

Senate Republicans and Reynolds reach ‘budget compromise’ that excludes House

By Robin Opsahl
Iowa Capital Dispatch

While Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds and Senate Republicans said Monday they have reached a “budget compromise” on how to fund the state heading into the 2026 fiscal year, House Republicans are asking for more money in some areas.

Passing the state budget through a series of appropriations bills is one of Iowa Legislature’s largest jobs, and the final step before lawmakers can adjourn for the year. In Iowa, the goal is for state legislators to wrap up their work by the 110th day of session — this year on Friday, May 2. There’s a financial motivation for lawmakers to finish their work by or near this date, after which they will no longer receive payment for expenses other than mileage between their homes and the State Capitol.

As of Monday, four days before the May 2 deadline, only one budget bill, Senate File 628, has passed through the committee process. The Senate’s transportation budget bill was approved by the chamber last week, but has not yet been taken up in the House. But there was movement Monday to kick off public discussions on the rest of the budget as House Republicans released their spending targets for the upcoming fiscal year.

Also on Monday, Reynolds and Senate Republicans issued a news release stating they had reached a “budget compromise” that leaders said will continue the Republican trifecta’s work of lowering costs for Iowans.

“We cut taxes to ensure Iowans could keep more of their hard-earned money, and we must maintain spending discipline to ensure it stays that way,” Reynolds said in a statement Monday. “Iowa remains on a strong fiscally sustainable path, and we should continue our focus on putting taxpayers first.”

House Speaker Pat Grassley said in a news release the House Republicans budget also follows conservative fiscal beliefs while providing needed state financial support for services Iowans care about.

“Our caucus is committed to delivering a budget that follows responsible budget practices, while funding the priorities Iowans care most about,” Grassley said in a statement. “Iowans expect to see their tax dollars used wisely to fund important services like nursing homes, paraprofessional pay, support for human trafficking victims, and more of that sort, and that’s what this House Republican caucus is fight-



ing to deliver.”

The House plan would give Iowa a state budget of \$9.45 billion in FY 2026, an increase of \$506 million, or 5.65%, from FY 2025. It’s a higher target than the \$9.41 billion budget agreed upon between the Senate and Reynolds.

Comparing the two budget proposals, the differences are:

A roughly \$1 million difference for the Administration and Regulations budget, the appropriations for the Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL), the departments of Administrative Services and Revenue, as well as other state agencies and offices including the Secretary of State’s Office. The Senate target is \$73.5 million, and the House’s is \$74.5 million. The House also set a \$1.7 million higher budget target in the Agriculture and Natural Resources budget than the Senate and governor are proposing. This funding, going to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Department of Natural Resources and related outdoors and farming services, has a Senate GOP target of \$45.6 million and House GOP target of \$47.3 million. For Economic Development appropriations, the House is asking for \$450,000 more, a total of roughly \$40.6 million, compared to the Senate and Reynolds’ \$40.2 million target. This pot of funding goes to the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Iowa Finance Authority, Iowa Department of Workforce Development and related entities. There’s a larger difference in the Education funding goals between the two chambers projections —

House Republicans are asking for \$15 million more in the education appropriations bill than what the Senate and governor’s plan provides. This funding is separate from State Supplemental Aid, the per-pupil funding going to Iowa’s K-12 schools. This money heads to the state Department of Education, public universities governed by the state Board of Regents, the Department for the Blind and other education-related services. The Senate’s budget goal is set at \$1,026,386,031, and the House at \$1,042,264,716. Health and Human Services is the one of the two funding categories where the Senate and Reynolds’ plan has a higher funding target than the House’s plan. The Senate and governor are asking for nearly \$500,000 more for the appropriations bill that goes to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Veteran Affairs. The Senate’s budget target is \$2,468,992,645 and the House’s is \$2,468,514,264. For the Justice System and Judicial Branch, the House is asking for roughly \$3 million more in funding, with the Senate goal set at \$925.9 million and the House at \$928.9 million. These funds will go to the state’s judicial system, as well as state law enforcement entities, the Iowa Department of Justice and Department of Corrections. The chambers’ goals for standings appropriations — typically a grab bag of other state funding obligations that includes the state SSA funding — public K-12 school funding — is the other area where the Senate has a higher target set than the House. The Senate is asking for \$4,836,758,719 in standings, while

the House is asking for \$4,851,312,672. A majority of this money has already been designated through SSA for K-12 funding, but there is still a \$3 million difference between the two budget goals for the measure.

As of Monday afternoon, the House budget bills have not yet been released, and not all the specific items causing disagreements between the Senate and House Republicans’ on spending priorities are public. House Republicans said in a news release that budget subcommittees “will continue their work to finalize their individual budgets.”

However, Rep. Gary Mohr, R-Bettendorf, the House Appropriations chair, highlighted increased funding for community colleges and continued support for the paraeducator pay increase included in last year’s bill making changes to the state’s Area Education Agencies system as priorities for House Republicans.

“As Iowa House Republicans, we have built our reputation on passing responsible budgets that have allowed us to lower the tax burden while funding Iowans’ budget priorities,” Mohr said in a statement. “... We are prepared to deliver once again on the promises we make to our constituents.”

Democrats criticized Republicans’ spending goals, stating the GOP budgets provide more money to wealthy Iowans while cutting funding going to those in need. Rep. Timi Brown-Powers, D-Waterloo, denounced Republicans’ budget for including a 44% increase for the state Education Savings Account program, providing state funds for private school tuition and associated costs that will have no income limits beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, and for providing “another \$1 billion tax break to corporations that lay off workers.”

