



Legislative Update

The 2021 Iowa Legislative Session

Week of January 25, 2021

This week in the Iowa Legislature

This week was another busy one in the Iowa Legislature. With countless bills and a handful of resolutions introduced this week alone, committees met to assign those bills and they passed some bills out of committee, but much of the days were filled with subcommittee meetings. Additionally, the House and Senate both debated the Governor's education bills and their own priority constitutional amendments.

The Governor signed her first bill of the session on Friday after both the House and Senate passed [SF 160](#), Return to In-Person Learning bill which requires schools to give parents the option of their kids returning to 100% in-person learning. Both chambers passed the bill largely on a party line vote (Senate 28-19, House 59-39). Schools are required to have a 100% in-person instruction offering by Monday, February 15th. Republicans noted this is a priority for many working families, while democrats expressed concerns about the lack of appropriate safeguards in place to protect students and staff.

The Senate also narrowly passed (26-21) the Governor's Education Plan, [SF 159](#), which has proved to be much more controversial. The bill is noted for pitting public education against private education. Republican senators said the bill is important to help students trapped in failing schools while Democrats said the scholarships in the bill are vouchers and will transfer money out of public schools which lead to more rural school closures. House leaders said they will take their time to consider this piece of legislation.

A few controversial constitutional amendment bills advanced this week as well. [HJR 5](#), No Right to Abortion, was debated and adopted by the House on a 55-44 vote, with all Democrats and Republicans Bloomingdale, Klein, and Maxwell voting against the bill. The abortion amendment now goes to the Senate. Additionally, [SJR 7](#), Firearm Rights was adopted by both chambers. Passing the Senate with a 28-19 vote and the House with a 58-41 vote. It goes to a vote of the people in the November 2022 election.

Special Election for Senate District 41

The special election for Senate District 41 occurred on Tuesday, January 26. Republican Adrian Dickey won against Democrat Mary Stewart, returning Republicans to a 32-18 majority in the Iowa Senate. Dickey will succeed now Congresswoman Mariannette Miller-Meeks in the Iowa Senate.

Looking Ahead

As we start the fourth week of the 2021 Legislative Session, committee and subcommittee work will continue to consume the majority of the legislators' time. We do expect limited floor debate to continue so bills can start making their way through the process. A list of scheduled [committees and subcommittees](#) with their virtual access information can be found at the link above. We will keep you updated on how you can access legislators and participate in the process while in-person access remains limited.

Key Initiatives this Week

On Thursday the full House Public Safety Committee passed [HSB 72](#), Public Safety Equipment Fund, in a 21-0 vote. The bill establishes a Public Safety Equipment Fund, includes reporting requirements for how DPS uses the funds to purchase equipment, and requires county treasurers to ask persons renewing their vehicle registration if the person wants to contribute to the fund. The bill is now eligible for full House floor debate.

Bills of Interest

Like sessions past, Advocacy Strategies will be tracking all bills pertaining to you. Along with this document, each week you will find an excel spreadsheet attached with the bills you have registered for or which we are waiting for a declaration. **Please review this and confirm your declarations are correct and complete.** 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.**

Dates to Note

- February 12: Final day for individual bill requests
- March 5: First funnel deadline (Friday of the 8th week)
- April 2: Second funnel deadline (Friday of the 12th week)
- April 30: 110th 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 2021 Legislative Session and throughout the year. Contact information for your lobbying team follows.

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