approximately 900 cyclist fatalities annually, two-thirds of which were due to head trauma. The study concluded that wearing a helmet dramatically reduces the risk of head and facial injuries, even when the crash involves a motor vehicle. To prevent this, helmet use will be required of all bicycle riders. “Any riders found without a helmet will be subject to a \$75 fine,” said Rep. Pryde.

Top 10 job fields to get tax break for hiring unemployed

Olympia – Senate Bill 5965 was introduced yesterday by Senators Caleb Stuhlmiller and Brian Cropp. “This bill addresses the issue of the high unemployment rate in our state and will create more jobs,” said Sen. Stuhlmiller. Unemployment rates reached 9.2



percent in March 2011, higher than the national average, and many of the lost jobs are no longer available. In order to put more people to work, the legislature will encourage employers in the top 10 quality job fields to hire additional employees. Some of these fields are tax preparation, game and software testing, home health care, law enforcement and medical billing and coding. To motivate companies to hire more employees, their business and operations taxes will be waived for one year for every two employees hired.

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 bicycle helmet regulations, smoking in cars, unemployment, welfare fraud, and plastic bag pollution. 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.

Watch us live at TVW.org

Death row inmates run out of time



Olympia – Senate Bill 7080 was introduced yesterday by Senator Logan Dozier. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty and will reduce the time between conviction and execution,” said Sen. Dozier. Many people convicted of heinous crimes and sentenced to death actually sit on death row for many years before being executed, if at all, according to the senator. For example, Jonathan Lee Gentry has been on death row in Washington State for 20 years. This bill will require that all appeals and the execution of death row inmates be completed within five years. “This allows time on appeal to see if there is any cause to convert the prisoner’s sentence to life in prison or to exonerate him. This could potentially save the state millions of dollars that would have been spent keeping prisoners alive for years on death row,” said Sen. Dozier.

Discriminatory athletic standard fixed



Olympia – House Bill 2,222 was introduced yesterday by Representative Ryan Funkhouser. “This bill addresses the issue of inequitable athletic eligibility standards and will level the playing field for high school sports teams across the state,” said Rep. Funkhouser. Because the current Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) standard is so low and does not adequately prepare student-athletes for college and

the work force, many schools raise the bar for their players. “While this benefits their academic achievement, it limits their athletic opportunities and puts them at a disadvantage with other teams that stick with the lower standards,” said Rep. Funkhouser. If this bill becomes law, the Legislature will require a minimum GPA of 2.0 or better for all student-athletes, but will permit the policy to continue of allowing the failure of one class to remain eligible. “Students with learning disabilities will be exempt and the local school board will also have the power to waive the rule for students on a case-by-case basis in extraordinary circumstances,” he said.

While adults smoke, kids choke

Olympia – House Bill 1823 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Fatima Neri and Sarah Vermeire. “This bill addresses



the issue of secondhand smoke and will protect the health of young children,” said Rep. Neri. Studies indicate that children are more at risk than adults for adverse health effects of secondhand smoke, ranging from ear infections to asthma and bronchitis. Second-hand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer-causing. This bill will ban all smoking in cars when minors are present. Any person who smokes a pipe, cigar, or cigarette in a motor vehicle in which there are passengers under the age of 18 is guilty of a traffic infraction. “Currently the state of Washington prohibits foster parents from smoking while a child is in the car. We should enlarge the group of protected children to all children in our state,” said Rep. Vermeire.

Senators work to legalize medical marijuana dispensaries



Olympia – Senate Bill 6969 was introduced yesterday by Senators Clayton McAuliffe, Logan Corbin, and Thomas Widger. “This bill ad-

resses the issue of medical marijuana and will make it legal for dispensaries to operate,” said Sen. Corbin. Currently, the law makes it difficult for patients to get the medicine they need to relieve symptoms of cancer, glaucoma, HIV, multiple sclerosis and other diseases/sicknesses. “Our goal is to reopen the dispensaries that have been shut down due to the strict interpretation of the original law,” said Sen. McAuliffe. The bill establishes a licensing procedure for the drug-store-like establishments, and all patients will have to register their prescriptions with the dispensaries. The department of health will oversee and license the stores, according to the lawmakers.



Plastic bags not a checkout option

Olympia – House Bill 2962 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Hanna Usanova, Tillery Murphy, and Meghan Robbins. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution and will improve the ecosystem,” said Rep. Usanova. Plastic bags which are used in retail and grocery stores create pollution and are difficult to dispose of. Every day in Washington State 270,000 tons of plastic bags and wrappings are thrown away. “When plastic bags are not properly recycled, they exist on earth for 1,000 years before decomposing, and they will not go quietly,” said Rep. Murphy. HB 2962 will eliminate the number of plastic bags in stores by stopping their production and replacing them with compostable plastic and paper bags. Beginning July 1, 2011, the current plastic bags will be available for an additional charge of 25 cents per bag until they run out. “This law will be a big step in improving the quality of life in our state, but it is a small part of the big world problem that needs to be addressed,” said Rep. Robbins.

