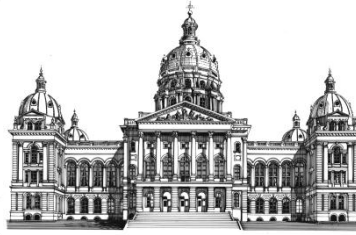


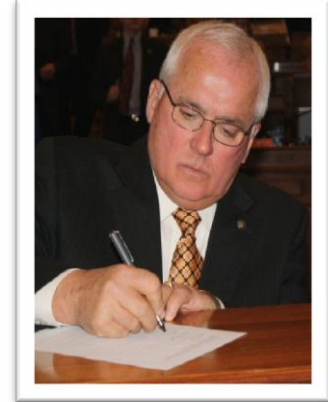
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House of Representatives
State of Iowa
Eighty-Fourth General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, Iowa 50319



OLSON'S OBSERVATIONS

In an effort to protect Iowa's Ag Producers HF 589 seeks to modernize offenses relating to Agriculture Production Code chapter (717A) to reflect changes in modern agriculture and to react to agro-terrorism crimes that the current law, that was enacted a decade ago, couldn't envision. The key proponent of this bill makes it unlawful to produce, posses, and distribute an unauthorized recording (sound or image) on an animal or crop operation. This bill also expands to protect livestock and crop operations against unauthorized destruction, killing or injuring of stock, or disruption of agricultural or biotechnical operations at an owner's premise. The expansion continues to include damaging, altering property, taking by theft and participating in a conspiracy to commit the prior offenses to additionally apply to a keeper of animals (custom feedlot operators, contract feeder of swine, chickens; kennels, and boarder facilities). This

"[HF 589] MAKES IT UNLAWFUL TO PRODUCE, POSSES, AND DISTRIBUTE AN UNAUTHORIZED RECORDING (SOUND OR IMAGE) ON AN ANIMAL OR CROP OPERATION. "

measure also creates a fraud provisions to address circumstances where apparent access to an animal or crop facility is granted by an owner or keeper to another person on the basis of falsehoods or deceptions that intentionally belie the real intent of the person seeking access to the facility. Special thanks to Rep. Sweeney for her work on this bill.

HF 569 works to correct differing interpretations of what date is required to put a filled vacant seat in a city election back on the ballot for reelection. The bill defines the next election for that vacant seat as the next regular city election, which occurs in November on the odd numbered years.

House File 392 makes changes to the Iowa plumber, mechanical professional, and contractor licensing Act. Several constructive changes are being made to streamline/simplify the licensing application. Many of the fees set seemed to be excessive and 3 million dollars in fees to those who paid on a pro rata basis based on the initial cost of the license will be returned. Many of the continuing education issues were simplified as well in this legislation. Many of these changes are being made in reaction to the legislation enacted 3 or 4 years ago. The electrical contractor's bill was also debated on the House Floor and some subtle changes were made.

This week the House approved a number of bills on the Floor (HF 583 – Independent Accreditation of Nonpublic Schools, HF 584 – Driver Education by a Teaching Parent, HF 585 – Charter Schools, HF 588 – Independent Private Instruction), several of which helped increase opportunities for homeschooling families, as well as providing choice and local control into the public school system.

Let's keep the nation of Japan and its people in our prayers. The impact of what is happening over there will spread worldwide and we'll keep you informed of any impact here in our state..

Always feel free to contact me on any issue before the Iowa Legislature. I can be reached at 515/281-6055 during the week or by e-mail at (steven.olson@legis.state.ia.us) or visit my web page for information at (www.iowahouserepublicans.com/members/steven-olson).

Appropriations

Conference Committee on Senate File 209 Continues to Meet

Over the past week, the conference committee on Senate File 209 met several times to try to find a compromise. SF 209 is the federal tax code coupling and FY 2011 supplemental appropriations bill.

The bill was approved by the Senate on February 22 on a 49-0 vote. As it left the Senate, the coupling with the federal tax code portion of the bill reduced general fund revenue by \$256.5 million over three fiscal years (FY 2011 – FY 2013). This includes \$14.7 million for increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit from 7 percent of the federal credit to 10 percent.

