



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.

Senators find answer to teen sleep deprivation

Olympia—Senate Bill 5678 was introduced yesterday by Senators Jagmit Dhami and Emily Harting. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprivation in teens and will improve academic learning as well as the health of our youth,” said Sen. Dhami. Many teenagers are currently sleep deprived. A poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) found that 60 percent



of children under the age of 18 complain about being tired during the day, and 15 percent reported that they have fallen asleep during class in the past year. The natural tendency for teens is to stay

up late and wake up late, due to biological changes in their bodies, according to the lawmakers. “When students are sleepy in class, their grades drop because they are too tired to pay attention,” said Sen. Harting. This bill requires that public schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Although there will be problems such as bus transportation, the senators are confident that the later start time will give teens the 8-9 hours of recommended sleep they need each day.

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 metal bat injuries in baseball, state funding for abortions, teen sleep deprivation and legislative page wages. 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.

Watch us live at TVW.org

Look who's cheering now... nobody



Olympia – House Bill 2569 was introduced yesterday by Representative Jaalam Legette. “This bill addresses the issue of cheerleading injuries and will protect young women in public junior high and senior high schools,” said Rep. Legette. Cheerleading ranks second highest, after football, in catastrophic sports injuries. From 1982- 2008 there were

73 serious injuries to high school cheerleaders; and, in 2007, cheerleaders made 25,650 visits to emergency rooms. “These athletes are suffering far more frequent and serious injuries like ruptured spleens, fractured necks, even paralysis and death,” said Rep. Legette. If this bill becomes law, the sport of cheerleading will be banned from all junior and senior high schools in the state.

EBT card restrictions proposed

Olympia – House Bill 3740 was introduced yesterday by Representative Anthony Sisco. “This bill addresses the issue of EBT fraud and will save millions of dollars for the state,” said Rep. Sisco. Electronic Benefit Transaction cards are state-issued debit cards that replace the old monthly welfare checks. They are intended to be used for buying food and other necessities for families. However, some recipients are selling the cards and claiming they have lost them in order to be reissued new ones each month. The state replaces an average of 27,000 EBT cards each month. In addition to illegally selling the cards, other people use their cards at local casino ATM machines so they can gamble with the money, according to Rep. Sisco. “This fraud has wasted millions of state tax dollars that we could be using to make up for our budget deficit,” he said. This bill proposes to require photo-identification and a signature with any EBT transaction. In addition, EBT card withdrawals will only be allowed at banks.



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.

Legislature sends wake-up call to high schools

Olympia – Senate Bill 5473 was introduced yesterday by Senators Quinn Johnson and Avery Maine. “This bill addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and will improve the academic success and health of our junior and senior high school students,” said Sen. Maine. Research shows that teenagers, whose bodies are changing and require more sleep than children or adults, work better academically and are generally healthier when they have 8-9 hours of sleep each night. Studies show that 60 percent of children under the age of 18 complain of being tired during the day, and 15 percent say they have fallen asleep at school during the year. In order to promote student health and academic success, this bill will require all public high schools to start no earlier than 9 a.m. “The Minneapolis School District tried this and found significant improvements in attendance, grades, and overall well being,” said Sen. Johnson.



Senator taxes fast food

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Michael Bates introduced Senate Bill 7549, which addresses the issue of unhealthy food sold in fast food restaurants. “The bill is a good one because it will encourage citizens to make more nutritious choices when eating out,” said Sen. Bates. A recent survey showed that 10.8 percent of 10-17 year-olds are overweight in the state. Eighty percent of high school students do not get the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables each day. “The problem isn’t limited just to children, either, as the percentage of obese adults has more than doubled in the last 30 years,” he said. The bill calls for a tax on unhealthy food sold in fast food restaurants. On foods with 200-399 calories, the tax will be 5 percent; those over 400 calories will be taxed at 10 percent. In five years, both taxes will be increased by 5 percent. This tax will not be added to food sold in grocery stores. “The income from this tax will be used to fund Washington Health Inspectors, who are most likely going to decide on which foods deserve the tax,” said Sen. Bates.



Lawmaker takes a swing at metal bats

Olympia – Yesterday, House Bill 2222 was introduced by Representative Dyonis Shuster. “This bill addresses the issue of metal bat injuries in baseball games and will require public high school teams to use wooden bats from now on,” said Rep. Shuster. Of the 17 deaths linked to batted balls from 1991-2001, eight were from non-wood bats. “Metal bats increase the risk of injury because balls come off the bats faster, giving players less time to react,” said Rep. Shuster. Professional and college teams use only wooden bats, and high schools should, too, according to the lawmaker. “From a cost standpoint, wooden bats are less expensive, so it would be a win-win situation all the way around,” she said.



