

IOWA HOUSE REPUBLICANS

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Appropriations

FY 2027 Infrastructure Budget Makes Major Investments into Iowa Communities

Investing in Iowa's infrastructure through the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund is always a sign that a legislative session is coming to an end. That was the case as the 2026 session concluded on May 2, with the state committing \$267.5 million towards new and ongoing building projects across the state.

Three major commitments are the highlights of Senate File 2484. Leading this is the investment of \$10 million into the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Strategic Infrastructure Program. This funding helps match a grant from the federal Department of War to Iowa State University Research Park to construct a facility at the Park's BioCentury Research Farm in Boone. This will house large fermenters to be used for research and create new substances made with Iowa-grown products. The \$40 million project has the potential to create new uses for Iowa crops necessary for the defense of the nation and possibly create new industries in the state.

Improving public safety is another priority for Senate File 2484 with the creation of the Railroad Overpass and Underpass grant fund. In several Iowa communities, railroad tracks bisect towns which can lead to parts of a community being isolated from emergency services when a train is passing through or stopped. This program, created in the Department of Transportation, helps communities build new passageways for this critical service to be able to reach those in need. The bill is providing \$5 million a year for the next five years for this effort.

Iowa's strong commitment to protecting the nation is shown with the third major project funded in the bill. Iowa's lone flying Air National Guard Unit, the 185th Refueling Wing based in Sioux City, is limited by the length and condition of the Sioux City Airport's runway. Federal funding to renovate the runway is being sought this year in Congress. But the project will require local funding as well, and the RIF bill provides a \$10 million appropriation to show Iowa's commitment to maintaining the state's role in defending America.

The RIF bill provides funding for several building projects around the state. The University of Northern Iowa gets \$6 million for its Commons renovation project, which will house the university's civics education program. Repairing the roof on the Iowa School for the Deaf's Giangreco Hall receives a two-year, \$8 million appropriation. To help complete the renovation of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, the state will contribute \$1 million to finish the project.

The state is committing funding to support the construction of a new facility for young adults with significant intellectual and physical disabilities at On With Life's Polk City facility. On With Life has served as the state's de facto brain injury treatment facility, and this new facility will serve those Iowans who need 24-hour care for their needs. And the infrastructure bill provides \$7 million for facility improvements at the Newton Speedway.

The RIF budget also provides funding for two major public safety projects. The Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) receives \$3.7 million next year to build a firing range dedicated to ILEA's use. Currently, cadets' time on the firing line is determined by when the National Guard is not using the current firing range. By building its own facility,

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ILEA will be able to go to the range when it fits their schedule. This is the second project in as many years where the state has invested significant infrastructure funding to upgrade the state’s main law enforcement training facility.

Also included in the infrastructure spending plan is the final year of funding for the expansion of the State Medical Examiner’s office. This three-year, \$36 million project will increase the facility’s capacity to perform autopsies and other examinations while also putting the State Medical Examiner in a position to start offering training to prospective pathologists.

As has been the case over the past few years, the RIIF bill provides a sizeable investment to improve state parks and trails. Once again, the Department of Natural Resources is receiving \$5 million for state park maintenance and \$1.5 million for water trails and low head dams. The Department of Transportation is also receiving \$2.5 million for its Recreational Trails program.

In the Transportation field, the RIIF bill provides additional funding to Iowa’s airports. Both the Commercial Air Service Vertical Infrastructure program and the General Aviation Vertical Infrastructure programs received increases in funding for Fiscal Year 2027. The bill also increased funding for rapid transit programs, with \$1.6 million dedicated to matching federal grants received in the past year.

Funding for local improvement projects will again be provided through a variety of programs. The very popular Community Attractions and Tourism program will again receive \$10 million spread out across the state for local infrastructure projects. And the Destination Iowa Fund, which provides state resources for larger projects, also gets \$10 million for Fiscal Year 2027. Funding for Regional Sports Authorities is increased to \$1 million. And the Department of Natural Resources gets a new \$1 million appropriation to help smaller communities remove derelict buildings.

Overall, the FY 2027 RIIF budget will put \$267.5 million out to help improve Iowa communities and state facilities.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Agriculture

House GOP Aggressively Supports Freedom to Farm – Passes Two Right-to-Repair Bills

Farmers across Iowa worked with House Republicans to fix the harmful outcomes from regulatory “red tape” when it comes to their ability to work on and fix their own farm equipment. As technology has rapidly evolved in agriculture, it has also created an issue where farmers’ equipment literally stops in the field if an emissions “light” or indicator shows that the Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) system has an error. This technology has cost farmers thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours of down time. Two bills passed by the Iowa House supported Iowa farmers’ rights to repair their equipment. House Republicans passed HF 2529 to address these concerns. HF 2529 gives farmers and ranchers the ability to repair and alter the equipment that they own. HF 2529 requires manufacturers to provide the same diagnostic tools and software to owners that they give to authorized dealers. If an Iowan bought the tractor, that same Iowan should own the right to fix it. This bill lowers costs by allowing for independent and self-repair. By passing this bill, House Republicans protected the freedom to farm and proving—once again—that House Republicans have the backs of Iowa’s farm families.

A second bill, passed later in the session House File 2763 (RTRII), applies the Right-To-Repair to *all* agricultural equipment owned by our farmers, not just those impacting the DEF exhaust system. HF 2763 requires manufacturers to provide farmers and independent shops with the same diagnostic tools, software codes, and repair manuals given to authorized dealers. When a farmer has skills to complete their own repairs, they should be allowed to do so. Iowa

House Republicans stand strongly with the Iowa farmer to reduce their costs, save their time, and help the challenging farm economy.

Unfortunately, these bills did not make it through the Iowa Senate.

Led by House Republicans: \$319 Million NEW Dollars for Water Quality, Monitoring, Infrastructure, Field Practices

In 2013, Iowa's Nutrient Reduction Strategy (INRS) was passed into law. Under INRS, Iowa already invests around \$600 million per year of voluntary conservation and water quality programs, including both state funded (\$100 million) and federally funded (\$500 million) programs. The Iowa legislature this year passed significant new funding and programming to double down on improving water quality and building a healthier Iowa.

