

IOWA HOUSE REPUBLICANS

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Appropriations

State Revenue Remains Strong in May

General Fund revenue for the state continued to come in strong, as tax receipts in May were 43.6% higher than what the state collected in May 2021. While some of this increase is attributable a variety of tax filing deadlines falling on a weekend at the end of April, the strong revenue number continues the state on a path to collect more revenue than what the Revenue Estimating Conference projected.

Leading the revenue growth this month was personal income tax, which generated \$939 million in collections for May. This amount is 60.4 percent higher than what came in during last May. While a good portion of the growth can be attributed to income tax filing deadline being on a weekend, there still was significant growth in income tax withholding which indicates solid economic activity in the state. Through May, personal income tax collections have risen 7.8 percent, while the March REC estimated growth rate is just 0.9 percent. This figure may come down a bit from its current level, as income tax returns in 2021 were not due until the end of May.

Sales and use tax collections also continued on the upward trend, as May collections were up 26.1 percent when compared to May 2021. Part of this increase was due to April 30 filing deadlines falling on a weekend and pushing revenue into May. For the year, sales and use tax receipts are 9.8 percent higher. This is running slightly ahead of the March REC forecast of 9.4 percent growth.

May is a smaller month for corporate income tax collections, but still this category showed revenue growth for the month. The \$54.3 million collected was \$1 million higher than what was received in May 2021. For the year, corporate income tax collections are down 10.4 percent. This is slightly higher than the REC forecast of a drop of 10.1 percent when compared to Fiscal Year 2021.

Overall, state revenue through May is 7.1 percent higher than what the state collected in the first eleven months of Fiscal Year 2021. The growth rate is almost 3 percent higher than what the REC projected in March (+4.3%). Iowa's strong economy is helping to withstand the impact of the burst of inflation the country has experienced during the Biden administration.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

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Agriculture

IDALS Announces Cost Share Funds for Soil Health and Water Quality Practices

On Friday, May 27, 2022, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release in which IDALS Secretary Mike Naig announced that farmers and landowners can now sign up for state cost share

funds. These funds help farmers adopt soil health and water quality practices, including planting cover crops, transitioning acres to no-till/strip-till soil management or applying a nitrification inhibitor.

Farmers who are planting cover crops for the first time are eligible for \$25 per acre through the cost share fund. Farmers who have already experienced the benefits of using cover crops and are continuing the practice can receive \$15 per acre. Producers transitioning acres to no-till or strip-till are eligible for \$10 per acre, and may receive \$3 per acre for applying fall fertilizer using a nitrapyrin nitrification inhibitor. Cost share funding through IDALS is limited to 160 acres per farmer or landowner. The funds will be made available in July, but farmers can start submitting applications immediately through their local Soil and Water Conservation District offices. Farmers are encouraged to call their Soil and Water Conservation District offices to inquire about additional cost-share funds available through other sources.

With farmers stewarding more than two million acres of cover crops across the state, Iowa continues to be a conservation leader. Last fall, over 3,500 farmers and landowners enrolled in the cost share program funded through the Water Quality Initiative. More than 413,000 acres of cover crops, 13,700 acres of no-till/strip-till and 5,400 acres of nitrification inhibitors were enrolled in the program in 2021. An estimated \$14 million of private funding was invested to match the \$6.9 million contributed by the state. To learn more about the soil health and water quality projects underway around Iowa, visit cleanwateriowa.org.

IDALS Secretary Naig Touts Legislative Session Accomplishments Benefiting the Iowa Agriculture

On Wednesday, May 25, 2022, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) issued a press release in which following the adjournment of the 2022 legislative session, IDALS Secretary Mike Naig issued the following statement congratulating state legislators on a successful session that saw major accomplishments for Iowa farmers and the agricultural community: “The 2022 legislative session has been incredibly productive for Iowa’s agriculture community. I applaud Governor Reynolds and members of the Iowa House and Senate for prioritizing the needs of family farmers, our agribusinesses, and rural communities. The Legislature addressed inflationary prices at the fuel pump by ensuring Iowans will have increased access to lower cost, cleaner burning biofuels over the next several years and cut taxes so hard-working families and small businesses can keep more of their money in their own pocket. They also passed bills that will grow markets for Iowa producers by launching an Iowa grown and raised marketing program and continued to invest in our small-town meat lockers.” Below are some of the major legislative accomplishments from the 2022 session that benefit Iowa agriculture:

Biofuel Access and Infrastructure

[House File 2128](#) ensures that more Iowans will have access to lower cost, clean burning E15 at the fuel pump. The Legislature also continued to make a significant investment in the state’s biofuel infrastructure to help fuel retailers around the state make the upgrades necessary to offer higher blends of ethanol to their customers.