Abolition of death penalty called for



Olympia – Senate Bill 6543 was introduced yesterday by Senator Naomi Bartel. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty and will save the state money,” said Sen. Bartel. Currently in Washington State there are seven people on death row, one who has been there for over 20 years. The Washington Bar Association estimates

that a death penalty case costs \$754,000 more than other murder cases, not including the \$100,000 associated with preparing for an execution. “If we didn’t have the death penalty, we could have saved nearly \$6 million on the cases of the seven inmates that are currently on death row. In this time of budget shortfalls every little bit of money saved helps,” said Sen. Bartel. If this bill becomes law Washington will become the 17th state to abolish the death penalty.

Restrictions put on young hunters and hikers

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Steven Wallis and Camden Wilhelmsen introduced House Bill 3999, which addresses the issue of age requirements for hunters. “The bill is a good one because it will keep our forests safe for both hikers and hunters,” said Rep. Wallis. The bill was introduced because of a

tragic accident caused by an unchaperoned 14-year-old hunter in 2008 who shot and killed a woman he thought was a bear. Currently, Washington has no age limit for hunters. “Hikers and hunters don’t mix,” said Rep. Wilhelmsen. The solution in the introduced bill is to ban hikers from within 5 miles of hunting zones during hunting season. In addition, hunters must be at least 16 years old and must be accompanied by an experienced adult until he or she is 18.



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.

Legislature trashes plastic grocery bags

Olympia – Senator Turi Abbott introduced Senate Bill 5015 yesterday in the Environment, Water & Energy committee. “This bill addresses the issue of pollution and will reduce the damage already done to our environment, as well as prevent deaths of marine wildlife,” said Sen. Abbott. Research reports published by the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* found that nearly 5,000 tons of plastic bags went to Seattle’s landfills in 2002. Plastic bags take over 500 years to decompose. Environmental groups say that the bags waste valuable oil, release toxins when burned and contribute to global warming because of the energy required to produce them. The bags also litter the oceans causing many deaths of sea turtles and other marine animals who mistake them for food. “If we continue to use these plastic bags, our landfills will build up with plastic bags that we won’t be able to get rid of,” said Sen. Abbott. If the bill passes, plastic bags will be banned in grocery and retail stores. There will also be a \$500 fine for those stores who offer the bags. “We use the bags for 10 minutes and yet they cause more than 500 years of damage. This bill will stop the harm,” said Sen. Abbott.



Sleep deprived students need an extra morning snooze



Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Emily Darms and Autumn Abbott. “This bill addresses the issue of sleepy teens and their poor performance in school,” said Rep.

Darms. Many teens do not get the 8-9 hours of sleep each night that they need, so when they have to get up early and start school at 7 a.m., they suffer academically. “This inability to focus in their morning classes means that they get poor grades and don’t do well on tests,” said Rep. Abbott. Sixty percent of students under the age of 18 complain of being tired during the day, and 15 percent say they fall asleep at school during the year. This bill will require public high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. “In places like Minneapolis, where start times were pushed back an hour, attendance, grades, and moods improved,” said Rep. Darms.

Lawmakers offer plan to reduce college tuition

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Claire Pepple and Brielle Tuohy introduced Senate Bill 5050, which addresses rising university tuition costs. “The bill is a good one because it will make it easier for anyone to get a college education,” said Sen. Pepple. In the last six years, tuition at Washington State University has gone up 57 percent and the price of tuition at the University of Washington has sky-rocketed by 66 percent, according to the senators. “These increases just make it harder and harder for a low- or middle-income student to pay for a 4-year degree,” said Sen. Tuohy. This bill will increase the sales tax on printed items by an extra one cent. The extra revenue will be placed in a fund



for state-run colleges to help lower tuition costs. “We hope the bill will encourage people to buy books to give everyone a chance for a better life,” said Sen. Pepple.

Distracted driving kills

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Katie Howard and Megan Johnson introduced Senate Bill 5878, which addresses the issue of distracted driving. “The bill is



a good one because it will reduce the rate of injuries and accidents on our roads and highways,” said Sen. Howard. Current research shows that a distracted driver is up to 23 times more at risk for having a traffic accident than a non-distracted driver. Some studies have found that a person talking on a cell phone is as unfocused as someone with a blood alcohol level of .08, legally drunk. In 2008, six thousand people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver, 23 percent of those involved use of a cell phone. This bill will take the current cell phone law even further, according to the senators. It will not permit any electronics that don’t aid in driving to be used while driving. “This will include ipods, cameras, and blue-tooth wireless devices, but will exclude GPS devices,” said Sen. Johnson.

DNA testing required before executing death row inmates



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Kara McAdams, Maria Meyers, and Erika Glas introduced House Bill 2340, which addresses the issue of the death penalty. “The bill is

a good one because it will prevent the innocent from being put to death,” said Rep. McAdams. Currently, DNA tests are not required before executions in Washington State. “Crime solving using DNA technology has made tremendous strides over the past two decades,” said Rep. Meyers. In Illinois 13 inmates on death row were released because they were found innocent after the DNA test was done. “With seven inmates on death row in our state, it is possible that one might be innocent,” said Rep. Glas. The new bill will require all death row inmates to have a DNA test positively linking them to the evidence from the trial before they can be executed. If the positive ID cannot be made, the death penalty will be converted to life in prison without parole. “No one wants an innocent man to die. We are better off safe than sorry,” said Rep. Glas.

