



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.

State calls a halt to plastic bottle litter



Olympia – Senate Bill 5681 was introduced yesterday by Senator Jessica Gudgell. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bottle pollution and will help reduce the amount of waste we put in our landfills,” said Sen. Gudgell. This proposed law will initiate a 5-10 cent bottle refund on plastic beverage bottles. The

consumer will pay an additional 5-10 cents for the price of the beverage and then get that money back when he or she recycles the bottle, according to the senator. “It won’t cost extra money for the state government; it will only help our environment,” said Sen. Gudgell. Seven states that have adopted this law reported a reduction of beverage container litter between 70 and 83 percent. “This is one thing people can easily do to help the environment,” she said.

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 drunk driving, animal abuse, beverage bottle pollution, and capital punishment. 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.

Death penalty dies

Olympia – Senate Bill 5551 was introduced yesterday by Senators Reilly Roach, Sean Johnston, Marcos Aparicio, and Ryan Baumgart. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty and will result in a huge budget savings and fewer chances of innocent victims being executed,” said Sen. Johnston. There are many instances documented where an innocent person was convicted and sentenced to capital punishment. There have been 265 post-conviction DNA exonerations in recent years.

“Mistakes are made in the evidence labs and in court with eyewitnesses, as well” said Sen. Roach. Another problem is that criminals often don’t receive proper representation. *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* revealed that 20 percent of the defense attorneys who handled capital cases in the state had been or were later disbarred, suspended or arrested. If this bill becomes law, the death penalty will be eliminated and replaced with life in prison without possibility of parole.



House bans death penalty, saves money



Olympia – House Bill 3035 was introduced yesterday by Representative Janine Donnelly. “This bill addresses the issue of capital punishment costs and will save the state money,” said Rep. Donnelly. She proposes banning capital punishment all together. “Jonathan Lee Gentry was convicted 20 years

ago and he is still on death row. This is making it very costly for the state—and he is just one out of seven prisoners there,” she said. According to Donnelly, the state has spent \$5.25 million more to keep these seven prisoners on death row. “This is ridiculous and outrageous! If we are going to keep these men alive for years, we might as well have given them a life sentence and saved our state a lot of money,” she said. The bill was heard in the Judiciary committee and will come up for a committee vote soon.

Lawmakers take away exemptions for vaccinations

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Erik Borchert and Kamryn Hull introduced Senate Bill 5678, which addresses the issue of mandatory vaccinations. “The bill is a good one because it will significantly reduce the risk of spreading dangerous diseases in the community,” said Sen. Borchert. Currently, Washington has a mandatory vaccination law, but allows parents to exempt their children on the basis of religious, medical, or philosophical reasons, according to the senators. “Unvaccinated minors are at risk of becoming sick and spreading it to others,” said Sen. Hull. Recently an outbreak of chicken pox occurred in Monroe



where 400 unvaccinated children had to get their shots before going back to school. This bill would remove some of the current exemptions.

Senators place conditions on abortions

Olympia – Senate Bill 6999 was introduced yesterday by Senators Ashley Lormor, Piper Napier, Elizabeth Shoemaker. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion and will result in more price-less, unborn children being saved,” said Sen. Lormor. The Guttmacher Institute reported that an estimated 1.2 million abortions were performed in 2008, an increase from 2005. “Many women

who have abortions are young and don’t understand the toll it takes on their body or that there is



a real human growing inside them,” said Sen. Shoemaker. This bill would require all women considering abortion to watch a video on the various procedures used to abort a fetus, as well as look at pictures of the developing baby throughout a pregnancy. “Afterwards, a woman can still decide to have the procedure, but we think many will change their minds and realize that an innocent living baby is being killed,” said Sen. Napier.

When cuddly turns ugly

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Andrew Brewington, Kristina Alvarez and Krissy Recknagel introduced House Bill 1000, which addresses the issue of canine attacks. “The bill



is a good one because it promotes public safety while discouraging ownership by those who don’t truly love dogs,” said Rep. Brewington. Reports regarding dangerous dogs often cite pit bulls as a dangerous breed, but the cause of their aggression is often due to poor treatment by owners, according to the lawmakers. A recent study showed that an American has a one in 50 chance of being bitten by a dog every year. This bill will require all dog owners to have insurance to cover any possible attack and to acquire an owner’s permit based on the breed of animal they have.