In addition, the bill provided the following supplemental appropriations totaling \$45.7 million, all to backfill the cuts made by Governor Culver on his way out of office.

The House approved the bill on Tuesday, March 1 on a 64-34 vote. The House amendment allows individuals to couple with the federal tax code starting in for 2010, allows corporations to couple with the federal tax code starting in 2010 and leaves the Earned Income Tax Credit at 7 percent and not increased to 10 percent. The amendment increases the revenue reduction to \$311.2 million over three years.

Also, the House approved an amendment that added the following items that had been previously approved in House File 45 but removed by the Senate:

- Creation of the Tax Relief Fund to capture the ending general fund balance
- Establishment of a minimum health insurance premium of \$100 for all state employees
- Requires the Revenue Estimating Conference to set a growth rate for FY 2013 at next meeting
- Prohibits DNR from purchasing land through the end of FY 2011, cuts REAP by same amount
- Appropriates \$25 million for mental health and repeals the current system as of July 1, 2012

The conference committee consists of Representatives Raecker (co-chair), Wagner, Helland, Jacoby and Tyler Olson and Senators Bolkom (co-chair), Dvorsky, Jochum, Zaun and Kettering.

The committee met twice the week of March 7 and four times the week of March 14.

The highest priority for the Senate Democrats is increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the supplemental appropriations. The highest priority for House Republicans is the Tax Relief Fund, the mental health funding and bonus depreciation.

House Republicans offered a compromise that would include all of the original provisions of SF 209 including coupling and bonus depreciation as of January 1, 2011, increasing the EITC from 7 to 10 percent, \$46 million in supplemental appropriations. The compromise would also include \$20 million for mental health funding and the language creating the Tax Relief Fund (TRF).

Senate Democrats responded that they wanted language changes to mental health and the TRF. They offered to push the repeal of the mental health law to July 1, 2013 (allowing the current system for one additional year) and agreed to the creation of the Tax Relief Fund but wanted only 25 percent of the ending balance and wanted it all for property tax relief.

House Republicans will continue to work with Senate Democrats to try to reach resolution on this important tax and spending measure and will continue to fight for tax relief and measures contained in the bill necessary for businesses to create jobs and grow Iowa's economy.

(Contact: Lon Anderson, 1-5184)

Agriculture

House Moves to Restore Council for Agricultural Education

On Tuesday, March 15, 2001, the House passed House File 592 by a unanimous 94-aye vote. HF 592 proposes to reestablish the Council for Agricultural Education that was repealed by legislation last year (Senate File 2088). The Council was first established by legislation in 1988 and functioned well for nearly 20 years.

HF 592 reconstitutes the Council as it existed before its repeal. The Council consists of nine voting members appointed by the Governor including five persons representing all areas of agriculture and diverse geographical areas, plus an individual representing agriculture on the state Council for Vocational Education, a secondary school program instructor, a postsecondary school program instructor, and a teacher educator. The council may also include as ex officio nonvoting members-- the state Future Farmers of America president, the current state Future Farmers of America Alumni Association president, the current Postsecondary Agriculture Students president, the current Young Farmers Educational Association president, a state consultant in agricultural education, the Iowa Secretary of Agriculture or the secretary's designee, and two members of each house of the General Assembly.

HF 592 provides that the legislative members shall be bipartisan in composition and sets out procedures for their appointment. The bill sets out duties and procedures for the council, including reviewing, developing, and recommending standards for secondary and postsecondary agricultural education and issuing an annual report to the state Board of Education and the House and Senate Agriculture and Education committees. The term of membership for the council is three years.

DNR Announces Rathbun Watershed Eligible for Extra CRP Financial Incentive

On Tuesday, March 15, 2011, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issued a press release informing landowners in parts of Rathbun Lake watershed who enroll in the general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are eligible for an additional one-time payment of \$100 to \$150 per acre. The general CRP sign up runs from March 14 through April 15. Landowners interested in the financial incentive are urged to apply at their local USDA Farm Service Agency offices. Private landowners in select sections of the lake's watershed will be offered a one-time incentive payment of \$100 per acre for a 10-year CRP contract or \$150 per acre incentive payment for a 15-year CRP contract. The landowner must agree to plant native grasses and forbs. The Iowa Lake Restoration fund has allocated \$75,000 which will provide the additional incentive payments on about 600 acres. Incentive payments are available on a first-come first-served basis. The watershed and 11,000-acre Rathbun Lake are home to the state's largest rural drinking water supply, largest fish hatchery and Honey Creek Resort State Park.

