IOWA HOUSE REPUBLICANS

July 23, 2026 IowaHouseRepublicans.com

Inside This Issue:

Appropriations

Closed Door Meetings in Iowa City Add to the List of Questions about the School District's Financial Crisis

On July 9, Cedar Rapids television station KCRG reported that the Iowa City school board had met in closed session twelve times in the previous four months. The board met using the exception to Iowa's open meetings law in Iowa Code section 21.5 (i) allowing a closed meeting to evaluate an employee's professional competency. KCRG reported that in the previous year, the board only met once behind closed doors for this purpose and on that occasion, they identified the subject of the meeting - then Superintendent Matt Degner. But this year, the board has not disclosed who was being evaluated during the numerous closed meetings.

KCRG pointed out that the exception in section 21.5 (i) requires the employee being reviewed to request the meeting be closed. When the station made an open records request to the Iowa City Schools asking who had requested that the meetings be closed to the public, the board cancelled three additionally scheduled closed sessions. District staff have yet to provide the requested information to KCRG and would not confirm that the records even exist.

The lack of candor from the school board and district administrators as to what is actually being discussed in these closed sessions just adds to the suspicions of a growing number of parents and taxpayers in the Iowa City school district. It adds to the long list of district problems that have been uncovered since January's disclosure of a multi-million dollar internal loan that district staff had made without the required approval by the school board. Among these (which have not been answered by district administrators or the school board) are:

Why did the district promote its Director of Technology & Innovation, Adam Kurth, to Chief Financial Officer in 2023? Kurth resigned in November 2025, just before the district's financial woes became public.

Why was the district subject to a federal tax lien for failing to pay federal payroll and excise taxes on time? Because of this, the Iowa City Schools had to pay over half a million dollars in penalties in 2024 and 2025.

Why was the Iowa City Schools so delinquent in completing the annually-required audits? The lack of timely audits prevented many of the district's financial problems from being discovered by the public.

Did the district follow Iowa Code section 11.6 (6) and request an extension for their delinquent FY 2023, FY 2024, and FY 2025 audits? And if they did, was it granted by State Auditor Rob Sand and what was the rationale for him blessing their tardiness? Sand has not been shy about calling out others for failing to file their audits on time. Why did the Iowa City School District get preferential treatment?

Why did school administrators tell the Iowa City school board that the district's bond rating had been "temporarily withdrawn" when these administrators knew the District had lost its bond rating in 2024 due to the failure to file its audit on time?

Why did school administrators make multiple loans amongst the district's various funds without getting approval from the school board, as required by state law? In addition to the $10 million loan last fall, the FY 2024 audit revealed that $38 million of internal loans were made without the Board's approval or knowledge. And since the audit for FY 2025 has yet to be completed, no one yet knows how much was shuttled around during that year.

How did the district overspend its capital and construction funds in FY 2024 by $19.5 million? Why did the district have to divert funds from its general fund to make a required bond payment in June of this year? And what is the status of the District's current $100 million building plan, which was supposedly put under review this spring? The school board committed the District's SAVE funding out to Fiscal Year 2039 to pay for these projects.

Why, over the past decade, has the district used general fund dollars to supplement its student activity fund when state law has very strict limits on how this can be done? According to the Cedar Rapids Gazette, the district had "illegally subsidized" extracurricular activities like sports teams and music programs with general fund dollars for a number of years.

Why did the district fail to comply with directives from the State Budget Review Committee to provide monthly reports to the SBRC on the district's financial position? The state board had required the district to provide these reports after the district was found to have run a negative fund balance in 2024. Those reports were not submitted.

How did district administrators and the school board fail to account for rising personnel costs? In the FY 2024 audit, auditors found that there was no reconciliation between the district's human resources and payroll departments to ensure employee contracts had been properly entered into the district's payroll system. This spring it was noted that the district's FY 2026 personnel costs had risen 9 percent, when district administrators told the board that they would only go up 2.5 percent, even after numerous additional hires for the school year.

What sort of training did the Iowa City school board receive to effectively oversee the district's books? Board members have said they underwent training provided by the Iowa School Board Association. It's hard to say this was adequate considering the failure of the board to identify or act upon the issues that were occurring.

Why did the school board call 12 closed door meetings to review employee performance without providing notice that the employee in question was requesting the meeting? Was the board actually reviewing the competency of staff or instead discussing the fiscal disaster without the prying eyes of parents and the public?

Local taxpayers are asking for answers, but getting nothing from school board members or school administrators (many of whom have left the Iowa City schools for other positions within the state). Other Iowans may start demanding answers if it appears that their tax dollars will have to be used to bail out such incompetent behavior in Iowa City.

State Revenue for June Comes In Higher

Fiscal Year 2026 came to an end with the state seeing increased revenue for the month of June, according to the Legislative Services Agency. Through the end of June, the state has collected $8.0908 billion in net receipts. That is a decline of 9.8 percent when compared to Fiscal Year 2025. This puts the year end number close to what the Revenue Estimating Conference had projected in March, when they forecast a 9.5 percent decline due to implementation of the 2024 income tax reduction law.

Personal income tax – With the implementation of the 2024 tax reduction law completed in Fiscal Year 2026, personal income tax collections were expected to be lower this year. For the year, personal income tax collections were 16.4 percent lower than the Fiscal Year 2025. This is a slightly larger decline than what the REC had forecasted in March, when they anticipated personal income tax payments to drop by 12.9 percent for the year.

