

infoNET

A publication of the Governor's DD Council & ID Action

ID ACTION GETS READY FOR 2010 ELECTIONS

Meet our new Vote Coordinator and find out what she has planned as we prepare for the 2010 Elections.

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“A” is for Advocacy in August

Congressional break gives Iowans a chance to lobby their Federal elected officials.

Congress takes a break every August, giving US Senators and Representatives a chance to get back to their home states and talk to the people they represent.

This year, our elected officials in Washington DC are ready for a break. Congress has been busy working on some pretty tough reforms –banks and credit card reforms, economic stimulus, and the yet-to-be-completed health care reform package.

Usually Iowans have to go to Washington DC to lobby their congressmen in person. Because health care reform is such a big topic, and because they have the month of August off, many of Iowa's federal elected officials are having town hall meetings to hear what Iowans are thinking.

If you care about health care reform or have something else on your mind, attend a town hall meeting. Share your story, your perspective, your solutions, or your thoughts. Or just come and listen to others.

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“They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.”

Pop Artist Andy Warhol



Special Election Called, Legislator Resigns



State Representative John Whitaker announced last week that he is leaving the Iowa Legislature. President Obama appointed Rep. Whitaker as the State Director of the Farm Services Agency in the US Department of Agriculture.

Whitaker, who represented [District 90](#), has been a family farmer since 1979 and a state legislator since 2003. He is a graduate of Iowa State University, and spent nearly a decade as a county supervisor.

Voters living in Van Buren county and parts of Wapello and Jefferson counties (including the city of Fairfield) will select a new legislator in a special election on Tuesday, September 1. The special election winner will serve the rest of Whitaker's term (which means the winning candidate will need to run for re-election in November 2010).

READ MORE ABOUT THE CANDIDATES RUNNING ON PAGE 3

SPECIAL ELECTION DATES

FRIDAY, AUGUST 21 –

PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE

You can still register to vote at the polls, but that can take some time. Be safe, and pre-register.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28 – DEADLINE TO REQUEST ABSENTEE BALLOTS BY MAIL

SATURDAY, AUGUST 29 –

AUDITORS OFFICE OPEN FOR IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTING

Auditor's offices are open until 5 p.m. for early voting.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 – SPECIAL ELECTION

Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

QUESTIONS? Call your county auditor or the Secretary of State at 888/SOS-VOTE (888/767-8683)

IOWA LEGISLATORS ADVISE WHITE HOUSE ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

Senator Jack Hatch of Des Moines, Senator Joe Bolkcom of Iowa City, and Senator Swati Dandekar of Marion are among a group of 35 state legislators asked by the Obama Administration to serve on a "White House Working Group of State Legislators for Health Care Reform." Sen. Hatch (pictured at right) was asked to lead the group.



The group met for the first time on June 17. Its mission is to create local momentum for health care reform, educate advocates and communities, listen to those voicing concern about health care, and build support among constituencies about their role in health care reform.

President Obama met with the group, and said, "We are not going to win this battle here in Washington, DC. We will win in the states." With that challenge, work group members will work with groups in their states, hold public hearings, host listening posts, and report back to the President with what they have learned.

You can visit the national health care reform website at www.healthreform.gov for more information on the initiative. You can find a complete list of state leaders and learn more about the group's work at www.statelegislatorsforhealthreform.com.



District 90 Special Election Candidates



THE DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE

Curt Hanson, a Fairfield community activist and retired teacher, will be the Democratic candidate in the special election for House District 90.

Hanson was born and raised on an Iowa family farm. He attended the University of Northern Iowa and received his masters from the University of Iowa. He and his wife, Diane, have two grown children. They are members of First United Methodist Church and the Fairfield Kiwanis Club.

"My priorities are simple: balance the state budget, create good-paying jobs in key industries like renewable energy, make health care more affordable for middle class families, and ensure our kids have the education and skills they need to get a job in these tough economic times," said Hanson.

Hanson was named Fairfield Teacher of the Year and served as President and Business Manager of the Iowa Association of Safety Education.

"As State Representative, I can promise the people of Jefferson, Van Buren, and Wapello Counties two things – I'll work hard and I'll always listen to you," concluded Hanson.