Under House File 2771, as a part of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Budget, Republicans are:

- (1) allocating an additional \$500,000 annually to water quality monitoring (totaling over \$5 million state-wide);
- (2) increasing annual funding for the Wastewater and Drinking Water Financial Assistance Program to over \$12 million. Combined with a one-time boost of \$8 million, Republicans are making \$20 million in grants available to Iowa communities for wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects;
- (3) creating the Rural Iowa Infrastructure Bank, providing \$10 million in 1% low-interest loans specifically for small and medium-sized communities to modernize their water systems without breaking the local budget;
- (4) providing a one-time, \$25M investment to Central Iowa Water Works to double their nitrate removal capacity within three years;
- (5) launching the Greater Des Moines Watershed Program (\$3.72M annually) to fund scalable "edge-of-field" practices like cover crops and wetlands. This treats water upstream reducing the burden on systems downstream;
- (6) continue to allocate roughly \$2.79 annually to the Urban Infrastructure Program that provides grants for urban conservation projects in Iowa communities like stormwater wetlands.

(Contact: Mindy Larsen 1-3096)

Commerce

Note to Rob Sand - Legislature Already Cracked Down on PBM's

Recently, Democrat gubernatorial candidate Rob Sand tweeted the following on May 11th and 12th:



Rob Sand  @RobSandIA · May 10



Right now, insiders - not lowans - are choosing what pharmacy people can use, prioritizing profits over lowans' health, convenience, and costs. That's wrong.

As governor, I'll take on PBMs and work to make sure lowans don't have to choose between medication and their next meal.



Rob Sand  @RobSandIA · May 11



Iowans deserve a fair shake when it comes to how much your medication costs. PBMs are preventing that. Make me your governor, and I'll work to make your medication more affordable. Thanks to Greenwood Pharmacy and Dr. Rob Nichols for hosting me in Waterloo.

Sand may want to pay better attention to what happens in the legislature. Despite a full year to study, Sand appears to have missed the legislature passing and the Governor signing significant Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) reform in 2025. Senate File 383 prohibited many unfair practices of pharmacy benefit managers and empowered patients to choose their pharmacy, including the following:

- Prohibits a PBM or insurer from discriminating against a pharmacy if the pharmacy is acting within its license and all laws
- Prohibits the removal of pharmacy choice or imposing any monetary advantages or penalties that result in removing pharmacy choice (including unnecessary specialty drug designations and requiring use of mail order pharmacies)
- Prohibits additional cost-sharing on the insured based on where they choose to have their prescription filled
- Requires all rebates to be returned to the employee plan sponsor
- Requires any amount paid by the insured for the prescription drug to be applied to their deductible
- Requires PBMs to reimburse retail pharmacies (not large national chains and those with only mail order) based on acquisition cost plus a dispensing fee of \$10.68.
- Prohibits spread pricing
- Requires pharmacies have an appeals process if not reimbursed at acquisition cost
- Requires regular reporting from the PBMs to the Insurance Division
- Requires a study of Pharmacy Services Administrative Organizations and wholesales by IID with a report due by January 1, 2026.

Not only did Sand miss that the bill was passed a year ago, he missed that it has been held up in the courts system with few provisions able to be enforced till the litigation is completed. The case is currently in front of the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals with oral arguments expected this summer or fall, and a potential decision before the end of 2026.

Sand can pretend to be tough on PBM's, but the legislature has already done it.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Economic Growth

Iowa Lands Corteva's New Seed Headquarters

This week Governor Kim Reynolds announced that Corteva will locate the global headquarters of Vylor, its future independent seed and genetics company, in Johnston, Iowa, following its planned separation later this year. The announcement builds on Iowa's continued investment in its biosciences ecosystem, which has seen growth in research activity, venture capital investment, and specialized talent.

Headquartered at Corteva's existing Johnston campus, Vylor will build on Iowa's deep agricultural roots while advancing next-generation seed genetics and biotechnology. The location places the company at the center of one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world. Communities across Greater Des Moines and central Iowa welcomed the announcement, highlighting the region's quality of life, affordability, strong schools, and vibrant communities as key assets.

Education

House Republicans Pass Education Bills to Support Parents, Improve Classroom Discipline and get Back to Basics

This year, House Republicans focused education policy on bills that protect students, protect teachers, promote civics and U.S. Government, cut red tape, and protect school choice. Unfortunately, not every bill made it through the Senate. Here are key bills that made it to the Governor.

HF 2230: This bill requires clinical experiences for all students that include 15 practicum hours focused on differentiation of instruction and support for special populations including English Language Learners (ELL), special education, instructional implementation and Individualized Education Program (IEP) progress monitoring and requires students in teacher prep programs to take an assessment to measure mastery and give the chance for remediation. Why is this a big deal? If students coming out of teacher prep programs don't have any idea how to teach special education students or handle an IEP, how is the teacher supposed to be successful and how the students are supposed to thrive? Special education students are in the general education classrooms as well and it is a disservice to our teacher prep students to fail to prepare them adequately.

HF 2231: This bill establishes a Seal of Civics Excellence Program to recognize students who excel in Civics. Iowans believe in the American dream and believe civics in school is an important subject. It is time to celebrate both again.

SF 274: This requires cash to be accepted at high school sporting events. Of all the issues legislators hear about, you would be surprised at how many complaints come in from across the state about the frustration of not being able to use cash at local school events. Community pride in one's school is a big deal and this makes sure whoever wants to walk into a game can pay cash instead of having to deal with using a card or buying online before they even arrive.

SF 2231: This bill does multiple things. First, when a preschool community provider requests to partner with a public school, the school must partner with them. Second, it cleans up code sections that would be unconstitutional related to religious classes and texts being able to be accessed through public schools. Third, it solidifies freedom of expression for students in schools. With the passage of Education Savings Accounts (ESAs), some public schools have refused to partner, or no longer partner with, a nonpublic community preschool provider for questionable reasons. That seems petty and only hurts the students and families. House Republicans also became aware of students not being able to create Turning Point USA chapters in their schools or being treated differently because of their beliefs, again, that is unacceptable when so many school district claim to be "inclusive." Now they actually will be.

