

Senator Mark Chelgren

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER



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The Senate
State of Iowa
Eighty-fifth General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, IA 50319

COMMITTEES
Economic Growth/Rebuild Iowa
Local Government
Veterans Affairs

Administrative Rules Review Committee
Justice System Appropriations Subcommittee

Week 8

This week in the Senate was a funnel week which means that any bills that are not passed through committee are no longer eligible for discussion this year.

Some of the notable topics that will not go through as bills are:

- Banning traffic cameras
- A ban on drones over the skies of Iowa
- A vote on the definition of marriage
- Limitations on abortion
- Voter ID

These bills were not considered by the Senate Controlling Party Democrats nor assigned committee votes which mean that unless they are assigned as amendments to another bill or brought forward as leadership bills we will not be discussing them this year.

The notable topics that remain for discussion are:

- Education reform
- Medicaid/healthcare reform
- Property tax equalization
- Additional funding for the Department of Economic Development taxation bills and appropriation bills which are exempt from the funnel

I had an opportunity to sit in on a subcommittee hearing on education reform proposed by Senator Brad Zaun with the primary issues in his bill being the closing of the state Department of Education and the creation of a scholarship fund which would deposit funds for students directly into an educational savings account controlled by the students' parent or guardian. I was able to speak about the problems that Iowa Legislators and the federal government have created over the past forty years with a patchwork of individual laws and mandates for local school districts. The rules are so confusing that local school districts find it nearly impossible to understand the state requirements, much less the federal, and it takes the Department of Education to act as a facilitator just so the schools can comply with those regulations. I challenged my fellow legislators to work diligently over the next three years to rewrite the entire code dealing with the education system in Iowa in order to streamline the process and hopefully create an environment that is easily understood by the local school systems thereby empowering them to make decisions.

Senator Mark Chelgren
Ottumwa, Iowa

"I swear to support the Constitutions of the United States of America and the State of Iowa. So help me God."