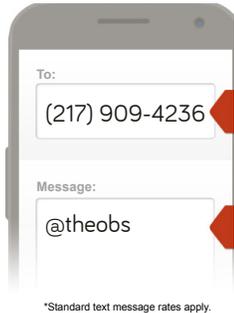


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Two bills attract the attention of Y&G delegates: H-O-10 and H-O-13

Sophie Defino - Co-Editor
Lake Park

Two bills have grabbed the attention of Y&G delegates this year.

The first, H-O-13, was written solely on the intention of legalizing prostitution; while the second, H-O-10, was devised for the safety of people who have been raped.

Delegates believe that both pieces of legislation have a very powerful message behind them.

The bill sponsors for H-O-13, from Waubensie Valley, believe Illinois would benefit from the legalization of prostitution because the new law will tax those who decide to become prostitutes, and it also will recognize the legal and social rights of those workers.

The legislation aims to end exploitation and abuse that currently exists in the industry of prostitu-

tion today.

Senate Sponsor Ayla Ahmed, said, "If this industry is legalized, it will protect the rights of those involved, and will also have many economic benefits".

According to the bill sponsors, the legislation gives prostitutes a sense of safety and security knowing they now would have the ability to report a rape incident and be protected from it.

The creators of this bill made it clear in committee that if prostitution did become a regulated industry, then people would have a choice to become a prostitute or not.

The sponsors expected that the total number of rapes would decrease by over 25,000 rapes per year because the prostitutes would now have rights.

The creators of bill H-O-10 from Oswego be-

lieve that their bill should be passed because it protects people who have been raped from being harassed by their perpetrators on college campuses.

Senate sponsor Samantha Keith said, "This bill, if enacted, ensures men and woman their physical and mental health by increasing the absence of the sexual predators on campus."

According to the legislation, a college or university must report to local authorities any accusation of rape or sexual assault within 48 hours after discovery of the alleged crime.

If the suspect is found guilty, he or she must be expelled.

"No longer will people have to live with the fact that rape and molestation will go unpunished," said Keith.

Bill group looks to limit rape on college campuses

Katie Dugan
Lake Park

A group from Wheaton Warrenville South developed a bill centering on sex offenses on college campuses to help the men

and women raped as well as to serve as a means for stopping rape.

In addition to mandating that the college or university authorities report to local police all rape

allegations within the first 24 hours of discovery, the legislation also creates a health care facility for the

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WHEATON GROUP SEEKS TO
LIMIT RAPE ON CAMPUSES

Diversity gap all too apparent in Y&G Youth Governor's office

Politics and government have reputations of not being very inclusive, with most politicians being Caucasian males. In fact, every single Illinois governor has been a Caucasian male, even though roughly 30% of Illinois's population is composed of minorities, with African-Americans being the largest minority, at 15% of the overall population. Females also represent about 50% of the population, yet all of the governors elected in Illinois have been males.

Y&G does have a slightly better record than the state of Illinois. Although the program does not keep specific records regarding the race of past youth governors, in the last five years alone, the program has elected two Asian and one African-American youth governors. While the last few years have been particularly diverse, the majority of youth governors have been Caucasian.

There have also been a few female youth governors since the program's inception in 1950; however, the num-

bers are nothing to brag about; less than 10% of youth governors elected have been female.

This begs the question – is there a need for more diversity in Y&G leadership positions?

To play devil's advocate, should it matter what race or gender the candidates are or should we be more concerned with simply making sure the best person is elected regardless of race or gender?

However, shouldn't we want more youth governors and candidates that reflect our diverse student population in Y&G? My answer to this question would be yes.

There is no obvious way to solve the problem of lack of diversity. To start, Y&G advisors could encourage more minorities and females to run for office by preparing them for a run starting early



Austin Tuttle, Co-Editor

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EDITORIAL: DIVERSITY NEEDED IN Y&G

Oswego bill group wants schools to start later

Franca Lolos
Lake Park

Jakob Swanson and Sean Raleigh from Oswego introduced a bill that would require schools to start later in the day.

According to the bill group, the state of Illinois has recently seen a decrease in test scores, and the bill sponsors believe that starting school later will allow students to get a more reasonable amount of sleep each night.

Swanson said, "With our bill, letting kids wake up later but still having the same amount of school time, their brains will be more alive, and they will be more awake and will hopefully improve their test scores and education."

It is obvious to the bill group that there is a direct correlation between the amount of sleep students get and their test scores.

