



APRIL 2018



WHO WE ARE
And —————
**WHAT WE
CARE ABOUT**



INTRODUCTION

The people of Iowa are proud of where they are from and how they were raised. The values instilled in every Iowan are what makes our state so great. We work hard, we're resilient, and we are independent. Iowa Values is a nonprofit, nonpartisan forum guided by free-market principles. It champions conservative values and is rooted in the belief that Iowa's greatest asset is its people.

While political progressives have a litany of strong public policy advocates in academia and the mainstream media, Iowa has few state-based, free-market organizations to bring conservative voices to policy discussions in Des Moines and across the state. Iowa Values was founded to help fill that void.

OUR PRINCIPLES:

As an organization, we will seek to support policies and encourage discussion on issues that:

- 1.** Encourage economic growth through free markets and robust international trade
- 2.** Limit the size and scope of government
- 3.** Exercise fiscal restraint and emphasize personal responsibility

Iowa Values believes in supporting voices that reflect these values and help defend our way of life.

OUR FOCUS:

To establish its thought leadership, Iowa Values will focus on several key policy issues:

- 1.** Increasing Economic Security for Iowa's Middle Class
- 2.** Supporting our Agriculture & Manufacturing Economy
- 3.** Educating the Next Generation
- 4.** Caring for our Seniors & Veterans

What follows is an overview of these issues and how we hope to impact the debate.



INCREASING ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR IOWA'S MIDDLE CLASS

U.S. News & World Report recently ranked Iowa as the best place in the nation to live. That #1 ranking among all fifty states highlights what Iowans know – that Iowa is where young people can receive a great education and pursue the American Dream, where families can get a financial foothold and buy a home, and where all ages find opportunity, welcoming communities, and a quality life. Iowa's strong and diverse economy, with unemployment around three percent and well below the national average, undergirds the vibrancy of our state.

Growth leads to opportunity, and while there is cause for optimism, the state is clearly at a critical juncture. Iowa policymakers must

continue to pursue initiatives that will make life more affordable for the middle class including:

TAX REFORM

Clear-sighted tax reform allows middle-class families to keep more hard-earned money in their wallets. The federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 offered much-needed tax relief for Iowa's middle class and their employers. But we have work to do on state taxes. Iowa has the fourth highest marginal income tax rate – nearly 9 percent – in the nation.¹ By following the success of national tax reform with state-level initiatives, Governor Kim Reynolds and Iowa's legislators can maximize the impact of commonsense economic policy – allowing the

hardworking men and women of our state to keep more of what they earn.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY

Iowa's middle class also suffers from troubles related to the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare), which Governor Kim Reynolds describes as "unaffordable, unsustainable and unworkable." She notes that this ill-conceived federal plan "has driven out consumer choice and competition," causing 72,000 Iowans to face increased costs under Iowa's single insurer.² Rising monthly premiums place a growing burden on middle-class families, while high deductibles and out-of-pocket costs can lead beneficiaries to delay necessary medical care.³ Meeting the health care challenges

faced by so many Iowans requires that our state and federal policymakers acknowledge the problems with our current policies, work together to forge practical solutions, and provide strong leadership to adopt and implement those solutions.

Tax reform and healthcare improvements are just two of the many ways that we can focus on increasing economic security for Iowans. Supporting our agricultural and manufacturing industries, while bolstering our education system, and providing the care and support that seniors and veterans need are all additional ways that we will create opportunity for citizens across our state to pursue better, more economically secure livelihoods.





AGRICULTURE & MANUFACTURING: THE FOUNDATION OF IOWA'S ECONOMY

The most important industries in Iowa's multi-faceted economy are agriculture and manufacturing. Manufacturing accounts for nearly a quarter of the state's gross products, and more than 4,000 manufacturing companies employ 210,000 Iowans.⁵

Iowa agriculture produces seven percent of America's food supply.⁶ Farming operations account for more than 30 million acres of our land—more than half of the state's area.⁷ Among their many noteworthy distinctions, Iowa farmers lead the nation in hog production, corn export value, and egg production.⁸

Protecting the family farm and building new factories require wise public policies at both the federal and state levels on issues like trade and environmental standards. Our farmers care about the land they work, and they want to preserve and protect it for future generations, while growing the economy.

