

Your Capitol Voice
Representative Bobby Kaufmann

Water Quality-This week we passed our first major first major piece of legislation. It is a first step in dealing with water quality in our state. I supported the bill. It passed in both chambers with bipartisan support. There is some misinformation about the bill being pushed by fringe groups with only politics in mind. The first is the speed of which this bill passed – this bill has been public knowledge for over three years. We even debated it in caucus last year. The second myth is that it has no accountability. That is also not true. Written directly into the bill is compliance with the Hypoxea Action Plan Baseline. This is in compliance with a 2011 Obama Administration memo directed toward the Mississippi Water Shed states. We are currently monitoring and measuring phosphorus output and working to monitor and measure nitrogen as well. What the bill DOES do is provide \$282 million dollars in new funding over the next 12 years for water quality. It focuses on both urban and rural improvements. I want to also be clear that I consider this only a good start. Water quality discussions need to continue and more work needs to be done.

ICN Scandal – Most of you have heard by now that the director of our State ICN board was caught mis-managing nearly \$380,000 of taxpayer monies. Our ICN board is the group that ensures schools, community colleges, our National Guard, hospitals, among many have wireless internet. This is a significant state scandal and this Wednesday I will convene the Government Oversight Committee to begin investigating how this happened, how the director was able to do this undetected, how to prevent it from happening again, and how to recoup taxpayer money. Our first interview will be with State Auditor Mary Mosiman who will walk us through everything from her perspective.

Education – I want to report that I continue to push for the following legislation to be passed this session: SAVE fund extension for school infrastructure, setting state aid as soon as possible and for as much as we can afford, extending dollars for operational sharing, and transportation equity for our rural schools. I will dedicate future columns to education as policy makes its way forward. All of these issues are very much possibilities for passage this session.

Health Care – In my first column I wrote how restrictive Obamacare is when it comes to individual states being allowed to create their own health care market. Ultimately long-term insurance rate stabilization is going to require federal action, but we are attempting to make changes within the confines of the current law. The Commerce Committee met last week with the Insurance Commissioner. The goal is to get permission for “group plans” and be able to market them as a state. I will report more on this as I get more information. I am also excited to host a group of nurses from Solon and Iowa City Tuesday. I have organized a series of educational meetings with them, myself, and healthcare policy makers.

Managed Care – As we await policy changes to Managed Care to come from both Legislative policy committees and the Governor’s Office I am taking action back home. In addition to my forum schedule this week I have secured a meeting back home with the new Medicaid Director. He will be visiting The Village in West Branch – a wonderful facility that specializes in taking care of those with long-term disabilities. They have been affected by the changes like many others and we will make the case for reform.

Capitol visitors: Bruce Barnhart, West Branch; Jerry Fleagle, Coralville; Tom Manor ,Patti and Ray Hamilton, Solon; Sara and Jeff Clark, Cedar Rapids.

Listening Post Schedule, February 3:

9 AM - Muscatine Community College

1 PM - Durant City Council chambers

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