

# 2023 IOWA LEGISLATURE IN REVIEW



PROGRESS  
IOWA 

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# Summary: 2023 Iowa Legislature Dominated by Partisan Politics, Ignored Public Opinion

In order to gain a better understanding of the 2023 Iowa legislative session, Progress Iowa conducted an analysis of the proposals made, public comments submitted by Iowans, and whether or not the comments made by constituents were considered by the legislature.

**Our findings were striking, and the conclusion we reached was that this year's Iowa legislature was dominated by partisan politics and ignored what Iowans wanted from their elected officials.**

In order to provide this summary report, the Progress Iowa team:

- Discovered which legislation received the most public comments in the senate and house, narrowing it to the top 10 in each chamber.
- Conducted an analysis of the more than 3,900 comments made on that legislation, to determine whether Iowans spoke out in favor or opposition.
- Determined whether or not the legislature listened to the comments made by Iowans on these pieces of legislation.
- Compiled a breakdown of every amendment offered by each party in the senate and the house, and how often those amendments passed.

The results paint a clear picture of a Republican-controlled legislature dominated by partisanship, with little interest in listening to their constituents or cooperating with their colleagues.

Our report offers the following key findings:

- Of the 20 bills that received the most public comments, the legislature ignored the will of the people 75% of the time.
- The Governor's divisive private school voucher proposal received more comments than any piece of legislation (888). Although nearly 90% of Iowans spoke against vouchers, the legislature passed the bill and it became law.
- The amendment process, typically used to make improvements to legislation in a collaborative process, almost entirely broke down during this year's legislative session. 164 amendments made it to the floor, and only 19 passed, just 11.5%.

- The amendment process also demonstrated the partisanship of this year's session. Only one of the 143 amendments proposed by Democrats passed, or less than 1%. By comparison, 13 of the 15 amendments proposed by Republicans passed, more than 70%.

The entire Progress Iowa team worked to compile this report. The data collection was led by [Todd Brady](#), who developed a program to more efficiently analyze information provided on the Iowa legislature's website.

[Progress Iowa](#) is an advocacy organization and Iowa's progressive communications hub with a network that reaches nearly 100,000. We conduct research, develop winning messages, communicate with Iowans about critical policy issues, and empower people who want to improve our state.

Inquiries about this report should be directed to Matt Sinovic, executive director of Progress Iowa by emailing [matt@progressiowa.org](mailto:matt@progressiowa.org).

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# Iowa Senate

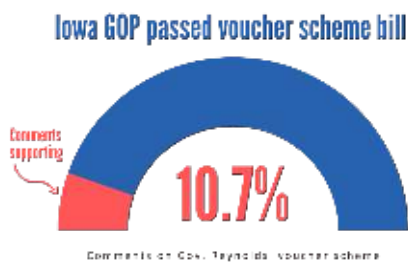
## Top 10 Bills With the Most Comments

These are the top 10 bills that had the most public comments in Senate subcommittee meetings. There is a total comment count, but also a percentage of comments that were for passage of the bill.

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### SSB 1022, Corporate Kim's Private School Voucher Scheme

A bill for an act relating to education programs and funding by establishing an education savings account program, modifying certain school district categorical funding supplements, making appropriations, providing penalties, and including effective date and retroactive applicability provisions.(See SF 94.)



**Committee:** Education

[Bill Link](#) | [Governor Signed](#)

**Total # of comments:** 888

**% For Passage:** 10.7% (95 comments)

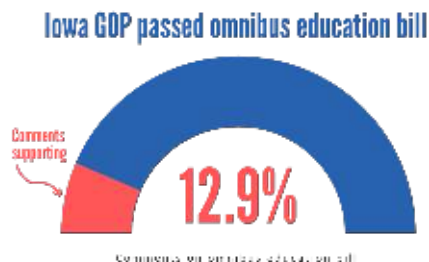
**Committee:** Passed

**Senate Vote:** HF 68 Passed 31-18

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### SSB 1145, Education Omnibus attacking STI education, books, and LGBTQ students

A bill for an act relating to children and students, including establishing a parents or guardians right to make decisions affecting the parents or guardians child, modifying provisions related to student health screenings and the curriculum in school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools, other duties of school districts, competent private instruction, and special education, making appropriations, and providing civil penalties.(See SF 496.)



