
THE TISL TIMES

The Official Newsletter of the 45th General Assembly

Today's Schedule

3:30: 3rd Legislative Session

6:00: PIZZA!

7:00: 4th Legislative Session

9:00: Adjourn



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It's a Man's World

An Editorial

It is easy to blame “male superiority” for noticeable underrepresentation of women in American politics. However, women are equally at fault (if not moreso). Over the years, the number of women attending TISL has grown exponentially, yet the number of women running for office in TISL and at the state or national level has remained low. The barriers of entering politics are preconceived notions from men and women. These barriers continue to exist because of the perpetuation of the female acceptance of the view that politics is an “old man’s game.”



This morning, The Women’s Political Collaborative of Tennessee (WPC) held a Women’s Leadership Breakfast to remind the women of TISL that this game has indeed begun to change, and that it must continue to do so. A speaker at the breakfast noted that the cause of fewer women in government has been the lack of women supporting other women. Furthermore, it is more than just “a women’s issue.”

Numerous comparative studies have found that governments with higher percentages of women holding elected office produce policies that improve the quality of education, health, and the general welfare of society. It is time to stop complaining about the limitations or lack of opportunity for women in government and become vital participants to continue to change the political game.

-Tiana Winstead

Arming the Defenders

Legislators Fight for Concealed Carry in Schools

If passed, Bill 140, proposed by Representative Austin Von Henner from Southern Adventist University, would allow teachers and other school personnel at publicly funded educational institutions with a concealed carry license to carry their weapons on school grounds.

The bill is a response to recent school shootings and would theoretically allow teachers to use their weapons to stop or distract a school shooter before appropriate emergency officials arrive, which, according to Von Henner, takes “an average of ten minutes.” Von Henner states that the bill would give most power regarding concealed carry within the schools to individual school boards, which would decide where on the licensed persons the weapons would be kept.

Possible criticism of the bill include the opportunity for teachers to cause unnecessary harm that would not occur without the presence of the weapons and the ambiguity of when versus when not to shoot in response to a school shooter situation, but Von Henner emphasizes that the weapons would be used “only in a worst case scenario” and that the bill is “ultimately for the safety and well-being of our public school children.”

-Eilidh Jenness

Executive Council Addresses “Joke Bills”

They happen every year. In 2012 there was the memorable resolution to warn Tennesseans of the dangers of exploding toilets. Last year there was a bill that urged the Tennessee state government to take measures to prepare for an impending zombie apocalypse. Joke bills such as these are oftentimes generally expected on Sunday’s final legislative session and, according to one representative, serve to “release some of the pressure that has inevitably built up over the previous three days of intense debate.”



This year, however, a new rule of order in the TISL Legislative Handbook states, “Satirical or farcical bills shall be referred to the Executive Council in lieu of a standing committee, which shall consider the bill pursuant to the general rules regarding Standing Committees. Any motion in the Senate or House of Representatives relative to such a bill shall be classified as dilatory. This rule may not be suspended by either house.”

While the rule has not had to be implemented yet (as of this article’s writing no “joke bills” have been found by the staff of the Secretary of State’s office as they process bills), it is intended to keep debates on the floors of both chambers centered around real issues. Secretary of State Caleb Butler commented, “TISL should be an educational experience that should be upheld to the highest standards, and joke bills have traditionally caused chaos and interfered with the integrity of the educational experience.”

-Chandler Schneider