



WRAP-UP

The Newsletter of the West Virginia Legislature

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Legislative Interns Discuss Their Experiences, Reflect on the Last 60 Days

by Jessica Wintz

During the past 60 days of the Legislative session, 66 interns have had the opportunity to experience their state government from unique points of view through five different internship programs. The McManus Fellowship, Rollins-Burk, Herndon, Frasure-Singleton and Legislative Information Journalism internships provide students from across the state the chance to participate in the legislative process in a variety of ways. Whether it's shadowing a lawmaker for a week or staying through the entire legislative session to observe committee meetings or summarize bills, each intern has a story to tell about their experiences.

Question: How has your internship compared with your expectations?

Answer: "This internship has far exceeded my greatest expectations. The level of access and involvement the senators have given us has been absolutely amazing. I feel personally invested in all the work we do." - Daniel Hager, junior health care management major, Marshall University, Herndon

"When I first interviewed for this internship, I thought that many of my tasks would be menial and my principle duty was going to be observation. After the first day, however, I am knee-deep in the type of work I thought was reserved for analysts and counsel." - Brad Heflin, senior political science major, Concord University, Herndon

Question: What do you feel is the most valuable thing you'll take away from this internship?

Answer: "The most surprising thing I learned was how much time the delegates and senators spend in committee meetings. I knew that the committees were an important and vital part of the process, but I did not realize that the majority of a delegate's day was spent there." - Catherine Staley, junior politi-



I Touched a Snake Today

A representative from the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources proudly displays an Eastern Corn Snake during the Legislature's Wildlife Day on March 6th.

photo: Martin Valent



cal science major, Marshall University, Frasure-Singleton

"A much more detailed understanding of the political process than the average social worker. I will be able to take what I've learned over the last 60 days and become a better advocate for my clients and community." - Rachel Henderson, social work graduate student, West Virginia University, Herndon

Question: Has your internship sparked your political interests?

Answer: "My interest in politics was at a peak and has continued to grow." - Justin Williams, public administration graduate student, West Virginia University, Herndon

"When I started this internship, I had absolutely no intentions on running for political office, I prefer to learn about the political system; However, after having this internship and being a part of the political process, it has sparked my interest in one day running for office." - Brooke Atchison, junior political science major, Marshall University, Herndon

Question: What one experience will you always remember about your internship?

Answer: "The atmosphere of these 60 days is something that can't be learned in the classroom. Every day is a different day." - Atchison

"I will always remember sitting with my delegate on the House floor during session. I loved being in the middle of everything, and it was a great insight into what actually goes on in session. The fast-paced atmosphere really is contagious, and by diving right into it, I gained a much better understanding of the process." - Staley

The Legislature welcomes students from universities and colleges across the state to participate in the legislative process during its regular 60-day session in the spring. Recruitment for these programs begins in the fall each year and students must meet certain eligibility requirements to be considered. For more information concerning these internships and to obtain applications, visit the West Virginia Legislature Internship Program webpage at <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Educational/Internship/Internship.htm>.



Completed Legislation

As of 7:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 5, 2008, the 57th day of the Regular Session, 1,345 bills have been introduced in the House, including 635 "carry-over" bills. 173 of those bills have been passed by the House. 787 bills have been introduced in the Senate, 172 of which have been passed by the Senate. Below is a sampling of the 55 bills that have completed legislative action:

Senate Bill 101 will create a property tax exemption on property not leased for profit and used by nonprofit corporations for the purpose of distributing electricity.

Senate Bill 145, also known as the Castle Doctrine bill, provides a civil defense for West Virginia residents who use reasonable force to protect themselves, their property, or others against intruders in places where they are entitled to be.

Senate Bill 237 will repeal the requirement that elected county officials must file an annual report with their county commission and the state tax commissioner regarding the amount spent on the services of assistants, deputies and employees.

