

Legislative Update, April 18, 2011

House, Senate pass redistricting plan

The redistricting bill (HF 682) passed the House (97-1) and Senate (48-1) on April 14th. The bill now goes to Gov. Branstad, who will decide this week whether to sign it.

In U.S. Congressional districts, Rep. King faces Rep. Latham, both Republicans, in the new 4th District. Rep. Latham says he will move to the newly drawn 3rd District to run against Democrat Rep. Boswell. Rep. Loeb sack (D) will move to the new 2nd District, comprised mostly of his old district, except for Linn County, leaving Rep. Braley (D) unopposed by an incumbent in the new 1st District.



The map creates seven open seats in the Iowa Senate, with three featuring paired incumbents of opposite parties (Johnson & Kibbie in the northwestern corner, Bartz & Wilhelm in north central Iowa and McCoy and Ward in south Des Moines/Valley Junction). For the Democrats, Senator Bowman and Senator Schoenjahn are in the same district. For Republicans, Senators Seymour & Boettger are paired, Senators Bacon & Dix are paired and Senators Hahn & Hamerlinck are paired. Eight Republicans will not have to run in 2012, and 11 Democrats will not have to run. Seven Republicans incumbents are up for re-election, and ten Democrats must run again. Senator Gronstal, Senator Kibbie, Senator Danielson and Senator McKinley are all up for re-election.

In the House, 59 seats have one incumbent, 13 have two incumbents and one, House 8, has 3 (Iverson, Upmeyer and Rayhons). 14 are open. Only one seat has a Republican facing a Democrat (District 13, with Taylor (R) facing Hall (D)). Eight other seats have two Republicans facing each other (District 3 Chambers & Huseman); House 10 (Tjepkes & Shaw); House 16 (Hanusa & Brandenburg); House 24 (Anderson & Dolecheck); House 50 (Grassley & Sweeney); House 58 (Hein & Moore); House 78 (De Boef & Klein); House 79 (Vander Linden & Van Engelenhoven). Three House seats have two Democrats paired against each other House 55 (Wenthe & Thomas); House 74 (Mascher & Jacoby); House 82 (Swaim & Hansen).

Bills of interest moving

Medicaid Fraud investigative costs (HF 389). The bill allows the investigate costs of the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit that are recouped to be credited to the Medicaid Fraud Account. The House passed the bill, 94-5; the Senate passed the bill, 49-0, and it has been signed by the Governor.

Long Term Care Ombudsman (SF 495). Establishes the duties of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, the IDA, and the Commission on Aging as relates to the State Office. Makes the State Office a distinct unit in the IDA. An amendment, H-1479, strikes language creating an advisory council (of which IAHSA would have been a member) that was the subject of media scrutiny by the *Des Moines Register* in that the council would be involved in the office's performance review. Another amendment requires the Long-Term Care Ombudsman to consider the views of Area Agencies on Aging, Iowa seniors, and providers of long-term in performing the duties of the office. It would allow the Ombudsman to talk privately with long-term residents without restriction only if the resident agrees to communicate. The bill also limits the disclosure of this information unless the resident consents, or if the disclosure is needed to provide services, or if the resident cannot give consent. IAHSA was registered as undecided on the bill.

Administration & Regulations Appropriations (HF 646). Makes the Administration & Regulation appropriations. General Fund total: \$52.35 million. The bill passed the House, as amended, 92-0; it now goes back to the Senate. Of interest to IAHSA members, an amendment to this bill by Senate Democrats adds \$650,000 from the Medicaid Fraud Trust Fund Account to help refund DIA nursing facility surveyor positions that were unfilled due to budget restraints.

U.S. House passes Ryan budget cut plan

The House last week has passed a FY2012 budget plan that would cut trillions in spending over the next decade and fundamentally transform the current Medicare system.

The vote in favor of the budget proposed by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., includes a proposal to gradually transition the current Medicare system into a government-funded voucher program for seniors to purchase private health insurance. If enacted the bill would be a very tough pill for IAHSA members to swallow as it would favor lowest cost providers with little, if any, consideration for quality.

The Ryan plan is not expected to pass the Democrat-controlled Senate.

Upcoming dates

April 29th—Iowa General Assembly per diem expires; legislature to adjourn.

May 4th & 5th—*IAHSA's Spring Conference with Legislative Update*. Be sure to register at www.ageiowa.org.