

End of Session Summary

The legislative session has ended for 2016 and so the 86th General Assembly has completed its work for the 2-year cycle. In this newsletter I thought I would give you an overall update on what we did compared to what I said I would work for and what we still have left to do.

On the Budget—*When I campaigned for office I said I would work for:* fiscal responsibility and a balanced budget

What we did: We produced a balanced and sustainable budget for the 6th year in a row that lives within the state's means by sticking to the core sound budgeting principles of not spending any more than we take in, not using one-time money to pay for on-going expenses, not intentionally underfunding programs (so we can say we have balanced the budget but really haven't), and returning unused tax dollars to Iowa's taxpayers. At the same time we have funded priority services in the areas of education, health and human services and public safety. This included a 2.25% increase in funding for K-12 schools, significant oversight of the new Medicaid managed care system, and strengthening the state's efforts to combat human trafficking. The House also found a long-term dedicated source of funding within current existing revenue for water quality projects without raising taxes. However, the Senate did not take that up.

What we still have left to do: Keep on doing this! We aren't there yet! Continue to push for reducing the size and cost of government, which will help families' budgets and give businesses opportunity to expand, create jobs, and grow our economy.

On Taxes-*When I campaigned for office I said I would work for:* cutting taxes and enacting property tax relief

What we did: As you know we passed property tax relief and reform in 2013 which cut the scheduled increase in property taxes in the future. Iowa had never passed such a large property tax relief bill before. In addition each year since then we have picked up the increase in the school funding formula that would have in the past been paid for by property taxes. In 2014 we passed the Home Base Iowa Act which fully exempts military retirement from state income tax. This year we were successful to press the

Senate to couple with the federal tax code, which had the effect of preventing a \$95 million tax increase on many Iowans. We also pushed to eliminate the unfair double tax on consumable supplies used in manufacturing businesses to which the Senate finally agreed. This year we passed a tax credit for businesses that produce chemicals from the byproducts of the ethanol manufacturing process, a natural fit for creating jobs in Iowa. In addition, the House passed a flat tax option to the income tax in 2014 but it was not taken up by the Senate.

What we still have left to do: We need to continue to work for a fairer, flatter tax, tax credits/deductions, or any other creative way to reduce the tax burden on our families and businesses. We won't give up!

On Education-When I campaigned for office I said I would work for: greater local control of schools and expanded educational choice

What we did: We strengthened school choice by eliminating private schools having to go back to the state to get accreditation but instead will be able to continue with their own accrediting bodies. We strengthened local control of schools by clarifying the law that reading proficiency at the end of 3rd grade is not based solely on the FAST assessment but other factors can be considered as well. I led efforts to restore local control of our schools with bills to unhook Iowa from the Common Core system of centralized control over education by the federal government. Even though those efforts weren't successful we were finally able to get bipartisan agreement to delay the Common Core assessment for a year to give the legislature another opportunity to move away from the Common Core system.

What we still have left to do: Continue to work for local control of schools and getting Iowa's schools out from under federal government control! Keep pressing for ways to expand parents' educational choices.

On Family-When I campaigned for office I said I would work for: Pro-life legislation and defunding Planned Parenthood

What we did: This past session we doubled the adoption tax credit as a way to strengthen our families. I have supported and led in efforts to advance pro-life legislation including banning abortion by telemedicine and

banning the sale of aborted baby body parts, however the Senate did not take these up. I also worked to advance a life-at-conception bill to recognize the right to equal protection of the law for the unborn child, but it did not make it out of committee. I led in the efforts to cut off taxpayer funding to Planned Parenthood but that did not meet with success either. The only success I have seen was last year when the Senate agreed to require a woman seeking an abortion to have the opportunity to see an ultrasound image of her unborn baby, so that was great. However, looking at the big picture, not nearly enough was accomplished.

What we still have left to do: Just about everything!

On Constitutional Rights-When I campaigned for office I said I would work for: expanding 2nd Amendment rights and protecting religious liberty

What we did: After several years we finally pressed the Senate to pass two modest bills to expand 2nd Amendment rights: one that would legalize suppressors and one to loosen laws on carrying a firearm on an ATV. I supported efforts to bring more major 2nd Amendment rights issues forward like Constitutional Carry and Stand Your Ground but they did not make it out of committee. I led in efforts to strengthen 1st Amendment religious liberty protections but those bills did not make it out of committee either. Also the Voter Photo ID and the marriage bills as well as my bill to strengthen drunk driving laws did not advance. So, again, not nearly enough was achieved.

What we still have left to do: Nearly everything!

What this tells you is that some good things got done, for which I am grateful, but a lot more has yet to be done.

There are many other concerns that I worked on that are important but for lack of space I did not cover those. Please ask if I did not cover something here of concern to you.

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