

Bill groups feel "moment of silence" should be silenced

Samantha Pelc
Springfield Williamsville

A hot topic this year at Y&G seems to be the mandatory moment of silence in schools across the state.

During Region 2's Pre-Leg II, there were four bills about the moment of silence alone.

When asked about this school requirement, the majority of the delegates felt as though it was against their rights to have to take a moment of silence every morning.

Joey Zanghi, a leg-

islator from Elmhurst Lake Park, believes that, "[the moment of silence] is not necessary or appropriate for a school. The idea behind it is good, but the school really cannot enforce it."

Ken Bates, another legislator from Elmhurst Lake Park, took a stronger stand on the controversy.

"I find it's silly and pointless. It really just slows down the day, making announcements not as quick, and it infringes on the rights of our freedom of religion,"

said Bates.

Several other delegates were either indifferent to the mandatory moment of silence or wanted the law altered.

Eric Sulita, a delegate from Heritage Batavia, remains not "bothered" by it.

On the other hand, Andrew Hirschel, a delegate from Heritage Naperville Central, believes that "if [the moment of silence] is done right, it should be longer. I don't mind it. I've lived in other states where a fuss wasn't made about it. Kids will al-

ways complain."

Marie Adelman, an Elmhurst Lake Park page, said, "It's not a waste of time, but I don't think we should do it everyday."

Nonetheless, even though the views about the topic are not consistent throughout Y&G, no one is really taking a stand to help keep it intact.

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GLOBAL WARMING IS A "HOT" TOPIC AT 2008 Y&G ASSEMBLY

Molly Collins
Elmhurst Lake Park

For many high school students, global warming is an issue brought up in class consistently, especially with activists like Al Gore making the news every month.

This leaves many asking, what should the government be doing about this environmental issue?

Y&G supporters of a green government outnumber the opposed, and they want a more active role on the government's part.

"Who else will do it," asked page Ryan Libert of B.R. Ryall Wheaton Warrenville South. "The government needs to use its power."

Several students suggested laws dealing with

carbon capping and making the public more aware of the dangers global warming can cause.

"The government should be finding achievable ways to prevent it and start researching alternative fuel," said Yuka Narisako, a lobbyist from Elmhurst Lake Park.

Other students believe the government should not be held responsible for anything that may or may not be taking place in the Earth's ozone layer, and they find activists like Gore to be blowing the entire situation out of proportion.

"The government should play an inactive role," said Pat Ahrens, an Elmhurst Leyden Legislator, but "trying to fix the problem should just be left up to every day people."



Delegates discuss what the government's role should be in eliminating global warming. The polar bear (pictured above) is one of the many animals affected by the effects of global warming. (Photo - sierraclub.org)

The government needs to conduct more research for several students to take a stance on the global warming issue.

Despite their position on the threat of global warming, high school students still believe people can do little things to help protect the

environment by reducing human waste.

"The government should only be there to help enforce the opinions of the people," said Elmhurst Lake Park attorney Jim Harrison. "They

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GLOBAL WARMING

Snow cancelled last year's Pre-Leg II; students feel better prepared this year heading into assembly

Ninia Pesch
Springfield Williamsville

Last year, Pre-Leg II was cancelled because of extenuating weather circumstances. Seventy-five percent of delegates polled agreed that this year will run a little more smoothly because they attended a Pre-Leg II, while

seven percent said no and thirteen percent were unsure.

Dominic Campo, a legislator from Springfield Pawnee said that having Pre-Leg II this year will "absolutely" increase the success of the big weekend because it will "strengthen everybody's bill[s] and make for a better

experience overall.

Eric Caldwell, also a legislator of Springfield Pawnee, said that last year was still a success, but agreed that newcomers "might be better prepared" this year.

Calen McGinty, a Jef-

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SNOW CANCELS '07 PRE-LEG

Springfield Williamsville Curren feels privileged to attend Y&G

Marissa Collier
Springfield Williamsville

Bridget Curren, a senior legislator from Springfield Williamsville, has a special opportunity in this year's Y&G program.

Curren is lucky enough to be financially sponsored by a local Williamsville family.

The Kording family generously sponsors a Y&G delegate every year, and this year "they asked me if I would like to do it," said Curren.

