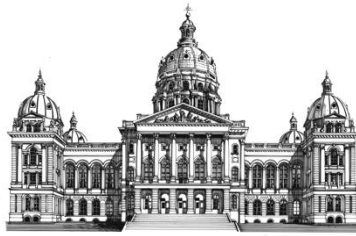


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House of Representatives
State of Iowa
Eighty-Eighth General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Economic Development, *Vice Chair*

August 6th, 2020

Hello all,

I hope everyone is coping as well as possible with the ongoing pandemic. The Iowa House Republicans are ramping up with campaigning, and as usual I'm sure all of us will be attentive if you have any concerns or comments.

Appropriations

Democrats Question Decision to Equalize Pay – Implicit Bias Against Republican Women?

This week, it was announced that the acting director of the Department of Public Health, the State Epidemiologist, will get a raise that brings the pay for this position within range of other similar positions in state government. Normally such actions would bring praise from Democrat legislators and their compatriots in the media and blogosphere. But when those actions are taken by Republican women, they are immediately attacked.

According to the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency's FY 2019 State Employee Salary Book, the state was paying the following senior medical directors at these levels:

Dr. Klein, State Medical Examiner	\$292,150
Dr. Greenfield, Dept. of Corrections Health Care Administrator	\$292,150
Dr. Lerd, Medical Director at Woodward State Resource Center	\$328,410
Dr. Rehman, then Medical Director at Glenwood State Resource Center	\$412,909
Dr. Pedati, State Public Health Medical Director and Epidemiologist	\$174,122

What is the difference between these five health professionals? The first four are men and Caitlin Pedati is a woman. Upon taking over as acting director of DPH, Kelly Garcia identified the pay disparity and took action. She raised the salary of the State Epidemiologist to bring it in line with other medical directors in state agencies. Instead of being praised for correcting this inequity, legislative Democrats and liberal activists attacked Director Garcia and Governor Kim Reynolds.

The questioning of Garcia's actions highlights a troubling trend by Democrats in Iowa. It is confusing to many that the political party which took such pride in enacting the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act on the

Federal level would be so critical of efforts implementing the tenets of that law when it is being done by Republican women. It is not the first time that Iowa Democrats have gone public with their double standard, and it raises the question of whether they have an implicit bias against Republican officeholders who happen to be women.

In 2017 when Governor Terry Branstad stepped down to become ambassador to China, Kim Reynolds became Iowa's first female governor. What should have been a time for celebration of the breaking of the "glass ceiling" turned into a petty partisan fight over whether the new governor would be given funding to pay for the transition. With Governor Branstad departing, there would be additional one-time costs the Governor's office, including making the usual final payments to departing state employees and replacing IT equipment as Branstad administration records would be turned over to the State Archives. The Governor's office was provided \$150,000 to cover these expenses.

Even before being sworn into office, legislative Democrats were attacking the soon-to be governor for the requested funding. Legislative Democrats had a sudden case of amnesia at that time, failing to remember that when Chet Culver - a male Democrat - became governor in 2007, he was provided with \$170,000 in transition funds.

This pattern of hostile and hypocritical behavior against Republican women at the Iowa State Capitol is troubling to many in Iowa.

Agriculture

Iowa Crop Progress & Condition Report

On Monday, August 3rd, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig commented on the Iowa Crop Progress and Condition report released by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. The report is released weekly from April through November.

"While spotty thunderstorms brought much needed rainfall to parts of the western Iowa drought region, other areas were not as fortunate and drought conditions persist," said Secretary Naig. "As we begin August, cooler temperatures and chances of thunderstorms are expected over the short-term, which would be beneficial to moisture-stressed corn and soybeans."

The weekly report is also available on the USDA's site.

Crop Progress

Although some areas of the Iowa received more than an inch of rain, statewide farmers had 6.0 days suitable for fieldwork during the week ending August 2, 2020, according to the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service. Fieldwork activities continue to be primarily spraying, harvesting hay and grain movement. Reports of aerial applications of fungicide continue.

Topsoil moisture levels rated 14% very short, 33% short, 51% adequate and 2% surplus. Northwest, West Central and Central Iowa all report topsoil moisture supplies are mostly short to very short. Subsoil moisture levels rated 10% very short, 31% short, 57% adequate and 2% surplus.

Corn silking or beyond reached 95%, 2 weeks ahead of the previous year and 5 days ahead of the 5-year average. Corn in the dough stage or beyond reached 44%, 10 days ahead of the previous year and 4 days ahead of the average. Corn condition declined to 73% good to excellent. Soybeans blooming reached 91%, 2 weeks ahead of last year and 6 days ahead of average. Soybeans setting pods reached 70%, 16 days ahead of last year and 6 days ahead of average. Soybean condition also fell to 73% good to

excellent. Nearly all of the oats are turning color or beyond. Oats harvested for grain reached 85%, over 1 week ahead of last year and 5 days ahead of the average.

