



## This Week @ Iowa Capitol | Week 2 | January 26, 2026

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The Iowa House of Representatives checked off one of their top priorities for the year last week. A bipartisan group of Representatives passed [a bill](#) to stop private companies from taking a person's land to build carbon pipelines (you may have heard it being called eminent domain). This issue divided Republicans last year and made it nearly impossible for legislators to pass a budget and other priority bills. They do not want this to happen again, so they plan to get this issue done and to the Governor's desk by the end of February.

### **Employment Bills Gain Support**

Turning to DD Council news, advocates are coming to the Capitol this week to raise awareness and advocate for bills that **allow people with disabilities to work, earn, and save more**. There have been several bills that have been

introduced already this year dealing with employment, and one has already moved out of subcommittee.

[Senate File 2087](#) deals with unemployment benefits for people with disabilities. To get unemployment assistance, a person must regularly apply for jobs. This bill counts time spent in vocational rehabilitation and other employment support programs as a work search activity for individuals with disabilities. The [Senate Workforce Committee](#) unanimously voted this bill out. That means it is safe from the first funnel and ready for debate by the full Senate. The best person to contact on this bill is [your State Senator](#).

[House File 2017](#) passed out of subcommittee this week. It creates a new state Work Opportunity Tax Credit, mirroring the federal work opportunity tax credit that expired last month. Businesses that hire people with disabilities would be able to get this tax credit. This bill, which was sponsored by Rep. Chad Ingels, was [our first 2026 Bill of the Week](#). If you want to take action on this bill, the best people to talk to about this right now are the members of the [House Labor & Workforce Committee](#).



## LET US WORK!

A campaign to give people with disabilities the freedom to work.

The **Let Us Work! campaign** BLITZ to get advocates to the Capitol every day this session starts February 2. The goal is to educate legislators about the barriers and opportunities for employment for lowans with disabilities. This includes the “**Work Without Worry**” bill introduced last session. To learn more about this and be part of the BLITZ sign up [here at Sign Up Genius](#)

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## Challenges Ahead for Special Education

As the federal government makes changes that threaten special education, Iowa lawmakers have introduced bills that are concerning parents of children with disabilities, including one that was voted out of a subcommittee last week.

[Senate File 2044](#) allows students to be removed from a classroom for both violent disruptions and non-violent disruptions. Those speaking in favor of the bill during a subcommittee last week laid blame on "special education students." Each school would have to create a placement review committee to decide when it's appropriate for a student to return to class. While the bill does say that the policies on removing a student need to be consistent with key special education laws (including IDEA, ADA), there is growing concern that children with disabilities will be targeted. The bill passed out of subcommittee last week. The best people to talk to about this bill are the members of the [Senate Education Committee](#).

[House File 2003](#) is another bill causing concern. It establishes a Department of Education-administered pilot program requiring one rural and one urban school district to create separate schools for students needing special education or students with significant behavioral challenges. Parents say this violates federal laws that ensure students with disabilities have free and appropriate education in the least restrictive and most integrated settings. The subcommittee on this bill has not yet met. The subcommittee members are the best people to talk to about this bill ([Rep. Samantha Fett](#), [Rep. Dan Gehlbach](#), and [Rep. Heather Matson](#)).

## Bills Put More Requirements on Early Voting

Two bills were introduced this week that may result in fewer early votes being counted. Since voters with disabilities face transportation challenges, these changes could mean your vote won't count.

[Senate File 2081](#) requires anyone voting early (both in-person and by mail) to cast a "provisional ballot." Provisional ballots are not counted

many to cast a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots are not counted until a group decides after the election that the person voting is allowed to vote. That means the votes cast early will not be counted in the election night results, which could delay decisions on who won for weeks. The best people to talk to about this right now are the subcommittee members ([Sen. Ken Rozenboom](#), [Sen. Jason Schultz](#), and [Sen. Cindy Winckler](#))

[Senate File 2077](#) requires mail-in ballots to be returned to the county election office by 5:00 p.m. on the day before election day. The current law is before the polls close on election day. Legislators have already shortened the early voting window significantly, so this makes returning a ballot even more difficult. The bill also requires an additional envelope and requires both a voter's signature and their voter verification number. Again, the best people to talk to about this right now are the subcommittee members, which happen to be the same as the previous bill ([Sen. Ken Rozenboom](#), [Sen. Jason Schultz](#), and [Sen. Cindy Winckler](#)).

## Looking Ahead at This Week

Legislators will likely have a short day on Tuesday. President Trump announced he will visit Iowa on Tuesday to deliver a speech on the economy. Most Republican legislators plan to attend the event that afternoon, so there will not be a lot of action that day. We do know there are a couple of subcommittees planned:

### **Tuesday, January 27 (8 am)**

The subcommittee will meet to discuss [House File 2094](#), which requires Iowa HHS to **double the number of inpatient beds at the state's mental health institutes (MHIs)**. To pay for this, Iowa would ask the federal government for permission to use state-federal Medicaid funds to pay for services in an MHI. The subcommittee members are [Rep. Ann Meyer](#), [Rep. Craig Johnson](#), and [Rep. Timi Brown-Powers](#).

### **Wednesday, January 28 (Noon)**

The [House File 2033](#) subcommittee will meet to discuss the possibility of making prescription labels, information, and bag tags more accessible to

Iowans who are blind or have low vision. The subcommittee members are [Rep. Brett Barker](#) (a pharmacist), [Rep. David Young](#), and [Rep. Elizabeth Wilson](#).

## Reminders

You can watch committee meetings and subcommittee meetings. Just go to ["Today in the Senate"](#) or ["Today in the House."](#) They will include the zoom (Senate) or WebEx (House) links to the meetings. The public is never allowed to speak at committee meetings. The public is always allowed to speak at subcommittee meetings. In the House, you can only speak if you are physically present at the Capitol. The Senate allows both in-person and online comments from the public.

Iowa HHS has opened its public comment period for the **Hope & Opportunities in Many Environments (HOME)** project, which will merge Iowa's many Medicaid waivers into three. These three waivers will be called Adults with Disabilities (AD), Children and Youth (CY) and Elderly. Comments must be received by February 13, so do not hesitate to let Iowa HHS know what you think. [Get started here.](#)

**We want to see you at the Capitol!** Contact the Iowa DD Council for more information about the Let Us Work campaign or sign up for your capitol day [here.](#)

Don't forget to join us at our every-other-week **Capitol Chat** on Fridays at Noon. Our next one is this Friday (January 30). You can sign up for these Zoom meetings [here.](#)

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