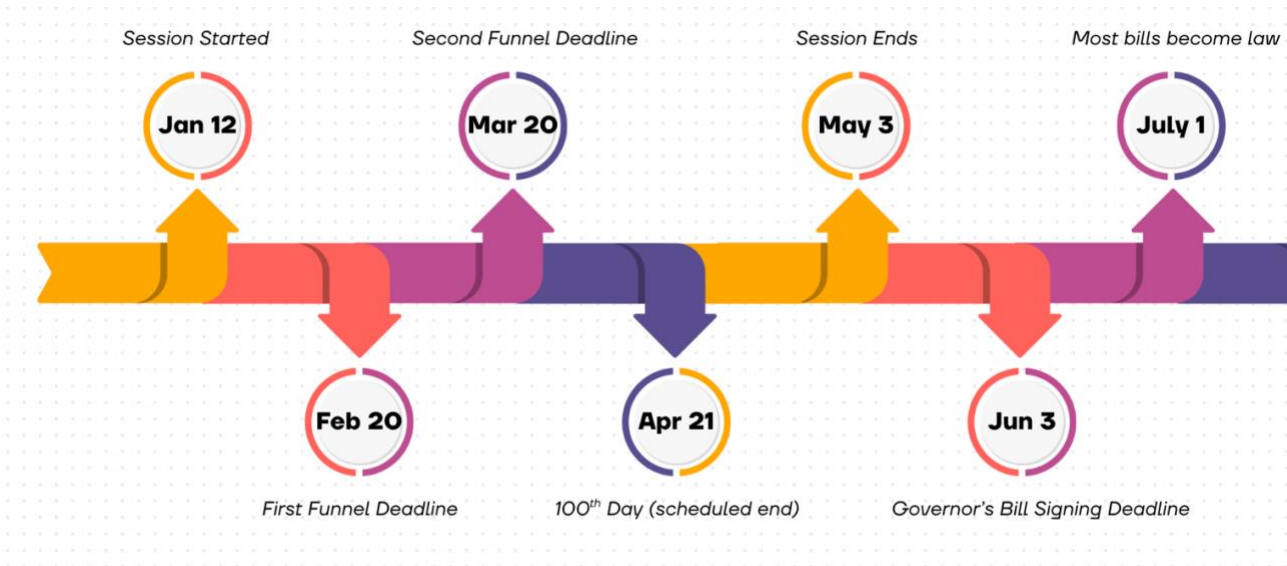




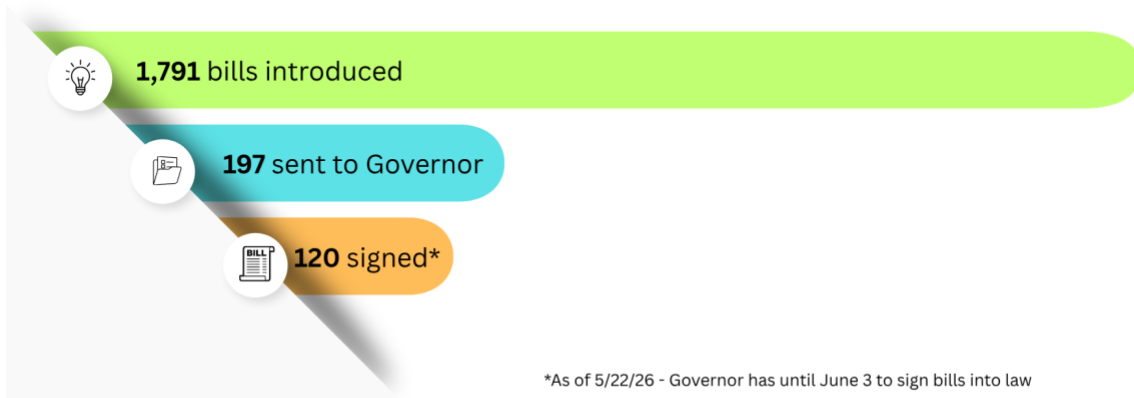
## 2026 End of Session Review | May 22, 2026

The Iowa Legislature ended on May 3 (12 days overdue). During the 34-hour weekend marathon of lawmaking, legislators sent all 10 budget bills and 38 policy bills to the Governor.



