

Legislative Newsletter

April 15, 2016



Budget Bills To Be Debated Next Week

The end of this week saw several budget bills dropping and schedules for debate starting Monday. This is a good sign signalling the end of the 2016 session. The week was busy, and there were several high points.

HF 2439 passed a Senate Committee, dealing with E-911 funding. It appears the two chambers have an agreement on language for this issue, including 60 percent of the wireless surcharge going back to the local public safety answering points. This was our top priority for E-911, so we are very appreciative of the Legislature for their work on this. Another 15 percent would go toward voluntary consolidation grants and 22 percent to Homeland Security. Homeland Security wanted \$3.5 million left in a carryover fund, and it appears they may get that as requested.

This week was also big on the fight to mandate long-term mental health services funding. Senate File 2236 passed a Senate Ways and Means Committee Thursday unanimously. We take this to be a good sign that this bill will be brought to the floor for vote, and will pass with bipartisan support. Of the 100 clients who have a stake or would have an interest

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in mental health and disability services, more than half have registered in favor of the bill. The lobbying team has warned the Legislature if mental health funding is kicked down the proverbial road one more session, property taxes must be increased, rather than acting now to lift the cap and give counties the authority to adjust to their own needs. Again, 73 of the 99 counties have or could reduce their property taxes under SF 2236.

An editorial from Sen. Mark Segebart, who sponsored the bill, and County Social Services Mental Health Region CEO Bob Lincoln, will appear in the Des Moines Register Sunday.

One of our allies in the lobby that has been helping us, Easter Seals of Iowa, distributed the op-ed column to 150 news outlets in Iowa Friday.

NOTE: SF 2236 has been reassigned a bill number and now appears as SF 2318.

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