

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE – WHAT’S AHEAD & WHAT HAPPENED

February 18 marked a major legislative deadline known as ‘first funnel,’ when most policy bills had to advance through full committee in the chamber where they were introduced to remain ‘alive’, meaning they are eligible for debate and a vote by the full House or Senate. The second funnel deadline is March 18. So, in the next month, all policy bills that survived first funnel must advance through full committee in the opposite chamber. During this time legislators also begin consideration of the state budget, generally the last bills considered before adjournment.

This is the second year of the two-year legislative session with a target adjournment date of April 19. Although legislators rarely adjourn on time, November 2022 is a significant election year at the state and federal level due to redistricting with all new legislative districts and with the Governor and state executives on the ballot, so we do not expect this session to go into an extended overtime.

What’s Ahead: State Budget Funding for Victim Services

Governor Reynolds’ budget released in January is essentially a request and recommendation for legislators to consider as they draft individual agency appropriations’ bills (also called ‘budget bills’). The Governor recommended ‘level’ funding of \$5 million in state funds for victim services, i.e., the same as last year. **The 3 Coalitions are asking legislators for \$10 million in state victim services funds and a change in the budget line item to include all victims of violent crime.** Currently state victim services funds are limited to domestic and sexual abuse services, so in addition to the funding increase, we are requesting an amendment so state funds can also support services for homicide, human trafficking, and other violent crime victims. The persistent unmet need for services, increased cost and challenges of providing services during COVID-19, and dramatic increase in homicides offer compelling rationale for the request, even without the added burden of the devastating loss in federal victim services funds.

The Justice System Appropriations Subcommittee has jurisdiction over crime victim services funding. Subcommittee hearings to this point included presentations by each agency funded through the subcommittee. On March 10, state budget analysts (Revenue Estimating Committee) will release estimates of state revenue available, and legislators feasibly use those numbers to inform budget decisions. After that, they draft their own appropriations bills for consideration. **Crime Victim Services Virtual Advocacy Day** on March 1 is timed for focused outreach to legislators as they are making budget decisions. Please [register here](#) to join us in this targeted day of action urging support for crime victims.

What Happened: Policy Bills

Way too many extremely harmful policy bills advanced, including bills to: implement barriers to accessing public health benefits like SNAP food benefits; drastically reduce unemployment benefits; allow a broad religious exemption from Iowa laws effectively allowing a license to discriminate; enact a trans athlete ban for public school sports; implement barriers to abortion care; proposals to cut taxes for high income families which would significantly reduce state revenue for everything; incessant attacks on public school funding and curriculum; and efforts to allow criminal penalties against teachers and librarians for effective teaching methods that include books addressing sexism, racism, gender identity, etc. The low points remain very low and many of these bills advancing will not make Iowa a better place to live. However, there were a few notable exceptions. Following are some highlights, attached includes list of specific bills, and [click here](#) for a good summary from the Des Moines Register.

Commutation: It did not end well but including this in high points for the short-term victory. Amazing progress on [HF 2191](#), a proposal to make meaningful changes to Iowa's commutation process came to a devastating halt when the House Public Safety Committee did not allow a vote on the bill. This bill, near and dear to all our hearts because it could give a second chance to survivors serving life sentences, had robust bi-partisan support (41 original cosponsors!), advanced out of subcommittee 3-0; and had enough votes to advance through full committee but leaders decided not put the bill on the committee agenda, so it did not survive funnel. Thanks to your voices on this and the herculean efforts of the small but mighty group of allies supporting these efforts, including 3 University of Iowa students, efforts to advance this bill succeeded in changing more minds than ever before. This was a gut-wrenching defeat but it makes the list of high points due to progress made in educating legislators formerly opposed.

