



Weekly Legislative Update

Week 4: February 2-6, 2026

This Week in Des Moines

We're in Week 4 of the legislative session—the heart of committee season. Bills are getting their first serious scrutiny in subcommittees and full committees, and several bills affecting homeschool families have advanced this week.

With the **First Funnel deadline just two weeks away** (Friday, February 20), committee activity is intensifying.

What's the First Funnel?

This is one of the two most important deadlines of the entire session. By Friday, February 20, bills must be voted out of committee in the chamber where they started, or they're essentially dead. Think of it just like its name —“funnel”—only bills with enough support squeeze through to the next stage.

● KEY BILLS TO WATCH

- **HF 2171 - Striking Immunization Requirements**
✓ **PASSED COMMITTEE 14-9**

This bill eliminates K-12 immunization requirements entirely for all students in Iowa, including all homeschool options.

Passed House Education Committee 14-9 on February 4 and is heading to the House floor for debate.

This is a major policy shift that would affect every homeschool family. Our position: **SUPPORT** - This expands parental authority and removes a government mandate.

● OPPORTUNITY BILLS - ADVANCING & NEW

- **SF 2212 - Home School Sports**
 **NEW THIS WEEK**

First bill this session to explicitly recognize "home school sports teams" and allow scrimmages with public/private schools. This creates athletic opportunities for homeschool students without requiring dual enrollment.

What it does:

- Allows public and private schools to scrimmage against homeschool sports teams
- Requires written agreement
- Results excluded from regular season standings
- Officials not paid for these scrimmages

Our position: SUPPORT - Expands homeschool athletic access.

Bills That Passed Committee This Week:

- **HF 824 - Custody Protection**
 **PASSED 18-0 (Gustoff - OUR CHAMPION)**

Creates a rebuttable presumption that children stay in their current educational setting during custody disputes. Explicitly includes homeschooling (Iowa Code 299A) as equal to public school and protects homeschool privacy. This prevents judges from arbitrarily forcing kids into public school during custody battles.

Next step: Heading to House floor for debate.

- **HF 2106 - Student Speech Protection**
 **PASSED 16-7**

Prohibits schools from preventing religious, political, or ideological speech. Protects student clubs from discrimination based on religious or political views. Applies to CPI families using dual enrollment.

Next step: Heading to House floor for debate.

Bills We're Working On:

- **HF 2124 - Electronic Educational Systems + Data Protection Amendment**

HF 2124 would require the Department of Education to develop standards for electronic data systems for schools. We've proposed an amendment to ensure that if this system is developed, it respects Iowa Code Chapter 299A limitations on homeschool data collection.

Current Problem: Software providers currently refuse to create forms specific to homeschool families, forcing families to submit excessive information through generic forms designed for accredited schools.

Our Amendment (proposed February 5): Would ensure that any new data collection system cannot collect information from CPI/IPI families beyond what Iowa Code authorizes (names, ages, address, supervising teacher if applicable—per Iowa Code §299A.3(1), §299A.2(3), §299A.1(2)(b)(6)).

- **SSB 3108 - Minor Driving Distances**

Currently allows "private school" students to get driving distance waivers beyond the 25-mile SMRL limit. We need to verify whether homeschoolers are included and potentially seek an amendment if they're not.

Other Opportunity Bills Moving Forward:

- **HF 2087 / SF 2093** - Disaster Actions:
Protects religious immunization exemptions during emergencies
- **HF 2113** - Minor Driving Permits:
Builds on our 2024 SMRL victory, provides second chance pathway
- **SF 2066** - Sex Ed Parental Consent:
Requires written parental consent (applies to dual enrollment context)

BILLS WE OPPOSE

We're monitoring two bills we oppose:

- **HF 2078** (tax credit changes)
- **SJR 2005** (constitutional amendment on education standards)

Both bills appear stalled and we're not dedicating significant resources to them at this time, but we're watching in case they gain momentum.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: FIRST FUNNEL

Friday, February 20 is the First Funnel deadline. Bills that don't make it out of committee in their chamber of origin by this date are generally dead for the session.

What this means:

- Committee activity will be intense over the next two weeks
- This is the critical window for bills to survive or die
- Bills we support (like HF 824 and HF 2171) that passed committee are well-positioned
- Bills we oppose that haven't moved are likely dead

Exceptions: Budget bills, tax bills, and leadership-sponsored bills can move any time. They are not subject to funnel deadlines.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

If you want to support HF 824 (Custody Protection) or HF 2171 (Immunizations):

These bills passed committee and are heading to the House floor for debate. Contact your State Representative and let them know you support parental rights and homeschool protections.

Find your legislators: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find>

What to say:

- Identify yourself as a constituent and homeschooler
- Reference the specific bill number
- Share briefly how it affects your family
- Ask for their support

Keep it simple: A 2-3 sentence email or 1-minute phone call is perfect. Legislators want to hear from real constituents.

REMEMBER:

Your Homeschool Iowa membership funds our lobbyist and advocacy work. Our success in protecting homeschool freedom—like the 2024 Special Minor's Restricted License victory and the bills advancing this week—depends on staying engaged throughout the legislative process.

Questions? Contact us at: advocacy@homeschooliowa.org

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Equipping families and protecting homeschool freedom since 1992