

STATE ISSUES FROM SANDS

House District 87

Serving Louisa, Muscatine and Des Moines Counties

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News from the Hill...

Two weeks ago, the majority party released joint budget targets for approximately one-half of the state budget. However, they have refused to release the entire budget including targets for supplemental appropriations, standing appropriations and all of the transfers and tax increases. Because the majority party has yet to disclose the completed balance sheet, I will be opposing the budget proposed until it is made public. It would be irresponsible to vote on a spending bill without knowing how it will affect the total picture.

Nuclear Power Gains Support...

Since the late 1970's, the idea of building more nuclear power plants in America has not topped the list of issues advocated by the public, but since the growing need for cheap power and advancements in technology, Americans have begun re-examining the idea. A bi-partisan group of Iowa legislators is trying to move the issue forward. [House File 2305](#) passed through the House Commerce Committee unanimously Wednesday morning adds nuclear energy to the definition of alternative and renewable energy sources.

State Standards on Education...

Iowa House Republicans are pushing for rigorous content standards and assessments to compete once again with Minnesota and Wisconsin's educational performance. Three definitions help to define what the House seeks to focus on with education.

“**Core Content Standards**” are what students should know and be able to do. These help to set the basis for establishing the content of a statewide assessment system and for choosing the appropriate curriculum. “**Performance of Proficiency Standards**” are multiple assessments used as evidence to show how well students learn. And “**Curriculum**” would be defined as the details of the day-to-day schooling at the local level, as the local level is where curriculum decisions are best made. To enrich Iowa's education, we must focus on not only day-to-day curriculum but also core content and performance standards.

Rising Textbook Costs...

Students from across the state have noticed in the last few years the cost of college textbooks has dramatically raised. Last Thursday, [House File 2197](#) passed through the House by a vote of 96-0 giving students the ability to compare prices online. Universities and colleges will now be required to give students the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) to allow students to find the books online. By giving students the ISBN,

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colleges and universities are unable to hold the monopoly over textbooks causing the rising prices.

Gaming Bill Clears Committee...

On Tuesday, the State Government committee passed [SF 348](#) with a committee amendment. The bill, as amended, made changes regarding county casino referendums and codified provisions related to horse racing. These codifications include the horse purses for thoroughbreds, quarter horses, and county fair purses for standardbreds. The bill codified racing performances for the thoroughbreds and quarter horses, but does not for the standardbreds. These changes are supported by the thoroughbred and quarter horse representative groups but not for the standardbred horse groups.

I am proposing an amendment to better the interests for standardbreds increasing the number of guaranteed racing performances at Prairie Meadows.

For more information on these and other bills: <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/>

Until next time,
Tom Sands

Committee Assignments

Environmental Protection
Commerce
Public Safety

**Ways and Means
-Ranking Member**

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Upcoming Forums:

Saturday, March 1, 2008
Muscatine County Forum
9am Muscatine Community College Student Center
Muscatine, IA
and
Louisa County Forum
11am Wapello State Bank
Wapello, IA