



WRAP-UP

The Newsletter of the West Virginia Legislature

For information about your State Legislature, visit our Web site: www.legis.state.wv.us

Volume XXI, Issue 2 | January 27, 2010

State Legislature at the Forefront of Social Networking Revolution

BY JAEALYN JETT

As online social networking has expanded, so have the possibilities for West Virginians to better connect with the legislative process. The West Virginia Legislature is at the forefront of this revolution, and continues to adapt with advances in social networking and other technologies. With the October 2009 launch of Facebook and Twitter pages, the Legislature's goal is to involve the public - to deepen knowledge of and engage dialogue in the issues facing the state, while improving communication between state government and the people it serves.

While a number of other states have utilized social media for individual chambers or party affiliations, the West Virginia Legislature is truly leading the charge as the first state with official legislative presences on both Facebook and Twitter.

By expanding to these powerful sites, the Legislature reaches West Virginians across the state, especially younger web-savvy citizens, since over 75 percent of them regularly use social networking sites.

According to statistics released by Facebook.com it has over 350 million active users worldwide, and more than 3.5 billion pieces of content (web links, blogs, photo albums, etc) are shared each week.

In just five months, over 1,200 individuals have become "fans" of the Legislature's page on Facebook. They have access to photos, events, blog entries from the legislative Web site, committee meeting times and lawmakers' press releases. The information provided



MARTIN VALENT WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

Social Networking in a Mobile Environment

Followers of the Legislature's social media can get updates on the go from mobile devices.

through Facebook is continuously updated and offers citizens up-to-date information on legislative happenings.

press releases. This provides the growing list of nearly 300 followers an additional option to follow the actions of the Legislature.

Find the Legislature on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/wvlegislature>

Follow the Legislature on Twitter

<http://www.twitter.com/wvlegislature>

<http://www.twitter.com/wvsenate>

<http://www.twitter.com/wvhouse>

Blog - Today in the Legislature

http://www.legis.state.wv.us/daily_sum/today.cfm

Audio - West Virginia Legislature Live

<http://www.legis.state.wv.us/live.cfm>

Citizens also can follow both the Senate and the House of Delegates individually via Twitter. These chamber pages relay floor action in real time - allowing followers to track the movement of legislation during session.

For the past two years, the West Virginia Legislature also has provided a blog on its Web site titled "Today in the Legislature." It provides detailed information on daily Senate and House floor sessions, committee meetings, and other events of interest taking place at the State Capitol. Since its inception, the blog has had nearly 500 entries.

The Legislature's presence on the microblogging utility Twitter features short snippets on floor sessions, blog entries and



In the House

As of 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 27th, 2010, the fifteenth day of the 79th Legislature's 2nd Regular Session, 914 bills have been introduced in the House of Delegates. Of those, 5 have passed and have been sent to the Senate for consideration. The Bills passed were:

House Bill 4016 strengthens the State Ethics Act to include information relating to the spouse of public servants. The bill also requires the reporting of business interests in the state that provide employment or services to public servants. Additionally, the bill requires the Ethics Commission to publish all financial disclosure statements on the Internet.

House Bill 4026 requires the Higher Education Policy Commission and WV Council for Community and Technical College Education to evaluate and set standards for governing boards requests for capital projects and ensure that they manage the capital projects and facilities effectively.

House Bill 4138 requires the Board of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy to work with the West Virginia Board of Medicine to determine the scope of practice, education and training for Radiologist Assistants.

House Bill 4144 updates the law governing the practice of veterinary medicine.

A Sampling of Bills Introduced In the House

House Bill 4148 would prohibit members of the news media from being compelled to testify in any civil, criminal or grand jury proceedings in the state of West Virginia. Under this bill, members of the news media would not be compelled to divulge any source of information obtained while gathering, receiving and processing information for any news media communication to the public, published or unpublished, without the consent of that source.

House Bill 4149 would authorize incentives, such as the recovery of capital and operating costs, for energy conservation by electric utilities through installation of voltage regulation devices.