HF 2337: This bill makes it a simple misdemeanor to falsely represent oneself as possessing an academic degree or credentials for the purpose of obtaining employment or other personal gain. It also makes it an aggravated misdemeanor to falsely represent oneself as possessing a professional or occupational license under code chapter 272C. We clearly saw the need for this bill when "not doctor" Ian Roberts was caught in a giant lie while working as superintendent of Des Moines Public Schools.

HF 2493: This bill gives parents more choice and flexibility when they send their child to preschool and kindergarten. Right now, in order to qualify for free Statewide Voluntary Preschool, a child must be 4. Then, if they attend preschool, they must go to Kindergarten the next year. What if, after a year of preschool, a five-year-old child isn't ready to attend kindergarten? Before the bill that five year old's family may be on the hook to pay for the second year of preschool if they are not ready to attend Kindergarten, or, if the family decided to wait to send their child to preschool if they weren't ready and happened to be five years old, then they would still have to pay. Preschool is there to prepare kids for kindergarten and parents know best when it comes to kindergarten readiness.

HF 2539: This bill repeals outdated and unnecessary code sections and programs within Higher Education Code. The main reason Republicans started looking at repealing these code sections is 37 year old Regents Minority and Women Educators Enhancement Program. The program was meant to increase the number of women and minorities in the faculty at Iowa's public universities. Like many programs based on demographic traits instead of merit, there is no clear definition of success or any measurable end goal. Instead, only an imprecise aspiration for more jobs for individuals who display a preferred demographic trait.

However, the numbers clearly show the program has achieved what it was meant to achieve and therefore is no longer necessary. Concerns about backsliding are almost laughable as that would require Iowa's clearly left leaning public universities to reduce the number of women and minorities in faculty positions and replace them with white men. No one truly believes that is a realistic possibility. The program has fulfilled its mission and is no longer necessary. The bill also repeals the College Bound Program for Minorities for the same reasons. After Republicans initially proposed repealing the Minority and Women Educators Enhancement Program, the Regents requested the additional repeals such as the College Bound Program.

HF 2724: This bill allows the Board of Educational Examiners to create endorsements in fine arts, mathematics, and science. This allows those with a bachelor's degree to be granted endorsements in those areas. Certain areas of Iowa have teacher shortages that can be filled with people who are willing to step in, but due to not having the time or money to start over and go back to school to become a teacher, are unable to step in. This changes that.

HF 2670: Public K-12 education should prioritize universal skills—literacy, math, critical thinking, scientific method, and factual history—over ideological activism. Unfortunately, "Wokeness" has crept into K-12 curricula over the last several decades. It was called multiculturalism and global perspectives then it became political correctness then critical race theory and DEI and gender ideology. Regardless of the label it doesn't belong in Iowa's public K-12 schools. HF 2670 eliminates destructive woke requirements from education requirements and gets back to basics. It adds social studies as part of the statewide assessments, removes language that forces teachers to act as mental health professionals instead of teaching and adds physical fitness and nutrition to Iowa's health curriculum. Certain agriculture classes can be counted towards math courses, and it strengthens the enforcement mechanisms the Department of Education has on cracking down on divisive concepts and violations of free speech.

HF 2754: This bill protects and strengthens school choice regardless of who serves as Iowa's governor in the future. For charter schools, Teacher Salary Supplement money now follows the student to the charter schools, creates the framework for a revolving loan fund (no money appropriated), ensures charter school teachers are eligible for IPERS, makes sure charter school students have access to concurrent enrollment, extracurricular sports and activities, and Drivers Ed, and adds UNI as a charter school authorizer to give more access and flexibility for charter schools who want to begin accreditation. For nonpublic schools, it adds a second ESA application period for the second half of the school year, adds protections to prevent accreditor hopping, and states that private community-based providers of preschool may apply directly to the Dept. of Ed. instead of having to partner with a public school. For homeschool families, it strikes the requirement that Independent Private Instruction (IPI) families can't enroll more than four unrelated students or charge tuition, it makes sure that homeschool diplomas are accepted the same way a public school diploma is, and a homeschool parent has the authority to execute any document by law to verify the placement of their child in homeschool, their grades, etc. For open enrollment, it allows the Dept. of Ed. to obtain information on the reasons for open enrollment denials. A parent's right to direct the education of their child is constitutionally protected. House Republicans have worked very hard at making sure Iowa families can choose the best educational setting for their child.

SF 273: This bill simply updates the definition of grooming behavior in order to catch the creepy predatory teachers before something worse happens. The Board of Educational Examiners can then punish these teachers and get them out of the classroom prior to abuse or assault. House Republicans have been leading the charge for years in getting bad actors out of Iowa schools.

SF 2428: This is the classroom behavior bill which protects teachers and students. Classroom behavior and teacher empowerment is something the House GOP has been working on for years. Teachers subjected to physical abuse is unacceptable. But just as unacceptable is teachers afraid to punish students and students feeling physically unsafe in

their classroom and unable to learn due to one (or more) disruptive students. This bill requires the Department of Ed. to provide training on what least restrictive environment actually means, what Free Appropriate Public Education actually means and the actual requirements of IEPs. Teachers need to know what is in their student's IEP and 504 plans so they can understand what that student needs. A major piece of this bill is allowing a teacher to exclude a student from their classroom and the prevention of that student returning until certain steps happen. It also grants teachers a leave of absence with full pay for physical injury.

SF 2218: This bill combined an education employment verification bill, a bill ensuring employers aren't providing false social security numbers to employees bill, and the Governor's immigration bill. That's what passed both chambers, now on to what only passed the House.

HF 2244: This bill made sure that students in 7th and 8th grade have instruction in U.S. Government and Civics while expanding the required ½ unit of U.S. Government and Civics to a full unit. House Republicans have been pushing for these changes for at least three years.