Legislature needs to pay up!



Olympia – Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senators Ture Lund and Trevor Bahr. “This bill addresses the issue of unfair workplace treatment of legislative pages and will require that Senate and House pages be paid minimum wage for their work,” said Sen. Bahr. Currently pages are paid \$35 a day. This is less than half of the state’s minimum hourly wage of \$9.04. According to Washington state labor laws, 14 and 15 year olds may work for 85 percent of the state’s minimum wage, which would be \$7.68. The 16-year-old pages would be paid full minimum wage. “Our bill will not cost the state any more than they are now paying because we would cut the number of pages allowed by each lawmaker in half to allow for the raise in wages. With fewer pages, there would be more work for each one to do, resulting in less down time with nothing to do,” said Sen. Lund. If this bill becomes law, Washington State would be the first state to treat their pages as they do other workers.

Senators crack down on creditors

Olympia – Senate Bill 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senators Lucas Calvin and Jeremy Calvin. “This bill addresses the issue of college debt and will end aggressive tactics used by credit card companies to lure students into spending irresponsibly,” said Sen. Lucas Calvin. The bill will ban credit card companies from advertising on any state college campus. “Currently these companies come onto campus, set up a booth in the student union and then offer Frisbees, t-shirts, free food and even ipods to entice students to apply for credit cards,” said Sen. Jeremy Calvin. “Most college kids are poor and these freebies look really good.” There are many stories of college students who have used the cards to rack up debt. Ryan Rhodes graduated college with \$13,000 in credit card debt. The astronomical interest rates for college students contribute to this high debt, as well, according to the senators. This bill will ban credit card companies from advertising on any state college campus. “If students want to accept offers they get through the mail, we can’t really control that. But, we can control who comes onto our campuses,” said Sen. Lucas Calvin.



Bill intends to save future generations

Olympia – House Bill 3051 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Kaela Hill and Elizabeth McKee. “This bill addresses the issue of public funding of abortion and will reduce the misuse of taxpayer dollars,” said Rep. Hill. In 2009, 22,642 women in Washington State had abortions; 15,510 of those were state funded, according to the lawmakers. “A recent poll reported that 51 percent of Americans identify themselves as pro-life, but the taxpayer dollars of these concerned citizens are being used to fund the procedure they abhor,” said Rep. McKee. If this bill becomes a law, public funding of abortions will be cut. Currently 32 states prohibit the use of state funds for the procedure. “I expect this bill will go a long way toward saving lives and helping our state get out of the budget crisis it currently is facing,” said Rep. McKee.



Representatives speak-up for voices that cannot be heard



Olympia –Representatives Kelly Riddle, Alyssa Goodwin, and Sydney Paulsen introduced House Bill 1111 yesterday in the Healthcare and Wellness committee. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion in young girls under the age of 18 and will save many unborn children’s lives,” said Rep. Riddle. Currently, the state does not require parental notification or consent for abortions if the girl is a minor. Approximately 86,000 women younger than 18 had abortions in 2002. Two years ago, the total number of abortions in Washington was 22,642. The bill will require parental consent to be given before an abortion can occur and a 48-hour waiting period after a series of three counseling sessions, where a legal guardian must be present. “The bill will help girls understand the drastic measure they are taking. It is not something that can be reversed, and it is important for the girls to understand this,” said Rep. Goodwin. There are already 21 states requiring parental consent and a waiting period before a girl gets an abortion. The legislators believe that Washington should join them.



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.



Guest speakers visit Page School

Brian Sonntag, State Auditor; The Honorable Charles Wiggins, State Supreme Court Justice; and JulieAnne Behar, Voter Education and Outreach Coordinator from the Secretary of State’s office, joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Each spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information in regard to their contribution to state government. An avid baseball player in his youth, Mr. Sonntag first got involved in local government when he was offered a day job with the county clerk’s office in Pierce County. “I was going into banking, but that required me to work at night. The day job with the clerk allowed me to play baseball at night, so I took it,” he said. Justice Wiggins is a relatively new Supreme Court judge, having been elected just last year. The law continues to fascinate him, but decisions that have to be made about the death penalty and child custody cases are the most difficult for him to consider. “Not because of the legal issues, but rather because the situations are so sad,” he said. Pages became signature checkers when Ms. Behar handed out an activity simulating verifying names on petitions, which is a big job that the Secretary of State’s office oversees during elections. She explained how initiative and referendums work, as well. Pages were able to interact with the guests, asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers’ questions.



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 and include delivering campus correspondence, helping with mailings in legislative offices, and handing out documents on the floor of the Senate and House. Thanks for a great week!

Teachers passionate about civics

The Washington State Legislature’s 2012 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 seven 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

