



This Week @ Iowa Capitol | Week 3 | February 2, 2026

Attend Your Caucus Tonight!

The Republican and Democratic caucuses will be held this year on **Monday, February 2, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.** Caucuses are local meetings where party members decide party business, talk about the issues that matter to them, and pick people to volunteer to serve on the various political party committees. *Since legislators actively participate in their local caucus, they will not be at the Capitol today and will return to work on Tuesday, February 3.*

Many people skip the off-year caucuses, but there is a lot of important political party business that goes on in them. They are not as exciting as a Presidential year caucus, when voters get together around the state in small neighborhood meetings to pick the person they want to represent their party in the

Presidential race.

What happens at a caucus? The caucus is where a political party starts to organize itself for the next year's election. Caucus goers will also learn about volunteer opportunities in their community and hear from some of the candidates that have decided to run for office in the November 2026 election. You must be at your caucus by 7 pm (you cannot be late).

Who can participate? The caucus is open to all registered voters who are a member of the Democratic or Republican parties.

- Only registered Democrats can participate in the Democratic caucus.
- Only registered Republicans can participate in the Republican caucus.
- 17-year-olds can participate if they are 18 on or before Nov. 3, 2026.
- You can register to vote at the caucus.
- You can change your party at the caucus in order to participate (don't worry, you can change it right back after if you want).

Where is my local caucus? You can find locations for the Democratic & Republican Caucus sites in your county by clicking on the following links:

- [Democrats](#)
- [Republicans](#)

Don't Miss Your Chance to Comment on HOME!

Iowa HHS is working on a project to change Iowa's home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers. The new waiver program is called the **Hope and Opportunity in Many Environments (HOME)** project.

- **Iowa currently has seven HCBS waivers:** AIDS/HIV, Brain Injury, Children's Mental Health, Elderly, Health & Disability, Intellectual

Disability, and Physical Disability. Each waiver has a different menu of services and some have caps on services (while others do not).

- **Iowa HHS has a plan to consolidate these seven waivers into three and base the services provided on age and need instead of diagnosis.** The new waivers are: Children & Youth (CY), Adults with Disabilities (AD), and Elderly.
- These changes will be phased in:

Phase One (2026) will combine the AIDS/HIV, Children’s Mental Health, Health & Disability, and Physical Disability waivers into two waivers (Children & Youth, Adults with Disabilities).

Phase Two (date TBD) will add the Brain Injury and Intellectual Disabilities waivers.

The Elderly waiver will not change.

- **The plan must be available to the public for at least 30 days for comment.** Then the plan has to be approved by the federal government (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, also known as CMS). Iowa HHS has to apply for a waiver from CMS. The public will also have the chance to comment on the waiver application after it is sent to CMS.
- You can find out more about the plan at the links below:

[General Information](#)

[Slides from public meetings](#)

[Watch a recording from a public information session](#)

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Iowa HHS wants to know what you think about this plan — public comment period ends at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, February 13, 2026! Here's how you send in your comments:

- **Attend our Capitol Chat on Friday, February 6 (Noon-12:30 pm) to learn more about how to comment.** Register for the Zoom Capitol Chat [here](#).
- Read the public notice about the comment period [here](#).
- Review the public comment “Frequently Asked Questions” [here](#).
- **Mail or email your comments before the February 13 deadline:**

HCBS_Public_Comment@hhs.iowa.gov

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services
Iowa Medicaid
312 East 12th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319

Please write “HCBS New HOME Waivers” in the subject line.

Quick Tip: Public comments can suggest changes, point out problems, or highlight things that are good in the proposed new waivers. Comments will be most helpful if the comments are **clear and specific**. Try to **give an example** and explain why the change matters to you. Focus on what is most important for you, your family, or your community. The details you share help Iowa HHS understand your point of view.