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No more abuse!

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Mattalynn Meyers, Emma Larson and Kimberly Kreifels introduced Senate Bill 7130, which addresses the issue of animal cruelty. “The bill is a good one because it will keep animals safe,” said Sen. Meyers. A case in Woodland, Washington this year involved miniature horses with hooves so long that the animals could barely walk. In addition, the animals had no shelter or clean water supply. “The underbelly of each horse was covered with black flies,” said Sen. Kreifels. Puppy mills are another place where animals are abused. In one case more than 600 dogs were crammed into filthy cages without adequate food, water or veterinary care. If this bill becomes a law, all animal owners will be required to register with the state. Professional inspectors will go to all homes to check on the condition of the animals. Owners will pay a fee to register, which will pay for the inspectors.

Keown proposes beverage bottle tax



Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Mitchell Keown introduced House Bill 2863, which addresses the issue of plastic bottle pollution. “The bill is a good one because it will make money for the state and reduce waste caused by plastic beverage bottles. There are 50 bil-

lion plastic water bottles put into American landfills every year, more than 140 million bottles each day,” said Rep. Keown. The bill imposes a state sales tax on all bottled beverages to make people less inclined to buy them. “Those who continue to purchase the beverages will be contributing the tax they pay to help reduce the budget deficit we are currently facing in these tough economic times,” said Rep. Keown.

Bottle bill introduced

Olympia – House Bill 1164 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Coleman Forrester and Carlos Nunez. “This bill addresses the issue of beverage container recycling and will reduce the amount of beverage bottles becoming litter and entering landfills,” said Rep. Forrester. The legislature will mandate a 10-cent deposit per beverage container under this bill. This deposit would be paid by consumers to retailers, who would

refund the deposit to consumers upon their return of beverage containers. Rep. Forrester, the bill's prime sponsor, mentioned another benefit of the bill: "In some states where bottle bills such as this one have been implemented, people have been concerned about the costs to the state of recycling the containers. We plan to fix that by diverting unclaimed deposits back to the state to help cover the cost to the taxpayers." Rep. Nunez noted that the states of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, Oregon, and Vermont already have bottle bills. “Greenhouse gas emissions from landfills are a growing concern for our environment. Twenty percent of those emissions are a result of beverage containers,” he said. Both the bill's sponsors asked the public and fellow representatives to support HB 1164.



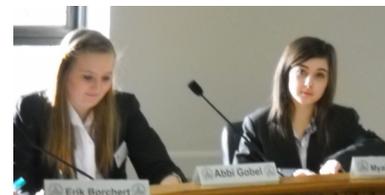
Fair for all



Olympia – House Bill 3333 was introduced yesterday by Representative Dansil Green. “This bill addresses the issue of eligibility standards for high school athletes and will reduce unfair advantages,” said Rep. Green. This bill will require the WIAA to set higher standards than currently exist for team participation. Athletes must take all the minimum number of classes required, fail no classes, and have an overall C average to play. Schools will not be able to raise or lower these standards. “This will help level the playing field for all teams so no one has an unfair advantage,” said Rep. Green.

Seniors with driving problems should stay off the road

Olympia – House Bill 2222 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Myah Dawkins and Abbi Gobel. “This bill addresses the issue of elderly driving and will reduce automobile accidents due on our roadways,” said Rep. Dawkins. Accident rates in the U.S. among drivers 65 years and older are higher than for any other age group besides teens, according to the lawmakers. “As the number of elderly drivers increases, so will the number of accidents,” said Rep. Gobel. If this bill passes, everyone over the age of 65 will be required to take a mandatory physical driving test every other year in order to keep their license.