Sales and use tax – Sales and use tax collections were higher in June. For the year so far, sales and use tax receipts grew by 6.2 percent over Fiscal Year 2025. This is higher than the Revenue Estimating Conference's prediction of a 4.0 percent growth for the year.

Corporate income tax – Changes in the tax rate and the continued fluidity produced by the pass-through entity tax impacted corporate tax collections for the year. While June collections were higher compared to last year, the overall total for this category is smaller than last year. Corporate income tax collections are 21.1 percent lower than FY 2025. But this figure is a smaller decline than what the REC projected in March.

Refunds – Another category being impacted by the full implementation of the 2024 income tax reduction is in the amount of refunds paid out by the state. With tax tables lowered, Iowans paid less in personal income tax and thus had less to be refunded to them. Through June, the amount of refunds paid by the state has fallen by 12.8 percent. This is much larger decline than the REC had forecasted in March, when they expected refunds to decline by just 2.8 percent. While we have now reached the calendar end of the fiscal year, the state's books on Fiscal Year 2026 do not officially close until the end of August. During this time, revenue and refunds that should be counted as part of FY 2026 will be accounted for. Final numbers will be released when the Revenue Estimating Conference meets this fall.

Casino Tax Revenue Exceeds Revenue Estimating Conference Projection

Casino tax payments during Fiscal Year 2026 exceeded the state Revenue Estimating Conference's forecast for the year. For the month, the state collected just over $26 million in casino tax. This figure was slightly higher than the $25.9 million collected from casinos in June 2025. June was the third straight month that casino gaming tax collections had exceeded the previous year's figure.

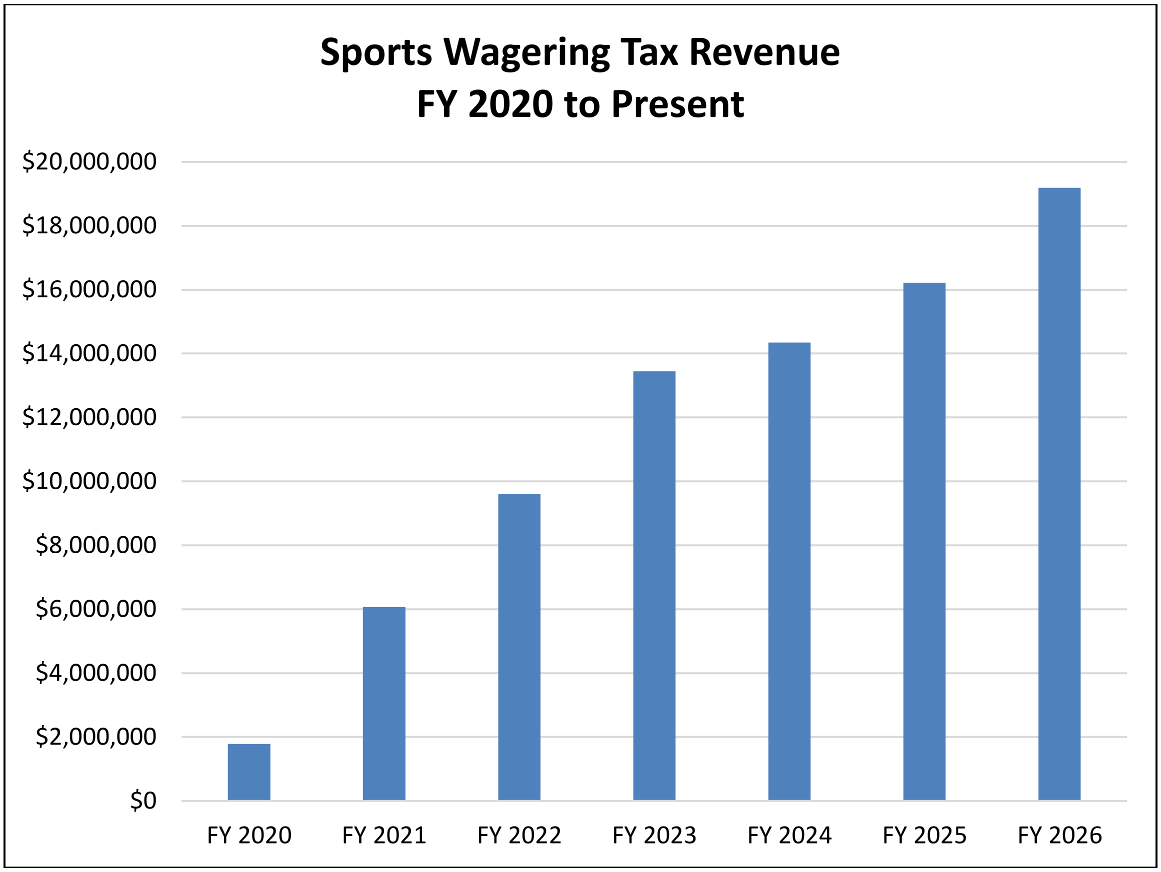
For Fiscal Year 2026, the state took in $312.55 million in casino gaming tax revenue. This is $1.9 million less than the state collected in FY 2025. The reduction was due to the continued phaseout of taxing promotional play. This change was expected to reduce tax gaming tax revenue by over $5 million in FY 2026.

The year-end number did exceed the Revenue Estimating Conference's projection from this March, when the panel expected the state to collect $308.0 million in gaming tax payments in FY 2026. And the actual total also blew away the REC forecast from March 2025, which was used to put together the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund budget. Then, the three-member panel projected gaming tax revenue would be just $286.5 million in Fiscal Year 2026.

