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Visit the Iowa
Department of Elder
Affairs online at
[www.state.ia.us/elder
affairs](http://www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs)

Under the Dome

Welcome to the Second Session of Iowa's 81st General Assembly and to the second "season" of the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs Legislative Update. The legislative session is held from January 9th to April 18th.

This issue of the legislative update will focus on giving our readers some tips on advocacy along with the resources needed to understand Iowa's legislative process. We hope that you will use it as a reference throughout the session as you advocate on behalf of Iowa's seniors.

You can view the department's legislative updates under "What's

New at DEA" on our website or have the legislative update delivered to your inbox each week! Email erin.haafke@iowa.gov to subscribe. We are unable to supply hard copies of the update.

Please note that the Department has moved and our phone numbers have changed. Our email addresses will remain the same.

Our new location is:

Jessie M. Parker Building
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Des Moines, IA 50319-9025

Phone: 515-725-3333
Toll Free: 800-532-3213
Fax: 515-725-3300

Week in Review

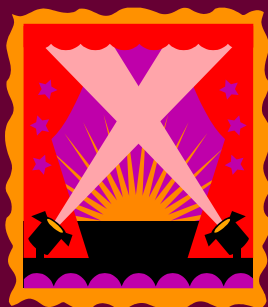
Overall, the first week of the session is one of protocol and of legislators getting organized. The Department is also getting reorganized in its new location in the Jessie Parker Building. Please note additional information later in this update regarding our February 9th open house.

Monday: House Republicans rolled out HSB 502 (now HF 2045) related to a phase out of pension

and social security taxes. The bill is estimated to cost \$249 million dollars. The fiscal note is still in process. Also introduced was HF 2002 related to the repayment of the Senior Living Trust Fund and HF 2010 related to Substitute Decision Makers, HF 2018 related to an increase in the Personal Needs Allowance and HF 2028 related to Veteran's Status. In the Senate, SF 2008 was introduced by Senator Kreiman related to Cemetery Access.

NOTICE:

The Health and Human Service Appropriations Committee will discuss the Department's budget on Thursday, January 26th at 9:30am in Room 116 at the Capitol.



Tuesday: Governor Vilsack outlined his budget priorities in his State of the State Address. The Governor is proposing a 3 million dollar increase the Department's Case Management Program for Frail Elders (CMPFE) (which will draw down an additional 6 million in Federal Dollars) and a \$62,500 increase to the department to provide consumer education related to assisted living, adult day services and elder group homes. Other programs in the department are recommended to be funded at their current levels.

Wednesday: Chief Justice Lavorato delivered the State of the Judiciary. House files assigned to committee were HF 116 related to Senior Deer Hunters. The House

Ways and Means Committee voted out the SS-Pension Phase Out (HSB 502). The bill will likely not come to the floor for debate until the fiscal note has been completed. The floor manager is Representative Boal. Introduced in the house was HF 2039, a bill relating to Elder Fishers. In the Senate, a pharmacy bill SF 833 was assigned to sub-committee.

Thursday: HF 2028 related to Veteran's status was assigned to subcommittee, as was HF 851 Death Certificate Fees, HF 852 related to Inheritance Tax Credit and SF 416 related to Cigarette Tax and Property Tax. Introduced into the house were HF 2049, related to a Senior Property Tax Freeze.

DEA Spotlight

Getting Ready - What Advocates Need to Know!

Reprinted with permission. Our thanks to Campbell/Patterson Consulting (some changes by DEA to reflect the aging network)

Are you an advocate? Many people say they are not. But they want their voices heard. Being an advocate just means that you are willing to let your elected officials know what you think about the issues that are important to you. Mad that more has not been done to address the lack of transportation in your area? Concerned that more attention is paid to teacher salaries

than giving persons with disabilities opportunities to work and earn salaries without fear of losing essential services? Do you simply wish that more buildings would be accessible to you and others you know?

If you want your voice heard – and you are willing to speak your mind to your legislators and elected officials – then you too are an advocate. Sometimes what you are advocating for will help you. Sometimes it will help someone you love. Other times it might just be the right thing to do, whether it helps you or not.

Caring for an Older Iowan? Bookmark the Iowa Family Caregiver website: www.iowafamilycaregiver.org/

It does not take too much effort to make your point as an advocate. State Representative Walt Tomenga, who represents a suburban area in Polk County, recently said it best, “If a legislator gets one call, s/he has an issue. If a legislator gets two calls, s/he has a problem. If s/he gets three calls, it’s a crisis.” That is about right – a few calls can make the difference between a bill being debated or being tabled indefinitely. Your legislators do listen – and they will listen even more this year, an election year, when they will again have to answer to their voters.

