



2025 Advocacy Toolkit

Day on the Hill

February 27, 2025

This toolkit can be used throughout the legislative session but is curated to accompany our annual day on the hill event. We hope this helps you to navigate the day and the legislative session.



Advocacy



Expertise



Impact



Special thanks to IMHCA's lobbyist, Emily Piper of Piper Consulting, for helping to organize today's event and for protecting the legislative and policy interests of mental health providers across the state.



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“I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept.” – Angela Davis

SCHEDULE

February 20, 2025

7:30 AM	Legislative Breakfast Meet in the Legislative Dining room (G15 Ground Floor) at the capitol.	Rooms signs are at the tops of the doorways. There is an option to register for only this event if you would like. We would love to see you even if you are not able to make the full day's events! This is a great way to dip your toe in the advocacy pool and get to know some of the legislators across Iowa. Parking can be in the visitor's parking lot on the east side of the building. You can leave your car here all day if you would like. See Map.
9:00 – 9:10 AM	Welcome	Emily Piper (IMHCA Lobbyist) introduces tips and tricks to speaking with legislators, sharing your story, and the bill watch list. Discuss a strategy for the morning.
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Advocacy Talking with Legislators in the Rotunda.	Separate into groups to call legislators out to discuss bills and priorities.

LOGISTICS FOR THE DAY

1. Parking: [See Map for parking and directions.](#) There are two main parking spots that you can leave your car at all day. There will be a couple blocks of a walk from the Capitol to the Historical Building and then again to the social hour at Republic on Grand if you choose to attend all day. There is two-hour street parking though the meter or app around the Historical Building and Republic on Grand if you need it.
2. Dress: Wear business casual if you are going to the Capitol. Please wear your favorite therapy related t-shirt, green (for mental health awareness), teal (mental health awareness), or blue for ACA/IMHCA colors. If you put in a size for a t-shirt, they will be delivered to breakfast and to the training session so you can change into them. Pair your t-shirt with a blazer, cardigan or dress pants to dress it up if you like. Wear comfortable shoes.



GET TO KNOW IMHCA

IMHCA.net About IMHCA Page

About Us

The Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association (IMHCA) is a chapter of the American Mental Health Association (AMHCA). IMHCA is dedicated to meeting the professional needs of all mental health counselors in Iowa in an intentionally inclusive manner. Since founded, we have worked to promote quality mental health services for all people, distinguish the identity of the profession, and influence public policy to maintain standards of care and opportunities in line with our professional ethics and values. We accomplish these goals by working with other professional organizations, the state legislature, state regulatory agencies, and clients to promote quality in mental health counseling practices.

The Purpose of IMHCA - Quality mental health services across the state.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

- Providing mental health counselors with continuing education opportunities to update and enhance their competencies
- Forums for presentations and advancing the practice of counseling while helping professionals add to their resume/CV
- IMHCA hosts an annual conference
- IMHCA partners with other organizations and agencies to provide continuing education to mental health counselors

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AND CONNECTION

- Providing a public forum and network throughout Iowa for counselors to address the social and emotional needs of their clients
- Networking events such as coffee mingles, book club, and live interviews with subject experts
- Timely updates to IMHCA members through email, newsletters, board reporting, and an annual report
- Awards to recognize outstanding professionals and active IMHCA members

ADVOCACY

- Distinguish the profession
- Promoting high standards of professional commitment to persons who seek mental health counseling services in Iowa
- Promoting attainable licensure and certification for counselors on state and national levels
- Increasing awareness of the role and function of mental health counseling and counseling services to the public
- Aligning mission, purpose and values with other professional organizations to advance mental health services
- Supporting research into mental health concerns, counseling interventions, and their effectiveness



2023-2025 IMHCA Board

Current Board Members

PRESIDENT Kristten Buttermore	PAST PRESIDENT Kenya Rocha	PRESIDENT-ELECT Open July 1, 2024	TREASURER Open	SECRETARY Rachel Swanson
GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY CHAIR Ellyn Nitchals-Kellner	PUBLIC POLICY CO-CHAIR Allison Levine	NETWORKING & COMMUNICATIONS John Bisenius	CONTINUING EDUCATION Open	
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE CHAIR Rebecca Spiess	CONFERENCE COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR Donna Soliday	STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE Lindsay Weyer	STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE Anna Alonso	
MEMBER-AT-LARGE Open	WEBSITE COORDINATOR Open	MEMBER-AT-LARGE Katrina Serfling		
MEMBERSHIP Jolena Perri				

DID YOU KNOW?

Members can be involved in a committee without being on the board!



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR 2025

Find our legislative agenda and more about the history of the legislative and public policy committee work on our IMHCA Advocacy page here: <https://imhca.net/imhca-advocacy/>. IMHCA's legislative committee meets at monthly between August and June to track legislative and policy topics, survey members, set legislative priorities, attend the Iowa Board of behavioral science meetings as guests, and plan the annual Day on the hill. The committee is made up of board members, IMHCA members with interest in this area, and affiliate members who may serve on other organizations' legislative committees.

The Legislative and Public Policy Committee distributes an annual survey to IMHCA's members and stakeholders to gather information about the key issues impacting our members and the clients that they serve.