Sports wagering tax revenue dropped slightly in June, but total collections again exceeded the previous year. In June, the state's 6.75 percent tax on casino sports wagering profits collected $1.107 million. This was lower than June 2025's figure of $1.285 million.

Through the end of June, the state had collected $19.188 million in sports wagering taxes. There had been $2.867 billion wagered through Iowa casinos, which generated $284.5 million in net receipts for those facilities. It is on that income that the sports wagering tax is assessed, not on actual bets.

The FY 2026 total is an increase of almost $3 million over the Fiscal Year 2025 total of $16.214 million. The growth in tax collections - 18.33 percent rise in FY 26 - is greater growth than what the state experienced in FY 2025 (+11.3%) or FY 2024 (+6.73%). Below is a chart which shows the rise in sports wagering tax collections since sports betting was legalized in Fiscal Year 2020:



(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Commerce

Iowa Insurance Division Fraud Bureau Stops $2.28 million in Scams in 6 Months

The Iowa Insurance Division provided the following information on July 2, 2026.

Since January 1, 2026, the Iowa Insurance Division's Fraud Bureau and Senior Financial Exploitation Investigators have achieved the following:

- 211 investigations opened across 96 Iowa communities.
- $77.9 million in reported losses investigated.
- More than $2.28 million stopped in its tracks before reaching scammers.
- $27,721 directly recovered for victims.
- Millions in assets seized for the purpose of victim restitution, including:
    - $3.58 million in cryptocurrency
    - $1.5 million in real estate
    - $300,000 in vehicles

How to Report Fraud

State officials emphasize that early reporting is the single most critical factor in fighting back. It drastically increases the likelihood that investigators can interrupt fraudulent transactions, freeze illegal transfers, preserve vital evidence, and potentially recover stolen funds.

If you or a loved one believe you have been targeted by a scam, report it immediately. For free scam prevention resources or to file a report, visit IowaFraudFighters.gov.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Economic Growth

Iowa Celebrates Ameria250 with Art Throughout the Summer

Last week, the Iowa Arts Council, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, awarded more than $77,000 in grants to support projects celebrating America's history and culture across Iowa. Awards include:

- A full-stage performance of Aaron Copland's opera "This Tender Land: An Iowa Tribute," a snapshot of Midwest farm life during the Great Depression, presented by the Wartburg Community Symphony with the Wartburg Opera Workshop in Waverly.
- The inaugural Folk Art Fair at Living History Farms in Urbandale, featuring folk artists and craftsmen from across the state.
- Iowa Dance Collective's celebration of American dancer Isadora Duncan in Fairfield.
- Reflections on the Constitution, a visual art and theatre performance at Bluff Strokes Art Center in Dubuque.
- Declarations, a site-specific public art exhibition taking place throughout central and southwest Iowa.

The Hoyt Sherman Place Foundation in Des Moines also received a National Endowment for the Arts grant to present a free outdoor concert by the 34th Army Band of the Iowa National Guard featuring patriotic, classical and popular American music, along with educational activities for children and contextual commentary on music.

(Contact: Kristi Kious 2-5290)

Education

Community-Based Providers can now Apply for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program

The Iowa Department of Education has released the 2026-27 Community-Based Provider application for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) for Four-Year Old Children.

The purpose of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program is to provide Iowa's four-year-old children with a high-quality foundation for future learning by expanding access to preschool opportunities. Approved Community-Based Providers will contribute to Iowa's statewide effort to ensure children and families have access to high-quality early learning options within their local communities.

Eligible providers interested in becoming an approved SWVPP Community-Based Provider are encouraged to review the four foundational requirements within **IowaGrants**. Applicants must demonstrate readiness to implement a high-quality preschool program, including:

- Employing an appropriately licensed preschool teacher

- Providing an indoor and outdoor learning environment in alignment with approved program standards
- Implementing the required SmartTeach GOLD® Assessment System
- Maintaining a student information system to meet state enrollment and reporting requirements

House File 2754 established a new opportunity for eligible community-based providers to apply directly to the Department to provide the SWVPP program. Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, approved providers may operate an independent SWVPP program while meeting state requirements for high-quality preschool programming, accountability and reporting. The legislation also directs the State Board of Education to establish requirements for provider readiness, data collection and professional development to support successful program implementation.

To assist potential applicants, two informational webinars will be held on July 28 at 1 p.m. and July 29 at 10 a.m. An additional webinar on July 30 at 3 p.m. will offer an opportunity for applicants to ask questions.

The application period closes on Aug. 21 at 4:30 p.m. Applications must be submitted through IowaGrants by the application deadline. Interested providers are encouraged to review all application requirements before submitting their application.

Additional information, such as the funding opportunity, registration for the webinar and instructions for applying through IowaGrants, is available on the **Department's Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program website**. Questions regarding the application process may be directed to Marcie Lentsch at **marcie.lentsch@iowa.gov**. Questions regarding IowaGrants may be directed to Amy Stegeman at **amy.stegeman@iowa.gov**.

