



# The Weekly Page

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## Pages Learn About Legislature



### 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, circus animal abuse, promotion of STEM education, and various forms of pollution, from plastic bags to car exhaust. 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.

### Legislature cracks down on those who drink alcohol

Olympia – House Bill 3478 was introduced yesterday by Representative Parker Gehring. "This bill addresses the issue of

drunk drivers and will require anyone purchasing alcohol to have an IID installed in his/her car," said Rep. Gehring. In 2008, there were 11,773 alcohol-related deaths in the United States. In Washington

State alone, 232 people were killed due to drunk drivers. Ignition interlock devices (IIDs) are machines that are installed on the dash of a car. The driver must breathe into it to start the car. The car will not start if the machine detects any alcohol. "Drunk driving is a serious problem that shouldn't be taken lightly," said Rep. Gehring.

### Senators restore mental health services

Olympia – Senate Bill 5236 was introduced yesterday by Senators Mykah Shiosaki and Katrina Charba. "This bill addresses the issue of cuts in mental health care funding and will restore services in local communities," said Sen. Shiosaki. Almost \$26 million was cut from the 2011-2013 Washington State biennial budget. This has resulted in closing state psychiatric hospital wards and reducing funding for community mental health services. "Programs like the Disability Lifeline Program, which funds treatment for 37,000 clients, half of whom have mental illnesses, now face being eliminated," said Sen. Charba. This bill proposes to increase sales tax by half a cent for two years. The money will go to communities to help their mental health care facilities. "Local help will go farther than paying to reopen psychiatric hospitals," said Sen. Shiosaki. After two years, the Legislature will re-evaluate the tax. If it isn't needed, it will be ended.



### It's an "out" for the metal bat



Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Donnell Diego introduced Senate Bill 5611, which addresses the issue of baseball safety. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce injuries in baseball games,” said Sen. Diego. There have been 17 deaths nationwide linked to batted balls. With the use of the metal bats, the ball flies through the air at a much faster speed, causing more severe injuries when it hits a player. Pitcher Brandon

Patch, an 18-year-old from Montana, was killed after taking a hit to the head by a ball. His family was awarded \$850,000 in aluminum bat lawsuit. The bill bans the use of metal bats for teams with players 12 years old and up. “These bats are expensive and deadly. We need to go back to the wooden ones,” he said. States such as New Jersey have already banned the use of metal bats in Little League, and many community colleges have taken steps to using wood bats, like the professional teams.

### 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.

### Yellow plates to shame DUI drivers

Olympia – House Bill 1211 was introduced yesterday by Representative Baylee Allen. “This bill addresses the issue of drunk drivers and will keep many alcohol-influenced drivers off the roads,” said Rep. Allen. There were 11,773 drunk driving deaths in 2008 in the US, and 1,347 children 14 and younger died as occupants in these car accidents. Of those deaths, 16 percent were a result of drunk drivers. A year later in Washing-

ton State there were 492 fatalities; 232 were alcohol related. If this bill becomes law, drivers convicted of a DUI will be required to put neon yellow plates on their cars. The plate will stay on for one year and can



only be taken off at that time if there have been no other violations. “The daily shame of possibly being a drunk driver should keep drunk drivers from reoffending,” said Rep. Allen.

### Senators promote greener schools



Olympia – Senate Bill 6775 was introduced yesterday by Senators Abby McSheffrey and Raven Tomasko. “This bill addresses the issue of school energy consumption and will promote energy efficiency and conservation in our public schools,” said Sen. Tomasko. With this bill, the Legislature will require all schools to replace

equipment such as old water heaters with new, more efficient systems. It will also encourage students and faculty to practice simple conservation methods, such as turning off computers at night, holding recycling competitions and keeping skylights and fan filters clean. The Crooked River Elementary School in Central Oregon saved a little more than \$95,000 in just one school year and were able to restore two teaching positions with the money. “There are dozens of new ways to track energy use everyday, and most of them are extremely affordable,” said Sen. Tomasko. Reducing the use of external doors can stabilize building temperature by minimizing distractions. “When America's schools spend more than \$8 billion annually on energy, little changes can make a huge difference,” said Sen. McSheffrey.

### Give circus animals a break!

Olympia – House Bill 2978 was introduced yesterday by Representative Lydia Cosgrove. “This bill addresses the inhumane treatment of circus animals and will give them the needed rest from performing that they deserve,” said Rep. Cosgrove. The animals often are housed in very confined spaces and are not provided separate places to eat, sleep or go to the bathroom as they travel from town to town, according to the lawmaker. This bill requires circuses to give their animals a 6-month rest break each year.