Out of the 1,791 bills introduced this year, only 197 bills made it to the Governor's desk (11%). As of May 22, the Governor has signed 120 of them into law and has not yet vetoed a bill sent to her. All bills are effective July 1, 2026, unless otherwise noted.

## 2026 Iowa Legislative Session



\*As of 5/22/26 - Governor has until June 3 to sign bills into law

# Policy Bills Sent to Governor

The [LWVIA Bill Tracker](#) is updated as the Governor acts on bills. You can read more detailed descriptions of these bills in the tracker. Bills marked with a  have been signed into law. All bills are effective 7/1/2026 unless otherwise noted.

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## Voting

- [HF 2501](#): Clarifies that all laws that apply to “election day voting” include when a person votes in person early at a satellite voting center or county election office. Requires the Secretary of State (SOS) to be immediately notified of any local or state investigations into county election officials, and the Governor to be immediately notified of investigations of the SOS. **Cancels voter registration of any voter whose registration is incomplete/pending/unconfirmed after 90 days** if the election official has been unable to contact the voter and the voter failed to submit requested information. Substantially changes recount boards for public measures, consolidating recount responsibilities under the county commissioner and staff, and modifies recount petition thresholds for public measures requiring a 60% affirmative vote. Centralizes local and school election filings, objections, and contest processes with the county commissioner of elections instead of city clerks or school board secretaries, standardizing deadlines and procedures. **Removes the ability for voters to establish identity by attestation from another voter in their precinct**, tightening voter ID requirements. *Signed*
- [HF 2601](#): Prohibits **foreign nationals** from contributing to or influencing ballot issue campaigns, either directly or indirectly (election misconduct).
- [SF 140](#): Prohibits **satellite voting locations** on school property if there is a school-related bond, levy, or program on the ballot. Clarifies that prohibition of candidate materials being visible around voting locations applies to public ballot measures as well.
- [SF 2218](#): **Adds a new oath affirming US citizenship on voter registration forms**. Requires the SOS to use the SAVE system to verify citizenship of all on the voter rolls annually using the SAVE system (and all new voters monthly). Requires the SOS to share findings with county election officials, who are to mark these voters “unconfirmed” and send them a letter asking for documentation (with cancellation after 90 days if not cured). Makes violation of the new citizenship oath election misconduct. Requires all educators licensed by the Board of Educational Examiners to provide proof of legal residency/citizenship prior to licensure and renewal. Requires all public employers (state government, legislature, Regents, school districts, townships, counties, cities) to use **E-Verify** to verify citizenship/immigration status for all new employees. Requires all professional licensing boards to use the **SAVE** system to verify citizenship and legal status before issuing or renewing a professional license. Individuals have 10 days to appeal a denial, and employers have 7 days to decide on the appeal (agency decisions are considered final). Requires all employers to share failed checks with ICE). Requires cities and school boards also use E-Verify for newly hired staff. Private employers are prohibited from hiring or continuing to employ someone who provides a false social security number (\$10,000 civil penalty per incident; four or more violations shut down a company’s operations in the location of the violation).

