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2015 Legislators

The 2015 session of the 86th Iowa General Assembly began on Monday, January 12th. After the November election, the balance of power remains the same as last year, with a Democrat majority in the Senate and a Republican majority in the House. Democrats continue to have a narrow majority in the Senate with 26 seats to the Republicans' 24. Republicans increased their majority in the House by four seats, with a total of 56 seats to Democrats' 43.

While the balance of power is unchanged, there are several new faces in both chambers.

The new Senators are:

- » **Chaz Allen**, D-Newton, District 15
(formerly represented by Dennis Black-D)
- » **Tony Bisignano**, D-Des Moines, District 17
(formerly represented by Jack Hatch-D)
- » **Mark Costello**, R-Imogene, District 12
(formerly represented by Joni Ernst-R)
- » **Kevin Kinney**, D-Oxford, District 39
(formerly represented by Sandy Greiner-R)
- » **Tim Kraayenbrink**, R-Ft. Dodge, District 5
(formerly represented by Daryl Beall-D)
- » **Jason Schultz**, R - Schleswig, District 9
(formerly represented by Nancy Boettger-R)
- » **Tom Shipley**, R-Nodaway, District 11
(formerly represented by Hubert Houser-R)

Both Mark Costello and Jason Schultz previously served in the House; one term (2013-2015) and three terms (2009-2015), respectively. Tony Bisignano served three terms in the House from 1987-1993 and two terms in the Senate from 1993-1997.

The new Representatives are:

- » **Terry Baxter**, R-Garner, District 8
(formerly represented by Henry Rayhons-R)
- » **Liz Bennett**, D-Cedar Rapids, District 65
(formerly represented by Tyler Olson-D)
- » **Brian Best**, R-Glidden, District 12
(formerly represented by Daniel Muhlbauer-D)
- » **Darrel Branhagen**, R-Decorah, District 55
(formerly represented by Roger Thomas-D)

- » **Timi Brown-Powers**, D-Waterloo, District 61
(formerly represented by Anesa Kajtazovic-D)
- » **Gary Carlson**, R-Muscatine, District 91
(formerly represented by Mark Lofgren-R)
- » **Abby Finkenaar**, D-Dubuque, District 99
(formerly represented by Pat Murphy-D)
- » **Steven Holt**, R-Denison, District 18
(formerly represented by Jason Schultz-R)
- » **John Kooiker**, R-Boyden, District 4
(formerly represented by Dwayne Alons-R)
- » **Charlie McConkey**, D-Council Bluffs, District 15
(formerly represented by Mark Brandenburg-R)
- » **Norlin Mommsen**, R-DeWitt, District 97
(formerly represented by Steve Olsen-R)
- » **Zach Nunn**, R-Bondurant, District 30
(formerly represented by Joe Riding-D)
- » **Ross Paustain**, R-Walcott, District 92
(formerly represented by Frank Wood-D)
- » **Ken Rizer**, R-Cedar Rapids, District 68
(formerly represented by Daniel Lundby-D)
- » **Mike Sexton**, R-Rockwell City, District 10
(formerly represented by Tom Shaw-R)
- » **John Wills**, R-Spirit Lake, District 1
(formerly represented by Jeff Smith-R)

House District 23 seat is vacant following Mark Costello's successful bid for Senate District 12. A special election is set for February 10th.

To find bios, contact information, and photos of all the legislators, go to the [Legislators page](#) on the Iowa Legislature website. Select either "Senators" or "Representatives" on the left-side menu to see a complete list of all members, including links to their information page and district map. You can also filter the list by party and chamber, and sort by name, district, and county. For an updated list of legislators listed by their workforce regions, [click here](#).

Session Outlook

Legislative leaders are citing past bipartisanship successes and with a tight budget and several shared priorities this year, compromise is expected. Resources are limited this year due in part to the property tax cut and education spending that was approved two years ago. Both parties have named continuing to build a skilled workforce as a priority this session. The target adjournment date is May 1st, when the per-diem expense payments will end.

Governor's Proposals

Governor Branstad proposed several workforce-related initiatives during his [Condition of the State](#) address and in his [budget recommendations](#).

He introduced a [Center for Human Capital Enrichment Plan](#), a new public-private partnership designed to align education and worker training to address available skilled job openings that are unfilled. A public-private advisory body would be created to provide oversight and guidance and to provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss ideas. The council would be made up by the state's leading industries, members of the state's education and workforce infrastructure, the state auditor, and directors of the departments of education, workforce development, management, the college student aid commission, and economic development authority.

