

Increase Support for Faculty and Staff

Better Pay and Improved Working Conditions

1.) Respect the Profession: Raise Teacher Pay

Republicans have held school funding ~ 13% below inflation since 2010², pushing starting pay to 46th nationally¹.

My plan sets a \$50,000 starting salary, rising to \$60,000 within four years, lifts the entire salary schedule for experienced educators, and indexes annual raises to inflation so pay never falls behind again.

Additionally, to offset years of unfair wages and bring immediate relief, current educators and recent retirees will receive a one-time payment from the State Reserve Fund³:

- \$4,000 for all full-time educators
- Additional support for:
 - veteran teachers,
 - rural shortage areas,
 - special education,
 - behavioral health support roles

2.) Safe Classrooms with Trained Support

Teachers across Iowa report unsafe classrooms where they are not allowed—or not supported—to intervene when safety is at risk.

Many say serious incidents bring minimal consequences, allowing dangerous behavior to continue while putting staff and students at risk.

Under my plan:

- Staff are trained in de-escalation and safe restraint (only when necessary).
- Schools implement an on-call support system so teachers are never left alone in dangerous situations.
- Clear documentation and parent notification ensure transparency.
- Each district will provide a licensed behavioral health therapist (distinct from Guidance Counselor

End Iowa's Unconstitutional School Voucher Program

Redirect \$345 M/year Back into Public Schools

1.) Republicans Diverted Public Tax Dollars into Private Schools

In 2023, Republicans passed HF 68, which **diverts ~\$345 M per year of public tax dollars to private schools.**⁴

No new tax was passed. Instead, Republicans violated Medicaid rights, cut funding for public schools and libraries,² cut rental assistance for low-income Iowans, defunded rural hospitals, and reduced funding for mental health care across the state.

2.) Taxpayer Dollars Should Not Fund Anti-LGBT Religious Doctrine

After *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) prohibited segregation in public schools, private schools rapidly expanded because they were still legally allowed to discriminate.

Religious exemptions create another layer of legal protection.

Approximately **86% of Iowa's private schools are religiously affiliated.**⁸

Iowa and U.S. Courts allow private schools to discriminate against LGBTQ+ students and staff because Title IX contains religious exemptions.

They can deny admission, expel students, or refuse employment.⁷

We've seen it before.

During the Civil War era, pro-slavery activists used the Biblical story of Ham and Shem to argue that slavery was morally justified. Today, verses like Sodom and Gomorrah and Leviticus 18:22 are similarly used to portray LGBT people as sinful or inferior.

Children in religious schools are taught these beliefs from an early age, making them susceptible to anti-LGBT political movements later in life.

Anti-civil rights students become anti-civil rights voters.

Iowa taxpayers should not be forced to fund discrimination, and LGBT+ Iowans shouldn't have to endure it.

3.) HF 68 Violates Our Nation's Founding Principles

James Madison, "Father of the Constitution", wrote, "'No tax in any amount... can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions.'"

Thomas Jefferson famously wrote that the First Amendment built a "wall of separation between Church and State."

Since our country's founding, putting tax dollars into religious institutions was considered unconstitutional. And despite political pressure, for more than 200 years the U.S. Supreme Court upheld this separation.

4.) One-Party Rule Destroys Separation of Powers *and* Checks and Balances

Following the rise of the Religious Right in the 1980s, conservatives spent decades building political control over state legislatures, governorships, and the courts. In Iowa, that consolidation was completed in 2017 when Republicans gained control of all three branches of government.

Soon after, decades of constitutional protections separating taxpayer funds from religious instruction were steadily dismantled.

Iowa's voucher program did not emerge from neutral constitutional interpretation. It resulted from decades of coordinated political and judicial realignment designed to weaken the separation between church and state.

As George Washington warned during his *Farewell Address in 1796*,

"I have... intimated to you the danger of parties in the State....."

The common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and the duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it.

It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another...."

Political subversion.

Iowans are told that courts, legislatures, and governors act independently.

But when every branch becomes politically aligned under the same ideological movement, checks and balances become an illusion rather than a safeguard.

It is not benign policy. It is political subversion.