### 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.

## Credit card companies get the boot on college campuses



Olympia – Senate Bill 6789 was introduced yesterday by Senator Reilly Smith. “This bill addresses the issue of aggressive credit card companies pressuring college students to apply for cards,” said Sen. Smith. Student credit card debt has become a huge problem on college campuses, according to the senator. “These students are usually

jobless and have no source of a steady income. When the companies lure them into signing up with free pizzas, beach chairs and t-shirts, the temptation is often too much,” he said. In some instances, young men and women are in debt by thousands of dollars by the time they graduate. There are cases where students committed suicide to escape their credit card debt. This bill will ban credit card companies from advertising on state college campuses.

## High school start times pushed back

Olympia – House Bill 2772 was introduced yesterday by Representative Julia Doherty. “This bill addresses the issue of sleep deprived teenagers and will improve the academic success of our high school students,” said Rep. Doherty. Studies have shown that during puberty a teen’s biorhythms change, altering their sleep/wake patterns. They naturally fall asleep later and wake up later. “This conflicts with the current start times of most public high schools statewide,” said Rep. Doherty. Experts say that teens need between 8 1/2 and 9 hours of sleep each night, but 85 percent of them get less. The result is often poor grades, irritability, and loss of focus. If this bill becomes a law, high schools will be required to start no earlier than 8 a.m. “In districts where start times have been pushed to later in the morning, there has been an increase in alertness, grades, and motivation,” she said.



## Science/math teachers need to get equipped for classes they teach

Olympia – Senate Bill 6239 was introduced yesterday by Senator Zachary Vaishampayan. “This bill addresses the lack of student achievement in science and math in our state,” said Sen. Vaishampayan. According to a recent math and science study, 31 percent of biology teachers in the United States don’t have a



degree in biology, and 55 percent of physical science teachers have no degree in that area of study. “Most first world countries and some third world countries are beating us in these basic subjects,” he said. The bill will require all math and science teachers in public schools to have a major in the specific field they teach.

For example, a teacher with a biology major can teach a biology class, but not a chemistry class. Current teachers will have two years to get the degrees they need. The bill specifies a .05 percent increase in property taxes to pay for the additional education and teachers needed.

## Death penalty done

Olympia – Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senator Zac Watkins. “This bill addresses the issue of death penalty costs and will save the state money,” said Sen. Watkins. Mitchel Rupe was sentenced to be hanged in 1981.

During his time on death row he gained so much weight that hanging would decapitate him. He claimed the death penalty was cruel and unusual punishment and his appeals cost the state over \$4 million. Currently there are seven inmates on death row. The state pays approximately \$1.3 million for each one. This bill proposes to eliminate the death penalty sentence and replace it with life in prison without the possibility of parole, which would cost approximately \$40,000 per year. “In 2009, 11 state legislatures considered abolishing this practice because of the high costs associated with it. It is a trend that is gaining popularity and we could save our state a lot of money if we joined the cause,” said Sen. Watkins.



## Senate discusses head trauma bill

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Madison Snowden introduced House Bill 5678, which addresses the issue of head trauma injuries in public school athletic competitions. “The bill is a good one because it will keep athletes safe from concussions and other serious head injuries,” she said. Will Benson collapsed and died after a football game in 2002. He had actually been injured two weeks earlier in a helmet-to-helmet blow during a game. “This shows that returning to sports while still recovering is dangerous and potentially deadly,” said Sen. Snowden. This bill will require that injured players get clearance from a neurologist before returning to play after they have had two serious head injuries.



## Second-hand smoke choking kids



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Zoie Galloway, Brittany Curtiss, and Paige Bergstrom introduced House Bill 3000, which addresses the effects of second-hand smoke on children who are passengers in cars. “The bill is a good one because it will help

give minors a voice in protecting their health,” said Rep. Bergstrom. Over 45 million people smoke in the United States. One out of five deaths in America is related to smoking. Many of these people smoke in closed vehicles when their children are present. “Second-hand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals that are toxic, and children are more at risk than adults for adverse health effects of second-hand smoke, ranging from ear infections to asthma and bronchitis,” said Rep. Curtiss. If this bill becomes law, smoking in cars with passengers under the age of 16 will be banned. Violators will face fines of \$100.

