

# Legislative Update

## The 2018 Iowa Legislative Session

Week of March 26, 2018

### Last week in the Iowa Legislature

Last week was a lot like the prior week: very little committee work aside from Senate committees handling confirmations and floor action was limited to relatively non-controversial bills. The chambers appeared determined to “clear their calendar” of most bills and make way for any of the few large policy bills that remain, budgets and tax legislation.

By week’s end, it was clear that the House and Senate leadership were very close to budget targets—the announcement of which will shift the legislative timeline into high gear. Through news reports, the leaders said the FY 19 budget will be bigger than the current fiscal year’s \$7.254 billion—which isn’t much news. It does, however, signal that tax cuts will not reduce next fiscal year’s spending by much and, according to comments made in the press, a critical tax issue remains whether corporate income taxes will be cut. The Senate included those cuts in their tax bill and the House has not.

### Mental Health Signed By Governor

During her Condition of the State Address, Governor Kim Reynolds requested legislation that would help fill gaps in Iowa’s mental health system. On Thursday, Reynolds was proud to sign a comprehensive mental health bill into law ([HF 2456](#)) during a well-attended bill-signing ceremony. Reynolds expressed, “this legislation was pushed over the finish line by individuals and families who knew firsthand the importance of having a robust mental health system and the pain caused when services they or a loved one needed weren’t there. I know we can do better, and with this legislation, we will do better!”

The bill was guided by the suggestions from the Complex Service Needs Workgroup, a group of stakeholders from across the state that came together to develop a plan to modernize Iowa’s mental health system. It will ensure access to services with the inclusion of provisions that address access centers for those in crisis, assertive community treatment teams for individualized treatment, comprehensive crisis centers for hotlines and mobile response, and intensive residential service homes for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness.

Governor Reynolds also signed a suicide prevention bill ([SF 2113](#)) into law during the ceremony, which calls for school districts to adopt protocols for suicide prevention training for personnel. Reynolds said, “it’s vital that steps are taken to identify the early signs of depression and mental health challenges in children.”

## **Critical Infrastructure**

A relatively high-profile bill, SF 2235 (Critical Infrastructure Sabotage), is heading back to the Senate after the House amended it. It passed the House with a 69-31 vote count. This bill, with the amendments, makes sabotage of critical infrastructure a Class B felony. The bill defines “critical infrastructure” to include various utilities, and infrastructure for oil, electricity, water, telecommunications, and other related services. This excludes various farm activities from falling under provisions related to critical infrastructure sabotage. The bill does not include accidental interruptions. This bill is supported by utilities and is related to the Dakota Access Pipeline sabotage. The Dakota Access Pipeline was a highly contentious issue that ensued on site protests, and legal challenges that went to the Iowa Supreme Court. In August of 2017 the project was completed. The Senate is expected to concur and send SF 2235 to the governor’s desk.

## **Election 2018**

The State Objection Panel has been addressing candidate challenges with some considerable shake-ups. After this week, Governor Kim Reynolds will likely be the only gubernatorial candidate for the Republican Party. Ron Corbett, filed a petition to run for governor, and was found to be eight signatures short. Corbett has filed a formal challenge to the decision, arguing that more of his signatures are not duplicates and that he’ll qualify.

Corbett isn’t the only individual who filed a petition and received disappointing news. In State House District 56, Dale Bolsinger was removed as a Republican candidate because when he originally began collecting signature he was registered as a Democrat. This leaves the Republicans without a candidate for House 56. If the Party chooses to do so, they can nominate a candidate at a convention.

With these challenges being upheld, this means that there will likely not be a competitive Republican gubernatorial primary, and the Republicans could lose a House seat to Democrats. Given the strong push that the Democrats are making to upset the Republican majority, every seat counts.

On the federal level, Democrat Theresa Greenfield gave up trying to revive her campaign to become the Democrat’s nominee to run against Congressman David Young in Iowa’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District. A state panel found she had too few signatures to qualify for the June primary after she withdrew her original signature list upon learning a campaign manager had forged signatures. The Democratic Central Committee for the congressional district made an attempt to place her on the ballot, but Attorney General Tom Miller ruled that attempt was invalid because Greenfield never became a valid candidate in the first place.

## **Looking Ahead**

We reported last week that budget targets were expected then. But if the press reports are accurate (and legislators are telling the truth), then you truly should expect them this week. But aside from budget progress and more behind-the-scenes tax discussion, this week will look a lot like last week: limited floor action and the Ways & Means and Appropriations Committees meeting to consider bills.

## Key Initiatives

After bouncing between the chambers with amendments, the House and Senate finally agreed on SF 2364 (School Security Plans). The final bill is the same as before except school boards, under the final Senate bill that was adopted, can determine the school personnel, students and law enforcement that are involved in security drills. The final version passed 47-0 in the Senate and 100-0 in the House. It now goes to the governor, who is almost certain to sign it.

The Senate passed HF 2254 (911 Matters) without amendment, sending it to the governor. Once the governor signs it, which she is extremely likely to do, the bill will virtually guarantee that this year's lease-purchase payment for the state's interoperative communication system comes from a source other than the 911 fund.

## 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. This document does reflect the bills that remain alive after the 2<sup>nd</sup> funnel deadline. 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

- April 2<sup>nd</sup>: 85<sup>th</sup> calendar day of the session; legislators' per diem expires. \*\*This date changed because SF 2117 (the de-appropriation bill)

**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.**

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