



Iowa Chamber Alliance

Legislative Newsletter

October 2021

REDISTRICTING

The Iowa legislature returned to the Iowa Capitol on October 28th to consider the proposed redistricting maps drafted by the Legislative Services Agency. On October 5th, the Iowa Senate took up Senate File 620 after the State Government Committee voted the bill out of committee without recommendation. Following the floor debate, the Senate voted 32-18 to reject the proposed maps, with republicans unanimously opposing and democrats unanimously supporting the maps.

The Senate passed a resolution outlining the concerns to be delivered to the Legislative Services Agency. LSA delivered the second set of proposed maps to the Legislature on October 21st, with changes addressing the Senate's concerns.

In the second maps, 20 Senators and 38 Representatives were grouped together, and 11 open seats were created in the Senate and 21 in the House. The second maps have two districts in which three incumbents now live within the same districts. Additionally, Iowa's incumbent congresswomen in the 2nd and 3rd Districts, Representative Cindy Axne (D – West Des Moines) and Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-Ottumwa), both fall into the newly formed 3rd Congressional District.

Legislators cannot vote on the maps based on political reasons; instead, their decision must be focused on the compactness and population deviations outlined in Iowa Code.

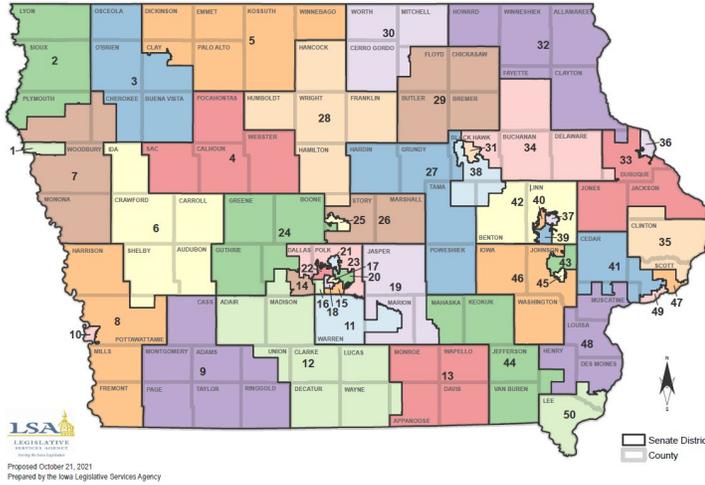
On October 28th, the legislature approved the second proposed plan following little discussion with a 48-1 vote in the Senate and a 93-2 vote in the House.

“After review of the second redistricting plan, I believe it corrects the failures of Plan One to redistrict the state in a compact manner with minimal differences in population,” Senate Majority Leader Jack Whitver (R- Ankeny) said in a statement. “Despite years of fear-mongering about gerrymandering and claims the first map could not be improved, the Iowa Senate followed the process outlined in Iowa Code, and a more compact map with better population differences has been approved.”

Governor Reynolds released the following statement, “Today's decision by the Iowa Legislature to approve the second draft of the legislative and congressional redistricting maps is very encouraging. I am confident in how the process played out – just as the law intended, and I believe these new districts will fairly and accurately represent the citizens of Iowa for the next decade.”

PROPOSED PLAN 2: IOWA SENATE DISTRICTS

To Be Effective Beginning with the Elections in 2022 for the 90th General Assembly



Impacted Incumbents:

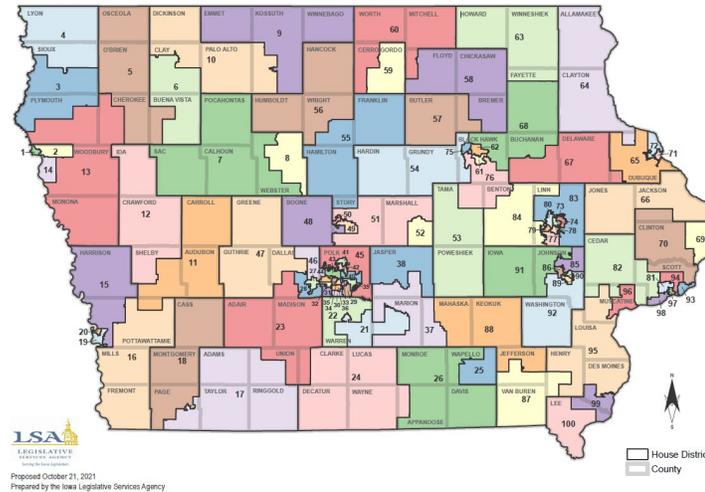
- SD4: Jesse Green (R)/Tim Kraayenbrink (R)
- SD6: Craig Williams (R)/Jason Schultz (R)
- SD 16: Claire Celsi (D)/Sarah Trone Garriott (D)
- SD30: Amanda Ragan (D)/Waylon Brown (R)
- SD34: Craig Johnson (R)/Dan Zumbach (R)
- SD40: Todd Taylor (D)/Liz Mathis (D)
- SD41: Jim Lykam (D)/Roby Smith (R)
- SD44: Ken Rozenboom (R)/Adrian Dickey (R)
- SD46: Dawn Driscoll (R)/Kevin Kinney (D)
- SD50: Jeff Reichman (R)/Tim Goodwin (R)

