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President Obama delivered his State of the Union address last week and [proposed several initiatives](#) aimed at alleviating the skills gap. One of the most discussed is “America’s College Promise,” a \$60 billion proposal to open community colleges to all. Through state partnerships, tuition would be waived for programs that are transferable to a four-year program or are occupational training programs, provided that the student meets the requirements. More details can be found within the White House [press release](#).

The American Technical Training Fund would expand career and technical education and industry-based apprenticeships to enable students and workers to quickly obtain skilled credentials in valued areas of the labor market. The \$200 million fund would award programs that have strong employer partnerships and include work-based learning opportunities, provide accelerated training, and are scheduled to accommodate part-time work.

The UpSkilling Entry-Level Workers initiative is a new collaboration with the private sector to invest in frontline workers, not only to increase the skills needed for their current jobs, but to support career progression. This could include increasing access to higher education benefits among the front-line workers.

The White House issued a [press release](#) providing more detail on the partnerships with employers to provide more skills to workers.

Additional details on all of these proposals will be available following the release of the president’s FY16 budget request, which is scheduled for February 2, 2015.

State Policy Update

The [Center for Human Capital Enrichment Plan](#) was introduced into the Legislature, as proposed by Governor Branstad. See the summary in the Legislation section below.

A [white paper](#) was provided by the Governor’s office for more information.

Budget Links[Summary of Governor’s Budget Recommendations](#)[Summary of Budget and Department Requests](#)

Administrative Rule Update

Rules proposed by the Economic Development Authority in regards to the Apprenticeship Training Program have been adopted and will become effective on February 25, 2015. The **Apprenticeship Training Program** was established in 2014 through [House File 2460](#) to provide up to \$3 million in training grants for apprenticeship training programs. The rules for implementation of the program were adopted by the Economic Development Authority Board on December 19, 2014. Prior to being adopted, comments were received. The comments were generally supportive and most questions concerned the formula for distribution of the funding. The rules can be found [here](#).

Amendments to Chapter 31, **Economic Development Region Initiatives** were [adopted as an emergency rule](#). These changes are minor and are adopted to address comments made by the Administrative Rules Committee during its review of [ARC 1626C](#), a more substantial amendment to Chapter 31. The changes under ARC 1626C amended the “definition of an economic development region to allow more flexibility in assembling a region; make changes to the application process; eliminate references to the repealed Grow Iowa Values Fund; and replace references to the Department with references to the Authority.” Both sets of amendments are intended to implement sections of the Iowa Code as amended by [Senate File 2359](#), among the 2014 Iowa Acts.

Important Dates

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| January 12 | First Day of Session |
| February 11 | AIWP Legislative Breakfast
7:00-9:00 a.m.
Legislative Dining Room (Ground Floor of the Capitol) |
| March 6 | First Funnel
Final date for House bills to be reported out of House committees, and Senate bills out of Senate committees, to stay alive. |
| April 3 | Second Funnel
Final date for Senate bills to be reported out of House committees, and House bills out of Senate committees, to stay alive. |
| May 1 | Target Adjournment Date
110th calendar day of the session and the date per-diem expenses will end. |

Legislation

[Senate File 39](#) and [House File 73](#) - Amends that an employer has the burden to establish that a deduction from employees' wages is lawful, and amends the burdens of the employer in regards to notification by workforce development, method used to calculate wages, and maintaining proper payroll records. Senate sponsors are Bisignano, Bolkom, Dotzler, Seng, Dvorsky, Hogg, Soddors, Quirnbach, Kinney, Bowman, Petersen, Wilhelm, Taylor, Horn, Dearden, Courtney, Brase, Gronstal, Jochum, Schoenjahn, and Ragan. House sponsors are Hunter, Kelley, Staed, McConkey, Hanson, Gaskill, Kearns, T. Taylor, Bennett, Anderson, Abdul-Samad, Mascher, Wessel-Kroeschell, Oldson, and Steckman. Introduced, referred to Senate's Labor and Business Relations Committee and House's Labor Committee. Senate subcommittee: Dotzler, Courtney, and Whitver. House subcommittee: Forristall, T. Taylor, and Watts.

[Senate File 108](#) - Would create a tax credit for apprenticeship sponsors employing an apprentice working in the construction trade at Iowa worksites. The credit would be available against the individual and corporate income tax for a portion of the wages paid to apprenticeships in the construction trade trained through an apprenticeship program. Sponsored by Dotzler. Introduced, referred to Economic Growth.

[House File 19](#) - Proposes that paid time off is added to the definition of "wages" and employer must pay all earned wages to an employee that is suspended or terminated, upon request. Additionally, employers shall not adopt a policy or practice to deny payment for paid time off. Sponsored by Hunter. Introduced, referred to Labor. Assigned to subcommittee with Watts, Holt, and Kearns.

[House File 20](#) - Would prohibit employment discrimination based on an individual's status as unemployed. Sponsored by Hunter. Introduced, referred to Labor. Assigned to subcommittee with Fry, Gassman, and Taylor.

[House File 22](#) - Would require certain weekly workers' compensation benefits to be calculated by including an employee's overtime and premium pay, and to include an annual cost-of-living adjustment. Sponsored by Hunter. Introduced, referred to Labor. Assigned to subcommittee with Sheets, Kooiker, and McConkey.

[House File 36](#) - Would create a worker shortage loan forgiveness program to be administered by the College Student Aid Commission. Sponsored by Hunter. Introduced, referred to Education.