House Bill 4152 would make it a misdemeanor to make more than three separate calls to 911 for non-emergency health concerns. Additionally, any person found guilty of the misdemeanor would be fined \$50.

House Bill 4156 describes the policies and procedures for recall elections, such as grounds for recall and application for a recall petition, of elected and appointed federal officers not serving life terms.

House Bill 4158 would create the neighborhood crime watch program. This bill would also create penalties for harassing officials of the program and a policy to ensure informants anonymity.

House Bill 4159 would require all insurers to notify their policyholders of all rate

increases 30 days prior to them taking effect. The notification should include the old and new rate as well as the reason for the rate increase.

House Bill 4160 would provide a tax incentive for dental practitioners who provide dental services to West Virginia patients that have no dental insurance and whose income is 150 percent or more below the federal poverty level.

House Bill 4161 would create the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs. The bill also establishes the powers and duties of this office in addition to creating a Minority Affairs Fund.

House Bill 4163 would permit governing boards of state institutions of higher education the option to participate in the West Virginia Public Employees Insurance Agency, another third party insurance carrier or to self-insure.

House Bill 4164 would create a pilot program for children ages four through ten who are entering the foster care system. Among other things, the bill requires that each child be assigned an independent advocate and provide a long and short-term plan for each child.

House Bill 4188 would create the Anti-Criminal Street Gang Act. This bill prohibits the participation and recruitment of individuals in criminal street gangs and provides for the forfeiture of property used in connection with criminal street gangs.

House Bill 4192 would create the West Virginia Ski Resort Industry Commission to encourage and foster the continued development of the state's ski resort industry. This bill is designed to capitalize on the potential of the state's eastern mountains to produce a first class ski product.

House Bill 4196 would require the State Athletic Commission to authorize mixed

The West Virginia Legislature's Reference and Information Center

Building 1, Room MB 27
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 347-4836

Charlene Glagola
Director

Drew Ross
Deputy Director

Jaelyn Jett
Chris Marshall
Public Information Officers

Randy Cain
Webmaster

Dave Martin
Web Administrator

Dee Spelock
Resource Manager

John Tice
Graphic Designer

Martin Valent
Photographer

Max Hunt
Per Diem Photographer

Kerissa Bennett
Kristen Footo
Amanda White
Interns - Marshall University

Andrew Stacy
Interns - West Virginia University



In the Senate

As of 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 27, 2010, the 15th day of the 79th Legislature's 2nd Regular Session, 367 bills have been introduced in the Senate.

Senate Bill 324 would establish a tax credit for graduates of higher education institutions for a portion of the interest paid on student loans. This is an incentive to attract and retain young talent to West Virginia.

Senate Bill 325 would provide services and facilities to assist student veterans at state institutions of higher education.

Senate Bill 326 would place hearings requested by a driver appealing the revocation of his or her license based on a DUI charge before the court that has jurisdiction over the original criminal DUI that caused the revocation of the license.

Senate Bill 327 would create an Office of Oral Health under the Bureau of Public Health, which would employ a full-time director with no less than three years of experience in health or management in a health care related setting. This will be created in hopes of improving existing and developing oral care in West Virginia.

Senate Bill 328 would allow a professional licensing board to post a proposed fee increase on its website and notify members of the website by mail or newsletter.

Senate Bill 330 would create the West Virginia Partnership to Promote Community and Well-Being Act and would be used to combat substance abuse.

Senate Bill 332 would fix technical aspects of the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System Act by alphabetizing terms, clarifying definitions and specifying procedures for the transfer of contributions from the Public Employees Retirement System while also modifying other aspects within the act.

Senate Bill 333 would clarify the authority of the West Virginia Consolidated Public

Retirement Board to determine the participating employer contribution rate under the provisions of the Deputy Sheriff Retirement System. It would also remove the 10.5 percent cap on total employer contributions paid by the county commissions and concurrent employers.

Senate Bill 334 would require write-in candidates to pay a filing fee equal to 25 percent of what elected candidates normally pay. Previously, write-in candidates did not need to pay any filing fees.

