

BRIEF



Iowa – CPAC Scorecard

Center for Legislative Analysis

11th Edition – 2024

Summary

The CPAC Scorecard for the Iowa 2024 session assesses 19 votes in the Iowa State House and 17 votes in the Iowa State Senate. The Iowa Republicans earned an average score of 84% while the Iowa Democrats averaged just 17%. In 2023 Republicans had an average score of 85% and Democrats averaged 10%, which shows that Iowa Democrats are moderating to stay competitive in an increasingly red state. Iowa has voted Republican in the last three Presidential elections, compared to the period from 1976 to 2012 when Iowa went Republican in only 40% of Presidential elections.

Iowa has a Republican Governor and Republicans hold both chambers of the state legislature, so the legislature was able to pass many conservative priorities. Lawmakers dismantled the DEI bureaucracy at state universities, lowered the tax rate and protected Second Amendment rights. CPAC looks forward to more conservative victories in the 2025 session.

Key Takeaways

Aggressive Action Against DEI and Ideological Bureaucracy

One of the most prominent features of the session was Iowa's decisive move to dismantle discriminatory Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programming across its public higher education system. **SF 2435**, an omnibus education bill, prohibited public universities from spending money on DEI offices or personnel. Meanwhile, **HF 2558** went even further by banning compelled DEI statements and authorizing post-tenure reviews for university staff, signaling a broader challenge to institutional orthodoxy in academia. Together, these measures reflect a growing commitment among Iowa lawmakers to roll back identity-based administrative structures and prioritize ideological neutrality in education.

Major Progress on Tax Reform

Iowa lawmakers achieved meaningful victories on structural tax policy this session. The passage of **SF 2442** will reduce the state's individual income tax rate to a flat 3.8% by 2025, down from 5.7%. Simultaneously, the legislature advanced **SJR 2004**, a proposed constitutional amendment that would prohibit the imposition of a graduated income tax, entrenching flat tax principles into state law. These developments represent a long-term shift toward simplicity and

uniformity in taxation, signaling Iowa's intent to attract taxpayers and businesses through a more favorable fiscal environment.

Increased Focus on Immigration Enforcement

Immigration enforcement became a more prominent state issue in 2024, with Iowa passing **SF 2340** to authorize state and local law enforcement to arrest individuals who enter the country illegally. While a related bill (**SF 108**), which would have required electronic verification of worker eligibility, died in the House, **SF 2340's** passage marks a significant shift toward state-level intervention in immigration. The legislation challenges the idea that immigration enforcement must remain solely under federal jurisdiction, and reflects growing concern among lawmakers over the perceived impact of illegal immigration on local communities.

Highlighted Votes Analyzed

SF 108 - Disincentivizing Illegal Immigration into Iowa.

This bill prohibits employers from knowingly employing illegal immigrants and requires them to electronically verify the employment eligibility of their employees. CPAC supports efforts to disincentivize illegal immigration and supported this bill. The Senate passed this bill on February 28, 2024 by a vote of 30-17 but the bill died in the House.

HF 2464 - Iowa's Second Amendment Financial Privacy Act.

This bill prohibits the government from keeping a record of privately owned firearms. CPAC supports the preservation of Second Amendment freedoms and supported this bill. The Senate passed this bill on April 11, 2024 by a vote of 45-0 and the bill later became law.

HF 2545 - Requiring the Teaching of Civics Courses in Public Schools.

This bill requires public schools to require students to take courses that discuss the different branches of government, the crimes against humanity committed by Communists, and Western civilization in general. CPAC supports measures that take steps toward properly educating students and supported this bill. The Senate passed this bill on April 16, 2024 by a vote of 33-14 and the bill later became law.

Trends and Observations

Heightened Legislative Focus on Local Government Preemption

Iowa lawmakers took several steps to limit the policymaking authority of local governments. **HF 2319** banned municipalities from implementing Universal Basic Income (UBI) programs, while **HF 2681** imposed rigorous justification standards on localities using automated speed cameras. In education, restrictions on DEI and curriculum content functionally preempted local boards and universities. These bills indicate a growing willingness to consolidate power at the state level in

order to prevent local entities from enacting policies perceived as ideologically extreme or financially irresponsible.

CPAC-Aligned Cultural Policy Took Center Stage

Iowa's session was dominated by legislation rooted in cultural conservatism, much of which aligned with CPAC priorities. Lawmakers passed bills to curtail DEI programming, expand Second Amendment protections, require instruction on Western civilization and communism's historical atrocities, and enable teachers to carry firearms on school grounds. These efforts were not simply symbolic; they carried substantial legal and institutional weight. The result was a session that prioritized social values as much as economic reform, illustrating a comprehensive conservative agenda that touches nearly every facet of public life.

Very Few Iowa Legislators Received a 90% Rating Or Above

The average score for Iowa Republicans was fairly high at 84% but no State Senators received a 90% rating or higher and only one House member received a 90% rating or higher. Republicans took the conservative position on cultural issues and the overall tax rate, but most Iowa Republicans still support special tax breaks and subsidies for favored industries, such as the **HF 2649** livestock tax carveout and **SF 574's** corporate tax incentive program for bioscience and manufacturing firms. These bills raise questions about the consistency of Iowa's economic principles. The session thus reflected both a strong deregulatory impulse and a persistent tendency toward favoritism in tax policy.

Conservative Excellence - Senate

None

Conservative Excellence - House

Anne Osmundson - 93%

Conservative Achievement - Senate

Kevin Alons - 88%

Mike Bousselot - 88%

Waylon Brown - 86%

Mark Costello - 88%

Chris Cournoyer - 88%

Dan Dawson - 88%

Adrian Dickey - 88%

Dawn Discoll - 88%

Jeff Edler - 88%

Lynn Evans - 82%

Jesse Green - 88%

Kerry Gruenhagen - 87%

Dennis Guth - 88%

Mike Klimesh - 88%

Carrie Koelker - 88%

Tim Kraayenbrink - 88%

Mark Lofgren - 88%

Jeff Reichman - 88%

David Rowley - 88%

Ken Rozenboom - 88%

Jason Schultz - 88%

Tom Shipley - 88%

Amy Sinclair - 88%

Annette Sweeney - 88%

Scott Webster - 88%

Cherielynn Westrich - 88%

Jack Whitver - 88%

Brad Zaun - 87%

Dan Zumbach - 82%

Julian Garrett - 87%

Sandy Salmon - 88%

Conservative Achievement - House

Brian Best - 84%

Brooke Boden - 89%

Jacob Bossman - 84%

Steven Bradley - 82%

Ken Carlson - 84%

Taylor Collins - 84%

Tom Determann - 84%

Dave Deyoe - 84%

Jon Dunwell - 84%

Dean Fisher - 88%

Joel Fry - 84%

Dan Gehlbach - 84%

Thomas Gerhold - 88%

Martin Graber - 84%

Pat Grassley - 84%

Helena Hayes - 89%

Robert Henderson - 84%

Steven Holt - 84%

Heather Hora - 84%

Bobby Kaufmann - 82%

Shannon Lundgren - 84%

Barb Kniff McCulla - 84%

Joshua Meggers - 84%

Ann Meyer - 84%

Norlin Mommsen - 89%

Carter Nordman - 84%

Mike Sexton - 84%

David Sieck - 83%

Luana Stoltenberg - 82%

Henry Stone - 84%

Mark Thompson - 84%

Mike Vondran - 84%

Skyler Wheeler - 84%

John Wills - 81%

Matt Windschitl - 84%

Devon Wood - 84%

Derek Wulf - 83%