

THE GAVEL

HITTING YOU WITH FACTS

Wednesday July 20, 2016

Governor's Summation

By: Lauryn Luttrull & Will Whitaker

Governor Luttrull's final address touched on many hot topics from the weeks. She discussed all of the bills she signed, including Life 101 Class Required H.B. 128/ S.B. 328, Texas Feral Hog Eradication Program H.B. 181/ S.B. 381, and Concealed Handgun License For 18 Year Olds H.B. 225/ S.B. 425. The Life 101 Class Required and the Texas Feral Hog Eradication Program bills were both passed and became laws. However, the Concealed Handgun License For 18 Year Olds bill was vetoed by Governor Luttrull. The bill was sent back to the Senate and House of Representatives, overturning Governor Luttrull's decision and making it a law. Governor Luttrull stated that, "this bill showed the effectiveness of the democratic process." Such a quote perfectly exemplifies the reason for all of us who are here at 2016 Texas 4-H Congress. She ended her address with a powerful message of "hope." Stating that hope is the voice in our head, it is this spark tells ignites and inspires us, even though the world may be telling us to quit. Hope is an acronym for Governor Luttrull, saying that the H stands for Honor, the O for Optimism, the P for Persistence, and the E for excellence. At the end she left us with this thought. This year's Texas 4-H Congress has given us great "hope"

for the future and all that it holds for us. With that the 2016 Texas 4-H Congress is officially ended until 2018.

2016 TEXAS 4-H CONGRESS BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW

H.B. / S.B	BILL
236 / 436	Changing Stations for Persons with An IDH
128 / 328	Life 101 - Class Required
214 / 414	Required Helmets for Motorcyclist
225 / 425	Concealed Handgun License for 18 Year Olds
224 / 424	Ban on Use of "Affluenza" at Mitigation
192 / 392	Relating to Poverty Awareness
197 / 397	Blue Spectrum Headlight Safety
210 / 410	Mandatory Driving Test for the Elderly
111 / 311	Faciliate Agricultural Advocacy in Elementary Schools
110 / 310	Exercise A Teacher's Right
181 / 381	Texas Feral Hog Eradication Program
229 / 429	Stanford
235 / 435	Cam'ron Law
101 / 301	Agricultural Awareness Curriculum for Public Middle Schools
239 / 439	Criminalize Abortion

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Stanford Case

By: Ember Reed

Today within the House, multiple controversial bills came to light and the one debate that woke everyone up this morning was *H.B. 229/ S.B. 429 Stanford*. It states that it will ensure all those convicted of sexual assault are given a mandatory minimum sentence of five years, and ten years probation.

This is a dramatic increase from the six month sentence with three years of probation that is currently issued. Right from the start the Stanford act was introduced vehemently and with the intent to pass by its House sponsor and author Representative McAnulty, "This is sexual assault. It ruins people's lives! With such a large number of people being assaulted we need to raise the sentence."

As the debate continued on, it became more and more apparent that the Representatives believed the lack of a more severe sentence actually encouraged this crime to be committed and more often. The only negative debate was offered by Representative Wilson, "This act is going to be making them serve five years for something they might not have actually done." In response Representative Sullivan pointed out that the court system is "usually correct" when accusing one of sexual assault with only a one percentile margin. "I think that raising the sentence is a necessity for the safety of our Texas citizens." With Representative Sullivan's closing remark, other Representatives agreed and the bill was passed within the House of Representatives this morning. This was a great beginning to a morning filled with fiery debate.



Update on Life 101 Bill

By: Ishani Pandya & Caroline Schulze

Life 101 Class Required H.B. 128/S.B. 328 was signed by Governor Lyndi Luttrull after passing yesterday in both the House (with a majority vote) and Senate chambers. The Governor was also the original author of the law, and spoke passionately about it.

When asked about what it was like to sign the bill that she herself authored, Luttrull answered, "It was very cool because this is a topic that I am extremely passionate about because I think it will help all high school students, whether they are going to college or starting a job."

