

# The Daily Iowan

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## A NEW CHAPTER IN STANDARD TESTING

The ACT score for Iowa's senior class of 2023 fell to its lowest average in the last decade.

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Iowa City West High School senior Andreas Warren thought he would regret not taking the ACT exam after it became test-optional for most colleges and universities across the United States.

"I thought it was going to be like a super risky move," Warren said. "But at this point, I don't think so."

Warren, who wants to study musical theater in college, said he has already been accepted by two out-of-state universities and received some merit-based scholarships.

The ACT test, the well-known college admissions test that was introduced by University of Iowa education professor Everett Lindquist in 1959 and became the reason for the ACT Inc. headquarters in Iowa City, is experiencing its most tumultuous time in six decades as admissions tests become optional and average scores decline.

Average ACT scores in Iowa dropped to their lowest level in the last decade at 20.8 — almost 16 points off of the highest possible exam score of 36, according to ACT data from October. These scores come after over 1,900 U.S. colleges and universities chose to not require SAT or ACT scores for admissions in fall 2024, according to FairTest.

Fewer students are also taking the exam, according to ACT data that has slightly decreased over the last three years. Forty-eight percent of estimated high school graduates in Iowa took the exam this year as opposed to 49 percent the year prior.

However, not everybody thinks it's a good idea to neglect these college exams.

The national composite ACT scores dipped 0.3 this year to 19.5 — the sixth consecutive year of score declines.

Of those who took the test, "more than four in 10 seniors meet none of the ACT's college readiness benchmarks," ACT revealed in its October report.

### ON THE DECLINE

Iowa ACT scores have dropped to their lowest level in nearly a decade and most U.S. universities no longer require it.

**Jan. 12, 2022:** Iowa Board of Regents votes to remove standardized testing requirements at regent institutions, including the University of Iowa.

**March 2023:** Columbia University first Ivy League school to allow test-optional ACT, SAT undergraduate admissions.

**May 2023:** Nonprofit in Iowa City ACT announces layoffs of over 100 employees and begins sale of ACT campus.

**Fall 2024:** Over 1,900 U.S. colleges and universities will not require SAT or ACT scores for admissions in fall 2024, according to FairTest.

#### ACT test cost increase

The price to take the ACT test increases each year, and some students take the test multiple times. The prices below include the ACT with writing.

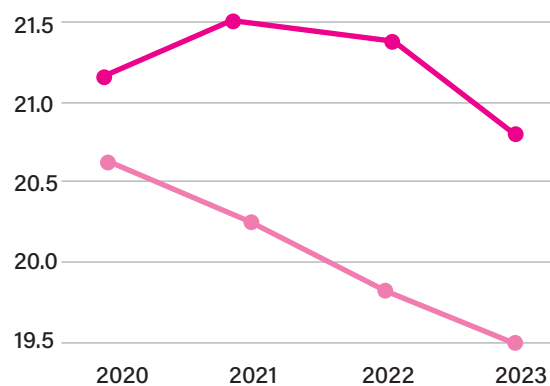
2021 **\$70** 2022 **\$88** 2023 **\$93**

#### Average composite ACT score in Iowa from 2020-23

Iowa ACT scores have dropped to their lowest level in nearly a decade.

Source: ACT

● Iowa  
● United States



Infographic by Marandah Mangra-Dutcher

ACT | 2A

### INSIDE



#### Valparaiso development, Iowa product

Iowa men's basketball's Ben Krikke is proving to be one of college basketball's most underrated players.

BASKETBALL | 1B



#### Honing youth talent in Iowa City

The Iowa Conservatory in Iowa City provides individualized curriculums ranging from performance to visual art with a student body of less than 10 high schoolers.

80 HOURS | 1C

### ONLINE

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• Look out for *The Daily Iowan's* online coverage of the next women's basketball game against Bowling Green on Dec. 2 at [dailyiowan.com](http://dailyiowan.com).

### DITV

Streamed live at 8:30 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Always available on [dailyiowan.com](http://dailyiowan.com)

## UI researches low telehealth access

The study revealed that telehealth care in K-12 rural Iowa schools is beneficial, but rare.

Shreya Reddy  
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Some rural K-12 schools in Iowa look to telehealth access to provide health care for its students, but access to it is slim. University of Iowa researchers conducted a study to measure the causes and the effects of telehealth in schools.

The researchers found that 67.7 percent of rural students did not have access to a health care provider based on where they lived.

Marcia Ward, a distinguished professor at the UI College of Public Health, said the study started with grantees from across the country receiving funding from the Health Resources and Service Administration.

The study collected a variety of data, analyzing it, and writing about the findings in a series of papers.

Ward said the intention behind the study was to make people more aware of the problem and understand that in a rural area in particular, there is a shortage of providers.

"With these grantees, we had them focus specifically on particular shortages in underserved rural communities where they formed relationships with schools in their area," Ward said.

A shortage of nurses in schools is one of the most significant findings from the study in urgent and primary care.

Though it would be ideal to have full-time nurses in each of these rural schools, Ward said it almost never happens, and telehealth provided a potential solution to that.

Instead of taking the student out of school



Isabella Tisdale | The Daily Iowan

Researchers Kimberly Merchant and Fred Ullrich look at research papers at the College of Public Health on Dec. 4. The researchers found that 67.7 percent of rural students do not have access to a health care provider based on where they live.

or parents potentially missing work, Ward said telehealth allows children with relatively minor injuries to use the service.

"Lots of the negatives such as cost of appointment, travel, and others can be avoided by using

telehealth and these services provided these students with nurses through a video call, even if the nurse is hundreds of miles away," Ward said.

TELEHEALTH | 3A

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## Elected IC councilor pushes election overhaul

Andrew Dunn said he wants Iowa City elections to be more intuitive and equitable.

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Dunn

City Council works.

Dunn wrote in a Nov. 14 letter to the editor published in *The Daily Iowan* that he would like to change the "broken" election system to make it not only more intuitive for

voters but also more equitable.

On the Iowa City City Council, there are three district seats — A, B, and C — and four at-large seats. Candidates running for a district seat must live within its boundaries, but a candidate running for an at-large seat can live anywhere within city limits.

In general elections, voters, no matter which district they reside in, can vote for all candidates on the ballot running for a district or at-large seat. However, for primary elections, only voters who live within the primary district can vote for the candidates in that election.

At-large councilor Laura Bergus, who is the future Dis-

trict A seat holder, said she was approached by many confused voters who were not aware of how the system worked during the District A primary this October.

Bergus said while she was campaigning for the primary, she often had to pull out a map to help voters figure out if they lived in District A and could vote in the primary. Also, some voters she encountered did not even know there was a primary election happening, she said.

In the District A primary election, less than 6.6 percent of the registered voters in the district voted in the race.

Iowa City is unique in the way its election system operates compared

to other nearby city governments. The City of Cedar Rapids, for example, has a total of nine members on its council. Of those nine, three members plus the mayor are elected at-large, while the remaining five members are elected by the voters in their district.

The City of Coralville has a council of five members plus the mayor, who does not vote in council matters and is technically a separate entity from the council that acts as a supervisor of council duties and actions. The council's five members are all elected at-large.

In his editorial, Dunn wrote that

ELECTION | 3A



**ACT**  
from 1A

**Defenders argue for the continuing value of college admissions tests**

Higher education experts — and area ACT and SAT prep tutors — say some K-12 students are still taking the ACT and SAT in high school to receive merit-based scholarships, but others, who are not necessarily seeking scholarships, are betting that the colleges they will apply to are test-optional.

Many factors contribute to the lower average scores, including lack of retention taught in schools, according to ACT prep professionals.

Amy Seeley, a founding member of the National Test Prep Association and Seeley Test Pros, an academic tutoring service in Ohio, said the most obvious cause of low ACT scores is that COVID-19 disrupted student learning.

“You’re going to start to see this trickle down if they don’t remember it,” she said. “You’re also just seeing that for some, the focus on memorizing information isn’t really there.”

Seeley said a large problem she and other test preppers see in students is their inability to memorize formulas in math, which is needed for the ACT.

The ACT has four individual tests in English, math, reading, and science reasoning. This year, only 37 percent of the 2023 graduating class in Iowa met the ACT math benchmark of a score of 23.

“I’ve never seen kids who can’t multiply, add, subtract, or divide,” she said. “And now, to be fair, the ACT does allow students to use a calculator, which can be an edge.”

Rose Babington, ACT’s senior director for state and federal programs, said ACT recommends school districts break down the data from its students that ACT provides to see what trends and causes of low scores can be discussed.

Babington said in Iowa’s high school class of 2023, 62 percent of students indicated that they had taken their full core curriculum across English, math, reading, and science. Compared to the year prior, 70 percent students self-reported students taking their core classes.

“I think I go back to the local perspective on it,” Babington said. “I think a big focus in a lot of states is looking closely at that data and what those trends are trying to say, what do we need to do right now?”

She added that ACT has partnerships with almost half the states in the country, not including Iowa, to offer the ACT in schools for free. Most ACT tests are taken on computers instead of paper,



Grace Smith | The Daily Iowan

Twelve-year-old Mira Gibbons completes a puzzle during a test preparation session with Founder and Director of test preparation organization FinnPrep, Kelly Finn, at the Armstrong Center in downtown Cedar Rapids on Dec. 1. Iowa ACT scores have dropped to the lowest level in about a decade.

to come to these three interviews if you’re not going to submit your test,” he said. “Sometimes it means tests optional for these two out of our 17 programs, but not the other 15.”

Although some colleges don’t require admissions tests, they still may use them to determine scholarships and other factors for the final tuition bill.

“The colleges need data points in order to determine what your tuition will be,” Kelly Finn, founder of FinnPrep in Cedar Rapids, said. “I have conversations about this nationally, and they need to see data. They need to see your GPA and test scores, your courses, so forth.”

Warren said while applying to colleges, he noticed that some applications required writing an additional essay instead of submitting an ACT score.

“It’s more work, but I think it is worth it to show a part of yourself,” he said.

Seeley said she advises her student clients to take the ACT or SAT if they are pursuing a full ride at a state university.

“I will say in the test prep industry, for many years, for most students, at least in my area in the Midwest, getting a better test score isn’t about going to a more selective institution — it’s about accumulating those scholarship dollars so that

The nonprofit lost over \$100 million in its fiscal year that ended on Aug. 31, 2020, in educational assessment and workforce development revenue that is generated by the ACT exam.

In June, ACT sold the Tyler Building at 301 Act Drive to the Iowa City Community School District for \$8.75 million.

ACT CEO Janet Godwin attributed the sale in a statement in May to the rise in hybrid work schedules at ACT after the pandemic.

“We determined that we could consolidate and make better use of the space on our campus,” she said in a release in June.

According to the Johnson County Assessor’s website, ACT owns five properties on its campus that are collectively assessed at a net value of \$25,423,140 this year.

**Concerns rise on ACT test equity**

Since the ACT test was introduced in 1959 to measure how prepared high schoolers are for college, the testing process has been criticized by many for not being equitable for students of color and those in lower socioeconomic classes.

A study by Student Aid Policy revealed that white high schoolers are two times more likely as Hispanic or Latino students and three times more likely than Black students to have combined ACT score of 31, or SAT test scores of 1400 to 1600.

ACT does offer a fee waiver to take the test for free up to four times for students who are eligible for free and reduced lunches in schools.

Some students and high schools in the U.S. have taken to the legal system to push for test-optional admissions because they claim the ACT and SAT are biased.

A school district and students won a lawsuit in 2019 that charged the University of California to make the SAT and ACT optional for college admission. The university complied and eliminated the requirement in 2020.

Following the suit, many other schools, including the University of Iowa and state Board of Regents universities in January 2022, have since removed standardized testing requirements.

Changing the higher education admissions process has been a hot topic this year after the U.S. Supreme Court voted in June to remove race-based admissions.

Some test preppers, like Derby, said equity issues in higher education will still exist if the ACT is removed from the admissions process.

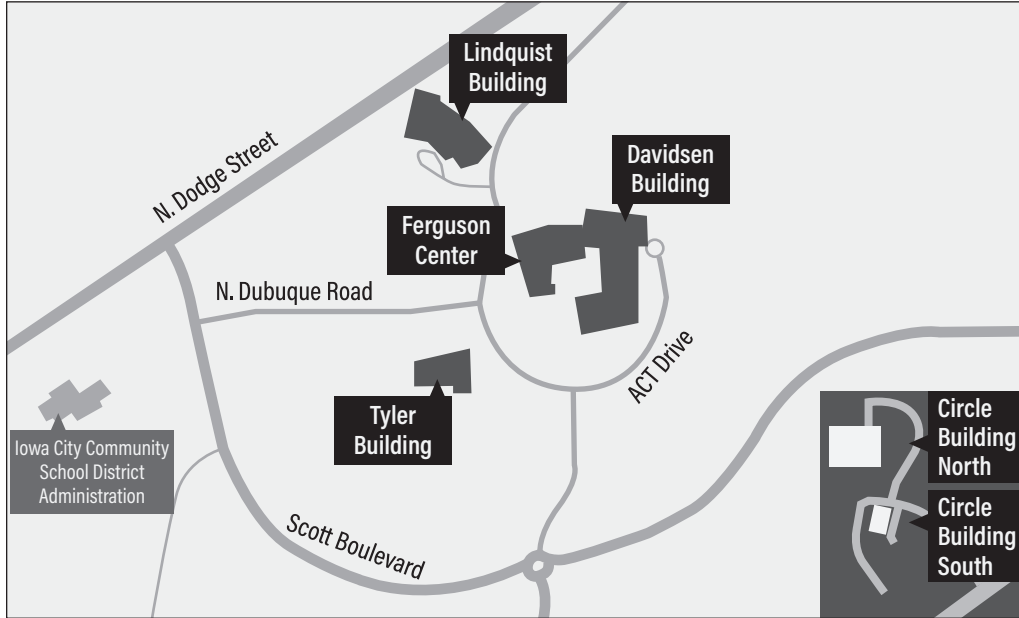
“There’s a difference between the ACT causing inequity and the ACT just being the mirror that shows it and brings it to light,” he said. “I think that it’s just really important that we keep bringing that to light. There’s no denying that it’s there.”

“I’ve never seen kids who can’t multiply, add, subtract, or divide. And now, to be fair, the ACT does allow students to use a calculator, which can be an edge.”

**Amy Seeley**  
Seeley Test Pros founder

**Location of Iowa City’s ACT Campus**

The main part of campus is 2.9 miles away from the Pentacrest.



Locator map by Bri Brown

she said. “[It’s] quite a bit above the national average — 19.5 is the national average — and I will say Iowa consistently tends to be a state that scores above the national average, but seeing a drop of this size, a 0.6 drop, when you have about the same number of students definitely is something that’s significant,” Babington said.

With most schools starting to allow test-optional admissions, the process of applying to undergraduate programs and what materials they require isn’t consistent across all universities.

Jason Derby of Derby ACT Prep in Dubuque, Iowa, said some schools announced they are test optional for admissions, but not for select scholarships.

“Sometimes it means test-optional, but you have

college is more affordable.” College undergraduate students on average receive an average merit award of nearly \$12,000 during the 2022-23 academic year, according to U.S. News and World Report.

**ACT downsizes headquarters**

In an effort to address “large-scale, rapid” changes in the admissions business, ACT Inc., based in Iowa City at 500 Act Drive, laid off 13 percent — around 100 employees — of its Iowa City workforce in May. ACT employs about 1,100 people across the U.S.

ACT is reportedly ranked No. 37 on Zippia’s list of the 100 largest companies in Iowa.



Grace Smith | The Daily Iowan

Twelve-year-old Mira Gibbons completes a puzzle during a test preparation session with Founder and Director of test preparation organization FinnPrep, Kelly Finn, at the Armstrong Center in downtown Cedar Rapids on Dec. 1. Iowa ACT scores have dropped to the lowest level in about a decade.

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# Community college online enrollment drops

The decrease in Iowa enrollment has made course planning and budgeting challenging.



Shaely Odean | The Daily Iowan

The Kirkwood Community College Regional Center at the University of Iowa is seen on Nov. 13. Fewer Iowa community college students are enrolling in online courses, a consistent decline since last year.

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Fewer Iowa community college students are enrolling in online courses, which is a consistent decline since last year, according to a November 2023 fall enrollment report. Though there has been a 4.3 percent drop, the Iowa State Board of Education said the number of credit hours in online and blended courses has since increased, meaning those who took online classes took more credit hours last year. In 2023, the number of credit hours for online classes saw an increase of 4.5 percent. Amy Gieseke, section chief in the

Bureau of Community Colleges and Postsecondary Readiness at the Iowa Department of Education, said these numbers are not entirely up to pre-pandemic levels but are steadily rising. "The increases in fall enrollment prove community colleges are continuing to reach students to provide them with the high-quality education, training, and industry certifications to ensure successful preparation for their careers and future success," Gieseke said. According to the 2022 report, there was a 5.1 percent decrease compared to 2021 in credit hours for online classes, with 39,576 students enrolled in online classes at community colleges. As of 2023, the

"Faculty are impacted when enrollment decreases. With fewer classes needed to be offered, there are fewer classes that faculty can teach."

