

## Capitol Report

Iowa Legislature – Week One

Paula Dierenfeld  
Nyemaster Goode, PC

**They're Back!** The second session of the 87th Iowa General Assembly convened at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, January 8. The session is scheduled to last 100 days with legislators' per diem expenses running out on April 17. Some are suggesting the Legislature will adjourn early again this year – most are saying they want to be done in 90 days. February 16 is the first "funnel" – bills not reported out of their originating committee by that date are "dead" for the session.

**And Who are They?** Republicans control the Legislature by significant margins in both chambers. There are 58 Republicans, 41 Democrats, and 1 open seat in the House of Representatives. In the Senate, there are 29 Republicans, 20 Democrats, and 1 No Party. In the House, Representative Linda Upmeyer continues to serve as the Speaker and Representative Chris Hagenow remains the Majority Leader. In the Senate, Senator Bill Dix is still Majority Leader and Senator Jack Whitver is the President of the Senate. A change did occur in the Senate Democratic leadership. This past fall Senator Janet Petersen was elected by her caucus to serve as the Senate Minority Leader, replacing Senator Rob Hogg.

**Special Election Update** A special election to fill the vacant seat in House District Seat 6 (Sioux City area), will be held this coming Tuesday, January 16. Jacob Bossman, a longtime staffer for Senator Chuck Grassley is running as the Republican candidate. Rita DeJong, a former principal and school teacher, is the Democrat candidate. With the Republican margin in the House so large, the outcome of the election will not change the Republican majority control. This will be the first election where voter identification will be required.

### Priorities

**History Made** No matter what she said, Governor Kim Reynolds was certain to break new ground in her first Condition of the State address. As the first woman to serve as Governor, she has made history. By all accounts, her first Condition of the State made history as well. Following are a few highlights of the Governor's speech:

**Water Quality** Governor Reynolds said it is her hope that a water quality bill will be the first piece of legislation she signs. Passage of water quality legislation does not mean the discussion is over, “rather it ignites the conversation to implement and scale practices that will continue to make an impact on water quality,” she said.

**Sexual Harassment** The Governor said it’s been a stain on our culture, a destructive force in politics, media, and entertainment, in workplaces large and small – in all facets of life. “And it must stop.” She called on the Legislature to join her in serving as a model to address sexual harassment in the public and private sectors.

**Tax Reform** While the details have yet to be released, Governor Reynolds said she will be “proposing a (a personal income) tax reform package that significantly reduces rates, modernizes our tax code, eliminates federal deductibility, and provides real tax relief for middle class families, farmers, and small businesses.” She said reforming uncompetitive corporate taxes will have to wait until next year but that she will be creating a bi-partisan task force to analyze tax credits and make recommendations.

**Medicaid Managed Care** Perhaps to the surprise of the critics of Medicaid managed care, the Governor said “it has become very clear that mistakes were made in how it was done.” She stated firmly that she still believes managed care is the right decision and that she has been working hard ever since she took office, every day, to make changes and get it right.

**Opioid Epidemic** Noting, that like other places, the wave of opioid and heroin addiction is spreading across Iowa, Governor Reynold’s proposed her plan to address the epidemic: increase use of the Prescription Monitoring Program, supporting enhanced intervention for Iowans addicted to opioids, expanding medication assisted treatment and limiting the amount of opioids that can be prescribed.

**Education** “Education is a priority, and we will continue to back that up with real money,” the Governor said. To support this commitment, Governor Reynolds proposed \$54 million in increased funding for Iowa schools, expanding 529 plans to include K-12 education, and passing the Future Ready Iowa Act, an initiative that includes funding for work-based learning and apprenticeships programs, and scholarships and grants for two- and four- year college degrees.

## Week Ahead

With Martin Luther King Junior Day on Monday, this next week will be a short one. Even though it will be short, the House and Senate Calendars are packed full with Committee and Subcommittee meetings. With the ceremonial activities of the first week out of the way, the Legislature’s work will begin in earnest.