

2015 WV YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT 58th MODEL LEGISLATURE & 27th MODEL SUPREME COURT ASSEMBLES AT CHARLESTON CAPITOL

By Pevton Brown

Nearly 360 participants from counties throughout West Virginia, gathered at the State Capitol to take part in the 2015 58th West Virginia Youth in Government. Youth became Legislative Delegates, Judicial Justices, Officers, Lobbyists, Press, Pages, Advisors, along with multiple other volunteers including real life Government



2015 YG Participants

Committee Members, came to this event with a purpose to educate West Virginia's youth about the procedures of government, while giving them a hands-on experience in the process. Ideas were shared and debates were held with the intentions of passing legislation that students felt would improve our government and enhance our live as West Virginians as a whole.

A Different Perspective

By Whitney Hunt

The Youth in Government Assembly means so much to its members. Have you thought about how others see it being beneficial? When interviewing Secretary of State, Natalie Tennant, we asked

how she believed the program benefited the younger generations of future leaders. Tenant said "It is a huge benefit to those who participate and a huge benefit to our whole community. It is building strong individuals and

"Individuals will leave here inspired and empowered to be leaders among their peers."

strong citizens who are going to learn and grow from it." She also said, "They will leave here inspired and empowered to be leaders among their peers."

The Governors Last Word

By Emily Harrell

The shoes of a governor are large ones to fill, but 2015 Youth Governor, Tyler Jenkins, handles it like a pro. While a five-year history attending Youth in Government (since 8th grade) certainly adds an air of credibility, it takes more than experience alone to run a government. It's the passion for the program and a slew of new ideas that serve as the driving force behind Governor Jenkins' time in office.

In an interview, Jenkins spoke



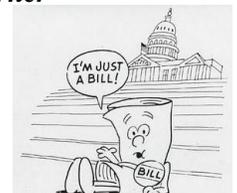
YG Bill Signing

briefly on the effect the YLA and YG programs have had on him-making him more comfortable speaking in public, leading a group, and effectively handling a great deal of responsibility. He also agreed with previous speakers in encouraging newcomers to speak up... *(continued on C3)*

I'm Just a Bill... Yeah, I'm Only a Bill

By Rhiannon Turner

At Youth in Government, the process of a bill becoming an actual law is



often underestimated. First, topic ideas for a bill are introduced by a delegation. Delegates research, prepare and draft a bill on their topic. The completed draft is assigned to a committee, a smaller legislative group, of a different delegation than the bill's author to consider the bill first. The committee... *(continued on C3)*

2015 Spirit of the Mountains



Adj. General James Hoyer

By Angela Myers

The Spirit of the Mountains was an event held by the Youth Leadership Association (YLA) on April 23 2015. During which Adj. General James Hoyer was the honoree in receiving the Lewis McManus Service Award. Adj. General James Hoyer is the leader of the National Guard and the

Army for West Virginia with over 6,500 troops. During his speech in the opening session of YG Hoyer said, "If I say something funny and you don't laugh we're all going to do push-ups" as a sort of ice breaker before beginning his speech on what makes people leaders. After this comment, he challenged the students to become leaders in their lives, to go out and help strengthen the people in our society.

Standing Against Racism

By Angela Myers

On Friday, April 24, 2015 a group of Youth and Government students joined the protest against racism. The protest was funded by the YMCA, their motto is "eliminating racism, empowering women". There were many community individuals in attendance. The leader of the protest was Mairilyn Wrenn. Many held signs, cheered their support, and encouraged individuals support the protest. Supporters showed support by

honking vehicle horns as they drove past the protest. There was even a boat on the river "voice" their support for this cause.



Blue House Bill #6: Family & Fathers Act

By Hanuka Okabe

Although equality between men and women has been improved, inequality still remains in some areas. Bill authors, Cristal Espinosa and Jazmin Gillum from Buckhannon-Upshur have symbolized an example of gender inequality in their bill for public baby changing stations. Presently, these stations only exist in female public restrooms. However, due to the passing of this bill, all male public restrooms will also be required to provide same changing stations. The bill passed unanimously to combat this gender inequality. A one cent increase in tobacco taxes for the next two years will fund these changes.

The Inside Look at a Lobbyist

By Joe Womack

At many points during the course of a Legislative and Judicial Session, there is one group of individuals that are not always appointed due credit for their work, and they as a group are sometimes forgotten. That group is the lobbyists, individuals who are renowned for their ability in persuading delegates to let a bill live or die. In a recent interview, I asked Mr. Benjamin Evans multiple questions regarding his position as a lobbyist for the Legislative and Judicial Session, and the goals he wished to accomplish. The

questions and answers are as follows.