Alfalfa hay second cutting reached 90%, 1 week ahead of last year but the same as the 5-year average. Third cutting reached 17%, 5 days ahead of the previous year but 2 days behind average. Hay condition rated 66% good to excellent. Pasture condition rated 46% good to excellent. For the first time since the week ending April 5, 2020 less than half of pastures were rated good to excellent.

Guidance on Proper Disposal of Unsolicited Seed Deliveries

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig confirmed that the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship is aware that individuals in Iowa have received unsolicited seed shipments from China and other countries.

The Department is asking anyone who receives unlabeled seed from an unknown origin to retain the original packaging and report it immediately at 515-281-5321. Recipients should not open the seed packet, plant the seed or attempt to destroy it. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will collect, analyze and properly destroy the seeds.

“The Iowa Department of Agriculture is working closely with the USDA to trace, collect and properly destroy these unknown seeds to protect our agriculture community from plant and seed-borne diseases,” said Secretary Naig.

Unlabeled seeds and seeds from unknown origins should never be planted. They pose the risk of introducing an invasive plant species or seed-borne diseases that do not currently exist in the United States. APHIS is working closely with the Department of Homeland Security’s Customs and Border Protection and State departments of agriculture to prevent the unlawful entry of prohibited seeds and protect U.S. agriculture from invasive pests and noxious weeds.

The USDA APHIS issued a news release stating this may be a “brushing scam,” where people receive unsolicited items from a seller who then posts false customer reviews to boost online sales.

(Info taken from IDALS)

Commerce

Federal Funds Available for Broadband Expansion

In the past having a high-speed internet connection has been considered a luxury. However, in today’s world it has become a necessity – much like electricity became a necessity close to 100 years ago. A few years ago, Iowa started to connect every Iowan to the internet by creating a broadband grant program. The Legislature has appropriated over \$10 million to fund broadband grants for broadband deployment in unserved and underserved areas of the state.

In addition to state grant program, there are a number of federal funding sources available for expanding broadband access in Iowa. The following federal agencies had funds available for FY20:

<u>Federal Agency</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>
1. Federal Communications Commission	
a. E-Rate	\$4.1M
b. Connect America Fund	\$4.5B
c. Rural Digital Opportunity Fund	\$20.4B
2. Department of Transportation	
a. BUILD Grants	\$1B

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| 3. Housing & Urban Development | |
| a. CDBG | \$3.4B |
| b. Section 108 Loan | \$300M |
| 4. US Department of Agriculture | |
| a. Rural Econ Dev Loan & Grant | \$61.41M |
| b. B&I Guaranteed Loan Program | \$1.35M |
| c. Community Connect Grant Program | \$35M |
| d. Rural Broadband Access Program | \$11.2M |
| e. ReConnect Program | \$555M |
| 5. Economic Development Agency | |
| a. Public Works and EAA | \$200M |

This incomplete list of federal funds totals over \$30B! These are additional funds that could be used to expand broadband access in Iowa. In addition, several funds were given additional funds as part of the federal CARES legislation. Leveraging federal funding for Iowa broadband projects is an important aspect to getting every Iowan connected.

Economic Growth

Rural Iowa Towns Awarded \$4.6 Million in Infrastructure Grants

Iowa Economic Development Authority made awards totaling \$4.6 million last week for water and sewer infrastructure projects in 14 communities across the state. The awards were made through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which provides support for community improvements. Grants are awarded based upon the benefit to low- and moderate-income persons, financial need, project impact and readiness, and commitment of local resources to the project. This round, awards were made in Carter Lake, Corning, Cushing, Dayton, Early, Ladora, Lewis, Lockridge, Marshall County, Oxford Junction, Parkersburg, Rickardsville, Rudd, and Ruthven

CDBG funds enable communities to make needed improvements to water and sewer systems, improve housing conditions for low-income homeowners, provide facilities for disabled and at-risk individuals, and make transformative downtown improvements. The CDBG program is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. IEDA is responsible for administering the CDBG funds in the non-metropolitan areas of the state.

Download a spreadsheet of today's awards:
iowaeda.com/userdocs/news/20202qcdbgwater-sewerawards.pdf

Education

Governor Pushes for In-Person Learning in Schools

On Tuesday, August 4, 2020 Governor Reynold's held a press conference in which she addressed local Return-to-Learn Plans. Some school districts are defying the law which states schools need to have students in the classroom for at least fifty percent of learning. It is important to also note that if parents are uncomfortable with that requirement, they are able to choose 100% online learning for their student.