**Dave Hunt**  
Kirkwood dean of academic innovation, strategy, and design

number of students increased by roughly 3,000 students compared to last year,

with 41,924 students. Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids saw a 10.3 percent decrease in credit hours in 2022. Dave Hunt, Kirkwood dean of academic innovation, strategy, and design, said most of the online enrollment at Kirkwood is from students in the local area. Because of this, Hunt said, many students take a blend of in-person and online courses. "With overall enrollment down last year, online course enrollment and in-person course enrollment took a hit," Hunt said. There are six online degrees offered at Kirkwood Community College, some of which include paralegal studies, business administration, and water environmental technology. Online courses offered at Kirkwood include entrepreneurship, introduction to cosmetology, and beginning conversational Spanish, among others. Hunt said this decrease in online enrollment impacts not only students but faculty and the college as a whole. "Faculty are impacted when enrollment decreases," Hunt said. "With fewer classes needed to be offered, there are fewer classes that faculty can teach." This often means supplementary faculty are not offered the section or sections that they would like to teach. Students are impacted by this decrease, specifically in registration for classes. It is more difficult for students to sign up for courses when there are fewer being offered, Hunt said. Hunt said for Kirkwood in particular, a decrease in enrollment makes planning and budgeting more challenging. Kirkwood does have a cash reserve set aside in anticipation of this decrease. "This is especially true when the decrease is not planned or more than planned," Hunt said. "Changes in the budget often mean we have to make choices about the programs and services we offer to students." Hunt said this fall, however, the college has seen an increase in online enrollment matching the overall enrollment numbers for 2023. "Enrollment is significant at the college as it now only represents who we are serving it also is what generates revenue," he said. "We are happy to see enrollment levels increased slightly this year."

## ELECTION from IA

not only is this confusing for voters, who also said he was frequently asked how the election system worked, but it can also act as a systemic barrier to minority candidates getting elected to the council. As cited in his editorial, an article by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund states that when communities of color do not make up the majority demographic of a jurisdiction, minority voters' choices are often overruled by the votes of the majority group of white voters. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's website, Iowa City's racial demographic makeup in 2022 was 73.8 percent white, 8.4 percent Black, and 6.4 percent Hispanic or Latino. To help combat these issues, Dunn proposed three different potential changes that could be made to the city's election system:

- Keep the same number of at-large members on the council, and the district seats can only be voted upon by those who live in the same district.
- Abolish the at-large seats and use only district seats that can then be voted on by their district's respective voters.
- No longer use the district seats and make all seats at-large.

In an interview with the *DI*, Dunn said the third option could be implemented immediately, but the first two would be implemented after two city council elections. Doing this would help the current council make a more objective decision on which path they think would be best, rather than which path could help them win the next election as the average term for a councilor is normally two, he said. The way these changes would be implemented would be through amending the city's charter, which essentially acts as a constitution for the city to abide by and operate by. The charter is reviewed every decade by a commission who are appointed by the city council, and that commission makes recommendations to the council of potential

changes that could be made to the charter. The council can then decide which changes they want to employ. The next cycle of this process will begin in the next few months, and the commission will have a year to review the charter, City Attorney Eric Goers said. Several times in the past, different charter review commissions have brought up the same issue Dunn has, but no actual change has been made regarding this topic, Goers said. Goers said the city council could also amend the charter by passing a proposed amendment for voters to vote on, or by passing an ordinance which could be struck down by voters if enough petitioned against it. A third way this change could come about does not involve the city council, as voters themselves could petition that a change be made, which would then go to a special election for voters to vote upon, Goers said. Dunn, who will be sworn into his District C seat and back on the council in January, said his goal for this issue will be put before the council for a vote by February, and he plans to talk more with the community to get their input on the topic in the meantime. He added that this topic is important to helping make Iowa City a better, more diverse place and also an issue he plans to pursue aggressively and involve the public every step of the way. "Ultimately I think it's going to come down to whether four councilors agree that we are the ones to make the change. And I hope that is the case because 40 years has demonstrated that"

**Andrew Dunn**  
Future District C Iowa City City Councilor

on, or by passing an ordinance which could be struck down by voters if enough petitioned against it. A third way this change could come about does not involve the city council, as voters themselves could petition that a change be made, which would then go to a special election for voters to vote upon, Goers said. Dunn, who will be sworn into his District C seat and back on the council in January, said his goal for this issue will be put before the council for a vote by February, and he plans to talk more with the community to get their input on the topic in the meantime. He added that this topic is important to helping make Iowa City a better, more diverse place and also an issue he plans to pursue aggressively and involve the public every step of the way. "Ultimately I think it's going to come down to whether four councilors agree that we are the ones to make the change,"

Dunn said. "And I hope that that is the case because 40 years has demonstrated that council has not been willing to do

that, [and] the literature over the last 40 years has demonstrated that that has been a poor call."

## TELEHEALTH from IA

All appointments were made through telehealth with a registered nurse, or RN, and 95 percent of the time the problem was solved, preventing the student from having to leave school. "That is the beauty of telehealth — it can be anywhere and can allow for quick access to needed clinicians," Ward said. Fred Ullrich, project director for research activities at the UI, said many students who had asthma, diabetes, oral health issues, and even behavioral health issues were able to be seen through this service and partially eliminate that lack of access to health care. Ullrich said depending on which service a student required, a provider would be involved and offer the specific service needed. For example, telehealth students with behavioral health problems would be able to be prescribed the appropriate medi-

cation needed as well as general counseling. Students with primary care or urgent care needs, Ullrich said, would be able to receive medication, care, and follow-up services if deemed necessary. Student-athletes who needed a sports physical could also receive these physicals via telehealth. "Most of these rural areas are getting these services via telehealth where they didn't exist otherwise," Ullrich said. Another aspect of telehealth that the researchers looked at was the number of encounters students had with this service. Students with chronic conditions tended to be seen more frequently than other students. For behavioral and health services, students were typically seen between one and six sessions a semester. Ward said since the pandemic, this telehealth service in particular has seen the most increase. "People see the efficacy of telehealth, and the popularity for it will continue to grow," Ward said.

# Kick-Off June Pride Month

AT THE THIRD

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# ETHICS & POLITICS

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## Iowa child care centers fill federal funding gap

With federal wage hikes in Iowa child care expiring, providers are expected to offer the same level of benefits.

**Liam Halawith**  
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As pandemic-era federal investments in child care expire, providers across Iowa and the U.S. are left to fill the growing gap in funding. Lawmakers are exploring bipartisan efforts to help struggling families in Iowa, but haven't reached a consensus on how best to address the "child care cliff."

The funding that came with the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act, a \$1.9 trillion federal stimulus package, ended Sept. 30. The funds helped supplement staff wages, child care center renovations, and expand available child care enrollment.

The emergency funding provided by the American Rescue Plan Act staved off a collapse of the childcare industry that was struggling to stay afloat before the global pandemic. Now, the industry faces an uncertain future while policymakers ponder more investments in child care.

According to a report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 14 percent of families who had children aged 5 and younger had a member who quit, changed, or refused a job because of problems with child care, compared with 13 percent nationwide in 2021.

Nearly \$24 billion was allocated to stabilize the national child care industry around the country during the COVID-19 pandemic through the federal relief package. The funds helped 220,000 providers and impacted 9.6 million children, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The average award for child care centers was \$140,600.

Iowa received \$200 million in federal funding for child care under the American Rescue Plan Act, which was distributed to 2,155 child care providers across the state, according to an HHS report.

This leaves child care providers and state and local governments to fill the gap now that funds have dried up. According to a June report by the Century Foundation, a progressive think tank, the gap could threaten access for over 13,000 Iowa children, and 401 child care programs in the state could close due to the funding cliff.

That report also found that more than 3.2 million children and 70,000 programs nationwide could be impacted by the expiration of this funding.

States like Iowa have invested their own money, in addition to federal funds, into child care in the state. Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds recently announced a third round of child care business incentive grants in October. The grants are part of over \$500 million that the state of Iowa has spent on child care since 2020, according to the governor's office.

The Arc of Southeast Iowa, located in Iowa City, received \$274,350 to renovate and expand its daycare center to increase overall capacity. The grant helped the center increase its physical capacity from 30 to 70, but because of staffing challenges, the center has only been able to increase overall enrollment by 17 children.

"Without support, our child care providers are staring down some very impossible decisions — laying off staff, cutting child care slots, raising prices for families, or just simply shutting their doors because they have no other choice."

**U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash.**  
Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee

Jenny Winegarden, the program director at the Arc of Southeast Iowa's child care center in Iowa City, said the center hasn't filled all of its slots because of the delicate balance the center must navigate. To bring in more children, the center needs more staff but must enroll more children to pay the staff.

This is because child care centers usu-



Isabella Tisdale | The Daily Iowan

A child plays at the Arc of Southeast Iowa's Bill Reagan Children's Center in Iowa City on Dec. 1. The children's center serves children ages three months to five years. The center received \$274,350 in federal funds to expand its daycare center to increase overall capacity.

ally make all their revenue from child care tuition, making it difficult to hire more employees without guaranteed enrollment to subsidize more staff, Winegarden said.

Mary Janssen, the director of the northwest region for the Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral, said tight budgets plague many child care providers' ability to offer higher wages. Janssen said this is due to all revenue, besides grants, coming from tuition.

"The only cost increase that our child care providers can do will be right back to that parent in the form of a fee increase," Janssen said. "It's really not an easy thing for them to do because ultimately they could lose that family down the street to someone that is charging less."

Winegarden also said low wages make it difficult to attract and retain providers.

"We're now living in a world where people can go to McDonald's and make \$15, \$16 an hour and as a nonprofit agency, that's just not something that we can afford," Winegarden said.

### Low wages, slow recovery for child care workforce

According to the report from the Century Foundation, 3,536 Iowa child care jobs and more than 232,000 child care jobs nationwide could be lost due to the funding cliff. This leaves providers in the lurch as local officials decide how to fill the gap.

The sector is already slow to recover; the child care sector has 3.7 percent fewer jobs than before the pandemic, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The child care sector also has some

data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Johnson County Board of Supervisors allocated funding from its share of ARPA funds to increase wages for local child care workers.

The program provides a \$2 wage increase to child care workers at centers that receive grant funding. The county will also provide \$0.153 per \$2 to cover additional payroll taxes paid by the employer.

Sheila Hansen, a senior policy advocate at Common Good Iowa, a nonprofit advocacy organization that advocates for child well-being, said providers across the state are having trouble keeping workers due to low wages, leaving providers without the ability to expand their capacity.

"We are still seeing places that can't hire anybody because they can't pay a wage that is a living wage, so providers are choosing to work elsewhere," Hansen said.

Hansen said federal child care assistance reimbursement rates are also an issue that providers face, with the rate of reimbursement for aid not covering private pay tuition rates.

### Some say child care not optimal for providers

Child care assistance to low-income families has helped provide access to child care for the 17,680 children currently enrolled in the state's child care assistance program.

Child care tuition rivals that of public universities in Iowa at \$10,437, according to a 2023 report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a nonprofit that focuses on child well-being.

Record high costs leave Iowans looking to the state and federal governments for assistance.

Under a new Iowa law signed in May, the income requirements for state child care assistance would go from 145 percent of the federal poverty level to 165 percent. A fiscal analysis by the nonpartisan Legislative Services Agency found the law would likely increase enrollment by 1,756 children, allowing a total of 19,436 children to receive federal child care assistance.

The bill invests an additional \$20 million in child care in Iowa annually, according to the agency's fiscal analysis.

Child care tuition rivals that of public universities in Iowa at \$10,437, according to a 2023 report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a nonprofit that focuses on child well-being.

Record high costs leave Iowans looking to the state and federal governments for assistance.

Chelsey Markle, the executive director of the Arc of Southeast Iowa, said child care assistance reimbursement is not enough to cover tuition costs and that it disincentivizes providers from accepting child care assistance.

Hansen said the state also does not reimburse enough absent days for children who receive child care assistance. Under the state's program, only six absences are reimbursed to providers. After the sixth absence, they are not paid for those absence days.

"Sometimes families who are low income and qualify for child care assistance might be gone more than six days a year," Hansen said. "And so what happens is that on the seventh, eighth, ninth day, those providers have that spot open, but they get no pay for it."

### Federal child care grants in the works

ARPA provided an additional \$15 billion to expand the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which helps low-income families pay for child care.

That funding is set to expire at the end of September 2024.

The state's program is funded through the federal Child Care and Development Fund under the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant.

President Joe Biden's administration recently introduced a bill to infuse \$16 billion into the block grant. After being reintroduced on Nov. 2 by U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., the chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, but the bill has still not left the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

The bill would give \$153 million in funding to child care in Iowa if Biden's proposal, in partnership with Murray and other Democratic colleagues, were to pass without alteration.

The Biden administration has also proposed capping co-pays for child care assistance at 7 percent and waiving them for families under 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

"Without support, our child care providers are staring down some very impossible decisions — laying off staff, cutting child care slots, raising prices for families, or just simply shutting their doors because they have no other choice," Murray stated in a Nov. 2 news release. "So this is a huge problem for working parents."

They are already struggling and they are going to be pushed out of the workforce if we don't have these child care stabilization funds."

However, no Republicans have signed onto the bill and Republicans in the House of Representatives have offered an appropriations bill allocating half the amount proposed by the Biden administration for child care block grants.

Congress continues to be divided over government funding over Republicans' concerns about federal spending and national debt. U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, has publicly supported bipartisan measures to expand child care. In March, Ernst supported a bipartisan bill

allowing the small business administration to grant funding to religious nonprofits for child care grants.

Ernst also supported a measure to expand funding for rural child care in June. U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson, R-Iowa, has advocated for other types of child care funding in the House.

Hinson introduced the Child Care After Hours Act that would provide block grant funding to child care centers that have hours outside of normal day shift hours.

The grant allows centers that provide at least 25 percent of their hours outside traditional work hours or on the weekends.

Hinson said this will help parents who work overnight or evening shifts and struggle to find child care options.

Hinson also supported \$8 billion in funding for childcare grants in the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill for fiscal 2024. Hinson also co-chairs the bipartisan Pre-K and Child Care Caucus.

"This is even harder for parents who don't work traditional 9-5 hours, like law enforcement officers, store clerks, emergency service operators and nurses," Hinson said in a May 25 news release. "Their jobs are critical to the health and safety of our communities — we have to make it easier for these hardworking Iowans to stay in the workforce while raising a family."

However, the majority of measures supported by the senators remain in committee processes and have yet to make it a vote on the floor.



Reynolds



Isabella Tisdale | The Daily Iowan

A baby sits on a caretaker's lap at the Arc of Southeast Iowa's Bill Reagan Children's Center in Iowa City on Dec. 1. Because of staffing challenges, the center has only been able to increase overall enrollment by 17 children.



# OPINIONS

DAILYIOWAN.COM

COLUMN

## Give Bluder the bucks she earned

Bluder makes less than men's coach Fran McCaffery despite her accomplishments.



Natalie Nye  
Opinions Columnist

The Iowa women's basketball head coach Lisa Bluder deserves pay equal to the college's men's team coach.

Bluder is the NCAA Division I women's basketball's 14th winningest coach of all time. Alongside star player Caitlin Clark, she has drawn an astonishing amount of national recognition and success to the team this past year.

Yet, Bluder is still tremendously underpaid compared to her male counterparts. For the 2023-24 school year, the men's coach, Fran McCaffery, is paid an average of \$3.2 million, while Bluder is paid a disproportionate salary of \$1 million. McCaffery has coached at the University of Iowa for 13 years, while Bluder has coached for 24.

Bluder's salary simply does not reflect the team's rampant success under her guidance. She clearly deserves a salary equal to that of McCaffery.

Pay equality in sports is meant to reflect the effort, skill, and dedication of female athletes and coaches, a step toward breaking down systemic biases that undervalue women's contributions.

Bluder has dedicated herself to her team, going above and beyond to lead her team to never-before-seen accomplishments for women's basketball. She has posted a winning record in 22 out of 23 years coaching the Hawkeyes.

As a three-time Big Ten coach, her resume after 24 years is thorough. She coached the 2018-19 women's basketball team to their first Big Ten Tournament Title since 2001 and the 2021-22 team's first Big Ten regular season title and Big Ten Tournament Championship.

She coached the 2022-23 Hawkeyes to their first National Championship game appearance in program history and its first Final Four in 30 years.

The last few years have put all eyes on the Hawkeyes. Bluder and her team have set records unmatched by the men's team, bringing national attention to the UI and women's basketball and selling out every game this season for the first time in the history of the women's team. Bluder is bringing massive amounts of attention



Grace Smith | The Daily Iowan

Iowa head coach Lisa Bluder waves to fans during Crossover at Kinnick, a women's exhibition basketball game between Iowa and DePaul, at Kinnick Stadium in Iowa City on Oct. 15. The Hawkeyes enter the 2023-24 season after advancing to the NCAA Championship for the first time in program history last year and winning a program-best 31 games in a single season in the 2022-23 season. The Hawkeyes defeated the Blue Demons, 94-72.

and fans to the UI.

During March Madness this past year, the UI women's team played against LSU, drawing in a record-breaking viewership of 9.9 million on ABC, 4.5 million on ESPN, and 6.6 million viewers of the Final Four win over South Carolina.

Bluder and the team sold out Kinnick Stadium in October bringing in a record-breaking attendance of 55,646 fans. It was the most attended women's basketball game ever at any level.

Keeping the salaries as unequal as they are now shows that despite the tremendous things a women's basketball

coach can accomplish, she will still be making less than her male counterparts.

Bluder deserves fair compensation for her accomplishments in leading her team and the UI into national fame, breaking record after record this year.

The topic of the gender pay gap in sports is frequently dismissed by those who wrongly believe women do not work as hard as men, yet the reality is that women such as Bluder must work twice as hard and twice as long to get half the income men receive. Bluder's success warrants a much higher pay.

COLUMN

## Young progressives are on the right path

Recent conflict in Iowa over the Israel-Hamas war has reminded us that young people are fed up with the Democratic Party, and it is hard to blame them.



Evan Weidl  
Opinions Editor

Young progressives are breaking away from the Democratic Party, and it's obvious why.

Iowa Democrats and young progressives, including the University Democrats at Iowa, have clashed over issues concerning the Israel-Hamas war. Across the nation, a whopping 70 percent of people ages 18-34, an overwhelmingly progressive demographic, do not approve of Biden's handling of the conflict.