Sediment and nutrients from soil erosion can cause increased cloudiness in the water, algal blooms and resulting sags in oxygen. Establishing native grasses improves water quality and can increase upland bird populations under favorable weather. Current land use is predominantly annual row crop production and habitat fragmentation is prevalent. For more information regarding the incentive, contact Helga Offenburger, DNR wildlife biologist, at (641) 203-0452. Fields with more than 50 percent highly erodible land (HEL) soils will be offered the incentive on the entire CRP offer. Fields with less than 50 percent HEL soils will be offered the incentives only on the erosive soils.

IDALS Announces Farm to School Programs “Wrap Your Own-Iowa Grown” Initiative Accepting Applications

On Wednesday, March 9, 2011, the Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Northey issued a press release in which he noted that Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) is inviting Iowa schools to participate in the “Wrap Your Own-Iowa Grown” initiative that is being offered through the Iowa Farm to School Program. The initiative will promote the purchase of locally-grown vegetables and products to create Iowa grown wraps.

To participating in this initiative, a school’s Food Service Director must complete a one-page application that can be found on the Department’s website at www.IowaAgriculture.gov and then clicking on the “Farm to School” link under “Hot Topics.” From the applications, ten schools will be selected to receive a \$200 grant to support the purchase of locally grown (in season) fruits or vegetables. In addition, schools can compete to win a grand prize by submitting their own wrap recipe. The best wrap recipe using the most local ingredients will receive \$300 for the purchase of fruits and vegetables. The Iowa Farm to School Program coordinator will also host an assembly and provide 25 t-shirts and promotional items to the winning school.

All winning schools will also receive a list of growers/producers/distributors that have Iowa products recipes for different kinds of wraps to distribute to your students “Now That’s a Wrap” contest. Iowa students are also invited to participate by using their photography skills to capture the best looking fruits and vegetables in Iowa. The “Now That’s a Wrap” contest will recognize two students that submit the best photos. The winners will receive a Wrap Your Own T-shirt and their picture will be placed on display at the IDALS website and be used in future promotions. More information and an application can also be found on the “Farm to School” page at www.IowaAgriculture.gov. The submission deadline is May 1, 2011. The photo and application can be emailed to emily.wadle@iowaagriculture.gov or mailed to IDALS-Organics Dept., Attn: Emily Wadle (F2S), 502 E. 9th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319. The “Wrap Your Own-Iowa Grown” is an initiative of the Iowa Farm to School Program that was started in the fall of 2009. This is the third time the program has been offered and the first time it has been available in the spring.

(Contact: Lew Olson, 1-3096)

Commerce

Obama Administration to Call for Privacy Bill of Rights

The Obama administration is beginning to push Congress to adopt a “Privacy Bill of Rights” implementing protections against data gathering by websites and internet providers.

Wednesday’s edition of the **Wall Street Journal** reported that the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communication and Information would appear at a meeting of the Senate Commerce Committee on Wednesday to call on the Congress to move on further internet protections for consumers. The administration’s proposal is built around a report issued last December by the Commerce Department’s Internet Policy Task Force which identified a number of protections for internet users.

Central to these protections would be requiring websites asking for people using their sites for permission to use personal data for a purpose other than what it was collected for. Currently, websites collect a variety of information when people view their website. Sometimes this tracking information is used by the website, but many times the information is given or sold to companies for marketing. One of the ways a person can tell that information on their internet viewing is being used for advertising purposes is by the ads that websites have embedded into their pages.

The proposal may also set the stage for allowing consumers to have access to the information that is being collected about them on the internet, and to require websites to store this personal information in a secure setting. Another idea that may be part of the Obama administration proposal is to call for a “Do Not Track” list. Operating much like the Do Not Call list that many Americans have used to rid themselves of telemarketing calls, a Do Not Track list would allow people disallow websites from collecting personal information from their web usage.