This is Curren's first year in Y&G, and she is very excited. She decided to accept their offer because "[she is] very interested in government."

She wasn't sure what she was agreeing to when she accepted the Kording's offer, "but [she has found] it interesting so far."

Since this is her first year, Curren is not sure what to expect, but she says she is looking forward to "a weekend at the Capitol because [she] hears it is very festive."

Curren is sponsoring a bill that involves conserving resources in the manufacture of water bottles. She says she is excited about her bill because "this is something that is really important to me."

Curren has heard a lot of good things about the program.

"My friends have told me some interesting stories," she said.

Equal media coverage for all candidates supported by delegates

DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS SHOULD NOT HAVE A MONOPOLY ON THE AIRWAVES

Crystal Kang
Elmhurst Lake Park

About 60 percent of Y&G students support giving equal media coverage and campaign funding to third parties.

Most Y&G students believe in equal media coverage but don't support the idea of giving government-funded campaign money to the two major parties.

"Attention-wise, everyone should have the equal chance to show their ideas [through the media]," said Heritage Oswego legislator Chanel Keyvan. "Funding for political parties should be based on how many followers a party has because more followers mean more needs."

Elmhurst Leyden legislator Max Andonov supports aggrandizing recognition of third parties because this adds more political diversity and unites people under common issues.

"We need more third parties like the Green Party [to enter the political main-

stream]," said Andonov. "I think the third parties would give more opportunities to choose other than conservative or liberal. Third party coalitions will create a considerable majority for these third parties."

Still others believe third parties have the power to sway voters because independent parties address voters candidly about specific issues.

"I feel that it's essential to have independent parties because there has to be an equal ground for people who aren't Democratic or Republican," said Caitlin Regan, Elmhurst York legislator. "It's essential that the media pays extra attention to independent parties because they are the ones who sway the votes."

According to Naperville North Lieutenant Governor candidate Dan Essig, third parties need to gain a memorable reputation to attract the voters.

"I really think [running for election] is about how

much money the candidates can generate in their campaign [without government funding]," said Essig. "Also, the media shouldn't be doing all the work. Independent candidates should be likeable and get their names out there."

Heritage Oswego Page Michelle Hartley believes independent parties should run on the same platform as a major political party and combine public issues.

"I think independent parties should run under as Democratic or Republican simply because when third parties split up, they hurt their chances of winning and the chances of others winning," said Hartley.

A handful of Y&G members took the middle ground when it came to maximizing support for independent parties. Joshua Keyser, Secretary of State candidate from Heritage Naperville Central said in theory, everyone should have a fair say. In reality, third parties don't have as much say in government.

Should the Illinois governor live in Springfield?

Jordan Durham
Christian County Taylorville

Would it help state legislation if the Governor of Illinois resided in the Executive Mansion in Springfield at least 300 days per year?

A wide majority of delegates believe the answer to this widely asked question would be yes, while the minority believes the complete opposite.

A bill being proposed makes living in the Executive Mansion a requirement for at least 300 per days a year for the current Governor of Illinois.

"It would reduce cost of travel for the governor if there was an emergency," said Springfield Williamsville legislator Megan Werner. "The governor would be there to do his job."

However, others felt that the state legislative process would be fine if the governor

lived in his original home in Chicago and flew back and forth, instead of only staying in the mansion.

"The governor should stay in the state he is running, not just staying in one town all the time," said Springfield Williamsville lobbyist Hilary Bowen.

Springfield Pawnee delegate, Dominic Campo disagrees with Bowen's statement, saying it would be best for everyone at the Capitol if the current governor lived in Springfield.

"He should live in the executive mansion due to the fact that the governor is an example for the capital city," said Campo. "When he is absent, there is lack of order." Along with Campo, Jefferson

"It (title of governor" is not the governor of Chicago . . . it's the governor of Illinois"



The Illinois Executive Mansion in downtown Springfield is the official residence of the Illinois governor. However, current governor, Rod Blagojevich, has decided not to occupy the mansion but chose to reside in Chicago. (Photo - illinois.gov)

County DuQuoin legislator Jordan Kelly felt that money and the environment should factor into the issue as well.

"It saves a lot of gas that that governor uses to fly into Springfield every day," said Kelly.