You can view more about Curt Hanson on his website www.curthanson.org, by calling his cell phone 641-919-2314, or by emailing curt@curthanson.org.

THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE

Steve Burgmeier, a Jefferson County Supervisor, will be the Republican candidate for the September 1 special election.

"I am working to be your next State Representative because I believe the people deserve to have their voice better represented in the Iowa House. Right now we have a unique opportunity to replace a voice for more government spending with one who believes government, like every other family and small business budget, must reign in its spending," said Burgmeier.

"We need legislators who are willing to listen to the people. The people of Iowa deserve a right to vote on the definition of marriage in Iowa, as your State Representative I will work to allow the people an opportunity to vote," continued Burgmeier

Burgmeier and his wife Betty live in Lockridge and are partners in the Hooter Lane Farms sow farm. He is the past district director of the Iowa Pork Producers, an appointed delegate of the Pork Act boards, and a Jefferson County Farm Bureau board member. Burgmeier is a little league baseball umpire.

The Burgmeier's have five grown children and are members of St. Joseph and Cabrini Catholic Church.

You can contact Steve Burgmeier at 319-931-1616 or stephenburgmeier@gmail.com.

ID Action gets head start on 2010 Election

More people with disabilities are voting than ever before. A 2004 National Council on Disability study showed 52% of people with disabilities that could vote, did vote – compared to 31% in 1996.

Two Rutgers University professors recently looked at US Census data and found that about 14.7 million voters with disabilities voted in 2008. That is on par with African American voters (15.9 million) and Hispanics/Latino voters (9.7 million).

Here in Iowa, ID Action is increasing participation and turnout among people affected by disability. We are focusing on building our ability to measure voting behavior among people with disabilities and those affected by disability, as well as doing outreach to encourage our ID Action members to go to the polls on Election Day. We've built a database of nearly 8,500 voters statewide. About 41% of those in our database are registered voters, and of those registered, an outstanding 78% (2,713) voted in last November's Presidential election.

"The increase in voting among people with disabilities and those interested in disability

policy is great news. But we can and will do better. We'll build on what ID Action has shown to be effective and we are excited about developing new tools to both encourage voting and measure our success," said Melissa Mulliken, ID Action's new voting coordinator.

During the 2008 election, ID Action contacted voters and potential voters via phone and mail to encourage them to vote in November. Well-attended workshops on voting rights and barriers were held around the state and an ID Action grant program funded local get-out-the-vote (GOTV) projects to increase participation by people with disabilities.

"There are few communities as affected by public policy and legislation as the disability community," noted Rik Shannon, ID Action Coordinator. "Voting, and building a recognized voting bloc, are powerful actions we can take to influence how decisions get made in Washington DC, in Des Moines and on County Boards of Supervisors across Iowa."

Article written by Melissa Mulliken, info@idaction.org

MEET MELISSA



Melissa Mulliken was recently named ID Action's Voting Coordinator. She'll join Matt Fitzgerald, the voting project's grassroots specialist, to design and implement the full range of ID Action's voting projects.

Melissa's career has taken her from New York City to Madison Wisconsin and along the way she has developed a wide range of experience in strategic communications including market research, media relations, strategic planning, publications development, fundraising and political consulting. She owns a public affairs firm located in Madison, Wisconsin which serves non-profit, corporate, governmental, and political clients both locally, regionally and nationally. Before moving to Madison, Melissa worked in public relations and in athletic administration for Barnard College and Columbia University in New York City.

Advocacy in August: Break Schedule

All of Iowa's federal elected officials were invited to share their August schedules with us. We have listed the phone numbers of those offices that did not respond – we encourage you to contact them directly for more information. Watch www.infonetiowa.com for updated schedules.

SENATOR CHARLES GRASSLEY

Wednesday, August 12

9:15-10:15 am – WINTERSET - Public Library, 123 North 2nd Street

11:15 am-12:15 pm – AFTON - Council Chambers, City Hall, 115 East Kansas Street

2:30-3:30 pm – PANORA - Community Center, 115 West Main Street

4:30-5:30 pm – ADEL - Public Library Meeting Room, 303 S. 10th St.

Monday, August 24

9:00-10:00 am – HUMBOLDT - Rustix Restaurant, 716 Sumner Ave.