In a related note, a group of internet advertisers announced that they are supportive of a Do Not Track tool to allow internet users to opt out of having their personal information tracked. This is a significant development, as internet advertising groups had, until now, maintained a unified front in opposition to the concept of a Do Not Track list.

(Contact: Brad Trow, 1-3471)

Education

House Passes Education Bills for Homeschool and Choice Advocates

This week the House approved a number of bills on the Floor, several of which helped increase opportunities for homeschooling families, as well as providing choice and local control into the public school system.

HF 583 – Independent Accreditation of Nonpublic Schools

Iowa is the only state in the country requiring state accreditation of nonpublic schools. This bill makes it voluntary like 18 other states, and would allow for a nonpublic school to be accredited by nonpublic accrediting bodies.

HF 584 – Driver Education by a Teaching Parent

Allows a parent teaching a student under competent private instruction to teach driver's education to the student over which they have custody and control. The course of instruction must be approved by the department of transportation and must meet at least the standards taught in public and private schools. Applying for an intermediate license requires a signed form designed by the department showing evidence of completion of the course. Regular requirements apply as far as a driving test for intermediate license and full license are concerned.

HF 585 – Charter Schools

HF 585 amends the charter school and innovation zone school chapter of Iowa code. It separates the approval process for the two types of schools by requiring charter schools to be approved by the local school board, as opposed to the state board of education. Innovation zone school applications are still to be approved by the state board. It allows more entities to apply for a charter school, including community colleges, regents universities, nonpublic schools, private colleges, and nonprofits. Current code only allows for a principal, teachers, or parents to apply for converting an existing school into a charter. The bill also allows for the charter to be established in a new building and not just an existing attendance center, as allowed in current code. The bill eliminates the requirement that charter and innovation zone schools have to comply with chapters 20 and 279, instead allowing them the option to comply, should they choose.

HF 588 – Independent Private Instruction

Allows for independent private instruction, which is a parent providing home school education to students that are not related. The bill limits enrollment to no more than four unrelated students. Independent Private Instruction is exempt from all school-related statutes and rules except compulsory attendance. Additionally, independent private instruction must provide private or religious based instruction as its primary purpose and must provide enrolled students with instruction in math, reading, language, science, and social studies.

(Contact: Jason Chapman, 1-3015)

Environmental Protection

DNR Announces Eight Operation ReLeaf Events Planned for Spring

On Tuesday, March 15, 2011, the Iowa Department of natural resources issued a press release in which it solicited Iowans looking for a cost-effective, yet eye-pleasing way to reduce home heating and cooling costs are encouraged to participate in Operation ReLeaf. Operation ReLeaf is a residential tree planting program that promotes long-term energy and natural resource conservation. Operation ReLeaf is a

partnership initiative funded by Alliant Energy and administered by the Iowa DNR Forestry Bureau with assistance from local partners, including county conservation boards and county extension offices. Through the program, approximately 2,380 high quality landscaping trees will be offered to Alliant Energy residential customers for just \$25 each this spring. The trees typically retail for \$65 or more and will be sold on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Alliant Energy will sponsor eight Operation ReLeaf events this spring beginning in—

- Marengo on April 21, from 4 - 6 p.m.
- Marion on April 30, from 7:30 to 9 a.m.
- Thompson on May 4, from 4 to 6 p.m.
- Maquoketa on May 5, from 4 to 6 p.m.
- Newton on May 7, from 9 to 11 a.m.
- Guthrie Center on May 12, from 5 to 7 p.m.
- Fort Madison on May 14, from 9 to 11 a.m.
- Marshalltown on May 21, from 9 to 11 a.m.

Tree species will vary at each event and include shade trees, ornamentals and conifers. The DNR encourages homeowners to prepare for emerald ash borer and other tree pests by planting a diverse mix of tree species. Just a few of the advantages of yard trees are:

- Decrease in Energy Consumption (Shade in the summer, windbreak in the winter)
- Increase in property values
- Decrease in storm water runoff, which may reduce flooding events
- Beauty and personal enjoyment

Operation ReLeaf participants must be Alliant Energy residential customers. Advanced order is highly recommended and advance purchase is limited to two trees per household. In the event there are extra trees available on distribution day, those trees will be released for purchase at that time. Order forms are available online at www.alliantenergy.com/releaf.

