

Bills Passing the Senate

The following bills passed out of the Senate last week:

School Security: This bill is largely in response to the tragic school shooting in Perry a couple months ago. It allows employees of school districts, private schools, and institutions of higher education to qualify for and be issued a professional permit to carry weapons. The employee must complete a firearm safety training course before getting a permit. Participation in this program is a decision of the school board. Even if the school decides to participate, school employees are not required to participate. Employee participation is on a voluntary basis.

A school employee issued a permit to carry must take a one-time, in-person legal training approved by DPS that includes training on qualified immunity, annual emergency medical training, and annual communication training. DPS must implement required annual live scenario training and quarterly live firearm training for school employees of school districts, private schools, or institutions of higher education that opt into participating in the professional permitting of school employees.

A school employee issued a professional permit to carry by DPS who is up to date with DPS-approved training and their school district are entitled to qualified immunity from criminal or civil liability for all damages incurred pursuant to the application of reasonable force at their place of employment.

The identity of a school employee issued a permit to carry must be confidential. This is part of the deterrent effect of the policy. School employees must not be required to obtain a permit to carry.

Two school districts in Iowa (Cherokee and Spirit Lake) have tried to create policies to allow their employees to carry firearms but ran into trouble finding insurance coverage. This bill will enable the school to be covered by liability insurance.

According to the [Iowa Poll](#) (from the Des Moines Register, asked of 804 adults between February 25-28), 60 percent of Iowans say they support arming teachers and staff (38 percent said they oppose it and 1 percent

were unsure). Among parents with children under the age of 18, 65 percent said they favored staff carrying firearms in school.

I think it's safer for students and teachers in the school building to be able to call upon someone in the building who is armed and could potentially end any threat from an active shooter much faster than if law enforcement must be summoned to the building to end an active shooter situation. As capable as our law enforcement are and they absolutely should be called, it would just take them too long to get there. It is much better to have someone at the school already trained and ready to handle the situation. Ending an active shooter scenario is better done in seconds rather than minutes.

Veteran Decals: This bill would replace special license plates for recipients of the combat infantryman badge, combat action badge, combat action ribbon, Air Force combat action medal, and combat medical badge plates with decals that may be applied to plates. The state currently has about 100 requests from veterans since 2011 to get these special license plates but because there has to be a minimum of 250 orders, this threshold is too high to reach.

The Dept. of Transportation (DOT) would design separate and distinct decals representing these awards and would be authorized to issue the decals to affix to license plates for veterans who have earned these awards. The decals would cost \$10 for two decals. The DOT would contact the veterans who had requested these special license plates and offer them this option for recognition. The bill also adds veteran organizations to the groups authorized to approve and issue decals for license plates.

Boy Scouts of America Civil Action: Those making a claim against the Boy Scouts for sexual abuse will be able to take their case forward without being restricted by Iowa's current statute of limitations. Under Iowa's current statute of limitations a claim for sexual abuse must be filed within 4 years after the sexually abused child becomes 18 and discovers the injury.

In most of the claims made in the Boy Scouts case, the sexual abuse was inflicted when the victim was a child. In addition, most did not discover their injury until well into adulthood and a time greater than 4 years has elapsed and so normally those victims would not be able to file a claim. This bill enables those victims to make their claims.

Side note: Last year I filed a bill to remove the statute of limitations entirely for all sexual abuse victims so that those victims would not be cut off from being able to file a claim. It is well known that it normally takes longer than 4 years from the time a sexually abused child-that-becomes-an-adult discovers an injury and decides to file a claim.**Youth Fur Trapping:** Youth under 16 years old will be allowed to trap without a license while accompanied by an adult with a valid fur harvester license. This is the same rule for youth under 16 with deer hunting.

Work-Based Learning: A new Workforce Opportunity Fund is created in this bill. The fund would be used for training and infrastructure related to the growth and maintenance of the state's workforce programs, such as equipment instructional materials, stipends, and other training-related costs. Allows instructional programs that include work-based learning to be provided when school is not in session, including during the summer. Allows a substitute teacher or a para-educator to shorten their student-teaching requirement if certain conditions are met. Certain income-based requirements will apply to the Last-Dollar Scholarship Program, which helps fund training for students in the most-in-demand fields.

Constitutional Amendment: Requires a 2/3rd's vote to raise income tax rates or create a new tax on income. Will require the legislature to show a compelling need for an income tax rate increase of a new income tax and will likely require bipartisan support. Provides protection for taxpayers.

411 Retirement System: This bill is for police officers and firefighters of the 411 retirement system. It would allow coverage of health care costs for work-related injuries arising out of the course of employment, including cumulative injuries, and adds mental health incapacity as a reason for accidental disability retirement if certain conditions are met. Member contribution rate is raised from 9.40% to 9.55%. The bill creates an additional exemption for the Iowa tax related to pension income for a surviving spouse who is not disabled or 55 years of age or older from the pension amount.

IPERS Retirement System: This bill makes changes to the IPERS retirement benefits of sheriffs and deputy sheriffs. It increases the percentage used to calculate monthly retired benefits after 22 years of services, increasing the maximum benefits to 80% plus a COLA.

Financial Privacy of Gun Owners: Prohibits a government entity from maintaining a record or registry of firearms owners, unless for criminal investigations or court cases. Also prohibits a financial institution from applying a merchant category code to distinguish a firearms retailer from other retailers.

Local Firearms Regulations: Iowa law already prohibits local governments from instituting regulations on firearms as that is a state responsibility. This bill raises the damages for violation of this law.

Maternity Group Homes: Prohibits cities from restricting maternity group homes from being located in residential areas. Allows them to be located in residential areas the same way group homes for those with developmental disabilities are. Maternity group homes offer room and board, personal care, supervision, training, support, and education for expecting or new mothers and their young children.

Firefighter and EMS License Plates: Allows the firefighter and EMS license plates to be personalized with a custom set of numbers and letters, not to exceed 5 digits.

Bicyclists in Crosswalks: Drivers must yield to bicyclists, strollers, wheelchairs, etc. who are in a marked or unmarked crosswalk at intersections. (Drivers are already required to yield to pedestrians.) That said, drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, etc. all have a duty to exercise ordinary care when attempting to cross a street or an intersection in order to avoid accidents and injuries.

Transportation Budget: This bill appropriates \$453 million from the Road Use Tax Fund and Primary Road Fund for FY 2025 to the Dept. of Transportation.

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