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Fifth graders at Fuller School got a lesson in legislating with a visit from U.S. Rep. Charlie Bass Monday.

The visit capped off a unit on government. As part of their lesson, the students all wrote entries for an essay contest sponsored by The Sentinel on the constitutionality of schools banning cellphone use by students during the school day.

Bass, a Peterborough Republican, debunked the rumor that the life of a congressman is all glamour. He told the students he goes to Washington, D.C., for three weeks a months, with meetings in the morning and sessions in the afternoon.

"If you really want to watch grass grow, watch Congress in session," he said jokingly.

Then came questions from the students.

How many times have you been to the White House? (A dozen.) How hard is your job? (Hard.) How do you get to Washington, DC? (By car, plane, bus, then train.) Have you ever thought of running for president? (Not seriously.) Who's your favorite president? (Teddy Roosevelt.) Have you ever met President Obama? What about his dog? (Yes and no.)

When 10-year-old Jon A. Moody asked why Bass is a Republican, Bass turned the tables on him. "Are you a Republican or a Democrat and why?"

"Uh, none," Jon said.

Ah, the coveted independent voter.

