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

COMMITTEES
Appropriations
Human Resources
Public Safety
Veterans Affairs

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Administration and Regulation,
Ranking Member

Dogs and Cats – More Fees!

On Tuesday, the Iowa House passed a bill on a 77 to 22 vote that increases fees and adds regulations on dog kennels, boarding kennels, pet shelters and research facilities. Kennels that are inspected by the USDA now pay a \$20 fee annually and under HF 2280 that would increase to \$175. State inspected kennels would see a fee increase from \$60 to \$175 as well. However, a dog breeder that operates a kennels and a boarding facility on the premises would pay \$350.

The USDA inspected facilities will now be subject to additional inspections from state IDALS inspectors after a complaint is lodged about the welfare of the dogs or cats in the kennel. Unfortunately, the dog breeder will not know who the accuser is until the accused goes to court. The backers of the bill talk about getting rid of the bad actors – the ones they believe have four or more breeding dogs but remain unlicensed or uninspected. Raising the fees from three to eight times the current amount does not seem to be conducive for causing more of the unregulated kennels to become licensed or subject to inspections. Currently, USDA kennels are visited regularly by local veterinarians in addition to annual inspections by USDA inspectors, so I do not believe a complaint driven inspection system will improve the conditions for raising dogs or cats in Iowa.

This bill was pushed by the National Humane Society and other animal rights groups, which gives me concern that the bill is a slippery slope toward future anti-livestock regulations. All of those reasons caused me to vote “NO” on the bill.

My Personal Point in the House Chamber

Mister Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House,

Iowans are still living under a real dilemma. Last week there was an opportunity regarding HJR 6 to place it on the pathway for a vote of the people in the future. However, a majority of Representatives of the people, knowing that our Constitution states that "all political power is inherent in the people" chose to ignore that fact and keep Iowa on the course that a decision of our Supreme Court is a law and no one can act to change that opinion.

I personally disagree with that notion and believe the inaction in this body sets Iowa on course for the Judicial branch to become the strongest branch over the executive and legislative branches - where any decision/opinion by the Courts will not be challenged and the separation of powers will be decimated on many more of the peoples' rights.

I believe the Supreme Court has given an opinion on the issue of same-gender marriage and as they do with many other decisions of sending a decision back to a lower court for reconsideration, should have remanded the decision to the legislature to change the law or direct the start of the constitutional process

to begin for the people to speak. Right now we have an opinion from the Court and a definition of marriage for one man and one woman in our Code. However, some same gender marriages are being conducted in Iowa - all on a decision by 7 appointed people.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to step back and really see the forest for the trees. We as representatives are here to speak for the people. The people should have a vote on changing the law because their representatives approved the definition of marriage as a union of 1 man and 1 woman. That can still happen through a full debate by this body on changing current law to reflect the court's decision or if that's too much of a challenge here - approve the first step for the people to vote on the real definition of marriage in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this body needs to stop being a firewall between the court and the people but consider becoming a conduit for the people's rights and liberties to prevail.

Mr. Speaker, tear down the wall that you and Senator Gronstal have erected.

Labor Committee Approves Forced Unionism

On February 11, the House Labor Committee approved House Study Bill 702, which allows the unions to charge a "bargaining and grievance reimbursement fee" to non-union executive branch employees. The bill is referred to as "fair share" and renders Iowa's Right to Work law nearly powerless. I call it "un-fair share" because the labor unions agreed to be the exclusive organization to bargain and arbitrate grievances for all workers whether or not they are union members.

Iowa Code specifically states "It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, association, labor organization or corporation, or political subdivision, either directly or indirectly, or in any manner or by any means as a prerequisite to or a condition of employment to require any person to pay dues, charges, fees, contributions, fines or assessments to any labor union, labor association or labor organization."

HSB 702 allows the unions who cover employees of the state's executive branch (including Regents) to bargain for a "reimbursement for employee bargaining and grievance services". According to the bill, the union can charge 65 percent of union dues for bargaining services plus another 10 percent of union dues for grievance services totaling 75 percent of union dues.

According to the nonpartisan Fiscal Services, the bill would double money going to the unions that represent state employees. Currently those unions (six in all) collect \$5.7 million a year in union dues. Under HSB 702 they would be able to collect an additional \$5.3 million from non-union employees.

The average annual union dues are \$472 per employee. Seventy five percent for non-union fees would be \$306 per employee. The Democrats and the unions say that this isn't doing anything to Right to Work because they aren't requiring the employee to join a union or pay union dues. This is simply not true. Calling it a "fee" and not "dues" does not change the fact that it will be mandatory and the employee will have no choice but to pay the fee.

House Republicans offered 17 amendments to the bill, but they were all defeated in committee. The bill was approved on a party-line vote and redrafted as House File 2420. I oppose this attempt to begin dismantling the state's Right to Work law.