The group hopes that with this bill, the increase in the amount of hours of sleep a student gets each night will lead to an increase in their test scores and grades overall.

The bill will only affect high school start times in the state and will not change the duration of a school day.

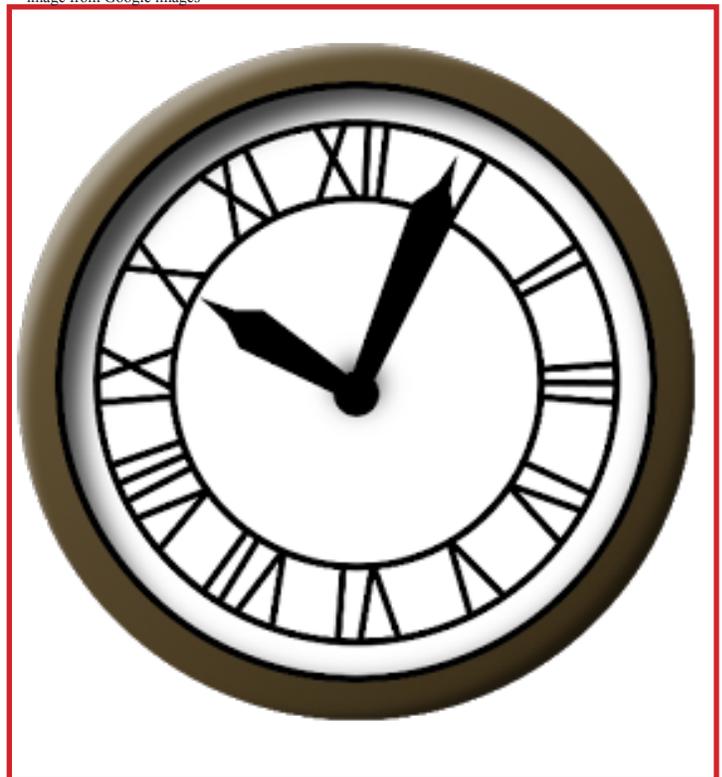
From research and background knowledge, sponsors Swanson and Raleigh know that "teenagers require about nine hours of sleep per night for optimal performance of health and brain development."

By increasing the number of hours of sleep students get each night, not only will their test scores and grades improve, but their overall health will too, contends the bill group.

The only obstacle the group feels they would

face is regarding extracurricular activities and how those activities.

image from Google images



S-O-20, a bill from the Oswego delegation, proposes to require high schools to start later in the day. "Teenagers require about nine hours of sleep per night," said the bill sponsor, Jakob Swanson. According to Swanson, current start times for schools don't allow students to get the necessary rest for top performance.

Wheaton group seeks to limit rape on campuses

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victims.

Senate sponsor Nell Rosenenthal said, "We think that rape on college campuses needs to be prosecuted, and also the women and men who are raped need to be helped in some way. Establishing a health center for assaulted victims would be helping them."

House sponsor Christina Adams added, "I want assaulted victims to have better care and bet-

ter facilities so that they're more comfortable reporting the crime and that more action is being done against it."

According to the bill sponsors, rape is a very large problem on college campuses and always has been. They believe that taking a big step like this would be very beneficial.

"Problems that we might face with this bill are the funding for it. Right now we're taking it out of the college initial funding, but we might have to im-

pose a tax," said Nell.

The bill group contends, as a percentage, around 15% of college women have reported being raped, while 12% have reported an attempted rape.

Those statistics are from a group of 6,000 college students on 32 college campuses nationwide in 1987.

When asked how this bill will benefit the state of Illinois, Nell stated, "Hopefully since rape is one of the most unreport-

ed crimes, we would like people who are assaulted to be more open to sharing it and being treated for it."

Adams said, "We believe that this issue is important enough that schools should be able to take it out of their funds for this prevalent of a crime." As expensive as college is, this bill group still believes that this issue should be covered by that money.

Adams added, "It's going to ensure a large feeling of safety for college students and the parents."

Editorial: Diversity needed in Y&G

continued from page 2

on, such as in their freshman or sophomore year. The program could also try and attract more schools with larger minority student populations to start a Y&G delegation.

I believe that by encouraging young minorities and women to participate in the political process through Y&G, we will be encouraging a future with more diverse leadership. Hopefully, in the near future we will see governments that better reflect the people they represent and perhaps even an Illinois governor who breaks a rather disappointing streak of lack of diversity.

Body cameras needed for police, bill group argues

Angelina Gervasio
Lake Park

A Waubonsie Valley High School bill group introduced a bill mandating the use of police body cameras, as well as the proper training to use the devices.