No matter the issues of money or an unstable legis-

lature, other delegates, such as Eric Caldwell, a legislator from Springfield Pawnee felt somewhat ignored by the governor living in his Chicago home.

"It (title of governor) is not the governor of Chicago," said Caldwell. "It's the Governor of Illinois."

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SNOW CANCELS '07 PRE-LEG

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Snow and ice cancelled last year's PreLeg II. This year weather was much better, and all PreLeg's were held. Did students benefit? (Photo - cnn.com)

erson County West Frankfort legislator, echoes Campo and Caldwell's thoughts and believes a "better understanding" of the activities and procedures will result.

Jonathan Moos is a legislator from Springfield Williamsville and likes to hear more people's opinions of bills before the big weekend, something that Pre-Leg II allows.

He also said that it helps him "catch mistakes you may not see" the first time around.

Jordan Estock, a legislator of Danville Catlin, has a slightly different opinion from Moos and thinks that most bill flaws are found during Pre-Leg I.

Finally, Jake McNamara, a lobbyist from Springfield Williamsville, agrees with the majority that success will increase this year because of Pre-Leg II. "Pre-Leg II allows delegates to become more familiar with the bills before the final decision process that occurs during the big Springfield weekend," said McNamara.

GLOBAL WARMING

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shouldn't be responsible for dictating actions that are needed."

Public opinion appears to take the threat of global warming seriously.

Dwayne Carter, an attorney from Heritage Oswego, thinks it is a "strong issue and the government should be doing something about it."

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Invocation during Y&G raises questions about separation of church and state

Elena Holler
Springfield Williamsville

At the beginning of every Y&G assembly, the delegates start and end their time together with an invocation led by either the chaplain of the Senate or the House.

However, many delegates question whether this contradicts the idea of separation of church and state.

Tyler Chance, from the Jefferson County West Frankfort believes that the invocation is acceptable.

"It is appropriate because it is a well-established tradition, and most people believe in some form of a high power," said Chance.

However, Eric Caldwell, from Springfield Pawnee, disagreed strongly.

"It is a huge violation because not everyone is Christian. You can't just assume that no one will be offended by it," he said.

Another Springfield Pawnee delegate, Dominic Campo, had a similar yet different perspective on it.

He believed "[the invocation] is not a violation of church and state; however, [he does] believe that the chaplain should be omitted due to the high percentage of religious diversity among the Y&G delegates."

Delegation wants to require motorcyclists to wear helmets

Drew Lazar
Springfield Williamsville

A bill being proposed by a group from Danville Schlarmann wants to address the issue of helmet safety.

Senate sponsor Arika Kramer and House sponsor Michelle Ames created this bill along with their co-sponsors Julie Smith and Celia Berkes.

The bill brief states that the new bill is intended to require "all persons operating a motorcycle, or a motorized pedalcycle to wear a full-faced helmet while the cycle is in motion."

Ames feels that the number of injuries and fatalities during motorcycle accidents could be reduced if this law was passed.

"The problem with [cyclists not wearing] helmets is very bad. The number of deaths that are seen each year in Illinois are just increasing as time goes by," said Ames.

According to information provided by the bill group, helmet use reduces the possibility of receiving serious injury, such as head



A bill group from Danville Schlarmann wants to make it mandatory for motorcyclists to wear a helmet while riding. The group wants to fine all riders who choose not to wear a helmet. Photo - www.motorcyclesafety.org

injury, by 37 percent, and is also 67 percent successful in preventing brain injuries. They also said, that "in 2004, 66% of fatally injured motorcycle riders were not wearing a helmet."

If this bill becomes law, "a \$150 fine [would be issued] if a person or persons are caught without wearing

a safety helmet," said Ames, and the bill group is hoping police officers will be strict in enforcing this necessary law.

According to the bill group, the law would be easy for motorcyclists to abide by because it is not a big burden on them, and they should all have enough common sense to wear a helmet anyway.

Springfield Williamsville's Schultz looks to big weekend

Jared Hayward
Springfield Williamsville

Second year legislator from Springfield Williamsville, Andrea Schultz, is starting to get excited about Y & G, specifically the anticipated annual big weekend.