(Contact: Lew Olson, 1-3096)

Human Resources

Health and Human Services Budget Bill Moves to House Floor

Reducing the reliance on one-time funding took a big step forward Monday, when the House Appropriations Committee approved the Republican proposal for the Health and Human Services budget bill for next year. House File 649 - which would spend \$1.477 billion for the Departments on Aging, Human Services, Public Health, and Veterans Affairs - received approval from the House Appropriations Committee on a party-line vote.

Central to the budget is funding for Medicaid. Last year, more than half of the state's share to fund the program was paid for with one-time dollars. The FY 2012 proposal increases the General Fund appropriation for Medicaid by over \$500 million. While general fund spending on Medicaid is increased, the bill also includes a number of cost containment measures. Among these are requiring prior authorization for a child to see a chiropractor, stricter controls on orthodontia care, matching Medicaid payment rules with Medicare in certain areas, and raising the co-pay for using the Emergency Room for non-emergency care.

The one area within Medicaid that is proposed to receive additional funding is nursing home reimbursement. FY 2012 is a cost rebasing year and House File 649 provides \$11.6 million to fund the increased cost of nursing home care. The way this is done is a major difference from the Governor's proposal. Governor Branstad proposed increasing the Quality Assurance Assessment paid by each nursing home to fund the increase. The House proposal does not raise fees on nursing homes, but funds it through the General Fund.

In Medicaid policy, the bill changes the rules for when Medicaid is allowed to pay for an abortion. Under House File 649, the only time that this would be allowed is when the life of the mother is in danger or there has been a miscarriage.

With the passage of House File 562, the House has taken the first steps to speed up child abuse appeals in DHS. The appropriations bill provides an additional \$500,000 to enable the Department address the backlog of appeals. The bill also provides additional funds to the eight DHS institutions to help maintain the current capacities of each facility. Funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs is also increased to make sure the Iowa Veterans Cemetery has the staff necessary to properly honor our veterans. Additional funding is given to the Department of Public Health to advance research and treatment of melanoma.

The House proposal also addresses concerns over who qualifies for pregnancy prevention grants. House File 649 removes language that allowed Planned Parenthood to access funds that had been used for abstinence-based programs. It also removes the advantage that current grant recipients had when re-applying for the grant.

With the proposal's funding level being \$47 million below Governor's proposal, a number of funding adjustments are included. Just like House File 45, the bill would eliminate funding for tobacco prevention funding to programs like JEL. Several health care reform committees created in 2008 are also eliminated in the Department of Public Health.

(Contact: Brad Trow, 1-3471)

Judiciary

House Passes Joint Physical Care Legislation

Divorce is difficult on a family. During a divorce there are many decisions that must be made by each party, but few decisions are as hard as determining who will have custody of the children. It's not just difficult for the parents, it also places a large burden on the child who goes from seeing both parents all the time to seeing one parent part of the time. It can also present a challenge for the judge hearing the custody case to make the final decision that is best for all parties involved. House Republicans are keenly aware of the problems facing these families and have worked with democrats to present bi-partisan legislation to help the parents and courts make the best decision for the children.

On Tuesday, the House passed HF 345 by a vote of 68-26 (6 absent). House File 345 is also known as the Joint Physical Care Bill. Passage of this bill opens the door for both parents to be more active in their children's lives if a divorce happens.

Representative Julian Garrett (District 73) managed HF 345 on the house floor. The Joint Physical Care Bill amends Iowa Code §598.41(5)(a), which addresses what happens in situations of joint legal custody. With the passage of HF 345, if joint legal custody has been awarded, the court may award joint physical care to both parents as well. This legislation creates a rebuttable presumption that joint physical care is in the best interest of the child. A rebuttable presumption is an assumption made by a court that is assumed true, and it is up to the opposing party to prove it false. In a case where joint legal custody is awarded, the court will assume that joint physical care is in the best interest of the child unless one party demonstrates that it is not in the best interest of the child by clear and convincing evidence.