The legislation garnered much support and was popular among delegates from both houses. "It would give many high school students skills that they might not realize they need in the real world," said Ms. Victoria Dockery, a lobbyist. "For instance, when they transition into college, it is really important to know how to complete tasks like tax forms and taking care of a car." Representative Isaiah Geter, the sponsor of the bill, was ecstatic about it passing after spending a lot of time researching the proposal and presenting it to the House.

"It feels really good to have it passed into a law because it's an excellent opportunity for non 4-H members to take a class to learn skills that are only taught in 4-H." He stated that there was "no debate at all", whenever he presented it in the House of Representatives. The bill was passed with a majority vote in both the House of Representatives and in the Senate.



Drama in the Chambers

By: Jayme Deville & Sarah Richter

Texas 4-H Congress was off to a heated start today with some sketchy debates! When The Legalization of Recreational Marijuana H.B./S.B. 487 and Concealed Handgun License for 18 Year Olds H.B. 225/S.B. 425 hit the floor, it seemed like everyone had an opinion. Rumors spread that some secret agendas might have been taking place. Could this be true? If so who was involved? That's politics for ya. I suppose there are just some mysteries that will not be uncovered.

The lobbyists are back at it! After recently renewing their relationships with the Press Corps, the Lobbyists are in it yet again but this time with the Governor. Recent news told us that the Governor got kicked off the House Floor. Following the Governor getting kicked off the floor, the Governor's Page ensured that the Lobbyists were kicked off of the floor as well. Could the Governor's Page and the Lobbyists have something against each other? Could the Governor have a secret plan to get certain bills passed? Well that's one secret we may never know. Let's just be glad that cat-fight came to a close.

Spotted!!! 4-H members making peace and dancing their hearts away at the Tuesday evening gala. As Texas 4-H Congress and our political wars come to a close, it's time for us to reunite as friends and enjoy our last few hours together before this 4-H year comes to a close. "Dreams, everyone has them. Some good, some bad, and some wish you could forget. Sometimes you outgrow them and some of us have nightmares. No matter what dreams you dream, the morning comes, reality hits, and the dreams begin to slip away." While it is bittersweet, let's not let these memories and friendships from Texas 4-H Congress slip away.

And who are we? I guess that isn't much of a secret... You know you love us. Love you darlings. XOXO Press Corps...



Safe Travel Bills to Protect Citizens

By: Javier Ramirez

In the past two days, legislators discussed the *Mandatory Driving for the Elderly H.B. 210/S.B. 410*, which would have required elderly drivers to take a driving test every two years. In the house, Representative Kyler Palmer from Karnes County expressed his opinion that the driving test would become a standardized test, which he believes the elderly shouldn't have to take. On the other hand, Representative Marshal Sullivan from Dallas County believed the bill should be passed because he stated, "Eventually people get old and start to lose control of their body, so they need to be tested on it." The bill was passed in both the house and senate chambers, and was signed into law by Governor Luettrull.

Require Helmets for All Motorcyclist H.B. 214/S.B. 414, was a hot topic in this year's Texas 4-H Congress legislative session. It was one of the most heated topics in the house Highway and Transportation committee. The author of the bill and House sponsor, Representative Marshall Sullivan from Dallas County said, "It will keep the motorcyclists safe, and it will also save the psychological health of anybody who would get into a collision with a motorcyclist." Representative Daniel Moore, from Gregg County, was against the bill stating "adults have their own right to choose". The bill was subsequently approved by both chambers and signed into law by the Governor.