The Department looks forward to partnering with community-based providers to expand high-quality preschool opportunities for Iowa's youngest learners and their families.
(Info from Iowa Department of Education)

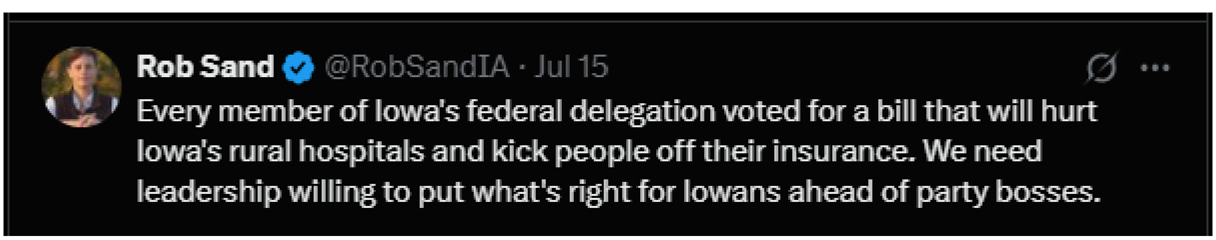
(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Health and Human Services

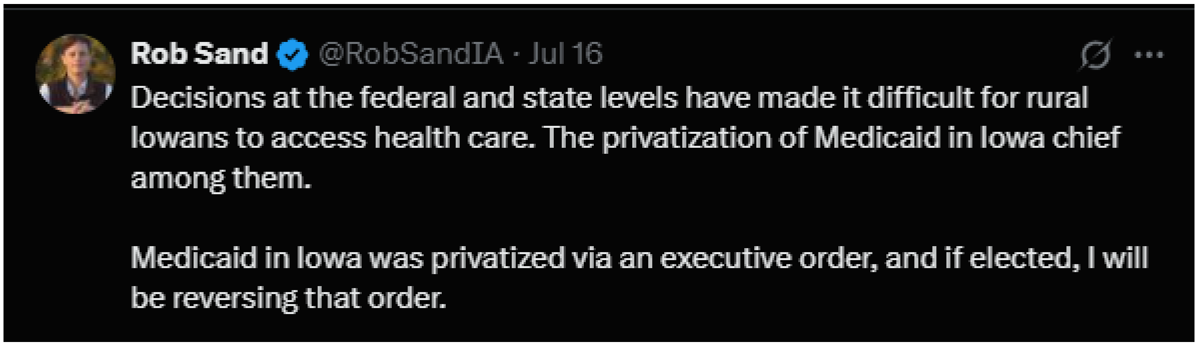
Rob Sand's Medicaid Contradictions Will Cost Iowa's Hospitals

In addition to the fabrications by Democrats and falsehoods not corrected by the media about Medicaid changes in the One Big Beautiful Bill (can be found here), Democrat candidate for governor Rob Sand doesn't appear to have even a basic understanding of fundamental principles of the Iowa Medicaid program.

On one day, Rob Sand will push fearmongering talking points that the OBBB will be a disaster to rural hospitals:



And literally the next day, Rob Sand will say he is going to repeal Medicaid managed care in Iowa.



Sand continues to consistently push this message with tweets as recent as July 22nd saying he will "reverse Medicaid privatization."

The irony is that hospital state directed payments – the very thing that Rob Sand is saying were cut in the OBBB – can only exist in states with Medicaid managed care. The federal regulations regarding hospital state directed payments ONLY show up in the managed care federal regulation chapter – 42 C.F.R. 438. **If Iowa were to repeal Medicaid managed care, as he says he will do if elected Governor, Iowa's hospitals will lose $1.08 billion annually.**

Another hypocritical aspect of Democrats lies about OBBB regarding Medicaid – every single Democrat in the Iowa House (May 13, 2025 vote on HF1049) and Senate (May 14, 2025 vote on HF1049) voted AGAINST codifying Iowa's hospital directed program into Iowa law, jeopardizing the very thing they publicly bash in OBBB! All Democrats didn't just oppose codifying the program, but also voted unanimously against legislative involvement in any decision that reduces Iowa's hospitals ability to receive over $1 billion in these funds.

Of course, the "media" will continue to perpetuate every Democrat talking point without fact checking a single claim, but working Iowans and taxpayers know the long-term benefits OBBB has to their pocketbooks and will only help their rural communities.

Iowa Legislature Prioritizes Rural Health Care

As rural populations age and decrease, providing health care requires unique solutions to attract health care workforce and ensure a stable business model. House Republicans not only focus on helping Iowa's rural communities thrive but also ensuring access to quality health care in all corners of the state.

Iowa has been awarded $209 million from the One Big Beautiful Bill in the first year of a five-year grant program, with over $1 billion expected to come to the state to help with rural health care access. Iowa's Rural Health Transformation Plan is titled Healthy Hometowns and has 5 initiatives, with a major initiative being Combat Cancer: Prevent and Treat. The cancer initiative will invest $183 million to increase screening access, University of Iowa Cancer analyses, cancer hubs, and radon mitigation. This website includes all information about Iowa's RHTP and includes an interactive dashboard to show where all funds have been distributed in the first year.

In addition to the $209 million being invested this year, the legislature has passed many bills this general assembly focused on rural health care. Below are some of those bills:

- **Medical Residencies** - House File 2782, the FY 27 HHS Budget, provides $9.3 million in one-time funds as well as $1.5 million of ongoing funds for start-up grants for medical residencies located outside of Johnson County and that are not family medicine.
- **University of Iowa Health Care** – HF 516 focuses our state institution and medical school on growing the physician workforce for the entire state. This bill requires the University of Iowa medical school and dental school to have at least 80% of their students be residents of Iowa, as well as priority admission to residents of Iowa who apply to these programs. This bill also requires specific questions regarding upbringing and intent to practice in Iowa by applicants for these programs as well as residency programs at

UIHC. This bill requires an annual report by UI regarding the same schools and UIHC medical residencies demographic information.

