

House of Representatives
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House Committees, Councils, and Appointments
Chair, Public Safety & Domestic Security Policy Committee
Vice Chair, Government Accountability Act Council
Criminal & Civil Justice Policy Council
Government Operations Appropriations Committee
Governmental Affairs Policy Committee
Joint Legislative Sunset Committee
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Ought to be a Law” Students to Present Smoking Bill in House Committee on Thursday at Capitol

Tampa, FL – Secondary education students representing various Bay area schools will be traveling to Tallahassee tomorrow morning to lobby legislators and present House Bill 1141, *Smoking in Vehicles with Minor Passengers*, within a workshop in the Roads, Bridges & Ports Policy Committee as a part of State Representative Kevin C. Ambler’s “Ought to be a Law” (OTBAL) Student Legislation Program.

Selected students from the OTBAL program’s Student Legislation Delegation will be leaving for the capital from Armwood High School tomorrow morning at 6:15 a.m. with Armwood teacher Tony Pirotta chaperoning on the trip. Students will spend tomorrow afternoon meeting with the members of the House Roads, Bridges & Ports Policy Committee at their Capitol offices to answer any questions or address any concerns that the Representatives have regarding the students’ legislation that they will be hearing the following day in Committee. The House Roads Committee will be meeting from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Thursday, March 25th in room 404 of the House Office Building. Fadwa Hilili (Tampa Bay Technical HS), Lacie Browning (Durant HS), Rebekah Morffi (Bloomingdale SHS), Aaron Santana (Bloomingdale SHS), and Emily Sukloff (Bloomingdale SHS) will be presenting a prepared PowerPoint presentation to the Committee about the bill.

House Bill 1141 provides that it is unlawful for any person to be smoking in a vehicle in this state if a minor under 16 years of age is also present in the vehicle. The violation is secondary in nature, and it will be an enhanced penalty, which will be a \$100 fine that will be in addition to the primary violation that the motorist receives.

Fadwa Hilili, a Student Legislation Delegation member and a junior at Tampa Bay Tech said of the bill that, "Other states, including California and Maine, have passed similar bills into law. We the students believe it is Florida's turn to do the same."

Different than mock programs, “Ought to be a Law” was created in 2004 by Representative Ambler to offer students the chance for their drafted bill idea to become an actual law. In the 2007 legislative session, the “Ought to be a Law” program made history when House Bill 1161 titled, *The High School to Business Career Enhancement Act*, was passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate and was then signed by the Governor into law. Governor Charlie Crist said at the “Ought to be a Law” bill signing, that “it is the greatest civics lesson we can achieve”.

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