

## OLSON'S OBSERVATIONS

Written by Steven Olson  
Friday, 13 April 2012 12:39

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Abill that sets the school start date no earlier than the fourth Monday in August passed the House with a 54-44 vote. Many parents, citizens, and tourism groups have supported the bill as well but its fate isn't certain in the Senate. As it stands, state law says the earliest schools can open is the week that includes September 1st but the majority of districts request, and are granted, waivers to start earlier. The Governor has hinted at preventing the Dept. of Education from granting those waivers and forcing the schools to honor the current code if the Senate fails to act.

Tax increment financing (TIF) is an economic growth tool that many areas of the state have used wisely, but there have been blatant abuses by some that brought the TIF Reform bill to the House Floor. TIF Reform relates to the city and county authority to address slum and blight and economic development by modifying Iowa's urban renewal law, providing for future repeal of Iowa's urban renewal law, authorizing cities and counties to establish project development areas to utilize tax increment financing for certain projects. A highlight of the bill, in most cases, states the three taxing entities; city, county, and school governments need to have a majority agreement on the need for TIF enactment. There are too many more topics related to TIF that are covered in the bill to mention in this article.

With the only the budget left to come across the House Floor, Health and Human Services, I would anticipate conference committee assignments on all of the other budgets yet this week. I believe this signals the end of session is near, possible by April 20th.

If you have concerns or questions I can be reached at the Capitol by emailing

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