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[ipamemberlist] Lobbyist Report - First Funnel

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Funnel Deadline & Session Hits Halfway Point

Monday marks Day 57 of the 110-day scheduled session, just over the halfway point. Friday (March 7) was the first “funnel.” Bills had to be voted out of committee before this deadline in order to stay alive and keep moving through the process. Bills that failed to make it out are done for the year. To get to this point, Weeks 7 & 8 saw a total of 357 subcommittees scheduled, far outpacing previous years. Hundreds of policy bills died for the year, and the session shifts focus to the remaining policy proposals along with enacting the budget and tax bills that will close down the 2025 session. Just a few stats to start you off:

- Legislators introduced 2,032 bills (as of March 7). That’s about 14 bills for each legislator.
- IPA is tracking 64 bills - about 2/3 of them are still alive (41 bills).

Since we’re at the halfway point, it’s also worth noting that the House, Senate and Governor have not yet agreed on **education funding**, typically one of the first bills signed into law every year. The House is holding out for a 2.25% increase while the Senate and Governor have agreed to a 2% increase.

Second Funnel

We now have four weeks until the **second funnel deadline on April 4**. For policy bills to remain alive after that date, they need to be passed out of committee in the opposite chamber. That means Senate bills are out of House committees, and vice versa. The only committees meeting after April 4 are Ways & Means (tax issues), Appropriations (budget issues), and Government Oversight (special issues).

There is a way to fast track bills so they can be funnel-proof. If a bill exists in identical form in both the House and the Senate, and both of those bills survived the first funnel, they are largely considered to have survived the second funnel as well, even though neither of them has been passed by a full Chamber yet. In the lobby, we refer to this as “double barreling” a bill. You’ll see that in the Governor’s rural health bills and Iowa Health and Wellness Plan work requirement bills.

Governor’s Policy Bills are Still Alive

House and Senate committees worked furiously this past week to keep a number of legislative proposals alive for further consideration. The survivors include a number of the Governor’s proposals, including:

- Banning using cell phones during instructional time ([HF 782/SF 370](#))
- Comprehensive energy bill ([HF 834/SSB 1112](#))
- Legislation focused on improving math scores ([HF 784/SF 450](#))
- Expanding childcare programs and addressing high ([HF 623/SF 445](#))
- \$1 billion cut for businesses in unemployment insurance taxes ([SF 504](#))
- Addressing youth with complex behaviors ([HF 833/SF 474](#))
- Improving rural health care ([HF 754/SSB 1163](#))
- Addressing disaster relief ([HSB 246/SSB 1188](#))

Tax and Budget

Bills dealing with taxes or spending are exempt from the funnel, so you will see a number of those trickle in over the weeks ahead as the Legislature begins to piece together the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) budget. The first step in this process will be the 10:00 am March 13th meeting of the **Revenue Estimating Conference (REC)**. The REC is tasked with meeting three times per year – in March, October and December – to analyze revenues and expenditures for the State and give guidance on how much the Governor and Legislature have to allocate in their budget.

At their December meeting, the REC estimated that General Fund revenue for Fiscal Year 2025 (current year) would be \$9.1536 billion. They forecasted that the state would collect \$8.73 billion in the upcoming (FY2026) budget year. If that estimate is lowered on March 13, the Legislature will need to prepare their FY2026 budgets based on that lower number. The meeting will be live streamed on LSA's YouTube channel accessed [here](#). After the REC numbers are set, look for legislative leaders to begin releasing "budget targets" that dictate the amount each appropriations subcommittee is allowed to spend in their budget bills.

Property Tax Overhaul

On Thursday, the House and Senate Ways & Means Committee Chairs, Rep. Bobby Kaufmann and Sen. Dan Dawson, introduced their plan ([HSB 313](#) and [SSB 1208](#)) to overhaul Iowa's property tax system, proclaiming it the biggest system overhaul since 1977. The bill would create a **2% annual growth cap on revenues coming into ALL property tax levies**. However, it would allow cities and counties to capture new valuation from new construction, annexation and boundary adjustments, major improvements, etc. Under the current system, a city seeing a big increase due to growth loses all of that increased value above a certain percentage.

The bill also makes a number of changes to school property taxes, including phasing out the local government's share of the regular program foundation base over 5 years, and reducing the local foundation property tax (the \$5.40 levy) to \$2.97 per \$1000 of assessed value. These and other changes would shift about \$426 million from local property taxpayers to the State.

The property tax bill also eliminates the rollbacks that exist on residential and commercial property by ratcheting the assessment limitation on those classes up to 100% of value over the course of the bill. The bill would provide a **\$25,000 homestead property tax exemption for all homeowners** and raise the existing veterans property tax exemption to \$7,000 (from \$4,000). The bill would also provide a new property tax credit to Iowans over 70 years old who make less than 350% of the federal poverty level.