Promoting Iowa Grown and Raised Products

[House File 2581](#) establishes the Choose Iowa Promotional Program, an agricultural marketing program, to increase the visibility of Iowa grown and raised foods. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will lead the program with plans to launch this fall.

Tax Relief for Farmers and Iowa Agriculture

[House File 2317](#) resulted in generational tax reform that cuts taxes for all Iowans while doing so in a fiscally responsible manner. The tax package lowers the current tax rate for all Iowans to a flat rate of 3.9%, makes retirement income tax free, and includes provisions that will benefit Iowa farmers and the agriculture community.

Continued Efforts to Grow Iowa Meat Lockers

[House File 2470](#) implements many of the recommendations of the Artisanal Butchery Task Force which was led by Secretary Naig in the fall of 2021. The Task Force recommended the creation of a one-year community college certificate program for artisanal butchery and addresses other challenges that Iowa meat processors identified related to

financial and workforce training programs. The Legislature also provided \$1 million in funding to help existing meat lockers upgrade their equipment and infrastructure.

Supporting the Mission of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

The Legislature continued to provide the resources that are necessary to help the Department achieve its goals to support Iowa's agriculture community. The Legislature made key investments in the state's foreign animal disease prevention, preparedness and response efforts to protect Iowa's livestock industry and continued to make a significant investment in the state's water quality and soil health initiatives.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

Commerce

Bottle Bill Changes and Help for Rural Pharmacies Highlight Work in Commerce Committee

This year the House Commerce Committee considered and passed over 20 bills. A significant amount of work went into the many bills the Commerce committee worked on, most had bipartisan support. The following are some highlights of the Commerce committee's work to encourage economic development and enhance the lives of Iowans.

Bottle bill reforms – The current bottle deposit and redemption system is not working well. One primary issue is the lack of redemption centers and viable convenient options for redeeming cans and bottles. This year the bottle bill reforms passed that make the bottle deposit and redemption system one that works for consumers. SF 2378 increasing the handling fee to encourage more redemption centers and also increased enforcement to ensure all parties follow the law.

PBM reforms – Pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) have historically been “middlemen” entities who would process prescription medication claims (for a fee) for insurance companies and plan sponsors (e.g. employers). The relationship between the drug manufacturers, PBMs, pharmacies, and doctors is complicated, and very few details are actually known. As healthcare costs continue to rise, the role of PBMs in rising healthcare costs and more specifically higher drug prices has been questioned. HF 2384 took a step towards helping rural pharmacies and reducing the increases to drug prices by prohibiting the practice of claw backs and adding transparency to the cost and reimbursement of drug prices.

(Contact: Ben Gentz, 1-3452)

Economic Growth

\$20 Million Available for Nonprofits Helping Iowans

Last week Gov. Reynolds announced a \$20 million investment to help nonprofit organizations in Iowa expand to meet the needs of more Iowans. The new Nonprofit Innovation Fund will provide a competitive grant opportunity to help nonprofit organizations make transformational investments in vertical infrastructure that will enable them to offer additional services or help more Iowans. Funding for this grant opportunity is made available through the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

Nonprofits are encouraged to apply with shovel ready projects that expand the number of services provided to Iowans and/or projects that increase the number of Iowans served by the nonprofit. Eligible expenses for infrastructure

projects include construction costs, acquisition, site development, engineering, and architectural services. The program provides awards up to \$3 million per project.

Applications will be accepted starting June 27th at iowagrants.gov. Grant recipients must have all funds obligated no later than December 31, 2024 and expended by June 30, 2026. For more information, visit iowaeda.com/nonprofit-innovation-fund/.

