

What happened to that bill? Recapping the Iowa Legislature

While most of the news cycle was dominated by presidential politics, important things were happening in Des Moines. Yet now the session is concluded. Here's a quick breakdown of key bills that passed this session and those that didn't:

Banning the sale of baby body parts

A bill that would have made it illegal to sell parts of an aborted child failed to pass in the Republican-controlled House, but **blocked** by the Democrat-controlled Iowa Senate.

Defunding abortion providers

After weeks of negotiations between the House and Senate on whether or not the state will continue to fund abortion providers, the Senate won, and **funding continues**. The House, however, was able to negotiate an increase in the child adoption tax credit, from \$2,500 to \$5,000. Seven Republican legislators resolutely refused to vote for a Health and Human Service Budget that continued to fund abortion providers: Reps. Salmon, Watts, Heartsill, Fisher, Baxter, Kooiker, and Sheets. Nonetheless, the budget narrowly passed with just 51 votes. All other no votes came from Democrats, who voted no for other reasons.

Doctor-assisted suicide

A Senate bill that would have legalized doctors prescribing death-inducing pills to patients diagnosed with a terminally ill disease **thankfully failed** in spite of two subcommittee meetings. This is an issue that will likely be discussed for many years ahead.

Governor's LGBTQ Conference

The House Government Oversight Committee wrapped up their investigation into the 2015 Governor's Conference on LGBTQ Youth. Their recommendation was to pass a bill that would require parents to opt in to any form of sexual education and disclose content ahead of time. Unfortunately, this legislation **failed** to receive the support it needed to advance this legislative session.

Human trafficking

This year we took another large step forward in combating human trafficking. Several years ago, Iowa received a "D" grade on laws against human trafficking. The FAMiLY LEADER Foundation and several other organizations worked with the Iowa Legislature to address these issues, resulting in Iowa now getting an "A" grade. Despite strong laws in place, however, our law enforcement was not equipped to handle this crime. But this year the Iowa Legislature opened a brand new office in the Department of Public Safety, and money has been appropriated to that office to begin hiring investigators to enforce laws against traffickers. This was a **huge victory** on an issue that has received strong bi-partisan support.

Predatory lending

The bill that would have expanded the payday lending cap from \$500 to \$5,000 **thankfully failed** this session. We do expect to see this effort resurrected in future years.

Religious liberty and life at conception

At the beginning of the session, over 70 pastors visited with the chairman and members of the Iowa House Judiciary Committee on the importance of both of these issues. **Neither bill moved forward** in committee. It may take years to change the minds of Iowa's leaders on these two issues, but we will continue to educate until the day Iowa recognizes that life begins at

conception and upholds and protects religious liberty.

Terminating parental rights of rapists

Thanks to the joint efforts of Republican Rep. Greg Heartsill and Democrat Sen. Steve Sodders, the Iowa Legislature successfully **passed** a law that allows a rape victim who becomes pregnant to more easily terminate the rapist's parental rights over the baby.

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