Summary

Workforce Development and Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and retention of new counselors Unpaid student internships Increasing ease of licensure in Iowa Student loan forgiveness options and funding
Mental health needs of specific populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental health of K-12 students/in schools Advancing perinatal mental health care LGBTQIA rights and mental health care
Professional Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name protection for counselors
Insurance Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase reimbursement rates, fair pay and equal compensation Clawbacks and audits Insurance transparency
Federal Priorities (with AMHCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in developing artificial intelligence (AI) regulations Support the entrance of licensed clinical mental health counselors in the realm of Medicare. Support the development of integrated behavioral health Support programs for student safety, improvement of school climate, and access to mental and behavioral health services within the school setting.

Check out more on [Advocacy – Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association \(imhca.net\)](https://imhca.net)



IOWA'S 91ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY - 2025 TIMETABLE

Note: This Session Timetable is subject to change *See SCR4 and HR 3 (2023), SR 3 (2019), and SR 113 (2020)

JANUARY 13 - First day of session (Iowa Code Sec. 2.1)

FEBRUARY 14 (Friday of the 5th week) - Final day for individual Senator and Representative requests for bill and joint resolution drafts to the Legislative Services Agency

MARCH 7 (Friday of the 8th week)** - Final date for Senate bills and joint resolutions to be reported out of Senate Committees and House bills and joint resolutions out of House committees

MARCH 17-21 (10th week)*** - Senate considers only Senate bills, Senate joint resolutions, and unfinished business House considers only House bills, House joint resolutions, and unfinished business

MARCH 24 (11th and 12th weeks) - APRIL 4 Debate not limited by rule

APRIL 4 (Friday of the 12th week)** - Final date for Senate bills and joint resolutions to be reported out of House committees and House bills and joint resolutions out of Senate committees

APRIL 7-11 (13th week)*** Senate considers only House bills, House joint resolutions, and unfinished business. House considers only Senate bills, Senate joint resolutions, and unfinished business.

APRIL 14 (Beginning of the 14th week) - Only the following bills and resolutions are eligible for consideration:

- Bills passed by both Houses
- Appropriations Bills
- Ways and Means Bills
- Government Oversight Bills
- Legalizing Acts
- Administrative Rules Review Committee Bills
- Committee Bills related to delayed or suspended Administrative Rules [Iowa Code Sec. 17A.8(9)]
- Bills co-sponsored by Majority and Minority Leaders of one House
- Conference Committee Reports
- Companion Bills sponsored by Senate and House Majority Leaders
- Concurrent or Simple Resolutions
- Joint Resolutions nullifying Administrative Rules
- Bills on the Veto Calendar (Joint Rule 23)
- Unfinished Business

APRIL 14 (Beginning of the 14th week) - House amendments need not be filed on the day preceding floor debate

MAY 2 - 110th calendar day of the session [Per diem expenses end - Iowa Code Sec. 2.10(1)]

****The March 7 and April 4 committee deadlines do not apply to Appropriations Bills, Ways and Means Bills, Government Oversight Bills, Legalizing Acts, Administrative Rules Review Committee Bills, Committee Bills related to delayed or suspended Administrative Rules [Iowa Code Sec. 17A.8(9)], Bills co-sponsored by Majority and Minority Leaders of one House, Conference Committee Reports, Companion Bills sponsored by the Majority Leaders of both Houses after consultation with the respective Minority Leaders, Concurrent or Simple Resolutions, and Joint Resolutions nullifying Administrative Rules.**

*****The week 10 and 13 limitations do not apply to Concurrent and Simple Resolutions, which may be filed and considered at any time during session.**



2025 Iowa Session Leaders:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/leadership>

THERE ARE 150 LEGISLATORS IN IOWA’S LEGISLATURE. Iowa’s Legislature has two parts: the Iowa House of Representatives and the Iowa Senate.

Legislative districts are drawn so that every Iowa Senate district includes two Iowa House districts. Every Senator represents approximately 63,800 people and every Representative represents approximately 31,900 people

SENATE		HOUSE	
There are 50 Senators in the Iowa Senate. They are elected to four-year terms. Even numbered districts were elected in November 2025, and the odd-numbered districts will face re-election in November 2026.		There are 100 Representatives serving in the Iowa House of Representatives, or the “Iowa House” for short. Representatives serve two-year terms so they will be up for election again in November 2025.	
President:	Amy Sinclair	Speaker:	Pat Grassley
President Pro Tempore:	Ken Rozenboom	Speaker Pro Tempore:	John H. Wills
Majority Leader:	Jack Whitver	Majority Leader:	Matt W. Windschitl
Majority Whip:	Mike Klimesh	Majority Whip:	Henry Stone
Assistant Majority Leader:	Adrian Dickey	Assistant Majority Leader:	Jon Dunwell
Assistant Majority Leader:	Lynn Evans	Assistant Majority Leader:	Heather Hora
Assistant Majority Leader:	Carrie Koelker	Assistant Majority Leader:	Craig P. Johnson
Assistant Majority Leader:	Tim Kraayenbrink	Assistant Majority Leader:	Brent Siegrist
Democratic Leader:	Janice Weiner	Minority Leader:	Jennifer Konfrst
Democratic Whip:	William A. Dotzler Jr.	Minority Whip:	Brian Meyer
Assistant Democratic Leader:	Claire Celsi	Assistant Minority Leader:	Sean Bagniewski
Assistant Democratic Leader:	Molly Donahue	Assistant Minority Leader:	Heather Matson
Assistant Democratic Leader:	Izaah Knox	Assistant Minority Leader:	Elizabeth Wilson
Assistant Democratic Leader:	Cindy Winckler		



Legislative Committees

When a bill is introduced in the House or Senate, it is sent to a legislative committee for review and public comment. The committee decides if the proposal will move on. We work closely with the committees bolded below.

