

“Fake News” or Corrupt Officials?

By Clara Raabe

Though the heated debates won't begin until chamber sessions on Tuesday, tension has already started through increasing rumors of scandalous action by the executive branch and legislative leaders. On Wednesday night, it was reported by the Congress Girls that Governor Kyle Herron had broken promises and strong friendships to gain “more beneficial” relationships. During committee hearings on Monday, news spread that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor John Phillip Jones had exchanged bribes to pass Senate bills approved by Herron, and by the end of the hearings Governor Herron lost all control of the House and Senate. Though the buzz from these reports has still not died down, members of the State Council believe the rumors just to be noise.

On the subject of the Congress Girls report, Governor Herron said he had “made no promises about anything,” and that the Governor's Reception wasn't about friendships. “I was elected to serve, and that's what I did. It's about the people, so I looked at the bills I wanted to pass, I looked at the sponsors, I decided I needed to make sure that they know I supported their bills. It wasn't about friendships, it wasn't about who I was buddy-buddy with, it was truly about the legislative process. This is about legislation, not about friendship.” Secretary of the Senate Corrie Earthman supported Herron. “I think it's kinda been blown out of proportion. I think Kyle has good intentions, I don't think he was trying to intentionally hurt anyone's feelings, I think he was just trying to take his role seriously.” Lt. Governor Jones had stronger words about Congress Girls, even describing the report as fake news. “Gossip columns are notorious for misinformation, which I believe it was.”

Jones also dismissed any allegations of accepting bribes or the Governor offering payments. “The first I heard about any bribes was from the blog itself, and that rumor must have been started by someone in the press.” Floor Leader Katelyn McCormick believes Jones and Herron to be above corruption. When asked what she thought of the bribing claims, she said “I feel like that's really illogical because both are very respected and trusted. They swore in that they would not take bribes.” But Press Corp Coordinator Alejandro Mata wasn't so certain, and interjected that the two swore “Not take bribes as elected officials. That's the keyword.”

Though council members denied any wrongdoing by Governor Herron, the subject of him losing power over the House and Senate was hard to deny after Monday's results. Lt. Governor Jones, however, didn't believe the Governor to have much power in the first place, explaining that the Governor represents the people and uses his limited voice and his opinions to fulfill that responsibility. It is still yet to be seen if this controversy is simply a result of the structure of government as Jones believes, or if Governor Herron really has lost his grasp on the House and Senate.



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MOVE THE BILL

Congress Members Discuss Immigration

By: Ryan Williamson

Lobbyists spent the morning pushing H.B.110 S.B. 310, *Ban In-State Tuition And State Financial Aid From Illegal Immigrants*. The bill calls for the prohibition of illegal immigrants receiving in-state tuition benefits or other financial aid.

“We border with Mexico, so obviously we experience these immigration issues,” Lobbyist Will Whitaker said. “Taxpayers pay millions of dollars to cover these illegal immigrants when they are not citizens of our state or even country.”

Senate Sponsor Hannah Chumchal has high hopes for this bill as it has passed in both the senate and house of representative education committee meetings.

“I hope that it passes so that citizens of Texas actually get the fair end of the deal,” Chumchal said. “Our residents deserve to come first, and this bill would ensure it.”

Not all opinions have been in favor, however, as the chairman of the house education committee Kyler Hardegree shared his view on the bill.

“I am neutral on this bill,” Hardegree said. “I do understand though that many of these illegal immigrants were brought here as children, and it takes 10 to 20 years to earn U.S. citizenship.” Supporters of the bill look forward to the future of the bill.

“I hope the bill passes because it is something I am passionate about,” Whitaker said. “



How to Lose a Governor in Four Days

By: Caroline Sexton, Ryan Williamson, and Haley Kopecki

One word can describe how the second day of Texas 4-H Congress went for Governor Herron—challenging. Challenging bills, challenging agendas, and challenging friendships. Throughout the course of the day, Governor Herron has faced many obstacles. For example, one committee chair, that wishes to remain anonymous, stated that they felt the bills that the Governor was in favor of were “bad and poorly written.” The chairmen went on to say that the reason he only discussed half of the bills that Governor Herron requested in this committee was because he simply “forgot about them.” To add on to this increasingly complicated situation, bill 270, one of the Governor’s most supported bills, failed in both the House of Representatives and Senate. Not only did bill 270 fail, but also many other bills that he supported. However, Lieutenant Governor John Philip Jones had some encouraging words to say when asked about Governor Herron’s stances on the bills, stating that he “fully supports every single one of Governor Herron’s selected bills.” Will Governor Herron be able to persevere through the next two days of Texas 4-H Congress, or have we already run off this noble leader?



Thoughts from Caroline

Duke weighs in

The first day of 4-H State Congress was nothing short of hectic. Controversial topics such as abortion, gun laws, and suicide floated around committees today and sparked debates between representatives and senators. A few bills in particular are profoundly controversial and have been creating talk around the Capitol.

The first bill is the “To Save a Life” bill. This bill focuses on the heavy topics of suicide and bullying. It requires a 6-Hour training course for educators to attend to teach the causes and effects of bullying. The most controversial piece of the bill, in my opinion, is the punishment if a school does not obey. If a school district fails to implement this bill’s policy, the state will cut 5% of their special education training. Why should kids with disabilities and kids that require a special education suffer because of their negligent staff? This was a poorly made decision by the author of the bill. If this bill was to become a law, thousands of kids around the state would be unjustly subject to cutbacks for something their educators didn’t do.

