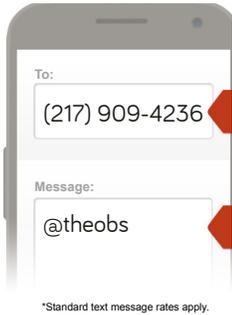


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We will also be publishing two more editions of THE OBSERVER print edition, one on Saturday and one Sunday.

# Bill group wants to make passing state driver license test much more difficult

Blake Dorris  
Sesser-Valier

A Sesser-Valier delegation introduced a bill that would lower the amount of errors necessary to pass the driving portion of the driver's exam from 36 to 18.

For co-sponsor Presley Robbins, the legislation is all about securing the state's thoroughfares.

"We hope to lower the number of errors on the driving portion of the exam to ensure more safety on the roads," said Robbins.

According to information released by the bill group, in 2012, Illinois had 274,111 reported car accidents, with about 1000 of those resulting in fatalities.

Savannah Boles, the House sponsor for the bill, thinks that is way too much.

"I have been personally affected by car wrecks, and it is a very big issue. People in Illinois need to realize how serious car accidents can be," she said.

The bill sponsors hope that their bill can reduce the amount of these wrecks.

Boles said, "This bill is mostly focused on first time drivers, but it will apply to everyone."

She also added that the legislation creates no exceptions for people with learning disabilities, adding, "Everyone will be graded equally on the exam."

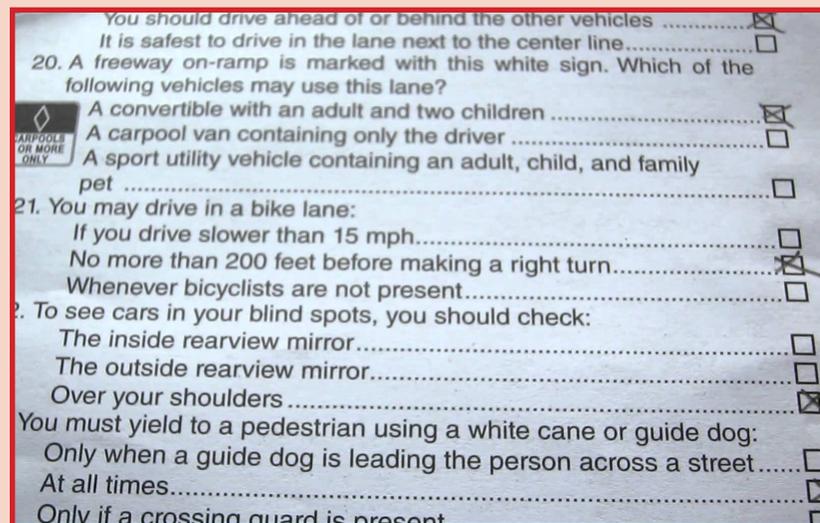
According to the legislation, once a driver passes the new exam, he or she never has to take it again.

"As long as you pass it before January 1, 2015, you will be fine. It will not apply to spot checks," said Boles.

January 1, 2015 is when this bill would go into effect provided it passed by the legislature and signed by the governor.

Not all delegates are in support of updating the driver's exam.

"People will still get into wrecks no matter what kind of score they get. Accidents make people better drivers," said Tyler Bradley, a legislator from Mount Vernon.



Left - The California State Driver's Test. A bill group from Sesser-Valier is proposing making the cut scores to pass the exam more difficult in the hope of making the state's roads safer.

## Youth and Government really needs a name for what we do this weekend

Baseball has the World Series. Hollywood has the Oscars. Nerds have Comic-Con. Youth and Government has. . . ?

Most organizations or groups have an original name for their biggest event of the year. However, Y&G does not have a universal, original name for the weekend when students from all over Illinois convene in Springfield.

There do seem to be some unofficial names for our time at the Capitol. I have always called it "the big weekend." I have heard others call it "the Springfield weekend." The official Y&G website occasionally calls it the Assembly or Assembly weekend.

Personally, I do not like any of those names. My point? We need a new name for our weekend in the capital city. I am tired of saying, "We have this thing at the Capitol over

the weekend," when people ask me about Y&G.

Now I am not the most creative person, but I have come up with a few names - Capital City Conference, or Springfield Session. Perhaps even "the big weekend" would suffice.

These could be fantastic ideas or they could be duds. Luckily, I know that there are about one thousand other students here in Springfield who can help come up with some ideas.

