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**STATE OF IOWA**

**Senate Journal**

**THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2023**

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# JOURNAL OF THE SENATE

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ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CALENDAR DAY  
SIXTY-EIGHTH SESSION DAY

Senate Chamber  
Des Moines, Iowa, Thursday, May 4, 2023

The Senate met in regular session at 9:05 a.m., President Sinclair presiding.

Prayer was offered by the Honorable Amy Sinclair, member of the Senate from Wayne County.

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Senate Page Anjali Kumar.

The Journal of Wednesday, May 3, 2023, was approved.

## HOUSE MESSAGES RECEIVED

The following messages were received from the Chief Clerk of the House:

MADAM PRESIDENT: I am directed to inform your honorable body that the House has on May 3, 2023, **passed** the following bills in which the concurrence of the House was asked:

[Senate File 528](#), a bill for an act relating to persons eligible to hunt with a crossbow.

[Senate File 560](#), a bill for an act relating to and making appropriations to the education system, including the funding and operation of the department for the blind, the department of education, and the state board of regents; requiring the state board of regents to conduct a study and prepare a report related to diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and efforts; providing for responsibilities of the workforce development board; establishing the Iowa workforce grant and incentive program; requiring the department of education to convene a task force to study issues related to programs for at-risk students and dropout prevention programs; modifying provisions related to the future ready Iowa skilled workforce grant program, the all Iowa opportunity scholarship program, the education savings account program, the gap tuition assistance program, the Iowa educational services for the blind and visually impaired program, career and technical education programs, the fine arts beginning teacher mentoring program, the equipment replacement and program-sharing property tax levy, and the posting of education-related job openings; and including effective date, applicability, and retroactive applicability provisions.

[Senate File 562](#), a bill for an act relating to and making appropriations to the justice system, including by providing for payments associated with indigent defense and representation, the funding of activities relating to consumer fraud and antitrust, a corrections capital reinvestment fund, an Iowa law enforcement academy study, a human trafficking study, and the funding of peace officer retirement, and including effective date and retroactive applicability provisions.

[Senate File 563](#), a bill for an act relating to the judicial branch, including appropriations to the judicial branch, apportionment of district associate judges, video recordings, noncontract attorney appointment, and contracting authority.

[Senate File 578](#), a bill for an act relating to state finances, including by making, modifying, limiting, or reducing appropriations, distributions, or transfers, authorizing expenditure of certain unappropriated moneys, making corrections, and including effective date, applicability, and retroactive applicability provisions.

ALSO: That the House has on May 3, 2023, **concurred** in the Senate amendment and **passed** the following bills in which the concurrence of the House was asked:

[House File 232](#), a bill for an act relating to probate proceedings, including fiduciary and trustee duties, and including applicability provisions.

[House File 265](#), a bill for an act relating to midwife licensure, providing for fees, and making penalties applicable.

[House File 270](#), a bill for an act relating to certain deadlines relating to the informal review and protest of property assessments in counties declared to be a disaster area.

[House File 430](#), a bill for an act relating to education, including requirements related to mandatory reporters, a process for investigating complaints against school employees, and the responsibilities of the department of education, school districts, charter schools, accredited nonpublic schools, and the board of educational examiners.

[House File 666](#), a bill for an act providing for programs and regulations administered and enforced by the department of agriculture and land stewardship, providing fees, providing for the allocation of moneys, making penalties applicable, and including effective date provisions.

[House File 707](#), a bill for an act relating to state child care assistance eligibility requirements and child care provider reimbursement rates.

[House File 708](#), a bill for an act relating to Medicaid reimbursement for services to individuals who meet the nursing home level of care and are required to register as sex offenders.

[House File 711](#), a bill for an act relating to levee and drainage districts, by providing for the repair or reconstruction of levees, requesting the establishment of a legislative interim committee to consider levee and drainage district laws, making appropriations, and including effective date provisions.

The Senate stood at ease at 9:10 a.m. until the fall of the gavel for the purpose of party caucuses.