Senate Bill 242 will allow the West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles to deduct three points from a licensee's accumulated points, after the licensee completes an approved defensive driving course. Licenses with 14 or more points will not be eligible. After receiving notification of a pending suspension of his or her driver's license, a person will be able to submit proof of the completion of a defensive driving course before his or her first day of license suspension to deduct three points and retract the pending license suspension.

Senate Bill 270 will eliminate outdated provisions that require circuit clerks to handle and disburse an inmate's money.

Senate Bill 271 will allow for the continuation of the Grievance Procedure Recommendation Board and for the grievance procedure of members of the state police to be covered by legislative rules. It also restates the Superintendent of State Police's authority to propose rules regarding the grievance procedure.

Senate Bill 493 will grant the Secretary of State the right to implement emergency procedures after consulting with the Secretary of Military Affairs and Public Safety in the event of a natural disaster, terrorist attack, war or general emergency occurring during or immediately preceding an election that may disturb access to an election ballot.

Senate Bill 495 will require that election commissioners or poll clerks receive training no earlier than 30 days before a scheduled election. If they do not attend the training, the clerk of the county commission may appoint a substituted person as a commissioner or poll clerk.

Senate Bill 496 will remove a person's driver's license number or nonoperator's identification number from the voter registration information available to the public.

Senate Bill 505 will allow the Legislature to use funds to cover the cost of all aspects of the construction and operation of the one or more cemeteries for the members of the United States Armed Forces, after all costs stemming from the construction and operation of United State's Armed Forces veteran's nursing homes are paid.

Senate Bill 512 will adhere to a federal change that requires the number of members on the West Virginia Records Management and Preservation Board increase from nine to 11.

Senate Bill 514 will allow absentee voters overseas and in the military to receive their ballots from a designated official by email at their request. Absentee voters receiving emailed ballots would return the completed ballot by email or by U.S. mail no later than the time that polls close on Election Day.

Senate Bill 579 will allow two nonresident members from Bluefield, W. Va. to be appointed to the Bluefield Sanitary Board.

Senate Bill 580 will remove the requirement that a driver must sign their traffic citation before a magistrate can accept payment.

Senate Bill 619 limits liability for civil damages for unanticipated operators of automated external defibrillators who acted in good faith to render aid.

Senate Bill 775 will statutorily define West Virginia's state parks and state forests and will prohibit the Division of Natural Resources from closing or changing the name or the designated use of any of the listed parks or forest. It will also clarify the limitations placed on Division of Natural Resources with regards to state parks and forests.

House Bill 2503 will permit West Virginian's to possess both a valid West Virginia driver's license and a state-issued identification card. Currently, only those individuals without a driver's license may obtain an identification card. If that individual is later issued a driver's license, the identification card must be surrendered.

House Bill 2881 will extend the period of time that antique motor vehicles and motorcycles can be driven for recreational purposes from 4:00 p.m. on Fridays through Sundays, to noon on Fridays through noon the following Monday.

House Bill 4069 will require vision screening prior to the renewal of a driver's license. This bill will also extend the period of time required for notifying a licensee of

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Completed Legislation

his or her license's expiration from 60 days to 90 days so that the individual will have enough time to get a vision examination. This bill will prohibit the Division of Motor Vehicles from renewing licenses to individuals not meeting minimum standards and also from obtaining personal biometric identifying information, such as a retinal exam, under the guise of a vision exam.

House Bill 4076 will increase basic compensation for members of the legislature from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year. This bill will also increase the per diem pay of legislators from \$115 to \$131.

House Bill 4080 will replace the Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act of 1972 with the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act. This act will provide statutory guidelines for management, investment and expenditures of endowments funds held by charitable institutions. The act will also provide for diversification and pooling of assets and total return investment to implement whole portfolio management.

House Bill 4099 will give authority to the Secretary of Military Affairs and Public Safety, the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and county commissions to designate the use of red lights on vehicles used for emergency response or emergency management.

House Bill 4124 will require that CPR and First Aid training be added to the health education curriculum in any of the grades six through 12, as the county school board considers appropriate.