TRADE

Iowa benefits from robust international trade. Ninety-five percent of consumers live outside the U.S., and they are a huge current and

future market for our agricultural products and manufactured goods.⁹ The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has improved Iowa's access to the Canadian and Mexican markets and strengthened Iowa's economy.¹⁰ If the United States withdrew from NAFTA, Iowa could lose 138,000 jobs, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce estimates. Preserving and strengthening NAFTA is an important policy goal for our state.¹¹



RENEWABLE ENERGY

Most Iowans believe strongly that it is our responsibility to preserve and protect the environment. We also know it can be done while simultaneously growing the economy.

We must develop plentiful energy supplies and renewable fuels as part of an “all of the above” approach to energy abundance.

Last fall, Governor Kim Reynolds penned an op-ed for The Hill that described Iowa as “The red state with an energy blueprint.” The phrase highlights the significant impact of the nation’s first law incenting utilities to buy more renewable power.¹² Indeed, Iowa is the nation’s leader in renewable energy and its booming ethanol, wind, and solar industries rank near the top.¹³

These industries are not without challenges and face stiff competition at the federal level from entrenched special interests. It is important that E15 and higher blends have regulatory parity and appropriate incentives exist to encourage blending. Ultimately, a free market will encourage energy production and conservation. All segments of the energy

production industry should move in that direction together. Until that goal is achieved, Iowans must resist efforts to hinder the development of renewable fuels and our state’s economic growth.

FARM BILL

The Farm Bill, first passed in 1933 and up for renewal in 2018, has a significant impact on Iowa’s agricultural sector. Its treatment of commodities is a topline policy concern, and it is key to international trade; Congress funds two federal agricultural export programs through the Farm Bill—the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development Program.

The Farm Bill was intended to help family farms through tough times, and it should stay that way. Market solutions like crop insurance to protect growers from reduced yields and crop losses due to natural disasters are important.





EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION

Iowa's education system enjoys a reputation for excellence. Our public schools, private schools, community colleges, state universities and private colleges provide Iowans of all ages many opportunities to learn workplace skills and grow as individuals. Now we face new challenges in a rapidly changing world, and we must draw upon our long-term commitment to providing education to meet the needs and aspirations of all Iowans.

Skilled workers are essential for the continued health of Iowa's economy. Providing Iowans with options for life-long education is key to developing and maintaining a skilled workforce. The state must invest in education, continuously improve our quality institutions, and promote cooperation with the private sector to provide the nation's best prepared workforce.

Iowa's strong education system is a great asset that prepares students for good jobs in our state. More students attending college in Iowa are staying in the state after graduation than in recent years, and will be an important component of our future workforce. Some of the ways Iowa can secure a bright future in education is by focusing on:

AFFORDABILITY

Dollars should follow the student, and parents deserve choices to determine what they feel is best for their children's futures. Policymakers should reexamine strategies for making access to higher education affordable. They should also provide appropriate support for K-12 expenses like tuition at a private or parochial school, tutoring, online classes, transportation, specialized therapies, and textbooks.

PERFORMANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

Ensuring higher performance and accountability for schools is important, but must be kept student-centered and individualized. Each student's development and progress need to be measured against his or her own measurable baseline, not against a static, one-size-fits-all standard.

Another education reform that has enhanced public school performance nationwide is the establishment of charter schools, to create competition and foster innovation. These schools are scarce in Iowa, as just three charter schools operated during the 2017-2018 school year.¹⁴



CARING FOR SENIORS & VETERANS

More than 16 percent of Iowa's residents are senior citizens, enough to rank fourth in the nation.¹⁵ Iowa is also home to 219,000 veterans¹⁶ who deserve policymakers' full support as they make the transition back to civilian life.