The Senate resumed session at 10:31 a.m., President Sinclair presiding.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Leave of absence was granted as follows:

Senator Brown, until he arrives, on request of Senator Whitver.

#### CONSIDERATION OF BILL (Ways and Means Calendar)

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent to take up for consideration [House File 660](#).

#### [House File 660](#)

On motion of Senator Schultz, [House File 660](#), a bill for an act relating to sales tax rebates for a raceway facility, with report of committee recommending amendment and passage, was taken up for consideration.

Senator Dawson offered amendment [S-3228](#), filed by him from the floor to page 1 of the bill, and moved its adoption.

Amendment [S-3228](#) was adopted by a voice vote.

Senator Schultz offered amendment [S-3227](#), filed by the committee on Ways and Means on May 3, 2023, to pages 1–2 of the bill, and moved its adoption.

Amendment [S-3227](#) was adopted by a voice vote.

Senator Schultz moved that the bill be read the last time now and placed upon its passage, which motion prevailed by a voice vote, and the bill was read the last time.

On the question “Shall the bill pass?” ([H.F. 660](#)), the vote was:

Yeas, 49:

Alons	Bennett	Bisignano	Boulton
Bousselot	Celsi	Costello	Cournoyer
Dawson	De Witt	Dickey	Donahue
Dotzler	Driscoll	Edler	Evans
Garrett	Giddens	Green	Gruenhagen
Guth	Jochum	Klimesh	Knox
Koelker	Kraayenbrink	Lofgren	McClintock
Petersen	Quirmbach	Reichman	Rowley
Rozenboom	Salmon	Schultz	Shipley
Sinclair	Sweeney	Taylor, J.	Taylor, T.
Trone Garriott	Wahls	Webster	Weiner
Westrich	Whitver	Winckler	Zaun
Zumbach			

Nays, none.

Absent, 1:

Brown

The bill, having received a constitutional majority, was declared to have passed the Senate and the title, as amended, was agreed to.

#### IMMEDIATELY MESSAGED

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent that [House File 660](#) be **immediately messaged** to the House.

#### CONSIDERATION OF BILL (Ways and Means Calendar)

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent to take up for consideration [House File 716](#).

#### [House File 716](#)

On motion of Senator Schultz, [House File 716](#), a bill for an act relating to elections, including primary elections, political party caucuses, updates to the statewide voter registration system, and costs of preparing lists of voters, with report of committee recommending passage, was taken up for consideration.

Senator Schultz moved that the bill be read the last time now and placed upon its passage, which motion prevailed by a voice vote, and the bill was read the last time.

On the question “Shall the bill pass?” ([H.F. 716](#)), the vote was:

Yeas, 33:

Alons	Bousselot	Costello	Cournoyer
Dawson	De Witt	Dickey	Driscoll
Edler	Evans	Garrett	Green
Gruenhagen	Guth	Klimesh	Koelker
Kraayenbrink	Lofgren	McClintock	Reichman
Rowley	Rozenboom	Salmon	Schultz
Shiple	Sinclair	Sweeney	Taylor, J.
Webster	Westrich	Whitver	Zaun
Zumbach			

Nays, 16:

Bennett	Bisignano	Boulton	Celsi
Donahue	Dotzler	Giddens	Jochum
Knox	Petersen	Quirnbach	Taylor, T.
Trone Garriott	Wahls	Weiner	Winckler

Absent, 1:

Brown

The bill, having received a constitutional majority, was declared to have passed the Senate and the title was agreed to.

#### IMMEDIATELY MESSAGED

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent that [House File 716](#) be **immediately messaged** to the House.

#### CONSIDERATION OF BILL (Ways and Means Calendar)

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent to take up for consideration [House File 590](#).

### House File 590

On motion of Senator Klimesh, [House File 590](#), a bill for an act relating to moneys credited to the flood mitigation fund from fees collected for flying our colors registration plates, with report of committee recommending passage, was taken up for consideration.

Senator Klimesh moved that the bill be read the last time now and placed upon its passage, which motion prevailed by a voice vote, and the bill was read the last time.

