

# Opinion & Politics

## Kaufmann elected Majority Leader in Iowa House

On Monday, Aug. 4, Iowa House Republicans elected Representative Bobby Kaufmann (R-Wilton) as the new Majority Leader to guide the 67-member House Majority caucus through the remainder of the 91st General Assembly.

"I am honored by the trust placed in me by my colleagues to serve as Majority Leader," Kaufmann said. "This is a role I will not take lightly.

Speaker of the Iowa House Pat Grassley (R-New Hartford) said he is eager to get to work with Representative Kaufmann in this new capacity.

"I am committed to uniting our caucus to advance policies that strengthen our economy, support our families, and ensure our children will have bright futures," said Kaufmann. "I look forward to working with Speaker Grassley to address the challenges and opportunities

facing Iowa with bold, practical solutions."

Kaufmann was first elected to the Iowa House in 2012. He has served as the Ways and Means Committee Chairman since 2022. Before his role leading the Ways and Means Committee, he served as Chairman of the House State Government and Government Oversight Committees.

"I've served in the Iowa House with Representative Kaufmann for many years now and have seen him grow into a leader for our caucus," Grassley said. "I have seen many examples of how his bold leadership style has brought the caucus together toward meaningful legislation to move our state forward. I look forward to working closely with him to advance our caucus's shared vision for Iowa."

Effective immediately, Kaufmann replaced Representative Matt Windschitl (R-Missouri Valley) as Iowa House Majority Leader.

## State Fair Straw Poll an unofficial barometer on Iowans' 2026 election preferences

Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate announced the results of the unscientific Iowa State Fair Straw Poll on Monday. The poll, which closed Sunday at 8 p.m., allowed fairgoers to cast their preference for candidates for the 2026 gubernatorial, senatorial, and congressional races. More than 2,000 fairgoers participated in the 2025 state fair straw poll, using tablets at the Iowa Secretary of State's booth in the Varied Industries Building to select their preferred candidates.

Fairgoers were asked to choose their preferred candidates for the 2026 Primary Election and to vote for their preferred candidate to represent their respective political party in the 2026 General Election. Secretary Pate emphasized that the poll serves a larger purpose beyond measuring candidate preferences.

"While historically, the straw poll has been a good indicator of where Iowa voters stand in terms of the upcoming election, the real goal of the straw poll is to encourage Iowans to participate in our election process," said Secretary Pate. "We have a City-School election coming up on November 4. Local elections matter. This is the time to truly make your voices heard and have an impact on your local communities. November will be here before we know it – and it's never too early to make your plan to vote."

Below are percentage totals for gubernatorial, senatorial, and congressional votes cast throughout the 11 days of the 2025 Iowa State Fair. Candidates featured on the straw poll ballots were identified by their respective political parties.

**REPUBLICANS**

*Governor*

Eddie Andrews won: 38.93%, 647 votes  
Brad Sherman (28.7%), 477 votes  
Randy Feenstra (27.38%), 455 votes  
Mile Bousselot (4.99%), 83 votes

*U.S. Senate*

Joni Ernst won: 61.37%, 977 votes  
Jim Carlin (33.04%), 526 votes  
Joshua Smith (5.59%), 89 votes

*Congressional District 1*

Mariannette Miller-Meeks won: 54.96%, 216 votes  
David Pautsch (45.04%), 177 votes

*Congressional District 2*

Ashley Hinson won: 100%, 183 votes

*Congressional District 3*

Zach Nunn won: 100%, 744 votes

*Congressional District 4*

Matt Windschitl won: 37.56%, 80 votes  
Kyle Larsen (23.47%), 50 votes  
Chris McGowan (23%), 49 votes  
Ryan Rhodes (15.96%), 34 votes

**DEMOCRATS**

*Governor*

Rob Sand won: 86.96%, 600 votes  
Julie Stauch (13.04%), 90 votes

*U.S. Senate*

Zach Wahls won: 30.24%, 189 votes  
J.D. Scholten (29.76%), 186 votes  
Jackie Norris (23.84%), 149 votes  
Nathan Sage (15.2%), 95 votes