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## Transparency & Civics

- [HF 2231](#): Creates a new **Seal of Civics Excellence Program** to recognize student excellence in civics (similar to the existing Seal of Biliteracy). The Department of Education will determine criteria for this, including demonstrated knowledge of American government and participation in civic or community activities.
- [HF 2490](#): **Modernizes open meeting and public record laws** by requiring posting notice in prominent and conspicuous place that is visible at all times (replacing use of a bulletin board); posting the notice on the body's Internet site (as long as it is regularly updated and maintained); and requiring notation on the notice if it has been amended (and requiring renotification after amendment made). Prohibits governmental agencies from requiring requesters of public records to be physically present to receive the records (requests can be made in writing, by phone, or electronically). Requires reasonable efforts to provide public records at no cost (other than copying costs) if production takes less than 30 minutes (and still requires expenses be reasonable and communicated when request received). Clarifies only direct costs attributed to supervising, making, and providing copies of records can be charged (excludes general administrative overhead). Legal costs are only chargeable for redacting legally protected information. Expands ex-employee public disclosure to include the date of the last day the employee worked and details of any post-separation payments or benefits that are beyond what is owed for work performed. Establishes a process for governmental bodies to seek court injunctions against individuals found to be "vexatious requesters," with safeguards that include attorney fees if courts find no vexatious conduct. Clarifies that high volume requests alone does not constitute vexatious conduct and protects news media from being classified as vexatious solely based on volume.
- [HF 2670](#): This is the Education Omnibus bill which substantially changes summative assessment, health education curriculum, and replaces common core standards. The bill adds **social studies assessments** in grades 8 and 11. The bill also removes the mandate that social studies curriculum be multicultural, gender-fair, and include global perspectives.
- [HF 2783](#): This is the Education Budget, but it includes language that mandates all three state universities mandate three credits each of **American History and American Government courses** as part of their undergraduate general education requirements (effective 7/1/2028).

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## Education

- [HF 2493](#): Allows younger five-year-olds to be included in the **statewide preschool program**. Districts are allowed to expand beyond these age group but will not get additional state funding for those children. Adds preschool to compulsory attendance laws (but allows a parent to opt out of this requirement in writing). Fixes laws so that children are not double counted. Allows schools to contract with community-based providers to deliver preschool (using 28E agreements). Effective starting with the 2027-2028 school year.

- ✓ [HF 2539](#): Eliminates the Board of Regents' **Minority and Women Educators Enhancement Program**, which recruited minority and women educators to faculty positions at the three state universities (because it is DEI).
- [HF 2670](#): In addition to the new social studies assessments listed above under the "civics" header, this **Education Omnibus** bill also eliminates the requirement for schools to adopt protocols for identifying adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and develop strategies to mitigate toxic stress. Standards for equity coordinators are removed, new health curriculum topics are added for all grades (communicable diseases, physical fitness, nutrition, substance use, CPR, prevention and control of disease), expands high school math coursework to include agriculture, applied sciences, technology, engineering, and manufacturing, and prohibits students from serving on committees that make school library removal decisions (applying this to charter/innovation schools as well). Expands personal finance literacy course requirements to charter and innovation zone schools but takes out a lot of the detail required in the instruction. The bill also states that any state mandates in this bill are to come out of existing school aid and strengthens state enforcement when districts are not complying with state or federal law (right now the Department of Education is allowed to enforce; this bill requires enforcement).
- ✓ [HF 2676](#): The **Governor's "MAHA" bill** reintroduces the Presidential Fitness Test curriculum in school physical education courses and requires K-4 students to have at least 40 minutes/day of physical activity (30 minutes/day for 5<sup>th</sup> graders). Prohibits a list of dyes and food additives in foods sold on school property and in the summer EBT program, including an anti-caking additive that is in all white flour products). Allows any kind of epinephrine delivery device on school property (not just Epi-Pens). Limits digital instruction for K-5 students to 60 minutes/day and requires all elementary schools to adopt a technology use policy (assistive technology exempted). A work group is also established to study the cognitive impact on school-issued technology.
- ✓ [HF 2754](#): Overhauls Iowa's **charter school laws** by allowing UNI to authorize and monitor a charter school; requires performance frameworks to be included in contracts; strengthens audits/reporting; changes funding formulas; requires AEAs to provide services and media to charter schools; establishes a Charter School Facilities Revolving Loan Program Fund; allows students in private and charter schools to participate in public school extracurriculars; requires public schools to offer or make available driver's education courses to charter school students; makes charter school employees eligible for IPERS; and allows community-based providers to participate directly in the statewide voluntary preschool program (and receive direct state funding). It also removes references to innovation zone schools (they will be considered a charter school). Bars a private school that loses its accreditation from reapplying for three years. Convenes a work group to look at the requirements for teacher training, including those required for licensure renewal (report due 12/31/2026). Allows a school tuition organization in Bettendorf to fund first year operational costs for a preschool. Requires superintendents given the authority to deny open enrollment requests to document the reasons for that denial (information to be submitted to department of education). Effective 5/12/2026.
- [HF 2783](#): This is the **Education Budget**, but it includes the elimination of the Iowa Special Education Council, reduces funding for at-risk student programs by \$2.6 million, suspends automatic appropriation for college work study, repeals tuition grants for for-profit colleges but allows students from eligible for-profit schools (notably barbering/cosmetology) to access the vocational-technical tuition grant instead, freezes tuition for resident undergraduates at state universities, caps annual tuition increases at the average Higher Education Price Index growth for past three

