

# Legislative Update

## The 2018 Iowa Legislative Session

Week of February 26, 2018

### Last week in the Iowa Legislature

It was a normal eighth week in the Iowa Legislature: floor action dominated much of the agenda, but subcommittees and committees met to advance bills ahead of the next funnel deadline. A handful of controversial bills—abortion rights, tax reform and traffic cameras—were brought up for votes on the floor, but most bills were non-controversial and rushed through to meet the next funnel. Budget subcommittees also met, but this was probably the last week they would until it becomes time to pass budget bills in April.

#### Tax Reform

The Senate Republicans' tax legislation, [SF 2383](#), passed last week on a party-line vote. The bill would reduce state tax collections by \$207 million in FY 2019, \$777 million in FY 2020 and roughly \$1 billion in the following fiscal years. As mentioned the last week, the bill makes significant changes to individual and corporate income taxes, sales taxes, taxes on credit unions, tax credits and eliminates federal deductibility.

The House brought forward [HSB 671](#), the tax reform authored by Governor Reynolds, on Thursday with a subcommittee hearing. The Republican-controlled subcommittee recommended passage of the bill, which is far less ambitious than the Senate's. The Legislature's non-partisan staff haven't yet published a fiscal note on [HSB 671](#), but it's likely to be far less than the Senate proposal. With the Senate legislation already in the House after last week's vote, look for the House to advance this bill through the committee process and begin earnest negotiations with the Senate in the coming weeks.

#### Budget

As we reported in our prior update, the Legislature is waiting for the March 9 Revenue Estimating Conference report to decide how much (if at all) to cut this fiscal year's spending. Aside from getting seven days closer to March 9, no progress was made on midyear budget adjustments between the two chambers last week.

Looking ahead, however, budget subcommittees are likely done with presentations for the year and will begin to discuss budget priorities for FY 19. After the REC meeting, budget subcommittee leaders will receive their budget targets—a fancy legislative term for “allowance”—that determines how much of the state budget they have to spend. The subcommittees fill in the details after that with individual line items. As policy bills flourish or

flounder through the legislative process, budget items and tax legislation will soon get the lion's share of legislative attention.

### **Mental Health Legislation**

The House unanimously passed a comprehensive mental health bill ([HF 2456](#)) on Tuesday, based closely on recommendations from the Complex Service Needs Workgroup. The bill helps reform current mental health practices, building six regional access centers, adding “assertive community treatment” teams, and ensuring long-term sustainable funding for Medicaid-covered mental health services, among other things. Rep. Lundgren, the bill's floor manager, opened the discussion, proudly stating, “we are putting forth one of the most comprehensive mental health bills in the state of Iowa, and it's important to all Iowans... This bill puts processes in place that can – and will – make a difference and may even save lives.” While some advocates are saying that the bill doesn't go far enough for treating teens and children, the conversation among everyone is the hope that the Legislature continues to push to ensure that individuals are receiving services across the state in environments more appropriate for mental health treatment.

Representatives from both parties in the House rose to speak in support of the bill. While there was overall support, a point of contention came when Rep. Staed filed an amendment to the bill, that he later withdrew, which would have added a provision for extreme risk protection orders, addressing gun violence. Rep. Staed withdrew his amendment with a statement that House Republicans threatened to kill the mental health bill if he moved forward with it; he complied to the warning, noting that he only did so “in order to show my support – 100% support – for [HF 2456](#).” House Republican leadership denied the claim, sharing again that the bill is bi-partisan and that they had every intention in moving it forward “one way or another.”

While thanking the large collaborative effort from stakeholders and legislators, Rep. Lundgren remarked “we have a great bill; it's a bi-partisan bill.” She went on to acknowledge that this bill takes steps forward to address mental health and noted “the work is never done, but today we can tell Iowans that mental health care matters.” Governor Reynolds has said that she supports the bill and would sign it, presuming it gets out of the Senate. Patients and advocates alike are hopeful that the Senate will follow the House's lead so that real changes can be made for those in Iowa living with mental illness.

### **Looking Ahead**

Without budget subcommittees this week, the House and Senate will both complete a lot of floor votes and committee work. The end of next week marks the second funnel deadline when bills must have passed one chamber and a committee in the opposite chamber—unless the bill is in the Ways & Means or Appropriations Committees. Look for a number of high-profile bills, passed by one chamber or another, to die quick deaths on March 16 when they fail to pass the other chamber's committee. Aside from tax reform, no large “must-do” policy proposal appears to exist for Republicans at the Statehouse. If that remains true and tax reform gets resolved in a reasonable time, the Legislature will likely adjourn in early April.

## Key Initiatives

The House passed HF 2254 (911 Matters) 98-0 last week. It now goes to the Senate, where it's poised for passage with an identical companion bill. The non-partisan Legislative Services Agency has produced a fiscal note on the bill, which can be accessed here:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FN/918801.pdf>

The AS team has been working with Senators to attach an amendment to SF 2364 (School Security Plans) that would exempt school security plans from the state's Open Records Law. The amendment is being drafted now, and it appears set for adoption when the Senate considers it.

## Bills of Interest

Like sessions past, Advocacy Strategies will be tracking all bills pertaining to you. Along with this document, please find an attached excel spreadsheet with the bills you have registered for or we are waiting for a declaration. Please review this and confirm your declarations are correct. Please let us know if there are any changes that need to be made.

## Housekeeping

Our ability to best represent you is based on quick and open communication. Once the legislative session progresses further, our requests for bill declarations will increase substantially. **We would ask that you let us know your organization's position on each bill within 24 hours of our notification to you so we can respond accordingly.** Each bill we send your organization automatically generates a registration of "undecided" on that bill. This allows us to lobby on the bill or to attend a subcommittee on your behalf. But whatever your organization's stance may be, please communicate it to us (even if the stance is "undecided") so we can register properly and most effectively represent your interests.

## Dates to Note

- March 16: Second funnel deadline (10<sup>th</sup> week)
- April 17th: 100<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the session; legislators' per diem expires.

**Please feel free to contact the Advocacy Strategies Team with any questions, comments, or concerns. We are pleased to be representing your interests during the 2018 legislative session and throughout the year. Contact information for your lobbying team follows. We look forward to a successful session and working with you in the days ahead.**

**Threase Harms**  
515.975.5299  
[threase@advocacyiowa.com](mailto:threase@advocacyiowa.com)

**Dane Schumann**  
319.350.4730  
[dane@advocacyiowa.com](mailto:dane@advocacyiowa.com)

**Emily Hockins**  
515.360.4096

**Kathy Gearke**  
515.471.1954

[emily@advocacyiowa.com](mailto:emily@advocacyiowa.com)

[admin@advocacyiowa.com](mailto:admin@advocacyiowa.com)