

STATE GOVERNMENT

IOWA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

END OF SESSION, 2009

PAY EQUITY

SF 137 makes wage discrimination against an employee because of age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion or disability an unfair employment practice under Iowa's civil rights laws. The bill:

- Prohibits a wage reduction for other employees to remedy a violation.
- Makes it an affirmative defense to argue that a pay difference is related to seniority, merit system, or for other non-discriminatory reasons.
- Awards double the wage differential for the period of discrimination, or triple the difference for willful violations, plus damages.
- Exempts employers with four or fewer employees.

SF 137 – signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009

GENDER BALANCE ON LOCAL BOARDS

HF 243 directs local governments to make a good faith effort to achieve or maintain gender balance when filling vacancies on appointive boards and commissions after January 1, 2012. If the local government makes a good faith effort, but still can't find a suitable candidate after three months, then the gender balance requirement can be waived.

HF 243 – signed by Governor; applicable January 1, 2012

CANCER AS WORK-RELATED DISABILITY

Establishes a presumption that cancer and infectious diseases are work-related for the purposes of disability and death benefits. This applies to the members of the Statewide Fire and Police Retirement only. Cancer and infectious diseases contracted by firefighter and police officer members of the statewide fire and police retirement system is presumed to be a disease contracted while on active duty due to the job for purposes of establishing a disability pension or providing a death benefit. The presumption does not apply to firefighter members who joined the retirement system after July 1, 1992, if the member has a medical condition that was known on the date the member joined the system.

SF 226 – signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009

ELECTION LAW CHANGES

Several bills were approved this year making changes to Iowa's election laws. These include:

- Requires the county commissioner of elections to begin counting absentee ballots the day before the election if the ballots were not completely counted by 10:00 p.m. at the preceding general election day. (HF 670 – signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009)
- Allows the county commissioner of elections to send the absentee ballot team out ten days after the ballots are printed, as well as 14 days prior to Election Day. (HF 708 – signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009)

- Requires the county commissioner of elections to notify the chairs of each central committee at least seven days before voters can vote at a satellite voting station. (SF 436 – signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009)
- Allows the county commissioner of elections to open the polls at noon, rather than 7:00 a.m., for any city election. (HF 450 – to Governor)

CAMPAIGN FINANCE LAW CHANGES

Several bills were approved relating to campaign finance laws. Changes include:

- Prohibits paying family members with funds in the candidate’s campaign committee account. (SF 50 – signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009)
- Requires political action committees to file their campaign reports electronically beginning May 1, 2010. (SF 51 – signed by Governor; effective May 20, 2010)
- Prohibits using a false caller identification to make phone calls urging the passage or defeat of a candidate or ballot issue. (HF 776 – signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009)

OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST

- HF 400 Makes technical changes to the licensure of sprinkler fitters and installers law. (signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009)
- HF 777 Makes changes to Iowa’s open records and open meetings laws (Senate Calendar with SF 282)
- HF 801 Requires the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to establish a free searchable data base for citizens to access the revenues and expenditures of state government. (Senate State Government Committee)
- HF 805 Requires the Department of Administrative Services to establish a website with a searchable data base for citizen access to information relating to expenditures and revenues. (Senate State Government Committee)
- HF 809 Creates a new category of community festival, no more than 4 days in length, where bingo can be held. (to Governor; effective July 1, 2009)
- SF 159 Makes technical changes to the licensure of electricians law. (signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009)
- SF 224 Makes changes to Iowa’s statewide licensure of plumbers law. (to Governor; effective July 1, 2009)
- SF 420 Allows a person employed by a class “A” native wine permittee to also be employed by a native brewery. (signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009)
- SF 447 Allows a person who orders a bottle of wine in a restaurant and doesn’t consume the entire bottle to have the bottle resealed and placed in a bag to take home. (signed by Governor; effective July 1, 2009)