Standing Committees:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees>

SENATE:	HOUSE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Agriculture</u> <u>Appropriations</u> <u>Commerce</u> <u>Education</u> <u>Ethics</u> <u>Government Oversight</u> <u>Human Resources</u> <u>Judiciary</u> <u>Labor and Business Relations</u> <u>Local Government</u> <u>Natural Resources and Environment</u> <u>Rules and Administration</u> <u>State Government</u> <u>Transportation</u> <u>Veterans Affairs</u> <u>Ways and Means</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Administration and Rules</u> <u>Agriculture</u> <u>Appropriations</u> <u>Commerce</u> <u>Economic Growth</u> <u>Education</u> <u>Environmental Protection</u> <u>Ethics</u> <u>Government Oversight</u> <u>Human Resources</u> <u>Information Technology</u> <u>Judiciary</u> <u>Labor</u> <u>Local Government</u> <u>Natural Resources</u> <u>Public Safety</u> <u>State Government</u> <u>Transportation</u> <u>Veterans Affairs</u> <u>Ways and Means</u>
Appropriations:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Administration and Regulation Appropriations Subcommittee</u> <u>Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee</u> <u>Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee</u> <u>Education Appropriations Subcommittee</u> <u>Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee</u> <u>Justice System Appropriations Subcommittee</u> <u>Transportation, Infrastructure, and Capitals Appropriations Subcommittee</u> 	

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF COMMITTEES IN IOWA:

STANDING COMMITTEES

work on policy issues in a specific area, such as transportation or taxes. The House and Senate each have their own Standing Committees and they meet separately. The exceptions are the Government Oversight Committee and the Administrative Rules Review Committee, which each meet jointly. These are listed below and linked so you can click to learn more about each. The committees we work most closely with are bolded. Our bills for mental health and licensure are most often in these committees.

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEES

work on state budgets in a specific issue area and report their work back to the Appropriations Committee. Unlike Standing Committees, Budget Subcommittees meet jointly (House and Senate members come together). Their job is to review requests for money, hear from the groups asking for that money, and recommend a budget to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Once that is done, they no longer meet.



KEY ISSUES & TALKING POINTS

ISSUE:



HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR EMERGING ADVOCATES

Don't worry if this is your first time or if you are a little rusty! IMHCA has you covered. See what we have below for suggestions and information on how to prepare for these very important discussions with Iowa's Senators and Representatives.

Prior to the visit/event: Prep Work

- Know who your local legislators are! [Find Your Legislator](#) - Enter address, city, or zip code to find legislators serving that area. Get comfortable with the Iowa Legislative Website. If possible, send an email to let them know you will be at the capitol and seek them out after the event. The extra effort can go a long way down the road! You can find legislators' emails by clicking on their names anywhere you see them on the website or under "Legislators." This will take you to their profile and list their standing committees, council, boards and commissions and contact information.
- Send email or call to introduce yourself!
 - Let your legislators know why this legislation is important to you and your clients
 - Make your emails or phone calls as personal as you can.
 - Include information about who you are, where you work and live, what types of clients you serve.
 - Let them know what your legislative priorities are and why you want to focus on this. Why it is helpful to you in your practice or to the people you serve.
- Follow the weekly legislative updates and bill watchlists [Newsletters – Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association \(imhca.net\)](#) from IMHCA and the lobbyist.
- Review the legislative agenda – set your own goals in next step with IMHCA priorities in mind.
- Link to IMHCA video(s) from this year:

[Advocacy 101 2025](#)

[Talking to your Legislator](#)

- IF YOU ARE READY FOR MORE DETAILED WORK: Review the legislators mentioned in the bill watch list or on important committees. Take note of party line stance, platform issues, committee role(s), voting record on the issue(s), etc. as you prepare.

Prior to the visit: The week before and up to the day of.

- Plan to wear your favorite therapy related t-shirt, green (for mental health awareness), teal for mental health awareness, or royal blue for ACA/IMHCA colors. Business casual if you can. Pair your t-shirt with a blazer, cardigan or dress pants.
- Identify 1-3 goals for your visit. Don't try and accomplish too much as you will run out of time and the importance of your message could be lost. Break those goals down into 2- 5 talking points each.



- IF YOU ARE READY FOR MORE DETAILED WORK: Once you have established your goals and talking points, decide which committees and/or legislators you need to speak with. IMHCA will help you with this as a part of our training on the day of. Committees are listed on page 6 of this toolkit if you need to find more information! You can find important committees when looking at individual bills. They are listed in the “bill history.” Our bills are often in the [human resources committee](#) based on their issue/topic.

