

# **Here Comes the 2023 Legislative Session!**

I hope all of you enjoyed a very Merry Christmas with family and friends and are looking forward to a Happy New Year in 2023!

The 2023 legislative session is coming right up and starts on Jan. 9<sup>th</sup> and we are getting ready! It is truly an honor and a privilege to represent everyone in the new Senate District #29! I am humbled by the trust that the voters have placed in me. I believe with your input and help we will be able to do some good things this year for the people of Iowa!

I am looking forward to seeing you at my town hall meetings, all of which will be held on Saturday mornings. These meetings are scheduled all over my district in Bremer, Butler, Chickasaw and Floyd counties and are set as follows:

Saturday Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> in Waverly at the city library from 9 to 10 a.m.

Saturday Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> in Charles City at the Floyd County Museum from 11 to Noon

Saturday Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> in Greene at the city library from 9 to 10 a.m.

Saturday Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> in New Hampton at the city library from 11 to Noon.

Saturday Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> in Sumner at the city library from 9 to 10 a.m.

Saturday Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> in Nashua at the Nashua Welcome Center (Gateway to Northeast Iowa Welcome Center) from 11 to Noon.

Saturday Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> in Parkersburg at the city library from 9 to 10 a.m.

Saturday Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> in Denver at the community room from 11 to Noon.

Saturday Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> in Fredericksburg at the city library from 9 to 10 a.m.

Saturday Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> in Allison at the city library from 11 to Noon.

In the Iowa Senate I will serve on the following committees: Education, Health and Human Services, State Government, Justice Systems Appropriations, and as Vice-Chair of Veteran Affairs.

## **Priorities for the Session**

**Balanced Budget** – We will focus on balancing our budget just as we have done the past 10 years, keeping spending under control and making sure the budget is stable, predictable, and sustainable. We will basically manage the taxpayer money the same way you do your own budgets in your home or business. Guiding principles will be spending within our means, not using one-time money for ongoing expenses, not overcommitting and then wind up under-delivering, and not intentionally underfunding programs in order to be able to say we balanced the budget. Budget priorities will be education, Medicaid, public safety, skilled workforce, broadband, mental health, and soil conservation and water quality commitments. No matter what, there will be always be more needs and requests than the taxpayers for state government can fulfill.

**Taxes** – We will build on the income tax cuts passed in the past couple years. Those were: a flat rate of 3.9% (by 2026), repeal of the tax on retirement pay, repeal of the inheritance tax, and the repeal of the mental health property tax levy. This coming session we will turn our attention to addressing property taxes as we have been hearing about this from constituents. Money in Iowans' pockets is the best way to stimulate the economy.

**Education** – We will be working on various issues, a number of them requiring schools to be responsive to certain parental concerns as some schools are not:

- Expanding educational choice, building on the governor's proposals from last session. Parents are the best ones to decide the educational setting for their children and the state should support that as the education of children affects the state's future.
- Giving schools more flexibility in the use of the funding they receive
- Providing alternative pathways for teacher licensure to help the teacher workforce shortage
- Reforms to prevent schools from quietly shuffling an employee guilty of violating standards of teaching practice from going to another school, as has happened in some schools.
- Making curriculum and library materials easier for parents to review will be considered. This is a good start for protecting kids but we also should include revisions to ensure taxpayers are not providing materials with sexually explicit content to students. There should be criminal penalties, loss of licensure and employment, funding denials, and parent-driven civil enforcement.

- Adding parent-driven civil enforcement and other penalties to Iowa’s law prohibiting teaching of critical race theory (CRT) in schools as parents have said a number of schools are continuing this programming of students in spite of the law. Addressing DEI and SEL which are harboring CRT ideas.
- Protecting children by prohibiting indoctrination regarding gender identity in schools, to include requiring schools not to withhold information from parents about a student’s request regarding gender identity.

**Medicaid** – For the last 2 ½ years during the pandemic, the federal government has prevented states from disenrolling ineligible Medicaid members. This has resulted in an estimated 100,000 ineligible Iowans receiving free health insurance, without paying any premiums or copays, and the state paying a monthly capitation payment for every single ineligible member. Even after the Biden Administration ends the pandemic, it will take many months for the state to do eligibility determinations and disenroll ineligible Iowans. In the meantime, more and more Americans creep towards socialized medicine in this “Medicaid for all” scheme.

**ESG** – Require managers of public funds such as IPERS to consider only financial factors when making investment decisions (as has always been) and not ESG ratings. Prohibit banks from using ESG scores in making decisions about loans. ESG stands for environmental, social, governance and large corporate directors and business investors, with input from the federal government, designate these scores based on how well the person or small business or company adheres to a number of leftist policies, such as the climate change agenda, opposition to the use of fossil fuels, “woke” ideas about racial equity, support for abortion on demand, and LGBT ideology. It has started to become a trend in some places to deny loans if a company’s ESG score is not high enough.

**Other** - There are many other issues that I am urging that we address:

1. **Carbon Capture Pipeline** - This is an issue I’ve heard from constituents about and am very concerned about the possibility of private companies using eminent domain to seize farmland in the form of easements for a taxpayer-funded private project that has no public use, has health and safety risks, and is based on debatable climate change ideas. This issue needs to be addressed by the legislature this session.

2. **COVID Vaccine Mandates** – We still need to work on protecting the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment right of Iowans to be “secure in their persons” regarding choice of health care treatment.
3. **Religious Liberty** - We still need to do more to protect the rights of people to live and work according to their beliefs without fear of punishment by the government, which includes the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment freedom of speech and religious freedom.
4. **Pornography** - We need to address the issue of pornography as it is totally pervasive now in society, especially on the internet, destroying children, marriages, and families virtually unhindered.
5. **Big Tech Censorship** - We should do what we can at the state level to protect citizens’ 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment free speech rights on social media.
6. **Election Integrity** – We need to now address the cyber side of election integrity and take stronger measures to protect Iowa’s election system from outside interference.
7. **Sex Change Treatments for Minors** – We need to address the tragedy of mostly permanently damaging treatments given to children emotionally distressed over their sex.

There are many other concerns that I and others are working on that are important but for lack of space I did not cover those. Please feel free to contact me if I did not cover something of concern to you.

I am looking forward to the many challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the coming legislative session!

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](mailto: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***