



The Weekly Page

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Pages Learn About Legislature

Carrillo proposes scholarships and tuition waivers to attract math, science teachers



Olympia – Senate Bill 6307 was introduced yesterday by Senator Tyler Carrillo. “This bill addresses the issue of quality teachers in the fields of math and science and will increase the number of instructors in these areas,” said Sen. Carrillo. In 2009, 45 percent of all 10th graders passed the math WASL. “If passing this test was required for graduation, that means that

more than half of our seniors would not graduate,” he said. In order to increase the number of good math and science teachers, with this bill the legislature will help provide scholarships and tuition waivers for graduate students who agree to become certified in math and science and teach in the state’s public schools.

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. 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 teen sleep deprivation, drunk driving, energy efficient light bulbs, and aggressive credit card practices on college campuses. 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.



Inequitable sports standards called into question

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Kelsy Webster and Olivia Kovacs introduced Senate Bill 6112, which addresses the issue of eligibility standard for high school athletes. “The bill is a good one because it will allow all students to have a fair chance to win and be scouted by colleges,” said Sen. Webster. All state high school teams must comply with the minimum criteria set by the Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA); however, districts may set higher standards for their sports teams. “This means not all high schools have the same playing field to compete. Some students may fail a class or two and still be able to participate in games, while others may not,”



said Sen. Kovacs. In order to establish equality in high school athletics, the legislature will require the WIAA to raise the eligibility standards for all school districts by requiring students to pass all their classes and have a minimum GPA of 2.0. No high schools may set higher standards.

Crime down, grades up with new school start times



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Shiara Blevins and Marlene Gielisch introduced House Bill 3971, which addresses the issue of sleep deprived teenagers and their academic achievement. “The bill is a good one because it will improve student grades in our in

high schools,” said Rep. Gielisch. A normal high school student’s body is wired to go to sleep at around 11:30 p.m. Many must get up at 5:30 a.m. in order to get to school between 7 and 7:30 a.m. This doesn’t allow the nine hours of sleep that a teen requires in order to do well in classes. This bill will require all public high schools to start no earlier than 9:30 a.m. “This later start time will reduce tardiness, depression, absenteeism, and the metabolic and nutritional deficits associated with insufficient sleep, including obesity,” said Rep. Blevins. “Plus, grades will only get better if students are more alert in class. Every step we take is progress, we just need to take the steps,” said Rep. Gielisch.

Breathalyzers to be installed in bars

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Alex Krause introduced House Bill 2346, which addresses the issue of drunk driving. “The bill is a good one because it will make the roads safer for other drivers,” said Rep. Krause. Drunk driving continues to be a problem in Washington State.



Thirty-two percent of fatal car accidents are related to drunk driving. To reduce this problem, Rep. Krause suggests installing breathalyzers in bars and other places where alcoholic drinks are served. “Anyone who comes into the bar will need to surrender his driver’s license to the bar and will need to blow into the machine in order to get the license back,” said Rep. Krause.

Senators want to ban plastic bags

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Kiah Combs and Mitch Jamison introduced Senate Bill 6543, which addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce the impact of littering on the environment,” said Sen. Combs. Every year people throw away 270,000 tons of plastic bags and

wrappings in the state. The bags take years to decompose, and many of the bags make it into oceans and lakes where marine animals eat them and die. This bill will require a 25-cent charge to shoppers for each plastic bag used at the grocery store in order to encourage the use of paper and biodegradable bags. This law will be in effect for five years, at which time all plastic bags will be banned completely. “We care about our environment, and we want it to be around for a long time,” said Sen. Jamison. “It’s just one more little thing that will eventually add up to a better and cleaner world,” he said.



Judiciary committee votes on capital punishment bill

Olympia – House Bill 3030 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Shawn Weisner and Joseph Thompson. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty,” said Rep. Weisner. It takes too long to execute prisoners on death row, according to the lawmakers. This bill will reduce the amount of time an inmate has to make appeals. “To minimize costs we spend on our death row inmates, a prisoner can only make three appeals over a 5-year period of time. After that, he or she will be executed by lethal injection,” said Rep. Thompson.



