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## Law students catch legislative process in action

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SPRINGFIELD — A group of law students saw the legislative process first-hand when they visited Springfield recently.

Third-year law students from The John Marshall Law School visited the Illinois General Assembly to see how laws are made during the fall veto session, which ended Thursday.

Kevin M. Hull, adjunct law professor at John Marshall, took three students from his legislative drafting class to the Illinois statehouse, letting the students see how laws are made.

Hull said he enjoys bringing his students to Springfield because it helps deepen their understanding of the law.

"It's the immersion into the actual General Assembly experience," Hull said. "It's one thing to teach it in a class, but it's quite another thing to have the students see it."

Hull said several John Marshall alumni are now legislators and legislative aides. He and the students visited John Marshall alumni Rep. James B. Durkin, R-Western Springs, and Rep. Kelly McGuire Burke, D-Evergreen Park, among others.

"It's great to visit with them, because from an instructor's standpoint, it's really putting the practical aspect with the classroom work," Hull said. "The hope is

that they can really see a holistic view of how things happen. As they start their practice, they're going to have this incredible view of the policy side of the law that no other law school teaches."

Law student Louis Raymond, who said he wants to be a trial attorney after graduation, said there is no replacement for seeing the legislative process first-hand.

"Throughout law school, you're taught to argue the law," Raymond said. "You're taught that this is how judges interpret the law, but you never really get a fair understanding of how the law is created. So this actually gave me a totally different perspective on legislation."

Raymond said he now likens trial work to legislating after seeing lawmakers debate bills and seek votes from their peers.

"Being in front of a jury and speaking in front of the legislature have the same characteristics," Raymond said. "You have to know your facts. You have to talk to them, make them understand and want to vote your way."

Law student Joshua Scanlon, who said he wants to work in public interest law or as a legislative staffer, said the experience let him preview the job he hopes to have some day.

"It's really interesting to me to be able to talk to people who are already working these types of jobs," Scanlon said.

"Specifically, I got to see what work is involved, what they do on a day-to-day basis and what kind of topics they're able to get into and influence."

Scanlon said he was surprised at the number of people in the statehouse — lawmakers, lobbyists, staffers, protesters and more.

"It's a really cool testament to democracy in action to have people there as the House is in session in the next room voting on bills," Scanlon said. "It's interesting to see the process work from the personal perspective of the people and how the legislators are responding to them."

Law student Stephanie Williams said she wants to work in public interest law. She said she already works with Chicago Volunteer Legal Services to help families going through home foreclosure.

"This process is very enlightening," Williams said. "It gave me an insight into what actually goes on behind the scenes. I ended up running into so many people who are really interested in the process, whether they're involved in the Senate or the House or are lobbyists."

Williams said she didn't know what to expect when visiting the statehouse, but she will remember the experience.

"I feel like I'm in a part of history," Williams said. "I can look back some day and say, 'I was there when this bill was passed.'"