



# The Weekly Page

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 14

APRIL 15, 2011

## 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.

### Play ball!



Olympia – House Bill 2500 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Lucas Bauer and Jimi Fay. “This bill addresses the issue of high school athletic eligibility and will level the playing field for more equal competition among schools,” said Rep. Fay. Currently the Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA)

minimum standards allow students to fail one class and has no GPA requirements to participate. This bill requires all athletes participating in high school sports to maintain a GPA of 2.5 and be passing all of their classes.

### 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 abortion requirements, math/science achievement, welfare fraud, beverage bottle recycling, and second-hand smoke. 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.

### Senators go green

Olympia – Senate Bill 6461 was introduced yesterday by Senators Olivia Brock, Brianna Curtiss, and Emily Ge. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bottle pollution and will reduce the number of materials that don’t decompose in landfills,” said Sen. Ge. Considering that 120,548 bottles end up in a landfill or a water source every minute, and that plastic bottles can take up to 1,000 years to decompose, this is a growing problem. The bill proposes a deposit on plastic beverage bottles, which can be refunded to the consumer when the bottles are recycled. “This bottle bill will not only decrease plastic bottles in landfills, but it will also urge the public to be more environmentally conscious,” said Sen. Brock.



### 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.

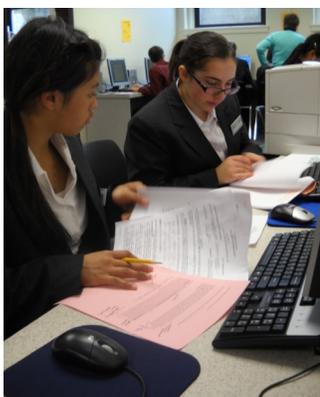
## Longer school year puts math/science students ahead

Olympia – Senate Bill 5432 was introduced yesterday by Senator Michael Kastama. “This bill addresses the issue of students lacking math and science skills and will enable U.S. graduates to become more competitive in the future global market,” said Sen. Kastama.



Currently, on international tests, high school seniors in the United States ranked 19th in math and 16th in science out of 21 countries tested. This bill will increase the number of days in the school year from 180 to 200 days. “By giving students 20 more days of instruction per year, we should be able to bring our students up to the level of their overseas counterparts,” he said. In South Korea, the school year is 204 days long, and they are ranked second in the world in math and math, according to the senator.

## How BIG of a problem is obesity?



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Jacqueline Ines and Sabrina Kavesh introduced House Bill 1492, which addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it will help improve the health of our young people,” said Rep. Ines. Current research shows that by 2018 the percentage of children who are obese will jump from 30.4 percent to 41.6 percent. It is

estimated that one in three children born in 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. “Part of the problem has to do with the eating choices our children are making,” said Rep. Kavesh. This bill will require all public schools to stock vending machines with healthy snacks, such as trail mix, fruits, vegetables, and yogurt, according to the lawmakers. “Those products that are high in sugar, caffeine and sodium are bad for our kids,” said Rep. Ines. The representatives hope to encourage local farmers to provide some of the fruits and vegetables for the machines.

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

## Parents have to know!

Olympia – House Bill 1114 was introduced yesterday by Representative Patrick McDermott. “This bill addresses the issue of minors receiving abortions in our state and will require one or more parents to be notified of their daughter’s intent before the procedure can be performed,” said Rep.



McDermott. According to a recent study, 40 percent of girls under 18 years of age who obtained an abortion did so without the consent of a parent or guardian. In Washington State alone, almost 1,500 abortions were performed on minors without any kind of parental notification. HB 1114 mandates that parents provide a signed statement that they have been notified before the procedure is done. It is the hope of the bill’s sponsor that this piece of legislation will lead to a decline of the number of abortions in the State of Washington.

## Reps establish smoke-free parks and beaches

Olympia – House Bill 1213 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Jacob Bradshaw, Matthew Anthony, and Matthew Moe. “This bill addresses the issue of the effects of second hand smoke in public and will help our citizens stay healthy,” said Rep. Anthony. Research has generated evidence that second-hand smoke causes the same problems as direct smoking, such as lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and lung ailments such as emphysema, bronchitis and asthma. The bill will prohibit smoking in public places such as beaches and parks.

“There will be designated spots, away from the most populated parts of the beaches and parks, where people can smoke, and there will also be a toll-free number (1-800-NOSMOKE) for by-passers to call if they witness smoking in restricted areas,” said Rep. Moe. If this bill become law, Washington will join several cities in California and Chicago that ban smoking in public places. “Public health officials are very in favor of this new law,” said Rep. Bradshaw.



### Senator wants death penalty reforms

Olympia – Senate Bill 5678 was introduced yesterday by Senator Loren Heldreth.

“This bill addresses the issue of wrongful executions of innocent people and will increase the quality of legal representation and tighten the standards needed for conviction,” said Sen. Heldreth.

