

Bills Passed by the House

Wrongful Birth/Life – This bill is in response to an Iowa Supreme Court decision that created a claim for a wrongful birth even though Iowa law was silent on the subject. The bill will prohibit a person from bringing a cause of action for wrongful birth or wrongful life. The case before the court was a couple who had sued the doctor and the hospital because they had a child born with disabilities and the doctor had failed to inform them of prenatal test results showing abnormalities so they missed the “chance” to abort their baby, thus a “wrongful birth”. By the court allowing this claim, the court stigmatizes those with disabilities and in essence says it may have been better if they had not been born. This makes doctors liable for a disability they did nothing to cause and opens the door to fraudulent claims. This does not change current law in that a person can still bring a claim for damages for an intentional or grossly negligent act or omission on the part of a doctor. This was a bill I introduced and was glad to see it passed.

Mental Health Services - This bill builds on Iowa’s community-based mental health system and decreases fragmentation of services to improve care by:

- Expanding services along the continuum of care to include evidence-based preventative services to deescalate mental health patients before crisis and to treat patients in the proper setting
- Removing the statewide sub-acute bed cap, and allowing these facilities to transition individuals to a lower level of care before they are prepared to return home
- Ensuring long-term sustainable funding for mental health services as Medicaid covered services
- Improving communication and processes between mental health professionals and law enforcement
- Allowing mental health providers, rather than judges, to make mental health care determinations in the least restrictive environment

Opioid Crisis - This bill prevents doctor shopping for opioids, reduces overprescribing, and provides support to Iowans suffering from opioid addiction by:

- Funding the new state-of-the-art Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP), which will have the ability to integrate with electronic health records and provide immediate access to information

- Requiring prescribers to register for the PMP and use the PMP when prescribing controlled substances
- Requiring electronic prescribing to eliminate fraud
- Requiring pharmacies to report to the PMP within 24 hours
- Allowing proactive notification to providers so they can recognize patients at a high risk for opioid abuse and addiction
- Allowing penalties to be assessed by licensing boards for providers overprescribing
- Providing prescriber education on opioids
- Prohibiting addictive prescriptions from being filled more than six months after the date prescribed and from being refilled
- Requiring first responders to report to the PMP if they administer an opioid antagonist
- Providing a one-time immunity from liability to a person calling 911 to seek help for a drug overdose and for the person experiencing the overdose, with exceptions for drug dealers and repeat offenders.

Veterans Hyperbaric Oxygen Treatment - This bill creates a pilot program to provide hyperbaric oxygen treatment for eligible veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) or PTSD. It is administered by the state Dept. of Veterans Affairs.

The veteran submits a treatment plan prescribed by a doctor to the IDVA. If it meets their criteria, they submit it to the Commission on Veterans Affairs for approval. Their approval is based on how much money is available in a special account set up for this program. This account will receive gifts, donations, bequests, etc.; no appropriations are needed to fund this program. They will be used to pay for reimbursements for approved treatment, reimbursements for any related travel and living expenses incurred by the veteran to get the treatment, and administrative cost by the IDVA in operating the program.

Other programs like this exist throughout the country and there are several facilities here in Iowa that will be able to administer this treatment.

Hyperbaric oxygen treatment is an experimental treatment currently. However, preliminary FDA trials indicate it shows promise for treatment of TBI and PTSD. Enough, so that now it is under testing by the VA to see if it can be relied upon as a safe and effective treatment. Results of that testing are several years away. In the meantime this bill provides a possible pathway for veterans to undergo an experimental treatment and perhaps

gain some needed relief. This was a bill I floor managed in the House due to being on the Veterans Affairs Committee.

Iowa Learning Online – This bill allows homeschool students to use Iowa Learning Online from the Dept. of Education. I floor managed this bill as a member of the Education Committee.

Consumer Protection, Credit Freeze - This bill ensures consumers can freeze their credit without fees to protect their identity. Agencies must freeze credit within three days, instead of five days under current law. Additionally, the bill requires consumer reporting agencies to report to the state Attorney General if a data breach affects more than 500 people.

Student Data Privacy – This bill helps protect K-12 students' personal information from being sold to 3rd parties or from being provided to companies that would seek to target advertising to the student for their products and services.

Iowa Senate Passes Heartbeat Bill

In an historic move to advance pro-life efforts, the Iowa Senate this past week passed out a “heartbeat” bill. This bill protects the right to life for an unborn baby from the time a fetal heartbeat is detected. The rationale is simple: just as we know that generally when there is no heartbeat present at the end of a person’s life, we know life is not there. In the same way when we detect a heartbeat at the beginning of life, we know there is a life there. That life, an unborn baby, is deserving of all the rights and protections, including the right to life, under both our federal and state constitutions and under the laws of our state.

A baby’s heartbeat is usually seen on ultrasound by 6 weeks. Once this milestone is reached there is a 95% chance of carrying the baby to term. Roughly 2000 babies are killed each year after the 6-week point, roughly 50-70% of the total killed, according to the Dept. of Public Health.

I have introduced this bill in the House and now that the Senate has passed it I am hopeful it will get taken up by the House.

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