

Legislative Newsletter

March 17, 2017



Gun Bill Will See Senate Debate

The Revenue Estimating Conference revised and released estimates Tuesday. Based on the new downwards estimates, Iowa could face a potential shortfall of \$131 million in FY '17, and \$191 million in FY '18. The Governor's Office cited declining commodity prices caused by a "challenging farm economy," among other causes. Others, including some legislators, point to the substantial redirection of state revenue through tax credits and tax cuts for the shortfall, since the rest of the Iowa economy is doing exceptionally well.

According to recent analysis, the states takes in about \$12-\$13 billion in annual revenue but only has about \$7.5 billion available for state appropriations. There has been some discussion for a review of tax credits and House Appropriations Chairman Pat Grassley has introduced a study bill to do just that. No action has been taken on the bill.

The Governor's Office has proposed the state dip into its rainy day fund instead of additional budget cuts.

The week ended with the House passing worker's compensation (House File 518), which passed along party lines. Debate lasted several hours Thursday, with one amendment adopted. The amendment strikes language that would change an employee's intoxication as a substantial factor in an injury to the "predominate" factor before preventing an employee from being compensated for injuries sustained on the job; it also changes "functional disability" to

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“functional impairment” in regards to an employee’s compensation base. It also eliminates the cap on 67 years of age for receiving worker compensation.

In the Senate, the week ended with the Senate Judiciary Committee voting to pass out the gun omnibus bill (HF 517), after over an hour of discussion and caucusing. Democrats said they want clarified language about where and when a child may use a firearm, as well as clarifying the meaning of possessing a firearm as it applies to a child. Democrats also reiterated “stand your ground” language was unnecessary, as Iowa Code already contains provisions regarding situations where a person does not have to retreat before using force.

Other work this week included:

- HF 52: Bailiff Protections. This bill would change language to include persons used by a county to provide bailiff service under provisions for interference with official acts. This bill was passed unanimously out of Senate Judiciary and now goes to the Senate floor.
- SF 454: E-911 Changes. This bill is mostly a technical clean-up, however, it also provides local emergency management agencies with voting membership on joint 911 service boards. It also removes the \$4 million scoop from last year. It does not change the 60 percent wireless surcharge return to the public safety answering points. It also requires the Department of Homeland Security and emergency management to develop a plan to merge the wireline 911 network with Next Generation 911 Network. There is an anticipated amendment about voluntary consolidation. This bill passed subcommittee and now goes the Senate Appropriations Committee. It is funnel-proof.
- HF 203: Primary Road Fund Spending. This bill allows the State Transportation Commission to allocate money from the primary road fund for secondary roads in exchange for retaining a portion of federal road funds that would otherwise be given to cities and counties. Several amendments were offered that failed, including an amendment to repeal the collective bargaining bill (non-germane) and an amendment that would have required the projects funded by this bill to

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comply “buy American” provisions. The bill has passed the House and Senate and now goes to the Governor’s desk.

- SF 452: Deputy Election Auditor. This bill limits the salary of the deputy auditor in charge of election to 85 percent of the salary of the county auditor. This bill passed the Senate unanimously and now goes to the House.

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