



The Weekly Page

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 7

FEBRUARY 25, 2011

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. 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 mistreatment of exotic animals, hunger, second-hand smoke in cars, and the death penalty. 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 raises the bar for student athletes

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Daniel Cook and Logan Bezon introduced House Bill 1212, which addresses the issue of student athletic eligibility standards for public high schools.



"The bill is a good one because it will ensure that all schools have a fair and equal playing field," said Rep. Cook. Currently all high school sports programs must abide by the WIAA minimum standards for athletes. However,

schools can set higher standards if they want. "This means that some athletes can compete with failing grades and some cannot, depending on what school they attend," said Rep. Bezon. The bill will require all schools to enforce the same standards, which will include passing grades in all classes. Sports teams will have 2-week grade checks throughout their season.

Death Row too costly

Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Haley Mullen and Amelia Payne introduced Senate Bill 5073, which addresses the issue of death penalty costs. "The bill is a good one because it will save the state money at a time when we are experiencing a budget crisis," said Sen. Mullen. The Washington Department of Corrections estimates that it costs \$35,000 a year to incarcerate someone, compared to the half a million dollars to execute a prisoner. This bill will eliminate the death penalty and replace the punishment with life in prison without the chance of parole. "Eliminating death row costs will take us one step closer to restoring Washington's economy," said Sen. Payne.



Page School on the web

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

\$1 added to license tabs to make roads safer

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Haley Hargreaves, Evonna



Bolden, Madeleine Gander, and Senator Samantha Yorke. “This bill addresses the issue of elderly drivers and will decrease the number of accidents caused by senior citizens,” said Rep. Hargreaves. Approximately 10 million drivers in the United States are over 75 years of age, and many of them suffer from health problems including hearing loss, vision problems, and mild forms of dementia. Many senior citizens take several medications for health conditions, and those medications may interact with each other causing drowsiness or confusion. “These conditions make elderly drivers a danger on our highways,” said Sen. Yorke. If this bill becomes law, drivers who reach their 70th birthday will be required to take a driving test every two years, in person, to evaluate their ability to drive. The Legislature will add a \$1 fee to license tabs each year to cover the cost of the test and pay for DOL employees to administer the tests. “This bill provides safety on our roads and fairly spreads the cost of the program to everyone,” said Rep. Gander.

Ineffective death penalty must go



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Matthew Smith and Donnie Tyson introduced Senate Bill 7999, which addresses the issue of the death penalty. “The bill is a good one because it brings us into the real world of the 21st Century,” said Sen. Smith. The death penalty is not a deterrent to violent crime, according to a recent poll of police chiefs around the nation. “It ranked last as the solution for reducing violent crime because perpetrators rarely consider the consequences when engaged in violence,” said Sen. Tyson. During the last 20 years, the homicide rate in states with the death penalty has been up to 101 percent higher than states without the death penalty. This bill eliminates the death penalty, replacing it with “life without parole.” “This punishment carries out justice more fairly and properly. Violent criminals should have a lifetime to think about what they have done,” said Sen. Smith.

Watch us live at TVW.org

Stores must pay state fee for providing non-recyclable bags

Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Nadia Nelson introduced Senate Bill 5678, which addresses the issue of plastic bag pollution. “The bill is a good one because it will help clean up the environment,” said Sen. Nelson. Every year in Washington state people throw away about 270,000 tons of plastic bags and wrappings—nearly 5 percent of all garbage going into landfills and incinerators. When they disintegrate in water ways, marine animals mistake them for food and they die after eating them. This bill will require that all stores pay a fee for non-recyclable bags they provide. Stores who do not want to pay the fee can offer customers paper, cloth or biodegradable plastic bags.



Lower drinking age, lower alcohol abuse rate



Olympia – House Bill 2525 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Adrian Kopps and Joel Meyers. “This bill addresses the issue of alcohol abuse and will lead to less drinking-related problems,” said Rep. Kopps. In Europe, car accidents due to alcohol are significantly lower than in the United States and Washington State itself. Research shows that in European countries where the drinking age is 18, there is less binge drinking among teenagers and fewer alcohol-involved car accidents among all drivers. Thirty-five percent of automobile fatalities in Washington State involve alcohol, just slightly lower than the 38 percent for the entire nation. “I find it ironic that at the age of 18 you are considered an adult and can serve in the military, where you may end up giving your life for your country, but you are not given the right to drink responsibly,” said Rep. Meyers.

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.

