



# IowaAging.gov AgingWatch

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The link to policy affecting older Iowans

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## Advocacy 101—What Do You Need to Know?

Speaking up and voicing concerns about the way government works is one of the most important actions that a citizen can take. Why?

Change is prompted only when a problem is brought to the attention of someone who can change it. If nobody knows about a problem, then nobody can fix it. Who can change the way your government works?

Elected members of federal and state legislatures.

If you have concerns about the way your government works, now is the time to voice those concerns. Why now? Election Day is Tuesday, November 6. This is the perfect time to chat with current and potential legislators about the issues that are important to you. Not only will sharing this information educate legislators, but it will help you determine whether issues that are important to you are also important to the candidate.

The following is a list of basic questions and answers to help you communicate with current and potential legislators and to find your way through the maze of Election Day:

- 1. When is Election Day?** Election Day is Tuesday, November 6, 2012. Polling locations are open statewide from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- 2. Where can I find my polling location?** The Secretary of State maintains a database where individuals can enter their address and be connected to their polling location. The link is: <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx>.



Your county auditor can also provide information regarding polling locations.

**Advocate**  
*verb*  
To support or recommend publicly; plead for or speak in favour of; a person who upholds or defends a cause; supporter

(continued on page 2)

*Advocacy 101 (continued)*

**3. What if I can't get to my polling location?**

The absentee ballot is one option for those who can't make it to a polling location. An absentee ballot is generally submitted by mail in advance of an election by a voter who is unable to be personally present at the polls. You should contact your county auditor if you would like to use an absentee ballot to vote. The website for the Secretary of State is another great resource for information regarding absentee ballots. The link is: <http://sos.iowa.gov/elections/electioninfo/absenteeinfo.html>.

There are other assistance options available if you would prefer to be present at your polling location. If you need assistance voting due to a physical disability, you can bring a person with you to assist. There are a few guidelines regarding who may assist you. For example, your employer cannot assist you in voting.

You may also receive assistance from precinct election officials. Precinct election officials can help with a variety of services, including assisting you in marking your ballot or even assisting with curbside voting. You should contact your county auditor in advance for any form of assistance you may require.

or additional information regarding who may assist you and the types of assistance available, visit the website of the Secretary of State at the following link: <http://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/edfaq.html>. There are a series of frequently asked questions with answers, including how to receive assistance due to a physical disability or limited English-speaking abilities.

**4. I am hospitalized or living in a nursing facility. Can I still vote?**

Yes. Please see the article on page 4 regarding voting rights in hospitals and facilities.

**5. I would like to talk with an elected official or candidate about my concerns in the upcoming election. How can I contact these individuals?**

Most elected officials and candidates can be easily found via the internet. A simple search by the individual's name should provide you with a website that contains contact information. You should be able to reach the individual by e-mail or telephone. You can also write letters to elected officials and candidates.

With elections this close, it is not uncommon that you can just as easily find elected officials and candidates at community forums in your area or even

*"What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult for each other."*

— George Eliot

*Advocacy 101 (continued)*

walking through your neighborhood. These are all opportunities for you to let elected officials and candidates know what issues are important to you.

**6. How do I address elected officials?**

Members of the Iowa General Assembly should be addressed as “Senator” if they are a member of the Senate, and as “Representative” if they are a member of the House of Representatives. Members of Congress should be addressed as “Senator” if they are a member of the Senate, and as “Congressman” if they are a member of the House of Representatives.

**7. I will be speaking with an elected official or candidate. Is there anything special I should do?**

Just remember, you are the expert regarding what is important to you – you are the expert in your issue! Have a few key points ready to discuss and be sure to justify why your issue warrants his or her attention and action. Recognize and acknowledge that the official or candidate has a lot of issues to sort and track, but let them know why your issue is special. Be specific about what it is you want the elected official or candidate to do. Finally, make sure to thank them for their time and consideration.

**Iowa Cities Cited Among the Top 20 for Successful Aging**

A recent report produced by the Milken Institute has identified 5 Iowa cities among the top 20 in the United States for successful aging.

The top cities for successful aging were divided into the categories of large metro areas and small metro areas. Within the large metro category, Council Bluffs was ranked number 3 and Des Moines was ranked number 6. Within the small metro category, Iowa City was ranked number 2, Ames was ranked number 11, and Dubuque was ranked number 14.

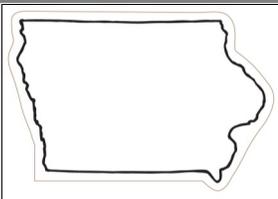
In determining the top cities for successful aging, the report looks at 78 different indicators, including health care, wellness, economic environment, living arrangement options, transportation, and community engagement.

