State Legislature Testing Online Comment System For New Bills

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - The Legislature this year has added an online comment option for bills under consideration in addition to the traditional telephone hotline it continues to offer the public.Gerry Sheehan of the Legislative Information Center said the "e-comments" feature currently is a pilot program. In order to make comments for or against a bill, computer users must first go to www.leg.wa.gov and enter the bill number after clicking on the "bill information" tab. Once on the information page, users have the option of clicking on a link to register a comment. The software requires the user to know a bill number before making a comment.Users will be required to create an account the first time they use the comment system and provide residential information to determine their legislative district. The software then targets comments to specific representatives. Sheehan said the personal background will not be sold to anyone nor otherwise be made available to third parties for commercial purposes.This service is in addition to the Legislative hotline, 1.800.562.6000. Because the hotline staff is limited, it often takes too long to receive an answer and some discouraged callers give up, Sheehan said. The web-based feature allows for round the clock availability without waiting.For more information, contact Sheehan at gerry.sheehan@leg.wa.gov.