So plan to speak your mind this session. Here are some basic things you will need to know:

1. The names of your legislators.

You can find these out easily. Every Iowan has one State Senator and one State Representative. You can find out their names and how to contact them by either calling your County Auditor (in your phone book’s blue pages) or the Iowa General Assembly’s website has a “Find your Legislator” section, which you can access at: www4.legis.state.ia.us/find-leg/ On this site, simply insert your address and receive the names and contact information for both your state and federal legislators.

2. Legislators represent you – it’s their job to address your concerns. Remember that your legislator’s job is to listen to your concerns and do something about them. If your legislator is not

helping you, or not listening to you, then you have a choice on Election Day 2006 – vote them out of office and vote for someone that will listen, and will do something about your concerns.

3. The Legislative Session meets for four short months this year.

This year, the Legislature starts on Monday, January 9, 2006 and ends in mid-April (April 18 is the last day legislators get paid, so they usually end right around this date). This leaves legislators plenty of time to campaign for re-election in November 2006. A Session Calendar can be accessed at:

www.legis.state.ia.us/Current/TimeTable.html and we have included a Legislative Funnel on page 5 of this Update.

4. Any legislator may introduce a bill to take care of your issues or concerns.

They can sponsor a bill to fix a problem or add money to a program. Ask your legislator to do this for you! They may ask if you have suggestions. You can look at which bills your legislator has sponsored by clicking on the name of your legislator here: www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Cool-ICE/FloorManager.htm.

5. Legislators like thanks. Always thank your legislators for listening to you – and always check back to see if they’ve done anything to address your concerns. Even when you feel like yelling, it is always more productive to thank your legislator for the work they ARE doing for you – not the things they aren’t making happen.

6. To make it into law, a bill must pass both the Iowa House and the Iowa Senate in the same form, and then be signed by the Governor. This process can be very quick, but usually it takes a very long time, sometimes years. But to pass, the bill has to make it through House and Senate committees, be voted out of both the House and Senate in the same form (sometimes they bounce the bill back and forth with amendments until they get it right), and be signed by the Governor.

7. Legislators that serve on committees impacting your issue can help you too. If your legislator is not on a committee that deals with your issue, you can also contact the legislators that are. A list of the legislative committee membership for Human Resources (House and Senate) Ways and Means (House and Senate) and Health and Human Service Appropriations (Joint) committees is available on pages 7, 8, and 9 of this Update. Remember to always contact your legislator first, but if you want to keep going after talking to your own legislators, go those on the committees charged with dealing with your issue.

8. Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Co-Chairs, and Ranking Members hold the fate of bills in their hands. Each House Committee has a Chair and Vice Chair appointed by the majority party (right now, the Republicans) and a Ranking Member appointed by the minority party (the

Democrats). The Chair and Vice Chair decide which bills get out of committee, and which bills are dead (won't come out of committee). Because the Iowa Senate is split evenly with 25 Democrats and 25 Republicans, committees have Co-Chairs (one Republican and one Democrat). Co-Chairs must agree to the bills coming out of committee, or they die in committee.

9. No One Will Speak For You!

You are your best, and only, advocate. If you wish things were different, if you have ideas that could make your life or the lives of your family and neighbors better, tell your legislator. They want your ideas, and they very well might turn those ideas into a bill. Your legislators are paid to represent you, so help them do that by talking to them about your ideas!

10. Vision without action is merely a dream. Vision with action can change the world.

Don't get overwhelmed and don't be intimidated by talking to your legislators. Self-advocacy is the only way to make something happen. Other people won't do it for you.

If all of Iowa's Seniors speak up, we can make a difference.

Together we can advocate for change – and make change happen! Remember, “It’s easy to sit up and take notice. What is difficult is standing up and taking action!” (author Honore de Balzac)

Legislative Funnel

First Day of the 2006 Legislative Session

Monday, January 9, 2006

House Committees move House Files
Senate Committees move Senate Files

March 3, 2006

House debates House Files
Senate debates Senate Files

March 6 - 24, 2006

House Committees move Senate Files
Senate Committees move House Files

March 24, 2006

Bills that haven't moved out of Committee in the opposing Chamber are Dead

Exception:

Appropriation bills
Ways and Means bills
Government Oversight
Can move at any time

End of Session

April 19, 2006

(100th day)

Opportunities to Advocate for Change in 2006

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There are many ways you can advocate for yourself, and not all mean calling your legislator. Here

are some ideas to help you get started.

