

NSP OPINIONS

Legislature needs no role in family gender decisions

The mom shook her exasperated head as if she'd heard it many times before. I encountered her a month or so ago, rummaging a rack at Burlington Coat Factory. She was trying to find something warm for the adolescent girl at her side. The teenage girl rejected each frilly option. No to pink. Absolutely no to the tasseled draw strings. "Give it up, mom," grumbled an adult daughter, nearby. "I told you, you shoulda had all boys."



ON THE RECORD

by Mark Ridolfi

Now, coats are the least of mom's worries. Iowa lawmakers passed bills that say boys are boys, girls are girls; anyone thinking differently is itching for prosecution. Funny how lawmakers can be so certain. Our American culture fiddles endlessly with gender distinctions that seemed unquestionable at one time. Girls' wrestling? Ick. Who'd want to do that? Boys' and girls' bikes? That bar between the legs now seems a nonsensical distinction.

At legislative forums, I listened as Sen. Chris Cournoyer and Rep. Bobby Kaufmann seemed repulsed when mentioning the gender-altering medications and surgeries some parents sought for their Iowa kids. Makes me queasy, too.

I grew up adhering to Biblical references written millennia ago by men based on their understanding at that time. These same men insisted women have few roles in their church. We now know that to be sexist hogwash. Nary a church in America could open doors on Sunday without women.

Meanwhile, God's creation continually tells me something different. I encounter folks every day whose apparel, mannerisms and visage simply ignore gender distinction. I see beautiful, strong young people confidently untethering those ancient norms.

I also see adolescents who consider gender as one of many boundaries they are eager to push.

At a Q&A forum March 11 in Walcott, Kaufmann worried a boundary-pushing teenager might persuade parents to make decisions all regret later. Me, too.

Seems to me that's a call for more, not less, access to help, so families can make informed decisions.

Kaufmann likened it to juvenile tobacco or alcohol use, both outlawed by the state regardless of parental permission. He lost me on that one. Sexuality and gender aren't mind- and body-altering substances peddled for profit to adults and kids.

Gender isn't a distinction bestowed by others. Lucky for me, I guess, it's a distinction with which I never struggled. But I've known of some who do. None were fixated on excelling in one of a few gender-distinct sports, or barging into the wrong restrooms. Those are the reasons I heard legislators give for inserting themselves into this family decision.

Safer restrooms

No kid should feel uncomfortable in a school restroom. Schools struggled for decades with kids' behavior in communal restrooms.

So, eliminate big, communal restrooms.

Instead, design restrooms as banks of private stalls directly accessible from a hallway. Put the sinks, towels and soap dispensers on the other side of the hall.

Schools can stop worrying about gender, vaping or the other stuff that goes on in communal restrooms.

As for athletics, I don't have an answer. I can't imagine any parent who would allow gender transformation solely to give their kid a few years of athletic excellence. To me, equity in public school athletic competition is not a big enough problem for Iowa legislators to inflict themselves into this family issue.

Gender and sexuality become vices only when legislators turn human choices into felonies and misdemeanors.

Iowa's new gender laws are aimed at people who are not hurting anyone. They seemed to be aimed at people who are hurting.

That little girl at the coat store wasn't waging culture war. She just didn't want a girly coat. And she had family around her to help.

If her questions get tougher, she'll be in big trouble in Iowa. So will parents.

God doesn't make mistakes. I believe God makes perfection, regardless of what Iowa lawmakers call it.

Contact NSP managing editor Mark Ridolfi at mrldolfi@northscottpress.com, or 563-285-8111.

DIRECTOR DISTRICTS

Trust counties to make their own best decisions

The headline in the March 15 issue of the *Monticello (IA) Express* caught my eye: "City council wards abolished after special election." On March 7, voters in the eastern Iowa city of 4,045 residents voted 139-122 to end their longstanding wards and elect all members of the city council "at large."

The item was of interest because the Iowa Legislature is expected to soon require director districts for election of county supervisors. The action seems prompted, at least in part, by Scott County board members earlier this year wanting to fill a vacancy on the board with someone from Davenport.



Impressions

by Bill Tubbs

Earlier this year, they did exactly that. Rita Rawson, from Davenport, was appointed to fill the vacancy created when Tony Knobbe became county treasurer.

