

Legislative Newsletter

Jan. 14, 2022



The 2022 legislative session gaveled in on Jan. 10, amid the sounds of first-day rallies on the first floor and activity through the rotunda. Subcommittees started as early as this week and several new bills were introduced in both chambers. The Legislature is in year two of its general assembly session, meaning bills that were still viable at the end of 2021 are still eligible for this session. And this year, taxes appear to be the name of the game for the majority party.

In her annual Condition of the State address Tuesday night, Gov. Reynolds announced she will propose a flat tax rate of four percent. Senate Republicans have already stated they will present their own comprehensive tax plan, with the Senate Ways & Means Committee intending to not meet until the plan has been drafted.

Introduced this week:

House File 2003: This bill would direct the Dept. of Human Services and the Dept. of Public Health to set Medicaid waiver reimbursement rates for substance abuse treatment. The Departments would agree on a projected cost report with the integrated provider network, and both Departments would have to review the rates and to report to the Governor and Legislature on funding needed for rate changes.

House File 2005: This bill would prohibit local governments from requiring prior approval for a no-impact home business and limits regulations to narrowly-tailored restrictions. The bill would not allow requirements that the property be rezoned for commercial use or to have fire sprinklers. Local governments would be required to establish by a “clear and convincing” standard that any regulation complies with the bill.

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House Study Bill 530: This bill would require the Dept. of Human Services to implement a tiered reimbursement methodology (partially based on the inpatient bed tracking study) for Medicaid psychiatric in-patient care, based on the patient's acuity by July of this year.

House Study Bill 531: This bill appropriates sufficient funds in fiscal year 2023 to expand the capacity at the Cherokee mental health institution by 12 adult and 6 adolescent beds, and by 20 and 8 beds respectively at the Independence mental health institution.

House Study Bill 532: This bill would require the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics to administer a psychiatric residency program at the Cherokee and Independence mental health institutions and at the Oakdale Classification Center. The program would have to have 12 positions with preference to lowans who attended college or medical school in Iowa.

House File 2025: This bill would prohibit the use of voting equipment that can connect to the internet.

House Study Bill 536: This bill would prohibit local governments from adopting stormwater ordinances that exceed the requirements of state or federal law.

House Study Bill 537: This bill pertains to the mental health prescriber loan repayments. It establishes a prescribing mental health professional loan repayment program in the CSC, similar to other loan repayment programs for healthcare professionals. Under this bill, it would also require the professional to practice for five years. There is priority to lowans and members of the Iowa National Guard. In terms of limitations, the bill sets limits on loan repayments to \$40,000 annually and \$200,000 overall (psychiatrists); \$10,000 and \$50,000 (ANRP); \$8,000 and \$40,000 (prescribing psychologist). Appropriates \$1 million for the program to the CSC.

Senate Study Bill 3029: This bill would give state agencies, and employees, officers and agents, protection from liability for good-faith actions taken in response to a state or federal disaster proclamation.

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Senate Study Bill 3032: This Economic Development Agency (EDA) bill moves the repeal of the Iowa Energy Center to 2027. It would also allow the EDA to designate a county as economically distressed for the High Quality jobs program due to recent significant layoffs, and allows the agency to extend the deadline for a housing project under the workforce housing program.

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