Joe: What made you want to be a lobbyist?

Mr. Evans: The freedom of mobility and being the master of my own fate, as well as politically influencing other delegates to vote in favor or against a bill.

Me: What do you think makes you an effective lobbyist?

Mr. Evans: My effectiveness in speaking and influencing others, as well as my ability to persuade.

Me: What bill or bills are you taking a special interest in?

Mr. Evans: I have a special interest in a bill that requires a photo ID for voting procedures. I hold many concerns regarding this bill, and wish to know more about it.

Blue House Bill #22: No Rights for Rapists

By Avery Lyons

Morgantown High delegates Terezia Galikova and Leila Hooshyar have authored a bill that will prevent a rapist from pursuing custody and visitation rights of children resulting from non-consensual sexual contact.

“We think it’s an oversight of human rights,” Galikova explained about the necessity of their bill. The relevance of this bill is unquestionable; in West Virginia one in five women will be a victim of rape. Yet the lack of protection provided to victims of violent crimes is a problem that is being overlooked.

Although the bills legislators personally support a woman’s reproductive rights, they hope that the bill will curve the number of legal and illegal abortions. “Women would feel protected by the law rather than having to face their rapist on a regular basis,” Hooshyar commented about how some women may be more likely to see the pregnancy to term if they felt the government was supporting them.

The bill, which aims to “promote safety and respect for women and children in the state,” passed without opposition in the Blue House on Saturday afternoon.

The Governors Last Word

(Continued from pg 1)

... and to take a step or two outside their comfort zone.

In terms of goals, the Youth Governor has worked diligently to incorporate significantly more social media into various parts of the program, such as establishing an official 2015 YG Facebook page, or live tweeting from the Governor's Cabinet. He has also established the first-ever YG budget, along with State Treasurer Isaac Liu, and House Sponsors Hunter Fletcher, and Preston Surface. The initiative is a full-fledged, comprehensive budget, complete with charts, that fits within the Balanced Budget Amendment.

Tyler Jenkins has taken up the role of one of the most powerful and influential people in the State of West Virginia. While it's only for the weekend, Jenkins' own influence and ideas (along with those of future Youth Governors) will continue to spark the flame of curiosity, knowledge, and daring in minds of brilliant young men and women across the state, and continue to uphold the ideals of leadership and character that embody the mission of the YLA.

I’m Just a Bill... Yeah, I’m Only a Bill

(Continued from pg 1)

is to evaluate the bill entirely, ask many questions to gain information, and maybe amend the bill, all in a less formal setting. Bills are rated on a scale of 1-75. While bills can die in committee, bills rated 1-5 are usually good bills to move on to be considered on the floor of the House or Senate. Bills on the floor are presented, debated and voted on. If the minority is held in favor, the bill will die. If the majority is held in favor, the bill will move on to the Governor's office. The Governor makes the ultimate decision as to whether

or not a bill will pass. 58th YLA Student Governor, Tyler Jenkins stated several things he focuses on in a bill: expenses, loopholes and effects. The Student Governor has the ability to either sign or veto a bill. A signed bill becomes a law. In the case of a veto, only a 2/3 majority vote from the legislature can override a veto. It’s much harder to pass a bill than to kill it!

Blue Senate Bill #12: No Return for Capital Punishment in WV

By Elena Liu

Blue Senate Bill number twelve (BS #12), entitled A BILL TO ESTABLISH CAPITAL PUNISHMENT IN WEST VIRGINIA stood to legalize the use of the death penalty by way of lethal injection. Capital Punishment was previously abolished from West Virginia in 1965. The bill would have taken affect one-hundred and eighty days after it was passed and would have been added to Chapter 61 Article 11 Section 2 of the West Virginia State Code. This bill was sponsored by delegate Matt McCoy and Ben Davis, who stated that the bill would have improved our

state by “using tax-payers money that is spent on keeping an inmate in prison for life on other agendas i.e. education.” Lobbyist Amanda Glaspell, who also stood for the bill, commented on the benefits, saying “the bill is already funded,” but also expressed her concern that the “wrong people may get capital punishment for the wrong crime.”

In Blue Senate Committee #1, where the bill was heard, there were very mixed opinions. After heavy debate the bill passed and moved on the floor a small majority. On the floor, many of the delegates in opposition to the bill expressed their concerns and distress. After the vote was taken

and tallied, BS #12 failed on the floor, and the death penalty was not reinstated in West Virginia.



TODAY'S YG THOUGHT....