**Committee:** Education

[Bill Link](#) | [Governor Signed](#)

**Total # of comments:** 210

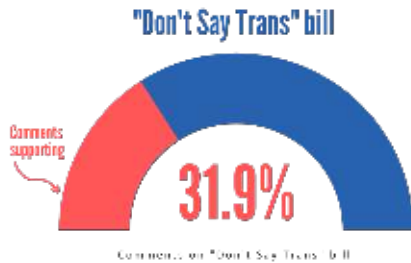
**% For Passage:** 12.9% (27 comments)

**Committee:** Passed

**Senate Vote:** SF 496 Passed 34-16

## SF 83, Don't Say Trans bill

A bill for an act relating to instruction relating to gender identity in the curriculum provided to students enrolled in kindergarten through grade eight in school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools and creating a private cause of action.



**Committee:** Education

[Bill Link](#)

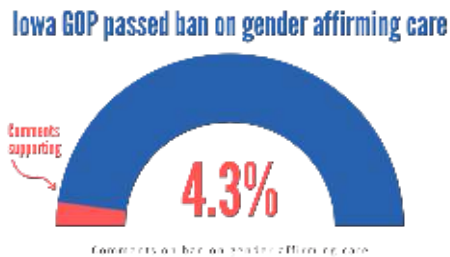
**Total # of comments:** 160

**% For Passage:** 31.9% (51 comments)

**Subcommittee passed, didn't go to Senate floor**

## SSB 1197, Ban on Gender Affirming Medical Care

A bill for an act relating to prohibited activities regarding gender transition procedures relative to minors, and including effective date and applicability provisions.(See SF 538.)



**Committee:** Health and Human Services

[Bill Link](#) | [Governor Signed](#)

**Total # of comments:** 115

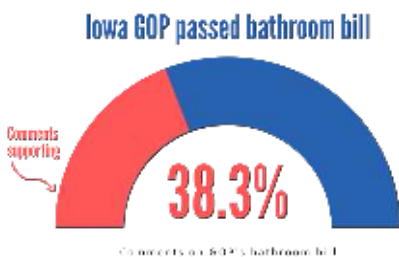
**% For Passage:** 4.3% (6 comments)

**Committee:** Passed

**Senate Vote:** SF 496 Passed 33-16

## SF 335, the "Bathroom Bill" requiring kids use the bathroom that corresponds with their "sex at birth"

A bill for an act prohibiting persons from entering single and multiple occupancy toilet facilities and other facilities in elementary and secondary schools that do not correspond with the persons biological sex and including effective date provisions.(See SF 482.)



**Committee:** Education, Bill: SF 335

[Bill Link](#) | [Governor Signed](#)

**Total # of comments:** 94

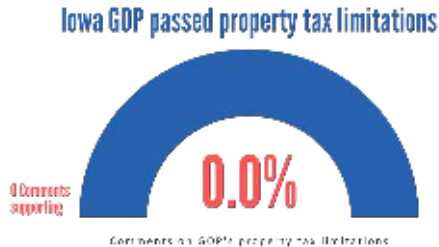
**% For Passage:** 38.3% (36 comments)

**Committee:** Passed

**Senate Vote:** SF 496 Passed 33-1

## SSB 1056, Property Tax Limitations

A bill for an act relating to the calculation of assessment limitations for residential property and including effective date and retroactive applicability provisions.(See SF 181.)



**Committee:** Ways and Means

[Bill Link](#) | [Governor Signed](#)

**Total # Comments:** 73

**% For Passage:** 0.0% (0 comments)

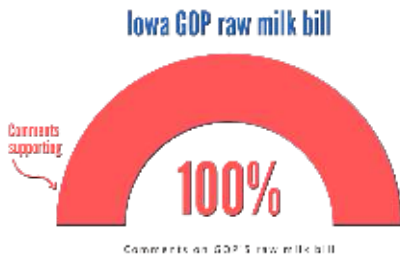
**Committee:** Passed

**Senate Vote:** SF 496 Passed 49-0

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## SSB 1107, Raw Milk Bill

A bill for an act relating to raw milk, by providing for the production of raw milk at certain dairies, the manufacture of products using raw milk, and the labeling and distribution of raw milk and manufactured products, and making penalties applicable.(See SF 315.)



**Committee:** State Government

[Bill Link](#) | [Governor signed](#)

**Total # Comments:** 69

**% For Passage:** 100.0% (69 comments)

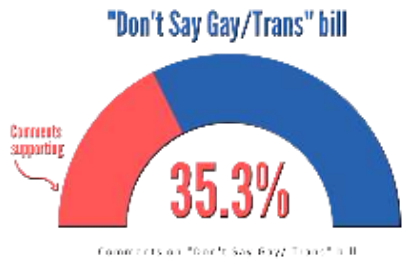
**Committee:** Passed

**Senate Vote:** SF 496 Passed 37-13

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## SF 159, Don't Say Gay or Trans Bill

A bill for an act relating to education, including modifying the responsibilities of the state board of education and school districts, prohibiting instruction related to gender identity or sexual orientation in school districts and charter schools in kindergarten through grade eight, modifying provisions associated with the human growth and development instruction and health screenings provided in school districts, charter schools, and innovation zone schools, and providing civil penalties.