There are a variety of reasons why the Democratic party is losing support from young voters. Instead of blaming the youth and accusing them of sympathizing with Republicans, Democrats across the nation must take this moment to reshape their policies and election strategies to reflect that of an up-and-coming generation that is much more progressive than the Democrats are historically. Failure to do so will result in crushing election defeats.

Generation Z has reached the age where their preferences can now be the difference makers in any given election. Their distaste for the current political state and direction of our country has been felt in recent elections and will only grow stronger with each concurrent election.

When looking at the facts, it is hard to blame Gen Z for their scornfulness of the U.S. They've grown weary of an economy that prioritizes the profits of corporations and salaries of executives over things, such as the environment, health of the citizens, and welfare of the workers who generate those profits and then labels that system as "freedom."

In every election since the 2016 presidential election, Democrats have presented a simple argument embodied by the slogan "Vote blue no matter who," according to *The New York Times*. They argue that because there are only two viable parties, not voting for a Democrat in every case is a vote for Republicans.

While it's clearly true there are only two viable parties, having to argue time and time again that people must vote for candidates they validly don't like for the sake of harm reduction is a conviction of the widespread disdain held for the Democratic Party.

In any given individual election, harm reduction is the morally correct stance to take. However, when harm reduction is the only reason Democrats have to offer every election to get voters to go with the party, it is not going to be enough to support them going forward. The party must do a better job of reflecting their voters' desires in both candidates and legislation.

This means aggressively taking on issues that everyday Americans face, especially issues that are growing worse for young people and thus are a higher priority for them. It means serious and unapologetic climate change legislation, fighting for reproductive health care rights, combating gun violence, making higher education more accessible, and fixing the ridiculous wealth gap that has exploded in recent decades thanks to lax corporate taxes.

Shaming people into voting for Democrats exclusively because of harm reduction is only going to carry the party for so much longer. In an ideal system, people will be able to vote for policies they like, not just against the policies they hate the most. If the Democratic Party is going to maintain its position as the dominant progressive party going forward, they have a lot of work to do.

DOC IS IN

## We need more doctors who have disabilities

To provide valuable leadership and ensure quality patient care, the medical field needs to recruit more doctors with disabilities.

Some will argue that recruiting doctors with disabilities compromise patient care, but there are compelling reasons to push back against this reactionary stance. Growing evidence suggests that medicine cannot afford to keep people with disabilities out of the profession and that patients with disabilities can achieve better outcomes when they are seen by a doctor with a disability. Furthermore, exclusion in medicine is fundamentally unethical.

### How many people with disabilities are in medicine?

People with disabilities are a large demographic in the U.S.—20-25 percent—yet they are one of the most underrepresented groups in medicine. Admissions results for medical students with preexisting disabilities are low, so doctors with disabilities are often those who developed disabilities during their careers. This disparity contributes to systemic bias that disability is something for patients to have and for doctors to fix. This harms the profession as a whole and limits institutional progress.

Medicine is entering a period of change. It has been rocked by nursing shortages, telemedicine, and artificial intelligence technology. Medical admissions should prioritize recruiting the most skilled and capable leaders to help guide physician efforts. Excluding a large minority group limits the potential of the medical field.

Furthermore, accessibility has emerged as a major issue demanding attention. Medical students and doctors with a diverse range of disabilities need to be at the table when decisions are made to adapt to change. Diverse organizations are capable of more creative and effective problem-solving than homogenous ones, but the access of diversity that medicine claims to value has thus far

excluded ability almost entirely. Thus, medicine cannot afford to exclude this valuable pool of potential leaders, that patients also stand to gain by embracing inclusion.

### How can having physicians with disabilities help patients?

Medical outcomes are significantly improved by a strong patient-doctor relationship. Many factors contribute to this bond, including shared culture and life experience. Black patients have better outcomes when they are seen by doctors who are also Black, and some evidence suggests that a similar phenomenon holds for patients with disabilities. Thus, greater diversity could provide substantial benefits at the individual patient level. Yet the value of these outcomes is greater than just for the patients in question. The prevalence of disability should illustrate that we all stand to benefit from improving the lives of this large minority. Nearly everyone relies on the services, support, or affection of a person in their life or community with a disability. We should all be invested in seeing them receive the best possible care because this would impact all of our lives regardless of personal ability.

While I have outlined above how inclusion may benefit medicine at the level of the entire field and of the individual patient, it is important to state that inclusion is worthwhile for its own sake. Equity is an aspiration we claim to prioritize, and we need to start living up to it. Everyone deserves the opportunity to pursue a career where their greatest strengths can serve their communities. The field of medicine must begin to adhere more fully to its ethical principles.

Margaret Fuller, She/Her/Hers, Final Year MD/PhD Student, Class of 2024

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GUEST OPINIONS must be arranged with the Opinions Editor at least three days prior to the desired date of publication. Guest opinions are selected and edited in accordance with length, subject relevance, and space considerations. The DI will only publish one submission per author per month. No advertisements or mass mailings, please.

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# ROUNDING OUT THE CAMPAIGN

Top Republican presidential candidates former President Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis visited Iowa on Dec. 2 ahead of the Iowa caucuses in January.



Jordan Barry and Shaely Odean | The Daily Iowan

(Top) A child waves an American flag during during a campaign rally for Trump. (Middle left) Former President Donald Trump addresses the crowd during a 2024 presidential campaign rally in Johnson Hall at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids on Dec. 2. Trump will be visiting Ankeny, Iowa, again on Dec. 13. (Middle right) Republican presidential candidate and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks to event-goers at the Thunderdome in Newton, Iowa on Saturday, Dec. 2. DeSantis' 99th stop in Jasper County, Iowa, rounds out the "full Grassley," which means he completed a full tour of Iowa's 99 counties. (Bottom) Former United States Attorney General Matt Whitaker throws MAGA hats to attendees during a campaign rally for Trump. The rally hosted nearly 1,000 people.

## WHERE IOWA POLLS STAND

According to a poll by *The Des Moines Register*/NBC News/Mediacom from Oct. 30, Republican presidential candidate and former President Donald Trump is the clear front-runner in Iowa leading with 43 percent. Former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis were tied for second. Tim Scott, who has since dropped from the race\*, sat fourth. Vivek Ramaswamy, who also visited Iowa City on Dec. 2, sits fifth in the polls. The Iowa caucuses are set for Jan. 15, 2024, where Iowans will help decide the Democratic and Republican nominees for the presidential election.



**Find more online:**

See more coverage of the candidates' visits to Iowa at [dailyiowan.com](http://dailyiowan.com).







**PREGAME: Iowa vs. Tennessee**

Check newsstands Dec. 13 for *The Daily Iowan's* final edition of Pregame this season.

**INSIDE 2B:**

- Hawkeye Updates
- Quote of the Week
- Stat of the Week
- Point/Counterpoint

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023

THE MOST COMPLETE HAWKEYE SPORTS COVERAGE

DAILYIOWAN.COM

**BASKETBALL**

## Valparaiso development, Iowa product

Hawkeye forward Ben Krikke continues to impress on the court without much fame.



Isabella Tisdale | The Daily Iowan

North Florida forward Trent Coleman attempts to block a shot by Iowa forward Ben Krikke during a men's basketball game between Iowa and North Florida at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Nov. 17. The Hawkeyes defeated the Ospreys, 103-78. Krikke was one of 12 players selected to play for Team Canada in the FIBA U16 Americas Championship that took place in Argentina in 2018.

**Chris Meglio**  
Sports Reporter  
chris-meglio@uiowa.edu

Iowa fifth-year forward Ben Krikke has provided a major spark for this year's Iowa men's basketball team. But long before he was a Hawkeye, he was just a Canadian with a dream.

Krikke was born and raised in Edmonton,



Krikke

Alberta, by his two parents, Kent and Aurelie Krikke. He grew up in a basketball family as his father was a former college basketball player and has run a basketball camp in Alberta for over 20 years.

Krikke has been around sports his whole life, either watching Edmonton Oilers hockey and

Toronto Raptors basketball, competing in sports like badminton, volleyball, and various track and field events, or simply enjoying physical activities such as fishing and mountain biking.

Despite this, basketball was always his calling card.

"I went to my dad's basketball camp when I was four or five," Krikke said as he reminisced about his early years with his father

to CBC News. "I just always loved the game, running up and down the floor with the older guys and just playing the game."

Krikke attended Jasper Place High School in Alberta, where he became a star in his local area. He was one of 12 players selected to play for Team Canada in the FIBA U16 Americas Championship, which

**KRIKKE | 3B**

**CROSS COUNTRY**

## New season, new lead runners

New athletes step up for Iowa track and field.



Jerod Ringwald | The Daily Iowan

Iowa's Paige Magee jumps a hurdle during day three of the 2022 Big Ten Outdoor Track and Field Championships at the University of Minnesota Track and Field Stadium in Minneapolis on May 15, 2022. Magee did not finish the event. Magee said underclassmen on the team show as much potential to make an impact as fourth-year and fifth-year athletes.

**Mia Boulton**  
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Filling the shoes of last year's graduating class might pose a challenge for Iowa track and field athletes, but it's a hurdle the Hawkeyes are ready for.

The new roster of upperclassmen is littered with school record holders, All-Americans, and national medalists.

"This is the elite of the elite," Director of Track and Field Joey Woody said.

One of these elite athletes is fourth-year multi-event specialist Austin West, who is an indoor second-team All-American and outdoor first-team All-American.

During West's final season as a Hawkeye, he looks forward to achieving big goals with the team.

"I'd like our team to win a Big Ten title indoor and outdoor," West said. "We've also been working toward getting on the national podium as a team."

Similarly, fourth-year hurdler Paige Magee



Woody



Magee

has high hopes for the Hawkeyes on the conference and national level. She said the underclassmen on the team show just as much potential to make an impact as the fourth- and fifth-year athletes.

"We are trying to show them that even though they are just freshmen, someone has to make it, and it could be them," Magee said.

The key will be to instill confidence in the team during training.

"Track is a unique sport where it is a team sport made up of individuals," West said. "You can't exactly help anyone who is out on the track. Once they are out there, they're kind of on their own."

The upperclassmen will lean on their experience and appreciation for those who guided them during their first seasons.

"I was lucky enough to have mentors myself, so I am trying to pay it forward and use what I have learned over the years to aid their learning process," West said.

Third-year sprinter Lia Love recalled the emotions of her first meet and how she plans



Love

**CROSS COUNTRY | 3B**

**WRESTLING**

## Iowa first-year wrestler turns heads

Men's wrestler Gabe Arnold took home two ranked wins to start his Hawkeye career.

**Isaac Elzinga**  
Sports Reporter  
isaac-elzinga@uiowa.edu



Arnold

Iowa men's wrestler Gabe Arnold has impressed early in his Hawkeye career.

The rookie has two ranked wins over Oregon State's then-No. 11 Travis Wittlake at 174 pounds and Iowa State's then-No. 6 Will Feldkamp at 184 pounds.

The upset over Feldkamp, a past All-American, led to the true freshman earning Big Ten Wrestler of the Week honors.

Arnold also rose to No. 10 in Flowrestling's rankings at 174.

"You know what your teammates have within them, and you know what they're capable of," 141-pounder Real Woods said following the Cy-Hawk dual. "To see that shine through more and more with guys like Gabe Arnold because he's young ... it's a wonderful thing."

Arnold welcomes the challenge and has been prepared to step up for the Hawkeyes, who were in flux after the NCAA's updated sports gambling guidelines.

"[Iowa head coach] Tom Brands says next guy up, so I'm going to embrace that," Arnold said. "Whatever that guy says, I'm going to embrace it 110 percent."

Arnold said having an All-American like Nelson Brands in the room has helped his development and prepared him to potentially take on a big role during his first season.

Arnold is ready to accept whatever role the coaching staff asks of him. Associate head coach Terry Brands said Arnold is always prepared to "answer the call" when needed.

The coaching staff is unsure if Arnold will redshirt or not this season. Under new NCAA guidelines, freshmen can wrestle in five dates of competition during the student athlete's first year of collegiate enrollment without using a season of eligibility. Arnold is 3-0 and did not compete in Iowa's last dual meet against Penn.

"I want to be a national champ," Arnold said after the dual against Oregon State. "So whatever that route looks like, if not this year, next year, if not next year, then the year after that ... I want to do big things by the time I'm done with the sport."

Arnold has embraced the spotlight and loves putting on a show for the fans when given the opportunity.

"You guys come to watch these meets because we're performers," Arnold said. "And at the end of the day, I put on a

**ARNOLD | 3B**



**UPCOMING SCHEDULE**

- Men's basketball**  
Thursday, Dec. 7  
At Iowa State  
6:30 p.m., ESPN and Hawkeye Radio Network
- Women's basketball**  
Wednesday, Dec. 6  
At Iowa State  
6 p.m., ESPN2 and Hawkeye Radio Network
- Men's wrestling**  
Friday, Dec. 8  
vs. Columbia  
7 p.m., Big Ten Plus and Hawkeye Radio Network
- Women's wrestling**  
Sunday, Dec. 10  
At Wisconsin  
1:30 p.m., Big Ten Network and Hawkeye Radio Network
- Swimming and Diving**  
Sunday, Dec. 10  
At North Central College Invationals

**NOV. 30-DEC. 2**  
At Iowa State  
6 p.m.

**BOWL GAME**



The No. 17 Iowa football team will take on No. 21 Tennessee in the Citrus Bowl on Jan. 1, 2024, at Camping World Stadium in Orlando. Kickoff is set for noon, and the game will be broadcast on ABC. The two squads last matched up in the TaxSlayer Bowl on Jan. 2, 2015, and the Vols throttled the Hawkeyes, 45-28. Iowa lost to Kentucky, 20-17, in the 2022 Citrus Bowl. According to Chad Leistikow, Iowa defensive back Sebastian Castro said after the Big Ten title game that he would be shocked if any of his teammates opted out of the bowl game, noting that they want to play one last time together.

**DOMINANT DEFENSE**



Despite the outcome, Iowa's defense under coordinator Phil Parker dominated against Michigan in the Big Ten Championship. After the performance, Parker took home the Broyles Award, given to the best assistant coach in college football. He is the first Hawkeye to win the award. The Wolverines' two touchdown drives went for a combined 11 yards due to special teams' miscues and offensive turnovers. The Iowa defense held Michigan to 3.3 yards per play, marking the Wolverines' worst offensive performance in the Jim Harbaugh era. Michigan is known for its mobile quarterback J.J. McCarthy, who had -35 rushing yards, and a stout run game led by Blake Corum, who finished with just 52 yards on the ground. The Hawkeyes held the Wolverines to 213 total yards, well under Michigan's season average of almost 400 yards per contest. In the words of Castro, the Iowa defense "played a hell of a game."

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

"We played our best, and we played for each other ... knowing that we gave our best, it's harder to not respect that."

Iowa defensive back **Sebastian Castro**

**STAT OF THE WEEK**

**1**  
The number of touchdowns Iowa has scored in its three Big Ten Championship appearances.

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL**

# Quiet but crucial to the team

Iowa women's basketball's Molly Davis is undersized and fearless.

**Colin Votzmeyer**  
Assistant Sports Editor  
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Few embrace the role of "undersized guard" as well as Iowa women's basketball's fifth-year point guard Molly Davis.



Davis

The 5-foot-7 guard is a quiet but crucial piece to the No. 4 Hawkeyes' highly efficient offense. While she's averaged six points per game so far this season, her float-er over much bigger defenders around the rim has proven to be a reliable scoring option behind her three-ball.

Additionally, Davis facilitates even better than she scores.

She makes use of her crafty ball-handling skills and quick movement in the halfcourt to drive toward the rim and draw opposing bigs toward her, eager to block her shot, before she dumps the ball off to her teammates — especially center Sharon Goodman — for easy buckets.



Bluder

"She looks like this quiet, nice person," Iowa head coach Lisa Bluder said before noting the opposite about Davis. "To me, she has a sneaky moxie about her. She has no fear."

Hailing from Midland, Michigan Davis began her college basketball career much closer to home at Central Michigan University — where she quickly excelled, making a name for herself as one of the most efficient players in the Mid-American Conference.

Davis earned All-MAC honors in each of her three seasons for the Chippewas, ranking 23rd in the country in scoring with 20.8 points per game and 13th in threes with 75

as a sophomore. She notched career-highs of 32 points against both Northeastern and Northern Illinois in her junior season.

In just three years at Central Michigan, Davis made her mark on the program's history. She currently sits:

- First in points per game in team history with 17.7
- Eleventh in points with 1434
- Seventh in assists with 356
- Sixth in career free throw percentage with 79 percent
- Eighth in threes with 187

After her third year, Davis made the jump across the Midwest to the Iowa Hawkeyes — a program that gave her a true opportunity to contend for a national title.

In her first year with the Black and Gold last season, Davis' role diminished significantly as her minutes rose and fell throughout the season.

While her best game of the season came on Feb. 12 as she notched 17 points in 27 minutes on 5-for-7 from the field and a perfect 5-for-5 from the free-throw line, Davis saw little time in the Hawkeyes' NCAA Tournament run.

She played just two minutes against Louisville in the Elite Eight and against South Carolina in the Sweet Sixteen, and she played just

"She looks like this quiet, nice person. To me, she has a sneaky moxie about her. She has no fear."

**Lisa Bluder**

Women's Basketball Head Coach

eight minutes against LSU in the championship game loss.

So, Davis took the offseason to develop her confidence and her



Grace Smith | The Daily Iowan

Iowa guards Molly Davis, Kylie Feuerbach, and Taylor McCabe celebrate a play during a home opener basketball game between No. 3 Iowa and Fairleigh Dickinson at Carver-Hawkeye Arena on Nov. 6. The Hawkeyes, defeated the Knights, 102-46. Davis has averaged six points per game this season.

skillset — to mold into a bigger role for the Hawkeyes this year, and has already played one-third of her minutes last season.

