

Legislative Newsletter

Jan.15, 2021



The 2021 session is here, and it has started with a similar backdrop to the end of the 2020 session: COVID-19 is still prevalent in Iowa, and political division and social and civil unrest are dominating local and national headlines.

Last year's session ended in three days in June following a 10-week hiatus due to COVID. The first night had a 9 p.m. curfew in Polk County due to protests against racial injustice.

While it is still not business as usual on the Hill, the House and Senate, as well as the lobbyists on the Hill, are finding solutions to get our work done and advocate for our clients. Nearly all committees and subcommittee meetings will be held virtually, although the Chambers have established different rules about how to speak at subcommittees and access to view committee hearings.

As of Friday night, one unnamed person "associated with the House" tested positive for Covid19. The General Assembly had adopted rules to prohibit publicly identifying individuals who test positive and are relying on individuals to both report and self-isolate. It is not clear whether the individual was a House member or staff. Leaders have indicated that they cannot mandate masks in the building controlled by the General Assembly. The individual was last in the Capitol Wednesday, January 13.

Contract tracing is underway but Leaders have not indicated any other activity as of the weekend.

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The Condition of the State was delivered at night instead of on Tuesday morning. In her address, Gov. Reynolds called for all schools to provide the option of returning five days a week in person and announced her “Back the Blue” legislative proposal. House and Senate Republicans have also stated a desire to focus on childcare needs statewide, which became more than apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Legislature did not wait long to start subcommittee hearings, which commenced Thursday and with contentious topics such as the death penalty.

Among the bills already introduced this session:

Senate File 77: This bill abolishes county compensation committees and gives the supervisors the duty to set compensation.

House File 21: An Act relating to revitalization areas by authorizing cities and counties to provide property tax exemptions for certain property located in areas previously subjected to lending discrimination and including applicability provisions.

Please do not hesitate Larry (319-361-2834), Gary (319-721-5977), or Meghan (515-321-5825) with questions and concerns as the session progresses.

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