



# 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.

### 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 drunk driving, animal rights, foster children safety, and same-sex marriages. 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.

### Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at:  
<http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool>

### Early to bed, late to rise makes high school students healthy, wise

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Maya Norton and Chelsea Nnanabu introduced Senate Bill 6723, which addresses the issue of sleep deprivation in high school students. “The bill is a good one because it will improve academic achievement and student health,” said Sen. Nnanabu. Research shows that high school students who are sleep deprived have more health problems and do poorly in classes. This bill would require all public high schools to start no earlier than 9 a.m. “In the Minneapolis school district, when the start times of seven high schools was moved from 7:15 to 8:40 a.m., there was an improvement in attendance, and increase in daytime alertness and a decrease in student-reported depression,” said Sen. Norton. Student athletes perform better with more sleep, too. “Sleep deprived sports teams have worse coordination and endurance,” said Sen. Nnanabu. “This just makes sense all the way around.”



### Senator wants to end illegal drug use among welfare recipients

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Sara Hyatt, introduced Senate Bill 7777, which addresses the issue of welfare abuse. “The bill is a good one because it will ensure that those people receiving state or federal money are healthy,” Sen. Hyatt. The bill requires each welfare recipient to take a drug test before receiving their money. If they test positive, they will be given 90 days to clear their system, but they may still be allowed to receive food and money vouchers until they can pass the drug test. If a second test after the probation period comes back positive, they will no longer be able to receive assistance. “According to the national Household Survey of Drug Abuse, 21 percent of welfare recipients had used illegal drugs in the past year. Illicit drug use and dependence are more common among women receiving welfare than among women who do not,” said Sen. Hyatt.

### Elderly drivers need limits!



Olympia – Senate Bill 7998 was introduced yesterday by Senators Curtis Maile and Colton Pfenniger. “This bill addresses the issue of elderly drivers and will help lower the accident and fatality rate of our

senior citizens,” said Sen. Maile. Over time, drivers start to forget skills required to be able to function on the roadways of Washington. Physical impairments and medications prevent the elderly from driving as carefully as they did when they were younger, according to Sen. Pfenniger. “Elderly drivers have the highest crash rate next to teens,” he said. “I want to be able to drive with a little less worry about being hit or getting into a collision,” says Sen. Pfenniger. The solution to the problem appearing in this bill will be that those citizens 65 and older must take an annual driving test, and if they fail twice, they will lose their license.

### Reps introduce same-sex marriage bill

Olympia – House Bill 1111 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Sarah Koefod and Natalie Vance. “This bill addresses the issue of same-sex marriage,” said Rep. Vance. Even though the state already has an “everything but marriage” law, the legislators point out that there are still some rights gay and

lesbian couples don’t have. “The state of Washington has been inching its way toward legalizing same-sex marriage for a while now, and it is time to take the last and final step,” said Rep. Koefod. “We know that some people are opposed to this idea on religious grounds, but marriage is a legal contract, not a religious one. If a church wants to allow a marriage, it can, but it doesn’t have to. The marriage certificate is issued by the state.” If passed into law, this will mean that Washington will join Iowa, Vermont, Connecticut, and New Hampshire in making same-sex marriage legal.



### Bill proposes to reduce energy costs

Olympia – House Bill 1115 was introduced yesterday by Representative Bronwyn Clarke. “This bill addresses the issue of high government building utility costs and will reduce those costs significantly,” said Rep. Clarke. The bill proposes to regulate the indoor temperatures of government buildings to 73 degrees during the summer and 69 degrees during the winter, control interior lighting, and install energy efficient bathroom fixtures. As a result, the legislature expects the amount of energy used in government buildings to decrease by approximately 17 percent. The costs of implementing the measures will be balanced by the savings predicted to occur, according to the legislator.

### Guest speakers visit Page School

Lobbyist and former legislator Don Carlson, representing the Association of Manufactured Home Owners; Sen. Dan Swecker (R-20th) and contract lobbyist Maria Chiechi joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Each spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information in regard to the legislative process. Pages were able to interact with the guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers’ questions.