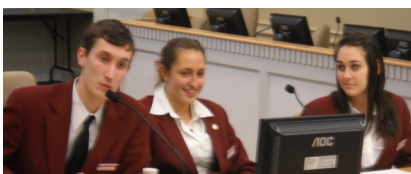
Exit exam ensures a future for dropouts



Olympia – Senate Bill 5601 was introduced yesterday by Senators Max Kroeger, Ethan Gourley and Beau Grantham. “This bill addresses the issue of high school dropouts and will ensure that students are properly educated before

heading out into the professional world,” said Sen. Kroeger. According to Parade magazine, over 7,000 students across America drop out of high school every day. Dropouts generally get low income jobs and many end up on welfare or in the prison system. “This costs the state millions of dollars a year,” said Sen. Grantham. This bill requires that students who want to dropout of high school take a test and pass it with 80 percent accuracy before being allowed to leave. Those who do not pass will be required to stay in school for one more year until they can retake the exam. Students who leave without passing the test will be found, sent to a mandatory alternative school, and their parents will be fined. An exit exam fee will be charged any students who wants to leave high school early, and this money will fund the program. “With fewer students leaving high school early, our economy will improve, our state debt will decrease, and we’ll have more academic leaders,” said Sen. Gourley.

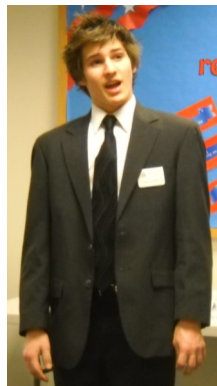
Will later start times equal smarter, healthier teens?



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Mariah May, Alyssa Armbruster, and Clay Brackett introduced Senate Bill 7777, which addresses the issue of

sleep deprived high school students. “The bill is a good one because it will give teens more rest so they can excel academically,” said Sen. May. Scientific studies show that 60 percent of students don’t get the required the 9 hours of sleep they need to be productive during the day, and 15 percent said that they fell asleep in class. This bill requires public high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. “Most teens experience a change to their circadian rhythm which results in a sleep phase delay,” said Sen. Armbruster. “This means they naturally feel ready for sleep around 11 p.m. or midnight, making it very difficult for them to get up when school starts so early.” Schools that have tried later start times have found improvements in grades, attendance and mood, according to Sen. Brackett.

Tax credits hope to encourage more food donations



Olympia – House Bill 2476 was introduced yesterday by Representative Cougar Henderson. “This bill addresses the issue of hunger and will help stock our dwindling food bank resources,” said Rep. Henderson. In 2010, one of every 10 Washington residents was in danger of going hungry. A decade ago, Washington was ranked the second most-hungry state in the nation.

This new law will give tax credit incentives to all restaurants and grocery stores who donate food to local homeless shelters or food banks. “The food can be past the ‘sell by’ date but cannot be donated after the ‘expiration’ date,” said Rep. Henderson. “We think this will start to solve the hunger problem, but things won’t get back to normal until more people are put back to work.”

Legislature limits young hunters to prevent accidents

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives David Knecht and Rosie Jennings introduced House Bill 2634, which addresses the issue of young hunters. “The bill is a good one because it prevents accidents caused by inexperienced sportsmen,” said Rep. Knecht. Statistics show that over half the hunting accidents are caused by hunters under 19. “We have seen that putting a powerful weapon in the hands of a child can have tragic consequences,” said Rep. Jennings. In 2008 Pamela Almli was less than an hour into a hike on the popular Sauk Mountain Trail in Skagit County when she was killed by a 14-year-old hunter who thought she was a bear. Currently, Washington State has no minimum age for a hunting license. This bill will correct that situation and will set the minimum age for hunters at 16 years old. Until a hunter is 21, he or she must hunt under the supervision of an experienced, responsible adult over the age of 21. While those under the age of 16 may accompany others on hunting trips, they may not actually fire a gun. “This will give them experience in learning the ropes and getting a feel for hunting before they actually use the gun for sport,” said Rep. Knecht.

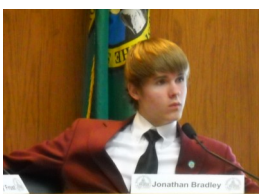


Guest speakers visit Page School



Legislative assistant Paula Rehwaldt and Congressman Adam Smith (D-WA) 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.

Senator steps in to protect young lungs



Olympia – Senate Bill 6342 was introduced yesterday by Senator Jonathan Bradley. “This bill addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in automobiles and will prevent serious, and potentially fatal, health issues in young people,”

said Sen. Bradley. "Second-hand smoke can easily lead to future health problems in young people who have never decided to smoke in their lives. Because young people may find it difficult to confront an adult about this problem, we must step in on their behalf. Young people should not have to suffer the negative effects of an adult's habit." If this bill becomes law, smoking in cars with passengers under the age of 15 will be prohibited, effectively saving thousands of young people from the future negative affects of second-hand smoke, such as cancer and emphysema.