“This morning’s headlines read that some schools will choose to defy the governor by rejecting the very guidelines they request. I want to be very clear, schools that choose not to return to school for at least 50% in-person instruction are not defying me, they are defying the law,” said Reynolds. “The Legislature

unanimously passed a bill, Senate File 2310, requiring in-person learning as the primary mode of education and that's what we are working to implement.”

Governor Reynolds further stated that schools who choose not to follow the proclamation will not get credit for those hours of instruction. Meaning those hours will need to be made up. School administrators could also face licensure penalties. Out of 367 school districts, only five districts have made statements that they will not be following the fifty-percent in-person order. Urbandale, Waukee, Des Moines, Ames, and Iowa City stated they would begin remotely this August. Iowa City has delayed the first day of school until Sept. 8. State officials will meet with administrators from these five districts in hopes of resolving the issues.

It should be noted that the contention seems to stem around the word “primary” and how it is interpreted. Interestingly one city involved in the disagreement has already defined what “primary” means. According to Iowa City Municipal Code, primary means 50% or more. “A licensee or permittee whose primary business purpose is not the sale of alcoholic beverages...establishes that on average over a calendar year more than fifty percent (50%) of the licensee's or permittee's gross sales on the premises are from the sale of goods or services...”

Lost in the disagreement is the fact that parents maintain control over their student's learning environment if school districts will allow it. Parents are able to choose to send their student to 100% in-person learning at school or they can choose 100% on-line learning. Why these five school districts are unwilling to allow parents that option is unclear.

Governor Reynolds also said that there will be a state-maintained website that will list the 14-day rolling average of positive Covid-19 cases in every school district. Once the positivity rate reaches 15% and at least 10% of students are absent, district officials may seek state permission to send all students home and shift to online instruction for 14 days. If the rate is anything less than 15%, on-site learning will take place.

Democrats Take Aim at American History Classes in Illinois

Radical leftism is alive and well across the river in Illinois. If Illinois Democrats get their way, parents may not only be sending their kids across the Mississippi River to play football this fall, they could be sending them so they will be able to learn American history.

Illinois State Representative LaShawn K. Ford issued a news release on August 2nd saying “Rep. Ford Today in Evanston to Call for the Abolishment of History Classes in Illinois Schools,” in which Ford asked the Illinois State Board of Education and school districts to immediately remove history curriculum and books that “unfairly communicate” history “until a suitable alternative is developed.” He further states that current materials and lesson plans “lead to white privilege and a racist society.”

Leaders in education, politics, and other areas have now gathered three times since February to discuss this change in curriculum with hopes to push legislation forward in November. It remains to be seen if Iowa Democrats will follow along. But after voting to ban homeschooling, close all private schools and eliminating all private health insurance, far left-wing ideas seem right in their wheelhouse.

Human Resources

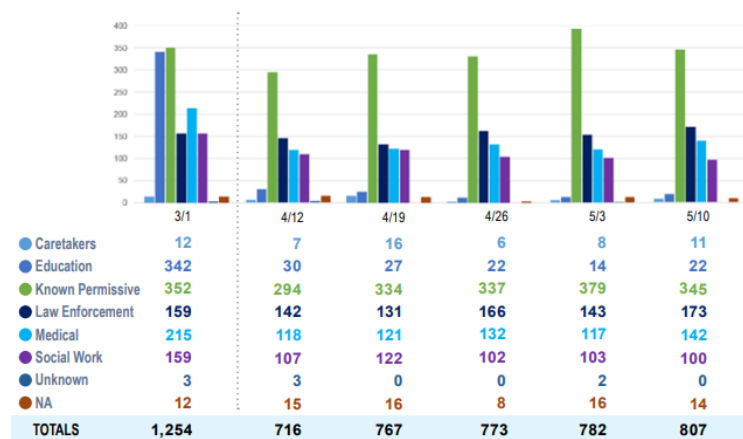
Pediatricians Recommend Schools Start In-Person

Recently, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued their [clinical guidance for school re-entry](#), which strongly advocated for the coming school year to start with a goal of having students physically present in school.

The guidance states that “the importance of in-person learning is well-documented, and there is already evidence of the negative impacts on children because of school closures in the spring of 2020. Lengthy time away from school and associated interruption of supportive services often results in social isolation, making it difficult for schools to identify and address important learning deficits as well as child and adolescent physical or sexual abuse, substance use, depression, and suicidal ideation. This, in turn, places children and adolescents at considerable risk of morbidity and, in some cases, mortality. Beyond the educational impact and social impact of school closures, there has been substantial impact on food security and physical activity for children and families.”