Officials from decades ago, when the concern was whether rural residents would have representation, would find it peculiar that they were looking for someone from Davenport – because the county board majority was perennially from Davenport and Bettendorf.

Farmer Robert Petersen from Walcott was the rural area's only supervisor, and then for several years, LeClaire businessman Otto Ewoldt.

In more recent years, this changed. The rural areas, i.e. territory outside Davenport and Bettendorf, since 2016 have been represented on the five-member board by Diane Holst and Tony Knobbe of rural Davenport, Brinson Kinzer of Blue Grass, John Maxwell of Donahue, and Ross Paustian of Walcott.

Representing everyone

All were elected "at large," i.e. with majorities in county-wide votes. Thus the suggestion that the vacancy be filled by someone in Davenport seemed reasonable – even though if you're a resident of unincorporated Scott County, the board of supervisors is your only government (unlike those in cities who also have an elected city council).

The topic of wards, or director districts, has come up just a few times in my 52 years, but never seriously enough to effect change.

The city of Eldridge talked about wards in 1977 after a "town hall" citizen forum. Arguments were made both ways, but nothing was done. Voters elected

Arguments can be made for and against precincts, wards and director districts, but those decisions are best made by the people closest to the action.

candidates they believed were most qualified, no matter where they lived. And they were there to serve ALL the citizens, not just one precinct or neighborhood.

In the early 1990s, four of five Eldridge City Council members (Butch Blanche, Bill Geisler, Larry Syring, Rob White) and Mayor Brian Roesler lived in the same neighborhood. This was not a problem. It was an effective, progressive council.

Eleven years ago, there was not one person on the seven-member North Scott School Board who lived in Eldridge. Any perceived lack of representation was corrected at the polls in September 2013 when all three newly elected board members – Reid Blanche, Nick Hansel and Donn Wilmott – were from Eldridge.

A state law was not needed to impose wards or districts to achieve the reshuffling.

'Home rule' upside down

In 1972, my first full year at *The NSP*, the Iowa Legislature, under the pragmatic and visionary leadership of Republican Gov. Robert D. Ray, adopted "home rule" for cities and counties, giving them "authority to determine their own local affairs and government in a manner which is not inconsistent with state statute."

The state did dictate a maximum tax levy, but most decisions were wisely left to boards of supervisors and city councils – the ones closest to the people.

Home rule was good for cities and counties, but inch by inch state lawmakers have been chipping away. The desire to dictate how local governments choose their leaders is just the latest example.

Arguments can be made for and against precincts, wards and director districts, but those decisions are best made by the people closest to the action. Lawmakers need to trust the voters in towns like Monticello and elsewhere to make the decisions that are best for their own communities.

'Let 'em play' a disservice to game

Play-by-play announcers, as skilled as they are at their craft, do harm to the game of basketball when they praise refs for "letting 'em play" when the game is overly physical.

Basketball is a game of skill, which cannot be performed properly when an opponent is grabbing your arm, pushing you from behind, or tripping you. Those grabs, pushes and trips should be called!

Bill Bradley, the former NBA star with the New York Knicks and then a U.S. senator from New Jersey, put it this way: "Basketball should look more like ballet than sumo wrestling." Hint, hint.

Early outs

Our teams – Iowa State, Iowa and Drake – made the NCAA tournaments, but with the exception of the Iowa women, were gone in the first round. We'll all be cheering for Lisa Bluder's Hawkeyes to make the Final Four!

As poorly as my ISU men played in the NCAA tournament, you wouldn't recognize them as the team that beat NCAA tournament teams Baylor three times, TCU twice, Texas, Kansas State and Kansas. Two of those teams, Texas and K-State, made the Sweet Sixteen.

A face in the crowd

The Drake men had Sweet Sixteen team Miami on the ropes for 38 of the game's 40 minutes. That's how it often goes. The game did provide a "face in the crowd" moment for North Scott 1992 graduate Ashley Crow DeVries. A screen shot is at right.