Credit card companies harming students

Olympia – Senate Bill 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senator Alex Naylor. “This bill addresses the issue of aggressive credit card companies on college campuses and will limit how they market to students,” said Sen. Naylor. “Currently these companies obtain student information from the universities who receive financial rewards when students spend money with the cards,” he said. There are many examples, like Ryan Rhoades, from the University Of Pittsburgh, who graduated with \$13,000 in credit card debt in addition to his student loans. The bill will make it illegal for universities to sell their students information to credit card companies. It will also make it illegal for these



companies to offer free commodities to students to get them to sign contracts for credit cards. “Although this bill will limit some freedom to market to students, it will still allow them to send mailers advertising their services,” he said.

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Second chance camp for homeless proposed

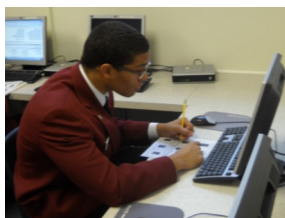


Olympia – Senate Bill 6666 was introduced yesterday by Senator Ali Johnson and Representative Jacinta Clay. “This bill addresses the issue of homelessness in Washington and will help people get off the streets, become self sufficient, and find work,” said Rep.

Clay. Homelessness is growing in Washington and includes families. There are 11,000 children under the age of six living on the streets or in shelters with one or both parents. “Our bill proposes that homeless families be allowed to live at designated encampments for up to five years. Here they will learn how to grow their own food. Second Chance Camp will take in new members as long as there is room,” said Sen. Johnson. Funds to create the camps will be provided by community donations. “This bill will result in giving homeless people the knowledge and second chance to live a healthy life,” said Sen. Johnson.

Sen. Ward addresses education reform

Olympia – Senate Bill 5744 was introduced yesterday by Senator Langston Ward. “This bill addresses the issue of quality education in the state and will better prepare students to meet the demands of our growing international market,” said Sen.



Ward. Currently students in the U.S. rank lower than those of other nations in the areas of science and math. “Students in our state have been consistent with the national averages,” he said. The bill will restructure the curriculum to prepare student for a globalized economy and real world situations. For example, students will learn to create a budget, invest, and begin learning languages at younger ages. This bill will also do away with state testing for graduation and federal funds. “By taking away the burdensome weight of the test, the focus will return to genuine learning, not getting good scores,” said Sen. Ward.

Transportation committee hears pedestrian safety bill

Olympia—Senator Caitlin Rouse defended Senate Bill 7319 yesterday during a regularly scheduled transportation committee hearing. “The bill is a good one because it will increase driver and pedestrian safety,” she said. Night time pedestrian accidents are high in the state, with nearly two-thirds of pedestrian fatalities occurring during night time hours. “Most of the deaths occurred within 90 minutes of the 2 a.m. closing time of bars,” said Sen. Rouse. This



bill will require that all pedestrians walking along paved roadways wear reflective gear after 5 p.m. Also, there will be a 1-800-CANTSEE number for drivers to call when they see someone walking along the road who is in violation of the law. “This shouldn’t cost anything because the existing police will be on the lookout for those who don’t wear the appropriate clothing,” she said.

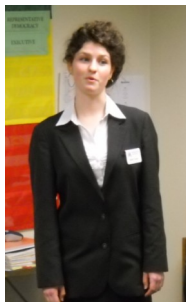
House and Senate bills suggests later start times

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Stella Tsitsiragos introduced House Bill 1878 and Senators Ashley Johnson and Kelley Borden presented Senate Bill 5678 in the education committees of their respective chambers. Both bills address the issue of sleep deprived teens and their academic success and stress levels. Recent research shows that because of current early school start times, some beginning as early as 7:30 a.m., a student’s ability to pay attention, communicate, think abstractly or creatively, problem solve, and make decisions are all seriously impaired, not to mention that their mood and motivation remain dangerously low. Scientists also have discovered that adolescents are not able to fall asleep until around 11 or 12 o’clock at night because their bodies are wired differently than adults and young children. “This insane school policy, that makes them start two hours before they are even awake, doesn’t make sense,” said Sen. Johnson. “Early high school start times make it impossible for them to get the required amount of sleep each night,” said Rep. Tsitsiragos. This bill will require public middle and high schools to start no earlier than 8 a.m. in the House version and no earlier than 8:30 a.m. in the Senate proposal. “I think my colleague and I can come to a compromise on the time that will best benefit all our students,” said Rep. Tsitsiragos.