(Contact: Kristi Kious, 2-5290)

Education

House Republicans Continue Power Shift to Parents in 2022

When it comes to the decisions directly affecting students, policy makers at the state level too often decide in the best interest of education administrators instead of students and parents. That tendency began to change in January of 2021 when House Republican legislators John Landon and Garrett Gobble authored a bill to force politically motivated school board members and administrators to get back to 100% full time in-person learning.

That power shift from the administration building to parents continued in 2021 with the elimination of mask mandates and the mistitled “voluntary diversity plans.”

School mask mandates were prohibited in May of 2021. Despite overwhelming evidence that masks do virtually nothing to prevent the spread respiratory viruses like COVID-19, many school districts clung to this uninformed requirement. Governor Reynolds and the Republican-led legislature finally had enough and prohibited mask mandates on last day of the 2021 session freeing students to be maskless for the final days of the school. Students began the fall of 2021 without masks only to see an activist judge place an injunction on the mask mandate prohibition forcing students back into the pointless theater of mask wearing. Thankfully by the winter of 2022, the legal process had advanced to the point that districts could no longer require school building wide mask mandates and most districts stopped attempts to require masks.

Voluntary diversity plans prevented students in certain school districts from open-enrolling out due to the color of their skin. These plans were in place so school districts could maintain a certain minority to non-minority ratio regardless of the individual impacts on students and parents. Those plans were eliminated in 2021 returning enrollment power back to parents. Administrators and parents do not always have the same motivations or interests. When it comes to the parents and their own children, nobody defends the best interest of the student like their parents. Parents and students now have more control of where they attend school and school district leadership is forced to listen to these parents and students as the decision-making authority has shifted to families.

In 2022 one of the most impactful policy changes came on the session’s last day. It is a simple but significant policy change that continues the shift in the locus of power from school administrators to the parents.

Republican legislators and Governor Reynolds have eliminated the March 1 deadline for open enrollment requests. Starting immediately, parents and students can open enroll out of public school districts which no longer meet their needs – whatever those needs might entail. As long as the receiving school district has space and staff for the new student, that family can open enroll into a new school district at any point. Students and families are no longer trapped in districts that enact policies, use curriculum or otherwise ignore parental feedback. The burden of proof no longer falls on the parents and students to show why they’d like to leave a district, the burden of proof is on the school district to prove to families they deserve to educate that child.

Not all House Republican priorities made it to the Governor’s desk. It is disheartening approve House File 2577, a workable and specific law giving parents more information and decision-making authority regarding their public school district’s attempts to infuse the dogma of Critical Race Theory and the scapegoating and stereotyping inherent

in many of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Social Emotional Learning policies present in Iowa's schools and teaching training programs at Iowa's colleges and universities, did not make it to the Governor's desk. The ultimate goal of House Republicans through curriculum transparency legislation (HF 2577) is to provide families with a tool for accountability. Curriculum transparency battles politics in the classroom from both the left and the right and keeps the culture wars out of the classroom. It lets kids be kids and lets teachers be teachers. Left-wing political ideology masquerading as academic material cannot be dismissed.

Instead, House Republicans will continue fight for the widely agreed upon American values contained in the Declaration of Independence, the 14th Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 such as treating all Americans equally under the law.

HF 2577 makes school districts and teachers post the syllabus, textbooks, related core materials and a list of instructional materials that will be used in the student's classes. The school satisfies this requirement simply by providing the parent or guardian access to the school's classroom management software such as Canvas or Google Classroom. School's that do not have a classroom management software system will have until July 1, 2023 to get up to speed.

The House GOP plan gives teachers the opportunity to correct any oversights regarding the posting of instructional material and allows teachers the flexibility to post instructional material throughout the year as their lessons and material change. Lesson plans are not considered instructional material and do not have to be posted.

The district also will provide a list of school library books. Again, this can be satisfied by allowing parent or guardian access to the online library catalogue. If a school does not have an online catalogue, they have until 2025 to comply. Parents will have the ability to review the list of books and provide to the school any titles they do not want their own children to check out.

