

**Your Capitol Voice**  
**Representative Bobby Kaufmann**

The 2018 Legislative Session has officially begun. I expect a busy year and always appreciate when my constituents respond to this column with feedback. For my first column of 2018 I want to write a brief synopsis of my top 7 priorities for the upcoming session. This is certainly not a complete list and, of course, issues will emerge throughout the session. There are several issues, like prevention of animal cruelty and my final oversight hearing on the Department of Human Services that could turn into major initiatives.

1. **Education**-Extension of the SAVE fund penny for school infrastructure is very important. In order for schools to use these dollars, they must be able to bond against the dollars and have a guarantee they will be available. This also takes the pressure from property taxes to fund infrastructure projects. Transportation costs are a major issue for many schools in my district. It is actually an issue of rural equity to me. Finally the SSA (Allowable Growth) must be set as early as possible. We all know there are precious few new dollars this year. Knowing exactly what that figure will be is crucial.
2. **I-80 Expansion and Interstate Overpasses** – Early on in the session I will dedicate an entire column to this issue and Highway 30, but I wanted to touch base on it here and now. The DOT is planning to expand I-80 to six lanes from the 380 exit to Illinois. They are threatening to not fully fund all the overpasses in Cedar, Scott, and Johnson counties. These overpasses are critical for travel, farming, safety, and our current county road networks. Not having them would be life threatening to those who need fire and ambulance. They are asking the county to help pay the bill to the tune of hundreds of thousands or even millions or lose the overpass. Let me be clear – this is WRONG and I will do everything in my power to stop it. These overpasses are federal and state property and should be maintained or re-built by those entities.
3. **EMS Funding** – I will work this year to promote a steady, dependable and adequate funding source for EMS providers and volunteers. This issue is reaching a critical juncture. People expect someone to answer when they dial 911 regardless of urban or rural.
4. **Fixing Managed Care/Medicaid** – When Governor Branstad made a change in how Medicaid services are delivered 3 years ago, a change was absolutely needed. Medicaid was growing at an alarming rate – over \$100 million per YEAR some years. This wasn't sustainable. However, it is crystal clear to me now that the changes made have many flaws and are in dire need of fixing. There is a sector of the population, and they are our most vulnerable, where our system is failing. We must act this session.
5. **Community Colleges/Workforce Development** – Governor Reynolds has made it clear that workforce development is a priority of hers. I support this priority. Too many employers in our district are having an issue filling good paying jobs. I want to ensure that those that do the best job training and connecting people, our community colleges, are the leaders in this effort and are properly funded to get it done.
6. **Water Quality** – A water quality bill will come up this session. My top two priorities for such a bill are funding for conservation practices and funding for our small towns that are being overwhelmed with the costs of upgrading sewer and water treatment facilities.

7. **Mental Health**– Upgrading and expanding Iowa’s mental health facilities is critical this year. I am happy to report that a new facility with over 70 beds will begin construction this spring in Bettendorf, but we need many more beds. Our hospitals and prisons are not mental health facilities but they are currently being treated as such.

Listening Post Schedule (January 13):  
Bennett American Legion-10AM  
Lowden City Council Chamber-1 PM

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