  - This bill requires the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics to offer an interview for the medical residencies of some of the most-needed specialties in Iowa to those with an Iowa connection.
  - This bill codifies requirements that were placed into session law in 2019 in House File 532. Additionally, it adds fellowships to the requirement that UIHC prioritize Iowans.
    - Requires medical residencies at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinic to give priority to applicants that have an Iowa connection (resident of Iowa, went to undergrad in Iowa, or medical school in Iowa).
    - Requires primary care residencies (family medicine, OB, psych, and internal medicine) at UIHC to provide the opportunity to participate in a rural rotation to expose those medical residents to rural areas of Iowa.
- **Prior Authorizations and Certificate of Need** – HF 2635 makes the following changes to insurance and health care providers relationships, as well as certificate of need laws.
  - Allows insurers to use AI for an initial prior auth review request, except for prior auth for medical necessity denials
  - Provides timelines for audits in private insurance and requires insurers to negotiate with providers
  - Prohibits private insurance from imposing a financial penalty, reimbursement reduction, administrative fee, or terminating participation in network based on the health care provider's referral to an out-of-network health care provider
  - Requires all prior auths to be submitted electronically starting July 1, 2027
  - Prohibits private insurance from denying or downgrading a request for prior auth unless a qualified reviewer or clinical peer within the same specialty makes the decision and a written statement is provided with specific reasons and coverage criteria.
  - Prohibits private insurance and Medicaid from requiring prior authorization on cancer-related screenings and life-threatening conditions
  - Increases the threshold to apply for a certificate of need for a new health service/equipment and removes some services from needing CON. Iowa's Rural Health Transformation Plan application included some of these changes to CON.
- **EMS –** SF 2472 allows counties to double the amount of funds collected to go toward emergency medical services.
- **Subacute -** House File 2543 makes the following changes based on the subacute mental health facility interim committee:
  - Removes the 10-day limit
  - Requires the development of a treatment plan within 24 hours of admission in a subacute facility
  - Speeds up current law on prior authorization response times in Medicaid for subacute
  - Establishes a PMIC bed tracking system
  - Requires DHHS and DIAL to review rules to remove barriers to subacute care to ensure they are less stringent than the mental health institutes
  - Requires DHHS to review the state's capability to establish subacute mental health services and additional inpatient services at Independence MHI
- **Direct Primary Care** – HF 2434 prohibits a health insurer from denying a covered benefit or applying higher cost sharing for a covered benefit solely because there was a referral made by a primary care provider not in-network with the insurer.
- **UIHC Noncompetes** – HF 2254 prohibits noncompete agreements for physicians, ARNPs, PAs, pharmacists and nurses at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.
- **Governor Health Care Bill** – HF 972 came from the Governor to do the following:
  - Require DHHS to request federal approval for a health care hub-and-spoke partnership funding model to establish regional collaboration between health care providers in rural areas
  - Consolidated five health care loan repayment programs into one called the Health Care Professional Incentive Program within DHHS that will award loan forgiveness or bonuses based on high-need health care professions in shortage areas. Provides for transition of funds to continue to support those with existing awards.

    - Repeal existing residency and fellowship programs, with transition provisions, and converts those programs to the Medicaid graduate medical education efforts. The Governor has said that this will create a projected 115 new residency slots at our 14 training hospitals and will bring 460 new physicians to Iowa in four years.
    - Eliminates the Health Facilities Council and replaces it with DHHS as the decision maker regarding certificate of need
    - Requires DHHS to bid out the Iowa Health Information Network
- **Loan Forgiveness** – SF 647 consolidated health care loan forgiveness programs into one program and increased funding from $4.2 million to almost $8 million.
- **Medical Licensing** – SF 2184 extends the timeframe between license renewal and requires license applications to be responded to in certain timeframes when applying for a physician license with the Board of Medicine.
- **UNI Nursing Program –** HF 2772 provided UNI $600,00 from the Skilled Worker and Job Creation Fund to expand their nursing education program

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063)

Labor

Iowa's Unemployment Rate Remains at 3.2 Percent in June

Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained at 3.2 percent in June, down from a jobless rate of 3.5 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate fell to 4.2 percent in June.

The total number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 55,200 in June from 56,100 in May.

The total number of working Iowans decreased to 1,674,300 in June. This figure is 1,700 lower than May and equal to the year-ago number. The labor force participation rate fell slightly to 67.3 percent in June from 67.4 percent in May. "June's report shows a continuation of slow-but-stable growth across Iowa's economy," said Beth Townsend, Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "Significant new job gains last month in trade and financial industries were partially offset by pullbacks in manufacturing and professional and businesses services. But the state added 600 jobs overall thanks to small increases across a wide variety of industries. Meanwhile, Iowans searching for work continue to find new careers among the more than 58,000 open positions that are now posted on **IowaWORKS.gov.**"

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment
Total nonfarm employment in Iowa rose slightly in June, gaining 600 jobs. This small increase means jobs have been added in four consecutive months, equating to 7,800 more jobs since a recent low in February. Trade industries and financial firms fueled this gain, while manufacturing and professional and business service sectors pared the most jobs. Private industry added 1,100 jobs and was responsible for the June increase. Government lost jobs (-500) and is now down 2,400 jobs annually, while total nonfarm employment trails last year's mark by 9,500 jobs.