## More wind turbines to be built

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Matt Allen introduced House Bill 2706, which addresses the issue of wind power to generate electricity. “The bill is a good one because it will allow more turbines to be built,” said Rep. Allen. This bill will provide clean, cheap, and effective power via wind turbines to cities. “Wind turbines are the most efficient and eco-friendly way for everybody to power their homes,” he said. “Coal and fossil fuel use for energy is destructive to the environment, releasing carbon into the atmosphere in massive amounts. Wind energy is clean and it provides jobs and taxes to local communities.” If this bill becomes law, it will require utility companies to provide 10 percent of their power supply generated by wind power by 2020.



## While adults smoke, kids choke!



Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Wm. Luke Gunning introduced Senate Bill 6666, which addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in automobiles. “The bill is a good one because it will keep children healthy by preventing smoking in cars,” said Sen. Gunning. Three states

already have such a ban and Washington State has a law prohibiting foster parents from smoking while a child is in the car. This bill would prevent all drivers from smoking if children under the age of 18 are passengers. It would be a secondary offense.

## Owners, not dangerous dogs at fault

Olympia – House Bill 1027 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Sara Long and Stasia Fischer. “This bill addresses the issue of dangerous dogs and will reduce the number of dogs that have to be put down each year because of their violent behavior,” said Rep. Fischer. “Many families have had to euthanize a dog that could have just been trained a little better,” said Rep. Long. “It’s sad



because they usually feel like the dog is a part of their family.” The bill will require new owners of those breeds considered dangerous, such as pit bulls and rottweilers, to enroll in and successfully complete an obedience course. Additionally, dog owners that are convicted of animal abuse will be entered into a data base that humane societies can access, and they will not be able to adopt any pets. “It’s the owner, not the dog, that usually is the problem,” said Rep. Long.

## Rep. Allen calls for more shelters

Olympia – House Bill 1414 was introduced yesterday by Representative Megan Allen. “This bill addresses the issue of abandoned animals and will give them a safe home, saving them from death,” said Rep. Allen. Too many animals are found wandering around the streets in the middle of a cold, windy, and rainy night. They are hungry, they are cold, and they are tired, according to local humane societies. “So what can we do to lower the number of animals found like this? We start at the source—the owners,” said Rep. Allen. “By making a law that will force people pay a small fee to get a furry friend, you can separate those who have the means to take care of them from those who don’t.” This bill requires the legislature to fund more shelters. Construction costs will come from pet adoption fees.



## Death with Dignity Act revised

Olympia – Senate Bill 7999 was introduced yesterday by Senator Jacob Durrance. “This bill addresses the issue of the assisted suicide law and will revise some of the provisions in this law,” said Sen. Durrance. According to the senator, the law currently states that doctors can falsify the death certificates after the death of the patient, showing “natural causes” rather than self-induced drug overdose. “This untruthfulness is unacceptable,” said Sen. Durrance. Other problems with the law include pressure by insurance companies to choose assisted suicide. In Oregon one insurance company denied an expensive cancer drug for a patient who needed long-term care but would provide payment for suicide drugs. The revisions in this new bill would require an accurate cause of death statement on the death certificate and would require doctors who wrote assisted suicide prescriptions to have a special license issued by the Department of Health.



### School extended from 180 to 210 days

Olympia – House Bill 1337 was introduced yesterday by Representative Devin Reynolds. “This bill addresses the issue of low test scores by American students and will improve academic performance by extending the school year by six weeks,” said Rep. Reynolds. It is common for teachers in September to spend several weeks reviewing what students learned the previous year because so much knowledge is lost during the long summer vacation, according to Rep. Reynolds. “The current school calendar was designed in a time where students needed to be home in the summer to help on the family farm, which is no longer the case,” he said. Various government officials, such as President Obama and Secretary Arne Duncan, support a move such as this, believing that it is important for America to continue competing on the world stage. “The students of America deserve the very best, which can be given with more time in the classroom.” This bill will extend the school year from 180 to 210 days.



### Monkey see, monkey do

Olympia – House Bill 2099 was introduced yesterday by Representative Zachary Bordenick. “This bill addresses the issue of violence in the media and will reduce negative behavior in our society,” said Rep. Bordenick. The National Institute of Mental Health has identified three major effects of violence on television—becoming less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others, becoming more fearful of the world, and behaving in aggressive or harmful ways, according to the representative. The bill creates a violence rating system for movies, TV and games that is more specific than the current system. In addition, it requires shoppers to carry an ID card to be shown upon purchase of some types of highly rated media items.



