

Your Capitol Voice Representative Bobby Kaufmann

Hello everyone! The 2019 Legislative session is already underway! Before I start my column, I want to address my response to recent attacks against me. The 2020 campaign has unfortunately already begun. The letter attacking me last week was so absurd and false, it's not worth addressing specifically. I want to make sure you all know that you can always contact me directly if you read obvious political attacks. I will not respond to them in the papers each week. I think this type of tactic speaks for itself.

The first week of session is very ceremonial. We head the State of the State from Governor Reynolds, the Condition of the National Guard from General Orr, and the State of the Judiciary from Justice Cady. During this first week we pick our seats and all the committees meet for the first time.

In this first column I want to outline my new committee roles and give you my top five priorities for the upcoming session. In years past I have been the Chair of the Government Oversight Committee. I still serve on the committee but I got a promotion and am now the Chair of the State Government Committee. This is a role with wide-ranging jurisdiction. Bills that traditionally come through State Government address gaming, elections, scope of practice, pensions, and any matter that has a tie to State Government. This committee is also the place where any bill concerning IPERS will go. I said it before the election and I will say it again – **there will unequivocally not be changes to IPERS**. Sadly there was **never** going to be an effort to do that but political groups led you to believe that for political purposes.

I also serve on Judiciary and Ways and Means. Each new session brings priorities from all 150 legislators. I want to share with you some of my personal priorities (in no particular order). These are ideas and areas of importance that I have heard from all of you back home.

EMS – I am firmly committed to finding our EMS folks a steady stream of revenue. I like attending pancake breakfasts as much as anyone but it is absolutely unacceptable that our volunteers have to host those just to get by.

Mental Health – Last year we set up the framework for greater access to mental health services in a bill that passed unanimously. This year we need to empower counties and fully fund that system and set up a similar system for children.

Animal Cruelty – It has become all too normal in Iowa for people to torture and brutalize dogs/puppies and cats/kittens and face little to no consequences. Besides the fact, that this is just plain wrong, I firmly believe that if you have the predisposition to commit such a crime it won't be long before you graduate to harming adults and children. We need strong laws and I will push for them.

Education – The Governor has proposed a \$92 million dollar increase to K-12 public schools. This is a 2.3% increase and I think it is a very doable number. Furthermore, I will push for the SAVE bill to get passed right away. I will also oppose vouchers.

Listening Posts (January 26)

8 AM Iowa City Chamber, Iowa City, City Hall

9:30 AM LWV, Iowa City, City Hall

Visitors to the Capitol:

Bruce Barnhart, West Branch; Mike Shuger, Wilton

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