HF 2510: This bill creates clearly defined unambiguous social studies standards. Iowa recently received a failing grade in social studies standards prompting the Iowa Dept. of Ed. to rewrite the standards. After reviewing these new standards, House Republicans determined they still fell short.

HF 2363: This bill allows districts to deny open enrollment if they don't have room in their ELL program. Right now, districts have to enroll an ELL student even if they don't have the room or teachers needed to serve the student. That becomes a huge financial and personnel burden, particularly when there is a large influx of students into a single district or school building who do not speak English.

HF 2752: This bill made updates to the Teach Iowa Scholar program by removing the requirement that students be in the top 25% of their teacher prep program and says of the funds, 20% will go to special education teachers and 50% goes to rural school district teachers. This would have removed barriers and helped our teachers and schools where they needed it, but alas, not this year.

HF 2492: This bill would've added Career and Technical Education instructors as a position that can be shared at a weighting of two pupils. This would've given schools flexibility more flexibility while filling needed positions.

HF 2546: This bill would've put in place a system in place to accurately and quickly track the education data needed to see where students are and what funding is going where.

HF 2684: This bill made funding more flexible for school districts. Most Iowans don't realize that for every ESA student within a public school district, the public school still receives categorical funds for them, but it stays in those categoricals. This bill would allow that money go to be used for general fund purposes.

HF 2705: This bill would've empowered school board members to be able to have access to information in their schools, as well as be able to observe a classroom. It seems strange that a school board member cannot observe a classroom or get access to key information when it is that board member's responsibility to set a budget and along school district policy.

HF 2686: This bill would've made it easier to obtain a transitional coaching authorization to help our schools get coaches in place quicker. Right now, it can take too long for a coach to be on the job when a school needs someone to step in quickly.

The Higher Education Committee focused on bills that would continue to reform the ivory towers of higher education.

SF 2168: This bill was originally an Iowa Workforce Development bill that went through the Labor and Workforce committees, but House GOPers added our own workforce priorities. As a result, the bill focuses on practical workforce development, expanding training opportunities, and administrative efficiency in Iowa's labor system. Additionally, it

expands support for apprenticeships, skilled trades training, and related initiatives. This bill is important for Iowa jobs and Iowa students. This is the only one that passed both chambers.

HF 2245: This bill would've reformed the process for how the Regent University presidents are selected. House Republicans have heard feedback that changes were needed in the presidential selection process. The bill aimed to standardize and increase transparency/accountability in searches while protecting candidate privacy during the process.

HF 2362: This bill would've limited the amount the Board of Regents can increase their tuition by the average of the increases in the higher education index in the previous three years. It also allowed students to lock in their tuition as freshman for the next four years. Unfortunately, The Senate didn't see the bill as a priority.

HF 2487: This bill would've required the Board of Regents to conduct a review of the general education and core curriculum requirements and identify any required courses that include DEI and Critical Race Theory (CRT). The Board, in its discretion, would've directed the institution to eliminate the course requirement.

HF 2513: This bill would've prevented Regents institutions, community colleges, and private colleges from entering into employment contracts with an individual who is the holder of a H-1B visa *and* a citizen of a foreign adversary or a country designated as a state sponsor of terrorism. House Republicans saw this as simple common sense that Iowa parents don't want their children receiving instruction from professors infiltrating our education systems or teaching our students to hate America. This would've taken a step at combating anti-American sentiments on our campuses.

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Health and Human Services

Legislature Passes Bills to Support Life, Democrats Confuse Elective Abortions with Miscarriage

This session, the legislature passed multiple bills to support pregnant women in need who want to bring their child into the world and help foster parents, as well as prevent harmful black-market abortion pills from being sent into Iowa.

- **Foster Parent Training** – SF 2096 strikes specific hour training requirements from code for foster parent licensure and renewal, removing unnecessary barriers to Iowans opening their homes to foster children in need. Instead, this bill allows DHHS to determine the need for training based on the experience and training of the individual foster parent and the needs of the child being placed in their care.
- **Finding Family** – HF 1003 allows the court to determine if placement with a foster parent that has had the child for the 9 months prior to the dispositional hearing is in the best interest of the child rather than placement with a relative or fictive kin. This bill helps children that have only known one home since birth from being removed to live with an unknown relative found after strong relationships have formed with their foster family.
- **Foster Parent Address** – HF 2526 prohibits DHHS and their agents from providing the unredacted address of a foster parent to the biological parent of the child in their care, providing protections from potential harassment.
- **MOMs Funding** - The FY27 Health and Human Services budget expanded funding for grants under the more options for maternal support program. This program helps pregnant women in need who want to bring their child into this world as well as helps with fatherhood engagement in the lives of their children.

Additionally, House File 2788 made many common-sense changes to Iowa's elective abortion laws. This bill restores in-person medical care as the standard: a physical exam, a real conversation about risks, and screening for coercion and abuse before any chemical abortion. Importantly, this bill ensures that women receive abortion-inducing drugs in a health care setting, rather than through the mail, and provides civil penalties to those that intentionally mail in these abortion-inducing drugs against the law and risk the lives of women.

Unfortunately, Democrats unanimously opposed this legislation that makes clear for all women and health care providers in Iowa that miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy treatment are not abortions, and that only elective terminations of pregnancy that end the life of an unborn child are covered by Iowa's abortion laws. Democrats intentionally misconstrue the choice to end the life of a child in the womb with caring for a mother going through the extremely hard situation of losing her unborn child from natural causes. Throughout the entire bill process, this bill incorporated every single concern from the medical community to ensure that Iowa women and children were protected.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Labor

House Labor Committee Accomplishments

Senate File 2086 allows schools to offer junior fire fighter programs to juniors and seniors where upon completion the student will be allowed to sit for the Firefighter I certification testing. This is a good bill particularly for rural areas who need more fire fighters.

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Local Government

House Republicans Approve Bills to Curb Waste, Increase Transparency

The 2026 legislative session has come to an end and the Local Government Committee reported over twenty bills out of committee. Sixteen of those bills were passed by the full House of Representatives and eight bills cleared both chambers and were sent to the Governor's desk for signing into law.