The second bill proposes putting “Fire Extinguishers in Every Classroom”. Without reading this bill, I assumed it was about protecting kids from fire. But then I read the bill. I was wrong. The premise of this bill is to use the fire extinguishers as self defense against intruders. The fire extinguisher’s canister is said to be used to “assault an intruder, while the foam could be used to slow down [the intruder], cause [them] temporary blindness, or even suffocate the intruder, if necessary.” This bill was obviously written in response to second amendment enthusiasts wanting to bring guns into the classroom. Sure, a fire extinguisher can do some damage if thrown or used as a bludgeon, but intruders in schools these days would likely have a gun. A battle between a person with a gun and a person with a fire extinguisher can have but one outcome. At any rate, the most a fire extinguisher could do would drive a person away from the classroom.

These bills are both causing buzz around Congress and will most likely make for a lively debate on the Senate and House floor. Bills such as these are ones to watch out for as we go through the legislative process today as our third day of congress takes place.



Environmentalists disregard animal cruelty?

By: Taylor Gunn

Amidst some heated debate in environmental sessions today, a few young agriculturalists spoke out on a few bills that have raised some serious questions on morals. Senator Stafford stated during a discussion on senate bill #391, “Horse slaughter will significantly boost economy and create jobs.” His arguments strongly suggested that money is more valuable than the lives of horses all over the state of Texas, and upon further discussion, the sponsor of this bill suggested this bill is only targeted towards horses that are “old, suffering, and retired”. With the implementation of these

practices, we must slaughter emotional, empathetic equine who can no longer work for us or carry us on their backs, solely due to our neglect or discontinued use of the animal. The fates of these helpless creatures are deemed to be “safe and painless,” however, the only effective method of humane euthanasia for equine is through the use of chemical euthanasia injected intravenously, which would taint the meat and leave it toxic to human or animal consumption. It is undeniable that horses are some of the most conscious and emotionally capable animals in the animal kingdom, which sets them far apart from other commercial livestock species. Horses are simply not meat animals, but rather companion animals, and there is simply no gentle way to slaughter such a creature.

Don't Cry Over Spilled Milk.... Or a Blog

Congress Girls here, your one and only source into the scandalous lives of the Congress elite. Two days in, and the Congress elite are in deeper than they thought. "I support the gossip column", said one Congress attendee yesterday morning at committee meetings. If only WE were the ones pushing bills. Spotted: a certain floor leader seemed to be misusing their power in their committee meetings. From embarrassing individuals to finding humor in serious procedures, that leader definitely kept us on our toes. A little later, we encountered someone close to the governor who told us working with him "has been hectic". Governor Herron was even said to be giving bribes to his Lieutenant Governor, but that's all fun and games isn't it? Apparently not according to Lieutenant Governor Jones who stormed into the Press Corp room demanding an apology for the accusation. Touchy much? Looks like someone needs a little thicker skin for such a prominent role. As it's been said, "If you can't take the heat, you can't take the seat". While the Senate runs smoothly, have y'all heard about the House of Representatives? Or as we like to call it, the House of Horrors. Rumor has it that many of the Governor's favorite bills were purposely pushed aside in house committee meetings. We'll leave it up to you to decide the real motivation behind all of the actions of the congress elite.



'Til next time,
-XOXO, Congress Girls

The Public Scoop

By: Kassidy Albright

During the committee meeting of the Public Health and Welfare it was a lot of discussion on the House Bill 308. The topic was about opting out of organ donation instead of opting in. This topic was very controversial due to the fact people thought it would be unfair if the checkboxes were overlooked and the person was stuck as an organ donor. Also there was affirmative discussion and questions were asked. The bill had twenty-seven affirmative and four negative meaning that the bill passed. It was set to be number four in topic of discussion in the clerks calendar however it is actually number fifteen on tomorrow's calendar. When the committee adjourned there was an opportunity to ask the author of the bill for her thoughts about the bill's future. The author, Elizabeth Lewis from District 8, stated, "I hope that the bill will make it all the way to the Governor but I also understand that there are more controversial bills working to be in play." We shall wish her and bill the best of luck on the floor tomorrow!



Freedom to be Yourself

By: Haize Korczynski

Freedom of Speech
Saying the earth is flat
On and on you preach
When you believe that

The right to bear arms
Even if you raise alarms
Falling on your butt
From the pouch of the gun
Because you no longer have to run

Right to private property
Better not take my lottery
And if you do
I'll scream out robbery

Right to a trial
when you steal a style
Get through it fast
To get that in your past

Freedom to be yourself
Because of the Bill of Rights
Freedom of speech
And to live your life
Law should never cross over
What you have in your sights

Because these are basic human rights!

Equal Uplift

By: Avonley Powers & Shannon Anderson

In a recent turn of events, House Bill 265 and Senate Bill 465, also known as Equal Uplift, will be presented on the House and Senate calendar. This bill is placed as the first bill in House, and the second on Senate.

This act focuses on providing funding which would allow the inmates in private and public prisons, to receive equal program availability. Inmates would be given equal opportunities when it comes to educational, substance abuse treatment, rehabilitation, life skills, and much more. If passed, this bill would be managed by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and funded by the state government. To ensure that these programs would be successful, the Office of Inspector General would inspect and audit on an annual basis.

Implementing this act would dramatically increase the inmates life after incarceration. This would help them better themselves in many key aspects of their life, and benefit the world around them. During tomorrow's debate, we're expecting to see many opinions differ between the House and Senate members regarding the implementation of this bill. Will Equal Uplift Be Uplifted? Follow along for updates and breaking news on tx4hcongress.blogspot.com

Garry's Giggles



Legislators Getting Into Character