Goodbye Congress

By: Taylor Maberry

This week was filled with a lot of highs and lows. There has been a great deal of debate, sections, and more than 100 motions that have been passed through 4-H congress in the past 3 days. There have been many topics discussed along with very heated debates. Some of these include Concealed Handgun License for 18 year Olds H.B. 225/S.B. 425, Criminalize Abortion H.B. 239/S.B. 439, and The Legalization of Recreational Marijuana H.B. 287/S.B. 487. There have been several topics with varying points of views, enhanced by the personal experiences of the delegates. After such an exciting time, I spoke to several Delegates, Lobbyists, Press Corps, and even Tech Team members to see their perspective of Congress.

“This experience has allowed me to explore the world of the politics in the state of Texas. I have always been interested in politics. Being able to interview and talk with all of the Delegates about the political issues and hear their thoughts about our state. Outside of the political stand point, I have made many new, life-long friends.”- Taylor Maberry (Press Corps)
“Texas 4-H Congress is a great opportunity for our Texas 4-H youth to experience the legislative process and experiences, first hand. I know that sitting in

a classroom, while listening to your teacher talk about the government system is extremely different than experiencing it in person. We have seen and heard many debates and several kids are working hard for the good of Texas.”- Dylan Sione (Lobbyist)

“I have learned all about Parliamentary Procedure and how a bill passes through the House, Senate, and to the Governor. I actually might have an interest in majoring in government or a career in politics.”- Parker Havens (House of Representatives Delegate)

“We try to make every Congress a little better. We started filming newscasts at the previous Congress, and tried to make them better every year. We hope to make it an overall better experience for all of the 4-Hers. Congress has exceeded our expectations.”- Stephen Kocmound (Tech Team)
Now our 4-H year have come to its end and the House and Senate have been dismissed. While it is bittersweet, we can cherish the fun and memories we have had at Texas 4-H Congress. We hope everyone has had a rich experience and enjoyed their time learning about the Texas Legislation. Safe travels and go chase those crazy dreams.



Inside Thoughts of a Lobbyist

By: Sarah Richter and Jayme Deville

In response to some of the perceived secret meetings held this week, Mr. Sturdivant stated “I believe that even though they were stated as secret meetings, it was just a spur of the moment meeting to accomplish some last minute business.” While it is exciting to get into character, it’s all fun and games. Lobbyists and Press Corps members worked together to inform the House and Senate and keep them updated on bills and recent news.

Sturdivant’s top three bills were *H.B. 128/S.B. 328 Life 101 Class Required*, *H.B. 111/S.B. 311 Facilitate Agricultural Advocacy in Elementary Schools*, and *H.B. 144/S.B. 344 Repealing the Top 10% Rule*. “Life 101 Class Required is a great bill in schools. It would provide kids with a more comfortable setting, while in class, kids would be able to ask questions and make the subject easier to understand. The remaining two bills on agricultural education will help instill in young people’s minds, the importance of Agriculture as

