

# Legislative Newsletter

Feb. 15, 2019



With the first funnel deadline weeks away, both chambers started debate on supplemental school aid this week and continued subcommittee meetings so bills may be placed on the committee calendar. Friday was the final day for draft request submission on individually sponsored bills. The first funnel is March 8<sup>th</sup>.

Both the House and Senate advanced their versions of prisoners' medical expense out of subcommittees this week (Senate Study Bill 1074 and House Study Bill 137). Both bills require the county sheriffs to provide necessary medical aid to prisoners by means of transporting the prisoner to the hospital if necessary. The bills put into the Iowa Code that payment would be on the county after the hospital attempted to bill the prisoner's insurance first. The bill would require payment be sought in the following priority order: private insurers (assuming the insurance plan covers care while in jail); another source such as the VA, Social Security; or the "appropriate governmental agency" (AKA, the counties). We are presently undecided on the bill, but emphasized that we are open to continuing to work on the issue with the Sheriffs' Association, as the bill comes with some concerns which have been shared with and discussed with the Urban County Coalition.

Another bill that was amended and passed through subcommittee is House File 56, which pertains to elections. The bill would make the following county elections nonpartisan: supervisors, auditors, sheriffs, treasurers, recorders, and county attorneys. A primary election

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for nomination would be held concurrent to the primary election for non-county government offices. We are registered against the bill.

Finally, the House released its budget limitations bill for counties (House Study Bill 165). In essence, it is statutory effort to pass the law for Tax Relief amendment, which was defeated years ago in a statewide referendum. HSB 156 strikes the property tax levy rate limitations on the general fund and rural funds of counties and cities, and establishes a new limitation on property taxes. It also allows for the certification of additions to the maximums after public meetings, and elections if the voters petition for one. Limits ending balances in various funds to no more than 25 percent and requires those balances to be used for specific purposes. Finally, the bill would allow cities and counties with low ending balances as of June 2019 to levy additional property taxes through fiscal year 2026. We are registered against this bill.

A Senate subcommittee passed out Senate Study Bill 1141 (companion to House Study Bill 100), regarding non-conforming structures, namely mobile homes. We are registered as undecided on these bills, however, our team has concerns with this bill because it is written so broadly that no type of non-conforming would be able to be approved. We expressed to the Senators if the bill was amended to be more narrowly defined and applied, those concerns would be alleviated.

In Committee work this week:

House Human Resources voted out House File 209, which suspends Medicaid coverage for inmates after 20 days of commitment until the inmate is released. This is considered an improvement over the current provision, which terminates such coverage. Under this bill, an inmate is able to get their Medicaid coverage back upon release.

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