Week in Review

In just three weeks, legislators have introduced 673 bills. Legislators are doing a lot of work in subcommittees and committees to get ready for the first big deadline on Friday, February 20. All bills must be voted out of their first assigned committee by this time, or they are effectively “dead” for the year. That means legislators will no longer work on them — they will need to start all over again in 2027. We call this deadline the “**First Funnel.**”

Bills that are sponsored by leaders, deal with taxes, or spend money are what we call “funnel proof.” That means these deadlines do not apply to them and they can be discussed at any time during the legislative session. Here are a few updates on priority bills:

- The House Higher Education Committee passed the bill to allow Iowa Tuition Grants to be used to pay for tuition for **Comprehensive Transition & Postsecondary (CTP) programs**. There are three US Department of Education approved programs in the state - the [University of Iowa REACH](#), [Northwestern College NEXT](#), and [North Iowa Area Community College EDUCATE](#) programs. The bill got a new number when it was voted out of committee — it is now [House File 2250](#). Since this is out of committee, it is now eligible for debate until the second funnel deadline (March 20). To stay alive, it must be passed by the House, approved by a Senate subcommittee, and voted out of a Senate Committee by Friday, March 20. The House has passed similar bills over the last three years, but the Senate has always failed to take action. This is our **Week 3 Bill of the Week** — [read it here](#).
- A new bill ([House File 2218](#)) was introduced this week. It requires all schools (public, private, charter) to install **video recording equipment in special education classrooms**. The bill says that the recordings must comply with privacy laws and the federal “Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act” (also known as FERPA). There is no additional money in the bill to help schools pay for this. The sponsor is [Rep. Brooke Boden](#) (R-Warren). It was assigned to the [House Education Committee](#), but the three members of the subcommittee have not yet been listed.
- [House File 2203](#) updates Iowa law allowing the use of epi-pens in schools, clarifying that any **epinephrine** administration system can be used (not just an epi-pen). The bill passed unanimously out of the House HHS Committee this week, so it is safe from the first funnel deadline.
- [Senate Study Bill 3082](#) passed out of subcommittee this week, but it will

be amended. This bill sets up **seven HHS service regions**, which are identical to the state's newly created Behavioral Health Districts. All HHS services will eventually follow these boundaries. The bill begins this process by making the Area Agency on Aging boundaries the same as the Behavioral Health Districts. Since there are currently only six area agencies on aging, this means our state will be adding a new administrative unit. Aging advocates say this will cost more money and cause service disruption; Iowa HHS said they want to change this section to make it less disruptive but need to clear it with the federal government first. [Sen. Kara Warne](#) (R-Story), who chairs both the subcommittee and HHS committee, said she would move the bill forward but will only take it up in committee once an amendment has been drafted. [House Study Bill 622](#) is identical to this Senate bill; the House subcommittee will meet to discuss it on Thursday, February 5 at 8:30 a.m. You can watch this subcommittee live at: <https://ialegis.webex.com/ialegis/j.php?MTID=m269995c38fa9011a92277f8873292d09> or join By Phone: 1.408.418.9388 (access code: 25086184664).

- A subcommittee will meet on Thursday, February 5 at 8 am to discuss [House Study Bill 621](#). This bill sets up a regular process to review **Medicaid rates for home and community-based services (HCBS) providers** and is a priority of the Iowa Association of Community Providers. Iowa HHS only reviews rates for some health care providers. The bill also states that all Medicaid rate reviews compare Iowa's rates with Medicare, neighboring states' Medicaid rates, and the Medicaid rates of states with similar populations. Right now, Iowa HHS only looks at Medicare rates when reviewing health care provider rates. You can watch this subcommittee live at <https://ialegis.webex.com/ialegis/j.php?MTID=mbd08eb98faeef04de703af777b4f35af> or join by Phone (1-408-418-9388; access code is 24956883283).
- The House Labor & Workforce Committee will vote on [House File 2017](#) on Tuesday, February 3 at 1:00 pm. This bill gives businesses a tax credit for hiring people with disabilities and others that face barriers to

employment (called the **Work Opportunities Tax Credit**). This was our Week 1 Bill of the Week — you [can read it here](#). You can watch the committee debate this bill live at <https://ialegis.webex.com/ialegis/j.php?MTID=md5f8ce0d470c43b8079b76f0b3ba6b6f> or join by phone at 1-408-418-9388 (access code: 24858114845)

Find all the bills we are tracking at:
iowaddcouncil.org/bill-tracker

Take action on bills by emailing your legislators at:
iowaddcouncil.org/take-action-center

Find local legislative town hall meetings in our calendar at:
iowaddcouncil.org/calendar

Find our bills of the week at:
iowaddcouncil.org/bill-of-the-week