



IowaAging.gov

AgingWatch

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The link to policy affecting older Iowans

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Synopsis of a Fast-Paced Week Under the Dome

The heightened pace of the legislative session continues as the common goal is to bring the 2014 session to an early close. This week will keep committees busy with second funnel fast approaching. Last week, Elder Abuse legislation made significant progress. The Senate passed [SF2239](#) unanimously and sent it to the House. Brief updates follow. Look for in-depth analysis in future editions of AgingWatch.

Second Funnel Approaching – The second funnel hits this Friday, March 14. What does this mean? Bills have to pass out of chamber and subcommittee and full committee in the opposite chamber to survive funnel. Bills that have not passed out of a full committee in the opposite chamber from which they originated will be considered dead. As stated in the last edition of AgingWatch, there are some exceptions – bills assigned to Ways and Means and Appropriations are always funnel proof. AgingWatch will provide coverage of bills that have survived and those that were funneled in next week’s edition of AgingWatch.

Elder Abuse Bill Advances – [Senate File 2239](#) passed unanimously out of the Senate this week. The bill was managed by Senator Mary Jo Wilhelm (D-Cresco). Senator Wilhelm described the bill as a “landmark for Iowa seniors.” Senator David Johnson (R- Ocheyedon) spoke to the legislation stating, this bill “serves those who fall through the cracks.” The Senate went on to pass the bill on a vote of 49-0. The bill has one week to get through subcommittee and full committee on the House side. The bill has been assigned to the Judiciary Committee.

This bill was featured in the [last edition of AgingWatch](#) and creates an elder abuse resource and referral program, establishes a primary point of entry for consumers seeking assistance regarding elder abuse, creates elder abuse protective orders, and establishes crimes and penalties for financial exploitation and elder abuse. The bill was amended on the floor. Changes made to the bill by amendment [S-5036](#) include removal of the crimes and penalties for elder abuse assault and theft against an older individual. It is anticipated that removal of some of these provisions will lessen the fiscal impact. Senator Wilhelm stated that by adopting the amendment, “we are down to cost in FY15 of \$668,500. I do feel it’s a small cost for protecting our seniors.”

Another Elder Abuse Task Force recommendation is to reestablish the Office of Substitute Decision Maker. The Governor’s proposed budget includes an

Session Timetable:

2nd Funnel
March 14

100th Day
(per diem ends)
April 22

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appropriation of \$325,000 to resurrect the Office of Substitute Decision Maker, which was defunded in 2009. It is unclear at this time whether the joint budget targets include funding to reestablish this Office. An article outlining the Office of Substitute Decision Maker can be found in the [January 24, 2014 edition of AgingWatch](#).

Budget Targets Released

An unusual event occurred last week: The House Republicans and Senate Democrats reached an agreement regarding budget targets for State Fiscal Year 2015. This is a departure from the tradition of each chamber proposing its own budget targets and then negotiating to determine final and mutually agreeable target numbers. The agreement early in session could continue the quick pace of this session and move the Legislature toward an on-time or early end to this legislative session.

Additional details regarding budget targets should emerge over the next few weeks and AgingWatch will keep readers informed regarding movement.

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

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