

LET'S TALK

TOURISM



## Iowa Legislative Report

### Capitol News Issue # 4

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#### **ACTION ALERT!**

#### **School Start Date**

While our odds of passing school start date legislation this year are slim, be aware of this development:

The Administrative Rules Review Committee meets at 10 AM on Monday, March 8th. In that meeting, Senator Merlin Bartz will make a motion to have the Department of Education develop rules to enforce the waivers on the school start date.

#### Four Weeks to Go (or Three ???)

With the second funnel now behind them and the end of session only four (and possibly three!) weeks away, legislators will return to the State Capitol next week to begin final negotiations on remaining bills and the state's \$5.3 billion (and shrinking) budget.

Friday (March 5th) was the 54th day of the 80-day session and the final legislative "funnel" deadline - to be eligible for debate bills need to have passed one chamber and cleared committees in the other chamber. This second funnel deadline came and went with little fanfare, few committees and even fewer subcommittees with many bills simply being allowed to die. The state budget crisis and the impending the March 11 revenue estimates have left legislators paralyzed to press forward on many issues like mental health parity, flood plain management, expanding domestic abuse laws to cover dating relationships, and a whole host of union-backed bills.

The best thing about funnel week: the end of funnel week. Returning to the Capitol after the second funnel is like hitting the "reset" button. You get to start over. The list of bills has shrunk (this year, historically small). You start from scratch, re-evaluate your priorities, and find a way to get them done in the new environment. As the Dalai Lama said in his ten life rules, "Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly." Crafty legislators can always find ways to breathe new life into dead bills. Truly, where there is a will, there is a way.

On a sad note, Rep. Roger Wendt (D-Sioux City) announced he would not return to the Capitol last week after finding out that he has terminal lung cancer. Rep. Wendt had beat lung cancer 17 years ago and had been in remission since then. He went to the doctor for a cold that kept hanging on and found the cancer was back with a vengeance. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his family.

Any contacts you can make with members of the Committee would be helpful. The committee membership is listed [HERE](#).

## Quick Links

[Grassroots Action Center](#)

[Bill Tracker](#)

[TFI Website](#)

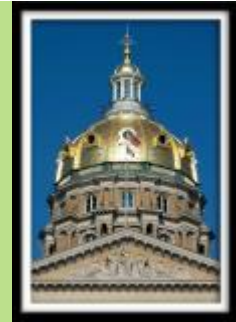
[State Legislative Website](#)

Continuing on the sad news, the House suspended business early during funeral week, closing down for the week on Wednesday evening. Speaker of the House Pat Murphy's 90-year-old mother died on Sunday, and many legislators had asked to be able to attend her funeral in Dubuque on Thursday.



## Capitol Visit/Contact Day

**Capitol Visit/Contact Day is on Monday, March 8!** TFI board members plan to deliver tourism talking points and would welcome industry participation to join in the day to "talk tourism" with your legislators. If you need more information, details are posted on the TFI web site at <http://www.travelfederationofiowa.org/>



For those able to travel and join in the cause to "talk tourism" in Des Moines on March 8, we will gather at 10:30 AM in the cafeteria located in the basement of the State Capitol and will proceed upstairs to the legislative chambers at 11:00 AM. You are encouraged to contact your legislators in advance to let them know you will be in town and would like to meet with them that day. If their schedule allows please consider inviting them to eat lunch with you that day. The cafeteria is a convenient option for lunch or there are numerous downtown restaurants. A list of downtown restaurants can be found at [http://www.seedesmoines.com/do\\_more/dining.php](http://www.seedesmoines.com/do_more/dining.php) and click on the link to the "Greater Des Moines Restaurant Guide." TFI will not be organizing lunch arrangements, this is on your own with your legislators.

A list of parking options at the Capitol can be found at <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/tours/index.htm> and click on the "Additional Parking" link. Entrances to the Capitol are located at ground level on the south and west sides of the capitol. You will need to go through security when entering the building.

If you are not able to travel to Des Moines on March 8, please participate by contacting your legislators that day from your offices and contact information is listed below. To assist you with these efforts, TFI has prepared Talking Points for this year's legislative priorities and these can be found on the TFI web site at <http://www.travelfederationofiowa.org/talktourism.html>

Legislator Contact Information:

\* Link to a list of legislators and their email addresses:

<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx>

\* Senate Switchboard to contact your senator by phone: (515) 281-3371

\* House Switchboard to contact your representative by phone: (515) 281-3221

\* If you are new to advocacy efforts and not sure who your legislators are, click here to find out. <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/FindLeg/> For the purposes of the Capitol Day on March 8 we are asking you to contact your State Senator and State Representative and you will need to scroll down the list past your federal legislators to the state legislator information.

## → 2nd Funnel Casualties

The only bill being tracked by TFI that died in the second funnel was the Native Distilleries Bill, language which was included in the Government Reorganization bill.

Speaking of Native Distilleries, the Governor did not re-appoint Lynn Walding as Administrator of the Alcohol Beverages Division, a post he held since 2000. Instead, the Governor appointed Stephen Larson to the position. Larson is the state's deputy treasurer and was administrator of the Great Iowa Treasure Hunt.

## → Hotel Motel Regulation Fee

A bill - [SSB 3245](#) - was introduced this week to allow a local government to impose a \$1.50 per night local lodging regulation fee. The city or county would create a special account for the money, which would first be used for the inspection, supervision, and regulation of hotels and motels. Any excess funds would need to be expended for property tax relief.

## Your Advocacy Toolkit:

[Grassroots Action Center](#)  
[Bill Tracker](#)

### Your Capitol Team

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