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Public Safety



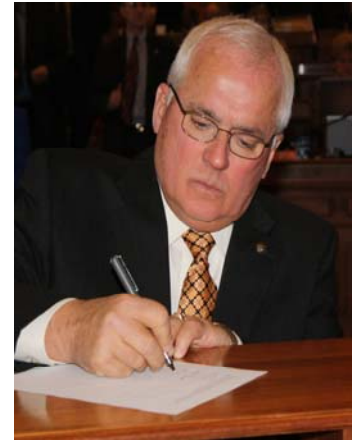
**House of Representatives**

State of Iowa

*Eighty-Third General Assembly*

STATEHOUSE

**Des Moines, Iowa 50319**



***OLSON'S OBSERVATIONS***

A battle is brewing in the Capitol between teachers' unions and administrators. Background on the issue: In 2007, upon the Governor's recommendation, the state legislature passed legislation that helped raise teacher compensation from 37<sup>th</sup> in the union to the present ranking of 26<sup>th</sup>. To do this, the state had agreed to pay \$5,000 of the total salary for teachers in Iowa's 361 districts and area education agencies. This is known as Teacher Quality money. The state funding is approximately \$251 million. The average teacher salary in Iowa is \$48,638. In October of 2009, the Governor announced an across-the-board cut (ATB) of 10%. This would result in a \$500 reduction in teacher compensation. In December, the Iowa Department of Education issued a declaratory ruling saying that districts didn't have to pay the ATB. Many districts followed the ruling and passed along the 10% ATB to their teachers.

On Monday, the Education Appropriations subcommittee passed [SSB 3248](#). This bill has a collective bargaining provision that would do the following:

- Teacher Quality money is not subject to an ATB - retroactive to this fiscal year and applicable to any future ATB. Districts that didn't pay the 10% ATB in FY10 will now have to do so (statewide this total is \$24 million);
- Community college salary money is not subject to an ATB - retroactive to this fiscal year and applicable to any future ATB;
- A new procedure for K-12 negotiations is that districts shall negotiate Teacher Quality and regular salary money as one combined salary, retroactive to July 1, 2009; and
- K-12 teachers immediately get the name of any person who filed a complaint against them. Thirty-two other licensing boards don't give out the name of the person unless or until it is a founded complaint. Also, the teacher immediately gets "all other supporting documentation" regarding the complaint.

Now, with FY10 almost over, some school districts will have to come up with the money to fund the \$24 million. This is an example of an unfunded mandate and if this bill passes in its present form, property taxes will have to be increased to come up with the money.

I want to give you an update on [HF 2456](#), the text banning bill. Last week the Senate amended this bill to include not only the banning of sending text messages, but also reading text messages. On Monday, the House considered the Senate version. A very interesting scenario played out. An amendment was offered to ban the use of mobile electronic devices behind the wheel for those on a restricted driver's license. This usually applies to youth between the ages of 14 to 17. There had been complaints from some trucking companies and bus drivers saying that they receive text messages giving them directions. A legislator challenged that the amendment was not germane and the chair ruled the amendment out of order. Then a motion passed to suspend the rules and allow a vote on the amendment. The amendment passed 54-39 in the House and the bill went back to the Senate to consider the House amendment. On Tuesday, the Senate rejected the new House amendment, sending the bill back to the House. Eventually, the two chambers will have to come to an agreement on this bouncing bill.

On Wednesday, after a long and spirited debate, the Iowa House passed [SF 2357](#) with bipartisan support. This bill prohibits a person who is the subject to a no-contact order or protective order or has been convicted of domestic violence from possessing a fire arm.

On Thursday, the State Revenue Estimating Committee meets to release the updated numbers to project the state income. These numbers are very important at this time to complete the legislative budget bills, especially with a March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Hopefully, these numbers will be good and the majority party follows these as guidelines.

Congratulations to Cal Wheat upon the boys' victory on Monday at the State Basketball Tournament. Good luck to them for the remainder of the tournament.

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](mailto:steven.olson@legis.state.ia.us).