

Your Capitol Voice
Representative Bobby Kaufmann

Committee work is underway as the second week of Session has come and gone. For a reminder, I serve on the following committees: State Government, Local Government, Environmental Protection, Ways and Means, and I am Chairman the Oversight Committee. This week I will write about some of the work being done in my committees but I first want to report some big news to you.

DOT Ends I-80 Overpass Nonsense – Last week I had a meeting with the Director of the Department of Transportation along with four other DOT top officials. There was one discussion point on the agenda: the attempt by the DOT to get Cedar County and Johnson County to help pay for the overpasses on I-80. I was very firm with them and made it crystal clear that the only acceptable outcome was that the taxpayers of Cedar and Johnson Counties be held harmless and each and every one of those overpasses is replaced. I talked policy and fiscal right and wrong, but I made it personal. To me this was an attack on Cedar County and rural Iowa by the DOT.

In less than a week I received official word from the DOT that they are going to replace all 6 overpasses and pay 100% of the costs. I thank the DOT for listening. A special thanks to Rep. Gary Carlson who was also in the meeting and stood with us, as well as Senator Bob Dvorsky who was supportive every step of the way. This is the most significant political victory Cedar County has had in my 6 years in the legislature. These overpasses cost a minimum of \$1.3 million dollars per overpass. This wasn't just a victory for Cedar County; this was a victory for the entire state of Iowa. Tens of millions of dollars were at stake if this precedent of shifting costs to county government was allowed to happen and become the status quo. Thank-you to all of you, including the Cedar County Board of Supervisors, who came to the meetings, called me, and emailed me – this is your victory.

IPERS– The CEO of IPERS presented to the State Government Committee and she did an excellent job. She showed us a retirement system that is both conservative in its investing approach and mindful of the bigger picture. She showed us plans they have to keep IPERS solvent decades into the future. I was happy with the presentation and am here to report what I have been saying all along – your IPERS is solvent and safe both now and into the future. **Some with politics in mind continue to push a narrative that there is a secret plan to go after your IPERS. Please read this carefully: This is a sad and shameful political tactic that is categorically false. Your IPERS and my IPERS is safe and sound.** Unfortunately it is a classic political move used by some politicians and groups to make up a crisis then take credit when the crisis does not happen because there never was one.

Government Oversight – Last week we concluded “Part II” of our investigation of the Department of Human Services, which was initiated by the tragic deaths of two young girls in Polk County. I am happy to report that the new Director, Jerry Foxhoven, presented a very positive picture of the Department going forward. He has made significant changes in the 7 months that he has been on the job and he presented a litany of goals he believes can be achieved in 2018. If you wish to see my full report – email me and I will send it to you. I continue to dedicate my work on this issue to the two forgotten young women who died horrible deaths. God bless them both.

Many of you have seen in the news that a scandal has broken out with the Chair of the ICN board. This shyster was caught mismanaging over \$380,000 of your taxpayer dollars. This is a huge and developing story that I will write more about next week. Expect the Government Oversight Committee to take action and expose this entire episode as well as search for solutions to prevent any other scandals from happening here.

Capitol visitors: Eileen Fisher, Solon; Steve Colcord, Floyd Pershin, Wayne Frauenholtz, David Johnson, West Branch; Ken Rochholz, Durant; Denny Snow, Tipton.

Listening Posts Schedule, January 27:

Iowa City Chamber of Commerce, Iowa City Chamber Office-8 AM

Johnson County LWV, Iowa City Public Library-9:30 AM

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