Why are we including property tax review in your update? Cuts to property taxes will impact your local governments' ability to maintain basic infrastructure and their ability to contribute to other initiatives that are important to their community. While IBHA will not be taking a stand on this, you may want to talk to your local elected officials about impacts and discuss it with your own legislators.

iDOGE Input Sought

Governor Kim Reynolds announced an Iowa DOGE initiative during her Condition of the State Address in January. The Governor wants to continue streamlining state government and add to the work she has done over the past few years by turning the focus toward local government efficiencies. Her staff is putting together a Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Task Force comprised of business leaders and local government officials that will look at the services provided by local governments with an eye toward finding a more efficient way to deliver those services. She released a [press release](#) on February 10 outlining some of these details and a [DOGE page](#) has been added to her website. While this effort takes shape, the Governor and her staff are looking for ideas from the public of places where efficiencies can be found. You can submit ideas for them to consider at doge.feedback.iowa.gov/.

IPA Tracked Bills Surviving Funnel

IPA Priority Bills & Bills IPA Amending

- Adding psychologists with specialty training in neuropsychology or concussion management to be added to school concussion protocol providers ([HF 471](#)). *This is a priority for IPA this year.*
- Convening a work group (including MH professionals) to review impact on school-provided

technology on student cognitive functioning ([SF 516](#)). We asked for mental health professionals to be included in this review - and this was added. *IPA will work with agencies to make sure a psychologist is represented.*

- Requiring health insurers respond within 56 calendar days to a provider request for credentialing, but only applies to MD/ARNP/PA ([HF 875](#)) *IPA and other behavioral health providers will be asking that this be expanded to include any providers.*
- Requiring dental plans to disclose if they are state-regulated ([HF 874](#)) *IPA had a bill several years ago to do this for all health plans, but it didn't pass. We will be asking that this be amended to include all health plans.*

Behavioral Health

- Allowing commitments for someone experiencing “psychiatric deterioration” ([HF 312](#))
- Permitting a PA/ARNP to testify in lieu of a mental health professional at an involuntary commitment hearing ([HF 313](#))
- Requiring individuals discharged after an involuntary commitment to be referred to the ASO and given 30 days of medication ([HF 385](#))
- Allowing a person to file an involuntary commitment for substance use in any county ([HF 573](#))
- Requiring HHS to develop a plan that gives victims of human trafficking access to “restorative facilities and protective services” ([HF 452](#))
- Making changes to help youth with complex behaviors ([HF 833/SF 474](#))
- Allowing MH/DS regional incentive funds to be used to start up the new BH services system and prohibiting the new BH Administrative Services Organization staff from functioning as a county MH advocate ([HF 757/SSB 1171](#))

Medicaid/Insurance

- Requiring lowans covered by the Iowa Health & Wellness Plan to work at least 80 hours/week ([HSB 248/SF 363](#))
- Setting timeframes for insurers to respond to prior authorization requests ([HF 303/SF 231](#))
- Requiring Medicaid to cover autism treatment including ABA ([HF 509](#)) and doing the same for private insurers ([HF 330](#))

Addictions/Substances

- Adding THC beverages to open container laws ([HF 181](#))
- Increasing the number of mCBD dispensaries ([SF 399/HSB 224](#))
- Removing psilocybin from schedule 1 drug list upon FDA approval ([HF 383](#))
- Legalizing drug testing and checking equipment, including but not limited to fentanyl test strips ([HF 699](#))
- Increasing penalties for those who give someone else fentanyl (even without knowing there is fentanyl in it) to first degree murder ([HF 792](#))
- Increasing taxes on vape products ([SF 475](#)) and regulating “heated tobacco” like cigarettes ([SSB 1212](#))

General Health Care

- Increasing penalties for assaults of protected workers, including health care (and behavioral health) providers ([HF 177/SF 397](#))
- Adding volunteers, students, and others to the definition of protected worker for the assaults above ([HF 310](#))
- Allowing a health care provider to refuse to provide a service if they morally disagree with it ([SF 180](#))
- Prohibiting any health professional boards from restricting prescribing authority ([SF 313](#))
- Governor’s rural health care bill, which includes the merger of all health professional recruitment and retention programs ([HF 754/SSB 1163](#))

Other Stuff

- Increasing legislator salaries from \$25,000 to \$45,000 beginning in 2027 and adding \$150/day to their per diem expenses (\$450/day total); increasing leader salaries from \$37,000 to \$67,500

annually; adding an automatic legislative salary COLA of 3%; and increasing statewide elected official salaries ([SF 544](#))

Yes, you may note that the bill that increases Medicaid provider rates by a COLA did not make the funnel, yet a bill increasing legislative salaries AND adding a COLA did survive. You can view all the bills that did not make the cut [here](#). They include bills that would have enacted PSYPACT, banned state agency use of the title "psychologist" if the person is not a doctorate level licensed psychologist, granted defense attorneys access to any mental health record of a plaintiff in a civil suit (including notes), allowed athletic trainers to be substitutes for school nurses, allowed school staff to test students for Medicaid HCBS waiver applications, allowed use of magic mushrooms for religious ceremonies and creating factories to produce them, outlawed kratom, expanded access to school mental health resources, allowed student access to cannabidiol, required vaccine manufacturers to waive immunity, prohibited any gene-based therapies and vaccines, made assertive community treatment, eating disorder treatment, and acupuncture covered services by private insurance, and criminalized homelessness.

Remember you can find public forums list [here](#) and full bill tracker [here](#).

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