School districts must post the process for the review of educational materials and the reconsideration or removal of school library books prominently on their website so parents know exactly what they can and should do. If the parent disagrees with the school board's decision, or the school fails to take action on a complaint from a parent or guardian on either of the above, they can appeal to the State Board of Education.

None of these requirements places an undue burden on a school district or a teacher. But, if a teacher or a district decides to break the rules, there will be consequences. If it is found that a school is not being transparent and withholding information, the Department of Education has the ability to either impose conditions on their funding or withhold payment of funds. If the Department finds that a district is noncompliant, the department will allow the school 14 days to correct the violation and if they fail to do so, a civil penalty will be assessed against the district in an amount not less than \$500 and not more than \$5,000. The teacher who is not compliant will also be referred to the Board of Educational Examiners for potential sanctions on their license.

House Republicans will attempt to persuade other policy makers in the Statehouse to approve this plan next session.

(Contact: Jeff Mitchell, 1-5137)

Human Resources

House HHS Budget Provides Increase for Mental Health, Disability Providers

Recently, the House and Senate passed the Health and Human Services Budget for FY 2023 (House File 2578). Below is a list of highlights of the significant investments to advance access to mental health and support disability providers. This budget appropriates \$2.068 billion of state general fund (in total with federal money and other funds it is over \$6 billion) towards Medicaid, child care, child welfare, public health and aging and veteran services.

- Mental Health – The House has focused on expanding mental health workforce and access to beds for difficult to serve Iowans. This budget funds those priorities, along with the help of the Education budget, and also provides additional rate increases through Medicaid.
 - Provides \$1.5 million for psychiatric tiered rates so that hospitals are reimbursed based on the acuity of the patient and can receive the intensive psychiatric care that they need. This amounts to a \$4 million increase when combined with federal funds. This appropriation is within the range provided in the fiscal note for half a fiscal year.
 - Requires DHS to apply for a state plan amendment to cover multisystemic and functional family therapies to provide evidence-based treatments for youth that address a youth’s home and environment to reduce problematic behavior and divert the youth from out-of-home placements.
 - Provides \$1.28 million of state funding, and a total funding increase of \$3.4 million, to behavioral health intervention services.
 - Completely phases out the property tax payments to the MHDS Regions with a \$71 million standing appropriation.
 - Adds in HF 2245 to ensure that health insurers are not excluding mental health providers providing telehealth to Iowans simply because they are not physically located in Iowa.
 - Adds in HF 2529 to ensure that Iowa can expand psychiatric residencies in Iowa as soon as possible by requiring UIHC to apply for 12 residencies per year to be focused on training at state facilities, including the mental health institutes and Woodward Resource Center.
 - Also continues to add \$200,000 to the existing rural psychiatry residency program so they can continue to added residents each year.
 - Shifts funds from the autism support fund to Medicaid to provide a 7.5% increase to autism providers.
- Workforce for difficult to serve Iowans:
 - Intermediate Care Facilities for those with Intellectual Disabilities receive a total increase of \$3.6 million, and also require these funds to go directly to direct support professional wage increases.
 - Group care for child welfare – this budget provides increases to both shelter and QRTP care for children in foster care.
- Field Operations: Funds an additional 50 FTEs to reduce caseloads for child abuse.
- Health and Human Services Alignment – this bill creates a department of health and human services that will over the next year merge together the department of human services and the department of public health. The departments have presented the draft organizational chart and transition plan after receiving significant stakeholder feedback.
- Medicaid disenrollment – We continue to wait to see when President Biden will finally allow the federal public health emergency to end and the state can begin to disenroll ineligible individuals from our Medicaid rolls. This budget asks DHS to do this disenrollment as quickly as the federal government allows. Iowa’s

Medicaid enrollment sits around 800,000 and we know that at least 100,000 of those individuals should not be receiving free state health insurance.