On the question “Shall the bill pass?” ([H.F. 590](#)), the vote was:

Yeas, 49:

Alons	Bennett	Bisignano	Boulton
Bousselot	Celsi	Costello	Cournoyer
Dawson	De Witt	Dickey	Donahue
Dotzler	Driscoll	Edler	Evans
Garrett	Giddens	Green	Gruenhagen
Guth	Jochum	Klimesh	Knox
Koelker	Kraayenbrink	Lofgren	McClintock
Petersen	Quirmbach	Reichman	Rowley
Rozenboom	Salmon	Schultz	Shipley
Sinclair	Sweeney	Taylor, J.	Taylor, T.
Trone Garriott	Wahls	Webster	Weiner
Westrich	Whitver	Winckler	Zaun
Zumbach			

Nays, none.

Absent, 1:

Brown

The bill, having received a constitutional majority, was declared to have passed the Senate and the title was agreed to.

### IMMEDIATELY MESSAGED

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent that [House File 590](#) be **immediately messaged** to the House.



CONSIDERATION OF BILL  
(Ways and Means Calendar)

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent to take up for consideration [House File 672](#).

[House File 672](#)

On motion of Senator Cournoyer, [House File 672](#), a bill for an act relating to certain specified employees of school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools, including renewal requirements associated with licenses issued by the board of educational examiners to practitioners with master's or doctoral degrees, fees associated with the review of certain specified records, and background checks for employees of school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools, with report of committee recommending passage, was taken up for consideration.

Senator Cournoyer moved that the bill be read the last time now and placed upon its passage, which motion prevailed by a voice vote, and the bill was read the last time.

On the question "Shall the bill pass?" ([H.F. 672](#)), the vote was:

Yeas, 49:

Alons	Bennett	Bisignano	Boulton
Bousselot	Celsi	Costello	Cournoyer
Dawson	De Witt	Dickey	Donahue
Dotzler	Driscoll	Edler	Evans
Garrett	Giddens	Green	Gruenhagen
Guth	Jochum	Klimesh	Knox
Koelker	Kraayenbrink	Lofgren	McClintock
Petersen	Quirnbach	Reichman	Rowley
Rozenboom	Salmon	Schultz	Shipley
Sinclair	Sweeney	Taylor, J.	Taylor, T.
Trone Garriott	Wahls	Webster	Weiner
Westrich	Whitver	Winckler	Zaun
Zumbach			

Nays, none.

Absent, 1:

Brown

The bill, having received a constitutional majority, was declared to have passed the Senate and the title was agreed to.

#### IMMEDIATELY MESSAGED

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent that [House File 672](#) be **immediately messaged** to the House.

#### CONSIDERATION OF BILL (Ways and Means Calendar)

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent to take up for consideration [House File 677](#).

#### [House File 677](#)

On motion of Senator Koelker, [House File 677](#), a bill for an act relating to native winery and native brewery retail alcohol licenses, with report of committee recommending passage, was taken up for consideration.

Senator Koelker moved that the bill be read the last time now and placed upon its passage, which motion prevailed by a voice vote, and the bill was read the last time.

On the question "Shall the bill pass?" ([H.F. 677](#)), the vote was:

Yeas, 47:

Alons	Bennett	Bisignano	Boulton
Bousselot	Cournoyer	Dawson	De Witt
Dickey	Donahue	Dotzler	Driscoll
Edler	Evans	Garrett	Giddens
Green	Gruenhagen	Guth	Jochum
Klimesh	Knox	Koelker	Kraayenbrink
Lofgren	McClintock	Petersen	Quirmbach
Reichman	Rowley	Rozenboom	Salmon
Schultz	Shipley	Sinclair	Sweeney

Taylor, J.  
Webster  
Winckler

Taylor, T.  
Weiner  
Zaun

Trone Garriott  
Westrich  
Zumbach

Wahls  
Whitver

Nays, 2:

Celsi

Costello

Absent, 1:

Brown

The bill, having received a constitutional majority, was declared to have passed the Senate and the title was agreed to.

