

Funnel Week Ends

The Legislature has hit the halfway point in session, and the first major deadline of the year has sliced the list of eligible bills in half. Unfortunately, you are going to find a lot of bills that INA had hoped would die on that survivor list. Several anti-LGBTQ+ bills that specifically target gender non-conforming students made it through the funnel deadline, along with book bans that will keep the likes of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Ulysses*, *The Color Purple*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Canterbury Tales*, *Atlas Shrugged*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *The Kite Runner*, *The Hunger Games Trilogy*....and the Bible (because they all include a description of a sex act). Legislation to eliminate references to HIV & HPV in school health curricula also passed; proponents say it's already covered in requirements to discuss sexually transmitted diseases. One Iowa lobbyist Keenan Crowe testified about the necessity of keeping these references in Iowa Code, saying they were specifically added because schools were not including them, and removing the requirement would allow schools to stop talking about the one cancer-preventing vaccine in existence.

Looking ahead, legislators will spend most of the next two weeks in debate, with subcommittee action ramping up again mid-March to prepare for the second deadline on March 31 (when bills have to be out of committee in the opposite chamber - so House bills out of Senate committees, Senate bills out of House committees). Another session milestone will come at the end of next week (March 10), when the Revenue Estimating Conference (REC) meets to review state revenues and revise their estimates for the current year (FY 2023) and the next budget year (FY 2024). This is important because by law, legislators have to base their budget on the lower of the two revenue estimates, December or March. If numbers come in strong, legislators will still base their 99% spending limit on the December numbers. As a reminder, the Governor's budget spends less than 90% of the December estimates.

While budget work will begin after the REC estimates, most think bills will be delayed until after decisions are made on what everyone is calling "the big bill" (aka the Governor's Reorganization Bills, HSB 126, SSB 1123). Both bills passed out of committee without changes, but an amendment is expected. Once the structure of government agencies is locked in, they can reorganize the budgets to reflect those changes.

It will take a few days to move bills to the inactive list after the funnel on Friday (March 3), but the bill tracker should be updated by Monday, March 6. [Click here to view the status of bills.](#)