Ashley is the daughter of Warren and Deb Nicholson, and wife of Drake coach Darian DeVries. They met at UNI and were married in April 1998 at Christ's Family Reformed Church, Davenport. We

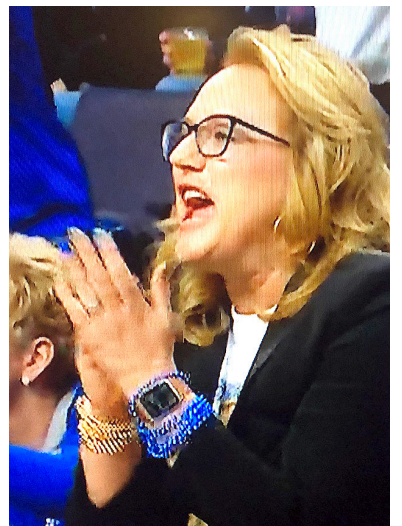
attended the wedding with our daughter, Alisa, who played on the undefeated Lancer freshman girls' basketball team coached by Ashley.

Ashley and Darian's son, Tucker, was Missouri Valley Conference player of the year. He is one of three players from Waukee's 2021 state championship team who are on, or soon-to-be-on, Division I rosters. The others are Payton Sandfort, at Iowa, and Omaha Biliew, headed to Iowa State.

Nijel Pack, a guard on the Miami team that beat Drake, played at Kansas State last year, but accepted an \$800,000 NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) offer and a car to transfer to the Hurricanes.

For all the joy we have watching the games, that's the seamy underside of collegiate sports we have a hard time reconciling.

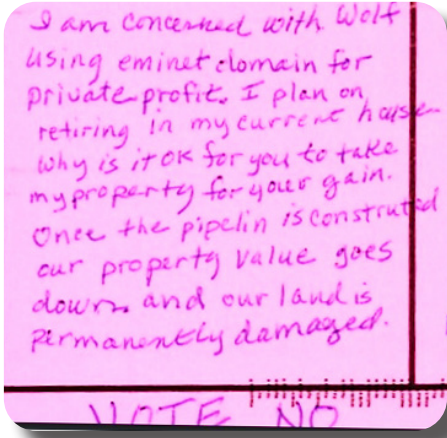
Publisher emeritus Bill Tubbs can be contacted at btubbs@northscottpress.com.



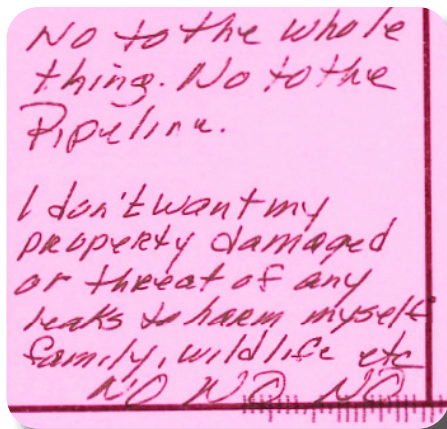
Ashley Crow DeVries

OPINIONS

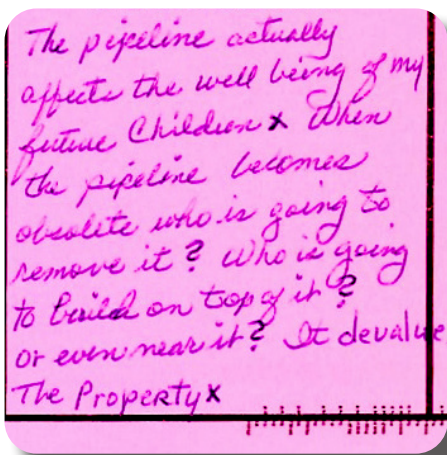
Scott County concerns fill Wolf Carbon docket



Cathie Sapp, Walcott



Diana Hart, Donahue



Frances Panther, Davenport

Safety, sustainability top comments in cards and letters against pipeline

Gary Abbott, of Donahue, provided a six-page statement to the Iowa Utilities Board with concerns about the Wolf Carbon Solutions pipeline route near his home. Here are edited excerpts with added headlines addressing three of Abbott's key concerns. Find his entire statement with this story at northscottpress.com, along with links to others on the Iowa Utilities Board site.

