



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. 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 included Intelligent Design, childhood obesity, emission testing requirements, and abortion. 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.

Stricter abortion requirements needed



Olympia – House Bill 3001 was introduced yesterday by Representative Kaitlyn Lehrkind. “This bill addresses the issue of abortion and will save many babies’ lives, as well as the mother’s health,” said Rep. Lehrkind. A woman’s body suffers every time there is an abortion performed. The procedure can seriously damage a woman’s reproductive system. Some repercussions are an increase in miscarriages and stillbirths. This bill requires women considering an abortion to take a course on the harm it may do to the body. “If she still wants the operation, she must apply for it. There will be criteria to meet and the cost will be very high. We think this will discourage many women from choosing this option,” said Rep. Lehrkind.

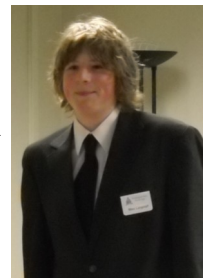
Matheison pushes for better test scores

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Andrew Matheison introduced House Bill 2963, which addresses the issue of low academic achievement in math and science in public schools. “The bill is a good one because it provides benefits for students with good test scores,” said Rep. Matheison. Students passing all four MSP/HSPE areas of math, science, reading and writing will be rewarded with college scholarships, while students who fail will be prevented from graduating.



Emissions mandatory in all counties

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Marc Langstaff introduced House Bill 3894, which addresses the issue of automobile emissions tests and the environment. “The bill is a good one because it will reduce pollution caused by older cars and make the testing more fair to drivers all over the state,” said Rep. Langstaff. About 101 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent were emitted in Washington in 2008. About 85 percent of that came from burning fossil fuels to produce energy. This pollution causes various cancers, asthma, and other health problems. Motor vehicles produce more than half of the greenhouse gas emissions in the state. Currently only five counties require emissions tests for cars, and in those, vehicles older than 25 years are exempt. This bill requires every car in every county to be tested every two years. “We should also put up signs reminding people to turn off their idling cars,” said Rep. Langstaff. “This saves gas and helps reduce other environmental problems.”



Washingtonians are starving



Olympia – Senate Bill 7777 was introduced yesterday by Senators Alison Funk, Carlie Arreola, and Hannah Gehrke. “This bill addresses the issue of the starving people of Washington, and

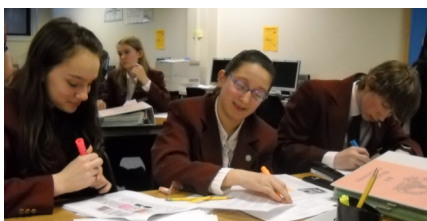
will help to eliminate hunger,” said Sen. Funk. “Last year, 1.2 million people went to food banks for help; 40 percent of them were children. Often the “working poor” increasingly have to choose between rent, electricity, medicine and groceries. “With the recent recession, many food banks are finding their shelves empty more quickly. Those at the end of the line, are just out of luck,” said Sen. Gehrke. In Washington, one in every seven families is experiencing hunger. In order to decrease the number of hungry individuals, this bill will offer tax incentives to restaurants that donate left over food to area food banks. “We are suggesting a tax credit of 20 percent of the estimated value of the donated food,” said Sen. Arreola. “We know that restaurants dump tens of thousands of tons of edible food every year,” said Sen. Funk. “This won’t solve the problem completely, but it will really help.”

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.

No more fat kids

Olympia—Senate Bill 6666 was introduced yesterday by Senators Hauna Borja, Sara Adelson, and Kody Berry. “This bill addresses the issue of childhood obesity and will result in much healthier kids,” said Sen. Berry. In 2004, an estimated 17 percent of children and adolescents, ages 2-19, were overweight. This statistic has tripled since 1980, according to the senators. This bill will require fitness exams in all public schools, one at the beginning and one in the middle of the year. “Children who fail the tests will be placed in additional fitness classes and will



not be allowed to purchase any junk food from vending machines or cafeterias,” said Sen. Borja.

Representatives take on abortion

Olympia – House Bill 2121 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Sydney Webster, Matthew Dymkoski, and Peyton Garrison.



“This bill addresses the issue of abortion and will reduce the number in our state,” said Rep. Webster. “It is just too easy to get this procedure in Washington, and most people who have it done don’t fully understand what they are doing to both themselves and the life inside them,” she said. If this bill becomes law, it will require all medical clinics where abortions are performed to show the patient a video on the various methods of aborting a fetus before having the operation. If she then declines to have the procedure but decides not to keep the baby, adoption counseling will be provided.

Drivers’ Ed not just for young teens

Olympia – Senate Bill 5511 was introduced yesterday by Senators Kurt Reinschmidt and Bradley Tate. “This bill addresses driver’s certification requirements and will reduce the number of accidents caused by older teens who have not taken a driver’s education course,” said Sen. Tate. The



implementation of the graduated driver’s license program over the last decade has decreased teenage fatalities by 36 percent. Unfortunately, according to the senators, the problem is that 18-19 year old drivers without the benefit of a driver’s education course cause twice as many accidents as 16-year-olds. This bill requires drivers under the age of 21 to take a driving course in order to get their drivers license. “This bill will make the streets of Washington a safer place for those who drive them,” said Sen. Tate.

Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/PageSchool>

Or watch our committee hearings at:

TVW.ORG

Harmful ingredients need bold labeling



Olympia – Senate Bill 5555 was introduced yesterday by Senators Sian Roche and Leah Penney. “This bill addresses the issue of food additives and will prevent negative health effects while improving the overall quality of food,” said Sen. Roche. Ingredients that can be harmful include trans fats, refined grains, salt and high fructose corn syrup. The average person consumes close to 63 pounds of high fructose corn syrup per year. Heart disease is a major result of eating too much fat and refined grains. This bill will require all processed foods to include bold labels that have easily visible information on any potentially harmful additives or ingredients in the product. “This bill helps consumers know what is in the food they want to eat, and which foods to stay away from because of harmful ingredients,” said Sen. Penney.

Bullet proof vests required for all officers

Olympia – Senate Bill 7675 was introduced yesterday by Senator Zach Wiley. “This bill addresses the issue of police safety and will require all police officers to wear bullet proof vests,” said Sen. Zach Wiley. There is a rise in criminal firearm activity, according to the senator. In 2009, firearms-related deaths increased 19 percent. “Only one third of all U.S. police officers wear a bullet proof vest. An officer may be prepared mentally to go out on a call, but until he or she is wearing a vest, they are not prepared physically for what might turn into a bad situation,” said Sen. Wiley. The cost of outfitting all officers will come from local citizens sponsoring a policeman in their community. “If we care enough, we’ll do this.”



Out shopping? Bring your own bag

Olympia – House Bill 1234 was introduced yesterday by Representative Tucker Andis. “This bill addresses the issue of plastic bag waste and will conserve energy, save natural resources and aquatic lives, and keep a clean earth,” said Rep. Andis. Plastic bags are a major polluter and are difficult



to dispose of. They kill sea life who mistake plastic bags for food. This law will ban plastic bags at all grocery and retail stores and violators will be fined \$1,000. Stores may provide alternative bags for sale made from reusable machine washable textile materials or paper bags for free.

Guest speakers visit Page School

Legislative Code Reviser Kyle Thiessen and State Supreme Court Justice Susan Owens joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. Both spoke about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information in regard to the legislative and judicial processes. Pages were able to interact with the guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speakers’ questions.



Reps say science students need choices

Olympia – House Bill 1563 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Clint Brantley and Seth Olson. “This bill addresses the issue of the public school science curriculum and will require that Intelligent Design be taught in in public schools along with evolution,” said Rep. Olson. Currently all 513 public high schools in the state require science credits for graduation. Biology, where the theory of evolution is typically taught as the only explanation of the origin of life, is one of those possible science classes. This bill requires all public schools to include the intelligent design curriculum in their courses, if they teach evolution. “Our young citizens should be able to choose what to believe, without being force-fed one theory,” said Rep. Brantley. “This will produce greater classroom discussions and strengthen the minds of our students,” he said.



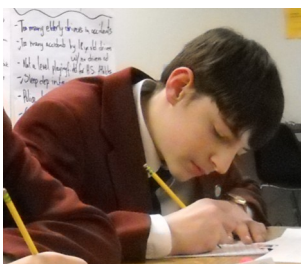
Later start times help sleepy teens



Olympia – House Bill 1111 was introduced yesterday by Representatives David Whitmore, Daniel Whitmore, and John Reid. “This bill addresses the issue of teen sleep deprivation and will help to improve

the academic performance, health, and daily functions of our youth,” said Rep. David Whitmore. Experts say that teens should get a recommended 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep each night,; however, with the early public school high school start times, this is nearly impossible for most teens, according to the legislators. Studies show that 15 percent of teens have fallen asleep in class from lack of sleep at home. Later sleep and wake patterns among adolescents are biologically determined: the natural biological tendency for teenagers is to stay up later at night and wake up later in the morning. If this bill becomes a law, all public high schools in Washington state will be required to start their school day no earlier that 8 a.m. “When the Minneapolis school district changed starting times from 7:15 to 8:45, results showed the extra sleep helped improve attendance, enrollment rates, increased daytime alertness, and decreased student-reported depression. We should do this, too,” said Rep. Reid.

Lockdown on drunk driving



Olympia – Yesterday, Senator William Miller introduced Senate Bill 6565, which addresses the issue of driving under the influence. “The bill is a good one because it reduces the number of drunk drivers on the road,” said Sen. Miller. The bill raises the current drinking age from

21 to 25 and sets a maximum drinking age of 70. Taxes will be raised on alcohol and DUI citation costs will be increased. Those who receive a DUI ticket will have to place a bright yellow license plate on their vehicles. “Drinking and driving continue to be a problem in our state. In 2008, 182 people died in drunk driving accidents; most were teens or senior citizens,” said Sen. Miller.

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.

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 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 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.



Page School Mock Committee
TVW Webcasting