Impacted Incumbents:

- HD3: Skyler Wheeler (R), Thomas Jeneary (R)
- HD6: Megan Jones (R), Gary Worthan (R)
- HD19: Jon Jacobsen (R), Brent Siegrist (R)
- HD21: Brooke Boden (R), Jon Thorup (R)
- HD23: Carter Nordman (R), Ray Sorensen (R), Stan Gustafson (R)
- HD34: Marti Anderson (D), Ako Abdul-Samad (D)
- HD42: Mike Bousset (R), Garrett Gobble (R)
- HD48 Rob Bacon (R), Phil Thompson (R)
- HD53: David Maxwell (R), Dean Fisher (R)
- HD61: Timi Brown-Powers (D), Ras Smith (D)
- HD66: Steven Bradley (R), Lee Hein (R)
- HD68: Sandy Salmon (R), Chad Ingels (R)
- HD74: Eric Gjerde (D), Molly Donahue (D)
- HD82: Ross Paustian (R), Bobby Kaufmann (R)
- HD87: Jeff Shipley (R), Joe Mitchell (R)
- HD88: Holly Brink (R), Dustin Hite (R)
- HD95: Mark Cisneros (R), Dennis Cohoon (D), David Kerr (R)
- HD98: Monica Kuth (D), Cindy Winkler (D)

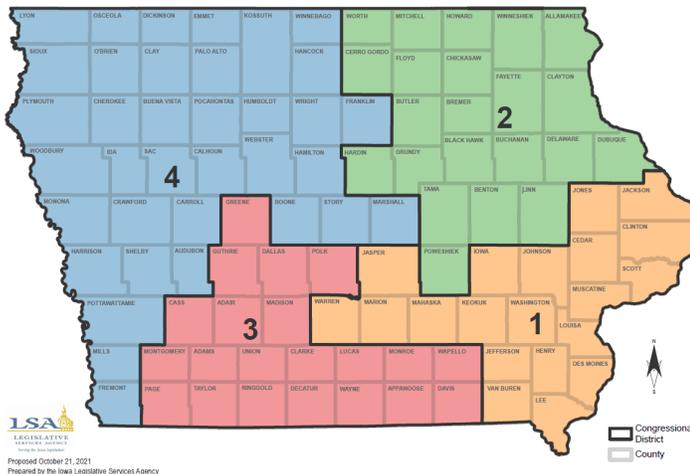
PROPOSED PLAN 2: IOWA HOUSE DISTRICTS

To Be Effective Beginning with the Elections in 2022 for the 90th General Assembly



PROPOSED PLAN 2: IOWA CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

To Be Effective Beginning with the Elections in 2022 for the 118th General Assembly



Impacted Incumbents:

- CD3: Cindy Axne (D), Marianette Miller-Meeks (R)



VACCINE LEGISLATION

In addition to redistricting, the Iowa Legislature took up legislation to address vaccine mandates on employees during the second Special Session. Representative Henry Stone (R – Forest City) introduced House File 902 of October 28th.

The legislation states that employers who require employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine shall also allow for exemptions related to an employee's religious beliefs or if receiving the vaccine would be harmful to the employee or someone living with the employee. The legislation also provides that an employee terminated for refusing a COVID-19 vaccine can not be disqualified from unemployment benefits for such reasons. In addition, a terminated employee for such reasons will not count against the employer's unemployment experience, which would otherwise impact the employer's unemployment insurance rates.

The bill was referred to the House State Government Committee; after a long debate, the bill passed out of committee with bi-partisan support. During the floor debate, House Democrats expressed concerns related to the vagueness of the language and the legitimacy of the exemptions.

"This bill, I think, is more problematic than it will solve any kinds of problems," Rep. Bruce Hunter (D – Des Moines) said during debate. "It will be a burden on the unemployment trust fund and it's not solving any problems it's purporting to solve."

Republicans argued that the bill provides support to employees who chose not to get the vaccine.

"I believe we have found a meaningful solution to protect Iowans and Iowa businesses from the Biden administration's extreme government outreach," House Speaker Pat Grassley (R- New Hartford) said in a statement.