Smoke-free apartments proposed

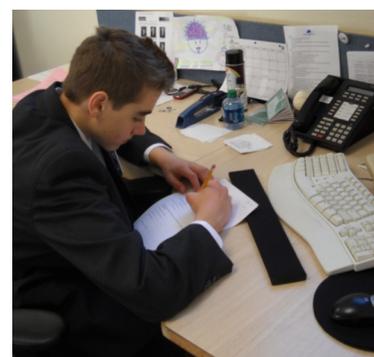


Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Sarah Moss, Megan Williams and Marissa Wingender introduced Senate Bill 5841, which addresses the issue of smoking in apartment complexes. “The bill is a good one because it will protect apartment residents and give smokers an incentive to quit,” said Sen. Moss. Studies show that smoking is the number one cause of death and is associated with almost every type of cancer. Second-hand smoke can increase the risk of lung cancer for nonsmokers by 20-30 percent. In Washington State, approximately 500

children each year get asthma from breathing in second-hand smoke. “In apartment complexes, smoke can seep through walls, around doors, through electrical outlets, and through shared ventilation systems, making apartments difficult to seal and difficult to clean after a smoker has vacated the area,” said Sen. Wingender. This bill will ban smoking inside apartment complexes and require residents who smoke to be at least 75 feet away from the building. “We can reduce the chance of non-smoking apartment residents developing diseases and persuade smokers to alter their behavior with this bill,” said Sen. Williams.

Ignition lock devices stop repeat offenders

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Caleb Houser introduced House Bill 2539, which addresses the issue of drunk driving. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce the number of repeat DUI offenders on our streets and highways,” said Rep. Houser. Research has shown that, nationwide, about 12,000 people die each year in car crashes due to drunk driving. In 2008, Washington State recorded 521 fatal car crashes with 35 percent of those alcohol-related. One-third of people arrested for DUIs are repeat offenders. This bill requires the installation of an ignition interlock system in vehicles of drivers convicted of driving-under-the-influence. “Drivers will have to pay for the installation and monthly leasing fee, about \$2 per day. Their car will not start if they blow through the breath analyzer and it detects any alcohol. This should cut down the number of repeat offenders considerably,” said Rep. Houser.



Students 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 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.

Youth's health is target of smoking ban



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Allison Teigen, CammiAnn Hinge, and Quynh Tran introduced Senate Bill 7998, which addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in automobiles. “The bill is a

good one because it will improve the health of our children,” said Sen. Teigen. Second-hand smoke is toxic and is the cause of many health problems, such as lung disease, heart disease, asthma and ear infections. Second-hand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to cause cancer. “Youngster in cars where adults are smoking cannot escape the exposure,” said Sen. Hinge. The bill forbids all smoking in cars when children under the age of 18 are present. “For the first six months, police officers may only issue warning, but after that, the law will be strictly enforced,” said Sen. Tran.

Brakes put on baby boomer drivers



Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Danny Hunt and Josie Markoff. “This bill addresses the issue of elderly drivers and will decrease the number of acci-

dents caused by our seniors,” said Rep. Hunt. Drivers over the age of 70 are more involved in fatal accidents and 10 million drivers are over the age of 75 in the United States. “With the baby boomer generation getting to that critical age, the percentage of motor accidents will only get higher,” said Rep. Markoff. This bill will require all drivers over the age of 70 to participate in a license renewal course every two years to keep their license. “At the end of the course, a test will be administered to judge reaction times, and an advanced hearing and eye test will be required,” said Rep. Hunt.

Death with Dignity Act tightened up

Olympia – House Bill 5001 was introduced yesterday by Senators Cheyenne Carter and Eric Hemmen. “This bill addresses the Death with Dignity Act and will close existing loopholes,” said Sen. Carter. The current law allows terminally ill patients with less than six months to live to end their

lives legally. No witnesses are required at the time of death and beneficiaries of a patient’s living trust, will, or other document may be a witness when the patient requests the lethal drugs from a doctor. The amendments to the law will require the patient to have a licensed doctor present during the administration of the lethal drugs, either in a hospital or at home, to prevent the misuse of medication. In addition, beneficiaries will not be allowed to sign as a witness during the request for the drug in order to prevent any pressure exerted on the patient to end his or her life. Since the law was enacted in 2008, 47 patients have taken advantage of the lethal overdose option.



Public schools given the “green” light

Olympia – House Bill 1001 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Evan Overstreet and Daniel Miyake. “This bill addresses the issue of public school energy usage and will save school districts money by promoting energy conservation,” said Rep.