"I want to sit in the actual [Senate floor] chairs!" Schultz exclaimed.

On a more serious note, Schultz said, "I'm really looking forward to observing the governmental process."

Additionally, Schultz likes the camaraderie of Y&G.

"Probably the most important reason for returning to Y&G this year is the fact that I have so many friends in the program, and we all had a great time last year," she added.

When asked what her experience was with Y&G last year, Schultz' response was bittersweet. "Our bill was a lot of fun, but it got shot down right off the bat. It was

rather disappointing."

Her group's bill last year attempted "to implement a four and a half day school week so that on Fridays teachers could stay all day and prepare for next week or help students."

Overall, Schultz is really anticipating the "rewarding experience that she will draw from the Pre Leg's and the big weekend and [she] hope[s] that this year will be as amazing as last year."

Elmhurst Lake Park's Lorenz relishes Y&G experience

Molly Collins
Elmhurst Lake Park

Since her sophomore year, senior legislator Katie Lorenz has been an active and visible member of Y&G.

"I have always found the governmental system interesting," said Lorenz of Elmhurst Lake Park. "The summer before my sophomore year I went to D.C., and then I heard about Y&G from some older friends, so I decided to do it."

Lorenz has worked her way up in the system, starting as a lobbyist her sophomore year and becoming a legislator her junior year.

In her third and final year, Lorenz's goal is to have her bill, which proposes to legalize homosexual marriages in Illinois, passed.

She would also like to find bills that she supports and then help those groups get their bills passed as well.

"I think that my charisma enables me to get to know

other students from different regions," said Lorenz. "Hopefully we can help each others' bills out in committee and on the legislative floor."

Lorenz also believes there is more to Y&G than the professional aspect.

"I think Mandatory Fun Night is awesome because it's a chance to get out of the political aura for a little bit," said Lorenz.

"Plus, you get to just have fun with all of your new friends and dance and do ob-

stacle courses," she added.

Along with Y&G, Lorenz is actively involved in Lake Park's marching band, newspaper, peer-mediation, National Honor Society, and the Bloomingdale Chamber of Commerce.

After high school, Lorenz hopes to advance the skills she has learned in Y & G.

"I definitely want to be involved in some type of student government in college," said Lorenz.

Bill group wants to ban tanning beds

Molly Collins
Elmhurst Lake Park

Delegates from Indian Boundary Hinsdale Central are sponsoring a bill banning the use of UV Ray tanning beds in the state of Illinois, unless customers have a medical prescription.

According to the bill group, tanning beds emit three times as much radiation through UVA rays as the sun.

UVA rays are associated with melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

"Tanning is very popular at our school," said co-sponsor Janie Langham. "There are mass lines out the door of the local LA Tan salon on 'Five Dollar Tuesdays.'"

Their lobbyist's papers back up the risks of tanning beds, with eye-opening statistics.

A Swedish study conducted in 1994 found that

women who tanned ten or more times per year had a seven times greater incidence of melanoma than women who never used a tanning salon.

"People just do not get that it's a big deal," said Senate sponsor Emily Burnett.

Opponents to this bill believe that tanning salons are a commercial business.

Therefore, the government should not interfere with America's capitalistic economy.

Also, they believe tanning is a freedom of expression so the choice should be left to the individual tanners.

The bill group, however, is not forcing tanning salons to close.

They are merely revoking their license to use a UV Ray tanning bed.

"By outlawing UV tanning, [the government] will [be] encourag[ing] the use of spray tans," said House

sponsor Billy Auriemma.

Medical use for tanning beds would be reserved for sufferers of psoriasis or eczema.

While age restrictions are already in place for salons, many teenagers find ways around the 18-year-or-older rule.

One delegate in committee told the story about

a classmate who continued to tan, even after explicitly being warned of the dangers.

"We know our bill is controversial, but we want it out for general debate," said Burnett. "Our goal is to see it be discussed. We just want to make people more aware of the risks of UV rays."



If a bill group from Indian Boundary Hinsdale Central gets its bill passed, tanning beds like this will become illegal in Illinois. This bill group hopes to make tanning by using UV tanning beds illegal in Illinois. The bill group contends that the potential damage caused by these beds far outweighs their commercial success.