Housing: It is hard to beat the high point of getting a unanimous but cliff hanger of a vote just before the funnel deadline in subcommittee and then by the full House Public Safety Committee in favor of keeping alive ICADV's top policy priority bill- [HF 2479](#) (formerly HSB 707), allowing **Early Lease Termination for victims** of violent crime. This bill survived an essential first hurdle but still has a long road ahead and we continue to need your help in reaching out to legislators. Next step for this bill is debate and a vote by all Representatives (House members). Importantly, another top housing priority bill introduced last year removing a major barrier to housing access by allowing for **expungement of certain eviction records** remains alive and well. Because the Iowa House approved the bill in 2021 and sent it to the Senate, it was not subject to this first funnel deadline. The original bill, [HF 820](#), is now included as a provision in HF 866 which is the bill that will likely get a vote. Enactment of these two policies would be a stunning and major victory for survivors and could help make your jobs a little easier in terms of assisting survivors who need housing.

Economic Security: And speaking of great economic security policy, [HF 2329](#), legislation ICADV supports allowing financial institutions to offer **prize-linked savings** accounts, survived funnel as well. These programs would help all Iowans and would be especially helpful to survivors by allowing individuals to open an account with a minimal deposit and a no-risk opportunity to quickly build savings. Plus having a savings account of their own opens many other financial doors to establishing credit and longer-term financial stability. Prize-linked savings programs can help survivors maintain savings, repair credit, and establish financial self-sufficiency without risk.

And then the low points.

Economic Security: Although legislation (HSB 508) implementing a new asset test for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) food benefits that would have kicked families off did not survive funnel, a larger bill still advancing includes troubling new barriers to accessing public benefits (SNAP, Medicaid, etc.) and we will continue to track those efforts. ICADV opposes bills advancing in both chambers proposing to **reduce unemployment benefits** from 26 weeks to 16 weeks as well as the dollar amount of the benefit. Cutting unemployment insurance (UI) benefits will not address worker shortages, it just makes it harder for people to get back to work, especially gender violence victims who need time to find a safe job and get back on their feet. This impacts ALL working families (not just union workers) who lose jobs through no fault of their own. All employees pay into UI (deducted from your paycheck like taxes) and these funds should be available when they need them the most.

LGBTQ Rights: ICADV opposes two bills advancing rapidly in the House and Senate ([HF 2416](#); [SF 2342](#)) that would **ban transgender athletes in public schools**, colleges, universities, and accredited non-public entities, from playing on girls/women's sports teams, i.e., the proposals would prohibit transgender girls/women from playing on sport teams matching their gender identity. The House voted 55-39 to approve their bill and Senators are likely to vote soon on this proposal. Two other proposals addressing religious freedom, [HF 2437](#) and [SF 2284](#) are advancing in each chamber. The bills were introduced to address an issue that came up in some states (not Iowa) during COVID-19 where churches were treated differently than other entities in terms of closures and restrictions. HF 2437 addresses this in a way that does not include the broad religious exclusions ICADV opposes in SF 2284 which would undermine the Iowa Civil Rights Act in a way that allows entities to discriminate by claiming a religious exemption.

Reproductive Health Care: Thankfully several proposals restricting or prohibiting access to abortion care did not advance, however [HF 2389](#), an outrageous bill restricting access to medication abortion and requiring physicians to provide medically inaccurate informed consent could be considered by the Iowa House. ICADV opposed this legislation- reproductive health services are an essential component of routine medical care for all women, and victims of gender violence have an acute need for timely access to the full ranges of services, including abortion care. Restrictions accessing abortion care are harmful to women's health and have a far greater impact on the safety of services women receive than whether women choose abortion. Restricting access to this method is especially harmful for survivors of gender violence and requiring physicians to provide inaccurate medical information to patients is harmful to women's health and unethical.

Gun Safety: Despite no threat to accessing guns in Iowa, lawmakers never seem to tire of undermining public safety. ICADV opposes [SF 2250](#), prohibiting employers from restricting **guns at workplaces** as long as guns and ammo are out of sight and locked in an employee vehicle. We also oppose [HF 2476](#) allowing a person to carry a **gun in their vehicle** on a public highway without it being taken apart or secured.

