



## Iowa – CPAC Scorecard

Center for Legislative Analysis

12th Edition – 2025

### Summary

The latest edition of the Iowa CPAC Scorecard assesses 19 votes in the State House and 17 votes in the State Senate from the 2025 session. Iowa Republicans earned an average score of 93%, up from 84% in 2024. Iowa Democrats averaged just 13%, down from 17% in 2024.

Iowa's 2025 session advanced some of the strongest conservative state legislation in the country. Iowa delivered a sweeping set of reforms strengthening parental rights, protecting biological reality in law, and rolling back DEI bureaucracy across state institutions. Lawmakers advanced major wins for election integrity, school choice, religious liberty, and the Second Amendment, while also tying public benefits like Medicaid to meaningful work requirements. The state positioned itself for long-term economic growth by cutting unemployment taxes on businesses and improving college affordability.

### Key Takeaways

#### **Iowa Reaffirmed Biological Reality in Law**

With SF 418, Iowa aligned its civil-rights code with biological reality rather than ideological fashion. The law removes “gender identity” as a protected class in the Iowa Civil Rights Act and prohibits changing the sex designation on a birth certificate after transition. This returns the law to clear, objective categories that can be consistently applied in courts, schools, and government agencies. It also safeguards single-sex spaces and programs that depend on biological distinctions. This law ensures that biological reality - not “gender identity” - will be used in the enforcement of laws related to hiring, housing, and public accommodations.

#### **Parents Gained Stronger Rights Over Children's Health and Religious Formation**

Iowa strengthened parental authority in education and health through **HF 299** and **HF 870**, both of which became law. **HF 299** requires schools to publicize how families can obtain vaccine exemptions, ensuring parents see all of their lawful options rather than only one side of the conversation. **HF 870** protects “released time” religious instruction, allowing parents to send their children to religious classes during the school day without bureaucratic stonewalling. Together, these measures emphasize that parents—not school systems—are the primary decision-makers for children's health and moral upbringing. They prevent institutions from

quietly burying information on parental rights behind red tape or silence. By passing these bills with strong margins, Iowa affirmed that government schools must serve families, not the other way around. This is a clear win for parental rights and religious freedom.

### **Building a Culture of Life in the Classroom**

Through **SF 175**, Iowa took an important step toward reinforcing the humanity of unborn children in public education. The law requires health classes to include imagery and instruction that depict fetal development in a concrete, humanizing way. It also bars schools from relying on materials created by abortion-industry advocates, keeping those special interests from shaping classroom content. This ensures students receive a fuller picture of prenatal life rather than a sanitized abstraction. By bringing science and visual reality into the curriculum, **SF 175** encourages students to grapple with what abortion actually does. The law supports a culture where young people understand the stakes of decisions about life and pregnancy.

### **Election Integrity Was Strengthened on Multiple Fronts**

Iowa bolstered the legitimacy of its elections through **HF 928** and **HF 954**, both now law. **HF 928** overhauls the recount process so that any close race is reviewed using a thorough, standardized procedure overseen by representatives of both major parties. **HF 954** equips the Secretary of State with better tools to verify the citizenship of registered voters, helping to prevent illegal voting without burdening lawful voters. Together, these reforms make it harder to cheat and easier for citizens to trust the results. They also move Iowa further away from ad hoc approaches and toward clear, predictable rules for election administration. In a time of deep mistrust around elections nationally, Iowa chose to increase transparency and verification. These changes put the integrity of the ballot above partisan advantage.

## **Highlighted Votes Analyzed**

### **HF 299 - Transparency on Vaccine Exemptions**

HF 299 requires schools to publicize the requirements to receive a vaccine exemption. CPAC believes it is appropriate to provide parents with this information and supports this bill. HF 299 passed the Iowa House of Representatives in a 58-30 vote on March 10, 2025, and it was signed into law by Governor Kim Reynolds.

