



# Legislative Update

## The 2021 Iowa Legislative Session

Week of January 18, 2021

### **This week in the Iowa Legislature**

Despite having Monday off for MLK Day, legislators were still very busy with a full slate of committee and subcommittee meetings this week. On Wednesday morning, lawmakers, staff, and members of the public were greeted by enhanced security measures due to concerns over potential protests or violent actions regarding the Inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. No such protests arose and the peaceful transition of power occurred without incident.

Both chambers saw a large influx of bill introductions this week and we can expect increased committee action next week. The House debated and passed their first bill of the session, [HR 3](#), House Rules which is typically a noncontroversial bill. The bill was passed on party lines, with a vote of 55-35, while ten members abstained from voting. Due to the pandemic-related changes in the bill, representatives of the House debated for around two hours, and numerous amendments were proposed before the resolution passed.

Two controversial bills caught the attention of legislators and the media this week. The House Judiciary Committee approved [HSB 41](#) No Right to Abortion on a 12-7 vote, which proposes an amendment to the Iowa Constitution that the state recognizes no right to abortion. On Wednesday the Senate introduced its companion [SJR 2](#). The lead sponsor of the resolution is Senate President Jake Chapman, along with 28 other Republican co-sponsors. The House Public Safety Committee passed [HSB 9](#) Firearm Rights on a 13-6 vote, which proposes an amendment to the Iowa Constitution over gun rights that places strict scrutiny on any potential restrictions. If this General Assembly approves the amendment, the public will have the opportunity to formally vote on it during the 2022 election.

### **Special Election for Senate District 41**

The special election for Senate District 41 to replace Senator Miller-Meeks is on Tuesday, January 26. The Democratic candidate is Mary Stewart and the Republican candidate is Adrian Dickey. Currently, the district has a registration advantage for the Democratic Party, but Republicans won in the previous two State Senate elections. The district trended Republican between the 2012 and 2020 presidential elections as well.

## Looking Ahead

We are expecting both chambers to continue to be productive with a full committee and subcommittee schedule this first full week of the legislature. A list of scheduled [committees and subcommittees](#) with their virtual access information can be found at the link above. As more information becomes available or changes, we will keep you updated on how you can access legislators and participate in the process while in-person access remains limited.

Both chambers have taken note of the Governor's request to move quickly on legislation requiring a return to in-person learning. The Senate is expected to caucus on the Governor's education bills this week and take up [SSB 1064](#) on the floor. Speaker Grassley said that although there are differences in the House and Senate bills it is a priority for his caucus and that the bill could come up this week as well.

## Key Initiatives this Week

This week the AS team had the pleasure of hosting IBC Executive Director Mark Wyatt at the Capitol on Tuesday and Wednesday. We were able to meet with key legislators and have conversations to work to advance IBC's priorities this legislative session.

On Tuesday the AS team coordinated a meeting with Mark Wyatt and Iowa House Transportation Committee Chair Brian Best. Best expressed his full support of the e-bike legislation and indicated he had plans to move it forward in the committee process. Best also discussed the importance of the hands-free/electronic device use legislation and provided updates on the change lanes to pass and adding distracted driving to driver's education requirements legislation.

On Tuesday the AS team and Mark were also able to meet with Representatives Kressig and Lohse, two Iowa biking community champions, on IBC's legislative priorities this session. Both are supportive of the e-bike legislation and committed to working with us to advance IBC's other priorities.

On Tuesday a House Public Safety subcommittee of Representatives Thorup, Gobble, and Kressig passed [HSB 5](#), Excessive Speed Deaths, in a 2-1 vote with Representative Kressig opposing until the bill is amended. The bill would make hitting and killing someone while driving at an excessive speed of 25 mph or more above the speed limit a class "C" felony. Injuring someone at those same speeds would be considered as call "D" felony. The bill now awaits consideration at the full House Public Safety Committee.