**Committee:** Education

[Bill Link](#)

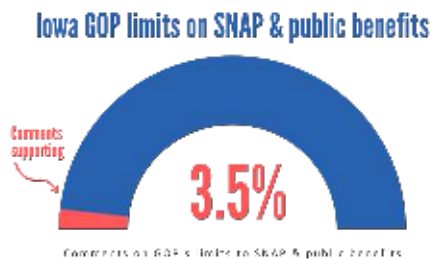
Total # Comments: 68

**% For Passage: 35.3% (24 comments)**

**Subcommittee passed, didn't go to Senate floor**

## SSB 1105, Limiting SNAP and Public Benefits

A bill for an act relating to public assistance program oversight.(See SF 494.)



**Committee:** Health and Human Services

[Bill Link](#) | [Sent to Governor, not yet signed](#)

Total # of comments: 57

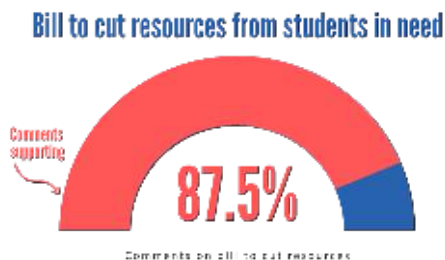
**% For Passage: 3.5% (2 comments)**

**Committee:** Passed

**Senate Vote:** SF 494 Passed 34-16

## SF 85, Cutting Resources for Students in Need

A bill for an act relating to public education, including participation in surveys, analyses, activities, or evaluations by students, employees, and contractors of school districts or charter schools and prohibiting the use of certain resources or materials related to social and emotional learning.



**Committee:** Education

[Bill Link](#)

Total # of comments: 40

**% For Passage: 87.5% (35 comments)**

**Subcommittee passed, didn't go to Senate floor**



## Amendment Summary: Iowa Senate

A summary of the amendments that made it to the floor in the Iowa Senate.

	Total	Passed	Failed
<b>Democratic Amendments</b>	55	0	55
<b>Republican Amendments</b>	7	7	0
<b>Other Amendments</b>	3	3	0
<b>Total Amendments</b>	65	10	55

# Iowa House of Representatives

## Top 10 Bills With the Most Comments

These are the top 10 bills that had the most public comments in House subcommittee meetings. There is a total comment count, but also a percentage of comments that were for passage of the bill.

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### HF 147, Stop Cops from Enforcing Federal Gun Safety Laws

A bill for an act creating the second amendment preservation Act, providing penalties, and including effective date provisions.

Stop Cops from Enforcing Federal Gun Safety Laws bill



**Committee:** Judiciary

[Bill Link](#)

**Total # of comments:** 796

**% For Passage:** 98.7% (786 comments)

**Not taken up by House**

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### HF 9, Forced Outing of Trans Students

A bill for an act relating to parental and guardian consent and information regarding the gender identity of students enrolled in a school district or charter school.(See HF 180.)

Forced Outing of Trans Students bill



**Committee:** Education

[Bill Link](#)

**Total # of comments:** 452

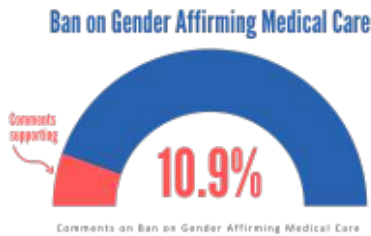
**% For Passage:** 3.8% (17 comments)

**[Passed out of committee, HF 180 not taken up by House](#)**

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### HSB 214, Ban on Gender Affirming Medical Care

A bill for an act relating to prohibited activities regarding gender transition procedures relative to minors, and including effective date and applicability provisions.(See HF 623.)



**Committee:** Judiciary

[Bill Link](#) | [Signed by Governor](#)

**Total # of comments:** 247

**% For Passage:** 10.9% (27 comments)

**House Vote:** Replaced with SF 538 Passed 58-39

## HF 77, Attempt to Re-register Sex Offenders who fulfilled their sentences

A bill for an act modifying sex offender registry requirements by requiring sex offenders whose registration requirements have expired to reregister, and making penalties applicable.



