

Protecting Iowans from Abuse

In an effort to protect women and men who are victims of domestic violence, the Legislature has adopted language that mirrors federal law. It will prevent persons who are the subject of a protective order or convicted of domestic abuse from owning a gun.

Under the bill, Senate File 2357, a person would be required to relinquish his or her guns under one of two circumstances: being the subject of a permanent protective order or after being convicted of domestic abuse.

If a law enforcement officer is the subject of a permanent protective order, he or she must relinquish their personal guns, but can still use a gun to perform their job.

If the conviction of domestic abuse involves the use or attempted use of physical force or threatened use of a deadly weapon, they will not be able to obtain or own guns.

Protecting Older Iowans

With the goal of better protecting Older Iowans, the Legislature has established the Office of Long-Term Care Resident's Advocate. The law takes effect July 1, 2010.

Senate File 2263 was signed into law by the Governor on March 19, 2010. The state long-term care resident advocate, along with the local long-term care resident advocates, will investigate and help resolve complaints regarding administrative actions and the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents. The office oversees residents and tenants of long-term care facilities, assisted living programs, and elder group homes.

If an advocate suspects abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a resident or tenant, the advocate is required to contact the proper state agency, including the local authorities, to investigate the matter.

In addition, the office will make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for improving the health, safety, welfare, and rights of residents and tenants of long-term care facilities, assisted living programs, and elder group homes. The office will be overseen by the Iowa Department on Aging.

Censoring Obscene Materials

We also will continue to help Iowa's children by stopping the cycle of abuse. The Legislature approved a bill to expand the definition of child abuse.

Senate File 393 bans the practice of knowingly showing, or allowing access to, obscene materials to a child. This action is added to the definition of child abuse and a person found guilty of this will be subject to placement on the child abuse registry.

In addition, the bill says this type of abuse may trigger a Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) adjudication. This will assist in addressing issues imminently likely to cause harm to the child because a parent, guardian, or custodian, or person responsible for the care of the child acted improperly. A child who is adjudicated a CINA is subject to the least disruptive order for the child.

Senate File 393 now goes to the Governor for his consideration.