



FROM THE DESK OF REPRESENTATIVE DE BOEF

January 26, 2012

Doing the People's Business

After being in the legislative session of the 84th General Assembly for three weeks, we are starting to get down to business in earnest. Two important issues looming before us are property tax reform & education reform. Sub-committees have been meeting regularly, putting in long hours on these two topics. I do not serve on any of these sub-committees, & I have been here long enough to know not to get too excited about initial proposals because the end product will be much different.

Three bills that we have passed out of the House are HF 573, HF 2042, and SF 2018. HF 573 codifies language that Governor Branstad put in place last year with an executive order. This states that all agencies must produce an impact statement on any affected business of a proposed rule. The hope is to curtail over-aggressive rule making that can be a detriment to job growth in our state. This passed unanimously.

National Guard Educational Assistance Program

Next we voted on SF 2007, a supplemental appropriations bill providing an additional \$1.3 million to the National Guard Educational Assistance Program (NGEAP, pronounced Nee'GAP) for FY12. This will be in addition to the \$3.186 million appropriated last year, totaling \$4.486 million.

The reason for the sudden increase was an underestimation in the amount of soldiers who would apply for the funds. With Iowa's largest deployment in the history of the National Guard ending recently and the ending of the war in Iraq, deployments are down and the number of returning soldiers is up. 2010 and 2011 deployment numbers were around 3,000, while 2012's numbers are less than 250. In the 2010/11 school year, there were just under 900 unduplicated students who were given awards, while that number is estimated now to be at 1,440 for 2011/12.

The College Student Aid Commission (CSAC), which administers the program, expended \$2,366,134 of the FY12 appropriation, leaving \$820,099 for second semester.

The awards for a National Guardsman who applies is typically about 90% of the cost of tuition. That equals roughly just more than \$3,200 per semester. General Orr sent out a letter to the Guard stating that due to less funds available, the award would be cut to 50%, or \$1,600.

I am glad we passed SF 2018, to provide this assistance.

USS Iowa Battleship

Last session, the Iowa legislature appropriated \$3 million to the Dept. of Cultural Affairs for a non-profit that was awarded possession of BB-61, the USS Iowa. In September, the U.S. Navy awarded the ship to the Pacific Battleship Center, based in Los Angeles. The Pacific Battleship Center began discussions with the Department of Cultural Affairs. The Department and the Pacific Battleship Center have been engaged in extensive discussions regarding how the funds have been provided. Meanwhile, much needed repairs and painting of the ship have been delayed.

The House and Senate worked together early this session to find a solution to expedite the renovation process for the USS Iowa.

Senate File 2018 is being brought forward to help provide direction to the Department in three ways:

- Outline how the Pacific Battleship Center should spend the money it receives from the state
- Establish a timeline for delivering the money to the PBC
- Establish reporting requirements for PBC on how they have spent the money, with reports going to the Dept. of Cultural Affairs and the State Auditor's office

The bill states that the grant shall be expended for the limited purposes of hull and superstructure preparation and painting, ship repairs and improvements, transportation and towing of the ship, pier and dock preparation and improvements, and museum development.

The Pacific Battleship Center will be required to provide two reports, one with the Department of Cultural Affairs and the other to the Iowa State Auditor itemizing how the money is expended. The first report will be filed when 50 percent of the grant has been expended; the second after 100 percent has been expended.

On January 18th, 2012, the Senate passed SF 2018 unanimously. The House passed the bill unanimously on Thursday, January 26th.

Governor Objects to Rule Requiring Electrical Inspections on Farms

Earlier this week, Governor Branstad formally filed his objection to a 2008 rule that requires farmers to have an inspection done on most electrical work. In his letter to Department of Public Safety Commissioner Larry Noble the governor stated that the rule was a "power-grab" by the Electrical Examining Board, and that it was "unreasonable, arbitrary, and capricious."

Branstad objected to Iowa Administrative Code r. 661-551.2 and 661-552.1 noting that he felt the board went beyond their statutory authority because Iowa Code Chapter 103 does not give the board permission to regulate electrical installations on farms by requiring an inspection or permit. Branstad stated that he felt such a requirement increased the regulatory burden on farmers, was excessively costly, and clearly violated the intent of legislature by circumventing the common-sense exemption for farmers. He said that a \$500 inspection is not needed because farmers generally hire licensed electricians to do the work.

The governor could not veto the rule (put in place by former Governor Culver) because it is more than 70 days old. However, his formal objection to the rule does mean that it will be easier for farmers to challenge the rule in court. The full text of Governor Branstad's rule objection can be found here:

<https://governor.iowa.gov/wpcontent/uploads/2012/01/ElectricalExamBoardObjection.pdf>.

Visitors at the capitol this week: Mike Hadley, Mick Berg, & Deke Wood, Keokuk Co. Supervisors, who were at the Capitol requesting increased funding for roads and bridges.

I am always happy to deal with any requests you may have or any input you may offer! Please contact me at 515-281-3221 or betty.deboef@legis.state.ia.us.