Davis has started seven of Iowa's nine games this season, solidifying herself as Iowa's starting point guard while being flexible enough to play the shooting guard position when Caitlin Clark opts to bring the ball up the floor.

"Molly plays anything we want her to play," Bluder said of Davis' versatility.

Davis slowly woke up to begin the 2023-24 campaign, her season-high early on at just four points against Northern Iowa on Nov. 12.

Davis has picked up her pace since then, especially in big-time games.

She scored 10 points in 21 minutes on 3-of-3 from the field and 4-of-5 from the charity stripe in Iowa's 65-58 loss to Kansas State on Nov. 16 — a game that saw Davis remain efficient while the Iowa offense as a whole stagnated.

"I knew that our outside shots

weren't falling, so I wanted to make an emphasis to get to the rim," Davis said postgame. "I came in there with an attack mentality to try and draw some fouls and also get to the rim and try and open some other things up as well."

In fact, Davis began to embrace that attack mentality, scoring another 10 in 27 minutes with three assists in Iowa's 113-90 win over Drake on Nov. 19.

When the Hawkeyes needed Davis to step up again as the team re-matched Kansas State in the championship game of the Gulf Coast Showcase on Nov. 26, she answered the call.

Davis scored a season-high 13 points in 35 minutes on the court, shooting 5-of-9 from the field and adding four assists and four rebounds to her performance in the win — earning her all-tournament honors.

"I really like the way that Molly's contributing to our team," Bluder said. "She never forces anything. She understands her role."

**Q&A | WILL RYAN**

## Distance runner talks music taste, goals after graduation



**Will Ryan**

Second-year  
Distance runner  
Waukee, IA  
Human Physiology

**Mia Boulton**  
Sports Reporter  
mia-m-boulton@uiowa.edu

**The Daily Iowan: What is your most memorable experience as a Hawkeye?**

Will Ryan: It has to be my day at Stanford [University] during my freshman outdoor track season. I ran a big outdoor [5,000-meter race] personal best of 14:15. That same day, our women's basketball team beat South Carolina to go to the national championship. And then, Max Murphy broke the [5,000-meter] school record that night.

**Who is your inspiration?**

I would say there are a lot of different types of inspiration that I pull from. Overall, I would say my mom and my dad. If I had to pick an athlete, it would be Kobe Bryant. I just love the way he approaches basketball and his killer mentality.

**If you didn't run, what do you think you would be doing?**

If I wasn't running, you'd find me playing basketball at a small college somewhere in Iowa or Minnesota or Wisconsin. I just always need to be doing a sport to be competitive.

**What is your favorite pre-meet tradition?**

My favorite thing that I like to do goes all the way back to high school. I went to Dowling Catholic [High School], so before every meet we would say a Hail Mary. I always like to say that in my head before races because it gets me in the right mindset to race in.

**Do you have any go-to pump-up music?**

My favorite pre-race music is the La La Land soundtrack if I want to be chill. My main mix is usually rock and roll like "Back in Black" because it's super Iowa-themed.

**What are you studying at Iowa?**

Right now, I am studying human physiology on the pre-med track. My plan is to go to med school at the University of Iowa.

**Do you have a favorite class you've taken so far?**

It might be one I'm taking right now. I kind of like elementary psychology. I like learning how the brain works and the different tricks it can play on you.

**What is your goal for after graduation?**

Right now, my main goal is to be a doctor and make a difference that way. I just want to make a difference and help others whether that be in my career or working through Catholic charities. Whatever way I can make the world better is my end goal.

**POINT | COUNTERPOINT**

## Will Cooper DeJean declare for the NFL Draft?



**Colin Votzmeyer**  
Assistant Sports Editor

**NO**

June 7, 2009, is a day that will go down in infamy in sports history. After the Lakers went up, 2-0, in that year's NBA Finals, Kobe Bryant sternly told the media, "Job not finished."

Cooper DeJean must be thinking the same thing.

The third-year defensive back is undoubtedly the standout star on this Iowa football team. Not only are quarterbacks afraid to throw the ball in his direction for his impressive reads and speed on the defensive side of the ball, but DeJean's athleticism has demonstrated potential on special teams and offense as well.

Such prowess is sure to attract a handful of NFL teams wanting DeJean in their rotations, but I don't think he is ready to give that to a professional football team just yet.

It's not that the Odebolt, Iowa, local isn't ready for the NFL. It's that his job at Iowa is not yet finished.



**Brad Schultz**  
Sports Reporter

**YES**

Without a doubt, Cooper DeJean will go down as one of — if not the most — electric players to ever don the Black and Gold on the football field.

After seeing limited action in his first year as a Hawkeye, DeJean broke onto the scene last year with five interceptions — including three pick-sixes.

This season, DeJean has maintained his status as an elite playmaker, not only as a defensive back but also as a punt returner.

Unfortunately, he suffered an injury during practice ahead of the Illinois game on Nov. 19, which ended his season prematurely. Since the injury, though, national pundits have projected DeJean as a mid-first-round pick in the 2024 NFL Draft.

DeJean is only a third-year, so he does have the option to return to Iowa if he wants. However, I think he will have a hard time passing up an opportunity to

play at the professional level, and he will declare for the draft following this season.

First, DeJean's injury, while certainly not career-threatening, does raise an eyebrow. If he returns to the Hawkeyes, a future injury could destroy any hopes of a pro career. He will want to get to the NFL as soon as possible to prevent that from happening.

The biggest reason why DeJean will declare is the fact that he will again most likely not get many passes toward his side of the field, similar to this season, because quarterbacks are simply afraid to throw his way. How can he show off his abilities with minimal opportunities to make plays?

The same scenario hurt former Hawkeye All-American corner Desmond King in 2016. The season prior, King tied the NCAA record with eight interceptions and could have been a first-round pick in the upcoming draft.

King chose to stay loyal to Iowa and play one final season for head coach Kirk Ferentz, and teams refused to throw the ball his way, so King fell to the fifth round. I'm afraid DeJean could be in the same predicament should he stay.

As much as I would love to see DeJean return for one final year, there is too much money on the line, and a bright professional career awaits ahead of him, so I think he'll make the leap to the NFL next year.



FOOTBALL

# Embracing the next man up mentality

Iowa redshirt first-year defensive back Deshaun Lee is stepping up and filling big shoes.

**Cooper Worth**  
Pregame Reporter  
cooper-worth@uiowa.edu

Many successful defensive backs in football subscribe to a “next play” mentality in which, no matter the outcome of the previous play, their focus is on the present. But “next play” has evolved into “next man up” for Iowa backup defensive back Deshaun Lee.

The 2023 Iowa football team has embraced that “next man up” mentality in a season plagued by injuries — especially with star defensive back Cooper DeJean, who will miss the rest of the season with a lower leg injury and join quarterback Cade McNamara and tight ends Luke Lachey and Erick All in plainclothes on the sideline.

Despite the adversity, the Hawkeyes finished the regular season with a 10-2 record and are headed back to the Big Ten Championship on Dec. 2 for the second time in three years.



DeJean

And that perseverance can be attributed to Iowa’s backups, always ready to step up should the players before them go down — and none better than Lee, who has started at defensive back in DeJean’s stead in Iowa’s last two wins over Illinois and Nebraska, and the loss to Michigan in the Big Ten Championship.

“I have confidence in Deshaun — everyone does,” Iowa starting defensive back Jermari Harris said. “He’s a really good player, and he’s gone out and showed it.”

The redshirt first-year from Belleville, Michigan, has started four games this season, recording 23 total tackles and three pass deflections.

Lee started in the Hawkeyes’ first two games of the season in place of Harris, who was serving a suspension related to the NCAA sports gambling investigation.

“I was just ready for my number to be called,” Lee said following Iowa’s season-opening win against Utah State. “[I was] just preparing and putting in a lot of work so I’d be ready when my day finally comes.”

Lee was a three-star prospect coming out of Belleville High School, receiving offers from Power Five schools such as Kentucky, Syracuse, and Pittsburgh — all after being named first-team Michigan Dream Team as a defensive back and propelling his team to a state title his senior season.

Lee opted to commit to Iowa, though, as he grew up rooting for the Hawkeyes and made a personal connection with Iowa defensive backs coach and defensive coordinator Phil Parker.

“He pushes me to be the best person I can be,” Lee said.



Ayrton Breckenridge | The Daily Iowan

Iowa defensive back Deshaun Lee celebrates after the 2023 Wildcats Classic, a football game between Iowa and Northwestern at Wrigley Field in Chicago, on Nov. 4. The Hawkeyes defeated the Wildcats, 10-7. Lee started in the Hawkeyes’ first two games of the season.

“You’re getting coached by one of the greatest, so everything he says you have to soak up like a sponge.”

Upon arriving in Iowa City, Lee saw no playing time in his first year with the team, instead using the year to acclimate to Parker’s defense and learn under veteran defensive backs in Harris and Riley Moss.

“We’re really close,” Lee said of the defensive back unit. “It’s a brotherhood, [and] we’re always joking around and having fun, but we know when it’s time to be locked in on the field.”

Coming into this season, Lee received praise from Parker for his performance during fall camp, which included Lee winning the Ball Hawk Award, which is given to the player who made the most plays in the secondary. He had two interceptions during the Kids’ Day

at Kinnick practice.

“He got his hands on the ball every damn practice,” Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz said. “Deshaun’s done a really nice job. It took him a while to get his feet on the ground, but he’s really developed.”

It hasn’t been an easy journey, though, as Lee was burned by Nebraska wide receiver Jaylen Lloyd for a 66-yard touchdown in the Hawkeyes last-second win over the Cornhuskers on Nov. 24 — the longest play the Iowa defense has surrendered this season.

Having embraced his role as the next man up in the Iowa secondary, Lee’s next-play mentality is something like second nature. He aided the rest of the defense in allowing just three points in the second half and prevented Lloyd from another reception for the rest of the game.

**KRIKKE**  
from 1B

took place in Argentina in 2018.

Of those 12 players, Krikke was one of two players west of Ontario to be selected and the first Albertan at the time to be picked for a Canada basketball men’s team for a major international championship since Jordan Baker in 2011.

After a very successful high school career, the 2019 high school graduate accomplished his dream of playing basketball in the U.S. by committing to Valparaiso University.

“It’s very exciting; it’s been a lifelong dream of mine to go down to the [United] States and play the best basketball I can,” Krikke said at the 2019 Alberta Basketball All-Star Showcase. “Personally, I just want to develop my skills as much as possible with the help of the coaches down there.”

Krikke’s first collegiate season was a success, given that he played in all 33 games that season.

He averaged 6.7 points and 2.9 rebounds a game while shooting 55 percent from the field and 34 percent from three in just under 16 minutes a game throughout the year.

He finished fifth in the conference and second among freshmen in field-goal percentage on his way to nine double-figure scoring games, including three games of at least 15 points. His best game of the season came against Illinois State, where he led the team in points, rebounds, and assists with a 17/8/4 statline.

Krikke was thus thrust into a full-time role for the 2020-21 season.

The second-year started in every game that season and led the team in both overall scoring with 12.3 points per game and conference-only scoring with 13.1 points per game. He also averaged 4.2 rebounds and one assist in 28.3 minutes per contest.

Krikke topped his breakout season with various honors: MVC Scholar-Athlete First Team, MVC Most-Improved Team, and All-MVC Third Team — the only player in the conference to receive all three honors that season.

Krikke built off of his stellar second season with an even better third season. Though he missed the first three games of the year, his stats rose in all major categories as he averaged 14.2 points, 4.5 rebounds and 1.6 assists on 54 percent shooting from the field and an improved 84 percent from the free throw line in 29 games.

Krikke finished the season 11th in the MVC in scoring average, eighth in field-goal percentage and fifth in free-throw percentage. He was named to the All-MVC Third Team and the MVC Scholar-Athlete First Team for the second straight year.

His senior campaign was the year Krikke made a name for himself on the national scale — and in the eyes of the Iowa men’s basketball team.

Playing in all 32 contests for an average of 35.7 minutes

per game, the fourth-year forward led the Missouri Valley Conference in scoring with 19.4 points per game overall and 21 points per game in conference play.

He also tallied 5.9 rebounds on a career-high two offensive rebounds per game and 2.1 assists per game while shooting 55 percent from the field, 28 percent from three, and 80 percent from the charity stripe.

He was again named to the All-MVC First Team, MVC Most-Improved Team, and MVC Scholar-Athlete First Team — once again being the only player in the conference to earn all three honors.

Upon graduation, Krikke etched his name into several all-time program statistical categories:

- Sixth-most points scored in a season with 622
- Fourth-most made field goals in a season — and the most by a Valparaiso player since 1972 — with 244
- Seventh on the all-time scoring list
- Sixth-highest career field goal percentage at 54.1 percent.

He also became just the third Missouri Valley Conference player since 2005 to average at least 17 points, five rebounds, 50 percent shooting from the field, and 75 percent from the free throw line.

Krikke wanted to play at an even higher level. And when Iowa head coach Fran McCaffery called his name, he answered.

“We are excited that Ben is [a part of] our Hawkeye family”

**Fran McCaffery**  
Iowa men’s basketball head coach

After four years at Valparaiso, Krikke announced his commitment to play basketball for the Iowa Hawkeyes.

“I’m grateful for the opportunity to become a Hawkeye,” Krikke said. “I’m excited to be supported by such a vibrant fan base and to get to be a part of such a great community.”

Krikke fills a void in the post left by the departure of forwards Keegan and Kris Murray and Filip Rebrača. At 6-foot-9, he often opts to branch out beyond the paint and is now known for his red-hot mid-range jumpshot.

Throughout the first seven games of the 2023-24 season, Krikke leads the team in scoring with 18.7 points per game on 61/50/76 shooting splits.

He is also averaging 4.6 rebounds, 1.7 assists, and 1.3 steals while playing a team-high 28.4 minutes per game.

**CROSS COUNTRY**  
from 1B

to be a steady leader as her freshman teammates have those experiences.

“I remember being so nervous,” Love said. “I don’t think I have ever felt that level of nerves. Now I just need to be a friend to my teammates so they feel like they have someone they can talk to, and they can trust in those situations.”

Magee still fosters the belief that the sky is the limit for her teammates — no matter their age or level

**ARNOLD**  
from 1B

show, and I’m glad everyone enjoyed it.”

Arnold wrestled in front of his mom, dad and grandma during the Hawkeyes’ home dual against Oregon State.

Arnold honored his hometown of Albany, Georgia, during his match against the Beavers with shoes that had “229,” the town’s area code, on them. Arnold said it helps remind him of his humble beginnings and the work he’s put in since the fourth grade to get to this point.

Arnold finished his prep career at Iowa City High last year, which helped him adapt to the state’s culture and prepare him for the atmosphere he’ll face during the season. The team and coaching staff have also been crucial in facilitating that adaptation.

“It’s hard to say, ‘Oh, this guy did the most, this guy did the most.’ It’s just been a group effort to make Gabe Arnold the absolute best human being he could possibly be,” he said.

of experience.

“At the end of the day, it has to be someone,” Magee said. “It has been done before, and it can be done again. I just hope they do better than I’ve done because it’s all about growing the program.”

Woody has faith in this year’s group of veterans to compete at a high level and encourage the newcomers to join them.

“This isn’t fun and games all the time,” Woody said. “You’ve got to be focused and dedicated. I think we have a really great group of athletes who understand that and what it takes.”



“Ben can score in a variety of ways and shoots at a high percentage,” McCaffery said. “He is excellent in transition and has a high basketball IQ ... Ben is a tremendous fit and addition to our program.”

Krikke has notched three 20-point games this year with 24 in a loss to Creighton and 25 and 21 in respective wins over Arkansas State and North Florida.

The big man has crafted his scoring efficiency over the course of his basketball journey from Canada to Valparaiso that has culminated in his progress in Iowa City this season — progress that is impressive but underrated on the national stage.


Should the Hawkeyes make a run for the Big Ten and, ultimately, NCAA titles in March, Krikke has the potential to prove his abilities to American basketball.



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# RUNNING AWAY WITH THE BIG TEN TITLE

No. 2 Michigan defeated No. 18 Iowa, 26-0, at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Sunday, claiming the title of Big Ten champions for the third year in a row.



<b>4</b> sacks	<b>4</b> sacks
<b>0</b> turnovers	<b>3</b> turnovers
<b>213</b> total yards	<b>155</b> total yards

Cody Blissett and Emily Nyberg | The Daily Iowan  
(Top) Michigan wide receiver Semaj Morgan carries the ball during a football game between No. 18 Iowa and No. 2 Michigan at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Dec. 2. Morgan carried the ball for 87 yards after a punt return.  
(Beside) Michigan defensive end Derrick Moore sacks Iowa quarterback Deacon Hill during the Big Ten championship game. Moore forced a fumble which ended the shutout game. Hill fumbled the ball twice and passed for 120 yards.  
(Bottom) Michigan linebacker Jason Hewlett lays in confetti during a football game between No. 18 Iowa and No. 2 Michigan at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis on Dec. 2. This is the third consecutive year Michigan has won the title.

Find more online:  
See more of the 2023 Big Ten championship game between Iowa and Michigan at [dailyiowan.com](http://dailyiowan.com).





# 800 Hours

## Honing youth talent in Iowa City

The only boarding school for arts in Iowa allows students to reap the benefits of Iowa City's creative scenes.

Avi Lapchick  
Arts Editor  
[olivia-lapchick@uiowa.edu](mailto:olivia-lapchick@uiowa.edu)

Before the Iowa Conservatory opened its doors in Iowa City for its first-ever day of school in August, the performing arts boarding school was built for a capacity of 325 eighth through 12th graders. In 2022, its founders anticipated a class size of 150.