By Gary Abbott
Donahue resident

When Wolf Carbon Solutions representatives were asked at the Scott County meeting if the company will be compensated by injecting liquid CO₂ into the ground, they responded that ADM would be compensated for the first 2 million tons of CO₂ injected into the ground and the remaining balance of CO₂ tons would be compensated to Wolf company.

ADM's CO₂ injection well is located near Decatur, Ill., which is part of a very large geographical formation, the Illinois Basin. The Basin is an oil and gas production area dating back to 1853. The high-pressure CO₂ in a liquid supercritical state has the potential to squeeze out more oil and gas by a process known as enhanced oil recovery, or EOR.

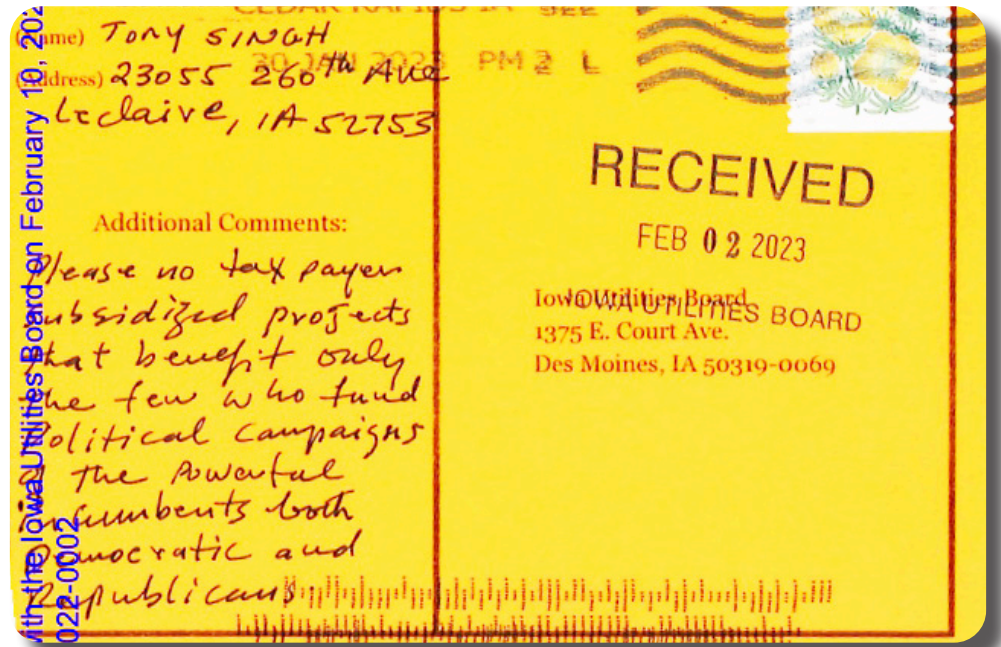
ADM was approached by Midwest Geological Sequestration Consortium to purchase liquid CO₂ to use for EOR purposes in the Illinois Basin. Is ADM providing liquid CO₂ for EOR purposes?

Is underground storage secure?

As oil and gas migrate toward wells designed to bring oil and gas to the surface, the liquid supercritical CO₂ can migrate toward the low-pressure point caused by extraction of oil and natural gas. This migration is caused by pressure differences of hydraulic forces through small cracks and fissures that already exist or can be created in future decades by earthquakes and shockwaves or increased pressure due to injection processes that cause micro-seismic events.

The higher pressure used to inject CO₂ increases the pressure on the cap rock over the sequestering aquifer above the liquid CO₂. Liquid CO₂ could migrate to a lower pressure area if nothing impedes or blocks it.

Liquid CO₂ could migrate into other layers of the crust and then to the atmosphere through the exterior surfaces of oil well piping if it is not properly sealed. Well piping may have pierced



Tony Singh, LeClaire

the layer of the cap rock that the liquid CO₂ is stored beneath. How many unregistered wells are there in the Illinois Basin? It cannot be scientifically declared that the liquid CO₂ is absolutely contained indefinitely.

Safety for Donahue

Donahue is physically located in a small valley surround by hills. The proposed CO₂ pipeline is generally at elevations above the occupied buildings of Donahue, and John Glenn elementary school is about 2,000 feet from the proposed location of the CO₂ pipeline as shown on Wolf maps for Scott County.

