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Mark Costello

Iowa

State Senator, SD-008 (R)

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75

Lifetime
Freedom
Score

IA Legislative Scorecard 2025

✓ Pro-Freedom ✗ Anti-Freedom – Did not Vote

Vote

1. Would have tightened insurance requirements for pipeline operators and redefined "common carrier" status to limit eminent domain use-particularly affecting carbon-capture pipelines.



Pro-Freedom: **Yes** · Cast: **No** · HF639 · 05/12/2025

2. Prohibits public entities-including state agencies, counties, cities, school districts, community colleges, and public universities-from spending any public or private funds on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) offices, roles, or initiatives.



Pro-Freedom: **Yes** · Cast: **Yes** · HF856 · 05/09/2025

3. Lowers the minimum age for acquiring or carrying weapons from 21 to 18.



Pro-Freedom: **Yes** · Cast: **Yes** · HF924 · 04/07/2025

4. Prohibits the use of ranked choice voting (RCV) and instant runoff voting (IRV) in state and local elections.



Pro-Freedom: **Yes** · Cast: **Yes** · SF459 · 03/19/2025

5. Makes it illegal to use a handheld electronic device (such as a phone) while driving unless it's in hands-free or voice-activated mode.



Pro-Freedom: **No** · Cast: **Yes** · SF22 · 03/18/2025

6. Establishes a strictly biological definition of "sex" based on birth anatomy and removes "gender identity" as a protected category under the Iowa Civil Rights Act.



Pro-Freedom: **Yes** · Cast: **Yes** · SF418 · 02/27/2025

Scorecard Votes: 67%

Why do these votes matter?

1. Carbon Sequestration Rules

HF639 would have tightened insurance requirements for pipeline operators, redefined “common carrier” status to limit eminent domain use—particularly affecting carbon-capture pipelines—and expanded who could intervene in Iowa Utilities Commission hearings.

The Iowa State Senate passed HF639 on May 12, 2025 by a vote of 27 to 22. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because using eminent domain for private corporations violates the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, which protect property rights and due process. There is no constitutional authority for federal or state governments to regulate carbon storage or enforce climate-agenda policies. Such efforts advance the goals of the UN's Agenda 2030, threatening individual liberty and state sovereignty.

2. DEI Ban

HF856 prohibits public entities—including state agencies, counties, cities, school districts, community colleges, and public universities—from spending any public or private funds on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) offices, roles, or initiatives. It defines DEI broadly to include programs, trainings, or policies based on race, gender identity, sexual orientation, “social justice” concepts, and similar topics.

The Iowa State Senate passed HF856 on May 9, 2025 by a vote of 34 to 16. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because the goal of DEI is to pit Americans against each other. Instead of pushing for equal protection under the law, which is what the Constitution upholds, DEI programs in school push for equity, which is rooted in communism and is part of the Marxist agenda.

3. Weapon Carry Age Reduction

HF924 lowers the minimum age for acquiring or carrying weapons from 21 to 18.

The Iowa State Senate passed HF924 on April 7, 2025 by a vote of 33 to 14. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because this bill would remove the state’s minimum age requirement that prevents a person younger than 21 from purchasing a firearm, which is both unconstitutional and more restrictive than current federal law. The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution assures that the right of the American people “to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

4. Ranked-choice Voting Ban

SF459 prohibits the use of ranked choice voting (RCV) and instant runoff voting (IRV) in state and local elections.

The Iowa State Senate passed SF459 on March 19, 2025 by a vote of 34 to 13. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because RCV undermines election integrity and the electorate’s ability to choose the best candidate. By design, RCV favors moderate-to-leftist candidates who often fail to uphold the Constitution. This complex, multi-round system can result in winners who lack true plurality support and imposes ballot-marking requirements that may pressure voters to act against their conscience.

5. Government Overreach in Driving

SF22 makes it illegal to use a handheld electronic device (such as a phone) while driving unless it’s in hands-free or voice-activated mode. Drivers caught using a device improperly face a \$100 to \$500 fine and include possible license suspension. The law exempts fully stopped vehicles, public safety workers, utility workers, transit operators, and farmers.

The Iowa State Senate passed SF22 on March 18, 2025 by a vote of 41 to 1. We have assigned pluses to the nays because this bill expands government regulation at the expense of personal responsibility and individual liberty. It allows the state to further intrude into daily life and sets a precedent for micromanaging behavior behind the wheel. Additionally, carve-outs for certain professions create unequal treatment under the law, undermining the principle of equal protection and fostering public distrust. Matters like this are best addressed through education and individual accountability.

6. Defining Sex

SF418 establishes a strictly biological definition of “sex” based on birth anatomy, removes “gender identity” as a protected category under the Iowa Civil Rights Act (eliminating state protections in employment, housing, education, credit, and public accommodations), prohibits changing the sex marker on birth certificates using medical transition, and bans instruction on “gender theory” in kindergarten through sixth grade.

The Iowa State Senate passed SF418 on February 27, 2025 by a vote of 33 to 15. We have assigned pluses to the ayes because this bill codifies biological reality in law, protects children from harmful gender ideology, and upholds parental rights. By removing “gender identity” as a protected class and rejecting the false notion that sex can be changed, SF418 pushes back against the radical Marxist agenda being forced into schools, workplaces, and public life. It affirms the state's duty to safeguard truth and common sense. Scientifically and biblically, there are only two genders.