

Legislative Newsletter

Feb. 9, 2018



Deapprops Passes Senate

The Legislature did not meet Monday due to state party caucuses, but spent the rest of the week debating education funding and de-appropriations, as well as committee work.

The Senate de-appropriations bill, Senate File 2117, made \$52 million in cuts to the fiscal year 2018 appropriations. A strike after amendment lessened to the cuts of \$32 million by reducing the cuts to the regent universities (\$14.5 million), community colleges (\$1.8 million), and the judicial branch (\$1.6 million). Amendments that would prohibit the Department of Justice from reducing victim assistance grants, corrects the language regarding ground emergency transport supplement, and reduces the legislator per diem days for legislators to 85 all passed unanimously. The strike-after was adopted on party lines, with the final bill also passed on party lines, 29-21.

The House has also offered its own de-appropriations version, House Study Bill 648. This bill calls for \$34 million in cuts, as well as a supplemental appropriation of \$1.7 million for indigent defense.

Of note, the backfill was not included in either the House or Senate bills.

While the Senate debated de-appropriations, the House worked on school aid funding. There is a \$14 million difference between the House and Senate versions. The House on

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Wednesday passed House File 2230 with an increase of \$32 million in state aid; however, the Senate amended it hours later and approved a \$46 million increase.

In committee and subcommittee work, a House Local Government subcommittee passed a bill that reduces the flexibility of county supervisor redistricting. House Study Bill 625 would prohibit counties with a population of more 150,000 and using a single-member equal-population districts from changing those districts by special election or by the board of county supervisors. This is particularly problematic as Linn County has used special election to change its districts from three to five 15 years ago, then last year from five back to three. We argued that this is a local control issue that voters are able to handle on their own. There is an amendment that would, instead of keeping larger counties under “plan three,” LSA would redraw the supervisor districts rather than it being done by a local commission.

The Senate Human Resources Committee unanimously passed a bill regarding the prescription monitoring program (PMP). Senate Study Bill 3071 (successor to Senate File 2198) would add a registered certified pharmacy tech to the Board of Pharmacy, and add prescribers to those required to report to the PMP on controlled substance prescriptions. Concerns from other stakeholders were that they wanted the bill narrowed, as it would cover dentists and other prescribers who do not primarily prescribe opioid-related controlled substances.

As a reminder, the week of Feb. 12 is funnel week. Bills must be voted out of their subcommittees and full committees in the chamber of origin by Friday. The exceptions are Ways & Means and Appropriations bills; these remain funnel proof until the last day of session.

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