The report also identifies innovative strategies that cities can utilize to increase opportunities for aging populations.

The following is a link to the website that contains the full report: <http://successfulaging.milkeninstitute.org/>

*A nonprofit, nonpartisan economic think tank, the Milken Institute describes itself as follows: Institute works to improve lives around the world by advancing innovative economic and policy solutions that create jobs, widen access to capital, and enhance health. We produce rigorous, independent economic research—and maximize its impact by convening global leaders from the worlds of business, finance, government, and philanthropy. By fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, we transform great ideas into action.*

**Top**



**Cities**



## Voting

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### ABSENTEE VOTING

In Iowa, there are special procedures for individuals residing in hospitals or health care facilities who would like to vote using an absentee ballot.

**Request an absentee ballot.** The form to request the ballot is available on the Secretary of State's website ([www.sos.iowa.gov](http://www.sos.iowa.gov)) or by calling (515) 281-5204 to request that the form to be sent via U.S. Mail.

The request must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election. If an individual is admitted to a facility or hospital between Friday and election day, she/he may contact the county auditor to request an absentee ballot.

**Voting.** A bipartisan team of election officials must deliver the absentee ballot. The voter will be notified when the team will be delivering the ballot. If the voter will not be available, she/he may arrange for another time that will be more convenient.

The team members will deliver the absentee ballot and wait while it is marked. They will return the ballot to the county auditor.

### Every citizen has the right to vote.

Under both the United States and Iowa Constitutions, every adult citizen may vote unless that person has been either (1) declared mentally incompetent to vote; or (2) convicted of an infamous crime.

### What does it mean to be "mentally incompetent"?

A person is mentally incompetent to vote if he or she *lacks sufficient capacity to comprehend and exercise the right to vote.*

### Who determines competency?

The court will usually make this determination during a commitment hearing or at the time of granting guardianship.

### Once a guardian is appointed, is the ward automatically presumed to be mentally incompetent to vote?

NO! Just because an individual has a guardian does NOT mean he or she is unable to vote.

Rather, the judge is required to make a separate determination regarding competency to vote at the time of granting guardianship.

### How does someone register to vote?

**Complete a voter registration form.** The form is available on the Secretary of State's website, or by calling (515) 281-5204 to request that the form be sent via U.S. Mail.

**Sign the completed form.** If a voter is not physically able to sign, she/he may use a mark or stamp she/he regularly uses or may ask someone to sign for her/him – as long as the signer is doing it at the request of and in the presence of the voter.

If this form is sent at least 10 days before a primary or general election or 11 days before any other election, the county auditor will send a voter registration card within two weeks

### Same-Day Voter Registration

Voters may also register on Election Day. The voter will need to show proof of residency and proof of identity. A current driver's license is the best method. If the voter does not have a current driver's license, she/he may provide a photo ID and one of the following: utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, tax statement, or residential lease.

EVERY CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES... SHALL BE ENTITLED TO VOTE AT ALL ELECTIONS... IOWA CONST., ART. II, SEC. 1

**Attorneys-in-fact and guardians are NOT authorized to sign a voter registration or absentee ballot on behalf of their principal or ward.**

## Iowa Department on Aging Recognizes Iowa's Centenarians

The Iowa Department on Aging will once again recognize Iowa's centenarians as distinguished and valued citizens. The Centenarian Honors Celebration will be held at the State Historical Building on October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1:30 to 3:30. Governor Terry Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds will honor these special Iowans at a reception including appetizers and desserts. The event is open to the public at a cost of \$20 per individual. You may find more information on the Department website [here](#).



### Centenarian Honors Celebration Reception

Please join the Iowa Department on Aging for appetizers and desserts.

October 23, 2012 | 1:30-3:30 p.m.

State Historical Building | 600 E. Locust St., Des Moines

#### Registration Form

The cost per individual is \$20. Return by October 12, 2012

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Special accommodations:

\_\_\_\_\_

*(We want our guests to feel safe and comfortable. Please tell us if we can provide special accommodations such as wheel chair, dietary needs, etc.)*

Tickets may be picked up as you enter the reception.

