

House of Representatives

Kevin C. Ambler

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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
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rep. Ambler's "Ought to be a Law" Student Legislation Program Town Hall is this Sat. January 23rd

Program now extended to include high school students at private and charter schools

TAMPA, FL – State Representative Kevin Ambler's (R-Tampa) "Ought to be a Law" (OTBAL) Town Hall and Student Legislation Program will commence with the Student Town Hall portion of the innovative civic education program this Saturday, January 23, 2010, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Hillsborough County Public Schools Building located at 901 E. Kennedy Blvd. in downtown Tampa.

For the past five school years, Representative Ambler has invited the thousands of high school students attending Hillsborough County Public Schools to participate in the OTBAL program which ensures that these students have the opportunity to effect positive change in Florida's government by proposing a bill idea to be sponsored by Rep. Ambler and State Senator Victor Crist in the upcoming legislative session. This year, the program has expanded to not only include Hillsborough County Public School students, but OTBAL also has program participation from Hillsborough County high school students who are homeschooled or are attending private or charter schools in the county.

Representative Ambler commented that he is, "proud to be able to make this unique opportunity open to every student in the county, which is now the 8th largest public school district in the United States. It is important to me to give as many students as is possible the chance to be educated about how they can positively affect state government and become a voice of change in our state."

The "Ought to be a Law" Student Legislation Program began as one of the first programs of its kind in the United States in 2004, when Representative Ambler realized after visiting several area high schools, that high school students should be given a better outlet to make their original ideas for a better Florida a reality, and to be able to actively participate in the real legislative process. Different than mock programs, "Ought to be a Law" was created 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 with a majority of votes 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".

Last year, the bill proposed by the OTBAL high school students and sponsored by Rep. Ambler in the Florida House of Representatives aimed to discourage teen drivers from using the phone to chat or text while driving. House Bill 1127 (2009 Session) deterred drivers, through the use of points and fines as enhanced penalties on moving violations, under the age of 18 from using any electronic devices such as MP3 players, video game systems, cell phones and other electronic devices unless the device is hands free.

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