Turn off the switch on CFLs

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Addie Turner introduced House Bill 2799, which addresses the issue of compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). “The bill is a good one because it will protect the public’s health and well being,” said Rep. Turner. CFLs contain mercury, which emits ultraviolet radiation. Without a filter, these UV rays are harmful to people, and can cause skin cancer and various skin disorders, along with other problems like nosebleeds, nausea and dizziness. New compact fluorescent light bulbs do not have diffusers and this can expose people to radiation, according to Rep. Turner. Her bill calls for banning the CFLs containing mercury and encouraging the use of incandescent light bulbs. The bill would give tax credits and other incentives to incandescent production plants which relocate to the state. “In addition to keeping us healthy, this would create a good job opportunity for Washington’s recently unemployed,” she said.



DNA testing saves innocents



Olympia – Senate Bill 6002 was introduced yesterday by Senator Kelley Smith. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty and will ensure that innocent victims are not convicted of crimes they didn’t commit,” said Sen. Smith. Studies show that since 1989, there have been tens of thousands of

cases where prime suspects were identified and convicted, until DNA testing proved that they were wrongly accused. Over 200 prisoners on death row have been exonerated with post-conviction DNA testing. Rolando Cruz was sentenced to death in Chicago and was in prison for 10 years until he was set free due to new DNA evidence that showed he was innocent. This bill provides DNA testing before any death penalty verdict can be decided. Where DNA testing is not possible, the most serious punishment for an aggravated first degree murder or rape will be life in prison without parole.

New plan to stop drunk driving proposed

Olympia—Yesterday, Representative Wyatt O’Brien introduced House Bill 1994, which addresses the issue of drunk driving. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce the number of DUIs and restore our personal rights,” said Rep. O’Brien. According to the lawmaker, increasing the penalties for traffic fines and jail sentences when someone is found drunk in a car will deter drivers from driving drunk. His bill proposes making it legal to drive while in-

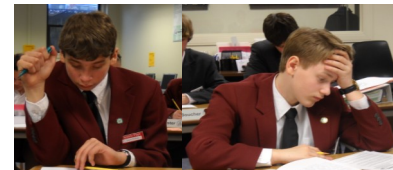


toxicated. “Lots of people drive drunk and don’t hurt anyone,” he said. “This should be someone’s right, as long as it doesn’t affect others.” If this bill becomes law, the current law will be replaced with a 5x multiplier for all traffic fines if the driver is drunk. A minimum sentence of life in prison will be given to any driver who is involved in a wreck that kills another person. If other people are only injured, there will be a minimum of 10 years in prison and a 25-year license suspension, regardless of who is at fault.

Pilot suggested for public health option

Olympia—Senate Bill 7331 was introduced yesterday by Senators August Waldron and Stuart Bright.

“This bill addresses the issue of private healthcare costs, and will provide a less expensive option for citizens,” said Sen. Waldron. For the last four decades, per capita healthcare spending grew much more rapidly than the per capita GDP. Much of the cost increases can be attributed to the emergence and application of new medical technologies, according to the senators. Administrative costs have also increased for healthcare providers and insurance companies. “In the U.S. we spend \$1052 per capita on administrative costs, compared to Canada’s \$307,” said Sen. Bright. This bill will establish a pilot program for a state government run healthcare program. The state will charge patients much less than they currently pay for insurance and services.



DNA swab—newest tool for police officers

Olympia—Senate Bill 6438 was introduced yesterday by Senator Henry Jennings. “This bill addresses the issue of DNA testing and will make more tools available for police investigations,” said Sen. Jennings. Currently, police in Washington State collect DNA from people convicted of a felony and many misdemeanor sex-related crimes after they are sentenced. This bill would require the collection of DNA from suspects at the time of their arrest, before they are even charged with a crime. “Taking a DNA sample at an arrest is no different than fingerprinting or a booking photo,” said Sen. Jennings. “It just involves a cheek swab.” The cost of the DNA test would be the responsibility of the person arrested.



