



Today!

September 26, 2025

Welcome (Brooke Lovelace)

Special Guest: How YOU Can Change Policy

- Carlyn Crowe, Iowa DD Council
- Shanna Sieck, Founder of [Mason's Lighthouse](#)

Conference Game Show Results (Carlyn Crowe)

- Ideas for Legislation in 2026
- Ways to make Iowa more inclusive
- Things to help you achieve your life goals

Election Reminders (Amy Campbell)

- Early Voting (starts Oct. 15)
- You can request Mail-In Ballots now
- Check your voter registration [here](#)

Wrap-Up (Brooke Lovelace)

- Final 2026 Capitol Chats – Anything YOU Want Covered?
- Workday with Your Legislator – National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October)



Special Guest:

Shanna Sieck – Founder, Mason's Light House



Pediatric Palliative Care

- [House File 933](#)
- Passed unanimously (97-0; 47-0)
- Iowa is the **first state** to have a special Pediatric Palliative Care Center license
- Makes sure children and young adults under 21 with complex, chronic, life-threatening conditions get respite and palliative care from diagnosis through end of life.
- Rep. Carter Nordman (Requested), Rep. Eddie Andrews (House lead), Sen. Kara Warne (Senate lead)



MYM! Policy Game

If there is one thing you could change about Medicaid, what would it be?



- Universal healthcare (everyone should have access)
- Increase Medicaid reimbursement, improve rural access
- Better coverage, faster payment to providers
- Get rid of managed care, go back to Iowa Medicaid
- Increase number of providers taking Medicaid
- Better dental access, end up paying out of pocket
- Shorten or eliminate waitlists
- Make communications more understandable, inclusive
- Eliminate marriage penalty
- Allow MEPD participants to have more assets
- Pass Work Without Worry
- Bring Integrated Health Homes (IHH) back
- Lower prescription costs
- More money, more benefits, more coverage, better research
- Increased funding to increase options/choices
- More mental health services
- Make it easier to navigate the system
- Eliminate or reduce excessive paperwork
- Equal pay for people on disability
- Preserve access to food assistance (SNAP)



MYM! Policy Game

What is one change that could make Iowa more inclusive?



- Improve access to transportation in rural areas
- More services available in rural areas, more rural providers
- More affordable housing options
- Changes to Medicaid and HCBS waivers
- Improve access to dental services
- Make it easier to get equipment into people's homes
- Expand school options for blind/low-vision or deaf/hard-of-hearing students
- Explain penalties for Medicaid members who must work (new work requirements)
- More home and community-based services
- More healthy food options
- Require businesses to be physically accessible
- Cost of living increase, so people are not in forced poverty
- Allow access to social security benefits while working
- Bring back DEI
- Support transgender Iowans
- Address the lack of empathy
- Improve mental health services
- Look at genetics
- Less construction work
- Lower taxes
- End discrimination
- Better funding for supports, Medicaid
- More community supports available
- Eliminate waiver waiting lists
- Improve special education



MYM! Policy Game

What is the biggest barrier to achieving your life goals?



- Waiting times for some specialty services
- Lack of community-based services, finding right supports
- Having to travel for care
- Being unemployed, lacking employment options
- Having to work too much (low wages keep me from achieving personal goals)
- Income, asset limits for public assistance programs
- People not believing you're capable, discrimination
- Being afraid of failure, afraid of what people think
- Life balance (kid with special needs, work, lack of support)
- Not enough schools for different populations
- Public transit, especially in rural areas
- Funding loss due to cutbacks for ride to work.
- Not enough staff, need more experienced DSPs
- Not enough elected officials that support inclusion policies for people with disabilities
- Recoupment & mess that is social security
- Help with learning how to pay bills
- Making bad decisions/choices in the past
- Personal Issues (fear of being a failure, my anger, worried people will take advantage of me, procrastination)
- The hoops you have to jump through for services
- Not enough money to fund supports, can't earn enough money to live
- Not enough infrastructure for medical services – particularly in rural communities
- Access to prescriptions (not covered)
- Lack of health insurance



MYM! Policy Game

What disability-related topic do you think will be most important to Iowa in next 5 years?