This year, property tax reform has been one of the central topics of discussion this session and a top priority of House Republicans, and for good reason. While income and sales taxes are more noticeable to Iowans when they look at their paystubs or receipts, one in seven tax dollars in the United States is levied by a local government with property taxes being the largest source. As of the 2022 Census of Local Governments, Iowa has 1,826 local governments composed of counties, municipalities, school districts, townships, and special districts that have tax levying authority that contribute directly to Iowans' property taxes.

Fighting Taxpayer Waste

This year the committee took a look at areas where waste could be eliminated and efficiencies found while limiting the steady creep of government overreach. The committee advanced several bills fighting wasteful spending at the local level while also providing transparency of elected officials. House File 2638 focused on Iowa's public records laws and aims to increase transparency around how and why government employees leave their positions. Across Iowa there have been high profile cases of public employees receiving large settlements following leaving their position and very few details about the situation. Taxpayers, who are on the hook for such costly settlements, have a right to access information about how those institutions are managed and how employees are held accountable. The language of HF 2638, ended up being amended to HF 2490 that has been sent to the Governor's desk for signing.

House File 2522 was signed into law in April. A technical cleanup of a law enacted in 2024 to ensure that insurance policies can be filed in place of a bond for required public officials. These insurance policies that are now being written and provided will be written on behalf of the appropriate governmental body and paid out to the body in the case of damages caused by the misconduct of the public official.

Another bill passed by the House that attempted to address an issue that has continued to occur in local communities and cause undue financial costs and confusion about the representation of their elected officials. House File 2520 limits petitions to call for special elections for both county and city elected officials if the governing body chooses to appoint a replacement to serve a term with 6 months or less remaining. By allowing this provision to become law it would have created more stability in the office that had been vacated to serve the members of that community. Special elections to fill such short vacancies traditionally see significant lower turnout and raise the expenses of the local government.

Transparency and Accountability

As mentioned above, there are over 1,800 local governments in Iowa. Many of these local governments are largely low profile and can fly under the radar of their citizens. The committee passed several bills to address the issue of transparency of these governmental bodies.

As mentioned earlier, legislation has been sent to provide increased transparency around the financial details and timelines of when government employees leave their positions. Another area that the local government committee tackled was accountability of local governments is local civil rights reforms. Senate File 579 was signed into law earlier this year. Before the enactment of SF 579 cities that have had a population of 29,000 were required to create and maintain a local civil rights agency or commission. This was intended to help ensure the fair treatment of all Iowans. However, in practice this requirement has created confusion and an uneven patchwork of processes for everyone involved. Cities are no longer required to maintain a local civil rights commission if they wish to discontinue their use since many of these local commissions already contract with the Iowa Office of Civil Rights to handle complaints. This change provides cities the opportunity to review and evaluate what will best serve their communities and citizens. Another change to the law is that local commissions are required to notify all parties that if after a year a filed complaint has not been resolved any party has the right to request the complaint be transferred to the Iowa Office of Civil Rights. This requirement is crucial to ensuring that complaints across Iowa are being reviewed in a timely manner and providing resolution.

Enacted in 2025, Iowa law now requires newly elected or appointed officials to complete an Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB) provided or approved course of training on their responsibilities of open meeting and public information laws. Too often when cases came before IPIB the defense given is that the official or government body wasn't aware of their legal requirements. The law requires that the training is made available and allows IPIB to approve acceptable courses of training offered by governmental bodies or other entities. This year, the Administration and Regulation budget appropriated an increase of \$29,000 to provide more staff to assist with the implantation of these trainings.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Natural Resources

Hydrogen Bill Protects Landowner Rights, Adds Guardrails for Mining

Senate File 2490 ensures fair payment for farmers and landowners in the emerging market for hydrogen in Iowa. Prior to 2026, Iowa law has been silent on landowner protections and regulatory guardrails for companies wishing to engage in mining for geological hydrogen or other minerals. Recently hydrogen pools have been found in our state, and issues have begun to arise. House Republicans worked to pass SF 2490 updating Chapter 458A to treat hydrogen like oil and gas, requiring companies to provide mandatory discovery alerts and reporting. Under current law (pre-2026), there were no landowner protections for hydrogen production. Your neighbor could drill and find hydrogen under your land and never even alert you, let alone pay you. SF 2490 establishes a 25% pooling standard. If your land is part of a production unit, you are legally entitled to your fair share of royalties—even if the physical well is on a neighbor's property. Most nitrogen fertilizer (anhydrous ammonia) is produced using hydrogen. Currently, that hydrogen comes from volatile natural gas markets, often overseas. SF 2490 paves the way for "geological hydrogen" to be harvested right here in Iowa, lowering input costs for farmers. SF 2490 also requires surface damage agreements, ensuring farmers have a say in where equipment goes and how their soil is protected. The bill also imposes a 6% severance tax

on extracted resources. This ensures that as natural resources are used, the state and local communities receive a direct benefit. Iowa House Republicans have shown a commitment to landowner rights. With that in mind, Republicans added elements to the bill to do the following: Ensure that no one can come onto your property to survey or drill on your land without your permission. Additionally, once a landowner says no to an agreement, or to being solicited, a company can no longer continue to harass them to reconsider.

(Contact: Mindy Larsen 1-3096)

Public Safety

House Republicans Crack Down on Repeat Offenders, Child Predators and Woke Prosecutors

One of main reasons people choose to call Iowa is that it is a safe place to live and raise a family. Every year that feels a little bit more at risk with the ridiculous toleration of violent criminal activity in places like Minneapolis and Chicago. These places are a short car ride from the Iowa border.

Just last November a 26-year-old woman was doused in gasoline and set on fire on the L in Chicago by violent repeat criminal with 72 prior arrests. Yet somehow, he was out on the street.

Then in April five people were shot, including three University of Iowa students, during a violent brawl on the popular University of Iowa Ped Mall. The suspect is a 17-year-old nonstudent.