Senate Bill 337 would require all of the money from the Racetrack Video Lottery Fund be used for paying off certain debt as well as paying off the workers compensation fund debt. The bill would also eliminate a \$200,000 annual payment used for providing health and disability benefits to jockeys and their dependents.

Senate Bill 343 would require students to be seventeen before they are allowed to drop out of high school. It would also require schools to give a written notice to the parent after a child misses five days of schools.

Senate Bill 344 would allow certain organizations to create a special license plate. In

Completed Legislative Action (Week of Jan. 20 - Jan. 27, 2010)

House Bill 4040 allows county school boards to choose the dates of the school year to ensure 180 days of instructional time. The boards are to include an icy condition and emergency plan to accommodate the number of days.

order to qualify, organizations would have to be non-profit, apolitical, unaffiliated with a religious group, and not promoting a brand name. The qualifying organization would be able to put lettering or a logo on the plate. There would be an extra \$25 fee for each plate, as well as an annual fee of \$15.

Senate Bill 346 would create a statewide credentialing verification organization for health care practitioners. This would establish a regular schedule and remove the burden of practitioners having to get verified at random instances throughout the year.

Senate Bill 351 would require training for certain law enforcement officers to prevent racial profiling. The training would occur in new officer training and during annual in-service training.

SEE IN THE SENATE, PAGE 4

West Virginia Legislature's Web site

The online **West Virginia Code** has been enhanced to show bills that have become law (under the chapter of the code affected) but have yet to be incorporated in the online version. <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/Code.cfm>

Bill Tracking has been improved to allow users the ability to prioritize bills and add personal notes. Users can also now sort and view their bills by multiple criteria. http://www.legis.state.wv.us/billstatus_personalized/persbills_login.cfm

On the **Bill History** page, sponsors, subjects and code affected are now all hyperlinked to related bills. It is now possible to sort bills by date, step, status or committee, and direct links to the history and text of the bills is now available. The effective date of bills that have become law has also been added. http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bill_status.cfm

The new legislative blog **Today in the Legislature** is a daily synopsis of legislative floor activities, complete with photos and daily committee meeting schedules. http://www.legis.state.wv.us/daily_sum/today.cfm

Visit the **Legislature's Homepage**: <http://www.legis.state.wv.us>

Social Networking - from Pg. 1

The newest addition to the legislative Web site is West Virginia Legislature Live, which allows individuals to listen in on House of Delegates floor sessions and committee meetings. Webcasting live audio of proceedings provides greater access to West Virginians interested in following the actions of the Legislature. House committee meetings and floor session times are provided.

The team of individuals that conceptualizes, builds, and maintains the Legislature's Web site and all official online social media is housed in the West Virginia Legislature's Office of Reference and Information (WVLRIC) - an apolitical, nonpartisan office that serves all members of the Senate and House of Delegates.

Web content is created in-house with input from the WVLRIC, Senate and House Clerks offices, leadership and committee staff. ■

In the House - from Pg. 2

martial arts in addition to reorganizing the commission.

House Bill 4200 would create the West Virginia Community Empowerment Transportation Act. Among other things, this bill authorizes county commissions to impose user fees for the construction and maintenance of roads and transportation projects.

House Bill 4201 would create the Livestock Care Standards Board. Additionally, the bill describes the purpose and duties of the board.

House Bill 4202 would redistrict the House of Delegates into 100 single member districts. This bill seeks to improve accountability and representation as well as aid in the implementation of campaign finance reform.

In the Senate - from Pg. 3

Senate Bill 362 would punish people who give false information to medical practitioners in order to obtain a controlled substance with up to 9 months in jail and up to a \$2,500 fine.

Senate Bill 366 would reduce the required number of members for a municipal planning commission in towns or villages to three. Currently, towns and village follow the same required amount as cities with a required five members.

Senate Bill 367 would make it a misdemeanor to use any technology found on a cellular device while driving. This includes text messaging, taking pictures and playing games. A first offense would be punishable by a fine of up to \$100 and second and third offenses would be punishable by fines of up to \$250 and \$500 respectively.