

THE GAVEL

HITTING YOU WITH FACTS

Tuesday, July 19, 2016

Is This Bill Trash? No, It's Recycled

Opinion Article By: Payton Holcomb

Today was filled with a lot of debate over one very simple bill: (*Recycling Schoolers Budget Increase H.B. 177/S.B. 377*) The basics to the bill is that a law would be put in order to furnish schools with recycling bins based on how many waste products one school might output. Interviewing two of our Lobbyists to see their plans for the day, they told me the negative before the positive. Here are a couple of direct quotes from them:

"H.B. 177 is unnecessary, way too much money for the schools to pay. It is way more money than the schools have to allocate towards recycling. We could better use the money for education." -Bailey Franklin (Lobbyist)

"The bill is too logistically complicated to try to coordinate between schools to divide the money. Also, I think that it is something that needs to be taught on a daily basis rather than make it a law. It is something that we need to talk about every day and explain how it helps the community." -Robert Sturdivant (Lobbyist)

After talking to these Lobbyists, I decided to discover deeper what this bill was about. So I went directly to one of the sponsors of the bill. He gave me some very detailed insight on what the bill's purpose was about.

"With recycling coming in, it will help fund school programs. It will reduce waste source by recycling the funds back into the schools. Imagine an arts program, band, or theatre program being funded by recycling. It could do a lot for the school to recycle." - Luke

Carroll (Senate)

By the end of the day, I finally found one of the Lobbyists for the Environmental Committee, who had some major reservations about the bill.

"We find that the cost would be about \$200,000 a year for every school. That would be a lot of money that each school would need to pay just to recycle. Even though it is a great idea, there could be a lot of improvements." - Ashlyn Tucker (Lobbyist)

In conclusion, my opinion is that this bill is filled with a few holes that could be fixed in order to make sure that the intention of the author was clear. I personally feel that the idea is great and very helpful to the community. At the end of the day, the bill was passed in the Senate and failed in the House of Representatives. There are some financial issues and inconsistencies that need to be addressed before both chambers could pass it.



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Beyond the Blackboard

By: Ishani Pandya & Caroline Schulze

How to balance a checkbook, reconciling a credit card, applying for insurance, and learning to change tires are just a few things high school students in Texas would be required to learn, in the passing of *Life 101 Class Required H.B. 128/S.B. 328*. In its essence, the Life 101 Class Required will better equip students "...on basic life skills and help with the transition into the real world."

It is certainly frightening to consider that a teenager's twelve years of education will not help them when they are filling out job applications.

In an interview, Governor Luttrull said, "I support this bill because these are skills the students need to survive in -the real world."

Even more promising, Lobbyists from both chambers are in strong support of the bill in a rare show of partisan unity.

"I am in support of the Life 101 Class Required because it teaches kids before they get out into the real world about things that they need to know. It [the class] gives them basic skills they are going to need to be successful," Lobbyist Robert Sturdivant said.

For some, like Representative Mary Catherine McReynolds, her support for the Life Skills 101 Class Required stemmed from her own personal experience.

"My mom teaches a dropout prevention class in which she teaches financial information and I know that's helped a lot of incoming freshman know how to budget their money and gives them the idea that if they do not go on and get a further education, they're not going to have enough money to live," McReynolds said.

During the House of Representatives session, benefits that would come with the passing of the bill. Not surprisingly, the House of Representatives passed the proposal with no negative debate and a strong vote in the majority's favor.

Check back tomorrow to see what the Senate has to say!

A Day in the Senate

By: Will Whitaker

This morning in the Public Health and Welfare committee there were some heated topics that were discussed.

Limiting The Height Of Shoe Heels To Three Inches H.B. 257/S.B. 457 was one of the topics that many were looking forward to hearing. The bill states that women cannot wear shoes that have a heel that is 3 inches or more. In the discussion there were many good ideas brought forth such as how men may also wear shoes that have 3 inch heels on them. In the end, the bill was passed from the committee to the Senate where they will discuss and vote on the bill.

Another bill that was discussed was *The Legalization Of Recreational Marijuana H.B. 287/ S.B. 487*. This bill was one of the hot topics of this year's Texas 4-H Congress because of its relevance in today's world. Throughout the conversation, it was revealed that by legalizing marijuana, the state would receive lots of income.

Ms. Steinbach, in an interview stated that "it is easier to keep track of when it is out in the open versus when you are trying to hide it from the police." For these reasons, the bill was passed from the committee to the Senate where they will act upon it and possibly send it to the governor.



Texas GMO Labeling

By: Ember Reed

The phrase, “genetically modified object”, can bring multiple images to a person’s mind. From large murderous dinosaurs to a small, unassuming, and hardy corn plant, the acronym, GMO, can be identified in many elements. *Texas GMO Labeling H.B. 285/S.B. 485* addresses the labeling of GMO’s on food products. We may not realize it, but we are surrounded by GMO’s on a constant basis in our clothes, food, and even fuel. *H.B. 285/ S.B. 485*, however, never states that this is a bad thing, but rather, is concerned over the labeling of “said” GMO products. While debating this bill, Senator Garrett offered positive debate, stating that “People have a right to know what is in our food.” This caused Senator Latham, a self-proclaimed agriculture activist, to show her support in the labeling of GMO food products. “Labeling GMO’s enables us to

see the use of this product, and informs the populace of GMO food products.” The Texas GMO Labeling bill would shed some light on all the images and misconceptions within the population, concerning GMO’s. Hopefully this bill will be served with lively debate within the Senate and the House.