Iowa policymakers must recognize and embrace our responsibility to provide for these groups. We need to set a national example not just for caring for them—but also in providing opportunities for a high quality of life.

AFFORDABLE LONG-TERM CARE FOR SENIORS

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, 47 percent of men and 58 percent of women who are retirement age or older will experience a need for long-term care in the future. Yet it is not covered by Medicare or private insurance.¹⁷ While policies are available to those who qualify, they can be difficult and expensive to obtain. Finding solutions to this challenge requires strategic, market-based policies that provide essential, well-deserved care for Iowans in their twilight years.

REINTEGRATION & EMPLOYMENT OF OUR VETERANS

Iowa is home to 219,000 veterans, who deserve policymakers' full support when they return home. Adjusting to civilian life takes its toll. Up to 30 percent of veterans suffer post-traumatic

stress disorder,¹⁸ and all must learn to reconnect with family and friends and find their place in society. Jobs programs and educational opportunities are key to doing so successfully.

Although Iowan veterans' unemployment and poverty rates are lower than other states', veterans' unemployment remains higher than the rest of Iowa at 5.2 percent.¹⁹ A little over 200 veterans are homeless,²⁰ compared with the nearly 40,000 homeless veterans nationwide.²¹ Through programs like Home Base Iowa, we can continue to support veterans' transition back to civilian life and into Iowa's work force.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION REFORM

In recent years, the VA has come under intense scrutiny nationwide for failing to meet the needs of veterans. Iowa is no exception, as The Des Moines Register reported last summer.²² According to U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley, the VA lied to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, claiming that no veterans had to wait longer than 90 days for care.

The bloated bureaucracy and red tape within the VA has led many to question the allocation of dollars in the administration. Legislative efforts have focused on caring for service-related disabilities, expanding access to care outside of VA facilities, and giving veterans a better choice of providers.²³

CONCLUSION

Anchored by traditional conservative principles, Iowa Values seeks to address these pressing issues and others by bringing a clear, consistent and conservative voice to state policy discussions. **Focusing on policy issues that matter most to Iowans, we will support voices that reflect our values as we seek to improve our way of life.**

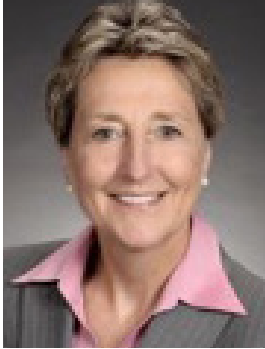


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OUR BOARD MEMBERS



PAULA S. DIERENFELD

Paula Dierenfeld has been the Mayor of Johnston since 2008 after serving eight years on the city council. She is an attorney and partner at Nyemaster Goode law firm in Des Moines.

Prior employment includes being the Iowa Utilities Board Commissioner, serving as legal counsel to Governor Terry Branstad, research staff director in the General Assembly and as a staffer to Chuck Grassley. Paula graduated from the University of Northern Iowa and received her Juris Doctorate from Drake University Law School.

He retired as executive vice president of Verizon Communications in 2013 and now serves on the boards of several public policy and non-profit organizations, including the Board of Regents of Loras College in Dubuque. Tom graduated from Loras in 1972 and received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Iowa College of Law.



SARA T. FAGEN

Sara Fagen is one of the nation's leading political and corporate issue strategists and has worked on over a dozen Iowa campaigns. Sara is a native of Dubuque and previously served

as the White House Political Director for President George W. Bush. She has founded three companies since then, including leading analytics and media firms as well as serving as a partner at DDC Public Affairs. Sara began her political career at Drake University, when she was elected as the chairwoman of the Iowa College Republicans.



THOMAS J. TAUKE

Tom Tauke served Northeast Iowa in the United States Congress from 1979 to 1991. Prior to that he represented his hometown, Dubuque, in the Iowa Legislature.

The logo features the word "IOWA" in a bold, red, sans-serif font, with the word "Values" written in a red, cursive script font below it. The text is contained within a white, irregular shape that mimics the outline of the state of Iowa, all set against a background of a lush green cornfield.

IOWA
Values