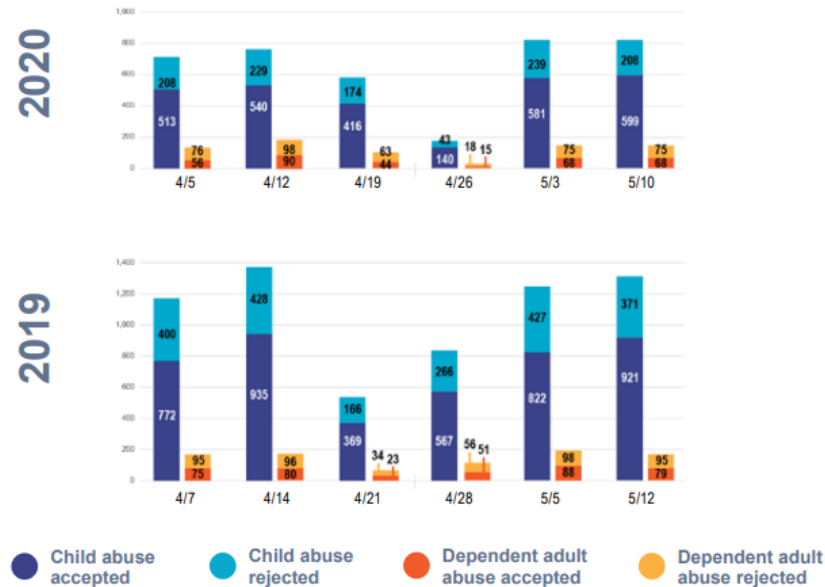
Unfortunately, school closures have had more of a negative impact on Iowa children than COVID-19. Below you will see two charts from the [DHS COVID Dashboard](#) depicting child abuse reports and intakes. In the first chart, you will see that **on March 1st, before schools closed, DHS was receiving 1,254 calls per week from mandatory reporters, including teachers, and the public that witnessed potential abuse of an Iowa child. Contrast that to the week of April 12th, with schools closed, medical providers seeing children less for appointments, and the height of people social distancing, there were only 716 calls to the child abuse hotline.**

Child Abuse Reports Volume and Source



With less reporting and fewer eyes on children, we have seen a large decrease in the number of child abuse investigations occurring. **Looking at that same week of April 12th, this year we had only 540 cases accepted as child abuse. During the same week in 2019, there were 935 cases accepted. We know that abuse and neglect has not decreased during these financially difficult times, but abuse and neglect has gone unreported leaving Iowa children in an unsafe situation.**

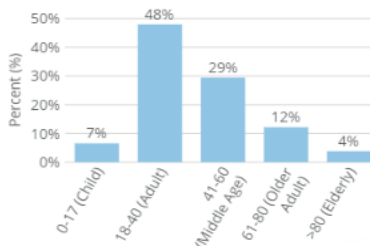
Child and Dependent Adult Abuse Intakes



The American Academy of Pediatrics also urged policy makers to “consider the mounting evidence regarding COVID-19 in children and adolescents, including the role they may play in transmission of the infection. [COVID-19] appears to behave differently in children and adolescents than other common respiratory viruses, such as influenza, on which much of the current guidance regarding school closures is based. Although children and adolescents play a major role in amplifying influenza outbreaks, to date, this does not appear to be the case with [COVID-19]. Although many questions remain, **the preponderance of the evidence indicates that children and adolescents are less likely to be symptomatic and less likely to have severe disease resulting from [COVID-19] infection. In addition, children may be less likely to become infected and to spread infection.**”

This is also reflected in [Iowa’s COVID data](#) that has shown that only 7% of cases in the state since the very beginning have been in those under the age of 18.

Positive Cases by Age Group



House Democrat’s Health Care Proposal Closes Rural Hospitals

Not to be outdone by the wave of socialist health care proposals at the national level, Iowa House Democrats introduced legislation this general assembly that forced Iowans into a government-run health care system that eliminated private health insurance ([House File 96](#)). There are countless

dangerous consequences to the entire Iowa House Democrat bill, but this newsletter will highlight the impact to Iowa hospitals, most of which are located in rural communities.

A [report released this year by Navigant](#) studied the impact of a variety of proposals to create a government-run insurance plan to compete with private health insurance companies. This analysis found that **between 25 and 52 of Iowa's 90 rural hospitals would be at high financial risk for closure if a government-run insurance plan entered the market.** The study found that there would be losses of millions in revenue if current Medicare rates replaced current higher commercial rates to hospitals.

This report only analyzed three scenarios, all of which still allowed individuals to purchase from commercial insurance or remain on their employer-sponsored plan. **The Iowa House Democrat proposal does not allow any of those choices, making the impact to Iowa's rural hospitals even more devastating on all rural communities.**

Just look at data from the Iowa Hospital Association. "More than 60 percent of hospital revenue is derived from government health insurance payments through Medicaid and Medicare", and these "payment rates fall far short of covering the actual cost of care and do not keep up with rates of inflation."