#### IMMEDIATELY MESSAGED

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent that [House File 677](#) be **immediately messaged** to the House.

#### HOUSE AMENDMENT CONSIDERED

#### [Senate File 219](#)

Senator Whitver called up for consideration [Senate File 219](#), a bill for an act relating to educational requirements for a permit to perform tattooing, amended by the House in House amendment [S-3119](#), filed April 5, 2023.

Senator Alons moved that the Senate concur in the House amendment.

The motion prevailed by a voice vote and the Senate **concurred** in the House amendment.

Senator Alons moved that the bill, as amended by the House and concurred in by the Senate, be read the last time now and placed upon its passage, which motion prevailed by voice vote, and the bill was read the last time.

On the question “Shall the bill pass?” ([S.F. 219](#)), the vote was:

Yeas, 38:

Alons	Bennett	Bisignano	Bousselot
Costello	Cournoyer	Dawson	De Witt
Dickey	Driscoll	Edler	Evans
Garrett	Giddens	Green	Gruenhagen
Guth	Klimesh	Knox	Koelker
Kraayenbrink	Lofgren	McClintock	Reichman
Rowley	Rozenboom	Salmon	Schultz
Shipley	Sinclair	Sweeney	Taylor, J.
Wahls	Webster	Westrich	Whitver
Zaun	Zumbach		

Nays, 11:

Boulton	Celsi	Donahue	Dotzler
Jochum	Petersen	Quirnbach	Taylor, T.
Trone Garriott	Weiner	Winckler	

Absent, 1:

Brown

The bill, having received a constitutional majority, was declared to have passed the Senate and the title was agreed to.

#### IMMEDIATELY MESSAGED

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent that [Senate File 219](#) be **immediately messaged** to the House.

#### CONSIDERATION OF BILL (Ways and Means Calendar)

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent to take up for consideration [House File 719](#).

#### [House File 719](#)

On motion of Senator Cournoyer, [House File 719](#), a bill for an act relating to unfair or deceptive acts or practices in the rental of vehicles and making penalties applicable, with report of committee recommending passage, was taken up for consideration.

Senator Cournoyer moved that the bill be read the last time now and placed upon its passage, which motion prevailed by a voice vote, and the bill was read the last time.

On the question “Shall the bill pass?” ([H.F. 719](#)), the vote was:

Yeas, 49:

Alons	Bennett	Bisignano	Boulton
Bousselot	Celsi	Costello	Cournoyer
Dawson	De Witt	Dickey	Donahue
Dotzler	Driscoll	Edler	Evans
Garrett	Giddens	Green	Gruenhagen
Guth	Jochum	Klimesh	Knox
Koelker	Kraayenbrink	Lofgren	McClintock
Petersen	Quirmbach	Reichman	Rowley
Rozenboom	Salmon	Schultz	Shipley
Sinclair	Sweeney	Taylor, J.	Taylor, T.
Trone Garriott	Wahls	Webster	Weiner
Westrich	Whitver	Winckler	Zaun
Zumbach			

Nays, none.

Absent, 1:

Brown

The bill, having received a constitutional majority, was declared to have passed the Senate and the title was agreed to.

#### IMMEDIATELY MESSAGED

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent that [House File 719](#) be **immediately messaged** to the House.

#### INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTION

[Senate Concurrent Resolution 7](#), by Rules and Administration, a concurrent resolution to provide for adjournment sine die.

Read first time under Rule 28 and **placed on calendar**.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION  
(Regular Calendar)

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent to take up for consideration [Senate Concurrent Resolution 7](#).

[Senate Concurrent Resolution 7](#)

On motion of Senator Whitver, [Senate Concurrent Resolution 7](#), A concurrent resolution to provide for adjournment sine die, was taken up for consideration.

Senator Whitver moved the adoption of [Senate Concurrent Resolution 7](#), which motion prevailed by a voice vote.

IMMEDIATELY MESSAGED

Senator Whitver asked and received unanimous consent that [Senate Concurrent Resolution 7](#) be **immediately messaged** to the House.