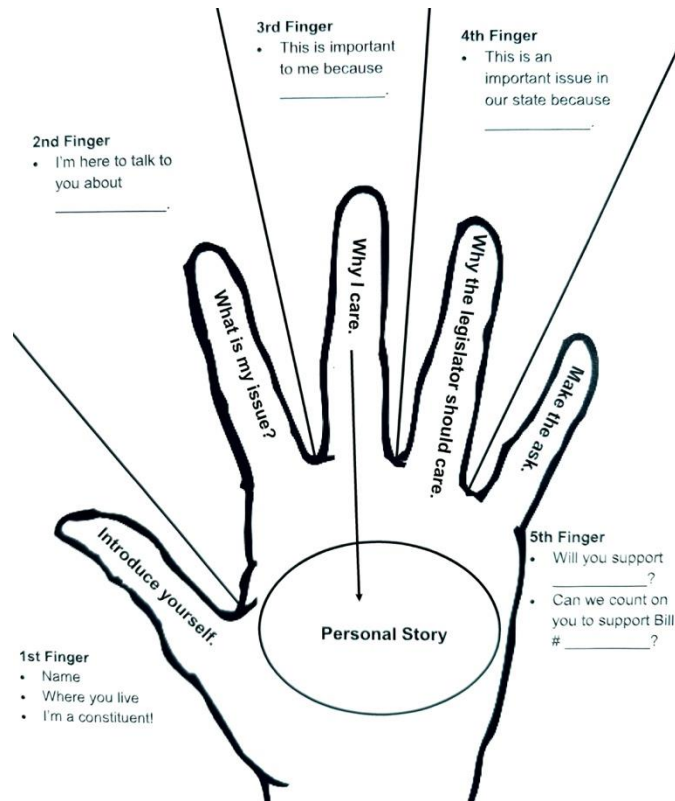
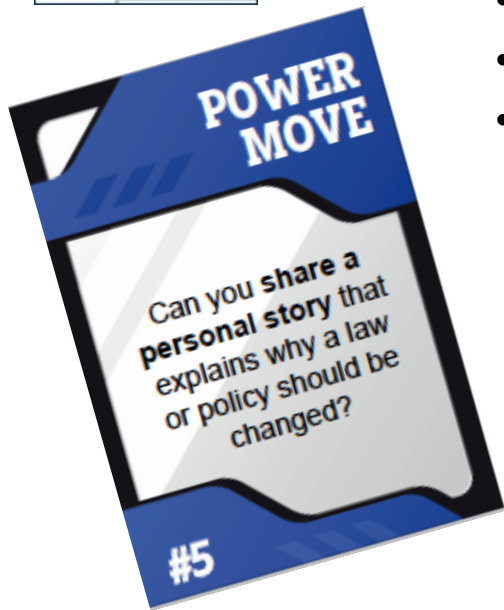
- Cap on job coaching will reduce needed benefits, need more employment options and earlier career counseling
- Asset income limit, worrying about making too much to lose insurance, Work Without Worry
- Passing policies to end discrimination at work, accommodations for part-time employment
- End the use of the "R" word
- Medicaid cuts & impact on mental health services
- Hospital reimbursements for rural physicians
- Switch to private school - losing access and opportunities for kids with special needs
- Waiting time for CDAC reimbursement, low rates
- Sending people out of state for services not available in Iowa – need to build capacity in Iowa
- Waiting lists for programs, supports, services
- Not allowed to work extra shift.
- Abortion law and impact on health workforce
- Cameras impeding privacy in our own house
- People with mental health issues, gun laws
- Immigration (everyone should have green card)
- Not qualified for food or medical assistance because of working but only allowed to work part-time
- Politicians don't know or listen to us.



MYM! Policy Game

Can you share a personal story that explains why a law/policy should be changed?

- Lots of stories to tell!
- You should think about this too!
- Remember this helping hand!





MYM! Policy Game

What is one new law/policy that would improve the lives of Iowans with disabilities?



- Universal healthcare for all
- Increase minimum wage, address wage gap, **automatic annual wage increase for DSPs**
- **Work Without Worry**, remove income limits, allow people to build savings
- Increase access to home/community services, options
- Increase access to affordable housing
- Increase mental health funding (finding, recruiting, retaining health care providers)
- Expand access to in-home nursing (beyond 1 hr)
- Add more resources for people with autism
- Make transportation more available, reliable
- Automatic approval for Medicaid, require state to prove that individual is not disabled to remove coverage
- Make Iowa inclusive (more involvement in community, adult changing tables, more family restrooms, more education about people with disabilities, increase awareness)
- Pass a uniform accessibility law that includes requirements for more accessible communications, plain language
- Sheltered workshops should be an option
- **Exempt people with accessible parking permits from paying for parking (Texas law)**
- Reduce political violence to increase trust
- **Right to choose the dental provider of choice**
- Don't make fun of people with disabilities
- Increase information and advocacy available
- Make sure laws are working for the people.
- **Help business learn how to hire and support employees with disabilities.**
- **Give businesses who hire people with disabilities priority in receiving state funds for building affordable housing (through the House Trust Fund or other state funds).**



How do we make a difference?

- Solutions-based storytelling!
- Offering solutions
- Innovative solutions
- Alignment of values
- Collective voices
- Volume and consistency

Just using our voices!



Ready to change policy?

1. Contact your policy makers—State? Federal? Local?
2. Describe the problem
3. Back it up with stories AND data
4. Offer solutions
5. How does it align with their values?
6. Build a movement—ask for help!
7. Be personal, polite, patient, prepared and persistent!

Don't give up!

Election Update: November 4, 2025



Important 2025 Dates

August 26 – October 24

Request Mail-In Ballots

October 15 – November 3

Early Voting Period

October 20

Voter Pre-Registration Deadline

November 1

Auditor's Offices open for early voting

November 4

Polls Open 7 am – 8 pm

Mail-in Ballots must be received by 8 pm

City & School Elections

- School Board
- City Council, Mayor
- Local Initiatives
- Trustees

sos.iowa.gov/elections-voting

Wrap Up

Final Two Capitol Chats of 2026

- **October 31 (Noon-1 pm):** Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/october-2025-capitol-chat>
- **December 5 (Noon-1 pm):** Sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/december-2025-capitol-chat>
- **What issues, topics, information do you want to see covered in these meetings?**



Legislature is back to work on January 12, 2026

- Returning to every other Friday Chats (schedule will be announced in October chat)
- Legislators must request bills by January 23, 2026

Workday with Your Legislator

- National Disability Employment Awareness Month (October)
- Invite your legislator to learn about your job
- iowaddcouncil.org/workday-with-my-legislator

Capitol Chat Recordings:
iowaddcouncil.org/capitol-chat