There have been 265 death row convictions overturned by DNA evidence in the United States. Many mistakes have been made due to poor representation by lawyers. “It’s just a matter of time before we execute someone who is innocent,” said Sen. Heldreth. The increased quality of defense attorneys and the added multiple points for a guilty convictions should save money on retrials and the amount of time spent falsely incarcerated, according to the senator.



### Private schools to pay for public school dropout program



Olympia – Senate Bill 7998 was introduced yesterday by Senators Ian Boudreau and Tristan Mailloux. “This bill addresses the issue of dropouts in high schools and will provide funds for more teachers and counselors to help kids succeed,” said Sen. Mailloux. Of

Washington State’s 290 high schools, 22 are considered “dropout factories,” schools where 60 percent or less make it from freshman year to graduation. This bill will increase funding to the schools with the highest dropout rates for more teachers and counselors. “Money will come from additional fees charged to private schools when they renew their business licenses,” said Sen. Boudreau.

### 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.

### Medical experts to verify banning additives

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Courtney Telloian introduced House Bill 1710, which addresses the issue of harmful food additives. “The bill is a good one because it will provide more wholesome food choices for the public,” said Rep. Telloian. Over 14,000 different chemicals are



added to our American food supply, a problem when you consider the fact that the average American spends a whopping 90 percent of their household food budget on processed foods. Examples of the additives include BHA, a preservative added to oil-containing foods to increase their shelf-life and considered a potential carcinogen; and aspartame, a controversial sugar substitute which is a proven neurotoxin that slows mental functions. This bill will establish a research committee to evaluate the risks of some of the main offending chemicals and recommend bans for the chemicals used in Washington-produced food products.

### Guest speakers visit Page School

David Johnson, TVW Education and Media Specialist; Greg Cook, Office of Program Research (OPR) session aide; and Dan Newhouse, Director of Agriculture joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. They spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about the branch 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.



## Stamp out EBT abuse

Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Natalie Schiermeister and Lauren Dunning introduced House Bill 1783, which addresses the issue of electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card fraud. “The bill is a



good one because it will save the taxpayers money and reduce state debt,” said Rep. Dunning. Records show that over 13,000 Washington State welfare recipients withdrew cash with their EBT cards in casinos last year, amounting to an estimated two million dollars. Gambling with welfare money is against the law. The bill will set a \$150 fine for any misuse of an EBT card for the first offense. Cards will be tracked through the existing system. On the second offense, the person will be removed from the EBT welfare program.

## Two hour shift in start times provides more sleep for high schoolers



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Erik Peterson and Ciara McAlinden introduced House Bill 3333, which addresses the issue of teenage sleep deprivation and its effect

on academic achievement. “The bill is a good one because it shifts public high school start times by up to two hours, allowing students to get the sleep they need to be productive during their school day,” said Rep. Peterson. Currently, 85 percent of teenagers get less than the recommended 8.5 hours of sleep. Shifts in circadian rhythm during the teen years prevent students from being able to simply go to sleep earlier. “In order to improve student health and productivity schools need to start later,” said Rep. McAlinden. This bill proposes that all public high school start no earlier than 9 a.m. Schools, like the Minneapolis School District, that attempted this solution found that students were less tired, more focused, got better grades, and were more alert throughout the day.

## Death with Dignity Act amended

Olympia – House Bill 2755 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Timothy Sizemore and Adam Carney. “This bill addresses the issue of the Death with Dignity Act, and will reduce the number of patients who take advantage of this recent law,” said Rep. Carney. The current



bill potentially allows patients who are mentally ill or depressed to receive a prescription for a lethal drug overdose to use to end their life. “This amendment will ensure that patients who commit suicide under this act do so in an informed, sane, and reasonable state of mind,” said Rep. Carney. The lawmakers contend that there is fraud involved in issuing the death certificate, as well. “The current act requires that medical examiners performing the autopsy falsify the certificates by listing the original terminal illness as the cause of death, rather than suicide,” said Rep. Sizemore. This bill requires an additional physician to verify the state of mind of the patient, requires that spouses or next-of-kin be informed when a patient requests an end-of-life prescription, and mandates the cause of death be listed as a lethal drug overdose.

## Legislators ban smoking in cars with minors



Olympia – Yesterday, Senators Katie Harrison and Ryan Berg introduced Senate Bill 6789, which addresses the issue of second-hand smoke in automobiles with minors. “The bill is a good one because it significantly reduces the health risks that face our children,” said Sen. Harrison. Second-hand smoke is toxic and has been found to be associated with lung disease, heart disease, asthma, and ear infections; and it can lead to an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome. “Inhaling particles of smoke can adversely affect the development of children’s lungs, and there is nothing that they can do to protect themselves when they are trapped in the backseat of a car,” said Sen. Berg. The new bill will ban any smoking in a car when children are present.

associated with lung disease, heart disease, asthma, and ear infections; and it can lead to an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome. “Inhaling particles of smoke can adversely affect the development of children’s lungs, and there is nothing that they can do to protect themselves when they are trapped in the backseat of a car,” said Sen. Berg. The new bill will ban any smoking in a car when children are present.

