

Legislative Newsletter

March 22, 2019



The House Property Tax bill (House Study Bill 165) continues to move slowly. It is in the Ways & Means Committee, so there is no deadline to get it approved before the next funnel deadline.

The House also amended the joint 911 service board voting membership. House File 516 adds a county sheriff (or the sheriff's designee), and a police chief (or designee) whose city operates a PSAP or from the county where the city is located.

The House passed the following bills and sent them to the Senate:

House File 735: This bill allows the Soil Conservation Districts to carry out additional duties related to water quality protection and the improvement of water quality under the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. An amendment requiring individual and district-wide projects be carried out was adopted. The House passed the bill unanimously.

House File 423: This is the Inmate Medical Coverage bill. It suspends, as opposed to terminates, Medicaid coverage for inmates after 20 days of commitment until the inmate is released. The House passed this bill unanimously.

The Senate had a few controversial bills up for debate. Among them was the Land Acquisition bill (Senate File 548). This bill has been controversial because it would, in part,

Gary Grant, CEO
Cell 319.721.5977
gary@grantconsultingllc.com

Larry Murphy, CFO
Cell 319.361.2834
larry@llmurphy.com

Meghan Malloy, General Counsel
Cell 515.321.5825
mvmalloy83@gmail.com

L&L Murphy Consulting / Grant Consulting

prohibit local governments from using federal clean water funds to acquire land from a private entity after July 2019 but allows funds to be used to finance an acquisition that occurred prior to that time. There were several amendments offered during floor debate: an amendment to define private entities to exclude individuals, cities, city utilities and public water works was adopted; all other amendments were rejected. The bill was passed on party lines and has been sent to the House.

The Senate also debated Senate File 93: This bill changes procedures related to abandoned buildings. The Senate adopted a strike after amendment to conform the bill to the House version, House File 676. That version includes certain mobile/manufactured homes in the abandoned buildings provisions. It also strikes the requirement that a building be in violation of the housing code for six months before being declared abandoned. Requires the property to have been vacant or only occupied by trespassers 135 days before requesting an inspection, and establishes a six-month waiting period, or 30 days after inspection, whichever is later, before filing a petition for abatement. The Senate passed the amended bill unanimously.

In committee work, the House Judiciary Committee passed Senate File 457. It changes criminal and ag theft surcharges. It also includes school bus safety provisions for failure to stop for a school bus. The bill also includes court modernization fees and scheduled violations. The bill was passed 17-1.

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