- Adds in HF 488 to protect Iowans health information. This bill prohibits the auditor from having access to names and residential addresses of those with reportable diseases, prohibits the collection of names by IDPH for hospital data, and prohibits government employees from accessing personally identifiable health information for a reportable disease if the employee does not have confidentiality training.
- Provides \$500,000 to establish a more options for maternal support program that will focus on promoting healthy pregnancies and childbirth through nonprofits that provide pregnancy support services. This Division also requires DHS to study the potential to expand postpartum coverage over 60 days.
- Glenwood Resource Center closure:
 - Since we have last discussed the HHS Budget on the floor, the Governor has announced the closure of Glenwood Resource Center by July 2024. The legislature is committed to ensuring a smooth transition for all residents of Glenwood, and have been impressed with the efforts of DHS to make this happen.
 - This budget fully funds Glenwood and Woodward Resource Centers at the Governor’s request, as well as DHS Department-Wide duties line item that includes central office oversight of the state facilities.
 - Additionally, this budget allows for up to \$11 million to be transferred from the adoption subsidy to be used for the resource centers over the next year. This will enable DHS to offer retention bonuses to maintain staff and also increase what is needed at Woodward.

Over the next couple fiscal years, there will be a significant change in use of funds that will assist in building up community capacity. Residents at the Resource Centers get cost-based payment, and as they are shifted to the community, that will free up significant dollars within Medicaid to be used for HCBS rate increases.

In the meantime, the Governor has committed to using \$22 million of the 10% enhanced FMAP provided to HCBS to go towards rate increases. This means a \$3 per hour wage increase for direct care workers. The Governor has also committed to using these funds to reduce the Intellectual Disability Waiver wait list. We know that these funds will be a part of the base for future budgets, and we are committed to funding those as we get through this change.

This budget also provides a \$1.78 million appropriation to create a new home health rate structure that provides an incentive for providing care to rural Medicaid members. This amounts to a \$4.8 million increase when combined with federal funds.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Information Technology

House GOP Leads on Cybersecurity and Data Privacy

2021 set records new records for data breaches, by the end of September 2021, the number of breaches already exceeded the number of breaches in all of 2020. Industries targeted included manufacturing, utilities, healthcare, financial services, and government. These breaches impacted millions of people. Some of the major breaches from 2021 included Facebook, LinkedIn, Coinbase, Robinhood, T-Mobile, and Colonial Pipeline among others.

Iowans should be confident that their information is secure and proactive steps are being taken to secure their private information. All session, the Information Technology committee has been learning and gathering information on cybersecurity risks. The IT Committee heard from cybersecurity experts and even a first-hand account of a major cyber-attack at DMACC.

Some of the proposals to arise from these conversations include the following bills passed by the House included:

HF 2555 – Encourages businesses to develop a cybersecurity program framework and keep it updated with the latest recommendations. If the business is not following a nationally recognized framework, the scale and scope of their program must be appropriate with the maximum probable loss calculated for the business. Business who have and keep their cybersecurity frame work updated are eligible to use an affirmative defense if they are subject to a cybersecurity breach.

HF 2461 – Criminalizes the use of ransomware in cyber-attacks and sets penalties for those who violate the law.

HF 2288 – Adds costs associated with protecting against a cybersecurity event to the essential county and corporate purpose definitions. This would allow cities and counties, under their current constitutional caps, to use bond revenue to protect against cyber threats.

In addition, House Republicans also took the lead on consumer privacy and passed HF 2506 that establishes consumers rights over their personal data, including the ability to see what data a company has on them and deletion of any personal data they have provided the company. It also set parameters on how companies can handle and use the data they collect on consumers. Finally, HF 2506 sets penalties for businesses that violate the law and consumers privacy.

Unfortunately none of these bills made it to the Governor’s desk as they died in the Iowa Senate. House Republicans will continue to push for enhanced cybersecurity and better data privacy measure in the future.

(Contact: Ben Gentz, 1-3452)

Judiciary

House Judiciary and Public Safety Committees- Keeping Iowa from Becoming New York City

Turn on the news and you’ll hear stories from New York and California about criminals roaming the streets, not being held accountable for their actions, and terrorizing law-abiding citizens. In Iowa, that’s not the case, and one of those reasons is because of the strong focus on law and order from the House Judiciary and Public Safety Committees. These two committees work together to ensure bills sent to the Senate make Iowa a safer and better place to live.

Stopping Sexual Abuse and Sex Offenders

Multiple bills passed this year were aimed at stopping sex offenders from reoffending and ensuring victims of sexual abuse had strong protection.