According to the bill sponsors, this bill was written in reaction to the Michael Brown tragedy in Ferguson, MO last fall.

Michael Brown was unarmed youth shot and killed by Ferguson, MO police.

Adarsh Velagapudi, Senate Sponsor, said, "Police body cameras would decrease the amount of conflict concerning evidence from police brutality cases."

In addition to addressing conflict between police and the public, the sponsors believe the legislation will tighten the relationship between the police and the community.

House Sponsor Andres Zocchi said, "The cameras would help re-establish trust between police departments and communities."

The city of Chicago and cities in California are currently researching the benefits and implementation of police body cameras.

According to the bill brief, funding for the devices will come from a tax increase on cigarettes.

The bill also proposes that police departments

and officers who fail to use the cameras will be issued a warning after the first offense, followed by set fines and investigation by the Office of the Executive Inspector General.

The bill group has researched and concluded that police body cameras also have financial benefits.

"The cameras will save Illinois approximately \$1.6 million by eliminating costs to gather evidence for cases," said Velagapudi.

Although acquiring the cameras will be very expensive for police departments, the bill group is confident that the cameras will eventually pay for themselves.

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.

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Ariana Miceli
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Tommy Sagins
Alan Morgan
Maxwell Pearson
Josh Vaughan

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Molly McLay
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John Powell

Senior Rebecca Glennon looks forward to final year in Y&G

Sarah Gregor
Lake Park

Rebecca Glennon of Lake Park is going into her third year of being an active member of the Y&G.

Glennon has had different roles in Y&G every year.

When first asked what roles she had experienced in Y&G, she responded, "I was a child, a backup dancer, and a party person."

After noticing the confused look she received, she added, "Oh, you meant for Y&G, didn't you?"

As a sophomore, Glennon lobbied fiercely for a bill that would allow newly licensed drivers to have more than one non-family member in the car.

Junior year, she made a bang as the representative for a bill that would legalize fireworks.

Her bill made such an impact on another representative that in the final two minutes of session, he moved to have her bill be debated.

"The guy had a really nice smile," she recalled. The House was able to pass the bill just in time before the session adjourned, and her bill was

the last bill passed that year.

This year, Glennon decided to try something new and join video press. Her major goals are to not embarrass herself and to find the angles that make everyone look good on camera.

She is looking out for everyone with that goal in mind.

Concerning her decision to join video press, she remarked, "I really like committee, so I don't even know why I chose video press."

However, there's no question as to why she joined Y&G again.

"Countless memories from past years ranging from a prostitution bill, to Chinese food, make the club irresistible," said Glennon.

The other members of Y&G also made the decision easy.

Glennon fondly remembers the nice people "who were trying to save the honey bees" and the "sassy legislators" who made sessions more interesting for everyone.

Glennon looks forward to another great year of hard work, funny memories, and legislation.

Justin Scafidi is ready to legislate at Y&G

Jamie Lamb
Lake Park

Justin Scafidi, a legislator from Lake Park High School, is looking forward to his second year participating in Y&G.

Going into this year, Scafidi has high expectations for his bill group.

"This year I want to learn more about the government while trying to pass my group's bill," he said.

Scafidi is very excited to be more involved in the bill passing process.

"I can finally debate when we go to the Capitol," he said.

Like some first year members of the program, his position did not allow as much involvement as he would have liked.

Scafidi had limited participation as a lobbyist.

However, Scafidi's bill was passed by the legislature and signed by the governor.

That is why now, as a legislator, he is anxiously

awaiting the trip to Springfield so he can finally have his chance to "debate and argue" for his bill.

Scafidi's favorite bill from the Capitol last year was "the Death Race" bill because he really enjoyed watching and following the debate until it was finally passed at the last minute, on the last day.

He also enjoyed the dinner that each delegation attended where the winning candidates were announced and the anticipation of knowing who won each position was over.

However, he said, "The most memorable part of the trip to Springfield last year would definitely have to be meeting all new people during mandatory fun night."

Scafidi enjoys participating in Y&G and is looking forward to what the future holds for his second year.

Legislation seeks to change Illinois emancipation law, lower age

Gabby Spapperi
Lake Park

A bill group from Neuqua Valley has developed legislation to adjust Illinois's current emancipation law.

This new bill would allow children under the age of eighteen to have the legal rights of an adult, and under certain circumstances, the parents would have no rights of refusal.

The legislation is aimed at children who need to get out of a bad situation.