In custody cases a judge may award joint legal custody to both parents. Joint legal custody means parents have "equal participation in decisions affecting the child's legal status, medical care, education, extracurricular activities, and religious instruction" in addition to other issues that may arise. Even if the court awards joint legal custody, until HF 345, the court did not have to presume that joint physical care was in the best interest of the child. Joint physical care is when each parent shares in the physical custody of the child. This helps to ensure that the child spends quality time with both parents and that one is not favored over the other. When joint physical care is awarded the parents sit down and write out a joint physical care parenting plan to help each side address issues that may arise.

The passage of HF 345 does not mean the court will automatically award joint legal custody, but if the judge determines that joint legal custody is right for all parties involved then the court will look to award joint physical care, unless either parent can prove that it is not in the best interest of the child. HF 345 helps ensure that both parents have an opportunity to have a close relationship with the child, even in cases of divorce.

(Contact: Amanda Freel, 1-5230)

House Passes Collective Bargaining Reform Bill

Last week, the House of Representatives passed HF 525, the Collective Bargaining Reform Bill, on a party line vote of 58-38. The protracted and open debate on the bill came to a close on Friday with the House passing the bill and sending it to the Senate.

The bill went through a lengthy and detailed discussion while in the House. The subcommittee for the bill was rescheduled so that it could be held on a day when labor activists were at the Capitol so they could be involved in the discussion. The Labor committee itself spent 15 hours debating through the night going through over fifty amendments. At that point, Republicans made a number of changes to the bill after hearing from Iowans. They stripped out portions of the bill that were unworkable and underdeveloped in their current form. After that, a two hour public hearing was held inviting even more input from Iowans. Debate on the bill began on Wednesday afternoon and finished on Friday around noon, however the discussion did not go all through the night as it did during committee. Republicans, again, made a number of changes to the bill after hearing from Iowans. The original bill had taken the topic of insurance off of the negotiation table, and a Republican amendment put it back in the scope of negotiations and also added the requirement that all public employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement must pay at least \$100 toward their health care insurance premiums.

Despite what Democrats and the Unions have charged, HF 525 does not gut collective bargaining. They have continuously compared the bill to the bill that Governor Walker recently signed in Wisconsin. However, the two are dramatically different in the extent to which collective bargaining is affected. Wisconsin's bill leaves only wages to be negotiated over. The topics that can still be negotiated in Iowa: wages, hours, vacations, insurance, holidays, leaves of absence, shift differentials, overtime compensation, supplemental pay, seniority, transfer procedures, job classifications, health and safety matters, evaluation procedure, in-service training, and other matters mutually agreed upon. HF 525 removed one item from the list, procedures for staff reductions, and also made 'outsourcing' a nonnegotiable topic of discussion. The other portions of the bill dealt with the procedures involved in the arbitration process, as well as providing the opportunity for an employee to declare oneself a free agent and not be represented by a public union.

The overwhelming majority of collective bargaining topics remain intact and mandatory topics of negotiations. House Republicans believe that the current state of collective bargaining is tilted too far in favor of labor and against the taxpayer. HF 525 seeks to restore the bargaining process to a level playing field. The bill now moves over to the Senate where it is expected to be met with resistance from the Democrats who control that chamber.

(Contact: Louis Vander Streek, 1-3626)

Natural Resources

HF 461 Passes the House

House File 461 requires that a deer tag be attached to the carcass of a deer taken within 15 minutes of the time a deer is located after being taken, or before the carcass is moved to be transported by any means from the place where the deer was taken, whichever comes first.

The key change here is the word located. Under current law, a hunter could technically be cited with a citation if a tag was not applied within 15 minutes of taking the deer. This bill helps clarify the law and applies the 15 minutes once the deer is located, or before the carcass is moved to be transported.

The bill passed the House with a vote of 91-0 and now moves to the Senate.

HF 462 – Operation of certain motorboats on Lake MacBride passes the House.