Iowa's hospitals were already are currently struggling due to lower government reimbursement rates in the Medicare and Medicaid programs, as well as the impacts this spring from the elimination of elective procedures due to COVID-19. The following [data is collected from Iowa's hospitals](#) and shows the number of hospitals below certain total revenue margins in 2017.

- Below 4% = 14 Iowa hospitals
- Below 2% = 19 Iowa hospitals
- Below 0% = 26 Iowa hospitals
- Below negative 5% = 3 Iowa hospitals
- Below negative 10% = 6 Iowa hospitals

With the majority of those unsustainable revenues coming from Iowa's Critical Access Hospitals who already experience higher Medicare and Medicaid patient stays, it is easy to see how only allowing government insurance will lead to rural hospital closures.

Rather than proposing radical and dangerous health care plans, the Iowa House Republicans funded an increase to Iowa's Critical Access Hospitals in Medicaid. All Iowa House Democrats voted against this funding.

This "free" health care plan proposed by House Democrats is unaffordable and would lead to massively higher taxes on Iowa families and business. Not only that, banning private health insurance leads to insurance and health care job losses in the thousands, takes away choice and access, and rations care.

Judiciary

Governor Signs Executive Order Restoring Voting Rights

On Wednesday, Governor Kim Reynolds, signed Executive Order Number Seven, restoring the rights of some felons to vote upon discharge of their sentence. The Governor had promised to do an executive order when the Senate was unable to pass a constitutional amendment restoring felon voting rights this year.

The right for convicted felons to vote varies by state and until today, Iowa was the only state in the union with constitutional language that broadly revoked a felons' voting rights. Giving convicted felons the right to vote either requires a constitutional amendment or an executive order in Iowa. In 2005, Governor Tom Vilsack issued an executive order automatically restoring the right to vote for all ex-felons, but in 2011, Governor Terry Branstad reversed the order and required felons to apply to have their rights restored. People from both sides of the aisle have been pushing for the right for felons to vote for several years, various language has been considered but could not garner enough support to pass as a constitutional amendment

Executive Order Number Seven does not restore rights for all felons, only for those who have discharged their sentence and have not been convicted of a felony under chapter 707 (homicide and related crimes). For the purpose of this executive order, discharging a sentence means that the person has been released from confinement, parole, probation or other supervised release, and completed any special sentence under 903B (sex offender registry). Along with the right to vote, those who qualify under this order will also be able to hold public office. The order does not restore firearms rights, which still have to be specially applied for and approved on a case by case basis. Even with the right to vote restored, individuals are still required to pay any fines, costs, restitution or other monetary obligation. The order does not expunge the sentence and further felony convictions can result in the loss of voting rights again.

There are close to 40,000 individuals who will have their voting rights restored in time for the 2020 election and the Governor will be continuing to restore voting rights daily as she receives confirmation that a sentence has been discharged. While this order solves the immediate problem of felon voting, the legislature will need to address the issue in the coming sessions to ensure clear language is in the constitution.

Labor

Unemployment Insurance Claims Down for Week of July 19

The number of initial claims in Iowa, filed between Sunday, July 19, and Saturday, July 25, was 7,441. There were 6,764 initial claims by individuals who work and live in Iowa, and 677 claims by individuals who work in Iowa and live in another state. The number of continuing weekly unemployment claims for July 19-25 was 110,960, a decrease of 4,970 from the previous week. The U.S. Department of Labor adjusted last week's initial claim number down to 8,811 (a decrease of 694) and continuing claims to 115,930 (a decrease of 880 for a total decrease of 1,574). Iowa Workforce Development relies upon the weekly data released by the U.S. Department of Labor to report its numbers and as such, adopts the revisions to the previously published data. Unemployment insurance benefit payments totaled \$31,811,405.67 for the week of July 19-25. The following industries had the most claims:

- Manufacturing (1,850)
- Industry Not Available - Self-employed, Independent Contractors, etc. (1,154)

- Health Care & Social Assistance (693)
- Education Services (517)
- Accommodation & Food Services (472)

A total of \$83,802,990 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) benefits was paid during the week of July 19-25, 2020. Since April 4, 2020, a total of \$1,480,501,543 in FPUC benefits has been paid.

A total of \$5,170,615.30 was paid in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits during the week of July 19-25, 2020.

A total of \$3,771,896.82 in benefits has been paid in Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) benefits for the week of July 19-25, 2020. Since May 27, 2020, a total of \$35,687,243.11 in PEUC benefits have been paid.

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits ended July 25th in Iowa which means the \$600 weekly additional benefit stopped. Claimants will therefore see a corresponding decrease in their weekly benefit amount. Individuals who have exhausted the additional 13 weeks of PEUC benefits may be eligible for State Extended Benefits (EB) announced in June. Claimants should continue to file weekly claims so that their claims can be reviewed to determine eligibility for State EB. These benefits may provide eligible claimants up to an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits. Not everyone who qualified for PEUC will be eligible for State EB.

