

# Graduate pushes bill through legislature

Stan Pulliam spearheaded HB 3581, which changes state wrestling regulations

By Lisa Catto  
Freelance Reporter

His cell phone rang at 10:30 a.m. The caller was a fellow legislative aide at the Oregon State Capitol who told him a package from World Wrestling Entertainment had arrived.

Stan Pulliam — a 22-year-old University graduate and legislative aide to Reps. Pat Farr, R-Eugene, and Tootie Smith, R-Molalla — immediately jumped in his car and headed to Salem.

Pulliam finally reached the building and ran up the Capitol's steps. He arrived at Smith's office and ripped open the package. His eyes opened wide and his mouth dropped when he found a WWE Championship Belt covered with signatures of WWE superstars. He was overjoyed. This was something he could show his grandchildren, Pulliam said.

The belt was a gift from WWE thanking Pulliam for his work in passing a bill to allow professional wrestling back into Oregon. Among the trials and tribulations of the 72nd Legislative Assembly, Pulliam is proud to have spearheaded House Bill 3581 before leaving the Legislature.

"I have wanted to do something about the regulations for several years, but I did not know how," Pulliam said. "I then decided to write a bill for the Legislature and try to take care of it myself, so that everyone can enjoy the local and national promotions."

The bill changed state regulation that had discouraged WWE from entering Oregon, Pulliam said.

For instance, the Commission required wrestlers to be tested for drugs and blood-borne pathogens by an Oregon doctor 30 days before an event, which was not cost-efficient for WWE, Pulliam said.

"The nature of the current regulations is such that WWE faces additional costs of tens of thousands of dollars to perform in Oregon, costs

that it would not incur in any other state," WWE representative Gary Davis said in a press release.

Smith also had harsh words for the regulations.

"I find it absurd that in the midst of having one of the highest unemployment rates and the weakest economy in the nation, the state of Oregon has decided to turn away business that will help create jobs and increase revenue to the state," she said.

The bill separated "ultimate fighting" and from "entertainment wrestling," stating that because the latter's results are pre-determined, it should be regulated differently than ultimate fighting.

"This bill is different from the others because I worked to get the support from WWE and local promotions, the Commission and the Trailblazer organization. I figured the best way to secure the success of the bill would be to get all sides fighting for it," Pulliam said.

HB 3581, which Pulliam drafted and Smith sponsored with more than 20 legislative co-signers, passed the House unanimously and the Senate with only three "no" votes. Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski signed the bill into law in May, and it will take effect Jan. 1, 2004.

"It is an amazing feeling to have written a bill and followed it all the way through the Legislature," Pulliam said. "I got a firsthand look of how the process works and what it takes to get a bill through."

The WWE plans to visit Oregon four times a year with an expected annual economic stimulus of \$15 million.

Pulliam has since left his job at the Capitol and finished his political science degree at the University.

"This bill has helped me figure out my career goals," Pulliam said. "I learned that a person can really make a difference if they try hard enough. It is great to know that I helped pump money into Oregon's economy at its neediest hour."

Lisa Catto is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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