years, and makes changes to dropout prevention funding. The bill also requires the Department of Education to submit an annual report on the incidents of violence in schools, referrals to therapeutic classrooms, and anti-bullying programs and funding. The budget is mainly status quo, with new funding for dyslexia specialist program to offset costs to teachers getting this certification (\$335,000) and school district electronic mail security to protect from cyber threats (\$500,000). Funding for teacher training to support students with mental health conditions was cut nearly in half (\$1.5 million cut, leaving \$1.9 million). These funds were used to pay for training in ACEs, Mental Health First Aid, and de-escalation techniques (the Department says that they've consolidated this programming at the state level, saving money in the process).

- ✓ [SF 2201](#): Sets **school funding** growth at 2% for the 2026-2027 school year.
- ✓ [SF 2231](#): Establishes new guidelines for K-12 schools regarding **constitutionally protected prayer and religious expression**. Mandates the Department of Education to distribute and train staff on federal guidance, requires model policies for compliance and extends protections to charter schools; preserves maximum autonomy and freedom to community-based preschool providers (so they can be religious); and adds new civil penalties for violations and waives sovereign immunity for schools.
- [SF 2428](#): Prior Iowa law set up a process for addressing **classroom clears** when a student becomes violent. This bill expands that process to include students causing non-violent disruptions. The process is refined, each school building must create a new oversight review committee to determine when a removed student may return to the classroom, empowers teachers to remove students for nonviolent disruptions for at least 30 minutes (return with teacher consent or oversight committee decision), requires students removed more than once for nonviolent disruptions to participate (with parents and staff) in creating a behavioral plan and consider alternative placements, and requires a teacher to consent to a student removed for a violent disruption to refuse if they were assaulted in the disruption (and the oversight committee cannot override the teacher's decision). The bill also establishes explicit IEP team meeting requirements, teacher involvement and training, and reviews. It also allows for a pilot in one urban and one rural school district that allows for **separate schools for disruptive students and students receiving special education services** (but placement must be voluntary).
- [SF 2474](#): The Iowa Department of Education will survey all public K-12 schools to determine if they have 1) adopted a **cardiac emergency response plan**; 2) if they have automatic electronic defibrillators; and 3) where in each school those AEDs are located. Legislators will use this information to determine if a grant program is needed to encourage schools to purchase more AEDs.
- [SF 2488](#): Creates an **Early Childhood & Family Services (ECFS) System** within Iowa HHS with the goals of prevention, early intervention, and ongoing family/community support for families with children under age 19. There are new district advisory councils (aligned with seven behavioral health districts) and new policies for data collection and program oversight. The bill eliminates decategorization (flexible source of funding for local use to support children/families) but retains the current Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) structure, which had previously been replaced by this new system. Allows ECI boards to transition home visiting services to the state's ECFS system, with safeguards added to ensure uninterrupted service and stakeholder involvement. Requests a legislative interim study committee to review and advise on transitioning from ECI board responsibilities to the new ECFS system.

