

Legislative Newsletter

Feb. 7, 2020



It was a short week in the Iowa Legislature due to the caucuses for both Republicans and Democrats. Lawmakers made up for lost time with back to back subcommittees, committee work, and the Senate even started debate on Thursday morning, passing **Senate File 2095**, which pertains to county attorneys obtaining professional permits for guns in courthouses.

The contentious county supervisors compensation bill (**House File 2035**) passed its subcommittee on Wednesday afternoon, however, representatives said there would be an amendment. While the representatives on the subcommittee agreed local control and voters should have the say at the ballot box, the amendment would contain a threshold safety valve of sorts on county supervisor compensation.

Senate Study Bill 3116/House Study Bill 657 was introduced late Thursday. This is the Governor's tax bill. The highlights of this bill include:

- **Income Taxes:** Changes the mechanism to trigger certain income tax cuts to when state revenues exceed \$8.3 billion, and reduces the rates and number of brackets to four as of the 2023 tax year.
- **Earned Income Tax Credit:** Raises the family income eligibility for the EITC to \$90,000.
- **Preceptor Credit:** Creates a tax credit for doctors who give on-site instruction to medical students at rural hospitals/clinics.

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- **Sales Tax:** Raises the sales tax by one cent, with 3/8 of a cent automatically being scooped for the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust fund. Ends the water excise tax. Exempts feminine hygiene products and diapers from the sales tax.
- **Counties:** Shifts most juvenile court funding to the Indigent Defense Fund.
- **Mental Health/Disability Services:** The bill establishes new MH/DS state supplement to help counties with mental health spending. The Senate is giving the impression there are several lawmakers who would prefer to completely fund mental health services with state dollars, and not use property tax. This raises more concerns, however, including if state funding would then make people who work in the regions state or county employees. If the former, then how will the regions manage employees who technically aren't their employees?

HOUSE COMMITTEE ACTION

In House Committees this week:

Supplemental appropriations (**House File 2244**) for the Glenwood facility (\$333,000) and an additional \$20 million to Homeland Security was unanimously passed out of the House Appropriations Committee. The Senate companion bill (**Senate File 2144**) also passed the Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously and then was unanimously passed out of the Senate chamber Thursday and sent to the House.

The House Human Resources Committee unanimously **House File 2051**, this strikes the current Medicaid home and community-based services elderly waiver monthly cap maximum. The Dept. of Human Services would have to annually report on the amount spent per recipient.

The “ban the box” bill (**House Study Bill 519**) passed committee largely on party lines, 11-9. The bill prohibits a local government from passing ordinances prohibiting

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private sector employers from asking applicants for information related to their criminal history.

House Study Bill 504 unanimously passed committee this week. This is the open meetings bill which deems any deliberations or actions taken by a government within the budgetary duties of the body as subject to the open meetings laws.

In Senate committees this week:

Senate Study Bill 3080 was voted out of the Senate Education Committee 8-5. This is the classroom behavior bill which would require teacher preparation programs to include the development of individualized education programs (IEP) and other strategies for behavioral interventions. These strategies would be established by the Department of Education with a half-million dollar appropriation. The bill also appropriates \$1.58 million for the therapeutic classrooms incentive fund and another half-million dollars for transportation claims reimbursement.

Senate File 2184 (formerly SF 115) allows peace officers whose duties include carrying a gun, to carry on school grounds, regardless of whether carrying is part of the peace officer's duties. The bill passed the Senate Judiciary Committee unanimously.

Finally, **Senate Study Bill 3073**, the prisoner's medical expense bill, passed committee 12-1. The lobbying team worked with Iowa Association of Counties, Hospital Association and municipal law enforcement groups to make sure local governments and local enforcement agencies had no more fiscal exposure than in the past regarding medical costs for inmates.

Senate Study Bill 3057 passed out of the State Government Committee unanimously. The bill allows the state to help fund hazard mitigation, if federal assistance

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is granted, without approval of state hazard mitigation funding. The local governments would have to have a state-approved emergency plan to receive funds.

Introduced this week:

House Study Bill 618: This bill raises the amount of the aggregate fee that the Auditor collects for audits of cities to \$600,000.

House Study Bill 631: This bill requires that a county declare that EMS is an essential service before adopting levies to pay for such services, and requires an effort to coordinate emergency services with local governments. It finally strikes the five-year limit for local EMS taxes and requires that voters petition for an election to end such taxes.

House Study Bill 632: This is a county zoning bill. Among several provisions is a requirement for supervisors to use the same procedures to amend a comprehensive plan as would be needed to adopt the plan originally. Furthermore, county supervisors cannot hold a public hearing on a recommendation from a county zoning commission unless the zoning commission has done a final report. Public hearings must be held before adopting a comprehensive plan. Finally, the bill establishes the residency requirements for the zoning commission members.

Senate Study Bill 3119 requires the Department of Management to establish a county records digitization program. Requires that an applying county be able to pay for 70 percent of the costs.

Senate File 2179/House File 2210: This bill allows fire departments, EMS agencies and law enforcement agencies to donate used equipment to another organization. Includes liability protections.

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