### **HF 295: Defending State Schools from Woke Accreditors**

HF 295 prohibits accrediting bodies from penalizing Iowa colleges for abiding by state law, and it provides legal recourse for schools harmed by accrediting bodies that fail to comply with this statute. CPAC believes that schools should not be harmed for following directives to remove D.E.I. programs and supports this bill. HF 295 was passed by the Iowa House of Representatives in a 65-32 vote on March 18, 2025, and it was signed into law by Governor Kim Reynolds.

### **HF 440: The College Affordability Act**

HF 440 directs state colleges to improve college affordability in the following ways: directing schools to implement a work-study program to help offset tuition costs, directing schools to offer

at least one baccalaureate program that can be completed in three years, and conducting studies into freezing tuition at the first year of a student's education. CPAC believes that these are sound efforts to address the pressing issue of college affordability, and it supports this bill. HF 440 was passed by the Iowa House of Representatives in a 64-33 vote on March 18, 2025, and it was signed into law by Governor Kim Reynolds.

## **Trends and Observations**

### **Second Amendment Protections Were Expanded for Young Adults**

With **HF 924**, Iowa aligned its firearm laws with federal standards by lowering the minimum age to purchase or carry a handgun from 21 to 18. This recognizes that 18-, 19-, and 20-year-olds are legal adults in nearly every other respect—they can vote, sign contracts, and enlist in the military. The law affirms that responsible young adults should not be treated as second-class citizens when it comes to self-defense. It also harmonizes state and federal rules, reducing confusion and arbitrary age-based restrictions. Critics often treat gun ownership as a privilege to be rationed, but **HF 924** treats it as a constitutional right that applies to all adults. The bill encourages a culture of responsibility rather than disarmament. Iowa has made clear that it trusts its young adults to exercise their freedoms.

### **Serious Pushback Against DEI Bureaucracy and Campus Ideology**

Iowa launched one of the most comprehensive efforts in the country to roll back DEI and CRT-style mandates in higher education. **HF 295** gives state colleges legal protection from accrediting bodies that try to punish them for complying with Iowa law—especially when they scale back mandatory DEI programming. **HF 856** goes further by defunding DEI offices at state institutions, preventing taxpayer dollars from underwriting ideological bureaucracies. **HF 437** complements these efforts by creating a Center for Intellectual Freedom at the University of Iowa, focused on the texts and ideas that shaped the American constitutional order. Meanwhile, **HF 269** and **HF 401**—which would have barred mandatory CRT-style coursework and strengthened Western and American heritage requirements—passed the House but stalled in the Senate. Even so, the overall trajectory is clear: Iowa is moving away from leftist programming and toward a content-rich, viewpoint-diverse academic culture.

### **Work Requirements For Welfare**

With **SF 615**, Iowa required able-bodied beneficiaries to work or engage in qualifying activity at least 80 hours per month. This emphasizes that public assistance should support people on the path to independence, not lock them into permanent dependency. The law recognizes the dignity of work and the importance of maintaining a strong workforce. The welfare system is being tightened to encourage contribution, not abuse.

## **Strong Session for Religious Liberty and Intellectual Pluralism, with a Few Missed Opportunities**

In addition to released-time protections in **HF 870**, Iowa advanced a deeper commitment to religious liberty and open intellectual life. **HF 870** ensures families can pursue religious instruction during the school day without hostile interference from school officials. **HF 437**'s Center for Intellectual Freedom aims to expose students to the great ideas and traditions that underpin American self-government, offering a counterweight to narrow ideological curricula. Meanwhile, the Senate passed **SF 473** to prevent discrimination against prospective adoptive parents based on their beliefs about gender, but the House never acted, leaving that protection unfinished. Bills like **HF 269** and **HF 401**, which targeted mandatory CRT-style instruction and strengthened Western heritage education, also died in the Senate despite passing the House. Overall, the session moved decisively toward more robust religious freedom and intellectual diversity, even if some promising reforms stalled.