Immigrant Rights: Legislation ([HF 2192](#); [SF 2068](#)) to ease Iowa's egregious "English Only" law was introduced but did not survive the funnel deadline and will not be considered this year. ICADV supported these proposals allowing entities to provide information and services in other languages if necessary to achieve their purpose to the state.

ICADV LEGISLATIVE TRACKER (select bills list)

Following is a select list of the many bills we are tracking, i.e., am highlighting proposals receiving some attention so far. Bills are often renumbered as they advance so some bill numbers may change. Policy bills not approved by full committee in the chamber (House or Senate) where they were introduced by February 18 did not survive the 'first funnel' deadline (spending and tax bills not subject to this). This means they are kind of 'dead' and not eligible to advance further in their current form but really, no bill is truly dead until legislators adjourn because some bills are exempt from funnel deadlines and proposals can survive by being attached as amendments to advancing bills. I will note which bills did NOT survive the funnel deadline, but again, approval by a full committee means the bill survived. For bills without hyperlinks click [here](#), on the left side, under 'Bills' section- just enter the bill number.

HOUSING

[HF 2479](#) (HSB 707) FOR – allows tenant to **terminate a lease early** without penalty if they provide written notice and documentation to landlord that tenant or household member is a victim of violent crime, e.g. domestic abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, elder abuse. Approved by House Public Safety Committee.

[HF 820](#) FOR- **eviction expungement**- removes unjust barriers to housing for tenants with prior **eviction** records. In 2021, this bill passed the House (95-0) and then was added as a provision to HF 866 which is now in Senate Ways and not subject to first funnel deadlines.

Did not survive funnel – failed to advance:

- HF 2084 FOR – created a tenant hotline

ECONOMIC SECURITY

[HF 2329](#) (HSB 584) FOR- allows Iowa financial institution to offer **prize linked savings** accounts (financial savings incentives). Approved by House State Government Committee.

SF2275 (SSB 3093) AGAINST- **reduces unemployment benefits**. Approved by Senate Commerce Committee.

SF2249 (SSB3096) AGAINST- **reduces unemployment benefits**. Approved by Senate Labor Committee.

HF2279 (HSB 631) AGAINST - **reduces unemployment benefits**. Approved by House Labor Committee.

[HF 2438](#) (HSB698) - implements new system for **public benefits oversight**; includes provision making ineligible for SNAP if do not cooperate with child support agency. Approved by House Human Resources. (ICADV has not registered a position on this bill yet.)

Did not survive funnel – failed to advance:

- HSB 504 AGAINST – new ID authentication for public benefits
- HSB 505 AGAINST – no SNAP if not coordinate on child support (but part of larger bill)
- HSB 508 AGAINST - SNAP asset test would have kicked thousands off
- HSB 693 FOR – increases income eligibility limit for SNAP (State Government)
- SSB 3136 FOR – increases income eligibility limit for SNAP (Commerce)

MENTAL HEALTH/REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & RIGHTS

[HF 2137](#) FOR – implements loan repayment program mental health professionals.

[HF 2389](#) (HF 2119) AGAINST- requires unethical informed consent for **medication abortion**-physicians required to tell women can reverse medication abortion. Approved by House Human Resources Committee.

Did not survive funnel – failed to advance:

- HF 2289 AGST – prohibits abortion in the state
- HF 2265 AGST – implements onerous data reporting statistics re abortion
- SF 2029 AGST – 12-week abortion ban

LGBTQ RIGHTS

[SF2342](#) (SSB3146) AGAINST - bans transgender athletes in public schools, colleges, universities, and accredited non-public entities, from playing on girls/women's sports teams, i.e., the proposals would bar transgender girls/women from playing in school sports matching their gender identity.

[HF 2416](#) (HF 2309) AGAINST - bans transgender athletes in public schools, colleges, universities, and accredited non-public entities, from playing on girls/women's sports teams, i.e., the proposals would bar transgender girls/women from playing in school sports matching their gender identity.