Employers are now required to notify their employees about Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits in accordance with Iowa Administrative Code Section 871-22.19. The requirement ensures that workers are aware of the benefits they may be eligible for if they become unemployed or experience a reduction in hours.

(Info from iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov)

Natural Resources

Sign up for Iowa State Park Passport

During the 100-year anniversary of Iowa State Parks, you can have a chance to win prizes for visiting Iowa's parks! Click [here](#) to sign up for the park passport.

In August, each qualified check-in earns a chance to win one of 10 free nights of camping at an Iowa State Park or one of 5 sets of mystery books by Iowa Author Karen Musser Nortman.

If you are one of the first 50 to check in to ALL 61 State Park locations, you can win an official Parks 2020 baseball cap.

Every unique check-in is an entry to the grand prize giveaway – a two-night cabin stay at Honey Creek Restor or will a set of 10 Iowa State Park Art Prints from BozzPrints. All check-ins through October 31 qualify.

Public Safety

Protect Your Right to Bear Arms

In 2019, the House and Senate voted in support of Senate Joint Resolution 18. This resolution restricts the government from infringing on a fundamental right, the right to keep and bear arms. SJR 18 passed on party lines, 53-46 in the House. During the debate, Democrats claimed to support the rights of gun owners while at the same time supporting bills that directly undermine second amendment freedoms.

For years, House Republicans have worked to strengthen rights for law abiding Iowans. Iowa is one of only six states without a constitutional amendment protecting firearms rights. The language approved by the House and Senate reads as follows:

“The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. The sovereign state of Iowa affirms and recognizes this right to be a fundamental individual right. Any and all restrictions of this right shall be subject to strict scrutiny.”

This language requires a court reviewing Iowa’s firearms laws to use strict scrutiny. This is the highest standard of judicial review and requires the government to prove the law was passed to further a “compelling governmental interest” and the law is narrowly tailored to achieve that interest. This language would not invalidate Iowa’s current or future laws, unless it is proven they don’t serve a compelling governmental interest. In other states, with a strict scrutiny standard, laws banning felons from possessing firearms and requiring permits have all been upheld as constitutional.

All House Democrats claimed to support firearms rights on the floor during debate, but their actions tell another story. During the 88th General Assembly (2019-2020), House Democrats introduced at least 24 pieces of legislation aimed at restricting law-abiding Iowans firearms rights. Bills like HF 65 that would instantly criminalize any person who owns a “large capacity” magazine that can hold over 10 rounds of ammunition, or HF 125 that would put law abiding Iowans in prison for up to ten years if they sell a “semiautomatic assault weapon” a made-up class of weapons based solely on how a firearm looks. House Democrats even submitted two bills to allow a sheriff to deny gun permits for almost any reason, taking Iowa backwards to a time of “may issue” permits. These bills and others like it were sponsored by numerous Democrats some of whom claimed to support firearms rights on the floor.

The language in SJR 18 will have to pass both the House and Senate again within the next two years to be eligible for the public to vote on in 2022. If the House is controlled by Democrats, there will be no vote on SJR 18, instead Iowans can expect votes on bills to take away their firearms, ammunition, and their freedom.

¹ <https://dia.iowa.gov/press-release/2020-07-30/state-iowa-strengthen-enforcement-social-distancing-requirements-food-and>

State Government

State of Iowa Increases Enforcement of Social Distancing in Restaurants and Bars

Last week, the State of Iowa began to take additional steps to enforce compliance with Governor Reynolds' emergency public health disaster proclamation regarding social distancing and advanced hygiene practices at Iowa bars, restaurants, and other food establishments.

The Alcoholic Beverages Division (ABD) and Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) will work together to ensure that businesses follow public health guidelines set forth by the proclamation due to the coronavirus pandemic.

To promote social distancing and limit the spread of COVID-19, the proclamation requires establishments to create at least six feet of physical distance between each group or individual dining or drinking alone, all patrons must have a seat at a table or bar, and an establishment must limit patrons from congregating together closer than six feet.

For businesses with an alcoholic beverage permit or license, the Alcoholic Beverages Division will issue a \$1,000 fine for the first offense. For businesses with only a food license, DIA will issue a warning.

The second documented infraction for either a business with only a food license as well as those with both a food and alcohol permit or license will trigger a seven-day suspension of the business' alcohol permit or license by ABD, as well as a seven-day suspension by DIA of the business' food license.

A third infraction will trigger the revocation of all food and alcohol permits and licenses for the offending business.¹

In practice, enforcement will be through customer complaints and ABD/DIA investigating the complaints.

An example of a complaint form for the Alcoholic Beverage Division can be found here:
https://stateofiowa.seamlessdocs.com/f/abd_covid19_violation.