Feral Hog Eradication

By: Christian Dietrich

Throughout the day, several bills have been discussed, varying from water conservation, to licenses for boating. In the Senate’s Environment Committee, the Feral Hog Eradication Program H.B. 181/S.B. 381 was presented as it aims to decrease the amount of feral hogs in the state of Texas. By joining a membership club, a bounty would be set on hogs. Live hogs would be processed into meats, which would then be donated to different organizations and sold to prisons.

On average, feral hogs cause more than \$52 million in damages annually, with a single hog able to cause over \$200 of damage

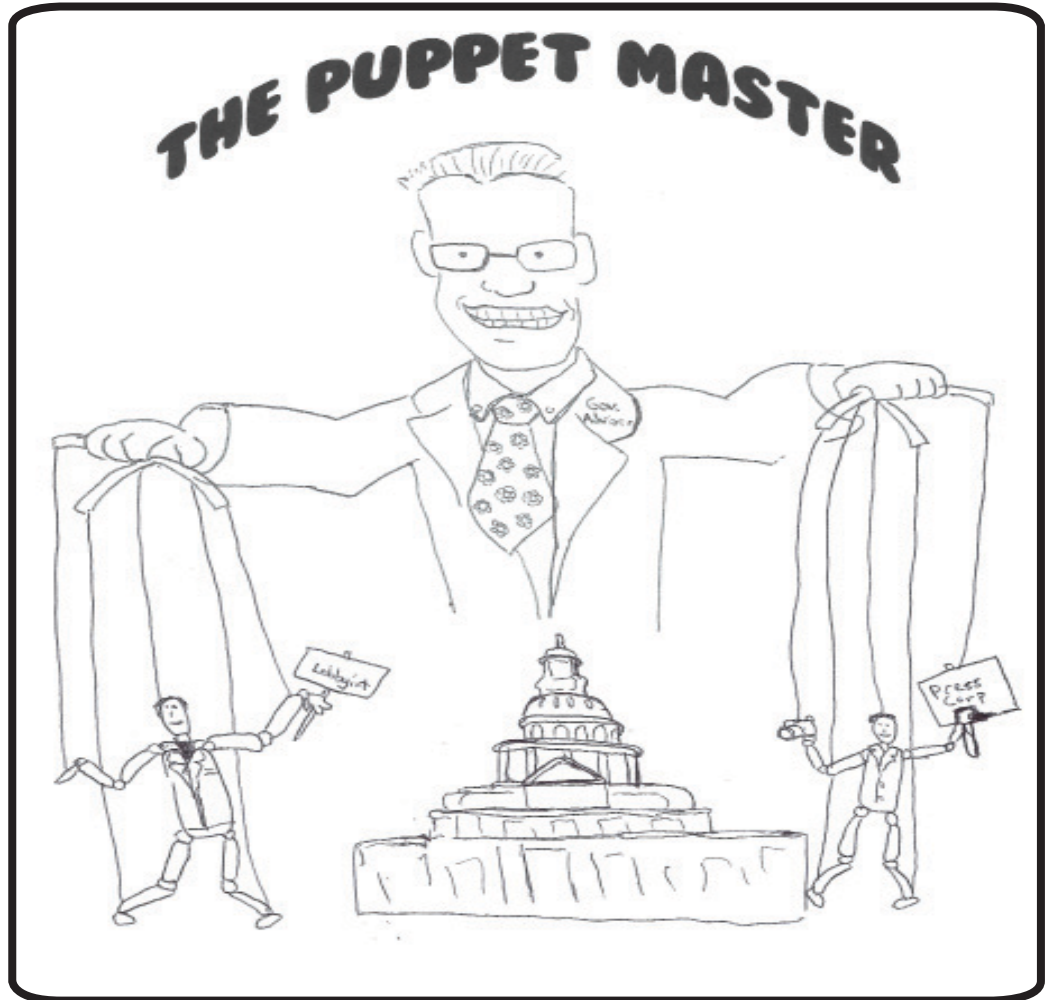
every year. Additionally, they are also carriers of many different diseases, including Rabies and E. Coli. Putting this bill into effect would assist in saving millions of dollars and help to prevent humans and livestock from contracting such diseases. However, selling these meats to basic consumers would cause questions to arise concerning the hogs’ consumption before they were captured. Animal rights organizations would be adverse to the idea of capturing the hogs, and would fight to stop it. Now that you have the facts, what’s your opinion?

Garry's Giggles!

By : Garry Branham,
District 7
4-H Specialist

Fill in the Blank Answers

1. 131 years old
2. Aluminum
3. France, Spain, Mexico, Confederacy, USA, and Republic of TX
4. Chili
5. 1845
6. Red Granite
7. Ann Richards and Miriam "Ma" Ferguson
8. Guadalupe Bass



Rumors Spread About Governor Luttrull

By: Sarah Richter and Jayme Deville

The second day of Texas 4-H Congress brought about some juicy facts about your Texas 4-H Governor. In a private interview, sister, Lauryn Luttrull spilled the beans. It turns out the Governor is a seasoned rapper. Rumor has it that she is a busy bee not only in 4-H, but also in FFA. GASP!

While she aspires to be just like Cinderella, she is also obsessed with pigs. Double life much? "I love a good pair of grandma heels!" said Governor Luttrull. Could she be in favor of *Limiting the Height of Shoe Heels to Three Inches H.B. 257/S.B. 457*? She's gluten intolerant, so be sure to bring the Governor an apple if you want to make her day. It would be an understatement to say that peanut butter and apples are an obsession.

A little birdie told us Governor Luttrull wasn't wearing pants today....oh wait she wore a skirt. Our recent sources say she is unable to ride a bike. Since we have only seen her walking this week, could this be true? The Governor named her car Kendra....but word on the street says she doesn't feed the poor thing (she cannot pump her own gas). So tweet us your thoughts... is Governor Luttrull a true blonde or just a Cinderella wannabe?

XOXO Press Corps.