## **Conservative Excellence - House**

<b>Eddie Andrews - 95%</b>	<b>Pat Grassley - 95%</b>	<b>Mike Sexton - 95%</b>
<b>Brett Barker - 95%</b>	<b>Helena Hayes - 95%</b>	<b>Jeff Shipley - 100%</b>
<b>Chad Behn - 95%</b>	<b>Robert Henderson - 95%</b>	<b>Jennifer Smith - 95%</b>
<b>Jane Bloomingdale - 94%</b>	<b>Christian Hermanson - 95%</b>	<b>Ray Sorensen - 95%</b>
<b>Brooke Boden - 95%</b>	<b>Megan Hess Jones - 95%</b>	<b>Henry Stone - 95%</b>
<b>Jacob Bossman - 95%</b>	<b>Steven Holt - 95%</b>	<b>Mark Thompson - 95%</b>
<b>Steven Bradley - 94%</b>	<b>Heather Hora - 95%</b>	<b>Charley Thomson - 95%</b>
<b>Mark Cisneros - 100%</b>	<b>Tom Jeneary - 94%</b>	<b>Mike Vondran - 95%</b>
<b>Taylor Collins - 95%</b>	<b>Craig Johnson - 95%</b>	<b>Ryan Weldon - 95%</b>
<b>Tom Determann - 95%</b>	<b>Bobby Kaufmann - 95%</b>	<b>Sam Wengryn - 95%</b>
<b>Zach Dieken - 100%</b>	<b>Barb Kniff McCulla - 95%</b>	<b>Skyler Wheeler - 100%</b>
<b>Jon Dunwell - 95%</b>	<b>Judd Lawler - 95%</b>	<b>Craig Williams - 95%</b>
<b>Samantha Fett - 93%</b>	<b>Shannon Lundgren - 94%</b>	<b>John Wills - 94%</b>
<b>Dean Fisher - 95%</b>	<b>Joshua Meggers - 95%</b>	<b>Hans Wilz - 94%</b>
<b>Dan Gehlbach - 95%</b>	<b>Ann Meyer - 94%</b>	<b>Matt Windschitl - 95%</b>
<b>Thomas Gerhold - 95%</b>	<b>Gary Mohr - 94%</b>	<b>Derek Wulf - 95%</b>
<b>Cindy Golding - 95%</b>	<b>Carter Nordman - 94%</b>	<b>David Young - 95%</b>

## **Conservative Excellence - Senate**

<b>Kevin Alons - 94%</b>	<b>Kerry Gruenhagen - 94%</b>	<b>Jason Schultz - 94%</b>
<b>Mike Bousselot - 94%</b>	<b>Dennis Guth - 94%</b>	<b>Tom Shipley - 94%</b>
<b>Doug Campbell - 94%</b>	<b>Mike Klimesh - 94%</b>	<b>Amy Sinclair - 93%</b>
<b>Mark Costello - 94%</b>	<b>Carrie Koelker - 94%</b>	<b>Dave Sires - 94%</b>
<b>Dan Dawson - 94%</b>	<b>Tim Kraayenbrink - 94%</b>	<b>Annette Sweeney - 93%</b>
<b>Adrian Dickey - 94%</b>	<b>Mark Lofgren - 94%</b>	<b>Kara Warme - 94%</b>

**Dawn Driscoll - 94%**  
**Lynn Evans - 94%**  
**Julian Garrett - 93%**  
**Jesse Green - 94%**

**Mike Pike - 100%**  
**Jeff Reichman - 94%**  
**David Rowley - 94%**  
**Sandy Salmon - 94%**

**Scott Webster - 94%**  
**Cherielynn Westrich - 94%**  
**Jack Whitver - 94%**

### **Conservative Achievement - House**

**David Blom - 84%**  
**Jason Gearhart - 84%**  
**Austin Harris - 89%**

**Shannon Latham - 89%**  
**Norlin Mommsen - 89%**  
**Tom Moore - 89%**

**Devon Wood - 84%**

### **Conservative Achievement - Senate**

**Charlie McClintock - 87%**

**Ken Rozenboom - 88%**

**Jeff Taylor - 88%**