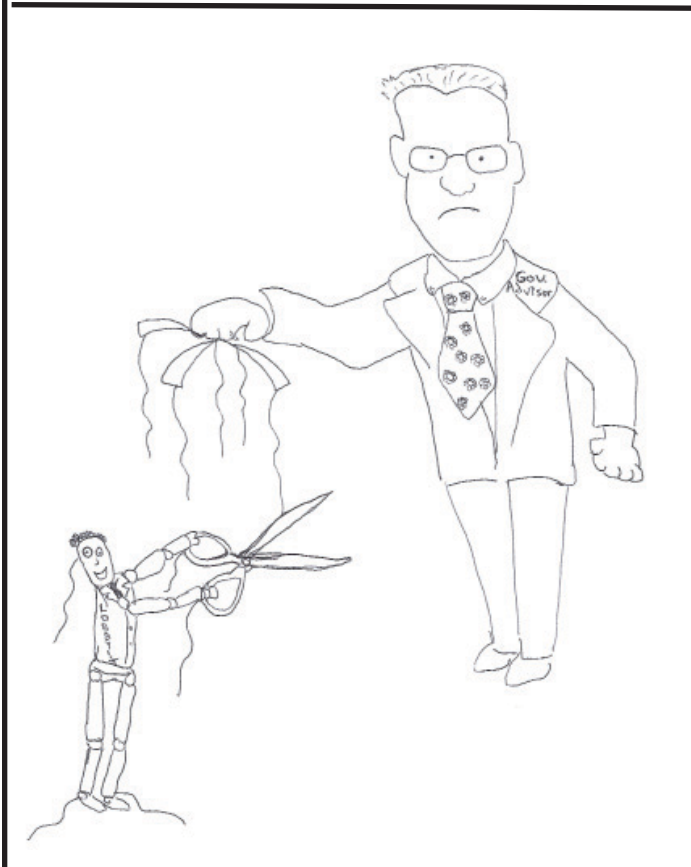
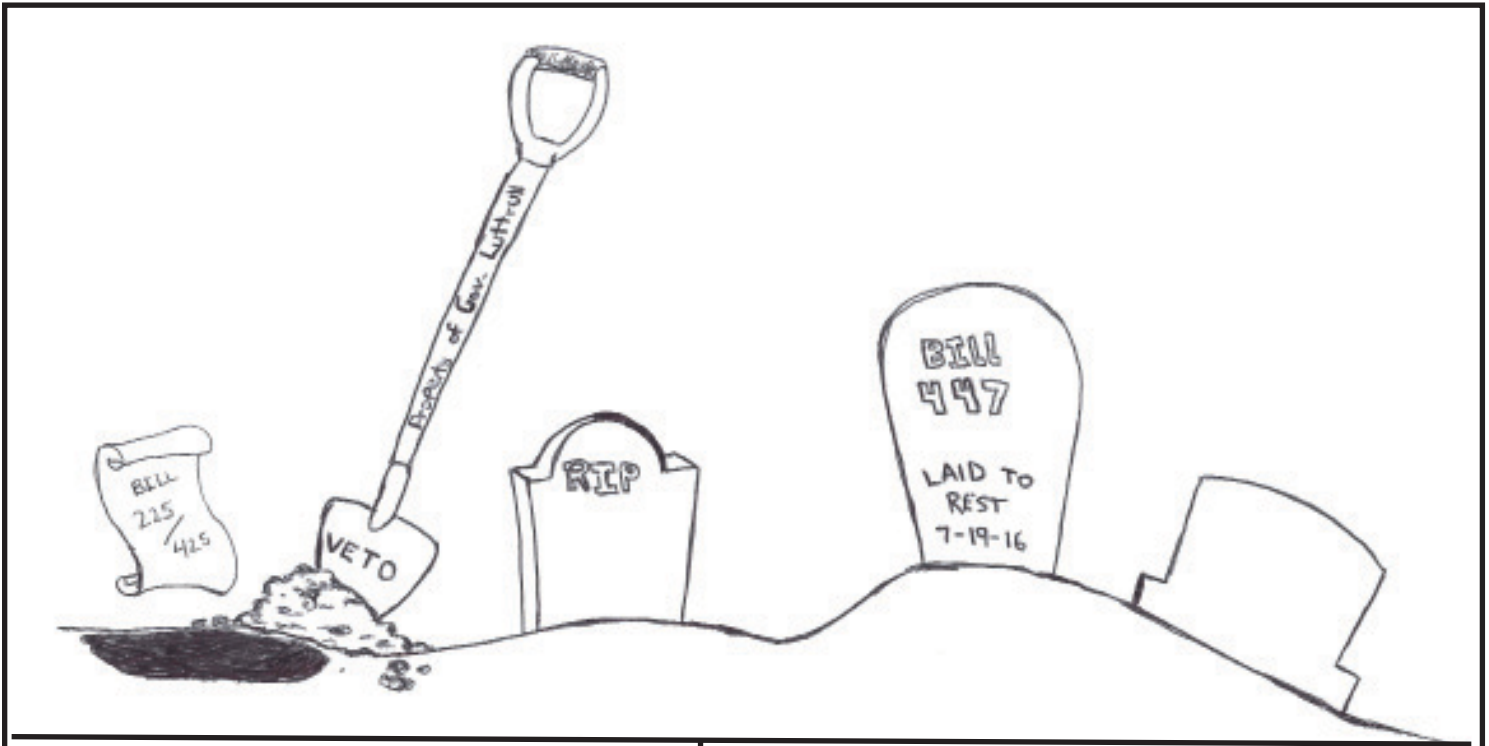
it can be implemented in their science and social studies.”

