



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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Essay Winners Visited State Capitol

JEFFERSON CITY— For three students in the 22nd Senate District, what started out as a class assignment turned into a valuable lesson in how the state legislature works. This past September, Sen. Bill Alter, R-High Ridge, held an essay contest for fifth-graders from three schools in the Northwest R-1 school district. He posed the question, “What Ought to Be a Law?” Of the more than 500 students who entered the contest, the writers of the three top essays were invited to the Capitol this week to experience what a typical day for a state lawmaker is like.

“This contest was my way of bringing civics to life for some students in my district,” Alter said. “I think that those who participated in the contest have learned not only how the legislative process works, but how they can play a part in it.”

Kristen Bogert, from Cedar Hill Intermediate, was chosen as the first-place winner with her proposal to prohibit convenience stores from selling individual cans/bottles of beer that are colder than 60 degrees. To recognize Bogert for her mature and well-intentioned idea, earlier this session Sen. Alter introduced a bill aiming to discourage drinking and driving.

“Kristen got an even bigger taste of state lawmaking when she was called to testify this week in a public hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee when the drunk-driving awareness bill was being considered,” Alter said.

The contest runners-up were Keith Hejnal, from North Jefferson Intermediate, whose essay suggested that a person must be 18 and still in school to get a driver’s license, and Sophia Stair, from House Springs Intermediate, who proposed that there be mandatory recycling.

The three essay winners were joined by relatives and their school principals: Dr. Lynn Gresham from Cedar Hill; Jeff Boyer from North Jefferson; and Mary Thomasson from House Springs. The group took a tour of the Capitol, visited the governor’s office, met Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder and had their picture taken with Sen. Alter in the Senate chamber.

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“From the get-go, I was incredibly impressed with the enthusiasm expressed by students in my district,” Alter said. “They all had such great ideas, and this contest spurred them to think about how those great ideas can become great laws.”



Sen. Alter poses with the essay winners and their guests. From left to right: Sen. Bill Alter, Mr. & Mrs. Hejnal, Mr. Bogert, Keith Hejnal, Mrs. Stair, Sophia Stair, Joanna Bogert, Kristen Bogert, Dr. Lynn Gresham, Jeff Boyer, and Mary Thomasson.

An electronic copy (“jpeg” format) of this photo can be obtained by calling Darbi Gibson in Senate Communications at: (573) 751-3824.