Name(s)

1. _____	3. _____
2. _____	4. _____

Enclose payment of \$20 for each person: # of guests \_\_\_ x \$20 = \$\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Please make check payable to: Iowa Department on Aging)*

Return to: Iowa Dept. on Aging | 510 E 12<sup>th</sup> St, Ste 2 | Des Moines, IA 50319-9025

Questions: Mabelle Shaffer | 515-725-3312 or 1-800-532-3213

Centenarian  
Honors  
Reception

October 23, 2012  
1:30-3:30

State Historical  
Building  
600 E. Locust St.  
Des Moines, IA

## Department on Aging Commissioner Ken Petersen Named Iowan of the Day at the Iowa State Fair

Ken Petersen will never forget the date of Thursday, August 16, 2012. That's the day Petersen was recognized as Iowa State Fair's *Iowan of the Day* by the Fair's Blue Ribbon Foundation and Cookies Food Products.

Founded in 1997, the *Iowan of the Day* program recognizes Iowa's citizens who have made a significant difference in others' lives while living up to those Iowa values that we all hold important such as dependability, integrity, hard work and community life.

Along with being an active member of the Commission on Aging, Ken Petersen is the legislative chair and volunteer for the Jennie Edmundson Hospital in Council Bluffs as well as a current board member of Wings of Hope Cancer Center. Ken's past involvement includes: board member of both the AEA (Area Education Agency) 13 and the American Cancer Society's Iowa Advisory Council; Pottawattamie County Tobacco Coalition; Chanticleer Theatre; Bluffs Art Council; Kiwanis; Rotary Club; American Red Cross and his church. Petersen also served twenty years on the Board of Education.

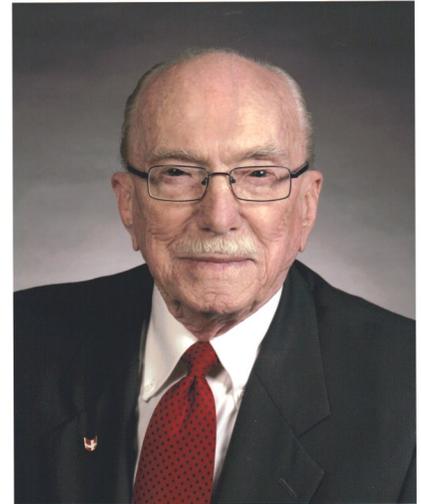
Jake Powers, Jennie Edmundson Hospital Volunteer Coordinator, nominated Ken for this distinction. As part of his nomination letter, Powers pointed out that, "Ken Petersen has brightened the lives of those around him by being active in more than 29 state and local organizations and non-profits in Council Bluffs and Southwest Iowa."

Ken, known for his humble and enthusiastic nature, said that he "Was honored to be recognized along with so many wonderful people."

Ken's day of recognition included a night's stay at the Marriott, use of the Fair's *Iowan of the Day* golf cart, a meal at the Iowa Pork Producer's tent, a cash prize, grandstand tickets and a special introduction on the Anne and Bill Riley stage. Topping off the day was a special plaque presented by Speed Herring, President of *Cookies Food Products*.

Ken added, "The best part of living is the nice people you meet and get to know. I have had a terrific life."

Petersen has served four years on the Iowa Commission on Aging.



### Commission Members

The Commission is made up of 11 members, seven of whom are appointed by the Governor. At least four of the seven must be 55 years of age or older, and no more than four can belong to the same political party. The remaining four members are Senators or Representatives, appointed by their chamber of the legislature to serve as non-voting members.

## **Older Iowans are Voting Iowans**

**OVER  
76%**

Percentage of Iowans age 65 and older registered to vote in the 2010 election, the highest rate of any age group. 65.7 % of people in this age group reported actually casting a ballot.

*Older Iowans: 2012, from the State Data Center of Iowa and the Iowa Department on Aging 05/2012*

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### **AgingWatch will not be published in October. The big November issue will feature the following:**

- Election Recap
- Update on Designation of Area Agencies on Aging

### To subscribe to AgingWatch

please send a blank email to:

[Join--agingwatch@lists.ia.gov](mailto:Join--agingwatch@lists.ia.gov)

Please feel free to forward AgingWatch to others who are interested in issues and programs that impact older Iowans.

*AgingWatch is provided in the spirit of information and education. The opinions expressed by the contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Department or its programs. The Department shall not be liable for any damages that may result from errors or omissions in information distributed in this publication.*

*AgingWatch will be published regularly during the legislative session and monthly in the interim by the Iowa Department on Aging. Recipients of the e-mail notice of publication are encouraged to share it with others.*

*The current issue may be found on the Department's website, [www.iowaaging.gov](http://www.iowaaging.gov). Past issues are archived in the "Publications/Information" section.*