During the Event: Talking to Legislators:

- Use ‘Senator’ or ‘Representative’ when addressing all legislators.
- Introduce yourself and include your credentials and city of origin. For example: “Hello. I am Suzy Smith, Licensed Mental Health Counselor and I work in Private Practice here in Des Moines.” or “Hello. My name is Joe Clark, and I am a student at XYZ University studying mental health counseling.”
- Be courteous and to the point.
- Identify the bill you would like to discuss and explain why you support or oppose this particular piece of legislation. Legislators like to know the nickname of the bill and not just the letter and number combination.
- Be as specific as possible (for example, is it the entire bill or just certain language in the bill that you support or oppose?). Reiterate the talking points you developed for each bill, and respectfully communicate them, leaving time for questions.
- If working in a group, designate 1-2 individuals to lead the discussion as you may only have 5 minutes to make your point.
- Keep in mind that local examples concerning the impact of legislation are very powerful. Think of how the legislation being discussed would impact you at an individual level. For example, would it make it harder for you to be reimbursed for your services? Would it ensure that consumers from your hometown get the kind of quality mental health services they desperately need? Would it create new opportunities for upcoming graduates or newly licensed counselors? This feedback is often what is desired during these discussions, so do not be afraid to weigh in!
- Let your legislators know if you agree or disagree on a particular vote. This feedback is important as it often takes several sessions for a bill to pass both the House and the Senate. They could be asked to vote on the same issue next year!
- Always thank them for their time.

How to Request a Conversation

- Circle the option called “waiting to see you.” Include where you are from, especially if you are a constituent. Also, include your cell phone number so they can reach you before you leave the building if they cannot see you immediately. Only



send one note in at a time to ensure that both legislators do not show up at the same time.

- Hand the slip to the doorkeeper and wait for a response. Sometimes it may take your legislator 10-15 minutes to come out. (They may be finishing up a call or conversation before coming out to talk to you.)
- If your legislator is not available or not in their seat, a page or doorkeeper will come back out and call your name. If your note does not come back out it means your legislator was there and will be out soon to talk to you.
- Sometimes a staff person will come out to speak to you if the legislator is occupied. Be polite and treat this staff person as you would the legislator — a lot of times the staff person is a friend, relative, daughter/son or spouse of the legislator.
- Be prepared and be patient. The Capitol can be noisy and crowded, and you may feel jostled if the crowd that day is particularly large.

After the visit/event: Follow-Up

- Send a follow-up email or letter to reiterate what was discussed and again show your appreciation for a willingness to discuss your concerns.
- Watch for calls if you requested a visit – they will follow up with email/phone call!



My Advocacy Plan

My Legislators

Senator Name:
Committees they are on:

Representatives Name:
Committees they are on:

Name:
Committees they are on:

Other Legislators I may want to speak with:

Name: Chamber: Position:

Name: Chamber: Position:

Name: Chamber: Position:

Question for Exploration:	Answer:
What does advocacy mean for your state/national professional organization and what is the link to your role in advocacy?	
Defining your issue: What is your issue? What is the problem? What is your experience and evidence of the problem? What is a clear solution? What are the views of users or consumers? What does this mean to you?	
Who is your target audience for this issue? Who is in support? Who is in opposition? Is there a committee involved at this time? Or will there be?	



Create an elevator pitch:
 What is the problem?
 Why is it a problem?
 What is the solution?
 How do you know it will work?
 What is your ask?

Your message to legislators:

- Use your introduction
- Describe the issue
- Describe the solution
- Identify your ask of them

Log of contact:

Who I spoke with:	About what or which bill:	Outcome:	Thank you sent



ADDITIONAL STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE RESOURCES

The American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA): The leading national organization for licensed clinical mental health counselors. AMHCA strives to be the go-to organization for LCMHCs for education, advocacy, leadership and collaboration. [Advocacy - American Mental Health Counselors Association \(amhca.org\)](#)

The Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association (IMHCA): The Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association is a chapter of the American Mental Health Counselors Association. IMHCA is the only organization dedicated exclusively to meeting the professional needs of mental health counselors in Iowa. Its sole purpose is to promote the profession of mental health counseling and the needs of our clients. <https://imhca.net/legislative-news/>

Legislative News: The Iowa Mental Health Counselors Association follows and reports on new legislation and updates to current legislation affecting mental health counselors in Iowa.

American Counseling Association: The American Counseling Association is a not-for-profit, professional, and educational organization that is dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Founded in 1952, ACA is the world's largest association exclusively representing professional counselors in various practice settings. [American Counseling Association | A professional home for counselors](#)

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT): The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) is the professional association for the field of marriage and family therapy. They represent the professional interests of more than 50,000 marriage and family therapists throughout the United States, Canada and abroad. [American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy \(aamft.org\)](#)

Find Your Legislator: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators>; Committee Assignments and Agenda pages: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/committees>

Contact your Senator: (515) 281-3371
Contact your Representative: (515) 281-3221
Governor's Office: (515) 281-5211
LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE (515) 281-5129

Legislative Document Research Page: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/publications/search>

The Bureau of Professional Licensure: The Bureau of Professional Licensure is a Bureau within the Iowa Department of Public Health with 19 licensure boards regulating 39 professions. The mission of the professional boards is to protect the public health, safety and welfare by licensing qualified individuals and enforcing Iowa's statutes and administrative rules fairly and consistently. <https://ibplicense.iowa.gov>

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services: <https://www.cms.gov/>



Counseling compact: <https://counselingcompact.org/tool-kit/>

Appointments to State Boards and Commissions – The Governor's Appointment Secretary (515) 281-5211 To find openings on state or local boards and commissions, or to apply for one, go to: <https://talentbank.iowa.gov/>.