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.

Sleep deprived teenagers get later wake-up



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Kaitlyn Landoe and Samantha Mesman introduced House Bill 2309, which addresses the issue of sleep deprived teens. “The bill is a good one because it will improve student learning and adolescent

health,” said Rep. Landoe. Researchers have proven that teens need at least 9 hours of sleep each day, but more than 85 percent do not get this recommended amount. In fact, 15 percent say they fall asleep in class. This bill requires that all public high schools start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. “When the Minneapolis School District changed to a later start time, there was a noticeable improvement in attendance, alertness, and grades,” said Rep. Mesman.

Cutoff week moves bills closer to becoming laws

This week pages spent a lot of time on the floor of either the House of Representatives or the Senate delivering amendments or other documents to legislators who were under pressure to get bills passed in order to send them to the opposite chamber. Pages got a first-hand look at how parliamentary procedure is used by legislators as they considered remaining bills. Hundreds of bills were introduced in the two chambers, but only about 15-20 percent will actually continue through the law-making process. After Monday, March 7, all bills will be transferred to the opposing chamber for hearings and deliberation. Bills which make it out of the second chamber will be sent to the Governor for her approval. The 105-day session is scheduled to end on April 24.

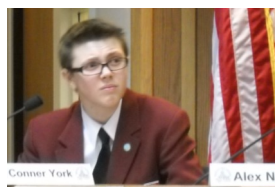
School lunch changes help combat obesity



Olympia – Senate Bill 6510 was introduced yesterday by Senator Kyle Rink. “This bill addresses the issue of childhood obesity and will steer our kids onto the path of a more healthy lifestyle,” said Sen. Rink. Obesity, a condition that leads to many diseases, is a growing problem in America and especially

in the younger population, according to recent studies. “The percentage of obese children has tripled in past decades and will lead to future health costs for the state,” said Sen. Rink. The proposed bill will require healthier lunch options in public school cafeterias such as salad and sandwich bars. “The proposal will have long-range financial gains for the state. As health improves, the state will have to spend a lot less on healthcare for the poor,” he said.

Lawmakers snuff out smokers in cars



Olympia – Senate Bill 7484 was introduced yesterday by Senator Connor York. “This bill addresses the issue of second-hand smoke and will ban smoking in cars where a minor is a passenger,” said Sen.

York. Heidi Henson, the tobacco cessation coordinator at MultiCare and a member of the Tobacco Advisory Board of Pierce County, says, “Every time I see a parent smoking while driving with kids in the car, I want to pull them over and talk to them about the dangers of second-hand smoke. They need to know it is not OK to poison children.” Current reports show that the toxins in the backseat of a car where someone is smoking is 30 times higher than the level at which an unhealthy air alert is triggered in the community. Studies also indicate children are more at risk than adults for adverse health effects of second-hand smoke, ranging from ear infections to asthma and bronchitis. This bill will become a law on January 1, 2012. If this bill becomes a law, it will start as a secondary law in order to get citizens use to it. At that time, any violators who are pulled over for other driving infractions will receive an additional \$100 fine. Leonard Sanderson, a member of the Tobacco Advisory Board, said, “Some people, you can't reach unless you have a law.”

Reps push ignition interlock systems for DUIs

Olympia – House Bill 2112 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Alicia Boucher, Connor Boucher, Clara Prentiss and Katherine Talbert. “This bill addresses the continuing problem of drunk drivers and will reduce deaths and injuries caused by them,” said Rep. Talbert. Alcohol-related car crashes kill someone every 45 minutes and injure another every two minutes, according to recent reports. Drunk driving costs the public \$114.3 billion a year. Approximately one-third of all those who drive drunk are repeat offenders. This bill will require all drivers convicted of a DUI to have an ignition interlock device installed in their cars. To be able to start the car, the driver must blow in the device. If the driver's BAC (blood alcohol content) is higher than .08, the car will not start. “With an IID, drunk drivers will not be able to continue their irresponsible behavior on our roadways,” said Rep. Prentiss.





Guest speakers visit Page School

Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark, Senator Bob Morton (R-7th), joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. They spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about the branches 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.



Page program over 100 years old

The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. 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.



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 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.