Peggy Kern, House sponsor, said, "Oftentimes those who are trying to get emancipated are those coming from sexually abusive parents and physically abusive parents."

This legislation, in turn, would help protect the kids of Illinois. But this protection comes with a price; a social worker would have to evaluate the home situation of the children who are seeking

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LEGISLATION TO CHANGE AGE

What should the speed limits be on Illinois roadways?

Ariana Miceli
Lake Park

Should there be a mandatory speed limit on the highways throughout Illinois? Two bills this year, S-G-06 (Oswego) and S-B-25 (Waubonsie Valley), propose to change speed limits on Illinois roadways.

A majority of delegates believe that there indeed should be a speed limit on the highway, but there was uncertainty as to what that limit should be.

Emily Joyce from Lake Park said, "There should be a speed limit just to insure safety but maybe

it (speed limit) should revert back to where it was before the gas deficit."

Others felt that road and weather circumstances should factor in when determining speed limit.

Sanjit Sama from Lake Park said, "Without a doubt there should be a speed limit

because you have to take into consideration the harsh weather conditions at any point in time."

Paul Garcia from Lake Park said speed limits are necessary to control unruly drivers.

"There should be a speed limit on the highway because there are times where people

are ignorant and out of control and drive extremely fast not watching out for the safety of others. Also you have to account for drunk drivers," said Garcia. There were, of course, people who did not agree to having a speed limit on the highways.

Zack Sparkman from Oswego said, "I think if it's done the right way, I think people who need to go places faster than the average bear should have the ability to [do so]."



Two bills seek to adjust current highway speed limits throughout Illinois.

Legislation to change age

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emancipation and then approve the request for the emancipation.

The bill also provides funding for these children if they are unable to support themselves financially. The funding helps with housing, electricity, water, and basic needs.

For the bill sponsors, timing is everything when it comes to emancipation.

"We were thinking, the day before your eighteenth birthday you are given no rights, but the next day you're allowed to do many things" said Derek Worley, Senate sponsor.

Waubonsie Valley group wants to prevent the killing of animals

Abby Weisensee
Lake Park

The Waubonsie Valley delegation introduced a bill regarding euthanasia of animals that would dramatically decrease the amount of animals killed in shelters.

The delegation found that 60% of dogs and 70% of cats enter a shelter and do not make it out alive. They predict that 97% of the pet population can be saved through the passing of this bill.

Their bill would abolish all kill shelters and replace them with no-kill shelters. However, although they are called "no-kill" shelters, euthana-

sia is still present at these shelters.

The difference is a behavioral test will be administered to the animal prior to euthanization. This means that the animal must be deemed unfit as a pet before it is put down.

In order to determine whether the animal would be a safe pet, a universal test will be given, and the animal will be graded on a set scale. This way, animals will only be put down for safety purposes, not just for space.

Sandy Balan, Senate sponsor, said, "The behavioral tests would include temperament tests. The dogs would be agitated and the reaction would

determine their fate." Balan continued to say, "It is important that animals are tested to ensure that they would not hurt their future owners."

As a way to fund the shelters, since so many more animals will be present at one time, the money set aside for euthanizations would be put towards maintaining the shelters because with an increase of animals in a shelter, the quality of the shelter could surely decrease.

In order to avoid the decrease of shelter quality, "random sanitary inspections administered by city

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EUTHANASIA LAW

Euthanasia Law

Anne Mou wants to leave her mark on Y&G in Springfield

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officials," said Balan. would support this bill, According to the bill such as PETA and other sponsors, certain groups animal rights organiza- against animal cruelty tions.



Bill group wants to give animals, like this Miniature Schnauzer, more rights by preventing shelters from needlessly euthanizing them. Photo from Pinterest.

Group wants to encourage recycling of plastics, imposes tax

Lauren Widlowski
Lake Park

The Neuqua Valley delegation introduced an environmental recycling bill designed to encourage corporations and companies to develop and use new types of environmentally friendly plastics.

Recyclable plastics protect the environment and preserve ozone.

J.R. Wagner, House sponsor, said "His motivation to sponsor this bill is for sustainable success."

He believes that "in the future we need a sustainable form of recycling and environmentally friendly packaging."

This bill would

Isabella Shaw
Lake Park

Anne Mou, a former lobbyist from Lake Park High School, has big plans this year regarding her role in Y&G.

Last year was productive for Mou.

"Overall being a lobbyist was a great experience. It was a good transition job. It allowed me to be involved in Y&G and watch how the program worked while having a manageable role," she said.

