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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Paula Feltner, ISPA Lobbyist



The 86th General Assembly gavelled in on January 12th. The make-up of the Legislature is very similar to the last General Assembly. The 50-seat Senate will have 26 Democrats and 24 Republicans, the same split seen the last four years. The Republicans will have a 56–43 advantage 100-seat House. With 21 new people in the legislature, it is important for us and for members of the Iowa State Police Association (ISPA) to establish good working relationships with these legislators. Sign up for newsletters and attend forums. Our success as an organization will depend on it.

There are very few changes in leadership in either chamber. The Senate Democrats chose Mike Gronstal (D-Council Bluffs) as Majority Leader. Pam Jochum (D-Dubuque) was re-elected President of the Senate. Steve

Sodders (D-State Center) was re-elected Senate President Pro Tempore. Joe Bolkcom (D-Iowa City) was elected Majority Whip. Senators Mary Jo Wilhelm of Cresco, Amanda Ragan of Mason City, Matt McCoy of Des Moines and Bill Dotzler of Waterloo were elected Assistant Majority Leaders.

Senate Republican Leader Bill Dix (R-Shell Rock) and Senate Republican Whip Jack Whitver (R-Ankeny) were unanimously reelected to their positions. Senate Republicans also elected five assistant leaders for the 2014 legislative session: Randy Feenstra (R-Hull), Rick Bertrand (R-Sioux City), Dan Zumbach (R-Ryan), Tim Kapucian (R-Keystone) and Charles Schneider (R-West Des Moines).

For House Republicans, Kraig Paulsen (R-Hiawatha) was selected to continue in the role of the Speaker of the House. Linda Upmeyer (R-Clear Lake) was re-elected as the House Majority Leader. Matt Windschitl, (R-Missouri Valley), was chosen as the Speaker Pro Tem. Chris Hagenow, (R-Windsor Heights), was re-elected as the House majority Whip. House Majority Assistant Leaders are: Reps. Lee Hein of Monticello, Walt Rogers of Cedar Falls, Jarad Klein of Keota and Joel Fry from Osceola.

House Democrats once again chose Mark Smith (D-Marshalltown) to be Minority Leader and Ako Abdul-Samad from Des Moines, Mary Gaskill of Ottumwa, Todd Prichard of Charles City and Sharon Steckman of Mason City to be Assistant Leaders for the caucus.

Subcommittee meetings, education reform, gas tax and lots of bill introductions describe the third week of the session. Most of attention was given to the fuel tax issue.

In terms of our issues, there were a lot of bills on automatic traffic system enforcement systems, gun bills, license plates and penalties for different crimes. Bills that made it past the first “funnel” of March 5th were:

- Senate File 378, ISPA Resolution, a bill for an act relating to reimbursement of defense costs of peace officers and corrections officers.
- A few gun bills in Senate File 427, a bill for an act relating to the making, transferring and possession of firearms and suppressors.
- Senate File 425 and House File 527, a bill for an act relating to the possession, manufacture, acquisition and sale of firearms and suppressors.
- Senate File 403, a bill for an act relating to expenditures of moneys from the E911 emergency communications fund.
Senate File 391, a bill for an act relating to the use of electronic communication devices while driving as a primary offense.
- Senate File 267, Police/Fire Peer Counseling. Does not allow a police peer group counselor to disclose confidential communications except where the officer has given consent or if the counselor was the original responding officer.
- Senate File 219, a bill for an act relating to the possession of marijuana and providing a simple misdemeanor for possession of less than five grams.
- Senate File 188, 411 APPROPRIATIONS. Appropriates \$9.8 million in FY15 for the Statewide Police and Fire Retirement System (411). Establishes a standing appropriation of 3.79 percent for the fund.
- Senate File 181, a bill for an act to provide that peace officers and retired peace officers qualify as classroom driver education instructors.
Senate File 150 and HF 373, a bill for an act increasing the criminal penalty for a sexually violent predator who escapes or attempts to escape from custody.
- House File 546. A bill for an act relating to possessing contraband or electronic contraband at community-based correctional facilities.
House File 447, a bill for an act requiring wireless communications service providers to provide call locations in circumstances of emergency, making penalties applicable and including effective date provisions.

A bill that did not get through the funnel was House File 292, a bill for an act requiring certain peace officers and school security personnel to wear a body camera.

This is a sampling of the many bills of interest to our members. Sign up for email notification and newsletters on the ISPA website at http://www.ispaonline.com/en/newsletters/mailling_list/.

If you have any questions about the current legislative session or the newsletters, please contact us or a board member. We will be posting a thorough status of files at the end of session. Thank you for the opportunity to represent you in another legislative session!