On Wednesday the AS Team and Mark met with Senate Transportation Committee Chair Waylon Brown. Senator Brown offered positive prospects for IBC's legislative priorities and indicated that the e-bike and hands-free/electronic device use legislation were being widely discussed. Senator Brown also saw no issues with the adding distracted driving to driver's education or enhanced penalties for hitting a bicyclist legislation. On the change lanes to pass bill, Brown indicated this would be more challenging but was open to continuing the conversation.

IBC's e-bike and multi-wheel bicycle legislation was introduced in both the Iowa House and Senate this week, [HSB 80](#) and [SF 97](#). Both bills were assigned to subcommittees; Representatives Maxwell, Bush, and Kressig and Senators Koelker, Rozenboom, and Giddens, respectively. **We have heard that this legislation could receive subcommittee hearings as early as this week and are working to have them scheduled for Tuesday or Wednesday.**

IBC's add distracted driving requirement to driver education courses legislation was introduced in both the House and Senate this week, [HSB 82](#) and [SF 98](#). Both bills were assigned to subcommittees; Representatives Gerhold, Cisneros, and Sunde and Senators Kraayenbrink, Rozenboom, and J. Smith, respectively. **The subcommittee for HSB 82 is scheduled for Tuesday at noon.**

The hands-free/electronic device usage legislation, [HF 75](#) and [SF 46](#), was also introduced in both the House and Senate this week. Both bills were assigned to subcommittees; Representatives A. Meyer, Thorup, and Forbes and Senators Rozenboom, Giddens, and Kraayenbrink, respectively. **The subcommittee for HF 75 is scheduled for Tuesday at noon.**

IBC's enhanced penalties for violations against bicyclists legislation, [SF 70](#), was introduced in the Senate this week. The bill was assigned to a subcommittee of Senators Zumbach, Bisignano, and Driscoll and has yet to be scheduled.

On Thursday Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) Director Scott Marler presented to the House Transportation Committee. Director Marler highlighted how IDOT had transformed due to the COVID-19 pandemic including going to an appointment-based system at licensing offices. Marler also praised IDOT's support of Iowa communities during derecho clean up and pointed to some major road and bridge projects completed over the last year.

## **Bills of Interest**

Like sessions past, Advocacy Strategies will be tracking all bills pertaining to you. Along with this document, each week you will find an excel spreadsheet attached with the bills you have registered for or which we are waiting for a declaration. **Please review this and confirm your declarations are correct and complete.** Please let us know if there are any changes that need to be made.

## **Housekeeping**

Our ability to best represent you is based on quick and open communication. Once the legislative session progresses further, our requests for bill declarations will increase substantially. **We would ask that you let us know your organization's position on each bill within 24 hours of our notification to you so we can respond accordingly.**

## **Dates to Note**

- February 12: Final day for individual bill requests
- March 5: First funnel deadline (Friday of the 8th week)
- April 2: Second funnel deadline (Friday of the 12th week)

- April 30: 110th calendar day of the session; legislators' per diem expires

**Please feel free to contact the Advocacy Strategies Team with any questions, comments, or concerns. We are pleased to be representing your interests during the 2021 Legislative Session and throughout the year. Contact information for your lobbying team follows.**

**Threase Harms**  
515.975.5299 (cell)  
[threase@advocacyiowa.com](mailto:threase@advocacyiowa.com)

**Kathryn Allen**  
309.335.3629 (cell)  
[admin@advocacyiowa.com](mailto:admin@advocacyiowa.com)

**Nick Laning**  
515.985.9054 (cell)  
[Nick@advocacyiowa.com](mailto:Nick@advocacyiowa.com)

**Bob Rafferty**  
515.314.9462 (cell)  
[rafferty@raffertygroup.com](mailto:rafferty@raffertygroup.com)

**Hannah McDowell**  
515.450.0574 (cell)  
[Hannah@advocacyiowa.com](mailto:Hannah@advocacyiowa.com)

**Rachel Ong**  
515.829.2775 (cell)  
[rachelong@raffertygroup.com](mailto:rachelong@raffertygroup.com)