The short distance from the pipeline to John Glenn is of great concern to myself, the Donahue City Mayor, and many other residents are aware of the multiple dangers by placing a hazardous high pressure (up to 2800 PSI) liquid CO₂ pipeline at an elevation above the city.

Does the State of Iowa have regulations or laws concerning the placement of hazardous conditions near a public school?

A moderate-sized leakage near Donahue during school hours would probably require an evacuation from the school. Waiting for school buses to return to the elementary school could take too long. An emergency evacuation could require that sufficient number of buses and drivers be stationed at the John Glenn Elementary School, providing that the CO₂ did not impair the bus engines from running.

A severe break in the pipeline close to Donahue could cause serious medi-

cal problems for the children, teachers, workers, and the residents located north of the school in a short period of time. How long would it take for multiple tons of liquid CO₂ to de pressurize and expand into the city of Donahue?

Are there plans to install in Donahue an emergency siren of a different and unique sound than the weather alert sound? Who would be responsible for initiating the CO₂ hazard alarm?

Federal regulations

What are the current Federal DOT regulations regarding hazardous CO₂ pipelines? Does the State of Iowa have regulations regarding safety and site selection more stringent than the Federal regulations on pipelines in Iowa? I emailed the U.S. gov.dot about this, and the response back was they do not have any siting regulations for CO₂ pipelines. That is the responsibility of the Iowa IUB. Is this correct?

Looking decades ahead

The Mount Simon Aquifer is stuffed full in Iowa and Illinois. Where are the mega tons of liquid CO₂ going to be put now? Who will continue to monitor the sequestered liquid CO₂ then? Maybe, just maybe, sequestering CO₂ is a justifiable short-term necessity, but it is not a sustainable process for unlimited amounts of CO₂. If the hazardous liquid CO₂ pipelines are no longer being used, what happens then? If eminent domain was used to force the acquisition of the property, can the pipeline owners use it for purposes that may not meet the standards of eminent domain or siting and safety regulations?

Find more online

- Links directly to the Iowa Utilities Board docket
- Route maps
- Previous NSP coverage of the pipeline

With this story at northscottpress.com.

Wolf says pipeline will bring prosperity

Edited excerpts from Wolf Carbon Solutions' pipeline permit petition. Find links to the entire petition with this story online at northscottpress.com.

The Mt. Simon Hub will immediately bolster ethanol's position as the premier alternative fuel – strengthening Iowa's agriculture industry and supporting thousands of farmers, plant workers, truck drivers, and numerous other individuals who produce, market, and distribute ethanol.

According to a recent report prepared for the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association by Des Moines-based Decision Innovation Solutions, capturing CO₂ and storing it underground in a geological formation like the Mt. Simon Sandstone could boost an ethanol plant's gross operating margin by 284 percent.

A study on the economic impact of the proposed Mt. Simon Hub, performed by Goss & Associates, estimates that the

project will generate \$2.8 billion in economic impact across Iowa and Illinois.

The project is expected to support 4,499 jobs during the first year of construction and an annual average of 704 jobs during operation and maintenance, generating more than \$780 million in wages and salaries.

In Iowa, the Mt. Simon Hub is expected to generate \$1.1 billion in economic impact and support 1,719 jobs during the first year of construction. The Iowa industries slated to experience the largest construction impacts are construction (\$95.7 million), wholesale trade (\$66.6 million), professional services (\$37.3 million), real estate (\$26.5 million), and durable goods manufacturing (\$17.3 million).

Present and future land use

The Project's proposed route will cross four counties: Linn, Cedar, Clinton, and Scott. Approximately 86 percent of the

route is currently identified as being in agricultural use (79 percent cultivated crop and 7 percent hay/pasture), and the remaining approximately 14 percent is identified as a mix of developed land of varying intensities, forests, shrublands, and native grasslands, or various types of wetlands and open water. There are no significant impacts anticipated to the current land use from the construction and operation of the Project.

Following construction, all areas disturbed by construction will be restored to their preexisting contours and hydrologic function to assist in the easement naturally integrating back into the existing landscape. The exception to this is the permanent impact at the location of the potential pump station and locations of the mainline valves, both of which are still in development for exact locations and number. These facilities will be sited to avoid impacts to the operational land use of the areas were in-



Proposed pipeline path

stalled and will not change the existing or future land use and zoning.