House File 2079-In a case of sex abuse in 1st, 2nd, or 3rd degree a protective order will be issued, and the defendant must appear before a magistrate prior to their initial release. This provides additional protection for the victim before their abuser is released from jail prior to trial.

House File 2239-Rape shield laws protect a victim of sexual assault from being questioned about past sexual experiences while testifying. House File 2239 extends that protection to depositions and post-conviction relief. It will prevent a defendant from asking intrusive questions that would not be permitted in court testimony. The bill also

creates an exemption from hearsay rules of evidence allows a person who received a report of sexual abuse from a child or person with developmental delays to testify on the report instead of the victim.

Senate File 2363- extends the time a sex offender must remain on the registry before they can apply for a reduced sentence. Current law allows a tier I offender to be on the registry for two years and a tier II or III offender to be on the registry for five years before applying for a modification. Senate File 2363 requires tier I offenders to serve five years and their II or III to serve at least 10 years.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Both committees advanced bills to help curb drug and alcohol abuse. Some bills focused on the sellers of these products while others focused on the users.

House File 2462 makes penalties for the distribution of heroin the same as meth. The focus of this bill is on the seller to ensure they serve an appropriate sentence for selling a dangerous and deadly drug.

House File 2367-Updates from ODCP regarding the Iowa Drug Policy Council. The bill updates outdated language and adds two members to the council to include a police chief and the state public defender.

House File 2340-Allows for a city to declare a bar a public nuisance if there are incidences in or outside of the establishment including assaults, weapons use, etc. Under current law some actions outside of the bar don't permit ABD to revoke a liquor license. By declaring the bar a public nuisance, a judge can order reasonable actions to end the nuisance. These changes will help the bars and law enforcement stop disrupting and illegal behavior in the community.

(Contact: Amanda Wille, 1-5230)

Labor

Unemployment Rate Continues to Drop in Iowa

Iowa's unemployment rate continues to be below the national average. In April Iowa's unemployment rate stood at 3 percent while the national rate was 3.6 percent. As a comparison in March of 2020 just before the impacts of government imposed shutdowns cut the legs out from a healthy economy, Iowa's rate was at 2.6 percent while the national rate was 4.4 percent.

(Contact: Jeff Mitchell, 1-5137)

Natural Resources

Critics Misstate Impact of Enhanced Deer Population Control Legislation

Contrary to some press articles, Senate File 581 doesn't authorize for the first time the use of semi-automatic weapons/rifles to hunt deer. That permission has existed previously. What it does do is allow, only for the January antlerless deer season (held starting on January 11 through the second following Sunday), for the fuller use of available antlerless deer tags in that season and permit the use of necked ammo so that if smaller caliber rifles are used (such as .223) sufficient muzzle energy can be generated to provide for a humane kill of intended deer. According to the state's Legislative Service Agency Fiscal Division fiscal note on this legislation, an estimate 1,272 January antlerless deer tags will be used in the January antlerless deer season which occurs in the coldest aspect of most winters and at a time when the public is most likely to be indoors.

The primary reason for Senate File 581 was to improve deer population control by enabling any carryover of unfilled antlerless tags to be available in the special antlerless deer season that is conducted in mid-January of each year. Current law specifies that a special January antlerless season only occurs in a county if more than 100 or more antlerless tags were not filled in the normal gun/bow hunting season and that are listed in administrative rule [IAC 571.106./1(6)] which last year were--Allamakee, Appanoose, Decatur, Wayne, and Winneshiek; with pending rules for next January antlerless season proposes to add Monroe to that list. Effectively, this legislation supersedes prior administrative rules and allows unfilled antlerless deer tags of any county to be used in that county during the January antlerless season. A second manner in which the legislation seeks to help balance the state deer population is it directs the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to lower the cost of depredation permits to take deer causing property damage from \$15 to \$5 and requires such licenses to be issued and used in September, October, November and December.

