



**WattsLine** from Repr. **Ralph Watts**

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*Occasional updates regarding legislative issues of constituent interest.*

## **RIGHT TO WORK AND HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT**

During the past several years, the Iowa Dept. of Economic Development website did not promote the fact that Iowa is a Right to Work state - as had been done for many years prior. Last week a bill was passed out of the House that would require the statement that Iowa is a 'Right to Work State' on all marketing material for economic development. Whether or not a state is a Right to Work state is a huge factor for any companies looking to set up a new business location in any state. If a state is not a RTW state, it is usually passed over for any consideration.

In addition, a bill was passed by the House that is being called the Health Care Freedom Act – HF111. This bill would ensure that Iowans can maintain control over their health insurance and prevents us from being forced to purchase health insurance as mandated by the overreaching federal healthcare legislation passed by Congress last year. As long as the concern of ever increasing health care costs hangs over the heads of small businesses in Iowa, we won't experience the growth that we need in order to invigorate our economy. Also last week, another judge ruled that the requirement for all of us to buy health care insurance as it was passed in the federal legislation was unconstitutional. No doubt this will eventually end up before the U.S. Supreme Court. In the meantime, the uncertainty of the costs that will have to be borne by businesses is casting a smothering impact on a badly needed expanding job market.

## **HJR 6 THE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE**

The bill to start the process for voters to have the opportunity to vote on the definition of marriage as being between one man and one woman, and placing it in our state constitution, was debated this week in the House. A well-attended public hearing on Monday evening gave all sides of the argument a chance to express their feelings and the debate on the House floor was vigorous. It passed out of the House by a 62-37 vote. It now goes to the Senate where the majority leader of the Senate has publicly stated his position that he will not let the bill move forward. HJR 6 will remain in the queue for Senate business until the end of the 2012 legislative session and if it isn't taken up by the Senate before that time the voters will have to ultimately decide whether they will allow the Senate leadership to stay in place. If the Senate doesn't act on HJR 6, in either the 2011 or 2012 sessions, the process will have to start over from the beginning in the 2013 legislature.

## **OTHER**

Other items of interest include a bill (HF181) that would place a sunset on all Administrative Rules five years after they are put into place. I consider this a major step forward in reining in the ever expanding role of government and its negative impact on our economy.

## **LEGISLATIVE FORUM**

The first legislative forum for the 2011 session will be held at Waukee City Hall on Sat. Feb. 12 at 9:30a. Hope to see you there and in the meantime, feel free to call or email your concerns.