



Representative Cindy Golding

House District 83

Under the Golden Dome #14

Dear Friends,

The end of session is looming before us. There is one legislative item that must be passed by the General Assembly each year – passage of a state budget. Last week I shared the proposals from the House, Senate, and Governor (see below). House Republicans have done our part. We’re now waiting for the Senate to provide their budget details.

It may be hard for you to keep up with bills you care about as the numbers change from study bills to House or Senate files. Many policy bills that we passed earlier in the session have now been assigned to Ways & Means or Appropriations committees. Bills through the House process have been sent to the Senate. If amended, they may have a new number and must be voted through the House or Senate again. You can click links to each bill referenced in this newsletter.

My commitment to you that I will read every bill before voting has been an enormous task. Several have come before us with “surprises” in the amendments sent back from the Senate. It’s also challenging for the public to know what is REALLY happening as the news generally paints an inaccurate (lopsided) picture. If you are surprised by my vote on any bill, please drop me a note.

	FY 2024 Governor After Realignment	FY 2024 Senate	FY 2024 House
Administration & Regulation	\$69,480,223	?	\$70,488,763
Agriculture & Natural Resources	\$41,773,227	?	\$43,544,227
Economic Development	\$41,188,399	?	\$42,113,893
Education	\$978,788,573	?	\$984,921,856
Health & Human Services	\$2,108,568,679	?	\$2,135,383,594
Judicial Branch & Justice Systems	\$874,755,753	?	\$885,843,753
State Aid to Schools & Standing Appropriations	\$4,371,992,932	?	\$4,416,801,866
TOTAL	\$8,486,547,786	\$8,486,547,786	\$8,579,097,952

Protecting Our Small Towns and Rural Communities

SF516 – Open Spaces Bill – sent to an interim Study committee

- This bill related to the maintenance, protection, and acquisition of Iowa’s open space properties and recreational trails.

*I received more communication on this bill than any other this session. As a result, I voted **NO**, giving all stake holders time to consider options.*

SF455 – Top Soil Bill – set aside

- This bill would stop cities and counties from adopting regulations for top soil and storm water run-off at construction sites that are more restrictive than the DNR requirements.

*I voted **NO** after visiting with several of our small towns and many constituents. We have worked hard for years to improve water quality. Top soil and storm water run-off are significant parts of that picture. Each community has unique challenges so this should be left to local control.*

Senate File 494 – Accountability in Iowa’s Welfare Programs - waiting Governor’s signature

- This bill came from the Senate and passed the House today. It has been significantly amended throughout the process as we sought feedback from Iowans. Here are the details:
 - Requires applicants to complete an identity authentication process prior to receiving benefits.
 - Requires assets to be reviewed for eligibility for SNAP (formerly Food Stamps).
 - Sets liquid asset (cash & savings) limits - does NOT include 401K account
 - Home & Household items like clothes or TVs don’t count toward assets.
 - To be clear, this only applies to SNAP, not to Medicaid.
 - Requires the state to check all income, employment, and financial institutions to ensure applicants for welfare programs meet eligibility criteria for those programs.
 - Makes cooperation with child support services a condition of eligibility for Medicaid.
- **Opponents** of this legislation say there is no fraud in the system. They chose to ignore the fact that Iowa has been [penalized \\$1.8 million](#) by the federal government for having an error rate of 3.2% higher than the national average. Additionally, in FY2022, the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals discovered 2,761 verified incidents of SNAP overpayment. This is another example of the media misrepresenting the facts.

This chart is a brief comparison showing Federal Eligibility limits more restrictive than Iowa.

Eligibility Test	Federal Limit	Iowa Limit (SF 494)
Level of income allowed	130% of Federal Poverty level	160% of Federal Poverty level
Liquid Assets allowed	\$2,000/household \$3,000 if elderly or disabled	\$15,000
Autos allowed	1 car valued at \$4,650	1 st car- any value, 2 nd car – up to \$10,000

*I voted **YES** because I believe this provides help for those truly in need, and assistance for more Iowans than the Federal limits allow, while removing incentives for able-bodied, working age Iowans to remain on government assistance. Our House Republican budget includes more funding for the programs serving low-income Iowans and assistance for job placement programs. The media has, once again, created angst by distorting the story.*

House Study Bill 245 – Protecting the Iowa Caucuses

- This bill passed Ways & Means committee. Now must pass the full House then go to the Senate.
- There are 3 main pieces of the bill:
 - Requires participation in a precinct caucus to be in-person to protect Iowa's first in the nation status.
 - The New Hampshire Secretary of State said that if Iowa allows mail-in voting, essentially replacing the caucus system with a primary, they will move to jump Iowa in the presidential primary calendar.
 - Requires party declaration at least 70 days before the caucuses. This is to limit bad actors attempting to meddle in the opposing party's caucus.
 - Removes the state from the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC).
 - Several key states have left ERIC, making it a less effective tool in maintaining our voter rolls.
 - Iowa's Secretary of State has other tools available to maintain Iowa's voter registration list.

As promised, I continue to push for real election integrity. The Senate has stalled our bills for additional improvements to the voting process, just as they stalled our bills for land-owner protections.

House File 1 - Property Tax Bill – proposed

- The biggest thing we hear about from constituents is the need for property tax reform.
- House Republican plan provides real relief to Iowans and certainty to the taxpayer.
- HF1 passed the House Ways and Means committee with an amendment.
 - Caps annual property tax increases to 3% for residential and agricultural properties and 8% for commercial and industrial properties.
 - Increases transparency by requiring more notice to the taxpayers and moving all bond referendums to the general election date.
 - Reduces the \$5.40 levy by \$1 and has the state fund the difference. This will deliver more than \$200 million in immediate real estate tax relief to Iowans.

Yes, this is complicated. Your tax bill is controlled by your local school board, city, and county officials. The best way to influence your real estate tax bill is to get involved in your local government – run for city council, school board, or serve on a county commission.

Now for some fun stuff that happens during the week – between debates and agonizing hours of reading and crosschecking legislation with current code.

Have a wonderful weekend,

Cindy



Don shares the mission of ESGR
(Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve).



Introducing some of my grandkids to the House



DMACC Nursing Students at the Capitol.



Hawkeye Caucus Day



Bio-Medical Engineering for Orthopedic Surgeries



Learning about ALL the vaccines kids

Final Notes:

- Tune in to the Doug Wagner show on WMT 600. I'll be on Monday morning (4/17) at 8:15 AM to discuss the latest out of Des Moines.
- Become an engaged citizen! Joe and I are facilitating Patriot Academy's Biblical Citizenship in Modern America class beginning on April 20. The class is free, runs on Thursday evenings, and is being hosted by Radiant Church, Cedar Rapids. Send a TEXT to me 319-360-1028 to register or for more info.