Her experience in Springfield was even more positive. She noted, "Springfield was amazing! I looked forward to all of the debates and interesting bills being brought up."

Of all the bills debated last year, she remembers the "Hunger Games" bill being one of her favorites.

Being in her second year at Y&G, Mou is determined to have her bill passed in Springfield.

"Since last year at Springfield my bill didn't get passed, my perseverance to get it passed this year is stronger than ever," said Mou.

Not only does she have a goal of passing her bill, but she also hopes to become committee chair.

"I saw what committee chairs did last year, and it seemed like an interesting role and challenge I want to take on".

Even though she had a good experience last year, Mou is looking forward to making some changes this year in order to be as successful as possible in Springfield.

"This year my voice will be heard and my opinions will help strengthen the understanding of my bill. Since I will be a committee chair this year I will be able to participate in the debates, instead of sitting back and listening to everyone. That should be a nice change," said Mou.

add 50% tax to all plastic beverage bottles. The collected taxes will be spent towards local recycling

corporations to agree on manufacturing our environmentally friendly plastics."

centers and research institutions.

Ben Groves, Senate sponsor, said, "Illinois, especially in the northeastern part of the state, could benefit from increased safe recyclables because it helps subsidize private energy businesses in order to develop new and innovative clean energy."

"Recyclable plastics is a difficult bill to pursue"

Wagner said, "Recyclable plastics is a difficult bill to pursue due to the tremendous amount of money put forth to fund the bill in order for

Bill pushes for paid maternity leave

Karolina Wysocki
Lake Park

A Naperville North delegation established a bill requiring all employers to provide women with minimum five weeks of paid maternity leave.

According to the bill brief, "This [legislation] will preserve equal opportunity in the workplace and help the mother stabilize her mental and physical health".

Olivia Ryan, Senate sponsor, said, "We felt that a big issue in today's society is the fact women are faced with the challenge of choosing between raising a family and making a career".

Isabella Russian, House sponsor said, "[The bill] makes it easier for women to start a family and help with the wellbeing of both child and mother."

According to the sponsors, the bill is intended to close the gender gap in the business environment by aiding many women who will be mothers in the future, to help provide basic needs to them and their future children.

Mt. Vernon group want to remove "unconstitutional" standards

Josh Vaughan
Sesser-Valier

H-G-09 is proposed legislation from Mt. Vernon to remove the Common Core State Standards curriculum in the state of Illinois. Kirsten Farley is the House sponsor and the Senate sponsor is Tyler Barcizewski. Shayln Koch and Kaitlyn Boss are co-sponsors.

The sponsors wrote this legislation to improve education in Illinois. According to the sponsors, students' grade levels have dropped overall in most

Sesser-Valier junior, Mabry, excited to be back at Y&G

Alan Morgan
Sesser-Valier

Zach Mabry, a junior at Sesser-Valier, is excited to be back at Y&G. He joined Y&G his sophomore year as a news reporter, and this year he enters as a legislator.

"It was a great learning experience," said Mabry, when I asked what he thought about Y&G.

Mabry is looking for a change of scenery in moving from press to the legislature.

"I think it would be a fresh change of pace instead of doing the same thing twice in a row," he said.

Mabry is energized about going back to Springfield and mingling with the delegates.

"I like to go around and meet new people and talk to them and learn more about them," he said.

He also likes being in the Capitol.

"Last year, I observed the House of Representatives and Senate quite a few times," he said.

classes since the Common Core curriculum has been in place.

A new curriculum would be set if this bill is

Common Core State Standards is "unconstitutional."

passed.

According to the bill brief, "the state board shall establish curriculum standards which reflect high academic standards for Illinois education in the core

academic areas of mathematics, science, reading, writing and social studies.

The curriculum standards shall be reviewed at least every five years. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed in any manner so as to impinge upon any district's authority to determine its own curriculum."

Farley said that this bill is important to the state of Illinois because the Common Core State Standards curriculum is, in her mind, "unconstitutional."

Legislation proposed to mandate prison gardens

Maxwell Pearson
Sesser-Valier

Felicia Wildermuth, a Carterville legislator, when asked about how she first thought of her legislation, said "I saw a special on Sanquin Prison...It got me interested in expanding their ideas."

Felicia Wildermuth and her bill group, composed of Megan Behan, Julianna Johnson, and Erin Wood, want to pass a bill that requires "all prisons in the state of Illinois [to] establish a vegetable garden within prison grounds."

According to Wildermuth, this bill will help both the prisons and the prisoners.