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## Reproductive Rights

- ✓ [HF 571](#): Health care providers and institutions will be allowed to refuse to provide a service if it conflicts with their moral or religious beliefs. They will also be protected from any legal, employment, and professional disciplinary retaliation. Titled the “**Medical Ethics Defense Act**,” it is targeted at abortion care, contraceptives and LGBTQIA affirming care. However, it is written so broadly it could be used to justifying medical refusals to people with mental illness or substance use disorders, or from certain ethnic backgrounds. It also includes protections so that a provider does not even have the obligation to *refer* a person to the service they are denying or let a patient know options exist.
- ✓ [HF 2502](#): Expands **parental leave policies for state employees** not covered under the federal Family & Medical Leave Act.
- ✓ [HF 2564](#): **Pregnant minors** are allowed to consent to their own prenatal, intranatal, and postnatal care. Under current Iowa law, a pregnant minor can consent to their infant’s care, but not their own.
- ✓ [HF 2788](#): Does not allow Iowa-licensed physicians to prescribe **medication abortion** drugs (mifepristone, misoprostol) via telehealth; instead, it requires an in-person visit with screening for coercion. While there is an exception for emergencies, it does create a loophole that could allow medications to still be prescribed by health professionals outside the state (depending on federal court rulings). Requires informed consent, renames this to “chemical” abortion; redefines abortion to exempt miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies, and makes other reporting changes. On the positive side, the Legislature did take all of the changes that the medical community requested to make it less bad, but medical providers say it will still have a chilling effect on access to these safe services and potentially endanger the lives of women.
- [HF 2670](#): In addition to what we’ve covered in prior categories, this bill eliminates references to kindergarten programs to include “healthy emotional and social habits” and references to “age-appropriate and research-based **human growth and development**.”
- [HF 2782](#): This is the HHS Budget, but it includes a significant increase (\$500,000) for the **More Options for Maternal Support (MOMS)** program, which has been criticized for funding crisis pregnancy centers instead of non-judgmental, secular supports for pregnant women. Two years ago, the program received \$1 million; last year there was no appropriation because funds were not fully utilized. This year, there is a \$1.5 million appropriation, and the program is allowed to carry-forward any unused funds at the end of the current fiscal year.

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## Human Trafficking

- ✓ [HF 1036](#): Strengthens Iowa’s response to **human trafficking** by requiring annual stakeholder meetings for the next five years to develop legislative proposals to combat human trafficking (report due annually on 12/1). Defines “commercial sexual exploitation” to juvenile justice code section. Establishes new screening and referral protocols for children potentially subject to commercial sexual exploitation (when referred for child abuse or during intake for juvenile delinquency). Extends some civil

statute of limitations for sexual assault and adds human trafficking. Minors will have up to five years after turning age 18 to file a civil action (or up to five years following the discovery of the sexual assault/human trafficking, if they were adult when they realized it happened). Gives more discretion to prosecutors to allow them to waive arrest and prosecution of a victim of human trafficking and instead refer them to Iowa HHS as a “child in need of assistance.” Moves victim compensation orders in human trafficking cases up to “category A,” which means they will be paid first before other restitution (this was done in the victim rights bill below for all other sexual assault and domestic violence cases). Finally, the bill directs the Iowa HHS to develop a plan for increased restoration facilities and clarifies that minors engaged in sex work are not to be prosecuted but referred for protective services.

- ☑ [HF 2598](#): Requires individuals applying for a commercial driver’s license to complete a 30-minute **human trafficking prevention training** (offered only in English and focusing on recognition, prevention, and reporting of human trafficking).
- ☐ [HF 2770](#): This is the **Justice Systems Budget**, which includes \$365,115 increase for victim services (\$75,000 of that increase goes to human trafficking, bringing the total designated for human trafficking victims to \$225,000). The bill also raises fines on several court filings by \$20, including divorce filings. Existing law required 20% of the divorce filing fees to go toward sexual assault and domestic violence programs, but they never were directed in that way. The bill not only increases the fee but also requires 20% of the total collected go to sexual assault/domestic violence programs in FY 2027 and then transition those funds to the SAFE Center grant in FY 2028 and beyond. That amount is estimated to be between \$400,000-600,000 annually (which is in addition to the general fund increase noted first). It should also be noted that the fee increase in other areas is dedicated to a new Attorney Recruitment Program to pay off student loans for attorneys who dedicate some of their time to indigent defense.
- ☑ [HF 2794](#): Sets up a grant program to fund a regional hub-and-spoke model **SAFE (Sexual Assault Forensic Exam) Center** to provide trauma informed care to adult survivors of sexual assault, human trafficking, and domestic violence. Children would still be served through the network of child protection centers. SAFE Center is to provide other services, including access to crisis mental health services. This grant is funded with approximately \$400,000 annually beginning July 1, 2027 (appropriation in HF 2770).
- ☐ [HF 2800](#): This is the Standings Budget; it includes a requirement that trained child protection workers **screen children for commercial sex abuse** if they identify known risk factors in the child’s background.
- ☑ [SF 2379](#): This is the **Attorney General’s victim rights bill**, which applies to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking. It expands and clarifies confidentiality protections between victims and counselors, narrows and standardizes training requirements for victim counselors, allows protective orders for sexual assault victims to extend beyond current limits (including options for lifetime protection), and shortens deadlines from five to three days for sex offender registrations and updates. Mandates law enforcement to store sexual assault kits for 20 years (or lifetime if a minor victim), with required written notice to victims prior to disposal and the right for victims to request further preservation beyond that timeframe. Expands the list of victim rights – including rights related to sexual assault examination kits. Gives victims the rights for individual evaluations of mental competency and alters the order of restitution payments, elevating pecuniary damages and fines and victim compensation.

