

Opinion & Politics

Strengthening Iowa's Voice

A new monthly feature, in partnership with the Iowa Newspaper Association, offers perspectives from both major political parties. This month's focus is higher education.

Iowa leads on higher education reform

By Rep. Taylor Collins, Chair
House Committee on Higher Ed.

The challenges facing Iowa's higher education system have been building for many years, and the impact on students is becoming increasingly severe. For far too long, we have seen a mission drift on campus, leading to out-of-control costs and a less-prepared workforce. The state legislature has a duty to act since taxpayers are forced to foot the bill. Last November, for the first time in over 50 years, Speaker Grassley formed a new committee solely focused on ensuring our higher education system better serves students, not just the university bureaucracy. I have the honor of leading that committee, and during our first year, we got right to work.

This fiscal year, the State of Iowa's appropriations to our regent universities topped over half a billion. The

legislature continues to support higher education in Iowa, but trying to address the cost of higher education by throwing more money at the system is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. Even as appropriations increase, the universities continue to drive up spending. For decades now, students in Iowa and across the country have seen sustained tuition increases, causing students to further weigh the costs and benefits of seeking higher education.

One of our solutions this year, House File 440, the College Affordability Act, was introduced and signed into law by the Governor just a few months ago. The legislation requires tuition rates for each academic year to be set before most students start enrolling,

COLLINS
continued on page 8A

Invest in our workforce to grow the economy

By Rep. Brian Meyer
House Democratic Leader

Tuition is too damn high. Higher education is so expensive that many Iowa students end up buried in debt before they even start working. More than 400,000 Iowans are still carrying student loan debt, and it's holding them back from building their futures here in Iowa.

As the state's investment in higher education continues to shrink, Iowa families have been left carrying a greater burden of the cost. Tuition at Iowa's three public universities has risen an average of 36% in the last decade. Iowa's average debt per borrower is \$41,600, totaling \$13.9 billion, which includes both federal and private loans. Tuition at Iowa's community colleges has gone up 21% from 2014 to 2023, and is the third highest in the Midwest.

This year, Iowa House Republicans created the Higher Education Committee. I was hopeful we'd finally see real solutions on how to reduce the rising cost of tuition. Instead, Republican members on the committee spent the entire session chasing culture war battles at the will of special interests, and did nothing to reduce costs for the people of Iowa.

To counter this, Iowa House Democrats introduced legislation to lower tuition costs and give families more certainty. The bill would lock in tuition and fees for all four years for Iowa freshmen at Iowa State University, the University of Iowa, and the University of Northern Iowa, which will save students about \$2,500 for a degree. It allows students and families to budget

MEYER
continued on page 8A

Winterset City Government Update

By Tom Leners
Winterset Mayor

Several Covered Bridge Festival Committee meetings have been held. The Committee is working hard to make sure the 2025 version is an awesome event! If you're looking for a way to be involved in our community, please call the Madison County Chamber of Commerce office (515-462-1185) and ask where they need volunteers. Also, a note of thanks for the volunteers that work the equivalent of a second job for the weeks prior to the Festival to ensure the Festival succeeds.

Thank you for being careful driving around the construction projects in town. We need to pack our patience when navigating around these important upgrades to Winterset infrastructure. When our commute times are so

short a twenty or thirty second delay is immaterial.

The Winterset City Council has discussed the sump pump ordinance. Winterset City Staff is working on wording that will fit our community. The specifics of the program will be announced as soon as it is complete. As a reminder, routing your sump pump outflow into the sanitary sewer is not legal in Winterset.

Compliments to the folks that bring products to the Farmers Market. We non-gardeners appreciate your hard work. The flower beds around town look terrific! I also enjoy the fall and early Halloween decorations that are out.

Thank you to all those who voted in the special election. 3,000+ ballots for a special election was a tremendous turnout! Also thank you to both candidates who offered their talents to the county.

All for now.

Relatively Minor

Vicki Minor, Editor
editor@wintersetmadisonian.com

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

...

Under the Friday Night Lights

The weekend is here, it's time for the game. Fans in bright colors, all shouting one name. They cheer from the stands, their spirits upbeat, Hoping their team won't taste defeat.

Players take the field, eleven on each side, Offense and defense, both ready to collide. The quarterback takes the snap with control, Steps back, firm grip, eyes on the goal.

The crowd holds its breath; the moment is rare, As the receiver offers up a silent prayer. Charging past the fifty-yard line with force, Hoping the ball will stay on its intended course.

Hands outstretched to make a fair catch, A defender dives in, quick to unlatch. The ball from his arms, the fans start to rumble, Deeply dismayed to witness the fumble.

As the ball rolled loose on the ground, Other players suddenly gathered around. Each one grabbing for the oblong prize Soon led to an enormous pile of guys.

Just then, the ref threw a flag in the air, Adjusted his cap and smoothed back his hair. This on-field chaos could not be ignored. Thinking the whole incident must be explored

Meanwhile, the ball popped loose from the pile, And bounced past the goal line in winning style. But no one could say who'd made the score, And that's how the ball bounces, nothing more!

Connect with your legislators

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