“Iowa Republicans have the wrong budget priorities, and plan to spend more than the state takes in forcing the state to borrow money for ongoing expenses,” Brown-Powers said in a statement. “As costs continue to rise for families, House Democrats will fight to lower costs for Iowans and pass a fiscally responsible budget.”

Senate Republicans said they plan to hold subcommittee and committee meetings on their budget bills this week.

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Secretary Naig Announces Investments in 14 Iowa Urban Water Quality Projects

WEST DES MOINES — Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig announced that the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will invest in 14 urban water quality projects within communities across the state. Secretary Naig made the announcement alongside city and community leaders from West Des Moines at an event at Legacy Woods, the location of one of the new water quality projects. The announcement was made as part of

the annual Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Week. Utilizing funding from the state’s Water Quality Initiative (WQI) and other resources, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will provide cost-share grants that cover up to 50 percent of the total cost of each project. The Department is investing nearly \$2.7 million to support the 14 projects, which will leverage an overall investment of more than \$5.7 million.

“No matter where you live in Iowa—city, town, or farm—everyone has a role to play in helping to protect our vital natural resources, like soil and water. Since 2015, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship has invested significantly in 140 urban water quality projects across the state, collaborating with local partners to advance and accelerate the Iowa Nutrient Reduction

Strategy goals,” said Secretary Naig. “Our new partnership project at Legacy Woods in West Des Moines showcases innovative practices that improve water quality and protect our rich natural resources. These practices also enhance recreation, preserve our cultural heritage, and provide the public with educational opportunities. Thank you to the West Des Moines Community Foundation, City of

West Des Moines, and West Des Moines Historical Society for partnering with us on this project, as well as

the many public and private partners who are helping with other urban projects across the state.”

Legal Notice

AUDUBON SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL
April 22, 2025 • 5:45 PM • Location City Hall
OPENING BUSINESS
Agenda Item: Call meeting to order
Minutes: Andrew Grabill called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Council members in attendance were Hocker, Richardson, and Wegner. Meyer and Mayor Lansman were absent. Others in attendance were Brian Juelsgaard and Janell Remsburg.
Agenda Item: Approval of agenda
Minutes: Hocker motioned Wegner seconded to approve the agenda. ALL AYED.
NEW BUSINESS
Agenda Item: Approve the liquor license for Audubon Columbian Club, Inc. (St. Patrick’s Parish Center)
Minutes: Richardson motioned Hocker seconded to approve the liquor license for Audubon Columbian Club, Inc. (St. Patrick’s Parish Center). ALL AYED.
ADJOURNMENT
Agenda Item: Adjourn
Minutes: Grabill closed the meeting at 5:31 pm.
(Published in the Audubon County Advocate Journal, Friday, May 2, 2025)

Legal Notice

AUDUBON SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL
April 22, 2025 • 5:30 PM • Location City Hall
OPENING BUSINESS
Agenda Item: Call meeting to order
Minutes: Andrew Grabill called the meeting to order at 5:28 pm. Council members in attendance were Hocker, Richardson, and Wegner. Meyer and Mayor Lansman were absent. Also in attendance were Brian Juelsgaard and Janell Remsburg.
Agenda Item: Approval of agenda
Minutes: Richardson motioned Hocker seconded to approve the agenda. ALL AYED.
PUBLIC HEARINGS
Agenda Item: Public Hearing for FY26 Budget
Minutes: Grabill opened the Public Hearing for FY26 Budget. No public comments. Grabill closed the Public Hearing for FY26 Budget.
NEW BUSINESS
Agenda Item: Approve Resolution 2025-13 FY26 Budget
Minutes: Richardson motioned Wegner seconded to approve Resolution 2025-13 approving the FY26 Budget. ALL AYED.
ADJOURNMENT
Agenda Item: Adjourn
Minutes: Grabill closed the meeting at 5:30 pm.
(Published in the Audubon County Advocate Journal, Friday, May 2, 2025)

Legal Notice

THE IOWA DISTRICT COURT
Audubon County
Probate No. ESPR009358
NOTICE OF PROBATE OF WILL,
OF APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTOR, AND
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
in the matter of the Estate of
JAMES A. ELLEFSON, Deceased.
To All Persons Interested in the Estate of James A. Ellefson, Deceased, who died on or about January 9, 2025:
You are hereby notified that on April 28, 2025, the Last Will and Testament of James A. Ellefson, deceased, bearing date of March 17, 2011, was admitted to probate in the above-named court and that Jennifer J. Kjar was appointed Executor of the estate. Any action to set aside the will must be brought in the district court of said county within the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of mailing of this notice to all heirs of the decedent and devisees under the will whose identities are reasonably ascertainable, or thereafter be forever barred.
Notice is further given that all persons indebted to the estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned, and creditors having claims against the estate shall file them with the clerk of the above-named district court, as provided by law, duly authenticated, for allowance, and unless so filed by the later to occur of four months from the date of the second publication of this notice or one month from the date of mailing of this notice (unless otherwise allowed or paid) a claim is thereafter forever barred.
Dated April 29, 2025.
Jennifer J. Kjar, **Executor of Estate**
4803 Riverside Ct. NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52411

David L. Wiederstein, ICIS#: AT0009262
Attorney for Executor
520 Chestnut St.
Atlantic, IA 50022
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