

Legislative Newsletter

Jan. 31, 2020



Week three brought the introduction of major bills that will likely dominate the session. **House Study Bill 586** is a competitive bid alternatives bill. It excludes work on city utilities that are on existing infrastructure or connection to an existing system from being considered “public improvements.” For alternative projects, the bill creates alternative project delivery contracts instead of competitive bidding. Finally, it would allow the use of construction manager-at-risk to review sealed bids and to then select a bid after consulting the government where the work is to be done.

Senate File 2104 is the property tax limits bill, which states that spending by counties over 101 percent of the budget limit rules (to become effective July 1) must be approved by two-thirds of the supervisors, followed by a vote of 60 percent of electors in that county. The bill also creates a property tax freeze for homesteads if Social Security or pensions make up 50% of the owner’s income.

The county compensation bill, **House File 2035**, was scheduled to have a sub-committee Thursday, but was canceled. Our lobbying team believes this bill does not have a solid support to stand on this session.

Committees have also started to pass bills through so after the Iowa Caucuses, things will be teed up for debates to beat funnel deadlines.

Gary Grant, CEO
Cell 319.721.5977
gary@grantconsultingllc.com

Larry Murphy, CFO
Cell 319.361.2834
larry@llmurphy.com

Meghan Malloy, General Counsel
Cell 515.321.5825
mvmalloy83@gmail.com

L&L Murphy Consulting / Grant Consulting

In the House this week, **House Study Bill 516**, the Cell Siting Act repeal revision, passed out of committee 20-1.

House File 2073: This bill would require the Department of Human Services to request a federal waiver for reimbursement on services provided to Medicaid-eligible persons with a serious mental disease and are in institutions for mental diseases. This bill passed committee unanimously.

House File 658: This bill proposes to increase fines for speeding for various speeding offenses (20 mph over: \$100 +\$10 per mile; over 25 mph in a work zone: \$1,500), and requires the additional fines to be allocated to Department of Public Health for matching funds for grants for EMS in underserved areas of the state. This bill passed the Public Safety Committee unanimously.

House Study Bill 508 is a sports betting-related bill which moves the taxes collected from fantasy sports and sports wagering to the Emergency Medical Services fund. The collection would repeal July 2021. This bill passed the State Government Committee 19-2.

Introduced this week:

House File 2151: This bill would strike the requirements that counties in the 14 regions be contiguous in order to remain in a region together. As expected, there are a lot of mixed feelings about this bill, though our team is unsure if it has any real traction for this legislative session. During the interim, there were forums where some counties expressed a desire to join a different region, but are unable to because they are not contiguous with any counties in the region. On the other side, many stakeholders are

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concerned services cannot be easily accessed or provided when the counties in a region are not contiguous.

House Study Bill 584: This bill pertains to volunteer service programs for municipal firefighters and emergency responders. Cities or counties who already have such a program could set an individual length of service for the program and must set contribution rates and the eligibility requirements. Finally, the bill creates a new fund within the State Fire Service & Emergency Response Council and a standing appropriation of \$1 million.

Senate Study Bill 3094: This bill requires the Department of Human Services to adopt rules to streamline various Medicaid processes, including prior authorization. DHS would also have to develop a uniform authorization process and issue a Request for Proposal for a single credentialing organization for Medicaid managed care organizations, and fees for service programs.

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