Scheduling Capitol Tours: (515) 281-5591

CITIZEN COMPLAINTS (OFFICE OF THE CITIZEN AIDE) (515) 281-3592 OR (888) 426-6283

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS ON LEGISLATIVE WEBSITE (515) 281-6506

LONG TERM CARE/MEDICAID MANAGED CARE COMPLAINTS (866) 236-1430



ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Participation in Making Iowa Laws](#)
2. [How an Idea Becomes a law](#)
3. [Organization of the General Assembly](#)
4. [Complex and Parking Maps](#)



Participation in Making Iowa Laws

The state Senator and state Representative from each district are elected to represent constituent interests when making the laws of Iowa. Citizens can take part in the decisions made by those elected officials. For locating constituent Senators and Representatives, or to learn more about the Iowa Legislature, contact the Legislative Information Office (LIO).

Director Legislative Services Agency

Tim McDermott

Phone: 515.281.3566

Fax: 515.281.8027

Division Director Legislative Information Office

Craig Cronbaugh

Phone: 515.281.8817

Fax: 515.281.8027

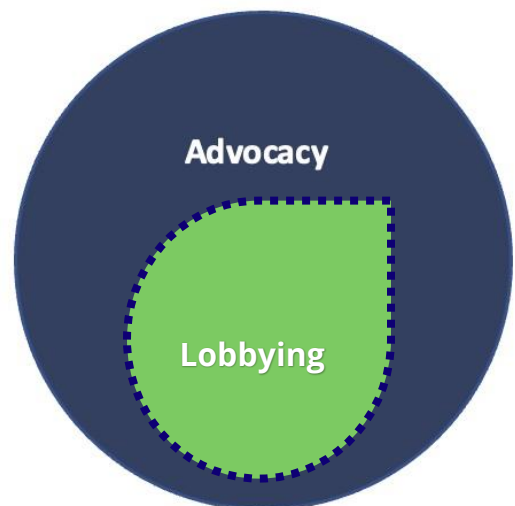
Legislative Services Agency Iowa State Capitol, Des Moines, Iowa 50319

E-mail: lioinfo@legis.iowa.gov

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY?

All lobbying is advocacy, but not all advocacy is lobbying. The main difference between lobbying and advocacy is that lobbying indicates an opinion about specific legislative change (e.g., particular changes to specific laws). Lobbying is always allowed as a private citizen, but researchers should be cautious about using resources (e.g., paid time, grant funded travel) to lobby whilst in a professional capacity. This restriction is related to what resources are used for lobbying – thus the amount of time used is the focus of any required reporting for tax-exempt organizations.

Government funding is strictly prohibited from being used for lobbying; though many researchers receive blended funding that is less explicitly restrictive. In short, if you're worried: minimize the use of organizational resources for lobbying.





Advocating:

- Contact Senators during the legislative session at the Capitol by calling the Senate Switchboard at 515-281-3371, or address mail to the Iowa Senate, State Capitol, Des Moines, IA 50319.
- Contact Representatives during the session at the Capitol by calling the House Switchboard at 515-281-3221, or address mail to the Iowa House of Representatives, State Capitol, Des Moines, IA 50319. The Iowa General Assembly website lists e-mail addresses of all legislators or call the LIO.
- Legislators may also be contacted directly (call the LIO, check listings on the Iowa General Assembly web site, or use the Official Directory of the Legislature, a printed book you may obtain from the information desk at The Capitol). The Iowa Constitution requires the legislative sessions of each General Assembly to convene yearly on the second Monday in January. Adjournment usually comes at the end of April. During the legislative session, both the Senate and House have operators on duty to take phone calls and relay messages to legislators. Any citizen visiting the Capitol can arrange to meet with legislators.
- Observe the session. The debates may be viewed from galleries in the Senate and House chambers. The public may attend committee meetings and public hearings on legislation. Live audio of the Senate and House debates is available on the Iowa General Assembly website.

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/chambers>



How an Idea Becomes a Law in Iowa

Ideas for bills can come from anyone and anyone can write a bill. However, only legislators, the Governor, or a state agency can introduce it. If you have an idea for a bill, you need to get one of these people to sponsor (introduce) it.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

STEP 1. REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Once a bill is introduced, it is referred to a standing committee in the House or Senate. The House Majority Leader makes these assignments in the House; the President of the Senate does it in the Senate.

STEP 2. SUBCOMMITTEE REVIEW The committee chair assigns the bill to a subcommittee (usually three legislators). The subcommittee holds an open meeting in which the public, lobbyists, and others can express their views about the bill and ask for changes. These meetings are often informal, but on bigger issues, the subcommittee may do formal hearings that require the public to sign up to speak. Subcommittee schedules are posted daily on the website legis.iowa.gov. A bill's chance for survival is often determined at this early level.

STEP 3. COMMITTEE ACTION If the majority of the subcommittee members approve the bill, it can move on to the full committee for action. The committee can amend the bill or pass it with no changes. If the committee does not act on a bill, it will not move on to the next level (the bill "dies" in committee).

