

## My Experience as a Legislative Intern

Contributed by Christie Braymer  
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As a homeschool student still in my senior year of highschool, the idea of working in the Kansas State Capitol scared me to death! I am fascinated with politics. I love being involved and often call my elected officials when they are voting on important issues. But me work as an intern for a senator? Scary! Yet when I found out that I would be working in Senator Pyle's office, I could not stop smiling. I was thrilled!

Since the 2005 Kansas legislative session started on January 10, I have been working as a legislative intern for Senator Dennis Pyle, a homeschool father and Kansas State Senator from Hiawatha. I have enjoyed working for Senator Pyle because we agree on so much: from fiscal policy and business issues, to the sanctity of human life, and the need for Christians to be salt and light.

I have learned so much more about Kansas state government here in the capitol than I could have learned in the "classroom". I have learned about bills, resolutions and the stress of deadlines and busy schedules. Previously, I wondered if all the e-mails I sent, and the calls I made to my legislators made a difference. Now I know, in Senator Pyle's office at least, constituent correspondence is read.

What do I do as an intern? I work in his office two days a week and my assignments vary. So far, Senator Pyle has asked me to draft responses to constituent letters and e-mails, research issues, and track bills. In addition, I have watched Senate and House sessions and sat in on committee meetings.

The most exciting session I have watched was the Senate debating Senate Concurrent Resolution 1601, the constitutional amendment protecting marriage between one man and one woman. The roll call vote on SCR 1601 was so close people in the gallery were counting the votes on their fingers. It passed 28 to 11, with just one vote more than the 27 needed for a constitutional majority.

There have been lots of highlights in just the last month, but one of the things I have enjoyed the most is meeting people. The Pyle family came to the Capitol for Day Under the Dome, and I was able to meet the Pyle campaign team -- Mrs. Pyle and the six Pyle girls. Campaigning was a family event for the Pyles. I have been amazed at all the other groups that visit the capitol. Everyone from the military and dental health organizations to home-school groups and Ducks Unlimited, a group that promotes duck hunting and habitat, set up displays in the capitol trying to get out their message. One day Planned Parenthood will be passing out literature, and the next Kansans For Life will be holding a pro-life rally on the Capitol steps!

Although I have really enjoyed my internship, it would not have been such a great experience if I was not working for such a great Christian

senator. I have learned so much and been able to help, in a small way, with issues that are important to me &ndash; and had a great time doing it!