Junior Cora Jeffers can't wait to legislate this year

Samantha Pelc
Springfield Williamsville

Cora Jeffers, a junior from Springfield Williamsville, is a student who does not intend to further pursue government in her

life after high school, yet something about the Y&G program keeps her coming back for more.

Jeffers says she likes Y&G because "it's a great experience, and it is defini-

nitely a fun event to have throughout the year."

Last year Jeffers was a lobbyist, which she enjoyed very much.

This year, however, she's taking on a bigger role.

"Last year while watching all of the delegates defend their bills in the Capitol, I decided that

I would like to be a legislator. It seemed like the kids were really having a good time creating their bills last year when I was a lobbyist, and I even caught myself wanting to help defend bills," said Jeffers.

This year Jeffers is

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CORA JEFFERS

Role of attorney really fits Elmhurst Lake Park's Jarna Shah

Crystal Kang
Elmhurst Lake Park

Two-year attorney Jarna Shah from Elmhurst Lake Park began her experience in the Y&G as a lobbyist her sophomore year. She became interested in the attorney position during her junior year, as she took advantage of the intellectual and political resources that this program provided.

"I joined Y&G because I thought that it would be a unique experience to fully immerse myself into a political profession I knew nearly nothing about," said Shah. "Although I plan to go into medicine, I want to be aware of the political issues in our society in my future. I feel like the biggest problem with Americans is the growing amount of indifference towards government decisions and policies."

The preparation process for attorneys includes choosing a case, defending a position, and preparing for an optional mock trial prior to the Springfield assembly.

The manual labor goes into writing the case brief, which must be submitted to the program's advisors before March.

Once the attorneys are in Springfield, they argue

their side of the case in front of a group of judges, who are other attorneys in the program.

As opposed to legislators, who rely on logrolling to gain as many votes as possible, attorneys may judge and defend court cases without depending on any support groups.

Shah said that there are more opportunities to speak one's mind as an attorney since the groups are smaller, and students engage in more interactive learning.

Shah realized that there is more depth to government than "what can be taught from a black and white textbook."

Through Y&G, students become cognizant that they are in a professional place and play their chosen roles, said Shah.

As an attorney, Shah appreciates the unique role of the judicial branch and its designated powers.

"The judicial branch is a living part of the government that has specific powers unmatched by the Executive and Legislative branches," said Shah. "Without this body of government, there would be no need to establish a Constitution."

Editorial - Stereotypes of "Southern" delegates still persist at Y&G

During the past years of my Y&G career as a press member, I have experienced and been exposed to many things.

My first year in Y&G I remember walking by a group of "Northerners" and, in passing, one said "I'm from Springfield and I hunt for my food," in a very strong, Southern accent.

That was my first exposure to a new judgment that I never knew existed.

Many "Northerners" believe that living in Springfield—which is in central Illinois—makes us hicks; I am baffled by this.

Yes, I live in a smaller town and I am not exposed to much diversity.

Many people think that living in a town of only 3000 residents makes them a farmer and sheltered.

I am not blind to other races, cultures, or lifestyles, nor are any of my friends; we just do not have as much exposure as someone who lives in a bigger city—or so I thought.

While attending PreLeg II this year at Naperville, my mind spun with even more judgments and stereotypes.

A governor candidate asked where I was from and how long it took to get here.

His reaction to my response of "Springfield" was "my cousin lives in the south too and it takes like four hours to get to his house."

Newsflash: Springfield is not in southern Illinois; we do not all farm, we do not hunt for our food, and we do not carry guns.

We have grocery stores, malls, urban areas, and normal lives.



Victoria Alexander
The Observer
Editor

Northern delegations want to repeal "moment of silence"

Crystal Kang
Elmhurst Lake Park

Four delegations from the North introduced bills opposing the Silent Reflection and Student Prayer Act at Pre-Leg II on Dec. 8. Elmhurst Addison Trail, Lake Park, Leyden, and Lake County Stevenson legislators pushed to remove an amendment that the General Assembly set into law this year.

This year, the Illinois legislators amended the Act to read "students and teachers shall observe a brief period of silence." The bill previously said, "Students and teachers may."

In a committee meeting, Addison Trail House sponsor Erica Whelan said that the Silent Reflection Act imposes religion in public schools.