11:30 am-12:30 pm - RUTHVEN - Ruthven Social Center, 1503 Rolling St.

2:00-3:00 pm – POCAHONTAS - Pocahontas Public Library, Community Room, 14 2nd Ave. NW

4:15-5:15 pm – ROCKWELL CITY - Community Center On the Square, 424 Main

Wednesday, August 26

10:15-11:15 am – LE MARS - Blue Bunny Ice Cream Parlor, 24 5th Avenue NW, Business 75/Hwy. 3

12:30-1:30 pm – CHEROKEE - Sanford Museum, 117 East Willow St.

2:30-3:30 pm – IDA GROVE - Community REC Center, Community Room, 311 Barnes

Thursday, August 27

8:00-9:00 am – ESTHERVILLE – Emmet Co. Farm Bureau, 421 1st Ave. N

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Families USA is a national group that promotes high quality, affordable health care for all Americans. They have recently put together an excellent set of tools for advocates that can apply to any issue you care about.

August Recess Tool Kit:

<http://www.familiesusa.org/august-recess-tool-kit/>

Tools & Tactics
Making the Case for
Health Care Reform
Getting Specific about
Health Care Reform
State-by-State Data
Share Your Creative
Strategies

Interested in health care reform? Watch Families USA website for updated information & talking points: www.familiesusa.org.

WHO REPRESENTS ME?

TWO US SENATORS & ONE US REPRESENTATIVE

Iowa's two US Senators (Sen. Charles Grassley & Sen. Tom Harkin) represent all Iowans.

Iowa has five US Representatives (Rep. Leonard Boswell, Rep. Bruce Braley, Rep. Steve King, Rep. Tom Latham, and Rep. Dave Loebsack). Each Iowan is represented by one of these US Representatives. The name of your Congressional representative is listed on the mailing label – if we have a PO address or you are new, you'll need to go to www.legis.state.ia.us/FindLeg/ to find out.

Advocacy in August: Break Schedule (continued)

Thursday, August 27 (continued)

10:00-11:00 am – SPIRIT LAKE - Sami Bedell Center for the Performing Arts, 612 28th Street

1:45-2:45 pm – GEORGE - George North Community Room, 115 South Main Street

4:30-5:30 pm- SPENCER - Administration Bldg., Conference/Board Room, 300 West 4th

Friday, August 28

8:00-9:00 am – PRIMGHAR - O'Brien County Courthouse, Assembly Room, 155 South Hayes

3:00-4:00 pm – JEFFERSON – Meeting Room, Greene County Community Center, 204 W. Harrison

SENATOR TOM HARKIN

Call 515/284-4574 for more information.

REPRESENTATIVE LEONARD BOSWELL

Call toll-free 888/432-1984 for more information.

REPRESENTATIVE BRUCE BRALEY

Meetings with * are on health care reform only.

Tuesday August 18

***2:00 pm – MAQUOKETA** –Jackson County Regional Health Center (use S. Entrance off Vermont St.), 700 W. Grove

Wednesday August 19

10:00 am – FAYETTE - Upper Iowa University - Garbee Hall, Fayette/Upper Iowa Room - 605 Washington St.

***1:30 pm – INDEPENDENCE** - Independence Library, 805 1st St. E

Wednesday August 26

***1:00 pm – APLINGTON** - Aplington-Parkersburg Middle School Cafeteria, 215 10th

***3:00 pm – WAVERLY** - Waverly Health Center, Rooftop Garden, 312 9th Street SW

Monday August 31

***10:00 am – CLINTON** - Ashford University, Durgin Center, 400 N. Bluff Blvd.

Wednesday, September 2

***9:30 am – MANCHESTER** - Regional Medical Center, Conference Room, 709 W. Main St.

***2:00 pm ANAMOSA** - Lawrence Community Center, 600 E. Main St.

Friday September 4

***1:30 pm – ELKADER** - Elkader Central School, Auditorium, 400 1st St NW

4:00 pm – GUTTENBERG - Guttenberg City Hall, 502 S. First St.

REPRESENTATIVE STEVE KING

Call 712/224-4692 for more information.