Hate Speaking, but You're a Darn Good Writer? Think about writing a letter to the editor to your local newspaper expressing your opinion on something. These are very short, usually less than 200 words. Every legislator subscribes to the newspapers in his/her district,

so they will see and read your letter, and it may motivate them to do something about your issue. If more than one person writes a letter to the editor on the subject, your legislator will most definitely take notice! Look on the InfoNet website for tips on writing a letter to the editor:

http://www.infonetiowa.com/advocate/advocacy_toolkit.php).

Ask your State Representative and your State Senator to add you to their mailing or e-mail list.

They will let you know what they are up to on a weekly or monthly basis, and let you know when they are having local legislative forums in your area. This is probably the single best way to keep tabs on your legislator. If you do not have access to a phone or email, have someone call your legislator for you and give them your address. Starting in January, you can call or have someone call your legislators at: 515-281-3221 (House) and 515-281-3371 (Senate).

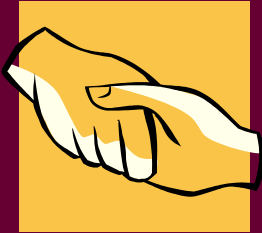
Attend a local forum. You don't have to speak – just sign in and shake your legislators hands. You can introduce yourself and just sit down and listen. Perhaps your legislators will say something that makes you want to speak, or you may just want to listen. What is important is showing up and letting your legislators know you are interested in what they are doing. If you do speak, keep it simple and short. Tell them who you are, where you are from, what your issue is, and why it is important to you. If you want, you can ask them what they are willing to do about

your issue or some other question. You can find out where your local forums are by following the advice in #2 above or they are often listed in your local newspaper (but you don't get much more than a day's or maybe a week's notice).

Start volunteering on a campaign.

If you like your legislator, help them out by offering to stuff envelopes, answer campaign office phones, march in parades, go door-to-door distributing information, or do any other volunteer work they need on their campaign. If you don't like the responses you've gotten from your legislator, find out who is running against them and volunteer on their campaigns.

Still Not Satisfied? Speak with Your Vote! If your legislator isn't paying attention to you, if he isn't addressing the issues you think are important, then replace him! Find out who is running for your legislator's seat and get to know the candidates. Vote in the primary (Tuesday, June 6, 2006) when the political parties pick their candidates, and in the general election (Tuesday, November 7, 2006) when the public will decide who gets the job. But make sure you are registered to vote – it's free, it's easy, and it's necessary if you want to vote. You can find out more information about how to register to vote by contacting the ID Action Office (866/432-2846; 866/432-2847 TTY/TDD; info@idaction.org).



Contact Lawmakers!

Senate Switchboard:

515-281-3371

House Switchboard:

515-281-3221

Mailing Address:

State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319

Office of the

Governor and Lt. Governor

State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319
515-281-5211

Health and Human Service Appropriations Subcommittee

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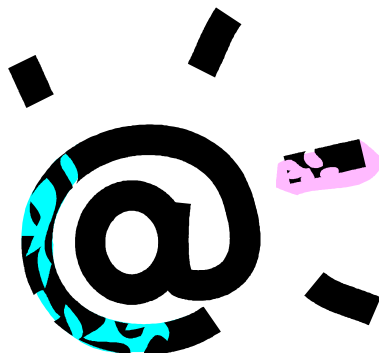
Human Resources Standing Committees

Senators:

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In the Legislature

For more information,
the Iowa Legislature
General Assembly
homepage is
www.legis.state.ia.us

Bills the Department is monitoring:

[HF 116 Senior Deer Hunters](#) An Act allowing certain senior residents to hunt deer during the youth and severely disabled deer hunting season. Struyk, Mertz, Dandekar, Lukan (House Natural Resources Committee) Van Engelenhoven (C), Whitead, Wilderdyke

[HF 833 Pharmacy Bill](#) A bill for an act making changes relating to the practice of pharmacy, providing for the creation of an electronic drug database, establishing and appropriating fees, providing penalties, and providing an effective date. Committee on Ways and Means (Senate Ways and Means) Danielson and Larson (C), McCoy, and Zaun

[HF 851 Death Certificates](#) A bill for an act relating to fees imposed for certified copies of death certificates. Committee on Ways & Means (Ways & Means)