Unique program gives uninsured children medical attention they need



Olympia – House Bill 1111 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Nicole Watkins, Jordan Badilla, and Samantha Bailey. “This bill addresses the issue of unin-

sured children and will improve the health of children living in families without access to doctors,” said Rep. Watkins. Every 41 seconds a baby is born without health coverage, and 73,000 children in Washington alone have no health care. Under this proposed bill, medical interns will be used to assist the uninsured children of Washington for any medical attention needed. “That way, the medical students will get the experience they need in treating patients, and the child will receive medical care,” said Rep. Badilla. According to Rep. Bailey, families will be charged a sliding fee for the services based on their ability to pay. “That money will be used to off-set the cost of the medical supplies and rent for the clinics,” she said.

Rights of multi-unit housing tenants go up in smoke



Olympia – Senate Bill 6432 was introduced yesterday by Senators Janna Mead and Amy Johnson. “This bill addresses the issue of second-

hand smoking in multi-unit living groups and will help make tenants healthier,” said Sen. Mead. Many non-smokers who live in apartments have to endure the affects of their neighbors who smoke. “Mr. Hogan started wheezing and complained to his landlord about the smoker living under his second floor apartment. Fumes from the neighbor seeped through walls, doors and outlets; and the ventilation system circulated the polluted air throughout the multi-unit building,” said Sen. Johnson. The legislature will forbid smoking inside multi-unit housing with this legislation. Instead, apartment owners may choose to provide tenants with a separate smoking area 20 yards from the housing area. “We know this is taking away the person rights of some people, but it is for the greater good of society,” said Sen. Johnson.

Dropout prevention program may be modeled after Georgia

Olympia – House Bill 1701 was introduced yesterday by Representative Ty’Zhaun Lewis, Tanner Siler, and Raul Polanco. “This bill addresses the issue of high school dropouts and will better meet the needs of those students who don’t do well in school,” said Rep. Lewis. It is estimated that this year three out of every 10 students, a total of 1.3 million students in all, will fail to graduate from high school. “Without a high school diploma, most students are setting themselves up for failure. They will make much less money over their lifetime than someone who has graduated,” said Rep. Rolanco. This bill will create a program called Higher Steps which will offer extra academic programs like art and tutoring. “The state of Georgia is hiring graduation coaches, like sports coaches, who coax and cheer students toward graduation. They have increased graduation rates from 35 percent to over 77 percent with this plan,” said Rep. Siler. “This bill should help students in the future, particularly at-risk eighth graders who will soon be freshman,” he said.



Enders and Anderson propose medical marijuana changes

Olympia – House Bill 2012 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Dana Enders and Mackenzie Anderson. “This bill addresses the issue of medical marijuana restrictions and will help those with prescriptions obtain their medicine,” said Rep. Enders. This bill will allow patients to buy marijuana from licensed dispensaries and providers. Currently, patients may grow the plant product themselves or designate one other person to provide the medicine for them. There is no provision for a pharmacy-type business to provide the drug. “This bill will authorize the Health Department to issue dispensary licenses so more than one person can buy the drug at a time. In addition, it will regulate the products purchased there by licensing farmers to grow the crops. Taxes from the sale of the marijuana will be paid to the state, so it’s a ‘win-win’ situation for everyone involved,” said Rep. Anderson.



Mikulak says cars need emission testing in all counties



Olympia—The Environment, Water and Energy committee met yesterday in executive session to take a final vote on Senate Bill 5607 introduced by Senator Roman Mikulak. “This bill is a good one because it will reduce pollution caused by car emissions and improve the

state’s environment,” said Sen. Mikulak. Currently only some counties require emission tests on cars. However, cars newer than five years and older than 25 years do not need testing. This bill will require emission tests on all cars in all counties every five years. Fines will be imposed on those drivers who do not keep their vehicles in good working order and fail the test.

Pages compete for Jeopardy win

On Friday pages tested their knowledge of the Legislative process in a spirited game of *Jeopardy*. Winning teams were awarded certificates and brightly colored stickers that they wore proudly for the rest of the day.

Guest speakers visit Page School

Rep. Timm Ormsby (D-Spokane) and Brian O’Neil, gang unit investigator for the Auburn Police Department, 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. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional and include delivering campus correspondence, helping with mailings in legislative offices, and handing out documents on the floor of the Senate and House. Initially, only males were allowed into the program. The first female pages began serving in 1937.



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>