FINAL ADJOURNMENT

By virtue of [Senate Concurrent Resolution 7](#), duly adopted, the day of May 4, 2023, having arrived, President Sinclair declared the 2023 Regular Session of the Ninetieth General Assembly adjourned sine die.

APPENDIX

HOUSE MESSAGES RECEIVED

The following messages were received from the Chief Clerk of the House:

MADAM PRESIDENT: I am directed to inform your honorable body that the House has on May 4, 2023, **concurred** in the Senate amendment **and passed** the following bills in which the concurrence of the House was asked:

[House File 660](#), a bill for an act relating to sales tax rebates for a raceway facility.

[House File 710](#), a bill for an act relating to certain tax receipts on internet fantasy sports contests and sports wagering, providing for tax credits, making appropriations, and including applicability, retroactive applicability, and effective date provisions.

ALSO: That the House has on May 4, 2023, **passed** the following bills in which the concurrence of the House was asked:

[Senate File 559](#), a bill for an act relating to and making appropriations for the economic development of the state, including to the economic development authority, the Iowa finance authority, the public employment relations board, the department of workforce development, and the state board of regents and certain regents institutions, and modifying the housing renewal pilot program and provisions related to regional industry sector partnerships, the apprenticeship training program, and new jobs training agreements.

[Senate File 577](#), a bill for an act relating to and making appropriations from the rebuild Iowa infrastructure fund and technology reinvestment fund, establishing a destination Iowa fund, providing for related matters, and including effective date provisions.

ALSO: That the House has on May 4, 2023, **adopted** the following resolution in which the concurrence of the House was asked:

[Senate Concurrent Resolution 7](#), a concurrent resolution to provide for adjournment sine die.

#### REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

President Sinclair provided the following remarks:

Six years ago, we began the first Republican trifecta in the state since the 1997-1998 General Assembly. Entering our first year in the majority, I could not have imagined the challenges we would face, the bold solutions we would design, and the successes we would have to better the state of Iowa. We focused our efforts on tax reform, the reformation of collective bargaining laws, balancing the state budget, and protecting the life of the unborn. During our first session in the majority, we passed 174 bills, overhauling laws put in place prior to our majority, beginning to repair the budget, and working to begin an economic revival in our state.

However, when the pandemic hit, new issues arose and existing problems we had not seen came to light. I never imagined we would need to pass laws to let kids go back to school, allow family members to visit loved ones in the hospital, or keep workplaces from mandating vaccines for their employees. But we did. I am proud of the leadership our state showed during this time. It was this leadership that paved the way for the legislature to pass these bills, leading the nation by being the first state in the country to get our kids back in the classroom and being named the fastest state in the country to recover economically from the pandemic.

Several years ago, one of my friends and colleagues retired from the Iowa Senate. When I asked him why, part of his response was that he felt like Iowa Republicans had accomplished more Republican priorities since taking the majority in 2017 than most Republican legislators dream of accomplishing in their career. While I can see why he thought that at the time based on past sessions, just wait until he looks at what we have done in the 2023 session.

While it is beginning to feel like we often hear the word “historic” when talking about the accomplishments of the Iowa Legislature, the 2023 session has truly been historic in seeing some of my own priorities accomplished. We have passed policy I never believed I would see cross the finish line when I was first elected. Parental choice in education has always been a passion of mine. Parents have a right to educate their children in the way that supports their values system. And if the district school available to them doesn’t meet that need, our state has an obligation to support them as they make an alternative choice. This year Iowa passed [HF 68](#), creating a pathway to universal school choice in our state. We also passed [SF 496](#) to ensure parents know their rights when it comes to transparency in our educational institutions. Parents should be able to trust that their school administrators and educators will always do the right thing for their children. Transparency will strengthen that trust.