## Reps fight for the needs of the hungry

Olympia – House Bill 7192 was introduced yesterday by Senators Zach Tepley, Jake Bensussen and Mickey Cao. “This bill addresses the issue of hunger and will help feed families that are struggling,” said Sen. Cao. Currently about 251,000 households in the state of Washington are living in hunger. Approximately 60 percent of parents who require help from local food banks skip meals in order to feed their children. “Studies have shown that kids who go hungry are anxious, irritable and often aggressive,” said Sen. Tepley. The bill will give a \$1,500 tax break to grocery stores when they donate 20 percent of their food to local food banks and shelters. A recent New York Times article estimates that 27 percent of consumable food is thrown out by supermarkets and restaurants. “This break will



reimburse the stores for what would otherwise be a loss for them,” said Sen. Bensussen, “so, it’s a ‘win-win’ situation.”

Watch us live at [TVW.org](http://TVW.org)

## Legislature to ban plastic shopping bags

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representative Carson Lewis. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution and will help clean up our environment,” said Rep. Lewis. The U.S. alone uses 100 billion shopping bags a year and only 5.2 percent are recycled.



Most end up in landfills where they remain for hundreds of years. Over 100,000 marine animals are killed every year by ingesting plastic bags that have found their way into waterways. This bill proposes to ban the bags in all stores. They will be required to switch to paper bags or decomposable bags. The stores also have the option of providing their customers with reusable bags for purchase. Fines of up to \$1,000 per day will be given to violators. A 1-800 number will be available to citizens who wish to report stores who do not comply with the new law.

## Restrictions on logging to preserve wildlife habitat

Olympia – Senate Bill 5973 was introduced yesterday by Senator Reid Lutz. “This bill addresses the issue of the destruction of our wildlife habitats and will help protect these areas for the future,” said Sen. Lutz. Animals such as elk and deer have left their natural habitats to seek food and water in residential areas that have replaced their forest homes. “As we continue to log the forests, we see more and more wild animals in housing developments,” he said. This bill puts restrictions on how many acres of logged forest land must be left after cutting down trees. For every 20 acres logged by timber companies, one acre of land must be reserved. In addition, loggers must plant one tree for every two they cut down.



## Kids will finally have a voice



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Jed Travers, Micah Gordon, and Giovanni Jerrett introduced Senate Bill 5612, which addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in cars that can harm young passengers.

“The bill is a good one because it will improve the health of our children,” said Sen. Travers. Tests have shown that smoke from cigarettes in cars can reach levels nearly 10 times the hazardous levels set by the Environmental Protection Agency. Secondhand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals known to be toxic or cancer causing. Studies indicate that children are more at risk than adults for adverse health effects like ear infections, asthma and bronchitis. This bill bans smoking in cars with passengers under the age of 18. “The legislation will begin as a secondary law to give people a chance to get used to it,” said Sen. Jerrett. “But more importantly, this bill will act as a voice for the kids.” Half of the \$120 fine will go to police departments and the other half will be used in efforts to help smokers quit the habit.

## Rep. Black proposes abortion restrictions



Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Tanya Black introduced House Bill 1821, which addresses the issue of abortion. “The bill is a good one because it will save many unborn children,” she said. Currently in Washington any woman can get an abortion up to the point of viability, the point at which the fetus can survive outside the mother’s body. In 2009 there were 23,738 women who received abortions

in Washington State. “Only 60 percent of women under the age of 18 voluntarily involved their parents, leaving the other 40 percent of parents unaware that their daughter was pregnant,” said Rep. Black. This bill will require parental consent for minors under the age of 18. In addition, before an abortion can be performed, pregnant women will be required to listen to the fetus’s heartbeat through an ultrasound. “In states that have this requirement, hundreds of thousands of babies are alive today because their mother listened to the heartbeat and changed her mind,” said Rep. Black.

## Washington students falling behind in science and math

Olympia – House Bill 1889 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Kaylee Rule and Emma Tate. “This bill addresses the low scores of Washington State students in the areas of math and science and will help to prepare kids to enter future global job markets,” said Rep. Rule. Currently U.S. fourth graders perform poorly, middle school students even worse and high school students are unable to compete with many students from other countries. This bill requires public schools to hold classes year round with breaks spread equally throughout the 12 months. “This will prevent the loss of learning that comes with a three month summer break,” said Rep. Tate. In addition, curriculum will refocus on algebra, geometry, physics and chemistry, rather than arithmetic and earth/life sciences. Teachers will also be evaluated with greater scrutiny.



