

# Legislative Newsletter

Jan. 17, 2020



The 2020 Legislative session gaveled in Jan. 13, with the Condition of the State and Condition of Judiciary following in the days after. Because this is the second year of the 88th General Assembly, bills which survived the funnel weeks but were not sent to the Governor are still fair game. Bills that did not get through the funnels may still come back.

Gov. Kim Reynolds made an emphasis in her Condition of the State to create long-term, sustainable funding for mental health services in Iowa as part of her anticipated Invest In Iowa Act.

“Mental health is becoming the biggest challenges of our time,” the Governor’s remarks said. “We must now provide predictable funding.” The Invest In Iowa Act purports the funding would come from a mix of property tax levy and state funds. The levy would be reduced to \$12.87 statewide, with \$80 million in state funds going into mental health services funding.

The mechanism itself is encouraging, but some of the math is not. Ideally, the Legislature would establish a formula that protects the Regions financially if the state does not. Our concern is that trading levy dollars for state dollars will not get the counties and Regions closer to where they need to be to fund some of the responsibilities the Region must fulfill under law.

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The prisoner's medical expense is still a live round, as well. **House Study Bill 518** places the primary responsibility for medical cost and copays on the incarcerated party, meaning the government would have to ask about the prisoner's insurance at the time of intake and requires a hospital or medical provider to ask about insurance at the time of admission. The hospital or provider would have to use other insurance before requesting payment from the government.

Open meetings bills are also still in the mix:

**House Study Bill 504:** Deems any deliberations or actions taken by a government within the budgetary duties of the body as subject to the open meetings laws.

**House Study Bill 505:** Requires that reasonable notice of a meeting be given to *any* person who has requested notice, not just to news outlets who filed requests.

**House Study Bill 506:** Deems only advisory groups formally created by a government or school, or appropriate officer, to be subject to the open meeting laws.

Though it was the first week - often a time of speeches and welcome back receptions - new legislation was introduced this week, including:

**Senate File 2002:** This bill would divide the state into seven regions for membership on the Transportation Commission. Each region would have a delegate to represent it on the commission.

**Senate File 2025:** This bill strikes the requirement that counties be adjacent in order to jointly hire a county engineer.

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**House File 2031:** This bill would allow a member of the local board of health be a physician, physician's assistant, advanced registered nurse practitioner, or advanced practice nurse. Currently, one member must be a physician.

**House File 2034:** This bill pertains to special elections. It deems an appointment to fill a vacant county elected office expires at the next general election and does not allow a special election for a vacant county office after a primary to occur less than 90 days before the general election. The bill also would not allow special elections to fill a vacancy 90 days before a city or school election.

**House File 2035:** This bill would prohibit a county compensation board from recommending compensation for county supervisors that exceeds the median annual income for the county.

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