## Texting X2 = \$248



Olympia – House Bill 2999 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Brent Townley and Jacob Van Dormolen. “This bill addresses the issue of traffic safety and will reduce the number of distracted drivers,” said Rep. Townley. In

February 2010, Heather Lerch was killed instantly after her car left the roadway and tumbled into a ditch because she was texting while driving. Since the current law went into effect 3,975 tickets have been written by state troopers for DWCHAT. “This means that many people are still not seeing the severity of this dangerous behavior,” said Rep. Van Dormolen. This bill will double the \$124 fine when a violator is pulled over for a second offense. “Fewer people will want to text while driving when they hear about this,” said Rep. Townley. “The safer it is for people to commute, the happier people will be while driving,” said Rep. Van Dormolen.

## Spay/neuter bill proposed

Olympia – House Bill 2000 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Justine Keesee and Alana Dermanoski. “This bill addresses the issue of abandon animals and will provide low income pet owners with services to help with overpopulation,” said Rep. Dermanoski. Many pet owners are unable to provide their family pet with food and medical needs during the recession and are abandoning them or taking them to shelters. “Unfortunately, when this happens, many are euthanized,” said Rep. Keesee. In Washington State, tens of thousands of cats and dogs are put down each year in shelters. This bill would establish a program for low income pet owners to have their animals spayed or neutered. Veterinarians at private, public, or non-profit clinics around the state would be encouraged to give 100 hours at their clinics to spay/neuter strays and pets of those who could not afford the service. As an incentive, the cost of the business license of the veterinary clinic would be waived after the 100 hours of volunteer service.



## Informed consent now needed for abortions

Olympia – House Bill 1235 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Mary Currall and Grace Ordos. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion education and will reduce the number of abortions performed in the state,” said Rep.



Ordos. HB 1235 is the result of abortion clinics failing to properly educate potential patients on abortion procedures, such as partial-birth abortions, dilatation and evacuation abortions, and the saline abortion method, as well as offering alternatives to pregnant women. “Currently, there is no mandate in Washington for counseling that includes information on fetal pain, the link of abortion to breast cancer, ectopic pregnancies, and the negative psychological effects of abortion on women,” said Rep. Currall. The bill requires that clinics provide accurate medical information on abortions and wait a required 24 hours before performing the procedure. “We believe a woman should be informed about all her options before she consents to this serious, life-altering decision,” said Rep. Currall.

## Sleepless in high school



Olympia – Senate Bill SB 6042 was introduced yesterday by Senators Alyssa L. Walker and Caleb G. Carlson. “This bill addresses the issue of teenage sleep deprivation and will improve the health and productivity of our high school

youth,” said Sen. Carlson. Current high schools start classes as early as 7 a.m., but scientists have determined that teens need between 8 1/2 and 9 1/2 hours of sleep each night. “Because teens have a biological clock that prevents them from going to sleep before 11 p.m. or midnight, getting up for an early class doesn’t allow them the sleep they need,” said Sen. Walker. The bill will require all public high schools to start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. As a result of the later start time, high schoolers will be more productive and alert in class, and get better overall grades in school, according to the lawmakers.



## Lawmakers call for separation of church and health



Olympia – Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senators Noelle Oppenhuizen, Emily Jiang, and Madeline Pepple.

“This bill addresses the issue of deaths among minors due to failure to receive treatment be-

cause of religious beliefs,” said Sen. Oppenhuizen. From 1975 to 1995, 172 children died who could easily have been treated because their parents denied them treatment under the premises of religious laws. In Washington State, a young Jehovah’s Witness from Mt. Vernon refused a life-saving blood transfusion and died in 2005. “If this bill becomes law, the legislature will require hospitals to intervene in the cases of minors with life-threatening illnesses who could benefit from treatment, rather than have the child’s parent refuse the procedure,” said Sen. Jiang. However, after the child reaches 18, as an adult, he or she may make their own medical decisions.

## Senate bill tightens rules for abortion



Olympia – Senate Bill 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senators Emma Finnsson and Julie Fulton. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion and will increase the number of requirements needed for the procedure,” said Sen. Finnsson. In 2002, more than 86,000 women younger than 18 had

abortions nationwide. Abortions in Washington State are not required to be performed by a licensed physician. “This presents a great risk for complications,” said Sen. Fulton. Washington also does not require any form of abortion counseling. “Abortions can have many effects, including physical, mental and emotional pain,” said Sen. Finnsson. This bill requires parental consent for women younger than 18, as well as counseling for the pregnant minor regarding all options available, including adoption and parenting skills. A 48-hour waiting period is required between the counseling session and the abortion procedure.

## 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.