"Illinois public schools used to have the option of [the silent reflection]," said Whelan. "Now schools must

do this, and not everyone can do this. This bill is defying the First Amendment rights, so it should be revoked."

Lake Park Senate Sponsor Nico Gianni said the Act should leave the silence reflection optional to all students.

"Through our bill, we want to regress back to the original Senate Bill which stated that students and teachers may observe a short period of silence," said Gianni. "Mandating the period of silence dilutes the importance of real tragedies that deserve a moment of thought such as the death of a teacher or the 9-11 tragedy."

Stevenson Co-Sponsor Brendan Howe emphasized that the silent reflection was more time wasted than time well spent.

"Even though I'm a religious person, who goes to

church every Sunday, I approve of my bill because the moment of thought has nothing to do with public education," he said.

The First Amendment emphasizes that Congress cannot prohibit the free exercise of religion. Advocates of the amended Act argue that taking away silent reflection constrains religious freedom in public schools.

Elmhurst York legislator Jerry Kurian, disagreed with removing silent reflection from the classroom.

"I am opposed to this bill because the period of thought is a moment to stay silent, not necessarily a moment to make everyone pray," said Kurian. "I think schools should have the moment of thought as a compromise between those who want to pray and those who do not."

Silence in general takes

away students' free speech. At the same time, students must shed some of their constitutional rights at the school gate. Leyden legislator Jack Redding doesn't believe that the Act infringes on students' First Amendment rights.

"Plenty of other times, students can't talk," said Redding. "I don't think it's a violation to tell students not to talk and to reflect on their lives. I don't think there's any problem taking time to think about our day."

Garrett Bergquist from Heritage Waubonsie Valley is against the amended Act because the law carries force and implies that all students need to take time during the school day to pray.

"I believe the moment of silence is being forced upon us," he said. "If people feel they have to pray in school, let them do it on their own time."

Danville group to tighten welfare requirements, lower numbers

Victoria Alexander
Springfield Williamsville

Delegates from Danville Schlarman pioneered a new bill that institutes stricter requirements for persons on welfare.

The goal of this bill is to reduce the number of people on welfare by weeding out those who do not need it: those using it for "free money," as stated in the bill brief.

Under the bill, the new requirements for welfare will include a resume, a two-week course, and proof of necessity.

The course will teach those who are uneducated, life skills to hold a job in the workplace.

Many questions were raised by delegates as to what types of jobs these citizens will be able to hold and

if they will indeed earn them enough money to stay off of the welfare system.

Nathan Liggett, a co-sponsor, said, "The class will help people to speak right in an interview and in front of future employers."

When asked the question of salary, he also guaranteed, "They will be able to make over minimum wage."

Another delegate questioned that if in the process of trying to save the state money, is it in fact spending more on the classes and the transportation to the classes.

Liggett was unsure of the ways to pay for the classes, teachers, and transportation. His repeated answer to how the state would obtain this money was "by weeding out those abusing the welfare program."

Cora Jeffers

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proposing a bill that forces consolidations of schools that have an enrollment of fewer than 100 students.

She thinks this bill is a creative one because it deals with something not a lot of people know about.

As for the big weekend in March last year, Jeffers made many new friends and memories that she hopes to repeat again this year at the Crowne Plaza.

A couple of these repeats are going to the top

of the hotel every night and looking out onto the skyline with her friends.

She also plans on passing notes during bill sessions.

Jeffers looks forward to this year very much and hopes that her bill gets passed because she thinks it is a very important topic dealing with schools.

"I'm really glad I decided to be a part of Y&G because it shows everyone the importance of the government in Illinois and also how to have a good time," she said.

Bill group seeks to require chemical castration for certain convicts

Marissa Collier
Springfield Williamsville

A Paris Heritage legislative group introduced a bill that would require chemical castration for all male pedophiles released from prison and put on parole.

This bill would require pedophilic parolees to be treated with a drug, called Depo-Provera, which would stop the production of testosterone in the testicles. This treatment would decrease the number of repeat sexual offenses.

Junior senate sponsor Brett Smith of Paris Heritage says their bill deals with "an important issue facing society today." He states that the purpose of their bill is to "stop the hurting of innocent children."

