

Texas 4-H Congress Declared a Success

By: Caroline Sexton, Clara Raabe, Caroline Duke

The last three days of 4-H congress has left 4Hers with a lasting impact. Friendships formed, bonds strengthened, and legislative processes were learned. The impact of 4-H congress is vast, as it teaches various different life skills such as parliamentary procedure, public speaking, and working in groups. They also learned about the legislative process in depth and how to debate while sparing people's feelings and opinions. Here are some tidbits about what some 4-Hers' favorite experiences and the impacts that congress has made on some 4-Hers.

What did you learn this week?

- Floor Leader Allison Halfmann, D6: "The main thing we learned was about the legislative process. But I think we also learned that everyone has their own opinion and we learned how to respect everyone's opinions."
- Rep. Tanner Owen, D1: "I learned that committees are very important, and that if [a bill] doesn't go through committee, then it doesn't go to the chamber."
- Rep Brady Vanover, D3: "What didn't I learn? It really gave me new insight into how congress works and gave me a new appreciation. I feel like I'll be able to use what I learned here to teach it to some of the younger 4-Hers."

What was your favorite part of 4-H Congress?

- Floor Leader Allison Halfmann, D6: "Probably the opportunity to override the veto. It happened two years ago at congress and it's a pretty cool thing to do."
- Press Corp Coordinator Madison Fussell D7: "Watching other delegates take part in being active citizens in our society and learning how our government works, and of course, drama!"

Which bill was your favorite to debate or witness?

- Rep. Sunny Cowley, D1: "I liked debating whether or not teachers should be able to carry handguns."
- Floor Leader Isaac Stecher, D4: "I would say the legalizing of the humane processing of horses in America. It was interesting to see all the different ideas going on at once."

If you came back to the 2020 Texas 4-H Congress, what role would you want to have?

- Sen. Kollier Miller, D1: "Press Corp, for sure!"
- Rep. Lydia Miller D1: "I would want to be a lobbyist."

In addition, Reporters Carrie Duke and Clara Raabe took to the chamber floors to survey the delegate's views on Congress Officials and the success of their leadership. The responses from representatives of about five districts were overwhelmingly positive!

Lobbyist Brandy Hoover, D6: "Their parliamentary procedure and maintaining order throughout the room [was great]."

Sen. Taylor Limbaugh, D7: "They have done pretty well."
Rep. Manley Stewart, D6: "I think they're actually helping out a lot and getting in their part."

As we see our fellow 4-Hers walk out of the Capitol doors for the last time for the year 2018, we think to ourselves, "What have we accomplished, achieved and learned in these last 3 days?"

This years 4-H Congress has helped more than a hundred kids on the viewpoint of what really goes on inside the Capitol. Whether it be arguing, debating, and different points of view, we all came back together because we respected each others opinions. These last few days have been a life changing experience for us all and we hope you come back next year!

2018 TEXAS 4-H CONGRESS SPONSORS



Un“BEE”lievable

By: Shannon Anderson

As the number one pollinators not only in the state of Texas, but worldwide, bees play a vital part in human life. Without them, life on earth would suffer dramatically. H. B. 180/S.B. 380, “2018 Bee Protection”, focuses on banning the use, sale, and production of all neonicotinoids in the state of Texas.

Because farmers have been using neonicotinoids as pesticides in their fields, these beloved pollinators are being poisoned by an overdose of this insecticide that in a way resembles the effect of nicotine.

With over 35% percent of America’s crops relying on bees, keeping this declining population alive has become a very pressing situation. While debating this topic in both the House and Senate chambers in today’s session, some members posed different opinions toward this topic.

Some members stated that they did not understand certain parts of the bill, and therefore did not support it. However, House Representative and member of the Environment Committee, Ty Dahlstrom, was extremely passionate about the success of this bill and spoke in great favor toward it.

Rep. Dahlstrom stated, “Research shows that four years after the bee population dies, so will the human race. This is due to decreased pollination and food supply. Voting against this bill is effectively trying to murder the human race.”

As a result of the many passionate members speaking out on both the Senate and House floors, the 2018 Bee Protection bill was passed in both chambers and signed into law by Governor Herron. We’re buzzing to see how this effects our state.

Catch This!

By: Paige Perry & Kade Miller

One of the big bills on the floor today was the Ban on the Affluenza Defense (HB 262/ SB 462) bill. It had great discussion in both the House and Senate. Affluenza is a psychological malaise that supposedly affects wealthy young people. Symptoms of Affluenza include a lack of motivation, feelings of guilt, and a sense of isolation. Most of the time, it is referred to when wealthy youth or young adults are not held responsible for their wrongdoing.