Trade industries added 1,500 jobs since May. Retail added the most jobs (+1,000), but wholesale trade also showed signs of hiring (+500). Wholesale trade has added jobs in three consecutive months, gaining 1,000 jobs since March. Retail trade has increased over the last two months, translating to a 3,100-job increase. Wholesale was bolstered by hiring in durable goods sales; retail trade was fueled by hiring in food and beverage stores. Finance and insurance gained 600 jobs in June. These hires were related to credit intermediation and related activities. On the other hand, manufacturing shed 1,000 jobs in June to lead all sectors. Durable goods factories were responsible for 700 of these jobs lost. Nondurable goods producers lost 300 jobs and have been trending down since January, losing 1,900 jobs. Professional and business services shed a combined 700 jobs. Losses were evident in all sectors but were highest in administrative support and waste management industries (-400).

Over the past 12 months, manufacturing has lost the most jobs (-4,300). Nondurable goods factories are responsible for most of those jobs shed (-2,500). Transportation, warehousing, and utilities have pared 3,500 jobs over the past 12 months. Transportation and warehousing industries were responsible for 2,100 jobs shed. Professional and business services are down by 3,000 jobs since last June. Most of those losses were from firms involved in professional, scientific, and technical services (-2,200). On the positive side, education and health care industries gained 4,500 jobs annually. Most of the hiring was within health care and social assistance (+3,700). Construction has advanced by 1,700 jobs, and finance and insurance has gained 900 jobs following three consecutive months of increases.
(Info from Iowa Workforce Development)

(Contact: Kristin Rozeboom 1-3015)

Natural Resources

Republicans Delivered Increases in Monitoring and Water Quality Funding for FY 2027

The Iowa Legislature, led by House Republicans, included historic increases in new water quality and water monitoring funding in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2027 (HF 2771). The increases can be found in H-8404 to HF 2771, the special project for water quality. The base bill of HF 2771 provided continued levels of funding for monitoring, including from the Groundwater Protection Fund – Water Quality (Section 9: $3,455,850); and the Environment First Fund EFF: Water Quality Monitoring (Section 19(3): $2,955,000). In addition, HF2771 provides a new $300,000 in funding this fiscal year for monitoring (Section 10). Last but certainly not least, the new special project for water quality (H-8404) provides a new and additional $500,000 in funding for each of the next 12 years, for a total of $6 million.

Any claims the legislature cut funding for monitoring are false. Millions of new dollars for water quality monitoring will be utilized this year and in the many years to come.

Water Quality Funding Is Getting to Work Immediately Through Streamside Buffers

In 2026 the Iowa Legislature passed historic increases in new water quality funding. The money is not going to take months to get to work, it is already moving out the door for proactive water quality projects. Last week, IDALS Secretary Mike Naig announced a major expansion of an existing streamside buffer strip program. An additional $3 million will be added to existing funds, and applications begin immediately. The Streamside Buffer Program provides financial incentives for farmers to install buffers between their fields and waterways to protect water. Buffers can also be layered with additional edge-of-field infrastructure like saturated buffers and bioreactors, which function much like a Brita filter, to capture tile drainage, making them especially effective at reducing nitrate loss. This state-funded incentive program is designed to offer more flexibility for farmers than existing federal cost-share programs. Previously, the program was limited to the North Raccoon, Boone, Middle Cedar, and Turkey River watersheds as well as all of Dubuque County. This critical water quality program now includes all of areas those plus the 22 counties that make up the Greater Des Moines Watershed project area.

(Contact: Mindy Larsen 1-3096))

Know Your State Government: How the Iowa Attorney General's Office Helps Iowans

Most Iowans will never step inside the Attorney General's Office, but nearly everyone benefits from its work. Whether it's stopping scammers, helping crime victims, defending Iowa laws, or supporting law enforcement, the Attorney General's Office works every day to protect Iowa families and uphold the law.

Here's a closer look at what the office does, and how it serves Iowans.

What is the Iowa Attorney General's Office?
The Attorney General's Office is Iowa's chief legal office. It represents the State of Iowa in court, provides legal guidance to state agencies, defends state laws when they are challenged, and enforces laws designed to protect the public.

The office is made up of attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, consumer specialists, and other professionals who work together to serve the people of Iowa.

How does the Attorney General's Office help Iowans?
The Attorney General's Office does much more than represent the state in court.
For example, the office helps:

- Protect consumers from scams, fraud, identity theft, and deceptive business practices.
- Support victims of violent crime by providing advocacy, information, and financial assistance.
- Assist local prosecutors and law enforcement with major criminal cases.
- Defend Iowa laws passed by the Legislature when they are challenged in court.
- Enforce state laws designed to protect Iowans and uphold public safety.

While many people never realize the Attorney General's Office is involved, its work helps make communities safer, protects public resources, and ensures state laws are fairly enforced.

Does the Attorney General prosecute criminals?
Yes, but not most criminal cases. The majority of criminal prosecutions are handled by county attorneys in Iowa's 99 counties. The Attorney General's Office becomes involved in specific types of cases, including criminal appeals, statewide investigations, and other matters authorized by law.

The office also works alongside county attorneys and law enforcement agencies by providing legal expertise and prosecutorial assistance in complex cases.

How does the Attorney General protect consumers?
If you've ever received a suspicious phone call, been targeted by an online scam, or had a dispute with a dishonest business, the Consumer Protection Division is one place you can turn for help.

The division investigates thousands of complaints each year involving identity theft, fake charities, home improvement fraud, robocalls, telemarketing scams, and other deceptive business practices. It also provides resources and scam alerts to help Iowans recognize warning signs and avoid becoming victims.