Once the pipeline is buried and land restoration occurs, normal operation of the Project will create minimal inconvenience. In most locations (other than above-ground appurtenances), farming, the current use of over 86 percent of the lands crossed by the route, can be conducted over the top of the pipeline.

NSP OPINIONS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Iowa legislation allows districts to trim school nurses

Heads up, Iowa friends. The Iowa Legislature is at it again, targeting our education system. Apparently taking public funding away and giving it to private schools wasn't enough.

State Sen. Chris Cournoyer is chair of the subcommittee that proposed Senate File 390 on March 14. The following paragraph is copied from that file.

Sec.13. section 256.11, subsection 9B, Code2023, still says a school district shall have a school nurse to provide health services to its students."

But the bill eliminates this existing provision: "Each school district shall work toward the goal of having one school nurse for every 750 students enrolled in a school district."

I interpret the change of wording to mean there would be one nurse per district! What is their answer to this dilemma? You got it right - train the educators!

Think about this - in a district like North Scott, where seven school buildings are spread out over 220 square miles, from Eldridge to Long Grove, and Dixon to Princeton, one nurse would be responsible.

Nurses not only are needed when a child is feeling ill or injured, but to administer necessary medications, monitor health forms, etc. When would a teacher have time to teach? I fear for the safety of our children while at school.

When I was getting my education in the Iowa school system, teachers were highly respected, and we were proud to be from Iowa.

What has happened in the last 50+ years?

Please, contact your representatives and implore them not to pass this bill.

Is anyone out there? Does anyone care?

Cheri Olson
Long Grove



North Scott Fellowship of Christian Athletes and volunteers wrapped and packaged 150 Christmas Child gift boxes for distribution overseas.

Contributed photo

Operation Christmas Child says thank you to North Scott

I am writing to thank Eldridge-area residents for sharing the true meaning of Christmas with children in need this past holiday season.

Generosity throughout contributed to a successful shoebox gift collection season at drop-off locations for the Samaritan's Purse project Operation Christmas Child. Across the U.S., the project collected over 9.3 million shoebox gifts in 2022. Combined with those collected from partnering countries in 2022, the ministry is now sending nearly 10.6 million shoebox gifts to children worldwide.

Through shoeboxes packed with fun toys, school supplies, and hygiene items, Eldridge-area volunteers brought joy to children in need around the world. Each gift-filled shoebox is a tangible expression of God's love, and it is often the first gift these children have ever received.

Through the continued generosity of donors since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 209 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 170 countries and

territories. This year, Samaritan's Purse delivered its milestone 200 millionth shoebox, which was packed on a country-wide tour and then hand-delivered to a young girl in Ukraine.

Across Iowa, shoebox packers often shop for deals on shoebox items throughout the year, and many serve at a deeper level by becoming a year-round volunteer. Information about ways area participants can get involved year-round can also be found at samaritanpurse.org/occ or by calling 816-622-8316.

Local drop-off locations for gifts will open again Nov. 13 - 20, 2023. Until then, anyone can be a part of this life-changing project by conveniently packing a shoebox gift online in just a few simple clicks at samaritanpurse.org/buildonline.

These simple gifts, packed with love, send a message to children worldwide that they are loved and not forgotten.

Casey Goodwin
Samaritan's Purse
Boone, North Carolina

A rose to North Scott Foods and Steve Grolmus

The North Scott Food Pantry sends this Rose to Steve Grolmus and his staff at North Scott Foods.

Over the decades Steve and his staff have taken time out of their working and non-working hours to fill orders for the food pantry, find special foods for our holiday baskets, find basic foods when supply-chain issues emerged, and hosted numerous events that



involved the community for the benefit of the food pantry. The donations the food pantry has received from NS Foods are too numerous to list.

From advice to food items to shopping carts, the need was always met.

We wish Steve and his crew the very best of luck in this new chapter of their lives. Your dedication and service to the community is very much appreciated.

Lynn Welch, for the
North Scott Food Pantry
Eldridge

LETTERS

Signed letters to the editor of no more than 300 words on any topic are welcomed.

ROSES

Readers are invited to submit short editorial tributes, or "roses," to lift up friends and neighbors who are making our communities better.