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## Water

- ☑ [HF 2527](#): While not related to water, this bill limits liability for damages “allegedly” caused by the **effects on climate** from greenhouse gas emissions, specifically those caused from renewable fuel sources (i.e. ethanol).
- ☐ [HF 2771](#): The **Agriculture/Natural Resources Budget** includes a significant increase for water quality: \$300,000 new appropriation to support the Iowa Geological Survey/Iowa Water Quality Information System at the University of Iowa; \$10 million from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF) to help small and medium sized communities (population <11,000) to upgrade their water and wastewater infrastructure; \$25 million from RIIF to help the Des Moines Water Works construct and install additional nutrient removal technology (with funding available through 6/30/2029). Also increases the Water Quality Financial Assistance Fund maximum grant from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

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## Gun Safety

- ☑ [SF 2280](#): No gun safety bills, but also the “anti-red flag” and school-carry bills failed too. This bill expands the list of professions that are eligible for **professional carry permits** to include the Attorney General, the AG’s deputies/assistants and judicial officers. It also adds a new “C” felony for threatening a judicial officer or their immediate family member and a serious misdemeanor for maliciously sharing personal information about a judicial officer/immediate family member (address, phone, location). The definition of harassment is also expanded to include communicating a true threat to a public official, if the official becomes aware of it within one year.

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## Worthy of Noting

- ☐ [HF 2297](#), [HF 2800](#), [HF 2635](#), [SF 2480](#): There was a significant discussion about **cancer prevention and treatment** this year, including a strong focus on pediatric cancer research. These bills dedicate \$3 million this year (FY27) to pediatric cancer research at the University of Iowa (HF 2800), establish a new 5-cent tax on vaping and nicotine analog devices and dedicate proceeds to pediatric cancer research beginning FY28 (SF 2480), require all new single-family or two-family homes will be required to have passive radon mitigation systems installed beginning July 1, 2026 (HF 2297) and prohibit insurance companies from requiring prior authorization for cancer screenings recommended by clinical guidelines (HF 2635).
- ☐ [HF 2542](#): Strengthens Iowa’s “**three strikes law**” – requires a third time felony offender to be sentenced as a habitual offender and serve at least 7 years (instead of current 3 years) and does not allow earned time to reduce that minimum. Increases habitual offender penalty ceiling from 15 years to 20 years. Requires probation officers to report any violations to proper authorities and does not allow deferred or suspended

sentencing for habitual offenders. The [costs](#) of this are astronomical – almost \$2 billion to build the required new facilities and \$115.6 million in annual operational costs.