REPRESENTATIVE TOM LATHAM

Call toll-free 866-428-5642 for more information.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVE LOEBSACK

Additional information and meetings are at:

loebsack.house.gov/ConstituentServices/HealthcareReform/

Saturday, August 15

9:30 am – CEDAR RAPIDS - 343 Cedar Hall, Kirkwood Community College, 6301 Kirkwood Blvd. SW.

12:00 pm – MT. PLEASANT - Civic Center, 307 East Monroe Street

2:00 p.m – FORT MADISON – City Hall, Council Chambers, 811 Avenue E.

3:30 pm - BURLINGTON - City Hall Council Chambers, 400 Washington St.

Saturday, August 22

10:00 am – IOWA CITY - Public Library, 123 S. Linn St.

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Advocacy in August: Break Schedule *(continued)*

REPRESENTATIVE LOEBSACK (CONTINUED)

1:45 am – TIPTON - Cedar County Extension, 107 Cedar Street

2:00 pm – MUSCATINE - City Hall, Council Chambers, 215 Sycamore Street

4:00 pm – COLUMBUS JUNCTION - City Hall, Council Chambers, 232 2nd Street

Saturday, August 29

10:30 am – WASHINGTON - Public Library, 120 East Main Street

1:00 pm – FAIRFIELD - Fairfield Public Library, 104 W. Adams St.

2:30 pm – OTTUMWA - Ottumwa Public Library, 102 W. Fourth

4:15 pm – BLOOMFIELD - Davis County Hospital, 509 N. Madison

Saturday, September 5

11:30 am – KEOSAUQUA - Village Cup & Cakes, 220 Main St.

1:45 pm – CENTERVILLE - Centerville- Mercy Hospital, 1 St. Joseph Dr., Conference Rooms A&B



"Just because you don't take an interest in politics doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you." Pericles (430 B.C.)

3:15 pm – CORYDON - Wayne County Hospital, 417 S. East St.

Saturday, September 12

2:00 pm – KEOKUK - Public Library Round Room, 10 North 5th Street

BREAKING BUDGET NEWS

GOOD NEWS.

Economists have started to see signs that the nation's economy is turning around. Economic experts in Iowa say they are seeing similar trends. The state's Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) estimated this month's sales tax revenues would be about the same (.1% growth was expected) – but they actually grew by 1.2% (that's \$4.7 million more than expected). But don't get too excited – Iowa still faces a very difficult budget year when the Legislature reconvenes in January 2010.

BAD NEWS.

The Department of Human Services has recently found out that federal stimulus dollars used to fill holes in the Mental Health/Disability Services system and Medicaid (\$36 million total) cannot be used as intended. The Risk Pool was to receive \$10 million of these funds to help counties eliminate or reduce waiting lists and meet other local needs.

The money was appropriated during session, before legislators knew the strings that would be attached to it. Iowa's legislative session was due to end before Congress made final decisions on stimulus dollars. As it turned out, Federal regulations do not allow stimulus dollars to be used as federal Medicaid match – so it cannot be used to fund the Risk Pool. Legislative leaders are on top of this and are looking for ways to fix this situation, but a final fix requires legislative action (and the Legislature isn't back until January 2010). Watch www.infonetiowa.com for updates on this situation.

Legislative Interim Study Committees Named

Interim study committees meet when the state legislature is not in session (during the interim). They are used to help legislators find solutions to more complex and often controversial issues, issues that take more time than session hours allow. This year, seven interim committees will meet over the next five months. Here are a few that might be relevant to people affected by disability:

Job Training Needs Study Committee

Charge: Examine job training issues and needs, focusing on underserved populations in Iowa (people earning less than \$20,000/year, minorities, women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and persons convicted of felonies who are trying to reenter society after release from prison). Members: Senators Dotzler (Co-Chair), Noble, Schoenjahn, Stewart, Wieck; Representatives Ford (Co-Chair), Cownie, Forristall, Jacoby, Schueller. Meetings: Not yet set. For more information: www.legis.state.ia.us/aspx/Committees/Committee.aspx?id=485.

Many of our readers say they are concerned about job opportunities for people with disabilities. Contact the legislators listed on this committee if you have ideas for them to consider.