House Bill 4137 will require insurance company's notifications regarding the total loss of a structure in the state be sent to the insured person, the municipality and county in which the structure is located.

House Bill 4327 will change the amount paid to workers at charitable bingos to no

more than 150 percent of the minimum wage.

House Bill 4418 will require that hospitals report health care-related infections to the Centers for Disease Control. These reports will be required to be entered into the CDC's National Healthcare and Safety Network, which was created for the purpose of accumulating, exchanging and integrating information on infectious diseases. This bill also states that this reporting system cannot be used for the purposes related to civil litigation. The bill will establish an advisory panel of experts on infectious diseases that will be responsible for providing hospitals with guidance and evidence-based practices in control and prevention of infections. The panel will also establish reasonable goals to reduce the number of infections in hospitals annually, develop advisories for the hospitals and review and recommend the manner of providing public information to the state Health Care Authority.

House Bill 4478 will prohibit the mid-year transfer of a mentor or aid working with a student with an individualized education plan. This prohibition is currently only applicable to students who are autistic or have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. This bill will only allow transfer if the individual is not certified or if the transfer is in the best interest of the student.

House Bill 4490 will call for the state to consider it a moral obligation to pay claims against the Division of Corrections for commodities and services provided to inmates, when not paid by the division because it has overspent its budget. These payments will come from the General Revenue Fund.

House Bill 4500 will provide that the Department of Education, residential care facilities, day care centers, providers of home care services, and others may access to the state's Central Abuse

Registry for the purpose of determining whether current or prospective employees have been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor offense constituting abuse, neglect or misappropriation of the property of a child, incapacitated adult or an adult receiving behavioral health services. The bill would also allow qualified entities access to the registry as to employees, prospective employees, volunteers, contractors and vendors who have or may have contact with children and others protected by the registry.

House Bill 4676 will continue the permissible appropriation of Public Employees Insurance Reserve Fund money to the Bureau for Medical Services of the Department of Health and Human Resources. This appropriation will expire on June 30, 2008.

House Bill 4677 will change the qualifications of the appointed Director of the Division of Personnel. Currently qualifications for this position are a degree in business administration, personnel administration, public administration or its equivalence and five years of experience. This bill will change the qualifications to either the education or the experience.

House Bill 4712 will increase the amount of funding for the Division of Motor Vehicles by \$1 million. This additional funding is intended to be used for the purposes of improving the use of booster seats, supplementing a grant to improve motorcycle safety through the implementation training and awareness programs, developing and implementing a state traffic safety information system, and improving security and reducing fraud within the Commercial Drivers License program.

House Bill 4713 will expire \$3.5 million from the Board of Risk and Insurance Management to the West Virginia Health Care Authority for the purposes of infrastructure and network support in the development of electronic medical records.

West Virginia Legislature's Web site

Designed to strengthen your connection to West Virginia's legislators and the laws that govern this state, the West Virginia Legislature's Web site provides you with access to various resources, including contact information, legislation and educational materials. The Legislature's online Bulletin Board maintains prompt information during legislative sessions through the Legislature's Calendars, Meetings, Abstracts, Indexes and Journals. Citizens also can view the entire West Virginia Code, interactive district maps, committee agendas and membership information at: <http://www.legis.state.wv.us>

Editor's Note: This is the final printed version of Wrap-Up for 2008. Final Wrap-Up, which will include summaries of all bills passed during the Regular Session, will be posted on the Legislature's Web site in the coming weeks.

West Virginia Capitol Complex - Then & Now

Aside from the differing seasons, these views from the Capitol steps show 60 years of change and modernization. In the 1940s, now classic cars lined the Courtyard on the North Side of the Main Capitol Building, residential homes instead of state office buildings faced the state's grandest architectural gem and Washington Street cut through today's enclosed campus. Once diminutive saplings have withstood the test of time to develop into the courtyard's now grand oak trees, while the interstate in the background typifies the state's 60-year expansion.

View of Capitol Courtyard from North Portico, Circa 1949



View of Capitol Courtyard from North Portico, Today