"It will reduce the costs to the prison...it will help the lives of the prisoners," she said.

The legislation also calls for minimum requirements for the gardens.

"Most prisons have space for [the garden], but if there is not enough space or fewer than five inmates are interested in the program, then the program is not required," she said.

The bill group also believes this will help prisoners after the sentences are served.

"When inmates are let out of the prison this program gives them opportunities for jobs after their release," Behan said.

Section VIII of their bill states that "upon completion of the program, the inmate will be issued a state certificate verifying their competence in one of the following areas: horticulture, landscaping, soil composition..."

Delegates vote - Cheerleading is definitely a sport

Haley Mierzejewski
Williamsville

Should cheerleading be recognized by the IHSA as an official sport? Does it depend on the type of cheerleading? These questions have been debated by athletes of all sorts for decades.

Delegates overwhelmingly believe cheerleading to be a sport.

Jonathan Hamburg, a legislator from Sesser-Valier, weighed in saying, "Absolutely a sport. I'm a cheerleader, too."

Sarah Bate, a member of the press from Decatur, said, "I think that if you're in competitive cheer, or if you're going to different competitions outside of IHSA, then it should be considered one, and maybe IHSA should make a competition for it, but if they're not interested in competitive cheer or if they don't qualify for it, I don't think it should be considered a sport."

Josh Cowley, a legislator from Murphysboro, said, "I feel that cheerleading should be a sport because cheerleaders work just as hard as dancers or any other sport. They do a lot of condi-

tioning, they have to be able to lift each other up, and basically cheerleading is a way to show your school spirit by dancing."

Maggie Sorenson, a lobbyist from Williamsville, stated, "It should be a sport if you're competing, but if you're not competing then it should be a club because you're not competing against anyone, you're just rah-rahing from the sidelines."

Mariah Dowell, a legislature from Williamsville, said, "I think they should be recognized as a sport because they do as much stuff, if not more, than any other sport."

Ashton Henrickson, a legislative assistant from Williamsville, seemed to flow with the general consensus saying, "It depends on if they do go to competitions. If they're just cheering at the school for the games and stuff, it's not really a sport. But, if they're going to competitions, then it's a sport."

Samantha Mool, also a legislative assistant from Williamsville, said, "They do practice like all other sports and they do competitions so, why not count them as a sport?"

Delegates are split on bus seat belts

Tommy Sagins
Williamsville

Seatbelts are great in cars as far as protecting the lives of those in the car if an accident were to occur.

But even though we have them in cars, should they be in school buses? A Mt. Vernon bill group is mandating that all school buses be equipped with seatbelts. Do delegates agree with this legislation, S-G-11?

Williamsville legislator Abby Clayton disagrees.

"No. If it has been ok for years, why should they add it now," she said.

Williamsville's Allison Mool had a similar response

"There haven't

been seatbelts for a while, and there hasn't large problems," said Mool, Sgt. at Arms for the Orange House.

Sam Sagins, a legislator who is also from the Williamsville delegation, agrees with the legislation.

"Yes. It is a good idea to make buses safer. I heard the other day about two buses colliding, and a few people were killed," said Sagins. "The seatbelts could have helped them."

Emily Bulla from Sesser-Valier agrees with Sagins.

"They should be required because of the accidents in the past. It's to better have them and just be safe then to not have them at all," she said.

Legalize same-sex marriage, say a majority of delegates

Cydne Ratliff
Williamsville

Gay marriage has always been controversial, but a vast majority of Y&G delegates are in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage.

Emma Caserotti, a lobbyist from Mt. Vernon, feels like it is a "personal choice. It is not up to the government to say who can get married."

A legislator from Sesser-Valier, Presley Robbins concurred. "I'm 100% for gay marriage."

"I think it is absolutely should be legalized," said

Madi Carey, a legislator from Cartersville, "I think it is a human right."

Jacob White, a legislator from Sesser-Valier, said that the issue is very important.

"I feel like it is not just important for us to reform, but it is also important to recognized everybody as an equal member of society, and let everyone have equal opportunities," he said.

Megan Behan agreed with Carey and White.

"I think gay marriage

should be legalized," says Behan, a legislator from Cartersville. "It is a human right to be married. I think it should be separate from church and state."

Some, like Karrina Stanley, from Sesser-Valier, were not in favor of legalizing same-sex marriage.

"I am not in support of [gay marriage], because of many reasons. One being that it makes a lot of reproduction issues difficult," said Stanley, a committee chair.