Let us know what you think. Post your ideas to Facebook by going to [www.facebook.com/ygobserver](http://www.facebook.com/ygobserver) or find a member of the press and tell them your idea. Maybe one of the names will catch on.

After all, if Y&G students can come up with a bill that would let prisoners compete in a race for their freedom, we should be able to figure out an original name for the "big weekend."

Austin Tuttle,  
Editor

## Delegates, watch the cell phone use please

A major issue that is facing our generation is cell phone usage.

Mostly everyone nowadays has a cell phone, but I personally think that it is teens who use cell phones the most, and oftentimes for unnecessary reasons.

Everywhere you go there are adults, teens and even little kids staring at their phones for various reasons - CEOs checking their emails, moms updating their calendars to keep up with their busy schedule and teens making their plans for the weekend.

But what I can't help but notice everywhere I go is the amount of teenagers who are constantly sitting, staring at their phones, whether they're alone or surrounded by people.

I'm sure you'll see this behavior quite often this weekend in Springfield.

Now, it is understandable that everyone

needs to be on their phones sometimes, whether it's to text someone back really quick, look something up online, check an email, take a photo or many other necessary things, but it's not always necessary to sit there on your phone especially when you're with other people.

Adults often have the same perspective.

Not a day that goes by where I'm on my phone, and my mom does not ask, "Can you please get off the phone?"

I think adults definitely get more fed up with the constant teen cell phone usage than anyone else, but, for better or for worse, it is the way things are now.

Cell phones are more popular than ever so everyone is going to use them, but there is a certain amount it should be used, and the right time and place for its usage, and, really, no one should abuse that.

Abigail Defino,  
Editor

## Legislation offered to clean up statewide rivers and waterways

Sofia Defino  
Lake Park

A bill group from Naperville Central has proposed legislation that attempts to reduce the amount of pollutants harming statewide public water sources.

This bill applies to rivers, streams, tributaries, ponds or any other source of public drinking water.

Senate sponsor Joshua Clayton said this bill is very relevant at the moment. "Environmental issues are really important in our world today, and people need to start realizing the

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DEFINO

# Defino: *State waterways need protection*

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harmful things they do to," he said.

The bill sponsors recognize that implementing a bill of this scope could be difficult to manage.

When asked how this bill will be enforced, House

sponsor Andrew Cassioppi acknowledged the challenges ahead.

"This is a hard question to ask, but when it comes down to the actual fines and checking in with the power plants, that could get a little complicated," he said.

According to Cassiopi,

the bill calls for each coal-fired power plant to produce an annual report of toxic-metal discharges and then to release that report to the public.

Under the new legislation, each power plant also will receive unscheduled inspections issued by the Illinois Pollution Con-

trol Board to guarantee its compliance with the legislation's new rules.

The Illinois Pollution Control Board is a sister agency of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

For Clayton, this bill comes down to protecting our natural resources.

## Bill group brings voter ID law before March assembly, wants to prevent election fraud

Rachel McCullar  
Williamsville

A delegation from Williamsville presented a bill that would require all voters to present photo identification in order to vote.

Senate Sponsor Hannah Levin said, "It's to prevent voter fraud. There have been occasions where a person who has died as apparently voted."

The bill clarifies that the forms of identification would include driver's license, state-issued identification cards, United States passports, military identification, and veteran's identification cards.

House Sponsor Anna Kluemke said, "[The picture] has to be similar, like, it's okay if you dye your

hair ... it's mainly because, as you may already know, the state of Illinois is very corrupt. You'll get lots of voter fraud."

Delegates' opinions of the legislation were mixed. Bailey Bryan, a legis-

lator from Heritage, said, "To be honest, I don't think that voter fraud is such a big deal." Dakota McClellan, a legislator also from Heritage, agreed.

"It's to prevent voter fraud. There have been occasions where a person who has died as apparently voted."

Others recognized voter fraud as a huge problem and thought this legislation would help.

Julia O'Connor, a legislator from Williamsville, said, "I thought it was a good idea. There weren't any downsides to it."

Francesca Boewe, a legislator from the Payson-Seymour, concurred.

"I liked the photo ID bill. I think it's a big problem for people in the United States and in Illinois, and I think it should pass," she said

## Legislation seeks to mandate drug testing of certain athletes

Angelina Gervasio  
Lake Park

The Wheaton Warrenville South delegation introduced a bill to mandate drug testing for IHSA athletes who participate in sectional and state competitions.

The IHSA began implementing random drug testing of student athletes for performance-enhancing substances in 2008.