The aspect of the bill that appears to generate controversy is that the measure expands the types of weapons and ammo that may be used in the January antlerless season with the language specifying—'A rifle with a barrel of at least 16-inches and firing centerfire ammunition propelling an expanding-type bullet with a maximum diameter no less than two-hundred twenty-three thousandths of an inch and no larger than five hundred thousandths of an inch with a published or calculate muzzle energy of five hundred-foot pounds or higher ...' This language is controversial to some because it allows .223 rifles, which is also typical of 'AR-15 style weapon'. In order to offset the small ammo size and to attain sufficient humane kill of deer, the legislation specifies both expanding bullets and sufficient muzzle velocity to deliver 500 foot-pounds of muzzle energy. To do this, ammo likely needs to be necked (not straight walled, and hence more propellant) to provide higher velocity and muzzle energy. While some recent press article have essentially warned-- '...Iowa okays semi-automatic guns for deer season..', that assertion is false, because current law doesn't outlaw semi-automatic rifles (current law specifies straight wall cartridge centerfire ammunition with expanding type bullet with a maximum diameter no smaller than .357" or larger than .50" delivering 5—foot-pounds of muzzle energy) and there are semi-automatic rifles that can use straight wall ammo that meets that those requirements.

The bill also has other hunting and fishing provisions. The legislation if enacted will increase the number of nonresident anysex deer licenses outside the 6,000 quota from 75 to 125 and specifies that the 50-increase are to be available for disabled veterans to participate in hunts hosted by an Iowa organization for that purpose. The measure further expands lifetime trout fishing license availability to a person who qualifies for a disabled veteran homestead credit under Iowa Code 425.15. The bill reduces the liquidated damage for taking an antlerless deer out of season from \$1,500 to \$500. And finally, the measure also expands the type of weapon a nonambulatory person can use to hunt deer to include any fire-arm weapon authorized by Administrative Code for any particular deer season.

(Contact: Lew Olson 1-3096)

State Government

Iowa Legislature Passes Protections Aimed at Outside Money Within Election Administration

Before adjourning for the end of the legislative session, the Iowa Legislature passed a vital provision in [House File 2589](#) protecting the conduct of fair and transparent elections in Iowa. An issue that has been discussed throughout the legislative session in the State Government Committee has been election integrity and one of the most important ways to ensure the integrity of elections is to eliminate the direct influence of outside private money to conduct elections.

In the 2020 elections, the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL), an left-leaning organization largely funded and partnered with Mark Zuckerberg, Google, and Facebook, spent over \$4,400,000 in Covid-19 Response Grant Programs in 63 of Iowa's counties. These donations were not to political campaigns or advertisements, but money directly given to election officials who oversee elections in Iowa. Zuckerberg donated \$350 million to CTCL in order to, in his

words, ensure “people are aware that the infrastructure is in place to make every vote count so they can accept the result of the election as legitimate.”

If the intent to spend that much money in local election infrastructure was to build trust in the election process, the effect was quite the opposite. Private funding used in the election process has only raised questions about potential influence of voter turnout, election outcomes, access to voter information, and influence of the large corporations who donated the money. While describing their work in a non-partisan fashion all three founders of CTCL were staff at the New Organizing Institute, a left-leaning organization that provided data, digital, and other trainings to progressive campaigns and organizers. The majority of counties that received grants from the CTCL voted for Joe Biden. The amounts of money per voter in these counties also skews towards counties that voted for Biden. Counties that voted for Biden got an average of \$4.41 per registered voter, compared to counties that supported Trump received an average of \$0.91 per registered voter. Polk County received \$6.01 per registered voter, Linn County \$4.63, and Johnson County received \$3.43 per registered voter.

Continuing the work House Republicans have done over the years to protect election integrity, Section 29 of House File 2589 prohibits the Secretary of State or any county auditor from accepting funding that is not lawfully appropriated public money from the federal, state, or local government for conduction elections. The prohibition includes accepting grants or gifts from private individuals for the purpose of conducting elections. County auditors are still allowed to accept the contribution of the use of a building as a polling location as long as it meets Iowa Code and Administrative Code requirements for such a use.