For more information, visit the Attorney General's consumer protection resources at: https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/for-consumers

How does the office help crime victims?
The Attorney General's Office works to support victims and their families throughout the criminal justice process. The Crime Victim Assistance Division helps victims understand their rights, stay informed about court proceedings, connect with resources, and apply for financial assistance through Iowa's Crime Victim Compensation Program. For eligible victims, assistance may help cover expenses such as medical bills, counseling, lost wages, funeral costs, and other costs resulting from violent crime.

Does the Attorney General defend Iowa laws?
Yes. When laws passed by the Iowa Legislature are challenged in court, attorneys from the Attorney General's Office often defend those laws on behalf of the State of Iowa. The office also represents state agencies, boards, and commissions in legal proceedings and provides legal advice to state government.

Can the Attorney General help with my personal legal problem?
Usually not. The Attorney General represents the State of Iowa, not individual citizens in private legal disputes. If you need help with a divorce, custody dispute, landlord issue, or another private legal matter, you will generally need to contact a private attorney.

However, if your concern involves consumer fraud, crime victim services, or another issue handled by the Attorney General's Office, staff may be able to investigate the matter or help connect you with the right resources.

Why Does the Attorney General's Office Matter?
Whether it's helping a senior avoid a scam, supporting a crime victim through the court process, defending Iowa law, or working with local prosecutors to keep communities safe, the Attorney General's Office serves Iowans in ways many people never see.

While much of its work happens behind the scenes, the mission is straightforward: protect the public, uphold the law, and serve the people of Iowa.

(Contact: Amanda Wille 1-5230)

State Government

Election Security in Iowa

Following President Trump's prime-time speech addressing concerns with election integrity across the country, there has been renewed conversation about election security. Due to the diligence of House Republicans, elections in Iowa are safe, secure, and trusted.

Before Election Day
All voting machines and electric tabulators purchased by the counties are certified through the Board of Examiners to certify that the voting machines function properly and do not exhibit any issues. When the equipment is not being used it is stored in secure facilities accessible only to authorized election personnel.

Before election day all voting equipment is publicly tested in every county in front of members of each political party, the media, and any member of the public who chooses to view the test. Members of the public are even entitled to submit test ballots they marked themselves at the public test of the equipment.

In addition to the secure storage and regular testing of the voting equipment, routine voter registration list maintenance is performed by county auditors and the Secretary of State's office to ensure that only voters who are eligible to vote in that precinct are on the list.

During the absentee ballot period the county auditors and the Secretary of State's office are now required to publish daily the number of absentee ballot requests received, absentee ballots sent, and completed absentee ballots received by the county auditors. This increase in public reporting is another redundancy to ensure transparency in the process. In addition to the increased reporting, county auditors are now limited to establishing only one ballot drop box that is secured and monitored on the county property. These drop boxes are required to be emptied and recorded at least four times a day during the absentee voting period.

Citizenship
In order to register to vote in Iowa an individual is required to be a US citizen. If an individual attempts to register to vote online through the Department of Transportation or in person at a DOT station and cannot verify their citizenship no data or registration is submitted to the Secretary of State's office. House Republicans passed House File 954, now law, to address the issue and protects the constitutional requirement that only US citizens participate in our elections. Division IX of the bill strengthens citizenship verification and helps ensure that the Secretary of State and county auditors in Iowa are not solely reliant on the federal government to confirm a potential voter's citizenship status. A status code for voter registration records designated as "unconfirmed" will ensure that ballots are not given to any potential voters who have not confirmed their citizenship status within the system. This status will apply to individuals whose citizenship status has yet to be confirmed or has informed the DOT or other state agencies that they are not US citizens. To bolster the unconfirmed status the law directs the sharing of information between state agencies and other states to ensure the most up to date information of potential individuals who have indicated to a state agency that they are not citizens. The law also expanded reasons to cancel a voter's registration to include citizenship status and allows challenges of voter's qualifications to include questioning citizenship status.

Election Day
Voters are required to provide valid identification to poll workers before they are able to receive a paper ballot. Voting equipment in Iowa does not connect to the internet or any other voting equipment. **Every ballot cast in an election in Iowa is a paper ballot** reviewable by the voter before submitting the ballot. After the polls close on election day, the bipartisan election board canvasses the votes at each polling place. This canvass is done publicly to credit each candidate with the number of votes for the candidates and a member from each party keeps a separate tally of the count to be compared. The election board then prepares a written report of the election results, and the results are delivered to the county auditor in person by a precinct election official. Before adjourning, the election board encloses the paper ballots in a container with a tamper evident seal and returned to the county auditor to be kept securely for a minimum of 6 months for nonfederal elections and 22 months for federal elections.

Post-Election Day
Following the election, the Secretary of State randomly audits one precinct in each county to ensure that the results match the ballots and the paper receipt from the tabulators. In addition to the county audits, candidates within a certain percentage of votes of winning are entitled to request and receive an official recount of votes. Iowa's elections are conducted off-line and with transparency. At precinct, county, and state levels boards publicly canvass and certify the results of the elections. Audits, and if necessary, recounts are conducted to ensure the official election results are accurate.

(Contact: Jason Covey 1-3626)

US House Begins Work on New Five-Year Transportation Funding Plan

With the current federal transportation funding law about to expire at the end of September, Congress has begun work on a replacement. And the first version includes several provisions that address issues the House Transportation Committee identified as priorities for Iowa.