A story that came up in both committee meetings, as well as the House of Representatives was the one about the 16 year old boy who became intoxicated and killed an entire family. On December of 2013, a sixteen year old boy stole beer from a Walmart, then proceeded to go to a party in his hometown to get drunk. After the party he got in his pickup, still intoxicated, and drove 70 miles an hour down a road that had forty miles per hour speed limit. The family who was pulled over on the side of the road was hit by the drunk teen driver and were killed because of it. In court, he originally pled guilty, but the tables turned when the doctor reported that he had Affluenza. Because of that, the boy walked out of the court room with a probation sentence, as well as sentenced to rehab.

The purpose of this bill was to eradicate criminal defense attorneys from using the Affluenza Defense Plea in any court case. Tuesday at the Capitol, in the House of Representatives, the bill passed with 172 affirmative votae and seven against. It also passed in the Senate with 45 in favor of the bill and one against. Because both chambers passed the bill, it was sent to the governor. Govenor Herron signed the bill into law. Now citizens cannot justify their wrongdoings on a “disease”.

Bill Blows Away Legislatures

By: Avonley Powers

The Texas Wind Energy Tax Exemption bill was one of the first bills which was both passed by both Chambers and signed by the Governor. This new law is all about giving back to landowners. Wind energy is a form of renewable energy. It's produced by the heating of the earth's surface, which causes air to move to different places. Wind energy can be harnessed by using wind turbines which generate electricity.

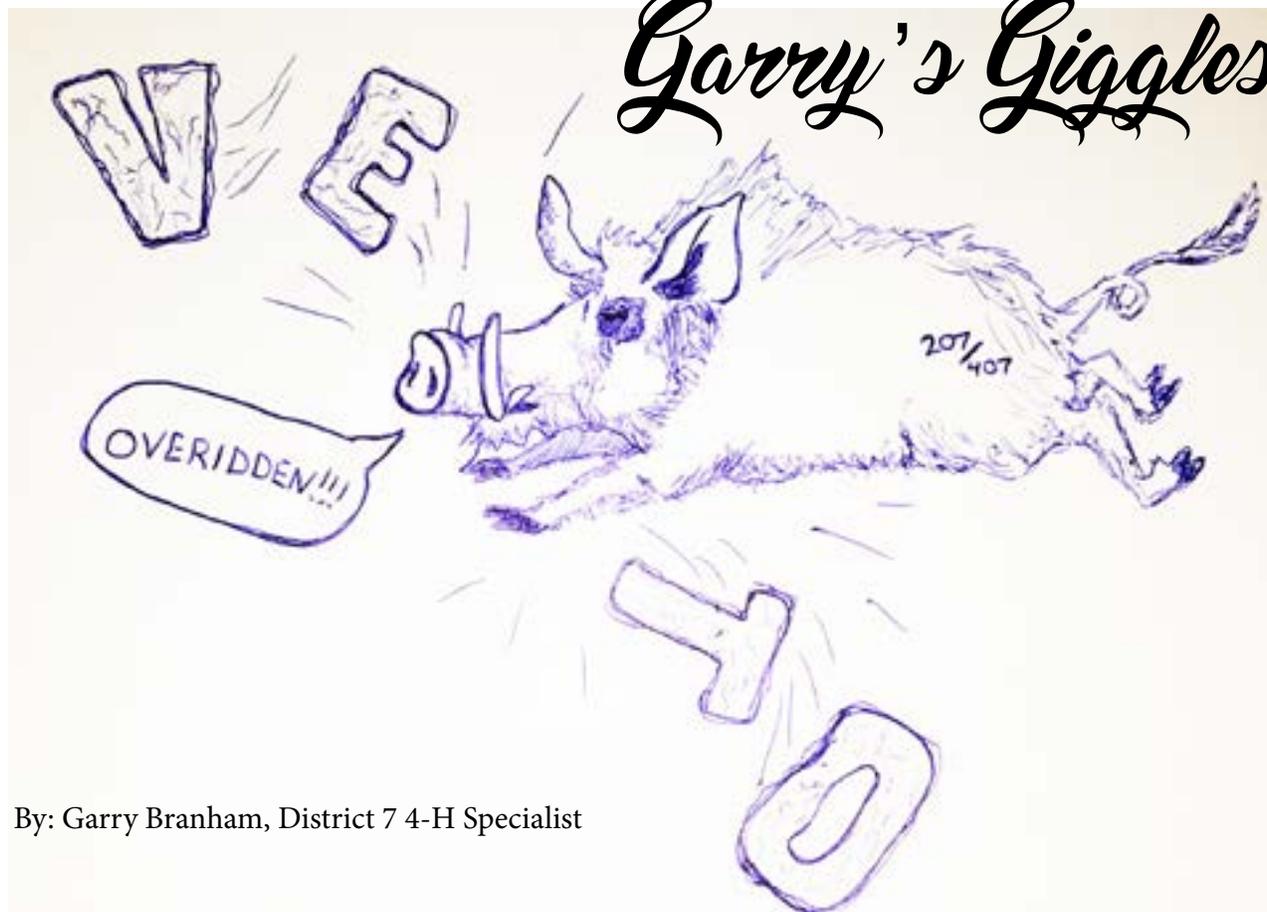
This law aims to let landowners, specifically farmers, lease their property to wind energy companies. This allows the construction of a wind farm, while also allowing the landowner to have lower property tax rates. This in turn, allows them to cut back on their expenses. In an interview with author and House sponsor Weston Reynolds, he stated the following:

"Currently, when landowners in the state of Texas that lease their property for wind energy development such as wind farms, and once they do that they lose their qualification to obtain agriculture tax exemptions."

When it comes to the more technical side of things, landowners leasing their property to wind energy companies, would be recognized as having a commercial energy facility operating on their property. This causes property rates to double, or in some cases triple, which can damage a negative perspective for agriculture.

The aim of the Texas Wind Energy Tax Exemption law aims to inspire even more wind energy development all over the state of Texas. It emerges from the importance of the "landowner sustainability, explicitly in rural/agriculture settings, as well as forwarding statewide wind energy advancement."

This law placed third on the Congress calendar, being one of the Governors favorites. I'd like to think he was a little blown away.



By: Garry Branham, District 7 4-H Specialist

All Great Things Come to an End

Congress Girls here, your one and only source into the scandalous lives of the Congress elite. Our last full day has once again been full of drama, but who's really surprised? We've been taking a lot of heat, but is the truth really that hard to swallow? Even some of our own have seemed to turn against us by implying that our information is unreliable. People are ignoring the opinions they don't want to hear, and apparently trying to silence those that oppose their own. We, for one, stand for truth and not corruption.

Everything was meant in fun and games as we got into our role as Press just for fun!! While the spotlight has been on us, it was actually not meant to harm any feelings!

-XOXO, the REAL Congress Girls



From 4-H Minds to Governor's Desk

By: Annabelle Welfel

The House and Senate floors were busy today passing a total of 13 bills to Governor Herron's desk, 12 of which became law. Some of the most controversial bills that passed were HB 162/SB 362, HB 207/SB 407, HB 308/SB 508 and HB 219/SB 419.

HB 162/SB 362, Second Amendment Rights In Texas Public Schools, went back and forth on the senate floor with one side arguing the opportunity for teachers to carry weapons as their constitutional right. The opposing side stated it would make students feel unsafe and can lead to unnecessary intentional harm. HB 207/SB 407, although passed in both the House and Senate, was vetoed by the Governor, but later overturned by the majority rule. This enacted the law, *Texas Feral Hog Eradication Program*.

Concern was raised on the Opt-out Organ Donation bill over the possibility of an individual missing or skipping over the check box to opt-out, resulting in accidentally applying to donate their organs in the event of an accident.

However, some of the biggest debate raised on the Senate floor came when introducing the Denial of Removal of State Monuments of Statues. This bill represented those that were set on preserving both Texas and American history, but was rebutted by other senate members apprehensive on letting statues involved in controversial history be celebrated.

Another notable bill was HB 110/SB 310, Ban In-State Tuition and State Financial Aid from Illegal Immigrants, which was vetoed by the Governor and left to die in the bill graveyard, along with the 215 other bills that didn't become laws.

The Condemnation of Property by High Speed Rail (HB 239/SB 439) was set apart because of a large support base and specified purpose.

Overall, the bills passed represent the diversity of thought and motivation for this next generation and showed how much 4-H youth can accomplish in just three days legislation. Governor Herron desired to pass bills that protect Texas culture and does not overregulate Texas citizens, which I will leave to you to decide if he succeeded.

Congress in Pictures

By: Kase Kuykendall





Thank you from the 2018
Texas 4-H Congress Press
Corp team for allowing us to
report the news to you this
week.