



Legislative Update

The 2021 Iowa Legislative Session

Week of February 8th, 2021

This week in the Iowa Legislature

Despite another very cold and snowy week in Iowa, the Legislature remained busy with an intense subcommittee and committee schedule. As the end of the week approached, legislators realized the pending Friday deadline for individual bill requests. The large majority of floor debate was consumed by education funding and the House spent Wednesday night passing 25 noncontroversial bills.

Throughout the week both chambers debated and passed K-12 education funding bills in subcommittees, committees, and then on the floor. The Senate passed their school aid bill, [SF269](#), early in the week. The Senate bill provided for a 2.2% increase in funding for the 2021-2022 school year. The bill also includes property tax replacement and transportation equity. The House bill originally had a 2.5% increase in K-12 funding, but in negotiations with the Senate and the Governor they amended the Senate's bill to provide a 2.4% funding increase. Debate in the House was largely divided along party lines. The Republican floor manager of the bill Rep. Dolecheck said the 2.4% increase fits within the state's budget and argued the bill would increase school aid by \$36.5 million. Rep. Smith, the Democrat ranking member on the House Education Committee, stated the 2.4% increase is not nearly enough and will force property tax increases to close the funding gap across the state.

In addition to education funding, the House passed their priority bills focused on improving access to childcare. The bills address many access issues including increasing the reimbursement rates to providers, addressing the childcare cliff, creating tax credits, encouraging developers to build more childcare facilities, and giving business owners tax credits to create in-house childcare. The Governor has noted this as a priority and now it is up to the Senate to decide whether these bills move forward this session.

Swearing-In of Senator Dickey

Senator Adrian Dickey of Ottumwa was sworn in on Monday after the Senate District 41 election results were certified. Senator Dickey was named Vice-Chair of the Transportation Committee after Senator Shipley gave up this position. Senator Dickey was also assigned to the Labor and Business Relations Committee and the Ways and Means Committee, replacing Senator Brown and Senator Driscoll in those roles.

Legislative Redistricting Update

This week the U.S Census announced the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a delay in the delivery of redistricting data needed by the states. Instead of this summer, the information will not be provided until September 30, 2021. The redistricting process in Iowa is outlined in the state constitution and requires legislative approval of a redistricting map by September 15 otherwise the maps are determined by the Iowa Supreme Court. Lawmakers had planned to have a special session this summer to address redistricting, but this delayed timeline has left it unclear if they will have any say in approving the new maps.

Looking Ahead

The pace of committee and subcommittee work will only quicken with the March 5 first funnel deadline just three weeks away. Otherwise we expect more of the same this week. To stay up to date on scheduled committees and subcommittees and their virtual access information, follow this [link](#).

We understand the Senate budget subcommittee chairs have been instructed to begin putting their budgets together. This is earlier in session than normal, which could be indicative of the legislature intending to finish ahead of schedule this year.

Key Initiatives this Week

On Monday night the House debated and passed [HF 304](#), Personal Delivery Devices, in a 90-1 vote. The bill authorizes and regulates personal automated delivery devices (devices which use automated driving systems for personal deliveries) and deems such personal delivery devices to not be vehicles but sets requirements for use. An amendment increasing liability insurance requirements from \$100,000 to \$500,000 passed by voice vote. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

On Tuesday the Senate Transportation subcommittee of Senators Brown, Koelker, and J. Smith passed [SSB 1155](#), Recreation on Private Lands. The bill would add bicycle riding, jogging, and walking to recreational activity definitions and allow railway companies to have immunity when letting the public use private land. The bill is focused on a bike path project agreement with a railway company in Oelwein. The Iowa Association of Justice spoke against the bill due to the expansion of immunity for railway companies and the added activities. The subcommittee is open to amendments narrowing the language, and the bill now awaits consideration at the full Senate Transportation Committee.

On Tuesday the AS team and Mark Wyatt met with Representative to discuss [HF 411](#), Passing Bikes and Bike Lights. We discussed the need to remove the daytime high visibility requirements, which he was very open to. Gobble has a family connection to IBC members and could be a champion for us going forward.

On Tuesday the House Transportation Committee passed [HSB 80](#), IBC's e-bike and multi-wheel bicycle legislation, in a 19-0 vote. The AS team met with Representatives Maxwell and Kressig again prior to address any concerns on OWIs prior to the meeting. Through conversations, no

amendments were added and the bill passed in its current form. The bill is now eligible for House floor debate.

On Tuesday the Senate Transportation Committee unanimously passed, [SF 46](#), the hands-free device usage legislation. An amendment that includes all electronic devices and adds exemptions for utility workers and public transportation workers passed by voice vote. The bill is now eligible for Senate floor debate.

On Wednesday the Senate Transportation unanimously passed [SF 98](#), IBC's addition of distracted driving requirements to drivers' education courses bill. The Senators all spoke in favor of the legislation. The bill is now eligible for Senate floor debate.

On Wednesday night the House debated and unanimously passed [HF 380](#), IBC's addition of distracted driving requirements to drivers' education courses bill, in a 94-0 vote. The bill is a companion to SF 98 and now goes to the Senate for consideration.

On Thursday the AS team met with Senator Koelker, the manager of IBC's e-bike and bill in the Senate, and she indicated that it should be on the agenda for the Senate Transportation Committee this coming week.

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

- 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)

Kathryn Allen
309.335.3629 (cell)

threase@advocacyiowa.com

Nick Laning
515.985.9054 (cell)
Nick@advocacyiowa.com

Hannah McDowell
515.450.0574 (cell)
Hannah@advocacyiowa.com

admin@advocacyiowa.com

Bob Rafferty
515.314.9462 (cell)
rafferty@raffertygroup.com

Rachel Ong
515.829.2775 (cell)
rachelong@raffertygroup.com