House File 462 – Allows the operation of motorboats equipped with power units exceeding 10 horsepower at any time, providing they be operated at no-wake speed.

Lake MacBride is a 900 acre lake located in Johnson County. Under current law, fishermen are not allowed to take their fishing boats on Lake MacBride with a motor exceeding 10 horsepower. Since the lake is a no-wake speed lake, the size of the motor shouldn't be a problem.

In addition, Lake MacBride is the only lake in Iowa with this special restriction.

The bill passed the House with a vote of 58-37 and now moves to the Senate.

Bills Passing out of Committee

SF 7 – A bill lowering the blood alcohol limit from .10 to .08 while operating a motorboat or sailboat.

Senate File 7 lowers the current .10 blood alcohol limit for operating motorboat or sailboats to .08.

This bill aligns the BAC level for Boating While Intoxicated (BWI) offenses with the vehicle OWI level. This will help reduce vessel accidents, injuries and fatalities caused by alcohol impaired operators. Currently, a person could be legally under the BAC limit on the water (.10), but could be over the limit in a vehicle (.08) leaving the lake or river.

The bill passed unanimously out of committee with a vote of 19-0 and moves to the House floor.

SF 130 – An Act Relating to Raccoon Hunting

Senate File 130 allows a resident of Iowa, who is under 16 years of age to accompany the minor's parent of guardian, or any other competent adult while hunting raccoons without needing to obtain a fur harvester license, so long as the minor does not hunt or carry a firearm or weapon of any kind.

The bill passed unanimously out of committee with a vote of 19-0 and moves to the House Floor.

(Contact: Dustin Blythe, 1-3452)

Big Hearts Help Fund Big Scams in Iowa

Iowans are well known for their willingness to help those in need, but unfortunately there are some who would take advantage of Iowans big hearts. Con-artists target Iowans for many different purposes. Whether young or old, rich or poor, these crooks know how to convince you to hand over your hard earned money.

With the tragic earthquake in Japan Iowans are looking for ways to help those who are in desperate need. Unfortunately, that also means con-artists are also looking for ways to make a quick dollar. The Attorney General's Office provides information on charity scams as well as other major scams happening in Iowa and how you can protect yourself against these thieves.

There are many great charity organizations throughout the United States, groups like the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders have worked hard to help victims of disasters throughout the world. But there are other groups who take advantage of people's good will when disasters strike. The Iowa Attorney General's Office offers several tips to prevent falling victim to these con-artists including:

- Donate to familiar charities
- Do not donate to unsolicited calls or emails
- Do your homework by investigating any charity you plan to donate to
- Don't feel pressured to donate immediately and when you do make a donation pay with check or credit card so you can track the donation

In addition to charity scams, older Iowans are becoming a large target for phone scams. The scam begins when the con-artist calls the house of an older Iowan. Without revealing who they are, the con-artist will refer to the older Iowan as grandma or grandpa, they talk quickly and inform their "grandparent" that they are in serious trouble and need money immediately. Many times the older Iowan will unintentionally reveal their grandchild's name during the conversation and the con-artist will use this to help build their credibility. Many Iowans have wired hundreds and even thousands of dollars to "grandchildren" who weren't actually in any trouble. Anyone who receives a frantic call or email from anyone asking for money is encouraged to call that family member back on a regular number to find out if they really need help. The Attorney General's website also offers more advice on these types of scams.

If you have been a victim of any of scams, it is important that you contact the authorities immediately. While there is no guarantee you will get your money back, alerting the Attorney General and local law enforcement will help them try and track these criminals and alert others to be aware of similar situations. Once the police have been contacted it is important to call the Consumer Protection Division immediately at 888-777-4590 if you live outside of Des Moines, or 515-281-5926 if you live in the Des Moines area.

It is unfortunate that some people try to take advantage of Iowan's as they try to help others. These con-artists are not new, but they find new ways to scam hard working Iowans out of their money. It is

important to be vigilant and always check where your money is actually going and if it's really benefiting those who desperately need help.