He introduced several proposals to [keep college affordable](#). One proposal is to create a new tax credit for lowans who donate funds to a Student Debt Reduction Organization (SDRO), which partner with charities. A student could volunteer a designate amount of time with a charity that is affiliated with the SDRO and receive a payment toward the student's debt.

Additionally, he proposes several changes in appropriations for the biennial budget.

Economic Development:

- » \$500,000 new appropriation per year to support a business to business portal
- » \$500,000 new appropriation for to market the Home Base Iowa program
- » \$250,000 increase to support international trade by assisting 60-80 small business in expanding sales to national and international markets

Workforce Development:

- » An increase of \$669,000 to support OSHA Consultation Program.

College Student Aid Commission:

- » \$4 million increase in FY16 for the Iowa Tuition Grant for non-profit institutes
- » \$1.3 million increase in FY16 for the Teach Iowa Scholar Program
- » \$200,000 increase for the Iowa Tuition Grant for for-profit institutes

Economic Development Authority:

- » \$250,000 increase in FY16 from the State Workers and Job Creation Fund to provide financial assistance to the Apprenticeship Training Program and to implement Economic Development Appropriations Act (HF 2460) from FY15.

Budget Links

[Summary of Governor's Budget Recommendations](#)

[Summary of Budget and Department Requests](#)

Delay on Rule

The effective date has been delayed on [HF 2448](#), legislation from 2014. The new tax incentives program for the development of workforce housing, as well as the amendments to the High Quality Jobs Program and the Enterprise Zone Program were included in this legislation. The Administrative Rules Review Committee members [voted](#) to delay the effective date until adjournment of the 2015 Legislative Session. Prior to voting, discussion concerned the reallocation of unused funds from one tax credit program to another.

Important Dates

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|--------------------|--|
| January 12 | First Day of Session |
| February 11 | AIWP Legislative Breakfast
7:00-9:00 a.m.
Legislative Dining Room (Ground Floor of the Capitol) |
| March 6 | First Funnel
Final date for House bills to be reported out of House committees, and Senate bills out of Senate committees, to stay alive. |
| April 3 | Second Funnel
Final date for Senate bills to be reported out of House committees, and House bills out of Senate committees, to stay alive. |
| May 1 | Target Adjournment Date
110th calendar day of the session and the date per-diem expenses will end. |

Legislation

[House Study Bill 12](#) Amends one of the financial need criteria for the gap tuition assistance program, prioritizes persons earning incomes between 150 and 250 percent of the federal poverty level, and states that a person who is eligible for WIA or WIOA is ineligible for tuition assistance unless the funds have been fully expended by a workforce region. Proposed Department of Education bill. Subcommittee Byrnes, Gaines, and Mommsen.

[House File 18](#) Authorizes the negotiating of fair share fees in collective bargaining agreements. Introduced, referred to Labor. Sponsored by Hunter.

[House File 19](#) Paid time off is added to the definition of "wages" and employer must pay all earned wages to an employee that is suspended or terminated, upon request. Additionally, employers shall not adopt a policy or practice to deny payment for paid time off. Introduced, referred to Labor. Sponsored by Hunter.

[House File 20](#) Prohibits employment discrimination based on an individual's status as unemployed. Introduced, referred to Labor. Sponsored by Hunter.

[House File 21](#) Provides employee the right to predesignate a physician. Allows employer to choose care unless employee has predesignated a physician. Introduced, referred to Labor. Sponsored by Hunter.

[House File 22](#) Requires certain weekly workers' compensation benefits to be calculated by including an employee's overtime and premium pay, and to include an annual cost-of-living adjustment. Introduced, referred to Labor. Sponsored by Hunter.

[House File 36](#) Creates a worker shortage loan forgiveness program to be administered by the College Student Aid Commission. Introduced, referred to Education. Sponsored by Hunter.

[Senate File 39](#) Amends that employer has burden to establish deduction from employees' wages is lawful, and amends the burdens of the employer with regards to notification by workforce development, method used to calculate wages, and maintaining proper payroll records. Introduced, referred to Labor and Business Relations. Sponsored by Bisignano, Bolkom, Dotzler, Seng, Dvorsky, Hogg, Soddors, Quirnbach, Kinney, Bowman, Petersen, Wilhelm, Taylor, Horn, Dearden, Courtney, Brase, Gronstal, Jochum, Schoenjahn, and Ragan.

Committee Assignments

[Click here](#) to view members of workforce-related committees and their corresponding workforce development region.

This update is a bi-weekly publication intended to share information and resources regarding legislative activities, events, and bills related to workforce issues in Iowa. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Natalie Koerber at nkoerber@sppg.com or 515-237-0338.