Monday night we had the Lobbyist Reception, not only did they have AMAZING food but also great company. There were many bills discussed that the Lobbyist wanted to see passed or failed Tuesday. The Lobbyist worked hard this week to present the best arguments in preparation for the debates. I think this year’s bills had different points and perspectives that made for a good Texas 4-H Congress.



Garry's Giggles!

By : Garry Branham,
District 7
4-H Specialist



Blast from the Past

By: Merah Winters & Myrah Geter

History always finds a way to repeat itself whether it be fashion trends coming back from the 70's or vocabulary from the 90's. We enjoy dressing up like people from the past with throwback themes. In the past years at Congress, we have noticed a repeating trend that one of the dinner themes is usually a throwback type. Back in 1998, Texas 4-H Congress had a medieval theme for their dinner, in 2006 there was a 70's theme, and in 2014 there was a 20's theme. This year was the exception. Instead we participated in a tailgate sports theme. Everyone enjoys dressing up like people from "way back when." This helps us remember how things were then; from the crazy clothes, questionable cosmetics and insane hairstyles they sported. Maybe the reason we enjoy embodying different eras of history or famous people is because we like to entertain the imagination and our dreams.

During Congress we dress in the professional garb of our legislative leaders, we create costumes to be our favorite TV characters or to try on a specific time in history, and last night we wore jerseys or apparel to show our team spirit whether it was sports, colligate, or local high school. Why is that we enjoy disguising in costumes so much? M&M's hunch is that these themes

allow us to not only express our interests, but also to embody those fantastic dreams of who we want to be. A knight in shining armor, the next star quarter back in the NFL, the next Fresh Prince of Bellaire; the list is endless.

But just like Cinderella, when the clock strikes midnight we take off the costume and resume being the best thing we can be... Ourselves. I'm sure at the beginning of this column you thought it was going to another boring history blurb. You may still have that opinion, however when the costume is gone and you've finished reading this article the only thing that remains is YOU; a 4-H member. A leader who has devoted their time and participated in Making the Best Better.



Changing Stations for IDH

By: Ember Reed

As 4-Her members, we have all had personal experiences with changing difficulties in public restrooms. They are uncomfortable, cramped, and anything but private, a matter that is addressed in *Changing Stations For Persons with an IDH H.B 236/ S.B. 436*. Examining the added difficulty for people with disabilities or handicap impairments (IDH), the bill explore. IDH is described in the bill as any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical

structure or function. This bill was passed in both the House and the Senate with little to no negative debate on the floor. Once on the 4-H Governor's desk it was signed into law and will proceed into our State Governor's hands to be reviewed to show 4-H's support for members of our society with IDH.

Abortion Bill Heats The House

By Clara Raabe

Representative Warner's *Criminalize Abortion Act H.B. 239/S.B. 439* spurred an enormous debate in the House on Tuesday, with crowds of members requesting recognition from the Speaker of the House at each opportunity to speak. The passion of the negative and affirmative speakers reflected the controversy of abortion policies in the United States over the year.

This act illegalizes all abortion procedures and shuts down all clinics. Women who violate the law would be fined \$1,000 if seen fit by a Judge, and anyone involved in the abortion would be sentenced to 30 years in prison.

