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RELEASE: Gov. Reynolds and Lt. Gov. Gregg reflect on 2020 Legislative Session

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Governor Kim Reynolds ★ Lt. Governor Adam Gregg

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Gov. Reynolds and Lt. Gov. Gregg reflect on 2020 Legislative Session

DES MOINES - Gov. Kim Reynolds released the following statement after the conclusion of the 2020 legislative session:

"Iowans began 2020 unaware of the challenges lying ahead, but I am proud to say that we rose to the occasion. Once again, our people proved resilient through unprecedented times, putting differences aside to move our state forward.

"In my Condition of the State Address, I said 'let's make this next decade Iowa's best,' and today I am more confident than ever in our state and its people.

"In the closing days of the legislative session, Future Ready Iowa, Empower Rural Iowa, and historic police reform passed with unanimous support. Paired with comprehensive changes to our licensure laws, these significant steps will ensure every Iowan, regardless of their background or circumstance, has an opportunity to find success.

"In the coming months, we will build on the progress made bringing meaningful change for the next generation of Iowans. While there's still more to do, if we continue to work together, the best is yet to come."

Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg released the following statement:

"From expanding broadband access in rural Iowa, to taking important steps in reforming our criminal justice system, this session was marked with bipartisan success. I look forward to building on this year's action by getting back to work with the Governor's FOCUS Committee, continuing the conversation on justice reform and racial disparities.

"Once again, Gov. Reynolds has put forward an agenda that brought compromise and I look forward to our continued commitment to serve Iowans during these unique and challenging times."

Key legislative priorities that passed during the 2020 Legislative Session:

Protecting Human Life:

The Iowa Legislature approved HF 594, which establishes a mandatory 24-hour waiting period prior to obtaining an abortion and ensures that women first receive an ultrasound and adequate information to make an informed decision. HF 594 also prohibits a court from ordering the withdrawal of life support from a minor child over the objection of a parent or guardian.

Preparing our kids for the knowledge economy

Iowa's total investment in PreK-12 education is over \$3.4 billion for FY21, with nearly \$100 million in new money. Since 2017, Iowa has invested nearly \$13 billion into PreK-12 education.

- SF 2142 provides \$85.5 million in new state funding for regular program budgets in the 2020-21 school year
- SF 2164 provides schools with \$7.7 million for transportation equity and \$5.9 million for per pupil equity
- This investment works in conjunction with other important priorities like Future Ready Iowa, STEM education, computer science and work-based learning.

Professional Licensing Reform

Excessive and burdensome occupational licensing laws have disproportionately impacted Iowa's working class, making it more difficult and expensive to earn a living and fill high-demand jobs.

HF2627 creates additional pathways and removes barriers to professional licensure in the state of Iowa:

- Allows new Iowa residents with an out-of-state license to use their skills and training in the same licensed profession here in Iowa without additional red tape
- Recognizes three years of work experience as a substitute for any education, training and work experience requirements
- Waives initial licensing fees for first-time applicants of families earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level
- Creates a uniform standard of review for denial of licensure based on a person's conviction history
- Adds provisions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor's proclamations during the public health emergency allowing continuing education requirements to be fulfilled online

Building a Future Ready Iowa

HF2629 continues and expands on Future Ready Iowa. Future Ready Iowa sets the ambitious goal of 70 percent of our state's workforce having education or training beyond high school by the year 2025. Currently, 60.2 percent of our workforce ages 25 to 64 does. Closing this gap is critical to help more Iowans launch rewarding careers and employers hire the skilled workers they need to grow.

- Expands the Apprenticeship Opportunities Program
- Creates the Iowa Child Care Challenge Fund to encourage businesses and others to build and increase the availability of child care
- Establishes requirements for K-12 computer science education over the next several years

Law Enforcement Reforms

HF 2647 brings additional levels of accountability for Iowa's dedicated law enforcement officers. That is good both for our communities and the police to whom we entrust our public safety. This legislation passed with unanimous bipartisan support, showing what can be accomplished when Iowans roll up our sleeves to find common ground and make positive change. The legislation:

- Creates stronger restrictions on the use of chokeholds by law enforcement officers
- Strengthens the process for certifying and decertifying law enforcement officers to ensure those who've been fired or resign after serious misconduct do not work in our state
- Allows the Iowa Attorney General's Office additional authority to prosecute officers whose actions result in the death of another
- Establishes requirements for annual anti-bias and de-escalation training for officers

Empower Rural Iowa

SF2400 will bring greater broadband connectivity to all four corners of the state. By increasing the match to 35% we are able to incentivize broadband being built out across the state. This structure allows the state to provide more assistance to incentivize providers to build networks to reach the most difficult areas to serve, and would also bring Iowa's broadband grant program more in line with neighboring states. This is a key component of the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative.

- Expands eligibility to receive grant funds by allowing the adoption of geographic units of measure smaller than US Census Blocks to better target state funds to underserved areas
- Allows awards of up to 35% of project cost if certain speed requirements are met
- Allows the Office of the Chief Information Officer flexibility to distribute federal COVID-19 aid to rapidly expand broadband service

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