STEP 4. DEBATE Once a bill passes out of committee, it is placed on the Calendar. The House Majority Leader and President of the Senate decide which bills will be debated each day and place them on a smaller calendar, called the Daily Debate Calendar. Bill sponsors may have to lobby their leaders to get a bill brought up for debate. Bills can be amended at this point in time. When debate on a bill is finished, the bill's title is read aloud to the chamber for the third

There are 3 types of bills

INDIVIDUALLY SPONSORED BILLS

A legislator or group of legislators requests these bills and their names are listed as sponsors. They are House File (HF) or Senate File (SF).

STUDY BILLS

Only committee chairs can request these bills. They do not have a legislative sponsor (the committee is the sponsor if action is taken). Bills requested by the Governor's Office and state agencies also come out in the form of a study bill. They are either Senate Study Bill (SSB) or House Study Bill (HSB).

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions do not change law; they express the thoughts of the Legislature on a topic. Sometimes they urge Congress to take action or recognize a group or person.





and final time. If a constitutional majority (at least 26 Senators and 51 Representatives) votes to pass the bill,

it moves to the other chamber (step 5). If fewer legislators than a constitutional majority vote to pass the bill, the bill fails.

STEP 5. REFERRAL TO OTHER CHAMBER After the House or Senate passes a bill, it is referred to the other chamber where it usually follows the same route to committee and floor action (Steps 1-4). The chamber may approve the bill as is, reject it, ignore it, or change it. Second Passage Amendments adopted by the chamber of origin are incorporated in the bill before it is sent to the other chamber.

STEP 6. FINAL ACTIONS There are several paths a bill may follow after it makes its way through both chambers. A bill introduced in the Senate will retain its original Senate number as it travels through the House and a bill introduced in the House will retain its original House number as it travels through the Senate. If the second chamber makes no

changes to the bill, it goes to the Governor. If changes are made, the bill goes back to the original chamber for approval. Lawmakers can approve the bill as changed (sending it to the Governor), reject the changes (starting the process to send it to conference committee where a group of legislators work out the differences), or make additional changes (which sends the bill back to the second chamber). This last action is often called a “bouncing bill” because it bounces between chambers until it is acceptable to both. If both chambers cannot agree with each other, the bill can either be tabled (dies) or sent to a conference

committee. Conference committee members work out differences and then draft a report that becomes the new bill. Legislators can only vote for or against it – they cannot amend it.

STEP 7. GOVERNOR'S ACTION After both the House and Senate have approved a bill in identical form, it is sent to the Governor. If the Governor approves of the legislation, she will sign it and it becomes law. If the Governor opposes the bill, she can veto it (it does not become law). In addition, if the bill is a budget bill (spends money), the Governor is allowed to veto parts of a bill, while signing other parts into law. This is called a line-item veto and it is only allowed for budget bills.

STEP 8. OVERRIDING A VETO If the Governor vetoes a bill, the Legislature may override the veto. This requires a 2/3 vote and is something almost never done in Iowa

Vocabulary

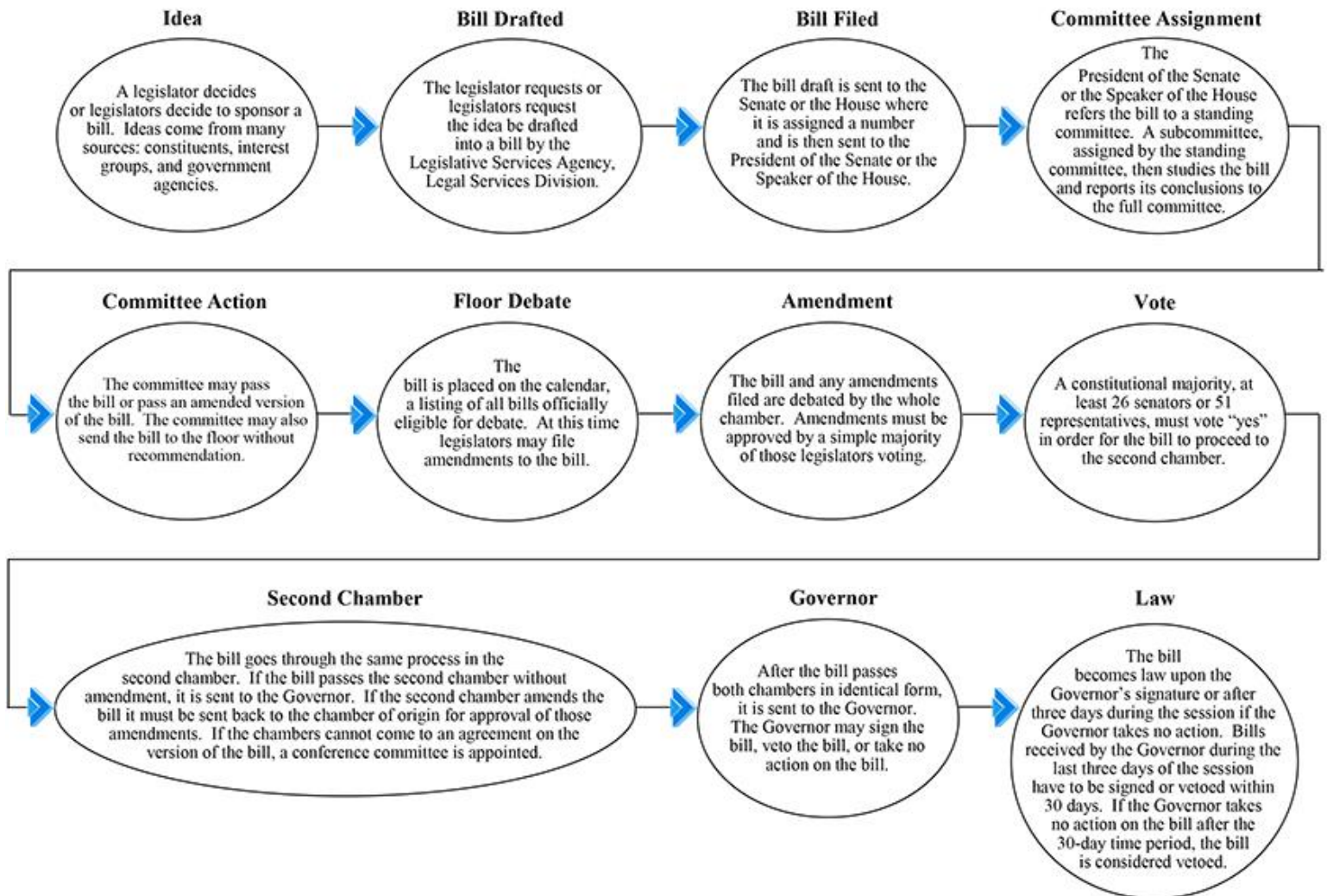
Conference committee Conference committees are composed of House members representing both the majority and minority parties and both sides of the issue in dispute. The 10 members of a conference committee are appointed by the Senate Majority Leader and the Speaker of the House to study the points of disagreement between the chambers in an attempt to reach a compromise.