Overstreet. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, taxpayers spend about \$8 billion a year on energy for K-12 schools. Lighting specifically represents about 26 percent of electricity consumption in a typical school, much of it coming from wasteful incandescent light bulbs. “By installing fluorescent lighting in public school classrooms and work areas, districts could potentially cut their electric bills in half. This is the focus of our bill,” said Rep. Miyake. As an incentive for schools to switch to fluorescent lighting, they will be allowed to spend the money that they save however they like.



Guest speakers visit Page School

Tom Allman, Accessibility Coordinator with the Secretary of State's office; Alyssa McClure, Senate intern; and Lindsay Pryor, Voter Education and Outreach Coordinator 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.



House attempts to reduce welfare fraud

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Justin McKern and Carl Svaren introduced House Bill 2011, which addresses the issue of welfare fraud. “The bill is a good one because it will save the state money by tightening up the restrictions on electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards,” said Rep. McKern. Welfare recipients are selling their cards and reporting them lost or stolen. Then they get a replacement card. An average of 37,000 cards are replaced each year. Currently, there is no picture or signature on the cards to identify the legal owner.



This bill would require that EBT cards are printed with the recipient's name and photograph so they cannot be easily resold. It would also prevent EBT cards from being replaced more than four times annually.

IIDs required for all cars

Olympia – Senate Bill 7879 was introduced yesterday by Senators Jordan Karlous and Payton Dineer. “This bill addresses the issue of drunk driving and will make our streets safer and reduce accidents,”



said Sen. Karlous. Alcohol related car crashes kill someone every 45 minutes and injure someone every two minutes. Drunk driving accidents cost the public \$114.3 billion a year. If this bill becomes law, ignition interlock devices (IIDs) will be required in all vehicles. "Fourteen states already routinely use this technology and experts say it can reduce intoxicated driving by up to 64 percent, so why not apply it to everyone?" said Sen. Dineer.

Second-hand smoke no good for kids

Olympia – Senate Bill 5050 was introduced yesterday by Senators Macrey Kallstrom and Derek Johnson. “This bill addresses the issue of smoking in motor vehicles and will improve the health of many youthful passengers,” said Sen. Kallstrom. Second-hand smoke causes a variety of long term diseases of which many are fatal, such as lung cancer heart disease and asthma. According to a study done in 2006 by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, second-hand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals that are known to be toxic or cancer causing. “Children riding in vehicles with adults who are smoking don't have a voice to express their dislike of being exposed to the toxic chemicals,” said Sen. Johnson. This legislation will ban smoking in cars where minors are passengers.



Later start time helps sleepy students

Olympia – House Bill 2750 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Maggie Harger and Paige Robecker. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprived students in Washington State and will enable them to perform better in schools,” said Rep. Robecker. The bill will mandate 8:30 a.m. as the starting time for all public schools. In recent studies, 60 percent of high school students reported feeling tired throughout the day and 15 percent said they fell asleep at school. Sleep deprivation can impair a student’s ability to pay attention and impact performance in class. “When I went to school, I was constantly tired,” said Rep. Harger. Those who oppose the bill say that students should just go to sleep earlier. But scientists say that teenagers have later biological clocks, meaning that even if they try to get to bed earlier, they won’t be able to fall asleep until 11p.m. or midnight.



Sine Die and goodbye!

At the rear of both chambers of the legislative building are massive doors. When opened wide, the presiding officers on the respective rostrums can see one another across the rotunda. It is a long-standing tradition that the final act of the legislative session occurs when the two officers simultaneously bang their gavels and announce they are now adjourned *sine die*; that is, without setting a time to reconvene. On Sunday, after 105 days, the first half of the 62nd Legislative biennium is scheduled to end. Over 2,000 bills were introduced in the two chambers, but only about 15-20 percent will actually become laws. Pages got a first-hand look at how parliamentary procedure is used by legislators on the floor of each chamber as they delivered documents, listened to their legislators express their views and watched the voting process during the week. The last bills to be passed will be sent to the Governor for her signature. A special session is likely this year because of budget reconciliations between the House and Senate.

Teachers passionate about civic education

The Washington State Legislature’s 2011 Page School employs certificated civics teachers Judi Orr and Leo O’Leary. Judi is a retired social studies and English teacher who taught for over 35 years in the Clover Park School District, and celebrated her birthday this week with us. Leo has been teaching and coaching in and around Olympia for the past five years. “I really like the fact that I can help kids make their dreams come true through both education and athletics,” he said as he introduced himself on Monday. Both teachers enjoy meeting so many students from all parts of Washington and teaching them more about how state government functions. “I’d be a committee ‘junkie’ if I wasn’t teaching each day. Watching citizens testify about various issues alongside experts in the field is just fascinating to me,” said Judi.



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.