On the Negative side, Representative Wright argued that "children are expensive", and poor people cannot financially afford children. Representative Hudson responded by pointing to Section 3 of the bill, saying

that women can apply for government assistance. One Representative hammered the point that women should have the choice to abort the baby because "the unborn babies are completely dependent on their mothers", but Representative Wilson swept her point through his evidence explaining how "The baby controls the development of itself in the mother's womb. It controls most of the process". The debate's intensity flared after Representative Grisham gave a detailed speech on the procedure of an abortion. Representative Sullivan attempted to defend the gruesome process when he stated that "all medical procedures are graphic", but he failed to douse the outrage. As the last negative speaker, Representative Wilson tied the bill to the Declaration of Independence, asserting that "...all men...are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. By this alone, we cannot kill an unborn child. It is legally not right". To end the discussion, Representative Warner gave a few last comments that brought the debate home: "Is it fair to give a baby the death penalty that even a rapist wouldn't receive? We mourn death in our country. I think it is time we mourn the death of 50 million babies in the womb".



The Young and The Defenseless pt. 2

By: Taylor Maberry

The last day of congress: Its full of debate, motions, and many bills. One of the most controversial bills debated was H.B. 225/S.B. 425, Concealed Handgun License for 18 Year Olds. This act allows young adults to obtain their concealed carry license without being active military. After much discussion, the bill was passed in both the House and Senate chambers. Immediately, Governor Luttrull vetoed the bill. After the Senate and House was brought back into session, there was a motion to override the veto. The motion passed and the veto was overridden. Many people had different views about the veto being overruled. Mr. Sturdivant, a Senate Lobbyist, said that the lobbyists joined up with a few members of the Senate and House to overrule the veto. Representatives Herfurth and Hoover were very excited about the override. Representative Sullivan thought otherwise. He believes that there are key development stages that happen between the age of 18 and 21. He said 18 year olds are too impulsive and don't have the right decision making skills to carry a firearm. The bill will now become a 4-H law and will arrive at Governor Abbott's Desk to be reviewed as an actual state law. Until next time, Texas 4-H Congress!

Congress Quotes!

By Payton Holcomb

This week was filled with a lot of highs and lows. There was a lot of debate, inquiries and so many motions that have been passed through the Capitol. Some of the hot topics have been concealed hand license for 18 years old, the Stanford act and life 101. There were so many different topics with so many different types of point of views and how people react towards them. Here is some of what people had to say.

“This experience has let me explore the world of the political world in the state of Texas. I have always loved the political world. Being able to interview and talk with all of the delegates about the political issues and what they think is good for our state. But out side of the political stand point, I have made many new life long friends.” - Taylor Maberry

“This is great opportunity for our Texas 4-H youth to experience the legislative process and experience first hand. I know that sitting in a class room listing to your teacher talk about the government system is a lot different then experiencing it first hand while going though the process. We have seen and heard many debates. And many kids working hard for the good. - Dylan Sione

“I have learned all about the parliamentary procedure. And how the bill passes to the house to the senate to the governor. I actually might have an interest in majoring in government or something in that field and possible something in that for my career in policies. - Parker Havens

“We try to make every Congress a little better. We started filming newscasts at the previous Congress, and tried to make them better every year. We hope to make it an overall better experience for all of the 4-Hers. Congress has exceeded our expectations.”- Stephen Kocmound

The Governor’s Desk has a visitor!

By Clara Raabe

After numerous shootings in 2016, a debate over gun rights swept the country. The *Exercise a Teacher’s Right Act H.B. 110/S.B. 310* specifically targets the school shootings that occurred, giving Texas teachers the right to conceal a handgun in their classroom if they are licensed for concealed carry. The bill arrived at Governor Luttrull’s Desk in the early afternoon after passing the long trial of the legislative process. Supporters of the bill cheered at the announcement of the bill’s signing! The last stop of the *Exercise a Teacher’s Right Act* is Governor Abbott’s Desk for review. Kudos to Stephen Sell, Darcy Wyatt, and the author of the bill!

