



STATEMENT

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IFP Statement: Governor Silent on Key Issues

Statement of Iowa Fiscal Partnership • Mike Owen, Iowa Policy Project

Governor Reynolds' Condition of the State address was upbeat, but exceedingly short on specifics of issues critical to the prosperity of Iowans. In fact, the speech was most noteworthy for issues that it did not address.

Positive notes included a 2.3 percent increase in per-pupil funding for K-12 schools. While still inadequate, especially in the wake of a 1.7 percent average increase over the last nine years, the proposal takes a baby step forward.

The term "dignity" ran throughout the Governor's address and it is an important one — a term that should be carried to many issues left unaddressed. She ignored such critical issues as raising the minimum wage, confronting wage theft with strong enforcement of existing law, and greater access to child care, all of which would reward and promote the dignity of work that she espouses.

The governor offered no new initiatives on water quality and was silent about anything she may be planning on new general tax cuts, or on reform of corporate tax credits, which her previous comments have indicated may be on the table.

There was no discussion of how the Governor intends to fix problems in our Medicaid program beyond a passing reference that she is doing so. There was no discussion of spiraling college tuition and the related sagging state general support of the regents institutions and Iowa community colleges.

Notably, at a time of a federal government shutdown and a precarious situation for safety-net services, the Governor chose to be silent on how the state might step in. Standing before a portrait of President Trump, she declined to call upon national leadership to resolve the dispute and protect families.

As the discussion moves on and budget proposals are considered, Iowans can hope for a more bold approach to emerge.

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The Iowa Fiscal Partnership is a joint public policy analysis initiative of two nonpartisan, nonprofit, Iowa-based organizations — the Iowa Policy Project in Iowa City, and the Child and Family Policy Center in Des Moines. Find reports at www.iowafiscal.org, and the IPP and CFPC websites, www.iowapolicyproject.org and www.cfpciowa.org.