## They play, we pay

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Cara Belvin introduced House Bill 3210, which addresses the issue of welfare fraud. “The bill is a good one because it tightens up the system that provides Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards for those in need,” said Rep. Belvin. Some welfare recipients are illegally using their cards in casinos, card rooms, and bingo halls, costing the state millions of dollars. “An EBT card doesn’t have your name or picture on it, so anyone can sell it and put in a claim for a lost card,” said Rep. Belvin. DSHS offices replaced an average of 27,000 EBT cards each month in 2011. This bill will require new cards to be issued with picture IDs. In addition, the card can only be replaced up to three times a year. ATM machines in adult entertainment locations will block the use of EBT cards, as well. “With our current budget crisis, we have to take care of the problem right away,” she said.



## House members say job fair will solve homeless problem

Olympia – House Bill 2000 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Ian Kemp, Sam LeBlanc, and Daniel Hinkle. “This bill addresses the issue of Washington State’s homeless population and will improve living conditions,” said Rep.



Kemp. The state ranks 25<sup>th</sup> in the nation for homeless children, with over 24,000 living in cars or on the streets. One in 26 homes has issues with food security, according to the lawmakers. A recent study found that a full-time worker making the old minimum wage of \$8 an hour would have to work 80 hours a week, 52 weeks a year to be able to afford a 2-bedroom apartment at fair market rent. The bill proposes to create a state-wide job fair for the homeless to offer them jobs. “In addition, we want to raise money for the building of low-income affordable housing that the new job holders can help build and live in,” said Rep. Hinkle. “This bill will get Washington’s homeless people off the streets,” said Rep. LeBlanc.

## Lawmaker wants to cut down on repeat offenders



Olympia – House Bill 2729 was introduced yesterday by Representative Emily Dorsey. “This bill addresses the issue of drunk driving and will reduce the number of repeat offenders in Washington State,” said Rep. Dorsey. Currently, drunk drivers are responsible for 42 percent of car accident deaths in Washington, and one-third of first-time offenders are likely to receive another citation

within three years. This bill requires mandatory installation of ignition interlock devices in cars of those convicted of DUIs. In addition, microchips will be implanted in the devices which will send signals to police cars that are nearby so the police will be alerted that someone with a previous DUI is driving by. “In states that use mandatory IIDs, there is a huge decline in second offences, so we think this should work here, too,” said Rep. Dorsey. Currently, IIDs are required but a judge can waive the requirement. This law does not allow waivers.

## Everyone will benefit from less smoke!

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Olivia G. McAuliffe, and Marlee K. Hager introduced Senate Bill 5313, which



addresses the issue of smoking in cars with young passengers. “The bill is a good one because it will improve the health of minors,” said Sen. Hager. Tests have shown that air pollution in smokers’ cars can reach levels nearly 10 times the hazardous level set by the EPA. Children are at great risk for respiratory diseases which can be caused by second-hand smoke, which contains more than 250 toxic chemicals. “This bill may help people stop smoking in the long run, but for the short time, it will definitely help children stay healthy,” said Sen. McAuliffe. The bill will ban smoking in cars with passengers who are under the age of 18. Although the law will begin as a secondary one, when it changes to a primary law, a fine of \$115 will be given to those who violate it, according to the lawmakers.

## ...And away they go!

Olympia – Senate Bill 7999 was introduced yesterday by Senators Makyla Bishop and Cassie Faber. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution and will save thousands of animals while protecting the environment,” said Sen. Faber. Though plastic bags have only been around for about 40 years, it is estimated that it takes 300-500 years for a bag to decompose. Each year 100 billion plastic bags are thrown out in the United States, yet only 5.2 percent are recovered for recycling. If this bill becomes law, all plastic bags in grocery and retail stores will be banned. “Stores will have a year to get rid of all the bags they already have purchased for their customers, but after that a fine of \$500 will be charged every month,” said Sen. Bishop. Sixty percent of the fines would be used to help sea animals who have been injured from the bags and the rest will be donated to the food stamp program, according to the lawmakers.



## Senators take a stand against drunk driving

Olympia – Senate Bill 6666 was introduced yesterday by Senators Jose Navarro, Christian Ochoa, and Forest Barnedt. “This bill addresses the issue of drunk drivers and will reduce the number of fatalities



caused by intoxicated motorists,” said Sen. Navarro. In 2008 there were 11,773 drunk-driving deaths in the United States that accounted for 32 percent of the total number of fatal car accident deaths. In that same year in Washington State there were 225 alcohol-related fatalities. If this bill becomes a law, repeat DUI offenders will be required to buy specialized license plates. “Anyone convicted of a DUI more than once in 10 years would be required to purchase a red license plate for every vehicle registered in his/her name. The cost would be \$30 per plate and the plates would be required for two years,” said Sen. Navarro. Anyone failing to comply would get an additional fine of \$300 and an extended time for the plate to be displayed. “Everyone on the road needs to be warned that danger may be coming their way and the license plate will be just that,” said Sen. Ochoa.

