

The Greiner Report

by Senator Sandra Greiner

District 39

March 7, 2013

“Funnel Week” at the Iowa Capitol always means a bevy of activity as legislators try to get as many bills as possible passed through committee. Any bills originating in the Senate must make it through the committee process in order to stay alive, and bills originating in the House must make it through House committees to be eligible for further consideration. Theoretically, if bills don’t make it across the first hurdle by the end of this week, they are dead. But bills have a way of reappearing later in session in the form of amendments attached to other bills.

Even though this is the final week for bills to be considered in their original committee, new bills were still arriving on our desks this week. Senate Mark Segebart, R-Vail, has sponsored SF287, which will allow persons who are engaged in the business of manufacturing beer to sell wine. I haven’t spoken to Segebart about his bill, but this appears to be an effort to allow many of the “cottage industry” breweries to also sell wine.

SF280, sponsored by Senator Joe Bolckom, D-Iowa City, will require new electrical installations on farms to be subject to inspection and enforcement provisions. The provisions include the requirement of the submission of a request for inspection, payment of inspection fees, performance of an inspection by the state or a political subdivision of the state, and condemnation and disconnection orders. The bill includes an appeal process.

Senate File 325, sponsored by Republican Senators Chapman, Ernst, Johnson, Guth and Anderson would over-ride the bylaws or restrictive covenants of Homeowners Associations or Housing Cooperatives from restricting individuals from displaying political signs.

There are also some bills of interest, which have successfully completed the first step in the legislative process:

The Committee on Veterans Affairs has passed SF302 which creates a Hire a Hero tax credit that would apply to both individual and corporate income taxes and the franchise tax. The tax credit is available for employers in the amount of \$1000 per eligible employee for the year in which the eligible employee is hired, and \$500 for each year of subsequent employment. The annual credits for initial and continued employment shall be prorated if such employment does not extend through an entire year. It will be interesting to follow this legislation as it works its way through the process.

The State Government Committee approved the passage of SF328 which directed the Iowa Lottery Authority to develop and issue one additional instant scratch card, annually, to benefit the Iowa Special Olympics.

The Senate Human Resources Committee adopted SF330 which creates a licensed social worker loan repayment program administered by the College Student Aid Commission. Applicant for the program must enter into an agreement with the commission, agreeing to work for a specific period of time in a "critical human service area," defined as a geographic area in Iowa with a shortage of social workers. The program provides a specific annual benefit, up to \$6500 for licensed social workers who have worked in a critical human services area in the previous year. No recipient shall receive a loan repayment that exceeds the total remaining balance of the student loan debt and no recipient shall receive cumulative awards in excess of \$25,000. The program is funded by a special revolving fund in the state treasury, controlled by the College Student Aid Commission.

I received an email last week, in response to my newsletter, inquiring as to *who* the Citizen Lobbyists were who have been visiting the Capitol and who might be paying these Citizen Lobbyists. "Citizen Lobbyist" is a term I use to describe a typical Iowan. Nobody is paying them to come to the Capitol to express their views. They buy their own lunch and they pay for their own gas to get here. All that said, they are also passionate about their issues and do a good job explaining how proposed legislation would affect their lives if the legislation is adopted. I really enjoy hearing from these people. Even when they hold views that are contrary to mine, I appreciate the fact that they have taken the time out of their own work day to share their views with me.

You do not have to drive to Des Moines to become a Citizen Lobbyist! You can achieve much the same result by contacting me from home!! Mail sent to me here at the Capitol should carry the zip code 50319. The Senate switchboard phone number is: 515-281-3371 and my email address is sandra.greiner@legis.iowa.gov.