This kind of violence is on its way here if we don't act. That's why House Republicans pursued a tough on crime agenda this session. Our approach? If you can't get on the right track after 2 strikes, then on that third strike: you're out. Dangerous repeat criminals should not be allowed back onto Iowa's streets.

Repeat Felons Will Finally Face Real Consequences

For years, Iowa's criminal justice system has let repeat offenders cycle through without meaningful punishment. HF 2542 changes that. Under the bill, anyone convicted of a Class C or D felony who has two prior felony convictions, in Iowa or another state, will be classified as a habitual offender. The bill increases the mandatory minimum sentence from three years to seven years, the maximum sentence from 15 years to 20, and ensures earned time cannot reduce that seven-year minimum. This bill ensures repeat offenders will no longer get endless chances, while law abiding Iowans pay the price. House File 2542 passed with overwhelming bi-partisan support and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

Child Predators Serve Their Sentence

With the signing of HF 2515, Iowa has removed the option for judges to issue deferred or suspended sentences to individuals convicted of sexually exploiting a minor under Iowa Code 728.12. Now, anyone found guilty of sexually exploiting a child in Iowa will face mandatory prison time, no exceptions. The Governor signed this legislation into law on April 9, 2026.

Cleaning up Legal Loopholes

SF 2114 clears up any ambiguity in Iowa's intimidation with a dangerous weapon law. The statute now clearly states that discharging a weapon at a person or at an occupied building, vehicle, airplane, or vessel qualifies as intimidation with a dangerous weapon. Prosecutors get cleaner statutory language and offenders face consequences for their actions.

Reevaluating Insanity Acquittal Hearings

When someone is acquitted by reason of insanity, courts must decide whether they remain a danger to the public. HF 2571 places clear guidelines on that process. Judges are now required to weigh a wide range of factors in commitment hearings, and the law specifically prohibits courts from releasing someone simply because they haven't acted out recently, recognizing that the structured institutional environment can mask how dangerous a person truly is.

Warrant Clinics Undermine the Rule of Law

HF 2787 prohibits "warrant resolution clinics," prearranged events where people with outstanding arrest warrants can show up and resolve them without being arrested. These events send the wrong message. Warrants exist for a reason. This bill bans the use of public funds or facilities for these events and sets penalties for violations.

Helping Iowans Evaluate Their Judges

HF 2719 attempted to bring transparency to Iowa's courtrooms. The bill would have required public reporting of objective performance data for district court judges, including how often they set bond below schedule, released defendants on their own recognizance, sentenced below prosecutorial recommendations, granted deferred judgments, or had their decision reversed on appeal. Iowans have a right to know what decisions judges are making and what that means for public safety in Iowa. Unfortunately, this bill died in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Protecting Domestic Abuse Victims Around the Clock

When a domestic abuser is arrested on a Friday night, the victim shouldn't have to spend the entire weekend unprotected waiting for a judge on Monday morning to issue a protective order. HF 523 fixes that gap. Under the new law, peace officers can file emergency protective orders on behalf of victims after hours and on weekends. The orders are effective for 72 hours, covering the time before a suspect's first court date. Governor Reynolds signed it into law on May 6. Victims deserve protection no matter the hour, and this law helps ensure they get it.

Strong Bail Standards Set

SF 2399 brings more accountability to Iowa's pretrial release system. For too long, offenders have been released back onto the streets with little explanation and minimal scrutiny. This bill requires judges to publicly justify decisions when setting bail below established bond schedules in serious cases involving forcible felonies, and other violent crimes. It also restricts "promise to appear" releases to low-level, nonviolent, nondrug misdemeanor cases, preventing repeat and dangerous offenders from simply walking out the door after arrest.

Kratom: A Deadly Drug

Kratom is being sold in Iowa gas stations and vape shops marketed as a natural supplement, but it is linked to addiction, overdose, and even death. HF 2133 would have designated kratom, and its synthetic equivalents as a Schedule I controlled substance under Iowa law. People found possessing kratom would have faced escalating criminal penalties, including felony charges for repeat offenses. The House passed the bill 69-26 on March 18, 2026. Unfortunately, the Senate did not take up the measure, and it did not make it to the Governor's desk this session. The House put Iowa families first and will continue to do so.

(Contact: Amanda Wille I-5230)

State Government

Licensing Reforms Help Rural Iowa Health Care

The 2026 legislative session has come to an end and the State Government Committee moved twenty-nine pieces of legislation out of the House of Representatives. Of those bills twenty-four have been sent to the Governor to be signed into law. These bills have ranged from providing working Iowans relief from burdensome licensure barriers, strengthening Iowa's election and campaign laws, and reviewing law to find areas to improve government efficiency and service.

Increasing Professional and Employment Opportunities

House Republicans worked this year to find areas to improve employment and professional opportunities for Iowans. In 2025, House Republicans advanced a new law to provide state employees paid parental leave. The law provided mothers with up to four weeks of paid leave the year following the birth of their child. The law also provides two weeks for the father and in case of adoption, adoptive parents are entitled to four weeks of leave. Following the enactment of the new law, a technical fix needed to be enacted to ensure that all state employees were entitled to leave, regardless of the employees' federal Family Medical Leave Act status.

Two pieces of legislation to provide more freedom and remove licensure barriers for professionals to work in Iowa or to live in Iowa and practice in border states are heading to the Governor's desk to be signed into law. [House File 2498](#), is focused on improving access to specialized healthcare by making it easier for podiatrists to practice across state lines. Iowa would join the Interstate Podiatric Medical Licensure Compact, an agreement among participating states that allows licensed podiatrists to work in multiple states without needing to obtain a separate license in each one. Instead, providers who meet a shared set of standards can apply for compact privileges, streamlining what has traditionally been a time-consuming and repetitive licensing process. At the same time, the bill maintains important safeguards. Each participating state, including Iowa, still retains the authority to regulate and discipline providers practicing within its borders. This ensures that while access is expanded, accountability and professional standards are not compromised. The compact also establishes uniform eligibility requirements, meaning that only qualified providers can participate. HF 2498 addresses gaps in access to care, particularly in rural and underserved areas of Iowa where specialists can be harder to find. Allowing out-of-state podiatrists from other compact states to practice in Iowa and vice versa simplifies the process for podiatrists to practice across state lines. The compact will go into effect once four states enact the legislation. If enacted, Iowa will be the second state to do so (Maryland has enacted it) and would be involved in the rulemaking of the compact.