Additionally, we passed a historic property tax transparency and reform bill. When attending forums and listening to my constituents, the number one issue I hear about is property taxes. With the major increase in assessments recently released, we knew real change was needed in our system. [HF 718](#) provides over \$100 million in property tax relief, making it the most comprehensive property tax reform bill ever. The bill will automatically reduce tax rates when assessments rise, restore basic levy limitations to control government spending, and simplify a complex system while still maintaining local flexibility and decision making for community priorities.

In addition to these accomplishments, this session has also seen bills that prevent fraud in our welfare systems, prevent sexually explicit materials from being available to kids in our schools, ensure we maintain a balanced budget, and create more access to health care solutions for rural Iowans. To top it all off, Iowa has been named one of the top ten overall best states by US News and World Report. So while we have heard the word “historic” used before, the word accurately describes the positive change Iowa has seen and will continue to see under the Republican trifecta. I am proud to have served District 12 in the Iowa Senate and honored to serve the entire state as Senate President during this historic session of the Iowa legislature.

## REMARKS BY THE MINORITY LEADER

Senator Wahls provided the following remarks:

As we come to the end of the 2023 Legislative session, I want to thank my Democratic colleagues for the honor of leading our team. Together, we represent one million Iowans, who deserve, like every Iowan, to have their values represented and their interests reflected in the work of this legislative body.

Colleagues, you have done an admirable job representing the people of Iowa during challenging circumstances this year.



I'd also ask the chamber to join me in showing appreciation for:

- our smart and hard-working caucus staffs and clerks,
- the Secretary of the Senate and his staff,
- the dedicated, knowledgeable, and hardworking staff at the Legislative Services Agencies,
- the sergeants-at-arms and the Senate pages,
- the custodial staff and all who keep our Capitol beautiful,
- the state troopers at Post 16 and security guards who keep us safe,
- and the news media who help keep our constituents informed,
- and everyone else who contributes to the work we do on behalf of Iowa.

Madam President, 2023 will go down in history as one of the most divisive and cruel legislative sessions ever seen in Iowa. Over the last four months, Iowa Republican politicians have continued to pour gasoline on the flames of the culture war by undermining and politicizing our public schools, banning books, mercilessly attacking the freedoms of parents and the LGBTQ community, and continuing the Republican push to ban abortion outright in the state of Iowa.

In addition to their obsession with culture war issues, Iowa Republican politicians spent this session protecting political insiders and keeping the public left in the dark, eroding transparency and accountability of state government, and even calling for the arrest of law enforcement officers who detained the January 6 insurrectionists.

All this without taking meaningful action to address the Reynolds Workforce Crisis, the number one challenge facing our state — other than trying to roll back protections against child labor.

On education, Iowa Republicans rammed through an expensive, unpopular voucher scheme that will divert one billion dollars away from our public schools and into exclusive private schools over the next four years. We all know this private school giveaway will come at the expense of our community schools. And we can see that it won't make these private schools any more welcoming to the vast majority of Iowa kids. In fact, many private schools' first step in response to vouchers has been to raise tuition, likely shutting out many of the students Republicans claimed this bill would help.

Senate Republicans followed up this terrible voucher bill with more attacks on our schools: slashing educational standards, banning books from school libraries, and even micromanaging where students go to the bathroom. None of this helps Iowa. It only hurts Iowa students.

And Senate Republicans made Iowa more dangerous for kids by rolling back child labor protections and instead allowing teenagers to serve alcohol and work in dangerous jobs like roofing, excavation, and demolition. This will make those occupations less safe, drive down wages, and jeopardize the future livelihood of Iowa's young people. None of this helps our state.

And, finally, Republican politicians spent this session making our government less accountable and transparent to the people we are meant to serve.

With the governor's reorganization bill, Republicans rubber-stamped a blatant power grab from the executive branch that hands over expansive new powers to the governor and attorney general, while removing important checks and balances. In addition, Senate Republicans declined to hold public budget hearings and instead advanced "blank-check" budgets. Some bill managers refused to answer questions about their legislation on the Senate floor. The public deserves to know what Iowa Republican politicians are trying to hide.