(Contact: Amanda Freel, 1-5230)

State Government

Absentee Ballot Reform and Iran Divestiture Pass House

House File 499 passed the House this week with near unanimous support. The bill makes a significant policy change in the way that absentee ballots can legally be collected. Under the bill, a candidate cannot go out and collect ballots on which their name appears. An elected official is allowed however, to help collect absentee ballots if they are not on that particular ballot. The reform came after the growing popularity of voting absentee when more voters requested absentee ballots in 2010 than ever before. The bill seeks to avoid the appearance of ballot meddling and overall improper ballot handling.

Another state government bill that passed the floor this week was House File 484. The bill seeks to divest any public funds from companies that have active business operations in Iran. Public funds include the treasurer's office, the state board of regents, as well as the various retirement systems. The bill requires the public funds to divest within 18 months following notice to the scrutinized company. The bill does provide that if the United States declares that the bill conflicts with foreign policy, a court rules on the bill, or the United States revokes sanctions against Iran, then the provisions of this bill will no longer be required. The bill requires that every October, each public fund make a public report available that covers the scrutinizes companies list as of the end of the year, a summary of all written notices sent out, and a list of investments sold, redeemed, divested or withdrawn as required.

(Contact: Kristi Kielhorn, 2-5290)

Transportation

No Money for Passenger Rail in Budget

House Study Bill 220 (Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Budget) passed out of appropriations on a party line vote this week. The budget bill funds building projects, technology improvements, and regent's construction projects among other things. One thing the bill does not fund is passenger rail. The governor did not recommend the funding in his budget. The most alarming component of the passenger rail project is the estimated \$3 million annual commitment needed to subsidize the operating costs of the train.

The bill removed \$6.5 million needed for federal match that was previously appropriated for the project. The state would have to commit a total of \$20.6 million to draw the federal funds. If the state did appropriate money, the federal government had already awarded the project \$230 million in 2015 with \$86.8 million designated for the Iowa portion of the project.

(Contact: Kristi Kielhorn, 2-5290)

Veterans Affairs

Senate Files to the House

The Veterans Affairs Committee will be seeing a few Senate bills in the upcoming weeks.

SF 194: Amends current code to change the name of the National Guard facilities improvement fund to the National Guard support and facilities improvement fund.

SF 194 allows for these funds to be used for both National Guard operations and facilities improvements. It amends current code regarding leasing of governmental facilities for designated military events and eliminates the requirement that the adjutant general approve the events and to expand the definition of events to include departure-related events.

It also eliminates the requirement that the state quartermaster be a current or former commissioned officer. This change allows current or former noncommissioned officers to serve in the position.

The bill amends current code to specify who may be placed on the role of retired military personnel from the Iowa National Guard. Code section 29A.78, relating to brevet commissions, is amended to link the brevet to membership in the Iowa national guard.

The bill provides definitions for “performing military duty” as it relates to the waiver of fees for certain birth and death certificates, the designation for the dispositions of remains made on forms provided and authorized by the department of public defense, the disconnection of public utility services, the refund of fishing and hunting license fees, and the renewal of weapon permits.

(The bill also amends the Iowa tort claims Act to provide that members of the Iowa national guard performing military duty in a state that has requested assistance from Iowa under the emergency management assistance compact are to be considered employees of the state of Iowa- for the purpose of tort claims arising from those duties where the tort claims coverage of the requesting state does not extend to such Iowa national guard)

SF 389: This bill provides that funds appropriated for the National Guard education assistance program shall not revert to the general fund of the state, but be available for use by the program for the FY until one year after the declared end of operation Iraqi freedom, operation new dawn, and operation enduring freedom. This bill is a top priority of General Orr's for the Soldiers and Airmen of the Iowa National Guard.

SF 399: This bill requires that a person advertising veterans benefits appeal services disclose in the advertisement that the same services are also available through county commission of veteran affairs offices free of charge.

The bill provides or incorporates definitions for advertising, veteran, and veteran's benefits appeal services and gives a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 for each violation. With this bill the civil penalty will be assessed by the district court in an action initiated by the attorney general and each day of a continuing violation be counted as a separate violation. The attorney general's office is given the discretion to accept a civil penalty in settlement of an investigation, also requires that any civil penalty recovered must be deposited in the veteran's trust fund.

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