When only a little over a dozen students applied, some panic set in that the inaugural

class would be too small for the renovated historical North Linn Street location.

"[We were] scared for such few students," said Leslie Nolte, a founder and head of the ICON. "Like, are we going to have groups that don't like each other?"

Among the applicants, only seven were initially accepted into the conservatory for the 2023-24 school year.

Two more students were later accepted, and the nine families took a leap of faith and paid \$35,000 in tuition for the school year.

"You have to remember, this time last

year, [the ICON] was pretend," Nolte said.

The ICON is a project over 10 years in the making. However, advertising a boarding school to families without a building to show or a residence hall to tour proved to be a difficult feat. Nolte said she and her administration underestimated how big of an obstacle that would be for parents already on the fence.

Yet, a place like the ICON could be key for nurturing young artists and performers



# CALENDAR WEEKLY EVENTS

## THURSDAY

DECEMBER 7

### • COLE BARNHILL W/ SHEA ABSHIER & THE NIGHTHOWLERS

Cole Barnhill will be performing with national touring artist and producer from Texas, Shea Abshier, and the Nighthowlers ensemble.

7 P.M. | GABE'S IOWA CITY  
330 E. WASHINGTON ST.

## FRIDAY

DECEMBER 8

### • HOLIDAY TUBAS 2023

University of Iowa Associate Professor of Tuba and Euphonium John Manning's studio students are among the performers of classic holiday tunes to help the public get into the holiday spirit. The crew will be collecting toys to donate to the Holiday Shop of the Iowa City Domestic Violence Intervention Program.

12:30 P.M. | OLD CAPITOL MUSEUM  
21 N. CLINTON ST.

### • FRANKENSTEIN'S CHRISTMAS CAROL

This Willow Creek Theatre production is about how Victor Frankenstein and his Creature learn the true meaning of Christmas.

7:30 P.M. | WILLOW CREEK THEATRE COMPANY  
327 S. GILBERT ST.

## SATURDAY

DECEMBER 9

### • TRACTOR WAGON RIDES SPONSORED BY HILLS BANK

The public may enjoy free rides in a decorated wagon pulled by an antique tractor provided by Bass Farms, as well as a variety of other holiday activities, at Hills Bank.

10 A.M. | HILLS BANK  
201 S. CLINTON ST.

### • ANNUAL GINGERBREAD HOUSE COMPETITION

The Fifth Annual Downtown Gingerbread House Competition will take place at the Graduate in two 2-hour competitions, featuring a cash bar with festive holiday beverages for competitors to enjoy while they work.

1 P.M. | GRADUATE IOWA CITY  
210 S. DUBUQUE ST.

### • PLEIN AIR GROUP: NATURE ON DISPLAY

Draw and paint collections at the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History's Bird and Mammal Hall in MacBride Hall with any art materials of your choice.

1 P.M. | UNIVERSITY OF IOWA PENTACREST MUSEUMS

### • KULDEEP SINGH

The Englert welcomes Kuldeep Singh, a classically trained dancer in the Indian dance form of Odissi, renowned for its cultural storytelling and movements. His performance pieces are unique and multidisciplinary.

7:30 P.M. | ENGLERT THEATRE  
221 E. WASHINGTON ST.

## SUNDAY

DECEMBER 10

### • NOLTE MADRIGAL DINNER

The public is invited to 16th century England with the Second Annual Nolte Madrigal dinner, featuring a performance by Nolte's Madrigal Singers and members of the Iowa City Youth Choir.

6:30 P.M. | THE JAMES THEATER  
213 N. GILBERT ST.

### • SARA EVANS

Evans has earned recognition as the fifth most played female artist on country radio and has tour dates across the country. She is known for her insightful songwriting and warm, evocative voice.

7:30 P.M. | ENGLERT THEATRE  
221 E. WASHINGTON ST.

## EVENT

# Wall-to-wall fluff

Iowa City's Hilton Garden Inn has a free-of-charge room filled to the brim with hundreds of teddy bears.

Riley Dunn  
Arts Reporter  
riley-dunn@uiowa.edu

The Hilton Garden Inn is spreading holiday cheer this winter with a five-week event in which a room at the hotel will be filled with hundreds of teddy bears in different shapes, sizes, and styles. The Inn hosts this event every year as an introduction to the holiday season, and it hopes to continue to do so for a long time to come.

Katie Carpenter works as the director of special events for the Iowa City Downtown District, and she is one of the main promoters of the Teddy Bear Room.

"I was in here yesterday and two kids came into the room. The look on their faces when they saw all the lights and decorations was adorable. Their eyes just lit up in happiness at all the activity going on," Carpenter said.

She also mentioned the fact that the room not only cheers up young kids but also the parents and grandparents who accompany them.

"Coming up to this room is completely free," Carpenter explained. "It's fun and it gives the kids something to do."

Visitors can easily access the Teddy Bear Room by checking in at the front desk. There, they will give out a key card that provides access to the eleventh floor, where the teddy bears are located. There is a return bucket for the key cards after each visit ends.

While the hotel does not charge admission into the room, there is an option for visitors to donate money to the Domestic Violence Intervention Program through the purchase of one of the miniature teddy bear ornaments hanging from the room's Christmas tree.

### How to attend the Teddy Bear Room

**Where:** Iowa City Hilton Garden Inn at 328 S. Clinton St.  
**When:** Until Jan. 1  
**Ticket price:** Free



Emily Nyberg | The Daily Iowan

Kynzie Trana, 4, lays in a pile of teddy bears at the Teddy Bear Room at the Hilton Garden Inn in Iowa City on Dec. 4. Room 1105 at the Hilton Garden Inn is filled with hundreds of teddy bears for the holiday season. The room is open to the public from Nov. 26 through Jan. 1.



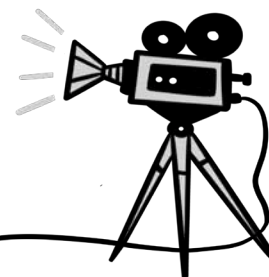
Emily Nyberg | The Daily Iowan

Kynzie Trana, 4, plays with teddy bears at the Teddy Bear Room at the Hilton Garden Inn in Iowa City on Dec. 4. The hotel does not charge admission to enter the room.

## REVIEW

# 'May December' is disturbing

Todd Haynes' newest film is emotional and hilariously unsettling.



Will Bower  
Arts Reporter  
william-bower@uiowa.edu

"May December," the latest release from acclaimed director Todd Haynes, is a twisted, uncomfortable, and oddly funny tale of manipulation and morality.

Starring Natalie Portman, Julianne Moore, and newcomer Charles Melton, "May December" features some of the highest-quality acting of 2023. In a year chock-full of unforgettable performances, this film stands out.

I would be doing a disservice if I didn't expressly recognize

Melton's performance as Joe Yoo. Known for his portrayal of Reggie Mantle on "Riverdale," Melton is a bonafide revelation in "May December." He is nearly pitch-perfect, exhibiting the nuances of a fragile, sheltered man in every move he makes.

Regardless of what happens this awards season, Melton deserves the utmost praise for his unique and compelling performance.

The storyline of the film is, in a word, disturbing. Portman's character Elizabeth Berry is an actress set to portray Gracie Atherton-Yoo, played by Moore, in a film about her infamous relationship with her husband nearly 20 years her junior, Joe Yoo.

Beginning when Gracie was 36 and Joe was 13, the pair's sexual relations led to Gracie serving time in prison. At the time of the film, they had been married for nearly 24 years and had three children, all of which are college-aged.

Both Joe and Gracie are

children in their own right. Joe stumbles over his words and has the demeanor of a skittish youth. Gracie has a lisp and utilizes "baby-talk" when things aren't going her way.

Joe's behavior is to be expected, as he never truly experienced childhood, and Gracie's is indicative of her fetishization of adolescence.

The subtle "youthfulness" of both characters is a testament to the rich character work done behind the scenes.

Standing on the sidelines is Elizabeth, uncovering the true evil at the root of the relationship and observing for her own benefit. Portman is hauntingly hilarious as a woman with a nonexistent moral compass.

I found "May December" to be a bold and ambitious film. Audience reception will be polarized due to the disturbing subject matter, but it is a must-see for anyone appreciative of quality acting, streaming on Netflix starting Dec. 1.

PLAYLIST

### BALLET BOPS

- "SWAN LAKE FINALE" | Pyotr Illyich Tchaikovsky
- "MOONLIGHT SONATA" | Ludwig van Beethoven
- "WINTER WIND" | Frédéric Chopin
- "ESMERALDA VARIATION" | Cesare Pugni
- "ROMEO AND JULIET: DANCE OF THE KNIGHTS" | André Previn

## CARTOON



Cartoon by Parker Jones | The Daily Iowan

"40 degrees Fahrenheit in Iowa"



**ICON**  
from **IC**

who are largely used to the often talent-dimming monotony of traditional public schools in the U.S., a sentiment shared by Jessie Frerich, the director of admissions at the ICON.

“As a public school teacher for many years, we spent so much time telling kids to sit down, be quiet, and be still,” Frerich said. “What I know Iowa Conservatory is doing is saying stand up, move around, have an opinion, and back that up. Let’s be creative.”

Furthermore, the option of residence reaches beyond Iowa City kids who, Nolte says, are surrounded by an already vivacious local arts community.

Even for kids with access to afterschool intensive arts programs, trying to fit that on top of an eight-hour, five-days-a-week school schedule can be a challenge. The ICON’s curriculum combines the two into a daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Nolte empathizes with parents’ apprehension, though. As a mother who made the tough decision to send her then-14-year-old to a boarding school, Nolte reflected on this albeit scary change as one that ultimately benefited her child.

“That’s not to say it’s easy for families to give up young students,” Nolte said. “We all think as mothers that we get these kids until we’re 18, but that’s not what all kids need or want.”

For ninth grader Caylor Hull, he and his family decided to transfer from an in-person public school in Preston, Iowa, to an online alternative that provided relief from bullying.

“I could just be me on the screen and still pay attention to school,” Hull said in regard to the online format.

However, after a while, a lack of a tangible artistic community at Hull’s online-based public school left him feeling out of place around people who didn’t understand him or his passion — tap dancing.

“The people at my school didn’t understand how much effort I put into my creativity and my art, and that just wasn’t what I wanted to stay around,” he said. “So, I decided to move to Iowa City.”

Now a dance major at the ICON, Hull has the space and time to fully embrace his passion.

He’s not just dancing; he and his eight classmates are fully immersed in dis-



Isabella Tisdale | The Daily Iowan

Students dance in a musical theater dance class at Iowa Conservatory on Nov. 28. Iowa Conservatory is Iowa’s first fine arts school and opened for its inaugural year in 2023. Students can take classes at ICON, which are nontraditional liberal arts classes, such as ballet.

ciplines outside of their major, with a course list that spans from study hall to music theory and introduction to directing, to name a few.

Currently, Hull’s favorite class is costume design, something he had never explored before transferring to the ICON.

“I’m singing, I’m playing piano, and I’m still doing school — science, math, and stuff like that. It’s just amazing,” Hull said.

Hull said he looks up to his instructors at the ICON: a cast of award-winning, master-degree-holding, Broadway-acquainted dancers, actors, musicians, and designers.

“Being around the staff, seeing what they’ve gone through to get to this school and what they get to do on a daily basis — what I now get to do on a daily basis,” Hull

said, finishing his thought with a smile and a wide-eyed sigh.

Malia Bohn, an ICON post-senior, is a musical theatre major in the gap year program at the ICON.

Bohn went the traditional route for high school, but after graduating from Linn-Mar High School in Marion, Iowa, earlier this year, she decided to take a chance at the ICON before pursuing a four-year degree at a university.

The transition, she said, has been an adjustment.

“[Linn-Mar] has a lot more students than most schools, so coming to a school with only nine students, which is totally fine because we’re just beginning, is different,” Bohn said. “You’re with the same people all the time.”

“What we hear from students all the time is ‘I found my people, I found my family.’”

**Jessie Frerich**  
ICON Director of Admissions

Unlike some of the schools her other classmates came from, Linn-Mar had a great reputation for its arts program. Its show choir program in which Bohn was an alto is a household name in Linn County.

Though a change in pace, Bohn is thoroughly enjoying the benefits of a cohort of less than 10.

“You’re able to get a lot more help and attention when you need it,” Bohn said.

With fewer heads to count than they were expecting, the instructors are able to give more one-on-one time to each student, tailoring their curriculums to cater to their individual goals — something Frerich feels art schools don’t do enough of.

“There are so many performing arts boarding schools and high schools that really care about the product, like, ‘You come here and we’ll get you into Julliard,’” Frerich said. “That’s great, but you come to [the ICON] and you’ll leave a more well-rounded human.”

Despite this school year’s intimate class size, the ICON expects a swell in their student body come next August.

“I’m talking to 30 families right now, we have four to five applications sitting in the queue, and two more that have committed,” said Beth Brown, the ICON’s director of curriculum and instruction. “But [the students] have really benefited from having such an intimate setting.”

Brown said she and the administration team are thrilled to see new faces next school year, but the once-worryingly small debut crew of nine has become something unique, special, and definitive of the school’s goal moving forward.

“What we hear from students all the time is ‘I found my people, I found my family,’” Frerich said. “I mean, ‘be seen, be valued, be heard’ is our mantra because we believe that every student should be seen, be valued, and be heard — not just a product of design or because they’re the best of the best.”



Isabella Tisdale | The Daily Iowan

Students sit down for a vocal class at Iowa Conservatory on Nov. 28. Only a little over a dozen students applied in its inaugural year.

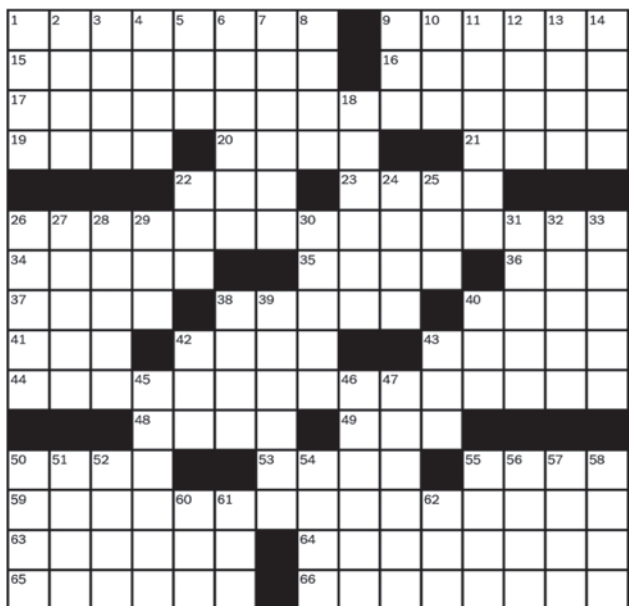
# THE BREAK

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS ON 3B

DAILYIOWAN.COM

The New York Times  
Crossword

Edited by Will Shortz  
No. 1101



**Across**

- 1 What a cat’s meow might mean
- 9 Starchless, as some foods
- 15 Peak in the Hawaiian-Emperor seamount chain
- 16 1957’s “Attack of the Crab Monsters,” for one
- 17 Actor Sean does some things that aren’t nice
- 19 What Odysseus was bound to during the sirens’ song
- 20 Turner with many Grammys
- 21 Feature of some Indian music
- 22 Role-play
- 23 Sierra runners

- 26 Silent film star Bara didn’t want to leave us
- 34 Little shots?
- 35 Vintage Camaro owner’s boast?
- 36 \_\_\_ Day (May 1, in Hawaii)
- 37 Break
- 38 An artist might blow it
- 40 Carpe \_\_\_
- 41 Half dos
- 42 California’s \_\_\_ Woods Nation Monument
- 43 Firm refusal
- 44 Artist Édouard mistakenly proposed 11:00
- 48 TV detective Bosch’s former org.

- 49 Sites for some docs
- 50 Touch
- 53 Cut-off pants?
- 55 Hand over
- 59 Fictional lawyer Perry cries “I give!”
- 63 Peninsula south of the Pyrenees
- 64 Differentiate
- 65 Explorer from 63-Across
- 66 1545 treatise whose rear ranged letters aptly suggest 17-, 26-, 44- and 59-Across

**Down**

- 1 Prayer leader
- 2 Tamale dough
- 3 Rustic refuges
- 4 Storage \_\_\_
- 5 Photographer Goldin
- 6 Procedural flaw
- 7 Elmo’s turquoise amiga
- 8 “Life of Pi” novelist Martel
- 9 Trail Blazers’ org.
- 10 Meditation sounds
- 11 Rough
- 12 Alternative to Reebok
- 13 Hobbit Frodo’s cloaking device
- 14 Test version
- 18 Wild horses couldn’t drag them away, presumably
- 22 Some remote batteries
- 24 Bothers
- 25 Govt. health agency

- 26 Hum monotonously
- 27 Spotted scavenger
- 28 Printer brand
- 29 What’s the point?
- 30 Heady weapon wielded by Wonder Woman?
- 31 Sync up
- 32 “The Brandon \_\_\_ Story” (1998 documentary)
- 33 Handmade sign at a stadium
- 38 “Forrest \_\_\_”
- 39 Mised
- 40 One of five in Yahtzee
- 42 Underground org. of New York
- 43 “Dynamite” K-pop group
- 45 Six Flags ride named for a powerful animal
- 46 Lunchtime tryst
- 47 Entities holding property
- 50 Within
- 51 Bunyan’s ox or Hoggett’s pig
- 52 Applications
- 54 Tabula \_\_\_
- 55 Manilow’s “hottest spot north of Havana,” informally
- 56 Online zine
- 57 Swear to mend things?
- 58 “Cómo \_\_\_ usted?”
- 60 Minor fault
- 61 Long March leader
- 62 Where 38-Down served, for short

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

**An Open Letter to Republican Voters of Iowa**

I am, admittedly, a never-Trumper, but please hear me out. I will concede that in 2016, Trump brought a certain fresh energy - not charisma exactly, but willingness to say whatever was on his mind, consequences be damned - that appealed to people. As much as he botched the COVID response, I give him some credit for fast-tracking the vaccine. And while it pains me to see what he has done to the Court, I can see why conservatives would applaud.