After release from prison, the offender would receive the castration treatment every 12 weeks until a state employed psychiatrist deems them no longer a threat to society. The penal system would fund the drug and therapy sessions.

Smith says his bill has caused quite a reaction. He says those opposed to the bill tell him that it is "inhumane" and "cruel". Smith says what is cruel is "allowing pedophiles to attack innocent children."

Laws very similar to this have already been passed in Florida, California, and Texas, and Montana. These states have seen an average decrease of repeat offenses from 75% to 2%. These states have also found this practice to be considerably cheaper than repeat incarcerations.

Smith firmly believes this procedure will help prevent many future attacks and "anything that can be done to stop them, should be done."

Sophomore Ashley Althoff looks forward to her first Y&G

Jordan Durham
Christian County Taylorville

Throughout the 2007-2008 Y&G, a wide variety of students support diverse backgrounds of experience with the program. Along with them, first year page, Ashley Althoff, sees the opportunity as a growing experience.

"Since it's my first year I thought my best bet would be to go and be a page," said Althoff. "The pages kind of go everywhere and I get to see many other aspects of the program while doing this, so I can go into another part of the program next year.

The history of the Y&G goes back many years; however, 2007 marks the first year Taylorville High School

participates in the program.

Not quite sure what attitude to enter with, Althoff hopes on making the best of the experience, as well as learn more about the legislative process.

"I'm undecided on what profession I want to go into," said Althoff, "but this is definitely helps me get many ideas on different things I could do."

Along with three others from Taylorville High, Althoff first learned of the opportunity to participate from her AP History teacher, Mr. Tim Kratochvil and Christian County YMCA Director Mr. BJ Wilken, both wanting to start up a program that will continue for years to come.

"They (Kratochvil and

Wilken) told me of the great opportunities the program held as well as the possibility of being part of it all," said Althoff. "This program is an experience of a lifetime and I look forward to sharing it with everyone here."

While pages in the program, she and Taylorville partner Emily Raab have been taught the way the whole legislative process works.

"I want knowledge of the electoral process, but I also want to come out of this with a lot of new friends," said Althoff. "This is a prestigious program that will be thought highly of on resumes and a great experience to fall back on."

"Governor, move to Springfield," says one bill group

Jordan Durham
Christian County Taylorville

Wanting to save tax payers thousands of dollars, a Mt. Vernon Sesser-Valier delegation introduced a bill requiring the Governor of the State of Illinois to reside in the executive mansion a minimum of 300 days per year. The represented bill also includes having the governor maintaining his/her sole office of operation in Springfield.

With taxpayer dollars as their main motive, House sponsor Kimberly Armes and Senate Sponsor Barton Shurtz looks to focus the governor's attention more towards the proceedings of the capitol legislature.

"We had just been talking in class and had read an article in the Springfield *State Journal-Register*," said Armes. "It had been discussing the governor going back and forth since the beginning of his term. I think it would help by saving so much money, and in the end, mostly

helping the citizens."

The majority of past governors lived in the "beautiful mansion" (as described in the bill brief) and promoters feel their bill comes across as "common sense," as present governor, Rod Blagojevich, spends an average of \$5800 a day, traveling back and forth, alone on a private jet plane.

"It's a step in the right direction to save our budget," said Armes. "If our governor can support this bill 100%, we can do this. The biggest concern and most controversial part is his signing it."

Blagojevich spends most of his term in office at his private home in Chicago; however, as a state law, citizens must pay for his property expenses during his term(s) in office, which includes the Chicago home as well as maintenance for the Mansion. If signed, the bill alleviates taxes for the upstate home.

State citizens express daily concerns of Blagojevich's

true meanings of his office terms. Many fear the governor's true intentions veered off the primary course, envisioned by Blagojevich beginning his first term.

"He is not a good governor if he's not putting legislature before anything else," said Armes. "By doing this he can put more commitment into his job."

Advisor Press Note -

This year, the staff of *The Observer* represents only three schools. Consequently, the coverage in this issue is limited to the PreLeg's that those reporters attended. We apologize for not being able to provide a more complete coverage of the program in this issue.

- Michael Gudwien and Adam Kershaw, advisors for *The Observer*