



March 2, 2018

LEGISLATIVE FORUM – CEDAR FALLS

March 10 @ 9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Central Rivers AEA, 1521 Technology Pkwy

Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613 + [Google Map](#)

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KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE FROM TRAFFIC DANGERS

Each day 2,600 children under 13—one child every 33 seconds—is seriously injured or killed in a vehicle accident, according to the National Traffic Safety Administration. That's why [Drive Safe Cedar Valley](#) is launching "[Kids Ride Safe.](#)"

Many recent accidents in Waterloo and Cedar Falls have been caused by drivers running red lights, going through intersections, and failing to yield. Children are especially vulnerable because they rely on responsible drivers to help ensure their safety. Kids Ride Safe aims to inform and shape attitudes about safe driving long before our young people get behind the wheel.

Drive Safe Cedar Valley is the first-ever localized, ongoing traffic safety program in Iowa. The non-profit organization's mission is to change the driving culture in the Cedar Valley.

UNI OFFERS SOLUTIONS FOR SCHOOL VIOLENCE – A BETTER WAY

The [University of Northern Iowa's Center for Violence Prevention](#) recently released its "[Primary Prevention Action Report for Iowa Schools and Communities.](#)"

The report is based on the work of a task force made up of representatives of schools, public health, youth athletics, victim services and legal aid, colleges and universities, and LGBTQ advocates. The task force met

monthly throughout 2017 to evaluate and assess current school and community efforts to prevent gender violence and all forms of bullying.

The report provides concrete and realistic strategies for schools to make improvements. One outcome is that school and community leaders will get training to help prevent violence and abuse, which will complement the Iowa Department of Education's online [Bullying Investigation Training](#) for school leaders.

PANTHER NATION IS SAFE CAMPUS LEADER

The University of Northern Iowa has been named one of the safest college campuses in the nation. The 2018 "[Safest College Campuses in America](#)" list ranks UNI 30th out of 243 universities and colleges. The highest ranked campuses boast low campus and local crime. Safety resources available to UNI students, faculty and staff include safety escorts, training, counseling, an on-campus police force, well-lit pathways and sidewalks, and secure residence halls.

NO BALANCE IN SENATE REPUBLICAN BUDGET

It's been more than 8 months since we learned that the state budget is \$35 million in the hole for FY18. That problem has not been fixed, yet Senate Republicans insist on a tax plan that creates more uncertainty in the state budget, while shifting costs to property taxes, walking away from partnerships with local schools, gutting public safety for our communities and rolling back job creation investments.

This is fiscally irresponsible and sets up our state for an ongoing budget crisis that will sabotage Iowans' priorities. In fact, a [nonpartisan analysis](#) shows [SF 2383](#) is worse than we imagined.

According to the [Iowa Fiscal Partnership](#), the legislation “would erode revenues, create structural budget deficits for years to come, and force cuts certain to imperil Iowa’s basic infrastructure...”

[SF 2383](#) does not make sense when you consider that:

- An ill-conceived proposal is moving forward to break a promise of [tax relief for local Iowans](#) ([SF 2081](#)). Cities, counties, townships and schools will all [lose money they’re counting on](#), an especially devastating move for our small towns and rural areas.
- No changes have been made to the huge tax breaks for big corporations.
- Taxpayers are forced to pay \$1.75 million for a sexual harassment lawsuit that should be the responsibility of the irresponsible behavior of the guilty Republican State Senators and staff.
- The state continues to throw millions in taxpayer dollars at the Governor’s Medicaid privatization mess that still doesn’t pay its bills on time and has jeopardized the health of vulnerable Iowans.
- The worst K-12 school funding in Iowa history for the last eight years under a Republican Governor’s office is shortchanging our students and schools with another year of inadequate funding ([HF 2230](#)).
- College and worker training, job creation, protections for vulnerable Iowans, public safety and justice for crime victims all face more cuts to bail the state out of its budget hole ([SF 2117](#)).

It’s time for a balanced approach to Iowa’s budget that invests in our future, not deficits for as far as the eye can see at the same time failing to make the right investments in the things that matter most to Iowans – good jobs, great schools, affordable health care & safe communities.

LOWEST FUNDING FOR K-12 SCHOOLS IN IOWA HISTORY

The Legislature has finally approved school funding for the 2018-19 school year. I opposed [HF 2330](#) because it amounts to another year of inadequate funding, which is bad news for Iowa students, families, educators and communities. Since 2010, under Republican Governors, Iowa schools have seen the lowest funding in Iowa history. Not even during the farm crisis of the 1980’s, were local schools underfunded like this.