[HF 852 Inheritance Tax Credit](#) A bill for an act relating to an inheritance tax credit for transferring a portion of an inheritance to an entity for capital investment, programming, including education, performance, and access, in arts and culture and providing a penalty. Committee on Ways and Means (Ways and Means) Soderberg (C), Lalk, Schueller (Formerly [HF 795](#)) (Formerly [HF 297](#))

[HF 2002 Senior Living Trust Fund](#)

A bill for an act increasing the standing amount required to be appropriated, reverted, or transferred to the credit of the senior living trust fund and including effective and retroactive applicability date provisions. Raecker and Kuhn (Appropriations) Heaton, Kuhn, and Raecker

[HF 2010 Substitute Decision](#)

Makers A bill for an act relating to and making an appropriation for the office of substitute decision maker under the Department of Elder Affairs. Smith (Human Resources)

[HF 2018 Personal Needs Allowance](#)

A bill for an act relating to an increase in the personal needs allowance for residents of nursing facilities under the medical assistance program. Gaskill and Swaim (Human Resources)

[HF 2021 Mr Case Payments](#)

A bill for an act relating to the costs of services provided to persons with mental retardation whose service costs are a state responsibility. Heddens (Human Resources)

[HF 2022 Cigarette Taxes](#)

A bill for an act increasing the taxes imposed on cigarettes and tobacco products and providing for deposit of the increased revenue generated in the senior living trust fund, and providing an applicability date and an effective date. Tomenga and Olson R. (Ways and Means)

[HF 2026](#) Non Profit Tax Exemption

A bill for an act relating to the property tax exemption for certain dwelling units owned by a nonprofit organization and providing a retroactive applicability date. Paulsen (Ways and Means)

[HF 2028](#) Veteran Status A bill for an act specifying the time period within which the Iowa department of veterans affairs shall comply with a request for veteran status from a health care facility. D Olson (Veteran Affairs)

[HF 2039](#) Elder Fishers An Act allowing fishing without a license for certain persons who fish in a supervised group. Bell and Huser (Natural Resources) Lukan, Bell, and May

[HF 2040](#) Medicaid Inflation Factor A bill for an act relating to services reimbursed under a medical assistance home and community-based services waiver for the elderly. Swaim & Gaskill (Human Resources)

[HF 2045](#) SS-Pension Income Phase Out An Act phasing out the state income tax on social security benefits and on pension and retirement income and including effective and applicability date provisions Committee on Ways and Means (Ways and Means)

[HF 2049](#) Senior Property Tax Freeze A bill for an act relating to the reduction in the assessed values of homesteads of persons sixty-five years of age or older below a specified income level, providing a penalty, and including applicability date provisions. Bukta (Ways and Means)

[SF 341](#) Long-Term Living System

A bill for an act relating to the long-term living system in Iowa including establishment of the intent for Iowa's long-term living system. Committee on Human Resources (Human Resources) *Formerly* [SSB 1272](#)

[SF 416](#) Cigarette Tax and Property Tax Cigarette Tax and Property Tax Committee on Ways and Means (Ways and Means) Van Fossen (C), Kurtenbach, Shomshor *Formerly* [SSB 1322](#)

[SF 2008](#) Cemetary Access A bill for an act relating to access to certain burial sites located on private property. Kreiman (Local Government)

[SF 2031](#) Grandparent Visitation A bill for an act relating to grandparent and great-grandparent visitation. Ragan et al. (Human Resources)

Iowa Department of Elder Affairs

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Our Mission:

To provide advocacy, educational, and prevention services to older lowans so they can find Iowa a healthy, safe, productive, and enjoyable place to live and work.

Extras!

The Department of Elder Affairs has posted an **Invitation to Exhibit at the upcoming Governor's Conference on Aging – to be held May 22nd and 23rd in Des Moines.** See our website for details at:

www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs/

You are Invited!

Join us for an **OPEN HOUSE**
Celebrating the **40th Anniversary of the**
Iowa Department of Elder Affairs

at our **NEW LOCATION**

Jessie M. Parker Building
510 East 12th Street, Suite 2

Thursday, February 9, 2006
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

*Enter through
Iowa Ethics &
Campaign Board,
take elevator to
second floor*

Disclaimer

This legislative update 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 update.

The Legislative Update is distributed electronically during the legislative session by the Iowa Department of Elder Affairs for informational purposes only. Recipients of this update are encouraged to share it with others.

The current issue can also be found on the department's webpage, www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs/, under the "What's New at DEA" heading. Past issues are archived in the "Publications/Information" section.

If you are interested in receiving or discontinuing the legislative updates, contact Erin Haafke by email at erin.haafke@iowa.gov.