### Page program over 100 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.

### 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.

### Shot requirements end

Olympia – Senate Bill 5969 was introduced yesterday by Senators Gentry Turk and McKall Turk. “This bill addresses the issue of vaccines and will end the requirement for those parents who choose not to vaccinate their children,” said



Sen. McKall Turk. According to the senators, many children are required to have 22 shots by the time they are in first grade. “Government statistics report that children under the age of 14 are three times more likely to suffer adverse effects—including death—following the hepatitis B vaccine than to catch the disease itself,” said Sen. Gentry Turk. This bill will repeal the mandatory law that requires vaccines. “Parents will still be able to make the choice to have their child vaccinate, it just won’t be required if this bill becomes law,” said Sen. Gentry Turk.

## No more wrongful deaths

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Trevor Moyes and Colton Martin introduced House Bill 2011, which addresses the issue of the death penalty. “The bill is a good one because it will help keep those who are wrongfully accused of capital crimes from being sentenced to death,” said Rep. Martin. False convictions are not a rare or isolated event, according to Rep. Moyes. “Nation-wide there have been 265 post-conviction exonerations. Fifty percent of wrongful accusations are due to invalid or improper forensic science,” he said. If this bill becomes law at least two DNA tests will be required and will have to agree with each other. Police will not be allowed to question suspects for more than two hours at a time without a lawyer present and snitching will not be allowed into evidence.



## Foster children to be given legal counsel

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Ashley Bartok introduced House Bill 1321, which addresses the issue of safety for foster children. “The bill is a good one because it will protect some of our most vulnerable children,” said Rep. Bartok. In 2008, there were more than 10,068 children in foster care in Washington and two thirds of them are not being consulted regarding their safety upon returning home to their families. “There have been many instances where children are returned to abusive households where the pattern of violence that originally removed them continues, according to Rep. Bartok. This bill requires that all children involved in dependency and termination proceedings be given legal counsel without parents present. “Having a lawyer or *guardian at litem* ask the opinion of the child before decisions are made would be best for the child’s welfare,” said Rep. Bartok.



## Bring ‘em back!

Olympia – Senate Bill 5595 was introduced yesterday by Senators Sabastian Sandoval and Ryan Taylor. “This bill addresses the issue of public high school drop out rates and will reduce these numbers drastically,” said Sen. Taylor. By funneling a small amount of school funds to local law enforcement task forces that deals with teen violence and crime, the senators believe they can decrease the number of teens who leave school before they graduate. “Our studies find that in 2007 the dropout rate for whites was 5.3 percent; for the African American community, it was 8.4 percent; and for the Hispanic population, it was 21.4 percent. There seems to be a cultural issue here, as well,” said Sen. Sandoval. A large portion of these people are skipping school and committing crimes in town. This legislation will provide funding for police officers to find the truant students and bring them back to school.



## 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 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 enjoyed 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.



## No blow, no go

Olympia – Senate Bill 5128 was introduced yesterday by Senators Eric Brown and Allison Foster. “This bill addresses the issue of drunk driving and will make our roads safer,” said Sen. Foster. Nationwide there were 11,773 drunk driving fatalities in 2008. Sadly, two-thirds of drunk driving offenders continue to drive even when their license is suspended, according to Sen. Brown. In order to reduce the number of repeat offenders drinking and driving, the Legislature will require an ignition interlock system to be installed in all drivers convicted of DUIs. “With this device, when a person who is legally drunk blows into the IIS, the car’s engine will not start,” said Sen. Foster. The cost of the device will be paid by the driver, so it will not cost the state government any money. In fact, it should save the state money by decreasing costs of jail expenses for repeat offenders.



## Autographs & Emails

## Bill Introduced to Protect Privacy



Olympia – House Bill 2937 was introduced yesterday by Representative Sachin Santhosh. “This bill addresses the issue of airport security and will retain the people’s rights to privacy and freedom,” said Rep. Santhosh. The bill will prohibit the use of full-body scanners

in airports. Full-body scanners invade a person’s privacy by producing naked pictures of the person when scanned. With each machine costing over \$170,000 each, the money that the state saves can be used to research other less intrusive ways of keeping people safe.