[House File 38](#) - Would require contractors to pay workers the same hourly wage plus fringe benefits for public improvements costing more than \$25,000. Allows the per-hour wage rate to be based on what is normally paid in the area by contractors for similar projects. Sponsored by Hunter. Introduced, referred to Labor. Assigned to subcommittee with Jorgensen, Forristall, and Hunter.

[House File 39](#) - Proposes a study of the economic, fiscal, and social impact of the living wage in Iowa. Sponsored by Hunter. Introduced, referred to Labor. Assigned to subcommittee with Forristall, Running-Marquardt, and Sheets.

[House File 40](#) - Proposes various modifications to Code chapter 94A, which provides for regulation of employment agencies in this state by the labor commissioner. Sponsored by Hunter. Introduced, referred to Labor. Assigned to subcommittee with Forristall, Sheets, and Steckman.

[House File 41](#) - Would require employers to provide an employee with meal and rest periods. Sponsored by Hunter. Introduced, referred to Labor. Assigned to subcommittee with Jorgensen, Forristall, and Hunter.

[House File 46](#) - Proposes that an individual has a right to engage in lawful occupation free from any substantial burden imposed by an occupational regulation unless the government demonstrates a compelling interest. Sponsored by Pettengill. Introduced, referred to State Government. Assigned to subcommittee with Highfill, Branhagen and T. Taylor. Passed subcommittee

[House File 63](#) - Would direct the College Student Aid Commission, in collaboration with the State Board of Regents, to commission an independent study of student debt at Iowa's public post-secondary institutions and the impact of student debt on Iowa's citizens and economy. Sponsored by Wessel-Kroeschell. Introduced, referred to Appropriations.

[House File 71](#) - Proposes an increase the state minimum hourly wage and to provide subsequent increases by the same percentage as the increase in federal social security benefits. Sponsored by Hunter, Kelley, Staed, McConkey, Gaskill, Kearns, T. Taylor, Smith, Lensing, Anderson, Abdul-Samad, Winckler, Mascher, Wessel-Kroeschell, Oldson, Dawson, and Steckman. Introduced, referred to Labor. Assigned to subcommittee with Forristall, Hunter, and Watts.

[House File 72](#) - Proposes increasing penalties for employers willfully misclassifying employees for unemployment compensation contribution purposes. Sponsored by Hunter, Kelley, Staed, McConkey, Hall, Hanson, Gaskill, Kearns, T. Taylor, Smith, Anderson, Abdul-Samad, Mascher, Wessel-Kroeschell, Oldson, Prichard, and Steckman. Introduced, referred to Labor. Assigned to subcommittee with Jorgensen, Forristall, and Kearns.

[House File 75](#) - Would direct the board of directors of a community college and the State Board of Regents to adopt policies relating to an additional classification of students for purposes of determining tuition and fees that provide equal opportunity for granting resident status to certain individuals. Sponsored by Hunter, Kelly, Staed, Hall, Kearns, T. Taylor, Smith, Bennett, Lensing, Anderson, Abdul-Samad, Winckler, Mascher, Wessel-Kroeschell, Oldson, and Steckman. Introduced, referred to Education.

[House Study Bill 10](#) and [Senate Study Bill 1053](#) - Amends the duties of the College Student Aid Commission, including eliminating provisions requiring the commission to develop and implement a program to assist criminal offenders in applying for higher education assistance. Proposed College Student Aid Commission bill. In Education. House subcommittee: Forristall, Stanerson, and Winckler. Senate subcommittee: Quirnbach, Dvorsky, and Sinclair. Passed House subcommittee.

[House Study Bill 12](#) and [Senate Study Bill 1056](#) - Amends one of the financial need criteria for the gap tuition assistance program, prioritizes persons earning incomes between 150 and 250 percent of the federal poverty level, and states that a person who is eligible for WIA or WIOA is ineligible for tuition assistance unless the funds have been fully expended by a workforce region. Proposed Department of Education bill. Amended and passed as House Education Committee bill; passed out of Senate subcommittee. Amended language not available yet, but will be included in next update.

[Senate Study Bill 1100](#) - Proposes expanding the definitions of returning dropouts and potential dropouts for purposes of prevention programs and services. Proposed Education Committee bill. Assigned to subcommittee with Quirnbach, Wilhelm, and Sinclair.

[Senate Study Bill 1114](#) - **Center for Human Capital Enrichment Plan.** Proposes the establishment of a human capital enrichment advisory council and operations teams with the purpose of implementing better alignment of education, workforce, and economic development policies through the collaboration of representatives from the public and private sectors. Proposed Governor bill. Referred to Economic Growth. Assigned to subcommittee with Bisignano, Soddors, and Anderson.

[House Study Bill 59](#) - Would allow for regents universities and private institutions to participate in the concurrent enrollment program, allows school districts to receive supplementary weighting under the concurrent enrollment program and the senior year plus program for sending resident students to eligible postsecondary institutions for college-level courses. Proposed Education Committee bill. Assigned to subcommittee with Highfill, Fry, and Winckler. Passed subcommittee.

Committee Assignments

[Click here](#) to view members of workforce-related committees and their corresponding workforce development region.

This update is a bi-weekly publication intended to share information and resources regarding legislative activities, events, and bills related to workforce issues in Iowa. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Natalie Koerber at nkoerber@sppg.com or 515-237-0338.