The House passed HF 902 with a 68-27 vote and sent it on to the Senate for consideration, where it was referred to the Senate Commerce Committee. After less debate, the Senate concurred with the House and passed the legislation with bipartisan support, 45-4.

Governor Reynolds signed the bill into law this morning and released the following statement.

"I am proud to sign this bipartisan piece of legislation today. This is a major step forward in protecting Iowans' freedoms and their abilities to make healthcare decisions based on what's best for themselves and their families. This legislation also gives employees the assurance that they will still receive unemployment benefits despite being fired for standing up for their beliefs.

"As I've stated publicly numerous times, I believe the vaccine is the best defense against COVID-19 and we've provided Iowans with the information they need to determine what's best for themselves and their families, but no Iowan should be forced to lose their job or livelihood over the COVID-19 vaccine.

"This is only the first step. We will be taking other legal actions against the Biden Administration's vaccine mandate."

Following the statement, Governor Reynolds announced Iowa joined a lawsuit with nine other states challenging President Biden's vaccine mandate for all federal employees. HF 902 came in advance of the anticipated OSHA rules related to the order requiring employers with more than 100 employees to require the COVID-19 vaccine.

SPECIAL ELECTION UPDATES

Republican Jon Dunwell won the special election for House District 2, flipping the Newton-based district that Democrats have held through numerous election cycles. District 29 includes Newton, Colfax, Mingo, Kellogg, Prairie City, Baxter, and parts of rural Jasper County. Former State Representative Wes Breckenridge stepped down in September after accepting a job with the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy.

Governor Reynolds is expected to announce a special election for Senate District 1 shortly following Senator Zach Whiting's announcement that he will be stepping down to accept a job with the Texas Public Policy Foundation. District 1 includes Lyon, Osceola, Dickinson, Clay, and Palo Alto counties.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: GREATER BURLINGTON PARTNERSHIP

Greater Burlington Welcomes New Manufacturer

Integra Pool Covers, an innovator within the automatic swimming pool cover industry, expanded their operations into the Greater Burlington area in early 2021. The company purchased the former Siemens building in the Burlington Flint Ridge Business Park. Moving operations from Knoxville, TN during a pandemic has not been without challenges, however production has begun, and finished goods are being shipped out of the facility. The new Burlington location will allow the company to better meet the incredible demand for their automatic swimming pool safety covers and replacement safety covers while accelerating their expansion into the production of vinyl pool liners.

Integra Pool Covers is part of the newly formed Xplore Pool & Spa Group that is headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee. This group is comprised of a collection of leading brands that have been passionately sponsoring quality family time for over two decades.

“Integra Pool Covers prides itself on our ability to provide high-quality safety covers within 48 hours,” states Toby Karsten, General Manager at Integra Pool Covers. “The addition of the Burlington site allows us to maintain high standards and better serve Value Added Resellers, independent dealers and the families they serve. We are especially excited to be creating 80 jobs over the next three years and leveraging their talents and knowledge to fuel even more growth.”

The Greater Burlington Partnership Economic Development team assisted Integra Pool Covers through Iowa Economic Development Authority's Targeted Jobs Program application. Burlington is one of five Iowa cities that offers the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit Program, which refunds a portion of the Iowa withholding taxes for positions created above the county wide wage threshold of \$21.61 per hour. Integra Pool Covers has committed to 40 of the positions to be at or above the wage threshold. As of October 2021, twenty of the eighty anticipated created jobs have been filled, with future expansion in the vinyl pool liner line, and pool safety cover line slated to ramp up operations in early 2022. The company is also looking to take advantage of the Iowa Industrial New Jobs Training program which is administered through Southeastern Community College and provides financial assistance for new employee training.

NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

On October 11th, Governor Reynolds announced \$200 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funding would be allocated toward the Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant Program. Governor Reynolds and the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) announced the awardees of the \$100 million state-funded program in mid-September. The additional \$200 million of ARAP funds will fund the remaining applications.

“Broadband has never been more important for our future. I continue to hear from Iowans who still lack access to the broadband speeds necessary to start a business, telework, or connect with a healthcare provider,” Gov. Reynolds said. “With this additional investment, we have invested more than \$300 million this year alone on bringing future-ready broadband to rural and unserved areas of our state.”

On October 20th, Governor Reynolds announced two new programs aimed at addressing Iowa’s workforce shortage. Both grant programs focus on expanding Manufacturing 4.0 and received a \$30 million appropriation from the American Rescue Plan Act funds. The [first grant opportunity](#) will supplement the existing Manufacturing 4.0 program for small manufacturers, employing up to 75 employees, with \$5 million. The [second grant opportunity](#) will invest \$25 million to make similar grant opportunities available to mid-size firms employing 76 – 250 employees.