An example of a complaint form for the Department of Inspections and Appeals can be found here:
https://stateofiowa.seamlessdocs.com/f/COVID_Food_Violation

Transportation

U.S. DOT Announces Resources for Rural Communities

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao announced the [Applicant Toolkit](#) (Toolkit) for the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES) Initiative at the U.S. Department of Transportation. It is the latest effort by the Department and the Trump Administration to improve rural access to federal grant funds. The Toolkit provides user-friendly information and resources to enhance rural applicants' familiarity with the Department's discretionary grant programs and the funding process.

"The ROUTES Applicant Toolkit will help rural communities better identify and navigate grant funding opportunities for rural transportation projects," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

Rural communities and their transportation networks have been instrumental in building and supplying urban areas throughout our nation's history, carrying people from city to city and carrying freight from bedrock American industries such as agriculture, mining, forestry, and manufacturing. Yet rural transportation infrastructure has significant challenges.

While one-fifth of Americans live in rural areas, 70% of America's road miles are in rural areas, carrying nearly 50% of the nation's truck traffic. In addition, 44% of automobile travel on rural roads is done by metropolitan area citizens, and rural America's traffic fatalities are disproportionately high, with a fatality rate twice that of urban areas. Further, of the nation's bridges that are posted for weight limits, 90% are in rural areas.

Discretionary grant applications can be complex and resource-intensive to complete. Many of the Department's discretionary grant programs require non-federal funding to cover a portion of project costs, which may present an additional barrier to rural communities with limited funding.

The new ROUTES Toolkit addresses these challenges by assisting rural stakeholders to better understand how to access the Department's grants and financing products. Specifically, the Toolkit illustrates key applicant requirements when participating in the Department's discretionary grants processes. It also catalogues discretionary grant programs by applicant type and eligible project activities. Additionally, the Toolkit provides resources for applicants to maximize the potential for award success.

Secretary Chao announced the ROUTES Initiative at the annual meeting of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) in St. Louis, Missouri last October. The initiative is led by the ROUTES Council, an internal deliberative body at DOT, which identifies critical rural transportation concerns and coordinate efforts among the Department's operating administrations.

To learn more about the ROUTES Initiative and the Toolkit, visit www.transportation.gov/rural.

Veterans Affairs

Complete List of Assistance Programs for Iowa Veterans

The state of Iowa offers a wide variety of assistance programs for Veterans. Here is a complete list courtesy of the Iowa VA.

IDVA Benefit Specialists

The IDVA staff includes benefits specialists, accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, who specialize in federal VA benefits, as well as state benefits. They advise veterans and family members of veterans concerning federal VA benefits they may be entitled to receive. These include pension, disability compensation, and other ancillary benefits. Benefit specialists can also represent claimants with federal claims and review all correspondence pursuant to those claims to determine if an award action or denial was correct. For additional information, please call the IDVA office at 515-252-4698 or 800-838-4692 and ask for a benefit specialist.

Injured Veterans Grant

This grant provides up to \$10,000 to service members or discharged veterans who sustained serious injury in the line of duty in an area where the veteran was receiving hazardous duty pay after September 11, 2001. (Injury categories are defined in DOD Joint Publication 1-02.)

Information: [Injured Veterans Grant Program](#)

Apply: [Iowa Injured Veteran Grant Application](#)

Homeownership Assistance

This \$5,000 grant is available to a service member who is buying a home in the state of Iowa. Members must have served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001 and purchased a home after March 10, 2005. Eligibility has been expanded to include service members who served 90 days of active duty between August 2, 1990 and April 6, 1991.

Information: [Military Service Member Homeownership Assistance](#)

Contact: To learn more, call 1-800-432-7230

Property Tax Exemption

This benefit reduces a veteran's assessed home value for property tax purposes by \$1,852. In order to qualify, a service member must have served on active duty during a period of war or for a minimum of 18 months during peacetime.

Information: [Iowa Property Tax](#)

Apply: [Property Tax Exemption Application](#)

Disabled Veteran's Homestead Tax Credit

This legislation, from the year 2014, provides 100% exemption of property taxes for 100% disabled service-connected veterans and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) recipients.

Information: [Department of Iowa Revenue](#)

Apply: [Disabled Veteran's Homestead Tax Credit Application](#)

Military Retirement Tax Exemption

This legislation, from the year 2014, exempts federal retirement pay received for military service and survivor benefits from state individual income tax.

Information: [Military Retirement Tax Information](#)

Veterans Designation on Iowa Drivers Licenses and IDs

Honorably discharged veterans may request the "Veteran" designation be placed on their driver's license or non-operator identification card. Veteran must present a copy of their DD214 or applicable discharge document to the Iowa DOT. The veteran must then complete an Iowa DOT Application form. **Note: Veterans may request the "veteran" designation anytime they seek a new card, not just at the time of renewal. The cost for a duplicate DL or nonoperator ID is \$10.00.**

Information: [Veterans License Designation](#)

Apply: [Veteran License Application](#)

Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License

Veterans in receipt of at least a 0% service connected disability can receive a lifetime hunting or fishing license for a \$7.00 fee. In order to qualify, the Iowa resident must have served on active federal service and was disabled as a result of that service.

