

**IOWA PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**

***LEGISLATIVE UPDATE***

**Week 1: January 9-13**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The 2012 legislative session kicked off on Monday, January 9, 2012. Much of the week is filled with ceremonial process, including the Governor’s Condition of the State Address, the Chief Justice’s State of the Judiciary, and introductory committee meetings. Although several bills were introduced this week, not much activity takes place as legislators attend these events and other welcome back receptions.

Because it is the second session of the biennium, bills that were previously introduced in the first year may still be considered. Additionally, legislators are still able to introduce new legislation. Therefore, the number of bills eligible for consideration is significantly greater in 2012 than in 2011. Legislative leaders have indicated that they intend to adhere to session timelines and hopefully avoid a lengthy session like we saw in 2011. While adjournment is scheduled for April 17, 2012 (the 100th day), leaders expressed a desire to conclude their business prior to that time.

The 2012 legislative session includes a new Senator, Liz Mathis. Senator Mathis replaces Swati Dandekar, who was appointed to the Iowa Utilities Board during the fall. Many may remember Mathis as a former television news anchor in eastern Iowa. Today, she serves as Chief Information Officer for Four Oaks, a children’s resource agency. Senator Mathis will serve on the following Committees: Commerce, Economic Growth, Human Resources, Ways and Means and Economic Growth Budget Subcommittee.

***Governor’s Condition of the State Address***

On Tuesday, the Governor delivered his Condition of the State address to members of the General Assembly and the public. This address outlined his priorities for the upcoming legislative session and briefly described his budget goals for the year. Governor Branstad’s priorities included (1) job creation, (2) education reform, and (3) commercial and industrial property tax relief.

The Governor also proposed and increase in general fund spending by $230 million dollars over the current fiscal year. Much of this additional spending would be devoted to education and human services, which is the department responsible for implementing mental health reform.

***Gas Tax***

Despite bi-partisan legislative pressure to increase the State’s gas tax, Governor Branstad has stated that he will not propose such an increase this year. Instead, he has asked the Department of Transportation to identify $40-$60 million in savings that can be used toward road infrastructure. However, he will not rule out signing such an increase into law if passed by the legislature.

**LEGISLATION**

**HF 2021 – Military Income Tax Exemption**

HF 2021 would exempt certain military active duty and other pay from Iowa State income taxes.

**SF 2009 – EMS Training**

Transfers $750,000 of the appropriation for tobacco use prevention for EMS training in towns under 9,000.

**SF 2011 - Interoperable Communications Board**

Adds a member who is an emergency manager to the Interoperable Communications System Board for a three-year term. Requires the Governor to solicit recommendations from various professional and volunteer organizations.

**SF 2012 – Emergency Service Charges**

Allows townships to charge for the provision of fire and emergency services, with charges for fire protection going to the property owner and charges for emergency services going to the recipient. Limits the service charge to no more than the cost of the service. Allows unpaid fire protection charges to be a lien against the property and for the civil collection of unpaid EMS charges after 6 months.

**SF 2013 – Public Safety Communications**

Requires public and private safety agencies to convey needs and concerns in regards to public safety communications to the joint E911 Board (or alternative entity) and for the Board to serve as a single-point contact for such concerns.

**SF 2015 – Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Credit**

Creates an income tax credit for volunteer fire fighters and EMS workers. Sets the credit at $500 and caps the aggregate credit at $60 million. Allows the credit to be taken for only one position and requires the credit to be prorated if the volunteer serves less than a year in the position.

**SF 2016 – Public Safety Employee Child Tuition Credit**

Requires the state universities and the community colleges to waive tuition and fees for an undergraduate who is the child of a public safety employee who was killed in the line of duty. Requires that the student be a resident of Iowa and under 26, or if a veteran, under 30, and to not be a convicted felon. Allows the child of a public safety employee who meets these conditions to continue coverage under the applicable group health plan.

**HSB 514 – Arresting Material Witness**

Allows a law enforcement officer who has probable cause that a material witness will not appear for deposition, proceeding, hearing or trial to arrest the person as a material witness.