The amount approved is below the rate of inflation and is simply not enough to give our kids a chance to compete with their peers of the future by earning a top-notch 21st century education.

Education in Iowa gets a smaller slice of the state budget pie than it does in most other states, according to the National Association of State Budget Officers. In a [recent report](#), Iowa ranks 34th in the nation in percent of state dollars spent on K-12 education, well below the national average.

Even in tough fiscal times, budgeting is about setting priorities. Parents, teachers and communities want us to make education a priority in the state budget. Our state’s quarter has a one room schoolhouse and the motto “Foundation in Education”. We are not living up to that longstanding Iowa value.

10 GOOD BIPARTISAN BILLS THAT ARE MOVING FORWARD

I will continue to work on bi-partisan ideas that improve Iowans lives. Here’s a list of bills that are moving with bi-partisan support. I wish we had a similar bi-partisan approach to budgeting/taxes, school funding & health care policies.

- Expanding Safe Haven laws ([SF 360](#)). Passed the Senate unanimously and is now under consideration in the House.
- Good Samaritan protections for seeking emergency assistance for alcohol overdoses ([SF 415](#)). Passed the Senate unanimously and is now under consideration in the House.
- Guaranteed health care coverage for services provided over telemedicine ([HF 2305](#)). Passed the House unanimously and is now under consideration in the Senate.
- Requiring everyone with an OWI to get an ignition interlock and eliminating temporary license restrictions ([HF 2338](#)). Passed the House unanimously and is now under consideration in the Senate.
- Guaranteeing health care coverage for spouses of fallen officers who were killed in the line of duty ([HF 2351](#)). Passed the House unanimously and is now under consideration in the Senate.
- Having every Iowa school establish a security plan to follow in emergencies ([SF 2253](#)).
- Expanding services for Iowans with complex mental health and substance abuse needs ([SF 2351](#)).
- Making our roads safer by expanding the Move Over, Slow Down law ([HF 2304](#)).
- Keeping anyone convicted of sex offenses off school property ([HF 2276](#)).
- Studying how best to treat sex offenders who require nursing care ([HF 2345](#)).

ART ENHANCES THE CEDAR VALLEY QUALITY OF LIFE

Through May 1, artists, nonprofit organizations, communities, tribes and schools [can apply for funding](#) to cultivate creativity, learning and participation in arts, while building culturally vibrant communities. Available Iowa Arts Council grants include:

- [School Arts Experience Grant](#) - \$200 to \$1,000 for school field trips to arts events, in-school artist residencies or equipment for the classroom.
- [Capacity Building Grant](#) - Up to \$5,000 to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations with budgets under \$150,000.
- [Artist Fellowship Program](#) - \$10,000 and professional developments to help Iowa artists advance their careers.
- [Art Project Grant](#) - \$1,000 to \$10,000 to artists, nonprofits, schools and communities for arts projects.
- [Cultural Heritage Project Grant](#) - \$1,000 to \$10,000 to nonprofits and communities for heritage projects.

FAMILY FRIENDLY MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND CAMPING

If you like to camp during Memorial Day weekend, you can now [reserve a state park campsite](#) for the weekend of May 25-28. New for the 2018 season, 75 percent of available campsites at each park can be reserved through the online reservation site; the remaining 25 percent are available first-come first-serve at the park. A few campgrounds will be closed all summer for renovations, but the parks will be open for day visitors.

IOWA WINTERS MAKE FOR CHALLENGING DRIVING CONDITIONS, STAY INFORMED & STAY SAFE ONLINE

The weather has been unpredictable this winter—bitterly cold, followed by heavy snow, followed by warm, spring-like days. With the official end to winter still weeks away, we need to be prepared for more.

Motorists want to know if and when it's safe to travel. To help, the Iowa Department of Transportation has more than 600 cameras on their snowplows around the state. The cameras show road conditions in real time so that drivers can make informed decisions about hitting the streets.

When the weather is bad, go online to [see road conditions in your area](#).

Contact information

State Senator Jeff Danielson serves Hudson, Cedar Falls and Waterloo. He can be reached at 319-231-7192. E-mail him at jeffdanielson@gmail.com.

Senator Danielson is ranking member on the Education Budget. He also serves on the Appropriations, Education, State Government and Transportation committees.

For further information, go to www.senate.iowa.gov/senator/danielson and www.jeffdanielson.org.