

House Passes Pro-Life Bill

Last week we passed out of the House a bill that protects the right to life for the unborn baby from 20 weeks forward. It also strengthens the current ultrasound requirement by saying that a woman must have an ultrasound and be given the opportunity to see her unborn baby, hear his/her heartbeat, and hear a description of her baby. In addition, a woman must be given all the information necessary to make a good educated decision for herself and her baby, including her options and their effects and the risk factors for each. Last, it establishes a 72-hour waiting period after the ultrasound to help a woman pause to consider the momentous decision before her, totally appropriate for the permanent, life-and-death choice she is making.

And while I wish we could do more, this is certainly a great start on protecting the life of the unborn. Support is building for the stronger measures we advocated (Heartbeat and Life at Conception) but that is not where we are today. So we took the best we could get. It was very encouraging to discover that this bill is the most comprehensive pro-life bill to ever pass the Iowa House in all its history!

In the House we have attempted numerous times to advance pro-life legislation in the past but were consistently blocked by the Senate. With a new makeup in the Senate this year, Iowans can expect the legislature to advance protections for the unborn. So I am optimistic as this now goes to the Senate.

The bill allows for exceptions in situations where the mother's or baby's life is threatened or there is a medical emergency.

A 20-week life protection bill such as this is similar to that of 23 other states. Most have been allowed to stand by the courts.

According to Dept. of Public Health statistics, this bill will save one baby each week in the state of Iowa.

We cannot underestimate the value of that little one's life and what he/she brings to us. Who knows the teachers, engineers, doctors, scientists, farmers, pastors, pilots, firefighters, singers, police officers, artists, etc. that

we have missed out on knowing and benefiting from their contribution to us? We do not want to cut ourselves off from the blessings that God wants to give us. That little unborn baby is truly deserving of the protection of his/her right to life under our Constitution.

FY 18 Budget Targets are Set

This past week House and Senate announced joint targets for the FY18 budget. The agreed upon budget plan spends \$7.245 billion, which is about \$18 million less than the FY17 state budget. This represents a real reduction in government spending not a smaller increase.

FY 2018 Revenue Estimate:	\$7.3645 billion
FY 2018 Revenue Expenditure Limit:	\$7.2909 billion
- <u>FY 2017 fund transfers:</u>	<u>\$0.0252 billion</u>
FY 2018 Available Resources:	\$7.2657 billion
- <u>Cash Reserve Down Payment</u>	<u>\$0.0200 billion</u>
FY 2018 Overall Budget Target:	\$7.2457 billion

Breaking the Overall Budget Target down into the different budget areas:

Budget Targets

Administration and Regulation	\$ 47.39 million
Agriculture and Natural Resources	\$ 38.84 million
Economic Development	\$ 38.41 million
Education	\$ 908.41 million
Health and Human Services	\$ 1.766 billion
Justice Systems	\$ 734.95 million
Standings	\$ 3.711 billion
<hr/> TOTAL	<hr/> \$ 7.245 billion

This budget takes a responsible and thoughtful approach to spending in recognition that revenue may continue to come in less than anticipated. This approaching to managing the state budget is just like the way families and businesses manage theirs.

This budget plan fully funds the additional \$40 million promised to K-12 schools earlier this session. K-12 education will be receiving the largest funding increase in all areas of government. Many areas will see budget reductions.

This budget plan makes an initial down payment of \$20 million to repay the Cash Reserve account. The House will be looking for ways to increase the down payment this year and make additional payments in FY 19. We will pass a plan to fully repay the Cash Reserve before this session is over.

Other Bills Passed by the House

2nd Amendment Omnibus Bill: This bill came back to the House because it was amended by the Senate, mainly to address concerns brought forward by law enforcement and the courts on the Stand Your Ground provision. Everything concerning this provision reported in my previous newsletters remains the same except a person who uses a firearm under this provision is required to notify law enforcement if they have done so and is prohibited from destroying any evidence or influencing witnesses. Failure to do so means that person cannot use Stand Your Ground as a defense. Also, on the provision allowing a parent to teach their children how to use a firearm, besides a parent, an instructor can also be allowed to supervise a person under 14 in the use of a firearm.

Drunk/Distracted Driving Bill: This bill allows a jurisdiction to set up a 24/7 sobriety program whereby a judge can require an OWI offender to report twice a day to be tested for alcohol and drugs and to use an ignition interlock. A test failure results in immediate sanctions, that can include jail time. In the event of an economic hardship or geographic impracticality a court may order an alternative method of monitoring consistent with this law. In addition, under this bill person who is using a hand-held electronic device, and kills another while driving is guilty of a Class “C” felony.

Statewide Student Assessment: This bill requires the Dept. of Education to ask for bids from test vendors to find one that will administer a new statewide assessment starting in the 2018/2019 school year. The Department must consider cost of the test, the time required to take the test, and the infrastructure and technology needs of the schools. It must cover English language arts (reading and writing), math, and science and must be available in both paper-and-pencil and computer-based formats.

Mammogram Bill: Facilities that provide mammograms must include information on breast density in reports sent to patients.

Project Labor Agreements (PLA) Bill: This bill repeals the requirement that a contractor who bids on a taxpayer-funded (state, school, city, or county) building project must use a project labor agreement in order to win the project. The problem with PLA's is that they discriminate against non-union labor (85% of the construction workforce in Iowa) and therefore narrow the pool of prospective, qualified contractors. They also increase project cost for taxpayers, affect the quality of the work performed, and favor using out-of-state workers when we are seeking to employ Iowans. Governments can still grant a bid to a contractor with a PLA but they are no longer required to accept only a contractor with a PLA under this bill.

Feel free to contact me with ideas, thoughts, and concerns. My phone is 319-987-3021 or you can email me at sandy.salmon@legis.iowa.gov . I want to hear what you are thinking and will listen to your input. Together we will work to make a difference for the future of Iowa. Thank you very much for the honor of representing you!

Sincerely,

Sandy