If an agreement is reached, it is presented to both chambers in a report that contains the compromise version of the bill. The report cannot be amended by either chamber. If the report is rejected by either chamber, a second conference committee may be appointed. If no agreement is reached, the bill fails.



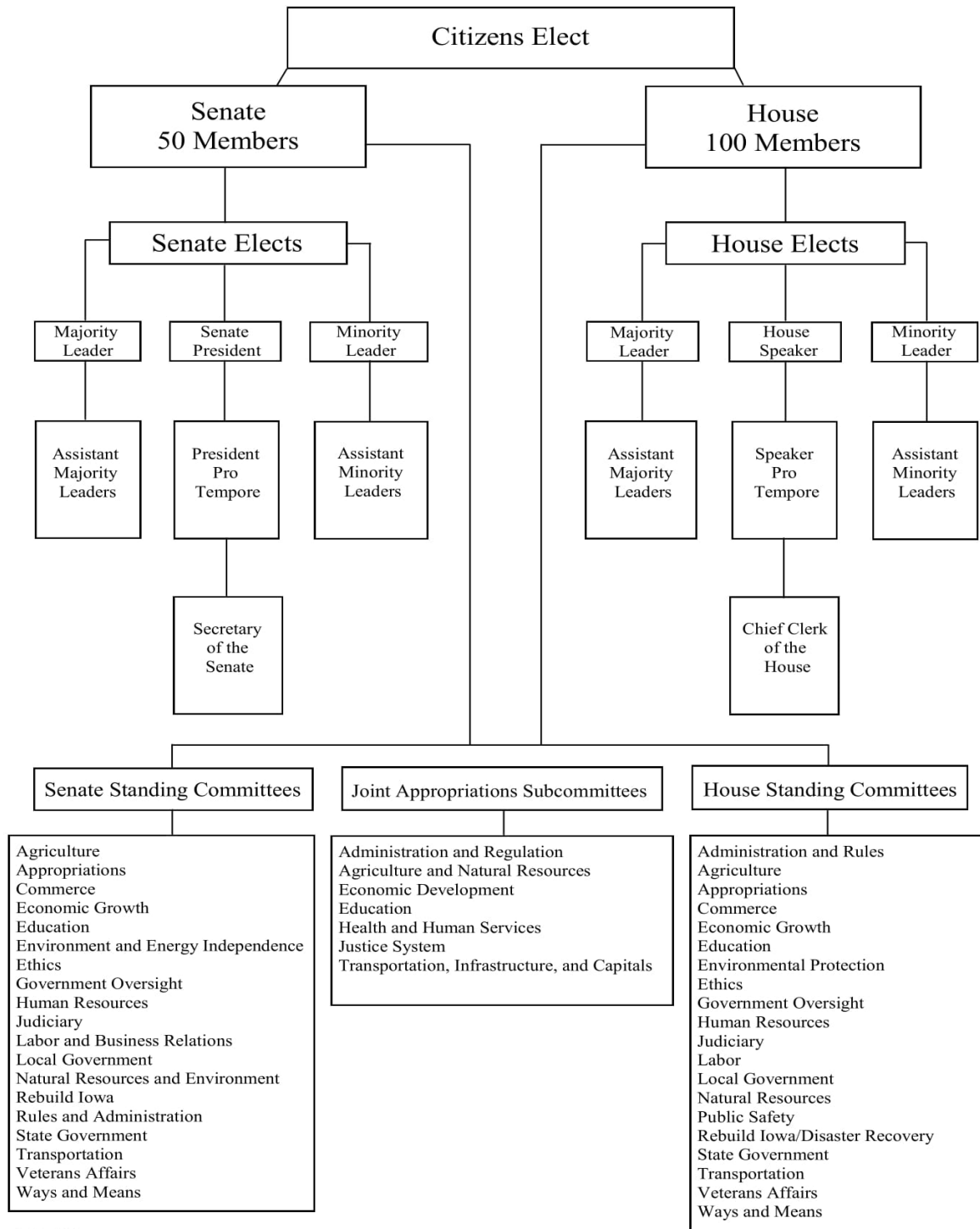
How an idea becomes a law in Iowa

How An Idea Becomes a Law





Organization of the Iowa General Assembly



1/07/10
 Legislative Information Office – Room G16
 Iowa State Capitol
 Iowa General Assembly web site: www.legis.iowa.gov

