

Steven N. Olson

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Eighty-Third District

Statehouse: (515) 281-3221

e-mail – steven.olson@legis.state.ia.us

HOME ADDRESS

2731 221st Street

DeWitt, IA 52742

Home: 563-659-9096

COMMITTEES

Agriculture

Environmental Protection,

Ranking Member

Government Oversight

Public Safety



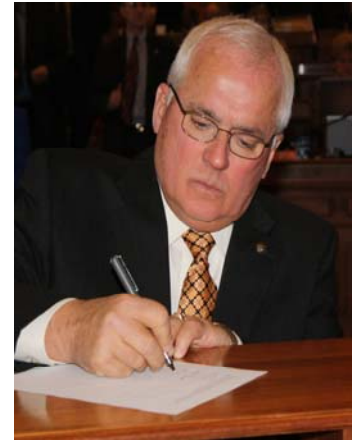
House of Representatives

State of Iowa

Eighty-Third General Assembly

STATEHOUSE

Des Moines, Iowa 50319



OLSON'S OBSERVATIONS

This is the first funnel week of this session, which means each chamber has to pass out of committee their bills to be considered this session. There are a few exceptions to this timeline. Because of the shortened session, it has become apparent that some legislation is being rushed and some legislative intent has been undermined. I have received many emails from constituents dealing with issues and the common concern is that the legislation is vague or rushed. I am working to correct many of these concerns.

A growing concern at the Capitol is the inability of the executive branch to deal with the state's shortfall of revenue. On Wednesday, State Auditor Vaudt released his review of the Governor's proposed budget for FY2011. It is the Auditor's conclusion that the proposed budget is \$25 million over the legal spending limit. If the legislature does not reduce the Governor's budget we could see increased property taxes and the continued use of state employees furloughs without pay. It is time we face what we financially can and cannot do, the state constitution requires a balanced budget.

With the economic crises this state is facing, you would think that the legislative leadership would be concentrating on creating jobs. Instead, the leadership in the Iowa House has been focusing their attention on weakening Iowa's Right-to-Work law. With growing fear that they might lose control of the House after the next election, they have decided this might be one of their few chances to weaken the Right-to-Work law, even though the public is overwhelmingly opposed to any change. Iowa's Right-to-Work law simply states that an employee has the choice to join a union or not. Non-union employees currently are not required to pay union dues, but this would change under this proposal. [HSB 702](#) was introduced on February 4 and it would repeal the Right-to-Work provisions afforded to Iowa's public employees and force a "fair share" fee upon non-union employees of the executive branch, including Regents.

According to the non-partisan Legislative Service Agency if passed, this legislation would bring in an estimated \$5.3 million to AFSCME and other unions. Presently, unions' total due paying revenue is \$5.6 million. This bill would allow unions to use the new "Fair Share" revenue for general operations and then convert most of the existing dues to campaign funds. In addition,

this bill will allow unions to sue state employees for not paying their “Fair Share” fees. Iowa became a Right to Work state in 1947 and I am a firm believer that we should continue to be one. An overwhelming majority of Iowans are opposed to any changes in our Right-to-Work laws. No state has repealed their Right to Work statute and I will work hard to prevent Iowa from being the first.

On a related issue the House Labor Committee resurfaced and passed the prevailing wage bill, [HSB 699](#). Prevailing wage requires private companies to pay the prevailing wage in agreement that there will be no strikes on the construction site. This is the issue that Speaker Murphy kept the House in session over the weekend last year in hopes of passing. His attempt fell short last session, so the Majority party made some changes in the bill in hopes of passing it this session. [HSB 699](#) requires prevailing wage on construction sites for dollar amounts over 100,000 and will only apply to the state’s executive branch; an example would be the new prison construction. Supporters of the bill say it saves money because there are no construction delays because of strikes. Opponents of the bill say it costs money to the state because it eliminates low cost non-union bids. I am in opposition to this bill because it is another attempt to weaken our Right-to-Work law.

The House Transportation Committee advanced the ban on texting bill while driving. This is a limited measure that outlaws reading texts and texting while driving. It does not make it illegal to use a hand held phone. The measure has a slow implementation date and will eventually result in a \$65 fine. If an accident occurs because of texting, the fine would increase to \$500. This bill still needs to be passed by both chambers and signed by the Governor to become law.

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.