



March 1, 2009

### **News from the Capitol Steps**

Since the last newsletter, we have learned a new term – the soft funnel. As many of you recall, the Iowa Legislature has a pair of “funnels” it employs to filter out legislation that is not making forward progress by a certain date. The first funnel requires a bill to emerge from the committee to which it has been assigned by a certain date (this year, “officially” March 13<sup>th</sup>), and the second funnel requires a bill to emerge from the committee to which it was assigned in the OTHER chamber (this year, “officially” April 10<sup>th</sup>).

Since the Legislature trimmed the session from 110 days down to 100 days, and Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal had been talking about shooting for an April 2<sup>nd</sup> adjournment, many of us were anticipating some sort of drastic move with the funnel dates. Midway through last week, we began to hear that the “soft first funnel” would be March 6<sup>th</sup>, one week before the official funnel deadline. Then, this week, people began talking about February 27<sup>th</sup> as the “soft, soft funnel.” Basically, what these terms mean is that legislative leadership in both the House and the Senate are instructing their committee chairs to begin quickly winnowing down the list of legislative bills they will consider for the year.

For legislators and the lobbyists, the soft funnel has meant a crazy couple of weeks – subcommittees are being held on large numbers of bills while at the same time new bills are being introduced in each chamber every day by the dozen. Many of the bills you will see in the bill list this week will be dead by the next Advocacy Hotline.

Policy bills have definitely been the focus, as legislators have waited until a couple of days ago to begin work on the budget. The budget targets were released on Thursday and they show a smaller budget than what the Governor proposed. The targets essentially give each of the appropriations subcommittee a slice of budget with which they have to allocate to programs under their jurisdiction. Still unknown is how money from the federal stimulus bill may fit into the budget. If legislators do intend to try to adjourn in early April, then the numbers will start to come together fairly quickly.

**Federal Stimulus Chart** - You have undoubtedly heard about the \$787 Billion stimulus bill that was just enacted and will begin flowing into the states. Iowa's

portion of the stimulus is roughly \$1.9 Billion. The Iowa League of Cities has put together a great interactive chart of how the Iowa dollars are divided. Just go to: <http://www.iowaleague.org/Downloads/Legislative/2009/StimulusFlowchart09.pdf>

**Gender Balance** - In the bill list, you'll notice two versions of three bills ([SF 133 & HF 243](#) & [SF 264](#)) that deal with gender balance on boards (including library boards). The bills all address the issue of lack of diversity on government boards and commissions. While no one can argue with the intent of the bills, GAC and ILA lobbyists are watching these bills closely as they could have a major effect on a library's ability to find and retain quality board members.

The first two bills are pretty direct in simply requiring gender balance on all boards and commissions moving forward. An exemption would be possible for cities under 1,000 and for entities that have tried unsuccessfully for three months to fill a vacant position.

The latest of the three bills (SF 264) would require cities and counties to put in place a process for selecting the best applicants for open positions, regardless of race, gender, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other discriminatory demographic characteristic. SF 264 would require cities and counties to periodically report their progress and board compositions to the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women.

**ILA's Lobby From Home Day was this past Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> – If you did not have a chance to send a message to your legislators on Wednesday, then DO IT NOW! Legislators are beginning to make some key decisions about the budget and they need to hear from YOU!**

\*The information in this update is prepared for ILA by Campbell/Patterson Consulting, LLP.

**[ILA's Bills of Interest List is Available at:](#)**

**<http://tinyurl.com/awc28c>**

Remember - The bill tracker contains several functions that we are still refining. You can view individual bills along with our description in the list by pressing the "Details" link below the bill title. Additionally, you can go directly to the bill's listing on the Iowa General Assembly's website by clicking on the bill's number. If your goal is to get the full bill list and copy and paste it for your own use, you can do that by clicking the "Print All" link at the beginning of the bill list. We hope you enjoy the new bill tracker!

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### **Top Priorities: Library Issues 2009**

- ⇒ Allocate funds to assist flood-damaged libraries so they can replace their collections, repair their facilities, and resume full service to their customers.
- ⇒ Enhance Iowa's workforce by providing statewide access to additional high-demand databases, such as test preparation software. These databases help Iowans prepare for a wide variety of

educational and career tests, from GREs to college preparation to civil service and military service exams. This would require a \$250,000 new appropriation to the State Library of Iowa.

- ⇒ Increase funding for Enrich Iowa to support the dramatic increase of Iowans' need for and use of libraries. Not every library can own everything; Enrich Iowa funds resource-sharing that enables Iowa's library system to be an efficient resource-sharing network accessible to all Iowans.
- ⇒ Support efforts to develop a statewide shared library catalogue and check-out system.
- ⇒ Sustain the budget of the State Library of Iowa and Library Service Areas for providing critical leadership and support to libraries.
- ⇒ Preserve hometown governance in Iowa public libraries by maintaining support for the local decision-making.

### **Important Dates of the 2009 Legislative Session**

- ⇒ **March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009** – First funnel deadline. A House bill must have been approved by the committee of jurisdiction in the House in order to remain alive (and vice versa). Bills exempt from funnel deadlines include any bills in the Committees on Appropriations, Oversight and Ways & Means.
- ⇒ **March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009** – ILA's Legislative Day at the Iowa State Capitol.
- ⇒ **April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009** – Second funnel deadline. A House bill must have been approved by the committee of jurisdiction in the Senate in order to remain alive (and vice versa). Bills exempt from funnel deadlines include any bills in the Committees on Appropriations, Oversight and Ways & Means.
- ⇒ **May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009** – 110<sup>th</sup> Calendar Day of the 2009 legislative session. Per Diems for legislators expire. (Unless the Session is shortened to 100 days)

### **The Best Resources for Your Advocacy Needs:**

Find Your Legislator - <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/findleg/>

Contact Your Legislator - <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx>

Legislative Committee Listings - <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Committees/CommitteeInfo.aspx>

Track Legislation (instantly updated) - <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Legislation.html>

Listen to Debate (live) - <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Audio/Audio.html>

House & Senate Calendars (weekly & daily) - <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Chambers.html>

Session Calendar - <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Current/TimeTable.html>

How a Bill Becomes a Law - <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Pubinfo/bill2law.htm>

Guide to the General Assembly - <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Central/Guides/gaguide.pdf>

### **2009 ILA Legislative Agenda -**

<http://www.iowalibraryassociation.org/associations/2221/files/2009legagenda.pdf>

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### **Your Capitol Team**

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