In one of their final acts of 2023, Senate Republicans passed a petty, partisan bill that strips away essential tools for the democratically elected state auditor to investigate waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

If there's one silver lining to this terrible session, it was the passage of a bipartisan property tax reform bill that will reduce tax bills for Iowans all across our state. This is a positive step forward, and Senate Democrats were proud to support it and see it passed into law.

I'd like to close with a message to the Iowans feeling angry, or scared, or left out by the actions of the Republican majority this year: It doesn't have to be this way.

Senate Democrats are committed to representing all Iowans. We're committed to listening to you, and reflecting your interests and values here in Des Moines. We're committed to solving the big challenges facing our state.

We'll never give up on you, and we'll never quit fighting for an Iowa that you can be proud to call home.

Thank you, Madam President.

## REMARKS BY THE MAJORITY LEADER

Senator Whitver provided the following remarks:

Madame President,

One hundred and fifteen days have passed since my opening day remarks in this chamber. During that speech I talked about how proud I have been to hear the word historic used again and again to describe our accomplishments in the prior six legislative sessions.

Historic tax relief, historic expansion of Iowans' 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment freedoms, historic protections of our elections, historic mental health reforms, and historic support for law enforcement are all included on that list.

In our 7<sup>th</sup> session in the majority, and first in the supermajority, we stacked more historic achievements on top of that list. One of the first bills passed by the Senate this year was [HF 68](#). It kept our promise to parents to give all students choice in their education.

Iowa has tremendous public schools, but they may not be the best fit for every student. School choice gives all parents and students the same opportunities currently available only for families with the means to pay their income taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, and still have enough to pay for private school tuition. School choice opens doors for families and it has shown in study after study to improve student achievement both for students in public school and in private school. Senate Republicans have led on this issue for years and we enjoyed seeing this policy cross the finish line so early in session and now the state of Iowa is a leader in school choice.

On day one I also mentioned how often we heard from Iowans about their serious concern of impeding property assessment increases. They were right. Over the last several weeks they shared their stories of 20%, 30%, and even 50% increases in the value of their property. They were angry about these increases because for decades they've seen their property tax bills go up and up, while being told by their local governments it's the assessor's fault, not the taxing authority.

[HF 718](#) was another historic achievement. It fixed the assessment problem. This bill implemented structural property tax reform and protected Iowans from those massive jumps in property taxes they feared by automatically reducing tax rates when assessments rise and consolidating and simplifying more than a dozen different levies. It also empowered taxpayers by giving them information about the taxes and spending of local governments on how it impacts their tax bill.

The final issue I addressed was workforce. Senate Republicans took several major steps to addressing the workforce shortage in Iowa by creating the Iowa Apprenticeship Office to put Iowans on the fast track to high-demand careers with strong salaries and benefits. We also made it easier for teenagers to explore potential career opportunities or make more money with common sense reforms to youth employment and removed unnecessary burdens to teachers looking to work in Iowa.

But our work wasn't just limited to those three issues. We passed a common-sense ban on gender transition surgeries on children and simply directed K-12 schools to have boys use the boys' bathroom and girls use the girls' bathroom.

The list of achievements goes on: We also passed several common-sense policies to expand health care access and availability by limiting non-economic damages in medical malpractice cases and a rural emergency hospital declaration to help stabilize rural emergency hospitals. Reforms to Iowa's public assistance programs were overdue. This year those reforms passed both chambers and the state's welfare programs will be better protected from fraud and available for Iowans truly in need. K-12 schools got more flexibility to meet the specific needs of their districts. For the first time in 40 years state government was aligned to improve efficiency, eliminate redundancies, and save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

The 2023 Iowa Legislature was truly a historic session, one of the most productive since as far back as 2021. Now is the time to celebrate our achievements. I am proud of the work this caucus did. I think I speak for all of us when I say we are looking forward to some days off, time with our other jobs, and time with our families. I will see you again in 8 months refreshed with new ideas to continue to deliver results for the great people of Iowa.

Thank you madame president.

#### AMENDMENT FILED

[S-3228](#)

[H.F. 660](#)

Dan Dawson