But this is 2024, not 2016. I have to ask: aren’t you sick of this guy already? Aren’t you tired of his thin skin, his misogyny, his exaggerations, his outright lies? About the way it always has to be about *him*? Don’t you find it a bit pathetic that he can’t seem to get past the 2020 election? Whatever you think of the classified documents case against him, can you in all honesty say this is the guy you want in the White House safeguarding our most vital secrets? Doesn’t it bother you, even a little bit, that he is facing 4 criminal indictments, and may very well be a convicted felon by the time the general election rolls around? Or is stupid enough to let himself get caught on tape asking election officials to “find” enough votes for him?

Republicans seem set on nominating a guy who lost the popular vote twice, and already lost one election to the guy he will presumably run against. Despite the current polls, I suspect that my guy would have an easier time against Trump than, say, a Haley or DeSantis. I don’t want to take that chance, though. He has had his day, his moment in the sun; now let’s just move on and consign Donald Trump to the dustbin of history.

**Paid for by John Mamin,**  
3317 St. Michael Dr., Palo Alto, CA 94306



# UI exhibit showcases Indigenous heritage

The “Drawn Over” exhibit shows documentation of Native American ledger drawings.



Emily Nyberg | The Daily Iowan



Emily Nyberg | The Daily Iowan

The “Drawn Over: Reclaiming Our Histories” exhibit is seen at the Stanley Museum of Art in Iowa City on Dec. 1. The gallery is a collection of Native American ledger art, a Plains Indian style established in the 19th century, through which artists told stories and documented events and achievements.

Items from the “Drawn Over: Reclaiming Our Histories” exhibit are seen at the Stanley Museum of Art in Iowa City on Dec. 1. The gallery shows Native American ledger art, a Plains Indian style established in the 19th century. The exhibit is open until Jan. 2, 2024.

**Caden Gantenbein**  
Arts Reporter  
caden-gantenbein@uiowa.edu

The University of Iowa’s Stanley Museum of Art is proven to be dedicated to showcasing underrepresented or historically diminished voices within its curated exhibits.

The “Drawn Over: Reclaiming Our Histories” exhibit, featuring an array of drawings from different Indigenous nations across Iowa, is its latest collection dedicated to educating through art.

The exhibit holds a large collection of ledger drawings — Native American pictographs — that emerged during the Plains Wars of the late 19th century when U.S. forces invaded Indigenous land between the

Mississippi River and Rocky Mountains. After Indigenous people were brutally massacred, centuries of villainization and misrepresentation followed.

Jacki Rand, a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is an associate professor of Native American studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the guest curator of the exhibit. She spoke on the importance of educating the community on the often wrongfully portrayed depiction of Indigenous people.

“We wanted to focus less heavily on warrior culture since it’s something Americans don’t usually understand the full picture of,” Rand said.

Instead, Rand, among the other curators, sought to display art that showcased Indigenous family life and an accurate representation of the historical dynamics between Indigenous men and women.

One ledger, in which a woman is depicted riding a horse while holding an umbrella over her head as a man leads on foot, is an example of this.

Rand’s goal is that viewers will perceive Indigenous people as they perceive themselves, rather than the defamatory depictions that are often at the forefront of U.S. history books.

The 11-piece collection can be attributed to the collaboration between Rand and the team she gathered for the occasion.

The team consists of Erica Prussing, an associate professor in the UI’s anthropology

department; Jennifer New, the community engagement specialist at the Stanley; Mary Young Bear, a Meskwaki traditional artist; Patricia Trujillo, a retired museum professional and citizen of Ojibwe/Meskwaki nations; and Phillip Round, an emeritus professor of English, Native American and Indigenous studies at the UI.

“If I give myself credit for anything, it’s that I put together a brilliant team,” Rand said. “The team consisted of people I knew, trusted, and [whose knowledge I valued] about Native history and culture.”

Rand noted that New, who specializes in community engagement, came up with the title of this exhibit. Likewise, Trujillo, a museum academic and Native woman herself, was a big asset in this collaboration, according to Rand.

“This ledger paper was used to keep track of us [Native Americans] like cattle,” Trujillo stated, underscoring that the artwork in the exhibit serves as a literal drawing-over of Native mistreatment and a visual reclamation of their history.

Trujillo shared she aimed to create a “sense of sameness” between non-Native people and Native people with the creation of the exhibit.

“Everybody has to take care of their family, take care of their home, get food, work ... those are all the same no matter what culture you’re in,” Trujillo said.

The inclusion of Native voices

on a project dedicated to curating a platform for uplifting those same voices was paramount for its success, according to Rand.

“It’s important to highlight that methodology,” she said. “We tried to shy away from that one expert curatorial direction and used collaboration to achieve this goal of bringing out unheard voices.”

Derek Nnuro, the project manager of the “Drawn Over” exhibition and the Stanley’s curator of special projects, emphasized the exhibit’s message.

“The show takes an innovative approach to exhibition design,” Nnuro said. “It is a celebration of Indigenous identity and survival.”

Open until Jan. 2, 2024, Nnuro urges Iowa City community members to see “Drawn Over” for a “first, second, or even third time.”

“I hope visitors leave feeling empowered to work toward a better future,” Nnuro said.

#### HOW TO ATTEND THE STANLEY EXHIBIT

**What:** Drawn Over: Reclaiming Our Histories free exhibition

**Where:** University of Iowa Stanley Museum of Art, 160 W. Burlington St., Iowa City

**When:** Attend until the exhibit’s last day Jan. 2, 2024

“If I give myself credit for anything, it’s that I put together a brilliant team ... The team consisted of people I knew, trusted, and [whose knowledge I valued] about Native history and culture.”

**Jacki Rand**  
Citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma & guest curator

Fall 2023

# CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is pleased to recognize the scholarship and achievement of our students graduating in December 2023 with distinction and honors.

We are proud of all of our new alumni and wish them success in their future endeavors.  
**Dean Sara Sanders**

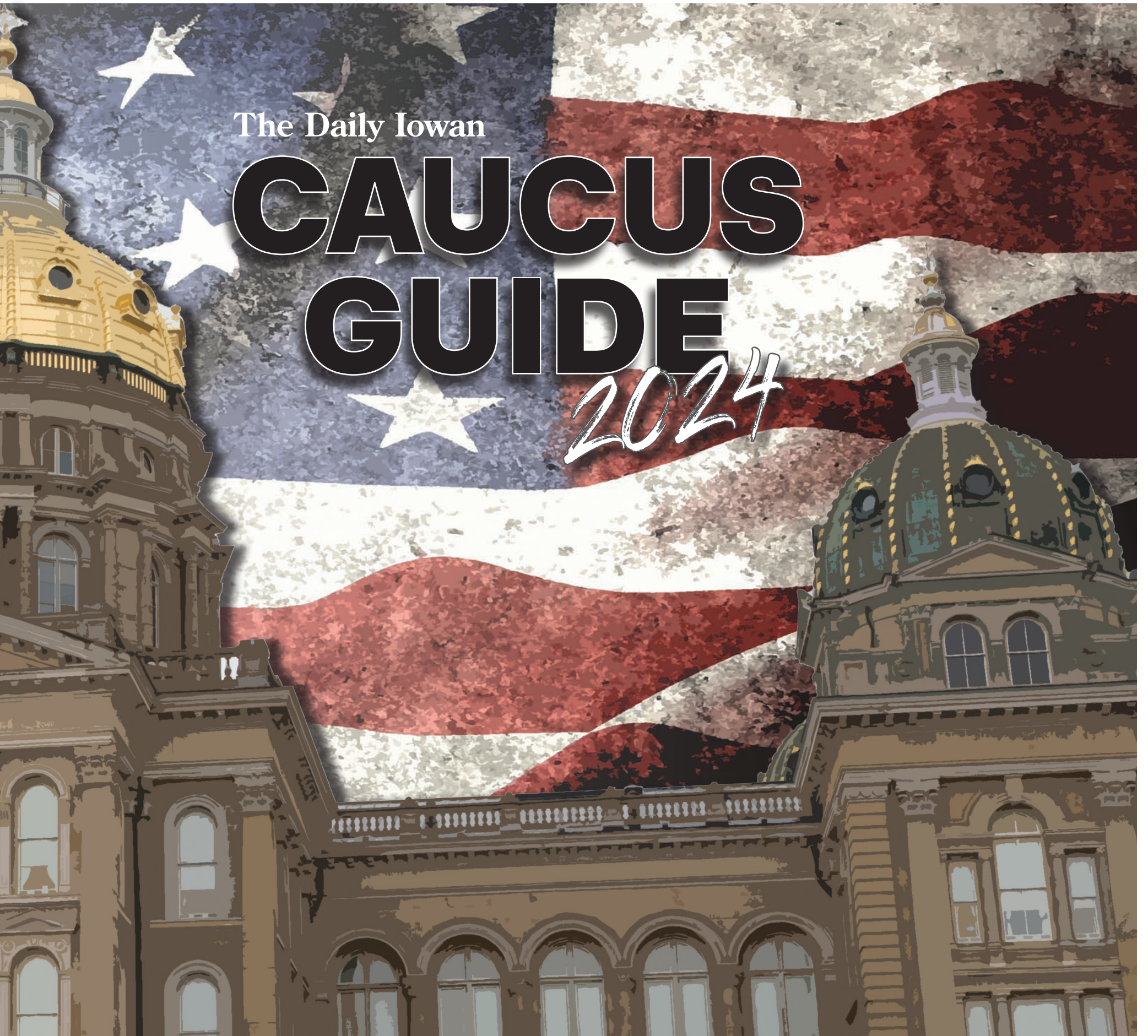
<p><b><u>With Highest Distinction</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aaron Blom</li> <li>Ethan Borchard</li> <li>Samantha Cary</li> <li>Faithe Cavalier</li> <li>Nathan Clack</li> <li>Samuel Fouts</li> <li>Nicole Gilbert</li> <li>Sharon Goodman</li> <li>Elizabeth Hernandez</li> <li>Olivia Jewell</li> <li>Cameron LaPage</li> <li>Daniel Molnar</li> <li>Marco Ocegueda</li> <li>David Roth</li> <li>Carter Shockey</li> <li>Kareem Shoukih</li> <li>Tyler Stallman</li> <li>Sydney Van Trump</li> <li>Caitlyn Ward</li> <li>Robert Weger</li> <li>Mary Wieczorek</li> <li>Justin Yem</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>With High Distinction</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abigail Anderson</li> <li>Justine Buman</li> <li>Alexis Carfrae</li> <li>Max Lemke</li> <li>Connorn Linzer</li> <li>Nicholas O'Donnell</li> <li>Heidy Tapia</li> <li>Leslie Tapia</li> <li>Devin Thomas</li> </ul> <p><b><u>With Distinction</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grace Bergstrom</li> <li>Brianna Brown</li> <li>Grace Burke</li> <li>Samantha deNeui</li> <li>Molly Donovan</li> <li>Hunter Eden</li> <li>Claire Enyart</li> <li>Dylan Gao</li> <li>Abigail Garringer</li> <li>McKenna Geake</li> <li>Jin Jin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Olivia Johnson</li> <li>Tess Kennedy</li> <li>Alec Knepper</li> <li>Lauren Lettington</li> <li>Kaitlyn Mitchell</li> <li>Erin Ng</li> <li>Lucas Regina</li> <li>Daniel Rompot</li> <li>Lauren Sanyal</li> </ul> <p><b><u>With Honors in the Major</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grace Burke</li> <li>Alexis Carfrae</li> <li>Samantha Cary</li> <li>Nathan Clack</li> <li>Aasthika Das</li> <li>Ariya Davis</li> <li>June Deo</li> <li>Stella Deo</li> <li>Nicole Gilbert</li> <li>Isabella Goldstein</li> <li>Olivia Goodyear</li> <li>Isaac Guerra</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cobey Heinen</li> <li>Israel Hoffman</li> <li>Rachel Hunt</li> <li>Olivia Johnson</li> <li>Mia Knapp</li> <li>Desiray Lange</li> <li>Cameron LaPage</li> <li>Trevor Larkin</li> <li>Lauren Lettington</li> <li>Madison McMurrin</li> <li>Oliver Morelli</li> <li>Callahan Morton</li> <li>Marco Ocegueda</li> <li>Lauren Sanyal</li> <li>Dallas Schaeffer</li> <li>Sophia Schoolen</li> <li>Victoria Sheehy</li> <li>Caitlyn Ward</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Phi Beta Kappa</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brianna Brown</li> <li>Nathan Clack</li> <li>Abigail Garringer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nicole Gilbert</li> <li>Elizabeth Hernandez</li> <li>Cara Heuer</li> <li>Tess Kennedy</li> <li>Cameron LaPage</li> <li>Daniel Moss</li> <li>Kyle Tristan Ortega</li> <li>Lucas Regina</li> <li>Daniel Rompot</li> <li>Lauren Sanyal</li> <li>Sydney Van Trump</li> </ul>
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The Daily Iowan

# CAUCUS GUIDE 2024





THE DAILY IOWAN  
**ETHICS &**  
**POLITICS**  
 INITIATIVE

The Daily Iowan Ethics and Politics Initiative is funded by a private donor and will appear biweekly this semester. The team's mission is to understand, interpret, analyze, and report on topics, trends and personalities that shape politics in Iowa and the U.S., and to recognize the importance of a strong ethical foundation in its pursuits.

Email [daily-iowan@uiowa.edu](mailto:daily-iowan@uiowa.edu) with story ideas, press releases, or reader comments.

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## Important dates

**Jan. 15** - The Iowa Democratic and Republican Caucuses will occur on Jan. 15, but the Democratic caucus is going to look a little different this year. Refer to page 7 on how to navigate these changes.

**Jan. 12** - Democratic caucus presidential preference cards mailed out starting

**Feb. 19** - Last day to request presidential preference card for Democratic caucus

**Feb. 3 & Feb. 24** - South Carolina Democrat and Republican primaries

**March 5** - Super Tuesday

Source: <https://www.270towin.com>

### Q&A | TERESA HORTON BUMGARNER

# Johnson County Republicans to continue caucus tradition

Teresa Horton Bumgarner explains the unanswered questions of the Republican caucuses ahead of Jan. 15.

**Grace Katzer**  
 Politics Reporter  
[grace-katzer@uiowa.edu](mailto:grace-katzer@uiowa.edu)

Two months ahead of the Iowa caucuses, many Johnson County voters are preparing to cast their first vote of the 2024 presidential election.

*The Daily Iowan* sat down with Johnson County Republican Chair Teresa Horton Bumgarner to learn more about what the upcoming caucus will look like for GOP voters in the county.

Horton Bumgarner emphasized the importance of voting in the caucuses because of how close the Republican primary race could be. She also encouraged all first-time voters to take a chance and show up to their precinct's event on Jan. 15.

To learn more about the Iowa caucuses and how to participate in the upcoming election, read the *DI's* interview with Bumgarner below. The interview has been edited for length and clarity.

### **The Daily Iowan: How can voters best prepare for the caucuses?**

Horton Bumgarner: Go hear the candidates, hear them all. And when you go, ask the tough questions. Ask the questions that are important to you, whatever that might be. This is your opportunity to sit down with potentially the next president of the United States and say, "This is my concern, and how are you going to handle this particular situation?" We're fortunate that we get the opportunity to do that.

The race is so far down the road that others don't get that opportunity. We're first, they start coming here first, and they come here longer. And a lot of times we can meet with these presidential candidates in a very small room with maybe 30 or 40 people. Sometimes it's a huge crowd, and sometimes it's a small crowd. I don't know anywhere else that you get to do that.

**What are the Johnson County Republicans doing to help prepare voters ahead of the caucuses?**

We have hosted almost every presidential candidate. I can't say we've had all of them in Johnson County, but we've had almost every presidential candidate, and we encourage them to come back.

My philosophy is that I want as many people as possible from the grassroots because every vote counts, every person is going to have their opinion and should experience and meet one-on-one with every candidate so that they can make an educated decision. The best way is to get them to sit down and talk one-on-one, and we can do that here.

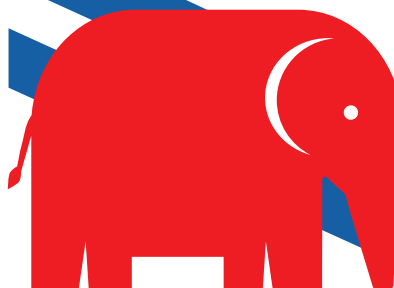
### **Do you have any recommendations for first-time voters in the caucuses?**

I'd say again, you want to take advantage of the opportunity to meet these people one-on-one if you can. Sometimes we must drive a lot — I had a friend who just drove to Dubuque because they wanted to hear a particular candidate that they hadn't had an opportunity to hear before.

So do your research and try to meet them don't just read what the basic news has to say, not that I want to knock the news people. Really take advantage of that one-on-one opportunity. I think that when we go out and meet them and ask them questions, it does two things for the candidate.

It helps secure our first-in-the-nation status because it shows the rest of the nation that Iowans are educated and interested. And secondly, I think it helps the candidates really hone their answers. People are really interested in that kind of thing.

I would also tell them to participate. Go. It doesn't take very long for our caucuses. I can't speak for other parties, but I know that ours are done in an hour. The basic vote is usually done within half an hour. It doesn't take a huge amount of time; you'll meet some great people out caucusing. And it's important. Don't be afraid to go.





