

For Immediate Release

Capitol Comment

Déjà vu All Over Again

By State Rep. Mike May

While I have never been a Yankee fan, how could anyone not love their famous former catcher and manager Yogi Berra? He was a terrific player and manager, but most people remember him for his malapropisms and fracturing of the English language. Two of my favorites are, "*I really didn't say everything I said,*" and "*Always go to other people's funerals or they won't come to yours.*"

Buy perhaps his most famous was the line you see as the column headline here: "*Déjà vu all over again.*"

I'm feeling a bit like Yogi. Bad legislation just keeps on rearing its ugly head here in the Iowa House; over and over again. I wonder why we continue to revisit legislation that will be detrimental to the future of Iowa. I am referring to a number of anti-business, anti-job employment bills that have made their way back to the Iowa House.

The following bills are live rounds, and you need to be aware of them,

A bill designated HSB 702 goes to public hearing this week. It is the union payback bill that would begin the liberals' gutting of the Iowa right-to-work laws.

Our right to work law guarantees that no person can be forced to join or support a union in order to get or hold a job. The proposed law would allow unions to collect fees from **executive branch** employees who are non-members. That defies the spirit of freedom inherent in right to work statutes.

A misnamed "fair share" fee would be charged to a nonunion employee, allegedly to cover the union's cost of negotiating for each employee. It's like charging a person for a hamburger he doesn't want and won't eat.

As a matter of history, unions wanted and were given the right to negotiate for all workers in a bargaining unit, including those who didn't want union representation.

If unions are seriously troubled by the requirement that they represent nonunion members, they could easily come to the Iowa Legislature and ask for relief. I don't expect to see them anytime soon.

Most importantly, required dues will destroy our status as a right to work state and place us at further competitive disadvantage with other states and we seek new and expanded business for Iowa.

The majority party has also reactivated HF 530. This bill reverses the current system that allows an employer to choose care for injured workers, and instead places the choice of doctor in the employee's hands. This will destroy an employer's opportunity to contract for health care and thus significantly raise insurance premiums.

Iowa has one of the best if not the best workers compensation system in the nation, and the system is not broken. Employees rarely seek alternative care, and when they do that request is generally granted. Increasing the cost to employers will not improve the job market which should be our focus.

I have previously mentioned the prevailing wage bill that our caucus is resisting. HSB 699 asks that so called prevailing wages be paid in local government projects. While everyone agrees that workers deserve to be paid fair wages, this legislation is not fair to workers or contractors. Artificially inflating the price of labor will cause local governments to scale back infrastructure projects.

Democrats are also once again trying to destroy our Chapter 20 which is the carefully crafted Iowa law governing collective bargaining between public bodies and public employee unions. This current state collective bargaining law has served us well. It clearly says that in return for the right to bargain, public employee unions give up the right to strike. Issues that can be bargained are written in code and unions have the right to arbitration.

Now unions are pushing HF 2645 asking for the legislature to revisit Chapter 20, perhaps in an attempt to get open scope bargaining. They would then be able to bargain for anything, including; lunch hours, dress, free time, work load, or frankly what ever employees want to bargain. This would be costly and a significantly loss of local control for city councils, school boards, and county supervisors.

These bills have nothing to do with creating more jobs in this state and frankly do just the opposite. During the last four sessions the legislature has done virtually nothing to improve the business climate in Iowa.

I suppose I could say "*It's déjà vu all over again,*" like Yogi.

I'm tired of seeing Iowans strike out.

Mike May