Send letters and roses to NSP managing editor Mark Ridolfi at mridolfi@northscottpress.com, or North Scott Press, P.O. Box 200, Eldridge, IA 52748

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Revenue estimates matches gov's target

The March Revenue Estimating Conference report on the state's budget and revenue confirmed our pro-growth policies and responsible budgeting have been working. Our budget target for the next fiscal year is \$8.486 billion and is the same target Gov. Kim Reynolds put forward. It is a 3.3-percent increase in state spending and continues our goal of responsible, conservative budgeting so we can focus on investing in important priorities and keep providing tax relief for Iowans.



Sen. Chris Cournoyer
District 35

• Senate File 326 would allow pharmacies in Iowa to dispense Epi-Pens without a prescription. The bill also allows self-administered hormonal contraceptives to be dispensed and administered by state pharmacists for patients 18 years and older without a prescription. The contraceptive must be approved by the FDA to prevent pregnancy and does not intend to induce an abortion.

Senate File 318 would establish the Iowa Office of Apprenticeship within the Department of Workforce Development. The goal of this bill is to help address the workforce challenges our state continues to experience and give more people access to the skills they need to be successful in the industries with workforce needs.

• Senate File 251 is an education-related bill that expands the definition of administrative costs within the Iowa code. Currently, code states that school administrative expenditures must not exceed 5 percent of a district's general fund. The bill defines administrative expenditures as those which do not relate directly to students and their instruction. This definition includes salaries for administrators and office staff, school administration, general administration, and data processing and collection services. The bill exempts schools with less than 1,000 students, so we are not inhibiting schools that rely on sharing agreements or rural and small schools from being able to

provide essential services.

In Iowa, the number of students has increased 9 percent, and teachers have increased 25 percent between FY 1993 and FY 2021. At the same time the increase in all other school district staff was 60 percent. Administrative staffing and costs are rising at a rate far above the increase of students and teachers.

• Senate File 398 would require the Department of Education to provide educational resources and technical assistance to school districts with career and technical student organizations related to robotics and robotics teams and competitions.

Contact Sen. Chris Cournoyer at chris.cournoyer@legis.iowa.gov or 563-289-7335.

'Mammoth' reorganization bill

Last week, we passed a fairly large government reorganization bill. This bill came from Governor Reynolds, with the purpose of streamlining many state operations and cutting down on excessive bureaucracy in our state government. This mammoth project was initially outsourced to a consulting firm to make recommended changes, which has been under the scope of the Governor's office since this past summer. Once the recommendation was received from the study, time was spent working with the state departments that were affected by these changes. Since then, the Governor's office has been working with members of this chamber to discuss the proposal and answer any questions. It has been a very communicable process which included legislators and departments.



Rep. Norlin Mommsen
District 70

An earlier estimate from Reynolds' office predicted the bill would eliminate 513 currently vacant positions, both funded and unfunded. This bill shrinks government from the bloated number of 37 state

agencies, down to 16. No state services for Iowans will be lost, only improved, and no state employee will lose their job. We had over eight hours of subcommittee hearings on this bill, and it passed through both the State Government and the Appropriations committee. After review by committee members, several changes were made to the bill through the committee process, making this a better bill for Iowans.

Contact Rep. Norlin Mommsen, R-DeWitt, at norlin.mommsen@legis.iowa.gov

Government realignment 'overdue'

By aligning functions and services that are similar, taxpayers will have a more straightforward process for interacting with the government and receiving the proper services without unnecessarily going to several agencies.

One of the biggest changes is bringing in all licensing and regulatory services into the newly named Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licenses. Currently, the licensing and management of 136 professional licenses is overseen by 11 different state agencies. Now when contractors work on a project they will only have to coordinate with one agency in order to complete various inspection aspects of the project.

While there was an undue amount of hyperbolic rhetoric about the size of the bill, 1,513 pages, the first 880 pages largely dealt with the merger of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health which has been in the works for over a year. The remaining changes made in the bill are not changes to services, but moving boards and oversight to more appropriate departments.

Contact Rep. Gary Mohr, R-Bettendorf, at gary.mohr@legis.iowa.gov.



Rep. Gary Mohr
District 93