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Sat, Apr 5, 2025 at 7:06 PM

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Iowa Legislative Session 2025: Week 12 Recap

As we reach the 12th week of the 2025 Iowa Legislative Session, lawmakers have successfully navigated a significant milestone: the passing of the second funnel deadline. This marks a pivotal moment in the legislative process, signaling that only those bills that have passed through at least one committee in both the Iowa House and Senate remain in play for the remainder of the session. This deadline is crucial as it helps streamline legislative work, ensuring that only the most viable bills (or the ones most likely to score political points) continue forward.

The biggest surprise this week was the resignation of Rep. Sami Scheetz, a Cedar Rapids Democrat. He was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Linn County Board of Supervisors. Interestingly, had the Governor signed [Senate File 75](#) before this appointment, Linn County would have had to hold a special election for the supervisor seat instead of appointing someone. Now the Governor will need to call a special election to fill the open House seat ([House District 78](#)). This is the third special election for a legislative seat in four months.

The Second Funnel Deadline

With the passing of the second funnel deadline (April 4), lawmakers have a clearer picture of the bills that will continue to move through the process and those that won't. During the first half of the legislative session, we saw many bills being introduced in both the Iowa House and Senate on a variety of topics — from smacking down DEI or DEI-like teaching in higher education, placing more limits on local control, public assistance restrictions and work requirements, and property tax reform. But now, after the funnel deadline, the focus shifts to a smaller, more manageable group of bills. **Funnel survivors include:**

- **House File 471:** One of IPA's priorities for the year came out of committee last week, saving it from the funnel. This bill allows psychologists with training in neuropsychology or concussion management are added to the list of professionals that can participate in **youth sports concussion protocols** (both field assessment and return to play decisions). Sen. Doug Campbell (R-Mason City) is the floor manager. It is one vote away from being sent to the Governor.
- **House File 310 & Senate File 397:** **Assaults on health professionals** (including psychologists) carry an enhanced penalty. Senate File 397, which has been sent to the Governor for signature, increases that enhanced penalty, adds spitting as an assault, and requires a mandatory week-long jail stay for spitting assaults. House File 310, which is now ready for a Senate vote, adds volunteers and students working in a health care setting to the definition of health professional in these assault protections.
- **House File 972:** The Governor's **rural health bill** is ready to pass the Iowa Senate. This bill combines all state health professional loan repayment/workforce incentive programs into a single program with greater flexibility. This includes the mental health loan repayment program. The new program would allow recipients to choose between loan repayment or a cash payment, so those with unsecured loans or who have already paid off their loans would be eligible for the program as well. It no longer ties programs to an arbitrary federal shortage designation; instead eligible practice areas would be determined through rule. While there is some concern about how this will all get put together to make sure each profession has access to at least the base level

they started with is yet to be determined. The bill also moves certificate of need decisions to the Department of Health & Human Services and eliminates the Health Facilities Council, which has been biased toward hospital systems. CON has been a major barrier to getting more behavioral health inpatient beds built in the state.

- **House File 385 & House File 573:** Both bills deal with **involuntary commitments**. HF 573 allows any interested person to file a petition for involuntary commitment for substance use disorder in any county. HF 385 makes bigger changes in requiring people being discharged from an involuntary commitment to be referred to the behavioral health administrative service organization (ASO) for system navigation and provide a 15-day supply of medicine (paid for by insurance, Medicaid, or the behavioral health system). Both bills are ready for Senate approval.
- **House File 968:** The Department of Inspections, Appeals & Licensing (DIAL) is directed to create **uniform tiered fees for each professional license**. The bill was just introduced last week and was sent to the funnel-proof House Ways & Means Committee, where it is assigned to Rep. Jane Bloomingdale (R-) and Rep. Chad Behn (R-Boone). The professional licensing boards would be consulted in doing this.
- **House File 912:** **Veterans would get priority** in all kinds of state services and programs if this bill were to pass, including being prioritized over others on waiting lists for housing vouchers, mental health services, disability services and substance use disorder services, as well as grant programs. Some have pointed out to Republicans backers of this bill that it is indeed a “DEI” bill. It’s currently in the House Appropriations Committee but has not been assigned a subcommittee
- **House File 571:** Health care providers and institutions could say “no” to providing services that would violate their conscience. Dubbed the “**health care free speech**” bill, this does not just single out abortion, gender-affirming care, or immunizations. It is also ready for a Senate vote.
- **House File 875:** All insurers would be required to adhere to new **timelines for credentialing**, which legislators still thought were too long (56 days) but later heard some insurers were taking more than six months to credential new providers. This currently only includes ARNPs, PAs, and physicians, but we’ll be watching this one to see if it could be amended in future years to include additional provider groups. This bill is also ready for Senate debate.
- **Senate Study Bill 1216:** The Governor’s two-year budget for distributing **federal block grants** hit opposition last week from provider groups. While nearly identical to previous years’ bills, SSB 1216 is missing a key paragraph in the distribution of community mental health services block grant funds. In past years, Iowa HHS would retain 5% of the block grant for administration, with the remaining 95% earmarked for community mental health services. Of that 95%, 70% was distributed directly to community mental health centers to cover the cost of uninsured/underinsured care, workforce incentive programs, prevention, and training. SSB 1216 eliminates that 70% earmarked funding for CMHCs. It sounds like the Senate subcommittee will amend the bill to keep funding distribution the same for one year, until the new BH system is up and running, and CMHCs can better understand how the funds will be utilized under the new system. The bill is still in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

We have also been tracking **Senate File 470**, which may seem odd since it requires **dental insurance plan cards to note if they are state-regulated**. Several years ago, IPA asked for a similar law for health insurance plans, but it was shot down by insurers. SF 470 had no opposition and is on its way to the Governor - so doing the same for health insurance cards may be something to think about again in 2026. You can see other bills that survived in the IPA Bill Tracker [here](#).

You can see the entire list of bills that died [here](#). They include most of the anti-DEI higher education bills, allowing commitments for “psychiatric deterioration,” inclusion of ABA services in the Hawki (children’s health insurance) program, a study on the impact of technology used in school and out of school on youth cognitive functioning, mandatory concussion training for youth coaches, increasing legislator pay, prohibiting licensing boards from restricting prescribing authority of a professional, and the “patient’s right to save” act.

What’s Ahead: The Final Stretch

As we approach the final weeks of the 2025 legislative session, the pace of work is expected to slow down considerably as committee work is replaced by endless days of debate and closed door marathon caucuses. Legislators will also begin crafting next year’s budget in the coming weeks. The process starts with leaders setting overall targets, then dividing that target among the seven budget subcommittees. Those subcommittees will then decide how to spend the money they are given.

Property tax reform is the reason legislators have not yet started talking about budgets. The Legislature wanted to lower property taxes by having the state pay more for schools and capping local government budget growth, which would cost the state about \$500 million to replace school aid. We have heard the initial runs on the property tax reform package are actually increasing residential property taxes while lowering them for farmers and businesses. Since that was not the intention, it looks like legislators may be going back to the drawing board to figure out how to proceed. This may be a hefty lift to do in four weeks.

We have less than a month to go before legislators lose their staff and per diem checks - and there is still a lot of work to be done.

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