Heidi Nassos, House sponsor, said, "We are aware the IHSA conducts random drug testing, but it is rarely enforced. We believe performance-enhancing drug abuse is a rising problem in Illinois and we hope to limit it."

Studies at the Insti-

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BILL GROUP WANTS TO DRUG  
TEST HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES

**The Observer**, which is distributed free of charge to Illinois YMCA Y&G participants, is published three times annually. Please send letters to the editors to the press room in the Holiday Inn Express. The advisors/editors reserve the right to edit the letters for considerations of brevity, clarity, and tastefulness.

**Editors**  
Abigail Defino  
Victoria Lolos  
Austin Tuttle

**Reporters**  
Sofia Defino  
Angelina Gervasio  
Veronica Klco  
Jamie Lamb  
Ariana Miceli  
Thalia Panoutsos  
Angela Shaw  
Andrea Vasquez  
Kaylee Kowalski

Sarah Bate  
Carley Horn  
Rachel McCullar  
Cydne Ratliff  
Sam Sagins  
Rebecca Williamson  
Blake Dorris  
Dustin Kemp  
Zachary Mabry  
Jacob Styve

**Advisors**  
Michael Gudwien  
Kaitlin Lounsberry

# Bill group wants to drug test high school athletes

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tute of Education Sciences collected data concerning students involved extracurricular activities.

The data showed that the student athletes who were subject to in-school drug testing reported less substance use than comparable students in high schools without drug testing.

According to the bill brief, IHSA rules state that any confirmed violation will require athletes to immediately forfeit his or her eligibility to participate in IHSA competitions. The penalty will last for a period of 365 days after the results are reported to the school and the offending student.

The bill group believes that mandating drug testing will help athletes by promoting health and athletic honesty.

Nassos said, "Drug testing is also beneficial by leveling out the playing field

into state competitions."

In terms of funding, IHSA rules state, "The costs of the educational program, and the additional substance test, are the responsibility of the student" (IHSA Performance-Enhancing Substance Testing Policy 2012-2013 Penalties, Section 1).

The bill proposes that IHSA merchandise, including event tickets and apparel, will increase in price to offset the cost of drug tests.

The state of Illinois will also apply for any national grants designed specifically for these laws.

Stephanie Gorski, a lobbyist from Wheaton Warrenville South, stated, "Our schools' athletic programs should be entitled to mandatory drug testing preceding every sectional or state high school competition. Doing so would promote fairness in the students' events."

## Bill group seeks to legalize industrial hemp

Jacob Styve  
Sesser-Valier

A West Frankfort Delegation introduced a bill that would allow agricultural growth of cannabis for industrial use.

Industrial hemp and what is commonly referred

to as marijuana vary in their respective looks and in their Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) levels.

According to information provided by the bill group, industrial hemp has a much lower THC level than the levels in traditional marijuana, and industrial

## Stevenson to make more drugs available for the terminally ill

Isabella Shaw  
Lake Park

these things do work."

Providing access

The Stevenson delegation introduced a bill designed to help patients who are suffering from a terminal illness by creating a provision to provide more drugs for these patients.

This bill will allow patients who are battling illnesses that are life threatening to have access to drugs yet to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in hopes of prolonging their life.

Andrew Pannu, House Sponsor said, "Right now the FDA blocks about 50% of applicant drugs, and since these patients have no other options, we feel like it is in the best interest of everyone to see if

to these drugs could allow the patient to have a longer life and also help the FDS in determining if these drugs work or do not work.

Pannu added, "We wrote [the legislation] because we think it's something that we were kind of interested in how the situation [with terminally ill patients] was and it was not right."

The bill group said that the legislation gives every person the right to decide or choose the option to be given the drugs. Drugs will not be mandated for the patients.

Pannu is optimistic about the bill's future in Springfield.

hemp, when planted, only takes four months until it is fully grown, allowing it to be planted several times a year.

Hemp also has few natural enemies and does not require many pesticides, making it a "green" crop.

For bill sponsor Keegan Gardner, this legislation is all about economics.

"Industrial hemp will be used to make products such as papers, plastics, fuels, composite fibers, textiles and various chemicals," said Gardner.

With the state getting into these new indus-

tries, Gardner believes it will have a tremendous impact on business in Illinois.

"I feel as though using hemp will allow us to export more products than we import," said Gardner.

The state will also profit from the \$500 permit price and the additional 3% sales taxes on products made from industrial cannabis that are called for in the legislation.

Gardner adds, "The bill will not cost the state any money."