Apply: [Hunting and Fishing License Application](#)

License Plates

Honorably discharged veterans (as defined in the [Code of Iowa 35.1](#)) are eligible to purchase specialty veteran license plates for their vehicle. These special plates are available for an additional charge through the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Information: [Iowa DOT Military License Plates](#)

Apply: [Veterans License Plate Applications](#)

Iowa Veterans Trust Fund

The State of Iowa has established a multi-million dollar fund to provide certain services to veterans. Beginning in December 2007, interest from this fund has been available to provide relief for Iowa veterans and their families. Currently, funds are used for unemployment or underemployment assistance due to service-related causes, assistance with vision, hearing, dental care, durable medical equipment, and prescription drugs; counseling and substance abuse services; vehicle repairs; housing repair; and transitional housing in an emergency. Trust fund expenditures are approved through the Iowa Veterans Commission.

Apply: [Iowa Veterans Trust Fund](#)

Information: [Iowa Veterans Trust Fund](#)

War Orphan Tuition Assistance:

Children of Iowa veterans killed in action following September 11, 2001 are eligible for up to \$11,844.00 per year in tuition assistance at an Iowa post-secondary institution. Children qualify up to the age of twenty-six (26). Dependents of those killed in action prior to September 11, 2001 are eligible for \$600 per year with a maximum of \$3,000. Residency is required to receive this benefit.

Information: [War Orphan Tuition Assistance](#)

Apply: [War Orphan Tuition Assistance Application](#)

Education

The Iowa Department of Education has been designated by the governor of the state of Iowa as the location for the Iowa State Approving Agency. The State Approving Agency is responsible for approving all GI Bill programs in Iowa for veterans and other eligible persons. (Program approval is a function of the State not the Department of Veterans Affairs.)

Information: [Iowa Department of Education Veterans and Military Education](#)

Contact Information:

Michael Dommer, Consultant - Michael.Dommer@iowa.gov

Phone: 515.281.3516

Rebecca Griglione, Assistant - Rebecca.Griglione@iowa.gov

Phone: 515.281.3317 Ext. 3317

[Post 9/11 GI Bill Information](#)

National Guard Tuition Benefits

Present Iowa National Guard members in good standing are eligible for up to \$2,700 per semester for full time enrollment. Part-time students are eligible for \$196 per semester hour. Additionally, Guard members who are mobilized will receive a tuition refund.

Information: [National Guard Tuition Benefits](#)

Contact Information: To learn more call, 515-252-4579

Operation Recognition High School

This program furnishes an honorary high school diploma to qualifying veterans who did not complete high school (in Iowa) due to armed service enlistment. The application form is used by the IDVA and the Department of Education to establish eligibility for honorably discharged veterans.

Apply: [Operation Recognition High School](#)

Iowa Veterans Cemetery

The Iowa Veterans Cemetery began operation on July 3, 2008. Located 10 miles west of Des Moines, near Van Meter, the cemetery is available to all veterans, their spouses, and dependent children for burial. Honorably discharged veterans will be interred at no charge and spouses/dependents will be buried for a \$300 fee.

Information: [Iowa Veterans Cemetery](#)

Apply: [Registration for Burial Determination](#)

Ways & Means

Annual Tax Holiday on Back to School Clothes this Weekend

This Friday and Saturday is Iowa's Annual Sales Tax Holiday on back to school clothes and shoes. In general, select clothing and footwear are tax exempt – meaning no state sales tax and no local option sales tax will be collected. Sales do not have to be in person and are tax exempt if they are ordered and paid for during the exemption period.

Iowa Code section 423.3(68)(a)(2) states the sales tax holiday begins at 12:01 a.m. on the first Friday in August and ends at 12:00 am midnight the following day—so the sales tax is back for Sunday purchases! Businesses that are open on these days are required to participate. It is not an optional holiday and a business cannot advertise that they will pay or otherwise absorb the sales tax on items that don't qualify.

The exemption does not apply in any way to the price of an item selling for \$100.00 or more. The exemption applies to each article priced under \$100.00 regardless of how many items are sold on the same invoice to a customer. Things that are not exempt include: watches, watchbands, jewelry, umbrellas, handkerchiefs, sporting equipment, skis, swim fins, roller blades, skates, and any special clothing or footwear designed primarily for athletic activity or protective use and not usually considered appropriate for everyday wear.

Thank you for allowing me to be your representative for District 75!

Take care, and please be safe!