This new piece of legislation will be important as we are about to conduct primary elections on June 7 and the midterm general elections in November. Iowans deserve to know how their local elections are funded and conducted to have faith in election results. Iowa has strong election integrity laws including voter ID requirements, 100% paper ballots, mandatory audits of voting equipment and precinct results, and routine voter registration maintenance. This latest provision will ensure that outside influence does not pose a threat to the confidence in our secure elections.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Transportation

House GOP Backs Emergency Response Personnel

The Governor recently signed a common-sense bill – Senate File 551 allowing fire department and EMS responders to exceed the speed limit if they are responding to an emergency. When seconds matter in saving a life, this bill can make a difference.

Iowa’s brave volunteer firefighters and paramedics are called to emergencies when they are not at the station or near the ambulance. They are called in from home, their work, or any of the other many places they spend time with their family and friends. They then drive their personal vehicles to the station prior to going to the scene, and once they get in that firetruck or ambulance, they have the authority to drive over the speed limit.

During debate over this bill on the House floor, Democrats lambasted a change that allows firefighters and EMS responders to *reasonably* speed when responding to an emergency. Even with significant safeguards within the bill regarding emergency vehicle operations training, requiring the fire chief or chief of EMS to sign off on the driver responding to an emergency call, and requiring the court to determine if their speeding was reasonable – over half of the Iowa House Democrats voted against this common-sense bill.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Veterans Affairs

Governor to Consolidate Veteran-Focused Agencies

The following information was provided by Governor Reynolds on May 27th:

Governor Reynolds has announced the resignation of Steve Lukan, a U.S. Navy veteran who has served as Executive Director of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) for nearly five years. Lukan has almost 20 years of combined elected and professional service in state government and is leaving for employment in the private sector.

IDVA assists veterans and their family members with coordinating federal and state benefits and a wide variety of support services. Additionally, veterans also receive services from the Iowa Veterans Home (IVH), a state-owned and operated residential long-term care facility which currently operates as a separate state agency.

“I’m pleased to appoint Major Matthew Peterson, currently serving as Commandant of IVH, to Interim Executive Director of IDVA,” said Gov. Reynolds. “I look forward to exploring how IDVA and IVH can consolidate as one agency and one team, enabling the state to better coordinate the delivery of all services that support our veterans and their families.”

A retired U.S. Marine Major and 5th generation Iowan, Peterson has held the leadership position at IVH, one of the largest residential care facilities for veterans in the nation, since July 2021. In that time, he has become a registered certified nursing assistant, established an American Legion Post at IVH, and earned a 5-star rating from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) each month since becoming commandant. Over his 20-year career in the Marine Corps infantry, he served seven deployments and held a wide range of leadership positions spanning 30 countries and five continents. He retired from active duty in 2019.

“Major Peterson has demonstrated extraordinary leadership during his time at IVH and throughout his military career,” Gov. Reynolds said. “I am confident in his ability to oversee a newly combined agency and its team and ensure that Iowa’s veterans continue to receive the quality service they deserve.”

“I’m honored to be appointed to this position by Governor Reynolds,” Major Peterson stated. “Consolidating services into one agency would greatly benefit Iowa’s community of veterans and their families.”

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Ways & Means

Tax Credit to Businesses Offering Child Care to Employees Heads to Governor

Part of the Economic Development Budget sent to the Governor this session includes tax incentives for businesses offering child care to employees. The House has actually passed the bill multiple times, but it was never taken up by the Senate until it was included in House File 2564 (Economic Development Budget).

Division V of the budget bill creates a new employer child care tax credit. The credit is tied to the federal credit and is for an equal amount. The amount of the credit (both state and federal) equals 25 percent of the costs to provide the child care benefit up to \$150,000 per year. The credit is non-refundable but any excess may be carried forward for up to five tax years. An employer may only claim the Iowa credit if they also were eligible for the federal credit.

The child care employee benefits could include the following: building or rehabilitating an existing structure as a child care center for employee use, leasing a child care center, or paying the annual operating expenses of the child care center including training for the employees of the center.

Example: Company A spends \$1.0 million dollars to build a child care facility. Company A will receive a \$150,000 federal tax credit and a \$150,000 Iowa tax credit.

The aggregate amount of tax credits authorized is capped at \$2.0 million annually. To receive the credit, taxpayers apply to IEDA. The credits are first come, first served and are available to businesses, banks, credit unions, and insurance companies. The credit will be available starting January 2023.

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