

April 28, 2023 Legislative Committee Minutes

Attendee Legislative Committee Council Members: Matthew Conaway, Mark Smith, Steve Steveson, Brittney Drinovsky

Absent Council Members: Kristen Aller, Brady Werger, Hugh Kelly, Rob Roozeboom, Carol Cross, Roxanne Cogil

Council Staff: Brooke Lovelace, Carlyn Crowe, Lindsay Hommer

Public: None

Capitol Happenings

Crowe stated that today was supposed to be the last day of the legislative session, but the session will continue through next week now. Budget bills are not completed yet and there are many other unfinished bills. The minority party did not see the budget until the day it was being debated for Health and Human Services (HHS) yesterday. Crowe shared the PowerPoint that was presented in today's Capitol Chat. The legislature is proposing to spend 89% of the budget. They could spend up to 99%. Available funds could be used for programs or to reduce the waiting lists for waivers but, the legislature is not proposing this.

Good news in the budget is:

- an increase in mental health and substance abuse funding
- \$500,000 budgeted to take people off the waiting list for public guardian services
- increase in nursing home rates.
- dental rates were approved to be raised for Medicaid as long as it doesn't cost more money
- \$50,000 increase to the Farmer's with Disabilities Program
- \$150,000 increase for Vocational Rehabilitation

Other bill updates:

- The HHS budget included that Health Policy Oversight Committee may meet only once per year if they choose to. This could provide fewer opportunities for public input and MCO reports to the public.
- The House clarified that the household asset test in SF 494 only applies to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and not Medicaid
- \$8 million was approved to be used from the Iowa Total Care settlement to be used for a user-friendly portal for people to apply for public benefits.
- Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver homes will be regulated like other family homes and not as facilities

Bills that may not pass but there is still a chance:

- "Brain Health" wording
- limiting participation in Iowa caucuses

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- scholarships for students with disabilities to attend accredited college programs

Chances are good that these bills will pass:

- the student suicide prevention phone number being on student id's bill
- taxing MCO's to draw down more federal funds bill
- childcare assistance eligibility increased to 160%
- HF 604 the school discipline bill

The governor has signed the government reorganization bill and the private school voucher bill. The governor is set to sign the public assistance bill, the mental health and disability regional boards bill, and the parent's rights in education bill.

Two resolutions of note are a constitutional change that updates the Iowa constitution to state that voting age is 18 and a resolution declaring March "Disability Awareness Month in Iowa."

Drinovsky stated that she spoke with Rep Henry Stone and he did not know if HF 604 would apply to students with individualized education plans (IEPs). Drinovsky also asked Rep Stone if it would be budgeted for counselors with credentials to perform the needed counseling with the children. Rep Stone did not have an answer for this. Crowe stated we will continue to work on this. Crowe stated it is up to advocates to keep talking to legislators and giving guidance.

Other News:

Upcoming events with the DD Council are the Youth Leadership Academy which will be July 17-21 online and the Make Your Mark! conference which will be August 30-31 in Coralville.

Crowe asked the committee to think about what we can do better next year to move issues along by getting advocates more involved. Smith asked if it is possible for us to create a bill and get several sponsors to get people off the waiver waitlist or address transportation issues. Crowe stated we can place these on our list to address and look at what the Medicaid waiver redesign committee is working on and hopefully complement what it addresses. Conaway stated that he is on the HCBS redesign steering committee and he can report what is being worked on. Crowe also stated there are many template bills that are being introduced in other states (such as the voucher bill and school discipline) as well as in Iowa and hopes there can be more communication about the effect on people with disabilities and how we can address these bills in the future.

Crowe stated we are trying to encourage individuals/organizations to do townhall meetings this summer with their legislators. These are especially important with majority party legislators.

Action Items

Schedule next meeting -- Crowe will send a poll to find the best times to meet

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