Legislative Health Care Coverage Commission

Charge: Develop a health care strategic plan and address the issues listed in SF 389, passed this last session. Members: Senators Hatch (Co-Chair), Johnson; Representatives Smith (Co-Chair), Upmeyer. Meetings: Not yet set. For more info: www.legis.state.ia.us/aspx/Committees/Committee.aspx?id=484

Contact the legislative members of this Commission if you have suggestions about state health care reform efforts.

State Government Reorganization Study Committee

Charge: Look for options to reorganize state government, improve efficiency, modernize processes, eliminate duplication and outdated processes, reduce costs & increase accountability. Look at expanded use of the Internet and other technology, and productivity improvement measures. The study shall include a process to receive state government efficiency suggestions offered by the public and public employees. Members: Senators Appel (Co-Chair), Danielson,

Feenstra, Hamerlinck, Warnstadt; Representatives Mascher (Co-Chair), Gaskill, Helland, Struyk, T. Taylor. Meetings: Not yet set. For more information: www.legis.state.ia.us/aspx/Committees/Committee.aspx?id=487

This committee will study a wide variety of issues – including the reorganization of departments and services. The administration and funding of mental health/disability services could be one of those areas. **If you have ideas on ways to make government more efficient for both the taxpayer and the service recipient, let your legislator and the committee members know!**

Prescription Medication Usage Study Committee

Charge: Identify solutions to address problems with the inappropriate use of medication. Members: Senators Ragan (Co-Chair), Bolkcom, Hartsuch; Representatives Wessel-Kroeschell (Co-Chair), Heaton, Thede. Meetings: Not yet set. For more information: www.legis.state.ia.us/aspx/Committees/Committee.aspx?id=488

Issues could include generic epilepsy drugs causing problems for some people with seizure disorders, and allowing use of sample drugs.

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Interim Study Committees (continued from page 8)

Three other interim committees will meet before the end of the year, including one regulating “puppy mills” and other pet breeders (Care of Animals in Commercial Enterprises Study Committee), an ongoing study committee to reorganize Iowa’s criminal code, and a review of the way schools are financed. You can find out more information on these studies, membership, and meeting schedules by calling the Legislative Information Office at 515/281-5086 (sorry, no toll-free number) or going online to <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Current/Interim/>.

There was not enough money to pay for a requested review of the Mental Health/Disability Services (MH/DS) system and its funding, but legislative leaders think it is important to have anyway. They have asked for a stakeholder work group to be appointed in the next week to address the service system administered by counties for adult MH/DS. The work group will meet with legislative staff to develop both short and long term options to reform the MH/DS services system and its funding.

The work group size is being kept small so the process does not bog down, but meetings will be open and include chances for public input (both in writing and in person). The work group is to include: 3 DHS staff, 3 county representatives, 2 service providers, and 2 consumer advocates.

The group is to look at options to address funding eligibility requirements (including ending balances and distribution requirements) and provide options for pilot projects that will use existing funding more efficiently and allow testing of new funding options (since local funds are capped and state budgets are strapped for cash).

The work group will meet on the following Wednesdays, from 9:30 a.m. to Noon (site TBA):

August 26
September 9 & 23
October 7 & 21
November 4 & 18

The Joint Health & Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, December 9 at 10 a.m. (site TBA) to review the work group recommendations and decide how to move forward.



Give Your 2 cents Worth!

The American Association of Persons with Disabilities ([AAPD](http://www.aapd.com)) and the US Government Accountability Office **are looking for testimonials about voting** in the 2008 Elections.

The power of real stories from real people is undeniable and will be very important in upcoming conversations about changes in voting technology. AAPD is particularly interested in stories of people who were able to vote privately and independently for the first time using accessible systems where they exist.

If you or someone you know has a story like this please send it to:

vote@aapd.com as soon as possible.

If you do not have access to email, you can tell us your story at 866/432-2846, and we’ll pass it along. Please remember to leave your name and phone number (this is needed for us to pass along).

*[FirstName] [LastName] OR CURRENT RESIDENT
[ADDRESS]
[Address2]
[City], [State] [Zip]-[Zip4]*

*Your US Representative is: [US Representative]
Your State Representative is: [Representative]
Your State Senator is: [Senator]*

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