**Committee:** Public Safety

[Bill Link](#)

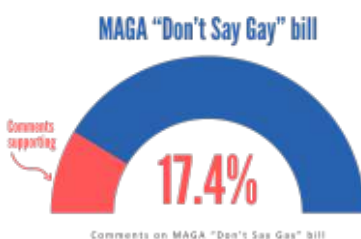
**Total # of comments:** 196

**% For Passage:** 0.5% (1 comment)

**Passed Subcommittee, not taken up by House**

## HF 8, “Don’t Say Gay”

A bill for an act prohibiting instruction related to gender identity and sexual orientation in school districts and charter schools in kindergarten through grade three.(See HF 348.)



**Committee:** Education

[Bill Link](#)

**Total # of comments:** 115

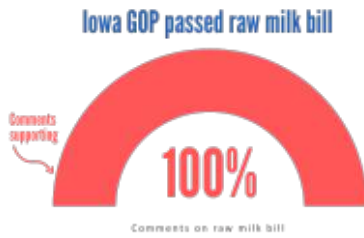
**% For Passage:** 17.4% (20 comments)

**House Vote:** HF 348 Passed 62-35

[Passed the House, not taken up by Senate](#)

## HF 338 / SF 315, Raw Milk Bill

A bill for an act relating to raw milk, by providing for the production of raw milk at certain dairies, the manufacture of products using raw milk, and the labeling and distribution of raw milk and manufactured products, and making penalties applicable.



**Committee:** Agriculture

[Bill Link](#) | [Bill Link](#)

**Total # of comments:** 114

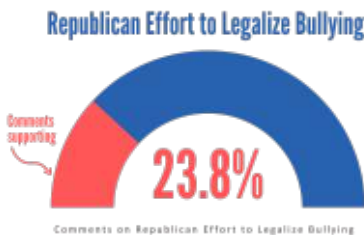
**% For Passage:** 100.0% (114 comments)

**House Vote:** SF 315 Passed 64-35

**Governor signed**

## HF 367, Republican Effort to Legalize Bullying

A bill for an act prohibiting school districts and charter schools from taking disciplinary action against employees, contractors, or students for the use of legal names or for the failure to use personal pronouns in official communications.(See HF 620.)



**Committee:** Education

[Bill Link](#)

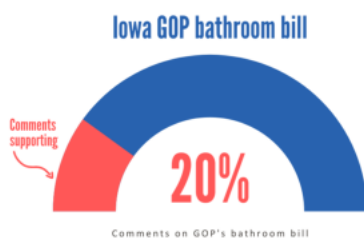
**Total # of comments:** 84

**% For Passage:** 23.8% (20 comments)

**Committee:** Didn't pass

## HSB 208, the “Bathroom Bill” requiring kids use the bathroom that corresponds with their “sex at birth”

A bill for an act permitting public schools to designate and allow the use of restrooms and changing facilities only by persons of the same biological sex, and providing a private cause of action.(See HF 622.)



**Committee:** Judiciary

[Bill Link](#) | [Governor Signed](#)

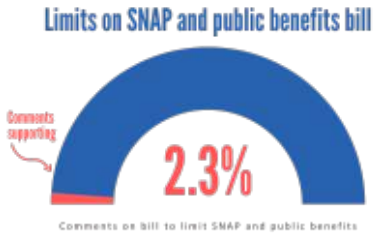
**Total # of comments:** 65

**% For Passage:** 20% (13 comments)

**Committee:** Passed

**House Vote:** SF 482 Passed 57-39

HF 3, Republican SNAP & Medicaid cuts for hungry children and elderly  
A bill for an act relating to public assistance program integrity, making appropriations, and including effective date provisions.(See HF 613.)



**Committee:** Health and Human Services

[Bill Link](#)

**Total # of comments:** 44

**% For Passage:** 2.3% (1 comment)

**Committee:** [Passed subcommittee, not assigned to committee](#)

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### HSB 219, Banning Books on Sex and Sexuality

A bill for an act relating to education, including modifying provisions related to school district library programs and the educational program provided to students enrolled in school districts, accredited nonpublic schools, and charter schools. (See HF 597.)



**Committee:** Education

[Bill Link](#)

**Total # of comments:** 38

**% For Passage:** 87.5% (36 comments)

**Committee:** Passed

**House Vote:** [HF 597 Passed 60-37, not taken up by Senate](#)

## Amendment Summary: Iowa House of Representatives

A summary of the amendments that made it to the floor in the Iowa House of Representatives.

	Total	Passed	Failed
<b>Democratic Amendments</b>	88	1	87
<b>Republican Amendments</b>	8	6	2
<b>Other Amendments</b>	3	2	1
<b>Total Amendments</b>	99	9	90