[SF2284](#) (SF2170) AGAINST - includes a broad religious exclusion which would undermine the Iowa Civil Rights Act in a way that allows entities to discriminate by allowing an exemption from civil rights laws by claiming it violates religious freedom.

Did not survive funnel deadline - failed to advance:

- SF 2024 AGAINST – no gender ID in elementary curriculum.
- SF 2025 AGAINST- prevents transgender students in elementary and secondary school from accessing restrooms not corresponding to their biological sex.
- HF 2054 AGAINST- no gender ID school curriculum.
- HF 2058 AGAINST – indecent exposure in establishments that would bar transgender.

CIVIL RIGHTS – RACIAL JUSTICE, IMMIGRANT RIGHTS, FREE SPEECH

[SF 339](#) (SF84) AGAINST- **anti-immigrant** rights bill penalizes employers for not using the federal e-verify system and harms immigrant workers. Approved by Senate Judiciary Committee.

Did not survive funnel – failed to advance:

- [SF 2068/HF 2192](#) FOR – amend English only
- HSB 635 AGAINST – penalize employers for not using e-verify
- HF2090 AGAINST - prohibited effective training all entities publicly funded

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM; CRIMINAL LAW

HF 2386 (HF 2042) AGAINST – allows unethical disclosure of psychological test material in criminal trials.

HF 2464 (HSB 721) FOR – expunge certain criminal convictions for HT victims. Approved by House Judiciary.

HF 2478 (HSB 711) UNDEC – intention is to include domestic abuse assault misdemeanor crimes in Chapter 915 notification protections but concerns with impact on victim compensation.

HF2419 (HF 2140) FOR - expunge domestic and sexual abuse dismissals. Approved by House Judiciary committee.

SF 2178 (SSB3027) UNDEC – permanent NCO, defendant must initiate extension. Approved by Senate Judiciary.

HF2346 (HF2093) UNDEC – requires vehicle ID on NCO, includes penalties. Approved by Public Safety.

Did not survive funnel – failed to advance:

- HF 2191 FOR - legislation to create meaningful **commutation** process; establishes structure with firm timelines and specific factors for Board of Parole and Governor to consider when reviewing cases. Public Safety subcommittee approved 3-0; not considered by full committee.
- HSB 607 FOR – **probation reform** to provide incentives to help reduce number of people sent to prison for inability to pay fees/fines or for technical violations. Public Safety subcommittee approved 3-0; not considered by full committee.
- SF 2109 FOR- provided chance for **parole for aiding/abetting** murder. Senate Judiciary subcommittee did not advance.
- HSB 525 AGAINST- **Marcy's Law** victim rights constitutional amendment. House Judiciary subcommittee did not approve but advanced without recommendation; not considered by full committee.
- SSB 3054 AGAINST – allows unethical disclosure of psychological test material in criminal trials.
- SSB 3131 FOR - expunge certain criminal convictions for HT victims. Approved by Senate Judiciary subcommittee, not considered by full committee.
- SF 2064 UNDEC – enhanced penalties violent repeat offenders. Approved by Senate Judiciary Subcommittee; not considered by full committee.

GUNS

[SF 2250](#) (SF 2143) AGAINST - prohibits employers from restricting **guns at workplaces** as long as guns and ammo are out of sight and locked in an employee vehicle.

[HF 2476](#) (HSB 646) AGAINST - allows a person to carry a **gun in their vehicle** on a public highway without it being taken apart or secured.

Did not survive funnel – failed to advance:

- HF2303 AGAINST - 2nd amdt preservation act
- SF2002 AGAINST - 2nd amdt preservation act

CIVIL LEGAL

HF 825 (HF 450) FOR- no finding for domestic abuse and sexual assault **consent agreements**. Approved by House Judiciary Committees.

Did not survive funnel – failed to advance

- HF202 joint custody; AGST - requires **50/50 joint physical care**. House Judiciary subcommittee did not advance bill.