# Iowa caucuses: A race for second place

Iowans will make their case in January, but presidential nominations don't stop in Iowa.



DI Staff | The Daily Iowan

From left to right: Republican presidential candidate Gov. Ron DeSantis, R-Fla., speaks at the River Center in Des Moines on Nov. 6. Former UN Ambassador and Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley answers a question during the 2023 Thanksgiving Family Forum hosted by The FAMiLY Leader at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Des Moines on Nov. 17. Former President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during the annual Lincoln Dinner at the Iowa Events Center in Des Moines on July 28.

## Liam Halawith

Senior News and Politics Editor  
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**F**ormer President Donald Trump holds a clear, decisive lead over the 2024 GOP presidential primary field with almost 30 points between him and his challengers in recent polling.

For some Iowa Republicans, it feels like the Iowa caucuses on Jan. 15 are all but decided. But road to the GOP presidential nomination doesn't stop in Iowa, and Trump's contenders could pull ahead in other early contests.

With Trump's authoritative lead, some experts and voters find it difficult to see a

race where the underdogs come out on top.

The most recent *Des Moines Register*/NBC News/Mediacom Iowa Poll points to a steep challenge for Trump's challengers to surmount. Trump boasts 43 percent of respondents in the October poll while former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis each hold 16 percent of the vote among 404 poll respondents.

The poll points to a harsh reality. The more than 500 Iowa campaign stops Trump's opponents made leading up to the 2024 caucuses have done little to whittle away Trump's stark lead.

The former president has yet to attend a Republican debate, has held a handful of

campaign events in the state, and faces 91 felony charges across four separate criminal indictments.

Dennis Werkmeister, of northwest Iowa, said at The Family Leader's Thanksgiving Family Forum on Nov. 19, he will caucus but is still undecided, though he thinks it is important to identify an alternative to Trump.

"The [Republican] party needs to be a leader and pick the person that's best going to suit the United States and that's up to the voters," Werkmeister said. "I'm gonna say let things play out and see how they play out."

Karen Maxium, a voter from Des Moines, said she worried if Trump would be able to

survive his legal troubles.

"Well, I'm worried because of what they're doing to Trump," Maxium said. "I don't know if he's going to be able to survive what they're doing. [I] definitely will support him if he ... can survive all this."

All of this has made little impact on carving out a spot for other presidential hopefuls to launch a viable challenge to Trump's reign.

However, some of Trump's rivals still see a path to overtake the party's frontrunner, and that relies on the outcome of early nominating contests like Iowa's first-in-the-nation caucuses.



## GOP from 3

### Late surge could challenge Trump's hold

Late surges are common in the Iowa caucuses as candidates hit the pavement in the few weeks before the event, hoping to make a last-minute appeal to voters. This has given some candidates a meteoric rise in the caucuses, but even with a sharp rise in the polls, DeSantis and Haley are far from breaking Trump's lead.



Santorum

Ahead of the 2012 Iowa caucuses in an October 2011 Iowa Poll, then-junior U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa., garnered only 5 percent of poll respondents but later went on to win the Iowa caucuses with almost 26 percent of the vote.

In 2008, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee had 12 percent support in the October 2007 Iowa Poll and surged to hold 34 percent of the vote on caucus night.



Cruz

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, polled at 10 percent in the October 2015 Iowa Poll but won the Iowa caucuses in 2016 with 28 percent of the vote.

Candidates have indicated they are looking to increase their presence in the state to capitalize on the late caucus surge.

Trump planned several campaign stops in the state, including a stop in Cedar Rapids on Dec. 2 and a stop in Coralville on Dec. 13. A Super PAC supporting Trump has also started airing attack ads ahead of the caucuses.

Haley launched a new campaign ad in Iowa and New Hampshire on Nov. 30.

DeSantis held an event in Newton on Dec. 2. The rally ended his 99-county tour across the state, traditionally dubbed the "full Grassley" after Iowa's senior Republican U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, who completes a tour of all 99 counties in Iowa every year.

Megan Goldberg, a Cornell College political science professor, said Haley or DeSantis would have to make massive strides in the coming weeks to cut back Trump's lead. Besides Haley's gain between the August and October Iowa Polls, no other candidate has gained momentum.

"I think that the surge that DeSantis or Haley would need is getting so big that I don't know how realistic it is to get," Goldberg said. "I'm increasingly skeptical that any of them are going to experience a surge this late in the game when we haven't seen any of those surges so far."

Even if Haley or DeSantis experience surges akin to those of Cruz, Huckabee, or Santorum in previous caucuses, they would still be short almost 10 percentage points from catapulting ahead of Trump's lead.

Tim Hagle, a University of Iowa political science associate professor, said while current polling may seem stagnant, there is



Ayrton Breckenridge | The Daily Iowan

Republican presidential candidate and U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, South Carolina, operates a grill during the Iowa State Fair at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines on Aug. 15. Scott has since dropped out of the race.

still a little more than a month before the caucuses, and voters might change their minds about Trump.

### Consolidating support might prove challenging

While Trump's grasp on his base remains strong, the caucuses have become a race for second place, Goldberg said. This has highlighted the importance of picking a singular alternative to challenge the frontrunner.

With little to no movement in Trump's camp, his challengers are left to scrap among themselves to coalesce their supporters and offer a more sizable challenge to Trump.

With eight candidates vying to challenge Trump as of early December, the field is still crowded. Without coalescing behind a singular alternative to Trump, Hagle said the party might not be able to offer a strong challenge to Trump's authoritative lead.

"DeSantis is competing with Haley to see which one of the two can move up or knock the other one out so that the non-Trump voters can coalesce around a single rather than being divided between the two," Hagle said.

Goldberg said coordinated support and endorsements for one of the second-ranked candidates could help solidify the field to create a stronger challenge to Trump.

National party elites have yet to coalesce around one candidate, let alone everyday voters. However, both Haley and DeSantis have picked up endorsements along the way.

DeSantis has secured endorsements from Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds and Iowa evangelical leader and political activist Bob Vander Plaats, among dozens of state legislators and hundreds of faith leaders across the state.

Haley picked up an endorsement from the Koch brothers-funded Super PAC Americans For Prosperity on Nov. 28. The national grassroots organization offers more organizational support for Haley's campaign as she continues to gain momentum in the race.

Goldberg said these endorsements could offer voters — who must sift through a mountain of information — guidance on who to support.

Reynolds' historic endorsement of DeSantis could be more of a test of her popularity among Iowa Republicans, and test if she holds more sway than Trump in the state, Goldberg said.

Reynolds' popularity among Republicans in the state is unmatched. She won her most recent campaign for office in 2022 with 58 percent of the vote, more than 19 points ahead of her Democratic opponent. According to the August Iowa Poll, 81 percent of Iowa Republicans view Reynolds favorably.

However, Reynolds' decision to endorse DeSantis didn't go over well with Trump. Even before Reynolds and DeSantis made the endorsement public, Trump attacked Reynolds. Trump took credit for Reynolds' wins and said she was "disloyal" and that the endorsement would be "the end of her political career."



Emily Nyberg | The Daily Iowan

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds speaks to the crowd during the 4th District tailgate presidential rally in Nevada, Iowa, on Sept. 9. The tailgate featured speeches from Republican presidential candidates, Reynolds, and a speech on behalf of the Trump campaign.





Emily Nyberg | The Daily Iowan

An audience member claps during the 2023 Thanksgiving Family Forum hosted by The FAMiLY Leader, an organization dedicated to advancing the role of religious values in government, at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Des Moines on Nov. 17. The event, moderated by the president of the FAMiLY Leader, Bob Vander Plaats, began at 3:30 p.m. with a round table discussion and was followed by meet-and-greet events with each of the candidates, which included Vivek Ramaswamy, Ron DeSantis, and Nikki Haley.

“America’s most Unpopular Governor and Ron [DeSantis] is second,” Trump said in a Truth Social post on Nov. 6. “That’s what happens when you are disloyal to those that got you there!”

Trump referenced a Morning Consult poll, which on Nov. 6 listed Reynolds with a 47 percent disapproval rating in a national poll, the highest out of any governor at the time of the poll in early November.

Alina Waggoner, a DeSantis supporter from Des Moines, said Reynolds’ endorsement will sway her supporters toward DeSantis at a DeSantis rally in Des Moines on Nov. 6.

### By the numbers

Although some hoping for Trump to lose the nomination would like for the field to coalesce around a single alternative to the former president, that might help Trump.

Polling shows just that. According to the October Iowa Poll, there is a large amount of overlap between the candidate’s supporters.

Of voters who chose DeSantis as their first choice candidate, 41 percent named Trump as their second, and 27 percent named Haley. If DeSantis were to end his campaign today, Trump would jump to 50 percent of poll respondents and Haley would rise to 21 percent.

Of voters who chose Haley as their first choice, 34 percent chose DeSantis as second, 19 percent chose U.S. Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., who has since dropped out of the race; 14 percent chose North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum; and 12 percent chose Trump as their second choice.

If Haley were to end her campaign today, Trump would jump to 45 percent support among Iowa Poll respondents and DeSantis would follow with 22 percent.

### Trump remains strong challenger

Despite quickly rising momentum from Haley and high-level endorsements from DeSantis, Trump presently remains a clear-

cut winner of the Iowa caucuses and the inevitable nominee for many.

Trump’s supporters remain steadfast in their support for the former president, despite his 91 felony counts across four separate criminal indictments.

An August CNN poll found that the majority of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents polled were not worried about Trump’s chances of winning the 2024 election, despite his criminal charges.

The poll also found that 60 percent of Republicans polled thought the criminal charges Trump faces would impact his ability to be an effective president.

Dorothy Sadler, of Cedar Falls, said she thought Trump was a good president, but he now comes with a lot of baggage and instead put her support behind Asa Hutchinson when interviewed by *The Daily Iowan* at the Iowa State Fair.

“He’s got a lot of baggage, he’s not able to do work up to his potential because the media — and all the left — all they do is get lawsuit

after lawsuit after him,” Sadler said. “They’re afraid, and I don’t know what they’re afraid of. I think they’re scared to death.”

Goldberg, with Cornell College, said if Trump’s legal troubles were to somehow disqualify him or impact his public support, it could open up a lane for Haley or DeSantis to angle Trump out of the race.

She also said the caucuses and the primary as a whole will be a litmus test for the general election — a test to whether or not Trump’s legal woes will affect his electability.

### Three tickets out of Iowa

Steffen Schmidt, an Iowa State University political science professor emeritus, said there is still a very viable path for Haley or DeSantis to capture the nomination.

Schmidt pointed out that the winner of the Iowa caucuses doesn’t always go on to win the nomination.

In 2020, then-South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg won the Iowa caucuses but ultimately did not win the nomination. The same is true with Cruz’s run in 2016. He showed out in the Iowa caucuses but never harnessed the momentum that Iowa is famous for giving candidates.

Even if Trump inevitably wins Iowa, Schmidt said any of the early contests could give other candidates the momentum they need to secure the nomination.

Schmidt said if Haley makes a large showing, or even wins the contest in her home state of South Carolina, she could garner enough support to win the nomination come Super Tuesday.

Hagle said the belief that there are three tickets out of Iowa is still true this year, but the second and third tickets won’t be as potent while Trump boasts such a large lead over his competitors.

“It would seem that if Trump wins Iowa, he would be in pretty good shape in New Hampshire,” Hagle said. “With that kind of momentum, it might be hard to stop him.”

New Hampshire’s first-in-the-nation primary is just one week after the Iowa caucuses on Jan. 23.

Despite Trump’s lead over his competitors, Schmidt said he thinks the caucuses are doing their job — to narrow the field and help pick the frontrunners for the party to choose from.

“I’m going to look forward to the caucuses this year as an interesting moment to see if they still have the magic of giving somebody a chance to be the proposed frontrunner,” Schmidt said. “It’s less likely this year, but I think the Iowa caucuses are alive and well.”

### See more online

Look out for *The Daily Iowan*’s in-depth coverage of the Iowa caucuses on Jan. 15 at [dailyiowan.com](http://dailyiowan.com).



# A guide to Iowa caucuses

While the Republican caucuses remains the same, the Democratic caucuses are now an administrative meeting for Democrat officials, and caucusgoers will mail in their picks for the Democratic presidential nominee.

## Democrats

**What happens?:** The Democratic caucuses this year are all mail-in. Iowa Democrats can cast their presidential nominee by mail. To request a “Presidential Preference Card,” according to the party’s website, fill out the online form or printed form and return it in the mail. The last day to request a card is Feb. 19, 2024, and the cards will be mailed out starting Jan. 12, 2024.

**When:** Now until card requests are closed Feb. 19, 2024

**What do I need?:** You need to be a registered Democrat to caucus. You can register online by Feb. 19, 2024, to participate.

## Republicans

**What happens?:** The location where you can caucus, which is normally in a public school or center, will be released a few weeks before Jan. 15 — caucus day. At your location, a “straw poll” will be conducted, and caucusgoers will write down their preferred Republican nominee on a piece of paper and hand it to an official, and the ballots are counted. Once the ballots are tallied up, party leadership will report it to the Republican Party of Iowa to compile the state results.

**When:** Jan. 15, 2024

**What do I need?:** You need to be a registered Republican to caucus. You can register day-of or online at the caucus. Bring an ID to register, according to the website.



Megan Nagorzanski | The Daily Iowan

University of Iowa students caucus at the Iowa Memorial Union on Feb. 3, 2020.

# ¿Cómo participar en la designación del candidato presidencial?

La designación del candidato de Iowa, un proceso que se empezó en 1972, está reconocida por su estatus de primera en la nación. La designación del candidato republicano se mantendrá igual, pero para la designación del candidato demócrata habrá una reunión de administrativos oficiales demócratas, y los ciudadanos que quieran participar podrán enviar por correo sus preferencias para el nominado o la nominada del partido demócrata.

## Republicanos

**¿Qué sucederá?** La ubicación de la designación del candidato, lo cual usualmente se hace en una escuela pública o en un centro público, será diseminado unas semanas antes del 15 de enero cuando será el día de la designación del candidato. En su ubicación, una encuesta oficial será distribuida, y los participantes escribirán su candidato republicano preferido en un papel y lo entregarán a un oficial, y todas las votaciones serán contadas. Una vez que todas las votaciones estén contadas, el líder reportará los resultados al partido republicano de Iowa para recopilarlos junto con los del resto de todo el estado de Iowa.

**¿Cuándo será?** El 15 de enero

**¿Qué necesito?** Necesitará ser un miembro inscrito en el partido político republicano para participar en la designación del candidato presidencial. También se necesitará presentar una identificación para inscribirse de acuerdo a las reglas del partido republicano expuestas en la Web.

## Demócratas

**¿Qué sucederá?** La designación del candidato presidencial demócrata será únicamente por correo. De acuerdo con el sitio Web del partido político democrático, para pedir una tarjeta de “Preferencia de Presidente” se requerirá rellenar un formulario en línea o en forma impresa y mandar por correo. El último día para pedir una tarjeta es el 19 de febrero de 2024, y todas las tarjetas tendrán que ser enviadas a partir del 12 de enero de 2024.

**¿Hasta cuándo hay tiempo?** Se pueden rellenar los formularios hasta el 19 de febrero de 2024.

**¿Qué necesito?** Necesita ser un miembro inscrito en el partido demócrata para participar en la designación del candidato presidencial demócrata.

Spanish translation by Isabella Hoeger-Pinto



Q&amp;A | JOHN DEETH

# Iowa Democratic Party switches up caucus plans

Volunteer caucus organizer for the Johnson County Democrats John Deeth says the deadline to request a ballot for the caucuses is Feb. 19.

## Link to request presidential preference card

Fill out the online form to request a card for the Iowa Democratic caucuses until Feb. 19. The candidate preference cards will be mailed out starting on Jan. 12, 2024.



**Natalie Miller**  
Politics Reporter  
nmiller32@uiowa.edu

After national Democrats stripped the Iowa Democratic Party of its first-in-the-nation caucus status earlier this year, the Iowa Democratic caucuses will look quite a bit different.

Iowa Democrats will now hold in-person caucus meetings on Jan. 15 and send in presidential preference cards via mail until Feb. 19. The results of the caucus will not be revealed until Super Tuesday on March 5.

John Deeth, a volunteer caucus organizer for the Johnson County Democrats, said holding the caucuses on Martin Luther King Jr. Day had led to some backlash in 2004, but the date, which coincides with the Iowa GOP caucuses, was not chosen by the Democrats.

The in-person caucus meeting's focus is to elect delegates to the county convention. Those delegates will then participate in state and national conventions depending on mail-in ballot results.

Deeth said party leadership came up with the new system after criticism from the Democratic National Committee regarding the amount of time it took and the accessibility of the caucuses.

Iowa Democrats can now request their 2024 caucus mail-in ballots through Feb. 19. All ballots must be back to the state party on March 5.

Caucusgoers can go online at

[iowademocrats.org](http://iowademocrats.org) to request a Presidential Preference Card. Preference cards will be mailed out Jan. 12, 2024. Registered Democrats are eligible to request a card and participate in the caucus or can register online.

## **The Daily Iowan: Where and when can Democrats in Iowa caucus for Democratic nominees?**

Deeth: The caucus this year is going to be just a business meeting, so if all somebody wants to do is vote for a Democratic presidential candidate, they would not need to attend. We encourage attendance because it's important to our party organizing, but the presidential voting is going to be conducted by mail.

The Democratic Party is taking requests now. You can request your ballot online, and then they will mail those out beginning on Jan. 12. The caucus meeting will be on Jan. 15.

## **How will the Johnson County Democratic Caucuses work?**

There will be some introductory remarks from an elected official or a member of the party executive board, and then there will be a petition signing for Democratic candidates to get on the ballot.

There will be some various presentations, and then the attendees will break into the individual precincts to get back the actual business.