- [HF 2711](#): Eliminates all state laws mandating or authorizing **affirmative action** in employment, procurement and education. Replaces targeted language (minority, women, disadvantaged businesses) to “Iowa-based business enterprises.”
- [SF 579](#), [HF 2800](#): This first bill prohibits local governments from enacting any ordinance or law that goes beyond the protections in the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1965, specifically going after communities enacting **civil rights protections** for LGBTQIA citizens. The second bill clarifies that local governments are not allowed to enforce any such ordinances or laws.
- [SF 2422](#): The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA/HR 1) made a number of changes to **public assistance programs**, so this bill brings our state laws in line with that (but goes even further with a few waiver requests). HHS would need to verify eligibility for all Medicaid products, SNAP, childcare assistance, and FIP using the federal government’s SAVE system. HHS will request a waiver to use other systems to help improve accuracy of the verification process. HHS will also ask for a waiver to claw back any unused SNAP funds in an EBT account after 91 days of inactivity. All Medicaid retroactive eligibility is eliminated, except two months allowed for pregnant women, children, and nursing home residents (currently they have three months and everyone else has two months). HHS is also prohibited from asking for a waiver to add retroactive eligibility back for others unless the Legislature okays that request. All Medicaid state plan amendments and waiver requests not currently in process would need to be expenditure neutral unless approved by the Legislature. While language locking the state into Medicaid managed care was removed, equally concerning language was included. HHS is prohibited from taking any actions without legislative approval that reduce the HMO taxes the MCOs pay. Getting rid of MCOs would reduce the HMO tax, so that in essence locks the state into managed care. Finally, HHS is required to submit an annual report showing any trends in exceptions to policies (geographic, demographic, type of service).
- [SF 2472](#): The last-minute passage of **property tax reform package** is supposed to save Iowans \$4 billion on their property tax bills in the coming years. Most of those savings are in cost-avoidance, capping local government budget growth at 2% annually. Homeowners will get 10% exemption on their property’s taxable value, replacing the current \$4,850 homestead credit. It also increases the elderly/disabled tax credit and rent reimbursement program. Legislators made changes in taxing multi-residential properties by increasing the taxes they pay by up to 6% more, which landlords say will likely boost monthly rental costs. There are also tax deductions for first time homebuyers, requirements that county assessors explain big increases in valuations, and new user-friendly tax notices to improve accountability.
- [SJR 11](#): Iowans will vote this November on a constitutional amendment to **require 2/3 vote for any new or increased income-based tax**. That requires 34 Senators and 67 Representatives for approval, limiting the state’s options for revenue enhancements to user taxes and sales taxes (and a reminder that a sales tax increase is constitutionally protected for outdoor recreation and environmental programs).

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## Budget Overview

The Legislature adopted a budget that spent more than expected revenues and relied on transfers from reserves and a temporary HMO tax to sustain services. While this helped avoid cuts in the short term, it may set the state up for a budget crisis in the coming years. That would be exacerbated by a limit on the types of revenue the state could raise.

Fiscal Year	Total Revenues	Total Spending
FY 2020	\$7.848 billion	\$7.644 billion
FY 2021	\$7.877 billion	\$7.779 billion
FY 2022	\$8.386 billion	\$8.119 billion
FY 2023	\$9.156 billion	\$8.209 billion
FY 2024	\$9.65 billion	\$8.517 billion
FY 2025	\$8.942 billion	\$8.949 billion
FY 2026	\$8.103 billion	\$9.496 billion
<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>\$8.472 billion</b>	<b>\$9.640 billion</b>
<b>FY 2028</b>	<b>\$8.717 billion</b>	

It is important to remember that education and HHS spending makes up **78%** of the state budget. When funding is tight, those two budgets take a larger hit. You can find final details on each budget bill [here](#) (just make sure you are looking at the files marked “final”). You can also go directly to the HHS budget review [here](#).

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## 2027 Watch List

There were a number of bills that didn't make the cut this year – you can see them all in the [LWVIA Bill Tracker's “Inactive” List](#). While bills need to start over and be reintroduced in 2027, we expect them to come back with renewed energy next year. These include:

- Forced cooperation with ICE.
- Home school access to state education vouchers.
- More attacks on public libraries.
- Firearms on school property and clergy in schools.
- Applying anti-DEI policies to private colleges.
- Opening door to conversion therapy, protecting parents from child abuse allegations.

- Disclosure of AI use in campaigns.
- More attempts to weaken school vaccine laws.
- Pipelines and any follow-up to hydrogen mining.

The state will have a new Governor in 2027, so many of the changes made this year limit what a new Governor will be able to do without legislative approval. Overturning the supermajority of Republicans in the Iowa House and Senate is unlikely, but narrower margins would help keep the fringe issues off the to-do list.