At the end of May, the US House Transportation Committee passed out its version of a new road funding bill. The BUILD America 250 Act would pump nearly 580 billion dollars into America's various transportation systems between fiscal years 2027 and 2031. While much of the legislation being passed through Congress is passed after highly partisan debates, the BUILD America 250 Act came out of committee with a bipartisan vote of 62-2.

The bill would dedicate more of the funding for road construction than is allowed under the current law enacted during the Biden administration. It also eliminates a number of climate-related provisions created in that law. For states like Iowa, one interesting idea included in the BUILD America 250 Act is a provision that would allow several states to take their road funding as a block grant. This would free states from requirements imposed on the current federal funding streams and focus more of the funding on actual projects. Advocates of this idea say it could be a big plus for local governments, improving their ability to use federal funding for roads instead of complying with numerous federal requirements that have no relevance in their communities.

The thousand-page bill also includes a number of state-specific provisions. For Iowa, one such piece involves the highway 65/5 bypass around the southern part of the Des Moines metro area. Area officials have wanted to transform this stretch of roadway into Interstate 435, but that is complicated by the fact that the bypass can be used by farmers to go between fields. If the road were to be changed into an interstate, this sort of traffic would not be allowed since it cannot operate at the minimum-required speed.

One potential solution has been to construct alternate routes for ag traffic. This would be an expensive option, requiring years of planning, construction, and agreement with landowners. A different option would be to get permission to allow the ag traffic on the road while setting up a warning system that would alert traffic that tractors and implements of husbandry were on the road. It looks like the House Transportation Committee is alright with the latter.

The bill includes a provision in section 1302 that states that if the bypass were to become an interstate highway, the vehicles that are currently allowed on the bypass would still be able to use the road as an interstate.

Another issue that the Iowa House Transportation Committee has pushed for several years is changing the maximum weight limit on Iowa's interstates. This level is set by federal law at 80,000 pounds. But previous transportation funding bills have included specific exemptions for various parts of the national interstate system. Nebraska was granted a higher limit of 95,000 pounds with a special permit, which means trucks have to stay off Iowa's interstate system if they do not drop any cargo before entering the state. This creates traffic safety issues, particularly in Council Bluffs.

The General Assembly passed House Concurrent Resolution 6, requesting that Congress raise the weight limit in Iowa and bordering states to 96,000 pounds. The BUILD America 250 Act does not include this change, although it does allow trucks to carry up to 108,000 pounds on a portion of Interstate 380 between Highways 20 and 218.

Instead, the bill creates a pilot program that would allow states to raise the interstate weight limit to 91,000 pounds if the trucks are operating with six axels instead of the current limit of 80,000 pounds on five axels. This provision appears to have the support of various trucking groups.

The BUILD America 250 Act awaits action on the floor of the US House of Representatives. The US Senate has yet to put forward their version of a new transportation funding bill. With the current law set to expire on September 30, it is likely that Congress will at least need to pass a short-term extension before they can come to an agreement on a new plan. But the BUILD America 250 Act is a good start with some positive changes for Iowa.

(Contact: Brad Trow 1-3471)

Veterans Affairs

Visit the Iowa Gold Star Museum

With a month left of summer break, a great educational trip is to Iowa's Gold Star Museum at Camp Dodge in Johnston. The museum walks through all military engagements in Iowa's history and Camp Dodge's unique involvement in each engagement. There are many interactive exhibits as well as historical military items to see in person.

Check out the website before visiting for hours: https://goldstarmuseum.iowa.gov/. There are group tours also held on Saturday's.

(Contact: Natalie Ginty 5-2063

Ways & Means

Property Tax Reform—Seniors, Multi-residential, and EMS

This newsletter series continues to examine the 75-page property tax reform bill passed as Senate File 2472 during the 2026 legislative session. This installment will cover Division VII—increasing the credit for elderly and disabled, Division VIII on multi-residential property changes, and Division IX on the increase in EMS levy.

Division VII—Elderly and Disabled Property Tax Credit and Rent Reimbursement
Under current law, the Elderly and Disabled Property Tax Credit provides property tax relief to eligible homeowners aged 65 years and older or individuals who are totally disabled. The credit is income-based and calculated using household income and property tax liability, with a maximum credit of $1,000. This division increases the property tax credit/rent reimbursement for elderly and disabled from $1,000 to $1,500.

Division VIII—Property Classifications and Assessment Limitations
This division reestablishes a multi-residential property classification for assessment years beginning on or after January 1, 2027, that includes types of property that were classified as multi-residential property for assessment years beginning before January 1, 2022. Such property is included within the residential property classification under current law.

It provides that multi-residential property is assessed at a percentage of actual value for the assessment year beginning January 1, 2027, equal to the percentage applicable to residential property for the same assessment year plus three percent, but not to exceed 100 percent, and for assessment years beginning on or after January 1, 2028, a percentage equal to the percentage applicable to residential property for the same assessment year plus six percent, but not to exceed 100 percent. So multi-residential property will always have a slightly higher taxable value than residential property.

Division IX—Emergency Medical Services Levy

Under current law, a county may impose an EMS levy of up to $0.75 per $1,000 of assessed value for counties. As of AY 2024, a total of 20 counties levied EMS levies under Iowa Code chapter 422D, and of those, 10 counties levied the current $0.75 maximum amount. This division provides that for fiscal years beginning on or after July 1, 2027, the county-side EMS voted upon levy can be up to $1.50. The current maximum is $0.75. This increase must be voter-approved after July 1, 2026.

(Contact: Kristi Kious 2-5290)