As with podiatrists, [Senate File 2139](#), is a licensure compact for athletic trainers. Similar to the podiatrists licensure compact, SF 2139 allows more freedom to practice across state lines while providing safeguards for Iowa to regulate and discipline practitioners. If enacted, Iowa would be the seventh state to enact the compact and would activate the interstate compact. States that have already enacted the athletic trainer compact include South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. Additionally, Missouri and Minnesota are considering the legislation.

Strengthening Iowa's Election and Campaign Laws

[House File 2501](#) was signed into law this year to address several issues that have arisen after election cycles. The bill restores that the filing and challenging process for city and school officials are conducted by county auditors. Currently, if there is a challenge to the validity of a school board candidate's nomination papers the complaint is filed to the school board secretary and then considered by the school board president, secretary, and one other member of the board. By moving these procedures back to the county auditor's office, suspicion of impropriety is eliminated and keeps all election related processes with the county's election commissioners.

The legislation also strikes a provision in code that allows voters to vote on election day without providing their identification. Under current law, a registered voter who arrives at their election precinct without acceptable identification is allowed to have another registered voter of that precinct attest to their eligibility to cast a ballot. HF 2501 eliminates this attestation portion of law, which undermines the integrity of Iowa's strong voter ID laws. The enactment of this piece does not prevent an eligible voter from voting. A registered voter without ID would still be allowed to cast a provisional ballot on election day and cure the ballot by providing their identification to the county auditor before the official canvass of votes. This measure simply ensures that all voters provide verification of their identity before casting a ballot.

Another bill passed by House Republicans was [HF 2609](#), which would have provided transparency and accountability for campaign material and advertisements that use artificial intelligence to create or manipulate media. With the proliferation of AI platforms and services more and more media is artificially created or manipulated. When it comes to Iowa's elections and campaigns it is important that the material being used by campaigns is transparent and not fake. The proposed legislation would have required any campaign material that has been intentionally manipulated with the use of any digital technology to create realistic, but false images, audio, or video of an individual to have a prominent

label that contains “THIS CONTENT GENERATED USING SYNTHETIC MEDIA”. These materials would include “deep-fake” videos or images of candidates, AI-generated images, or altered audio recordings.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

Transportation

English Proficiency Requirement, Citizenship Verification, English-Only Driver’s Tests Among Bills Approved in Transportation Committee

Improving road safety was a major focus by the House Transportation Committee during its busy 2027 session. This focus, along with other transportation-related measures, put several bills on Governor Reynolds’ desk for her consideration.

The committee’s work began with a multi-bill effort to ensure those operating on the roads understand the rules of the road and the directions given to motorists by being able to understand the English language. Across the nation, there have been a series of deadly accidents caused by a commercial vehicle being driven by someone who is unable to understand English. Iowans demanded action to prevent that from occurring here, and the House Transportation Committee responded.

Senate File 2426 takes several steps to reduce the possibility of these types of horrendous accidents from happening in Iowa. First, the bill would require those applying for or renewing a commercial driver’s license to demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency in order to get their license. If a person cannot meet this standard, commercial carriers are prohibited from employing them in Iowa.

If a commercial driver is stopped by law enforcement in Iowa and is found to not demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency, they can be charged with a crime and prevented from driving in Iowa. A commercial carrier who employs such a driver can be fined \$10,000 per instance and prohibited from having their vehicles on Iowa roads. In Senate File 2187, the General Assembly adopted a requirement that the Department of Transportation verify a person’s citizenship or immigrant status when they are applying for or renewing a driver’s license or identification card. While other states like Minnesota hand out driver’s licenses to illegal immigrants, Iowa is ensuring that the people getting licenses in this state are here legally.

And the House tried to go one step further by passing legislation that would have required all driver’s tests to be given in only English. That makes sense, since English is the official language of the state of Iowa. Unfortunately, the Iowa Senate did not take up House File 2102.

Another bill to improve road safety was a bipartisan effort to require drug testing of a state employee when they driving a state vehicle is involved in an accident causing serious injury or death. Surprisingly, this isn’t already required. But a near-unanimous House believed that it should be, as they passed House File 788. Again, the Iowa Senate did not take up this common-sense piece of legislation.

The Transportation Committee also took up an issue that many Iowans have been asking for consideration over a number of years - the speed limit on two-lane roads. This year was the year for action, as the House approved Senate File 378 which increases the speed limit to 60 miles per hour on two-lane roads. The change still allows local governments to set a speed limit under 60 mph on a secondary road when safety issues requires it.

The Transportation Committee also attempted to tackle several issues involving the use of technology. The House passed language that would have set rules for the use of license plate reader cameras by governments. These laws would have included new provisions protecting the civil rights of Iowans. Unfortunately, agreement on the changes could not be reached with the Iowa Senate.

The growing use of “geo-fencing” (reverse location information) to determine the location of Iowans was also examined by the Transportation Committee. The issue rose to prominence in 2023 when the Iowa Department of Public Safety used this technology to identify certain student athletes at the University of Iowa and Iowa State University who were engaging in sports gambling. The Committee unanimously approved a bill that limited the use of this technology and required warrants to be obtained. The bill, House File 2677, was not considered by the full House. The Committee also amended Iowa’s auto sales law to make it easier for Iowans to purchase a car from an out of state online dealer, like Carvana. House File 2485 made several changes to how certain documents can be transmitted, which enables these transactions to be done in Iowa.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Veterans Affairs

Legislature Supports Veterans in 91st General Assembly

This General Assembly, the legislature had the following bills signed by the Governor to help Iowa’s veterans, with one bill (SF93) awaiting signature after passing both chambers in 2026:

- **Free Tuition** - House File 2491 provides free tuition to a regent school for veterans with a permanent service-connected disability rating of 100%. There is no limit on the number of degrees a veteran can receive, as long as they have been accepted into the program. The veteran must have exhausted all other federal financial assistance.
- **County Commissions of Veterans Affairs** - HF250 comes from the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs to update a legislative report to be based on the fiscal year, rather than calendar year, and to provide oversight over the training of county executive directors and administrators by the commandant of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, Senate File 93 allows national guard members and reservists to serve on the county commission of veterans affairs.
- **Disabled Veteran Hunting** - HF885 allows disabled veterans able to receive one any sex deer hunting license during any firearm deer hunting season using the method of take allowed during that season. This bill also increases the number of nonresident wild turkey hunting licenses for those that served in the military and are disabled from 25 to 75.
- **Modification of National Guard Service Scholarship Program** – HF118 modifies the national guard service scholarship program in Iowa. It establishes that scholarship awards cannot exceed the difference between the tuition rate at the institution attended by the national guard member and any financial aid received under specified federal programs. The bill also removes the provision that eligibility and scholarship determinations cannot be based on a national guard member’s unit or drill location.
- **National Guard Service Professional Qualification Scholarship Program** – HF117 creates the National Guard Service Professional Qualification Scholarship Program, administered by the college student aid commission. This program is designed for Iowa National Guard members who are enrolled in educational programs leading to approved credentials. Eligible individuals must be residents of Iowa, have completed initial active-duty training, and maintain satisfactory academic progress. The scholarship awards will cover the total cost of the educational program, and the adjutant general will certify eligibility and award amounts. The bill also allows for the carryover of unspent funds to the next fiscal year for this purpose.
- **Veterans Transfer into Law Enforcement** – HF 901 allows military veterans with military police experience and former federal law enforcement officers to become certified law enforcement officers in Iowa without completing the usual training program. To qualify, veterans must have served at least four years and have recent military police training, while former federal officers must have four years of service and equivalent training. They need to submit proof of their service and training. The law enforcement council will review

applications and can approve candidates for a special program or suggest other training if needed. The council will also publish an annual report on the number of certified veterans and federal.

- **Lifetime Fur Harvester License for Disabled Veterans** – SF253 proposes to include provisions for issuing a lifetime fur harvester license to residents of Iowa who are disabled veterans or were prisoners of war during their military service. The bill specifies that these veterans can obtain the license upon payment of a fee established by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Furthermore, the DNR is tasked with preparing an application for this license, while the Department of Veterans Affairs will assist in verifying the applicants' status.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Ways & Means

Constitutional Amendment Protecting Income Tax Cuts Heads to Voters

This session House GOP passed Senate Joint Resolution 11 on a party line vote- Republicans in support with Democrats opposed. Under this proposed constitutional amendment, passage of any bill that increases the individual or corporate income tax rate would require passage by at least two-thirds of members of the House and Senate. This requirement does not apply to taxes imposed by local governments. Thus, if future Democrats decide to follow through with threats to undo Iowa's flat tax put in place by the biggest income tax in Iowa history—it would take a super majority.

Additionally, under this amendment, passage of any bill that establishes a new tax on any type of income would also require the super majority vote. This means when Democrats undoubtedly try to get around the super majority requirement, they will be blocked and the hard earned money of Iowans remains safe.

The concept will go to a vote of the people on the November 2026 ballot and if passed, would amend Iowa's constitution. This would protect generations of Iowans to come from massive income tax increases or new taxes.

Property Tax Reform Reaches Governor's Desk

It took all session—but a bill that saves Iowa property taxpayers over \$4.0 billion in the next six years. The bill puts hard caps on city and county general levies so that they cannot increase their revenue by more than two percent year over year while still allowing them flexibility within their variable levies to pay for insurance, benefits, and debt service.

Senate File 2472 converts the current homestead credit into an exemption and then increases it to an exemption of 10 percent up to \$20,000 of a home's value. That means big savings for property tax payers.

The bill sets up a way for Iowans to save for a home by creating First Home Iowa Accounts. These accounts work like the successful Iowa 529 Education accounts and will provide a way for future generations of Iowans, along with their families members to help save for their first home. This is small step to keeping young Iowans, and family members, close to home.

Finally, the state general fund is going to buy down the school foundation levy currently at \$5.40 to \$5.00. That's immediate property tax relief for every homeowner. Iowa House Republicans delivered on the property tax relief goals they made at the beginning of this session and crafted a bill that changed the trajectory of property taxes for generations to come.

New Vape and Pouch Taxes to Fund Pediatric Cancer Research

Senate File 2480 will head to the governor's desk and impose an alternative nicotine product (pouch) tax of \$0.05 per container containing up to 20 units and a proportionate tax at the same rate on each unit in excess of 20 units. It also imposes a vapor product tax of \$0.05 per milliliter of a solution containing nicotine or a nicotine analog and a proportionate tax at the same rate on any fractions of a milliliter.

What will the state do with the new taxes generated by pouches and vapes? Beginning in FY 28 and thereafter, the first \$3.0 million in tax revenue from these products will be appropriated for pediatric cancer research at the University of Iowa. All session House Republicans fought for a funding source that would be reliable and significant in order to fund pediatric cancer research. Legislators heard from cancer patients and their families on how damaging using adult cancer solutions on children was and how more research was needed. Now these families will have research dollars dedicated to their concerns.

New Fees on Wiring Money Support Combatting Human Trafficking, Building More Prison Space

House File 2750 was passed by the House this session and relates to fees for wire transmissions. The bill applied to wire transmissions of money to or from abroad. The bill required the businesses doing the transfers to collect a fee as follows:

- \$5 for each wire transmission up to and including \$500
- 2 percent on any amount more than \$500.

Ten percent of the fees collected are to be remitted to the Office to Combat Human Trafficking established in code section 80.45. Seventy percent of the fees go to a prison fund and 20 percent go to school safety infrastructure. This is estimated to generate between \$3.7 million and \$5.4 million annually to the human trafficking office for their efforts in fighting human trafficking. Unfortunately, this bill died in the Senate.

(Contact: Kristi Kiouss 2-5290)