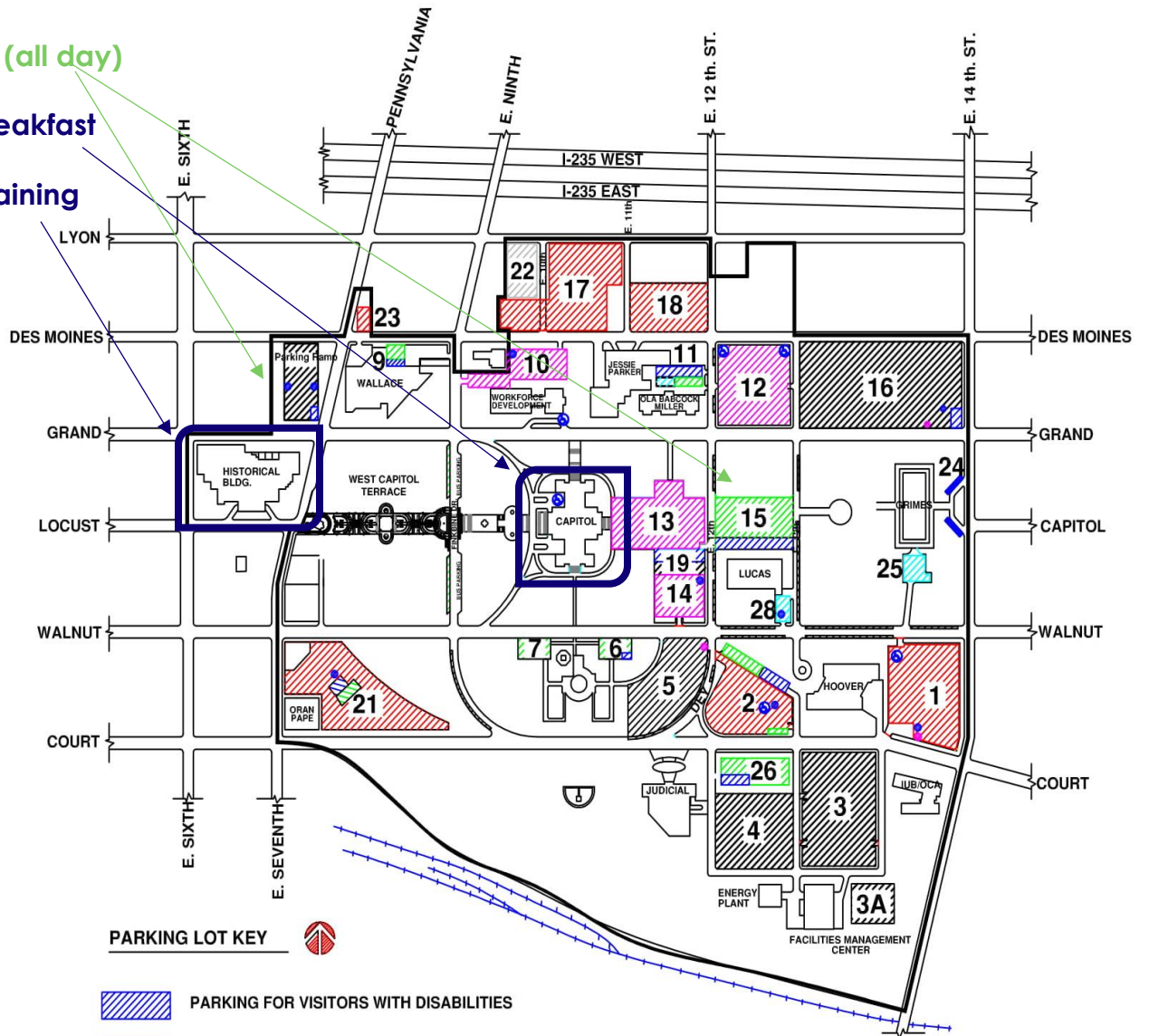


Iowa Capitol Complex

Parking options (all day)

7am – 9AM - Breakfast

9am- 12pm - Training



PARKING LOT KEY

- PARKING FOR VISITORS WITH DISABILITIES
- VISITOR PARKING
- RESERVED / SERVICE PARKING
- CONTRACTOR PARKING
- EMPLOYEE ONLY
- RESERVED EMPLOYEE
- EMPLOYEE AND VISITOR PARKING
- STREET PARKING (PLEASE OBSERVE POSTED HOURS FOR NO PARKING)
- CARPOOL/RIDESHARE VEHICLE SPACES
- MOTORCYCLE SPACES
- PARKING FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

ADDITIONAL ACCESSIBLE PARKING IS ALSO LOCATED IN EMPLOYEE AND VISITOR LOTS.
UPDATED SEPTEMBER 8, 2017