## Schools go green!

Olympia – Senate Bill 7778 was introduced yesterday by Senator Justin Ludwick. “This bill addresses the issue of school energy consumption and will help schools run more efficiently and save money,” said Sen. Ludwick. “We are wasting a lot of money maintaining things like old heating/cooling systems,” he said. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the American taxpayer spends approximately \$8 billion a year on energy for K-12 education. This bill will require all state public schools to replace inefficient hardware and machines to meet new energy standards.



## Criminals pay for public safety

Olympia – House Bill 2125 was introduced yesterday by Representative Andrew Bender. “This bill addresses the cuts in funding police forces in many cities and counties and will help ensure public safety,” said Rep. Bender. King County is a good example; they are the most prosperous county in the state, but have the second lowest number of police officers per thousand in population. They laid off 167 officers in 2011. This bill will raise all tickets and fines for breaking the law by 5 percent. “Public safety should be the number one issue after education,” said Rep. Bender.



## 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.

## Proposed law abolishes death penalty

Olympia – House Bill 2072 was introduced yesterday by Representative Josefina Alanis-Mora. “This bill addresses the high costs of imposing the rarely-used death penalty and will save the state money,” said Rep. Alanis-Mora. Capital cases where the sentence of death is a possibility cost on average \$700,000 more than trying the same case as an aggravated murder. There are currently seven inmates on death row in this state, and one has been there for over 20 year, so the state continues to provide for these criminals long after they should have been executed, according to the lawmaker. If this bill becomes law, the death penalty will be replaced with life in prison without the possibility of parole. “In the state of New Jersey, where this policy was adopted, they saved over \$1.3 million. In our state we would save on court cases and the extra security required for death row inmates,” she said. “The death penalty doesn’t really prevent crime; we should be spending this money more effectively on crime prevention and apprehension.”



## Clean up your act, Washington!



Olympia – House Bill 2222 was introduced yesterday by Senator Duncan Sheffels. “This bill addresses the issue of car pollution and will clean up the environment,” said Sen. Sheffels. There are over 16,034 pounds of carbon dioxide released by

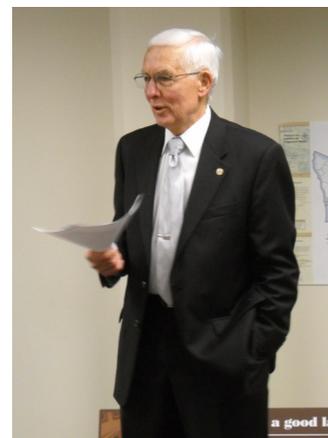
Washington’s 8.3 million vehicles every year. “CO2 emitted by automobiles and trucks has been found to be the top contributor to air pollution that is particularly hazardous to people with heart circulation problems and other respiratory conditions,” said Sen. Sheffels. Currently only five of the 39 counties in the state require a vehicle emission test every two years. “It is time for Washington to clean up its act,” he said. The bill would require all automobiles in all counties to have emission checks every two years. These tests cost \$15 and could create jobs at the testing sites, according to the lawmaker.

## Lawmakers advocate for more informative nutrition labels

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Hope Lackey and Annika Riise introduced House Bill 1415, which addresses the issue of confusing nutrition labels on food products. “The bill is a good one because it will better educate consumers so they can make healthier choices,” said Rep. Riise. Many people are deceived by labels such as “sodium free” or “hydrogenated oil,” according to the legislators. Sodium free items can contain up to 5mg of salt per serving, and oils are often mislabeled as “hydrogenated” when they are not fully hydrogenated, which can create a heart risk. This bill requires food producers in Washington State to format labels more clearly and accurately by making facts or ingredients commonly held as important more clear and accessible at a glance. It will also warn when



the foods contain potentially harmful chemicals and preservatives and will give more practical serving sizes. “Our bill will help you quickly make healthier choices when shopping,” said Rep. Lackey.



## Guest speakers visit Page School

Lt. Gov. Brad Owen; Joe Taller, Washington State Parks Commissioner; Sen. Craig Pridemore (D-Vancouver); and Rep. Steve Tharinger (D-Olympia), 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. Pages were able to interact with the guests, asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers’ questions.



## Page program over 120 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.