*Congressional District 1*

Christina Bohannon won: 64.89%, 85 votes  
Travis Terrell (21.37%), 28 votes  
Taylor Wettach (9.92%), 13 votes  
Bob Krause (3.82%), 5 votes

*Congressional District 2*

Lindsay James won: 47.27%, 26 votes  
Kathryn Dolter (34.55%), 19 votes  
Clint Twedt-Ball (18.18%), 10 votes

*Congressional District 3*

Jennifer Konfrst won: 51.12%, 182 votes  
Sarah Trone Garriot (39.33%), 140 votes  
Xavier Carrigan (9.55%), 34 votes

*Congressional District 4*

Stephanie Steiner won: 66.67%, 48 votes  
Ashley WolfTornabane (33.33%), 24 votes

**How did the fair fare?**

Secretary Pate also polled fairgoers on their favorite Iowa State Fair foods and rides and the most iconic part of the fair.

The butter cow was named the most iconic part of the state fair, receiving 36% of votes (810 total).

The corn dog was the top choice for fair food, receiving 36% of votes (799 total). Pork chop on a stick closely followed, receiving 32% of votes (703 total).

The Sky Glider easily took top place for favorite fair ride, receiving nearly 50% of votes (999 total).

All results are unscientific and unofficial. Fairgoers who visited the booth could also register to vote for the upcoming election and learn about various programs from Secretary Pate's Elections, Business Services, and Safe at Home Divisions.

## Relatively Minor

Vicki Minor, Editor  
editor@wintersetmadisonian.com

Laughter does not have to come from a major source. It could indeed be ... relatively minor.

### Defending My Flower Bed

A weed is Mother Nature's way of decorating your yard, whether you welcome it or not. It's the obnoxious intruder of the garden, appearing in the most unwelcome spots like an uninvited guest who refuses to leave. My flower bed, filled with a dazzling display of colors, remains neat and beautiful until dandelions unexpectedly pop up to throw everything off balance.

Now it's time for the "hoe, hoe, hoe" (Santa-style). Grabbing my long-handled tool, I swung the sharp metal blade into the earth, slicing through the roots. With a sweep, I gathered the greens, sending them off on their journey to the great beyond. For a fleeting moment, victory tasted sweet.

After a full day of battling, just when I thought it was safe to retreat indoors and rest, the vines emerged. They shot up through the grass, twisting and coiling their thin limbs around the stems of my roses, lurking like silent predators. Gripping tightly, refusing to loosen their grasp, they consumed each bush. My yard remained in a quiet tension, fully aware that the battle against the weeds was still ongoing.

The struggle continued in the backyard. Unwilling to concede, a fierce vine advanced toward the rickrack along the deck, weaving through the openings as it reached skyward to grab a nearby tree branch, attempting to pull it down. Calling for reinforcements, another vine climbed onto the deck, wrapping its tendrils around two propane tanks and slithering up the handle of my oversized rake.

With determination, I approached the plant. It seemed almost alive. Its large, uneven leaves and elongated, greenish body formed a tiny, leafy monument to the battlefield that lay before me. One tendril pointed straight at me, as if to challenge my resolve. I squared my shoulders, gripped my trusty hoe, and thought, "Alright, you green menace, prepare to meet your match."

The vine quivered slightly, as if reconsidering its audacious attack, but then it lunged again. The conflict between garden and weed raged on, and I was sure of one thing: in this conflict, surrender was not an option, only more fighting, more grappling, and maybe a brief moment of pleasure when yet another weed ended up in the compost pile.

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The Winterset Madisonian (USPS 687-260) is published weekly on Wednesdays by MadCoMedia Group, Inc. Periodical Postage paid at Winterset, Iowa 50273. Entered as Periodical at the Post Office at Winterset, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

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One year in Madison and surrounding counties (Clarke, Union, Adair, Dallas, Polk, and Warren) \$48.00. Elsewhere in Iowa \$52.00.

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