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## Legislative Update February 10, 2012

### EDUCATION

#### Education Reform

#### HSB 517 (Undecided)

The ed reform policy bill did not make much progress this week. The Governor's Education Appropriation bill, SSB 3145, was officially introduced in the Senate. The Governor's bill appropriates \$17 million for the reform initiatives. The bill reads as follows:

"For implementation of Senate Study Bill 3009 or House Study Bill 517 if either bill is enacted by the 84th General Assembly, 2012 Regular Session." \$17,000,000

We expect ed reform and ed appropriations to be around until the very end of session. The bills are certainly linked together. It is very difficult, at this point, to determine what will end up in the final bill. United Ways of Iowa will continue to lobby for our priority: a standard comprehensive statewide measure for school readiness.

#### College Enrollment

#### SF 2052 (For)

The bill increases the maximum annual grant amount a student may be awarded under the minority academic grants for economic success program from \$3,500 to \$5,000; directs the state board of regents to establish college-possible programs for students in grade five and a college go center program; and directs Iowa State University to establish the science bound program, a precollegiate program that is designed to increase the number of ethnically diverse Iowa students who pursue degrees in agriculture, science, technology, engineering, or mathematics, and award

### Legislative Website

The legislative website is a great resource. Daily schedules, live audio, "Find your Legislator" and everything you wanted to know about the General Assembly is on this site. Go to [www.legis.iowa.gov](http://www.legis.iowa.gov).

### Forums

Legislators host forums in their districts throughout the session to update their constituents on the issues and gather input from their constituents on what is important to them. See the links below for forum schedules for your elected officials.

[Senate Republican Forums](#)

[Senate Democrat Forums](#)

[House Democrat Forums](#)

[House Republican Forums](#)

(select legislator's name, then forum schedule)

successful science bound program participants full-tuition scholarships. The bill is currently in the Appropriation Committee. Senator Jack Hatch (D-Des Moines) is subcommittee chair.

## **INCOME**

### **Senate will Vote on EITC Tuesday**

#### **SSB 3116 (For)**

The Senate has scheduled a floor vote on the EITC bill. The vote will be Tuesday, February 14th. Senator Joe Bolckom (D-Iowa City) will be the floor manager.

The bill seeks to increase the credit to 13 percent. Currently, the credit is equal to 7 percent of the amount of a taxpayer's federal earned income tax credit. The bill applies retroactively to January 1, 2012.

### **ACTION ITEM: VITA and EITC**

Local United Way staff, volunteers and community partners who are engaged in Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites are encouraged to **email a list of VITA sites in your area to your local legislators** and any other public officials in your community. This information may be helpful to your legislator to include in their newsletter or during forums to their constituents. It also helps promote the great work going on in your community to your elected officials.

### **Community College Training Legislation**

#### **SF 2024 (For)**

An Appropriation Subcommittee on SF 2024 will be held on Monday (2/3) at 3:00 p.m. This bill previously passed the Senate Education Committee.

This bill establishes a skilled workforce shortage tuition grant program to be administered by the College Student Aid Commission. Attempts to obtain a separate line item for GED attainment have not yet been successful.

## **HEALTH**

### **Mental Health Restructuring Update**

The mental health subcommittee passed a draft bill out of subcommittee on Thursday morning. The Legislature typically only passes draft bills when it can't put together all the pieces for a formal bill but wants to keep the issue moving forward.

There is opposition to the current reform proposal. There is also a large divergence of opinion on the amount of funding restructuring requires. The goal of the bill is to create multi county regions across the state that will provide high quality services.

[Click here](#) for an updated values statewide from United Way based on the current mental health reform proposal.

### **DHS Town Hall Meetings on Mental Health**

DHS will be conducting a series of town hall meetings across the state to gather more public comment on the proposal.

- Clear Lake - February 10 from 11:00 - 12:30 p.m. at the Opportunity Village; 1200 N. 9th Street W
- Clinton - February 24 from 11 - 1:30, Clinton Community College, Technology Center Room 10, located at 1915 Manufacturing Drive.

For more information on mental health reform from the DHS perspective, [click here](#).

### **Food Purchasing Bill**

#### **SSB 3095 (For)**

A subcommittee was held last week on SSB 3095, a bill that provides for charitable food donations to food banks and emergency feeding organizations in Iowa. No formal action was taken at the subcommittee.

The program will be administered by the Department of Human Services.

The bill provides a mechanism for general fund appropriations to DHS in order to support several programs managed by an association representing Iowa food banks. The programs include the purchase of food, the improvement of food storage and distribution infrastructure, and instruction regarding nutrition and diet. The bill also establishes a tax credit for owners of ag land that produce food and donate the food to food banks.

### **Hot Lunch Challenge Campaign**

#### **HF 2093 (For)**

This bill directs the Iowa Department of Education to initiate an Iowa hot lunch challenge campaign utilizing social media and an internet site.

The campaign is to be designed to empower students, parents, schools, health professionals, community organizations, businesses, the faith community, and media by providing food and nutrition information. The information would encourage their efforts to work toward the goals of reducing childhood obesity and childhood hunger in this state by promoting healthy eating and improving access to healthy foods; making the hot lunch and other school nutrition programs in this state the best in the nation; leveraging federal resources and food assistance programs to improve access to healthy food and beverage options for children; and improving school nutrition and the educational environment by increasing consumption of healthy food and beverage items through various means. A subcommittee was appointed, with Rep. Peter Cownie (R-West Des Moines) as Chair. No date has been set yet for a subcommittee hearing.

## **NONPROFIT SUPPORT**

**Non-Profit Reform****[HSB 559](#) (Undecided)**

This bill passed the House Judiciary Committee on Thursday (2/9). It will be eligible for debate by the full House.

The Iowa State Bar Association Nonprofit Corporations Committee proposed amendments to the Revised Iowa Nonprofit Corporation Act. The 15-page update is based on the Model Nonprofit Corporation Act, Third Edition.

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