Abortion education needed

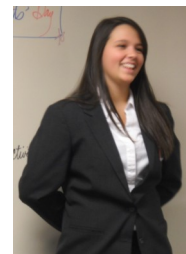
Olympia – House Bill 1111 was introduced yesterday by Representative Connor Trimble. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion and will educate women about the lasting physical and mental effects the procedure will have on their bodies,” said Rep. Trimble. With this bill, all pregnant women who wish to have an abortion must first take a



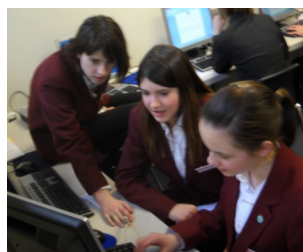
two week class to educate themselves about the decision. During this class, a physician will describe the various procedures and details. Also, the women will watch a graphic video of the different ways a fetus is aborted. “Because the rate of abortions has been increasing for a few decades, although we can’t completely abolish the practice, this step is made with the hopes of reducing the number of abortions for women in the state,” said Rep. Trimble.

Make the grade or pay the price

Olympia – House Bill 3636 was introduced yesterday by Representative Cassandra Hendricksen. “This bill addresses the issue of low achieving students and will increase the graduation rate,” said Rep. Hendricksen. Students who do not pass the state proficiency exams will spend their summers in school, increasing their knowledge, if this bill becomes law. The Center for Public Education of the National School Boards Association says extra time in the classroom could potentially boost American students’ performance. “American children rank lower than other nations in reading, math and science,” said Rep. Hendrickson. “We don’t need those long summer breaks for students anymore. Those were created during a time in our country when kids had to help their families harvest the crops,” she said.



EAT program improves health—exercise, academics and tasting!



Olympia – Senate Bill 5001 was introduced yesterday by Senators Catherine Badart, Catherine Hutt, Katherine Kallus. “This bill addresses the issue of childhood obesity and will encourage children and their parents to live a better lifestyle,” said Sen. Hutt. The bill

will put the EAT plan into action, requiring schools to put together new programs which will involve more rigorous PE classes, healthy eating classes, and more nutritious breakfasts and lunches. It also requires public schools to hold a seminar once a year for parents to learn more about inexpensive healthy food options for their kids. There will be a workshop for students and cooks at the schools on how to grow a vegetable garden, as well. "For this bill to work, it will take the cooperation of everyone—students, teachers and parents," said Sen. Badart. “Once students are eating right and exercising more, their academics will improve, too,” said Sen. Kallus.

Let's move American kids to the top!



Olympia – Senate Bill 7610 was introduced yesterday by Senators Jared Fritz and Christopher Frost. “This bill addresses the issue of student achievement and will help our future students compete for

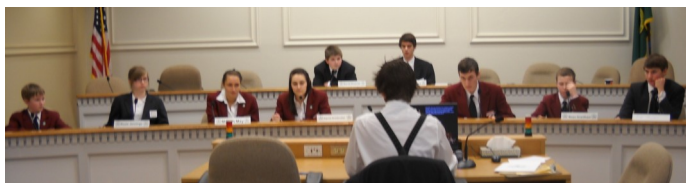
jobs globally,” said Sen. Fritz. In eighth- grade math, U.S. students have fallen to ninth place worldwide, and just a third of 13- and 14-year-olds can read as well as Singapore middle-schoolers. “This is not alright. We also know that nationally 30 percent of high school students drop out before graduation, and another 50 percent won't finish college,” said Sen. Frost. This bill will lengthen the required number of days that public schools must be in session to 190 days—10 days more than the current law provides. “Over our long summer breaks, students forget much of what they have previously learned. The extra days will help them retain that information,” said Sen. Fritz. The cost for the extra days will be paid for through in increased tax on alcohol and tobacco by .4 percent.

Legislature: The New Ringleader

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Katherine Winchell, Danielle Sweigard, and Margo Pin introduced House Bill 1523, which addresses the mistreatment



of animals. “The bill is a good one because it will put a stop to the senseless abuse of exotic animals in Washington state,” said Rep. Winchell. This bill bans entertainment productions that use wild animals, such as travelling shows, from entering Washington state. “Circuses will no longer we allowed to perform in our state,” said Rep. Sweigard. “Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus alone has had 27 elephant deaths, including four babies since 1992. In 2004, an 8-month-old elephant was euthanized after falling off a circus pedestal and suffering with irreparable fractures to both hind legs,” said Rep. Pin. Trainers use whips, tight collars, electric prods and bull hooks to get the animals to perform. “That’s just cruel,” said Rep. Sweigard.



Cut-off 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. In addition to handing out documents, pages were busy listening to their legislators express their views and watching the voting process. By next week, all bills that are still “alive” must 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 first half of the 62nd legislative biennium is scheduled to end, after 105 days, by April 24.

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.

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.

Autographs & Emails