So what we'll be doing is electing delegates to a county convention, and those delegates will all be unpledged delegates. There's no commitment to a presidential candidate; you're just a delegate to a county convention.

We'll be electing county committee members, platform committee members, and discussing platforms if people want to do that.

So the next step is the state Democratic Party. There's a deadline to request a

ballot: Feb. 19. The deadline to get the ballots back to the state party is March 5, and on March 5, the state party will release the results.

The delegates will meet at the county convention on March 23, and they will choose delegates to the next levels of convention in proportion to what the mail-in vote was.

The mail-in vote will determine how many district and state convention delegates and how many national convention delegates are elected for each candidate, whether that be president or an uncommitted slate, but people can caucus for whoever they want.

The caucus meeting has nothing to do with the presidential vote.

The state law requires we hold a party-organizing meeting and that we hold that meeting before other states start voting for president.

## **Why is it important that people participate in the caucuses?**

I think the caucuses, even though we're not voting for president, are still very important because it's the beginning of the organization process for the November election.

The Democrats are going to need all hands on deck this year for President Biden, for Christina Bohannon for Congress, for our local legislators and courthouse officials ... The stakes are very high in this election.

So it's important to get out on the ground floor, get involved, and get ready to do the work of getting your friends and neighbors out to vote, and the caucuses are a good way to get started on that.

## Timeline of Iowa Democratic caucus history

The Iowa tradition will see major changes to the way it runs this year.

Source: State Historical Society of Iowa

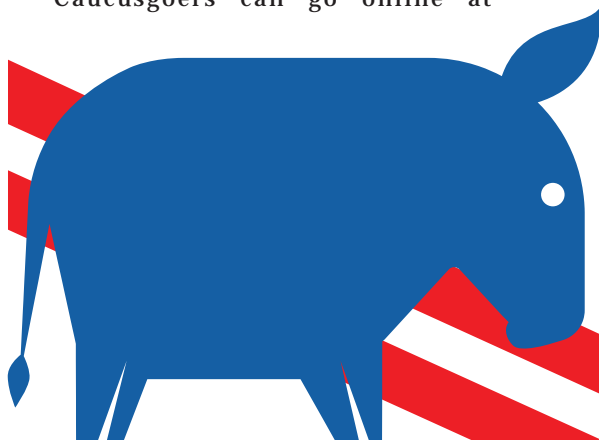
**1972:** Iowa has held the first presidential nominating contests in the country since the '70s. Iowa's caucus process is long, so Iowa was chosen to go first.

**1976:** Jimmy Carter wins the Iowa caucuses — giving Iowa extra recognition.

**October 2023:** The Democratic Party officially moves Iowa from first-in-the-nation status in the presidential nominating process. South Carolina dubbed first state to conduct primary.

**Jan. 15, 2024:** The Iowa Democrats will hold organizational meetings on this day.

**March 2024:** On Super Tuesday most U.S. states will host its presidential primary election day.







## JOE BIDEN



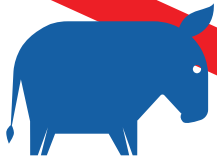
**Age: 80**



**Home State:  
Delaware**



**Occupation:  
President, U.S.  
Senator from  
Delaware**



President Joe Biden, the incumbent Democrat, is looking for his second term as president in the 2024 presidential race.

Biden spent 36 years, from 1973 to 2009, as a U.S. senator from his home state of Delaware. Biden went on to run alongside the 44th United States president, Barack Obama, and served as his vice president during his two-term presidency in 2009-17.

In the 2020 presidential election, Biden defeated incumbent former President Donald Trump, a Republican, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Biden's two chief accomplishments in office are his American Rescue Plan Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, both major spending bills that made massive infrastructure investments.

The \$1.9 trillion stimulus package helped K-12 schools reopen and address pandemic learning loss, infused money for public health activities including vaccine distribution, helped childcare providers stay open, and awarded funds to state and local governments to use on infrastructure and other projects.

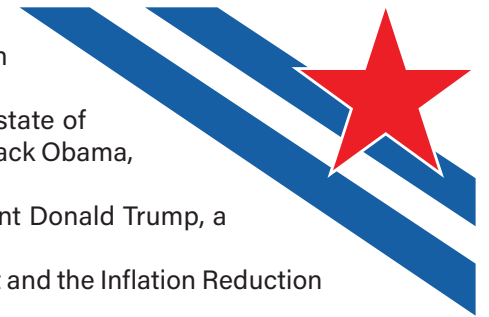
Since Biden took office in 2021, 11 million jobs have been created and unemployment is at a 50-year low.

With the help of both Democrats and Republicans, Biden passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act that requires citizens 18 to 21 to pass background checks to legally buy a gun. The law also funds crisis interventions and allocates more money toward mental health education in public schools.

During his term, Biden successfully nominated and confirmed Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson into the Supreme Court as the first Black woman to serve in the role.

Under Biden's Administration, he proposed a debt relief program that says who used Pell Grants in college can receive debt relief up to \$20,000 if they are earning less than \$125,000 and no more than \$10,000 for those earning any more than \$125,000.

Biden currently holds a massive lead over the Democratic caucus field with over 72 percent of the vote in an average of national polls by Real Clear Politics. Biden received over \$15.2 million in donations to his 2024 campaign and has spent \$14.2 million as of a Sept. 30 disclosure report. He has \$32.1 million cash on hand.



## MARIANNE WILLIAMSON



**Age: 71**



**Home State:  
Texas**



**Occupation:  
Author**



Williamson is offering a challenge to President Joe Biden's centrism. Williamson aimed to draw progressives and the youth vote from Biden during her second run for the presidency.

She ran in 2020 but dropped out after continuing to see her polling falter and not wanting to pull support from other progressive candidates.

Williamson's signature issues have been her criticism of America's health care system, rising cost of living, and her plan to help the help youth with the creation of the U.S. Department of Children and Youth.

Williamson said she wants to take a holistic approach to American health care. Williamson said everything from access to food, clean water, good working conditions, and the economy feed into the healthcare crisis.

In a Nov. 7 CNN poll, Williamson polled around 8 percent of 1,514 respondents nationwide. Williamson received over \$2.28 million in donations in her 2024 presidential campaign and has spent \$2.4 million in her primary campaign as of a Sept. 30 disclosure report.



## DEAN PHILLIPS



**Age: 54**



**Home State:  
Minnesota**



**Occupation:  
U.S. Representative  
for Minnesota's 3rd  
Congressional District**



U.S. Rep. Dean Phillips, D-Minn., announced a late run for the Democratic nomination in October. Phillips called for the party to pick an alternative to Joe Biden due to Biden's age and decrease in popularity.

"I will not sit still and not be quiet in the face of numbers that are so clearly saying that we're going to be facing an emergency next November," Phillips told CBS News in an interview that aired on Oct. 27.

Phillips first ran for Congress in 2018 after former President Donald Trump's win in the 2016 election. Phillip beat a long-term Republican incumbent and won reelection in 2020 and 2022. He is part of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus and has repeatedly split from Progressive Democrats.

A RealClear Politics average of national polling for the Democratic primary shows Phillips holds 3 percent of the vote among respondents to the six polls used for the average.

Phillips does not have any publically available campaign finance data since he filed for candidacy after the most recent filing deadline.



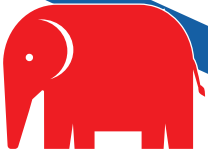


## DONALD J. TRUMP

 Age: 77

 Home States: Florida and New York

 Occupation:  
Former President,  
Real Estate Mogul,  
Reality TV Star



Trump is the definitive frontrunner of the race for the GOP presidential nomination, holding more than 27 points on his nearest competition in an October *Des Moines Register*/NBC News/Mediacom Iowa Poll. Among national polling averages he holds about 58 percent of the vote, and among averages of Iowa polls he holds roughly 47 percent of the vote.

Trump lost the popular and electoral votes in 2020 to Democratic nominee Joe Biden after serving only one presidential term. He rose to fame in the crowded 2016 GOP caucuses, where he won the nomination, and eventually the presidency.

Now, Trump's campaign has focused on the hundreds of felony counts the former president received for his role in interfering and attempting to overturn the 2020 election. He also faces felony counts for hush money payments made to a porn star and for hoarding classified documents and disrupting efforts to retrieve them. Trump has worn the charges as a badge of honor, touting the many pre-trial hearings and court appearances he is making while on the campaign trail.

Trump was impeached twice during his tenure as President, the only. Once by a Democratic-lead house in 2019 and again in 2021 for his interference in the 2020 election. Trump and his co-conspirators have also been accused of allegedly interfering in the 2020 election for organizing a conspiracy to overturn the election results using slates of fake electors, espousing lies about the election and election integrity that he knew was false and inciting a riot at the U.S. capitol to stop the certification of election results.

Trump currently has four criminal trials pending with his case in the federal district court in Washington D.C., set to begin in March 2024.

His other main platform focuses on the economy and foreign policy. Trump has rebuked President Joe Biden for his handling of the economy during the COVID-19 recovery and record-high inflation. Trump has also criticized Biden for his handling of foreign policy and has said he's not hard enough on China, Russia, and Iran.

The Trump-aligned Super PAC, Donald J. Trump for President 2024, has raised \$53 million for the Trump campaign according to fall campaign disclosure reports. The campaign currently has \$37 million cash on hand showing a healthy campaign for the former president.



## RON DESANTIS

 Age: 45

 Home State: Florida

 Occupation:  
Governor of Florida



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, endorsed by Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, is banking on ground game in the Hawkeye State to rise to the top of the GOP field.

DeSantis is one of the two favorites for an alternative to front-runner former President Donald Trump. In an October *Des Moines Register*/NBC News/Mediacom Iowa Poll, DeSantis garnered 16 percent of the vote among 3,028 respondents to the study of Iowans public opinion from Oct. 22-26. DeSantis is still 27 points behind Trump in the Iowa Poll.

DeSantis was a U.S. representative for Florida's 6th Congressional District from 2013-18 and went on to become the governor of Florida in 2019.

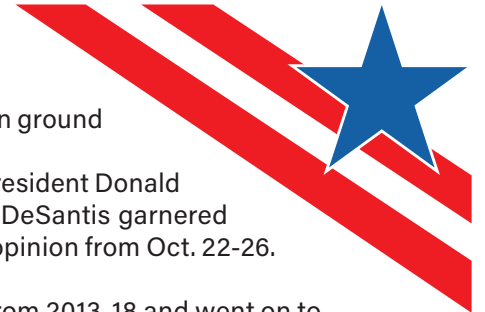
The DeSantis-run Florida became well-known by fighting what some Republicans call "woke" ideologies and led the way for other red states, like Iowa, to do the same. Legislation DeSantis signed into law includes several controversial bills. One bans critical race theory, limiting the instruction of race in schools. Several are anti-LGBTQ bills, including one dubbed the "Don't Say Gay" bill, which expanded a policy that bars public school teachers from instructing on gender identity and sexual orientation through eighth grade.

DeSantis signed House Bill 1467, which allows parents to have a say in what is allowed in libraries and instructional materials, this has widely been seen as 'book banning' throughout the country.

In April 2022, DeSantis signed into law the Reducing Fetal and Infant Mortality Act that prohibits access to abortion care after 15 weeks.

DeSantis received \$29 million in Donations for his 2024 campaign and spent \$19.3 million as of a Sept. 30 campaign finance report. DeSantis currently has \$12.3 million in cash on hand.

DeSantis' campaign has been plagued with money troubles and he had to cut his staffing early in his campaign because he was spending too fast.







### VIVEK RAMASWAMY

 Age: 38

 Home State:  
Ohio

 Occupation:  
Entrepreneur

Vivek Ramaswamy, a political outsider, has lagged behind the front runners in the race as he hopes to present himself as a more conservative version of Trump without the 91 felony counts that Ramaswamy thinks might disqualify him.

With only 4 percent of the vote in the October Iowa Poll, he has a lot of ground to make up to challenge the second-place duo of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and former U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley.

Ramaswamy is the founder of the pharmaceutical company Roivant Sciences, which he founded in 2014, and the investment firm, Strive Asset Management, which he founded in 2022.

He is also the author of "Woke, Inc.: Inside Corporate America's Social Justice Scam" and "Nation of Victims: Identity Politics, the Death of Merit, and the Path Back to Excellence, and Capitalist Punishment: How Wall Street is Using Your Money to Create a Country You Didn't Vote For."

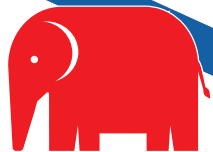
Ramaswamy's platform focuses on dismantling the bureaucracy, reviving the national identity, and taking a strong stance on China.

His chief policy is his plan to revive the national identity, which he says has been lacking in recent years. The plan would secure the southern border, end diversity, equity, and inclusion at public universities, and ban social media for people under 16 years old.

Ramaswamy is also known for his jabs at fellow candidates and his controversial stances on popular conservative ideals.

In an October *Des Moines Register*/NBC News/Mediacom Iowa Poll, Ramaswamy garnered four percent of the vote among the 3,028 respondents in the study of Iowans' public opinion from Oct. 22-26.

Ramaswamy received \$11 million in campaign contributions and \$15.25 million in loans from himself. Ramaswamy has spent \$22 million and has \$4.2 million in cash on hand, as of a Sept. 30 campaign finance report.



### DOUG BURGUM

 Age: 67

 Home State:  
North Dakota

 Occupation:  
Governor of  
North Dakota

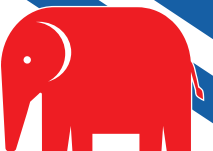
Republican North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum has built his platform on improving the economy, national security, and energy. Burgum is the founder of Arthur Ventures, an investment company involved in technology, life sciences and clean technologies. During his campaign, Burgum has remained an underdog and kept close to his three main issues, rarely addressing social issues, or delving into "culture wars."

"This is the best of America happening right here," Burgum said at a rally in Coralville in October.

As governor, Burgum has advocated for America-produced energy and created North Dakota's first Department of Environmental Quality in 2021, working toward a carbon-neutral North Dakota by 2030.

Burgum has also spoken on issues at the Southern border, noting that he has visited the border more times than Biden has throughout his presidency. Burgum sent North Dakota National Guard members to the border in Summer of 2023 to help secure the border.

Burgum is polling at 3 percent for likely caucus goers, the *Des Moines Register* reports, and his overall footprint shrank from 23 percent in August to 19 percent in October.



### RYAN BINKLEY

 Age: 55

 Home State:  
Texas

 Occupation:  
Businessman  
and pastor

Ryan Binkley, a businessman with no prior political experience, is the president and chief executive officer of Generational Group and a founder and lead pastor of Create Church, in Richardson, Texas.

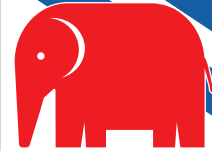
Binkley has run his campaign on the idea of bringing the nation back together as well as bringing back a trust in God.

According to his 13-part plan, as president, Binkley plans to secure the border, enforce immigration laws, and make proper decisions on immigration benefit applications.

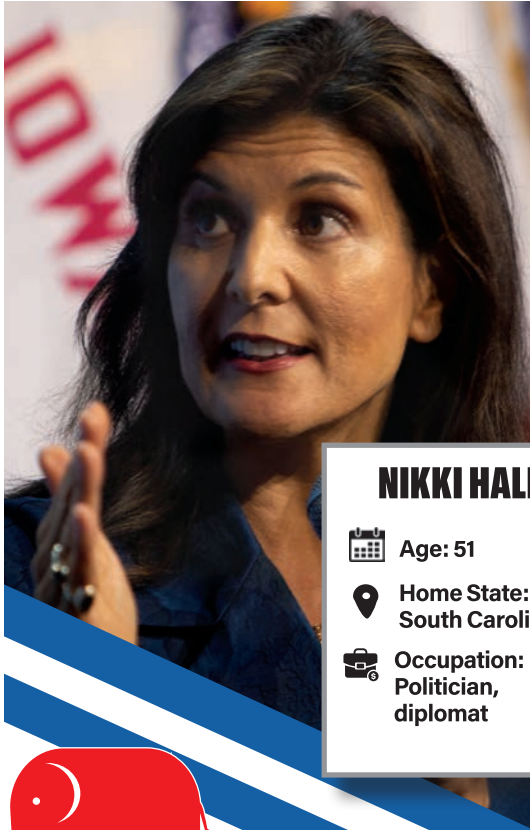
Binkley has also created an economic plan to balance the budget in seven years, as well as a plan to fix what he believes is a health care system that is too expensive and mispriced.

In his plan Binkley also says he is pro-life and would like to fix the U.S. Foster Care System as well as making adoption more accessible.

In an October *Des Moines Register*/NBC News/Mediacom Iowa Poll, Binkley polled with 0 percent of respondents. At least one respondent chose Binkley as their first choice. Binkley received \$751,370 in campaign contributions and \$6.3 million in cash loans from himself. He has spent \$7 million and has \$11,437 cash on hand.







## NIKKI HALEY



Age: 51



Home State:  
South Carolina



Occupation:  
Politician,  
diplomat

Nikki Haley served as governor of South Carolina from 2011-17 and was the United States ambassador to the United Nations during former President Donald Trump's term in January 2017 to December 2018. Haley is the only Republican woman in the race.

Haley is tied with Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in the most recent Iowa Poll showing her momentum growing exponentially in the state.

In an October *Des Moines Register*/NBC News/Mediacom Iowa Poll, Haley garnered 16 percent of the vote among 3,028 respondents to the study of Iowans public opinion from Oct. 22-26. Haley is tied with DeSantis and still 27 points behind Trump in the Iowa Poll.

Haley has stood out in the race as a moderate on abortion. Haley is a supporter of a 15-week abortion ban while others in the race, like her rival DeSantis, think 15-weeks is too liberal.

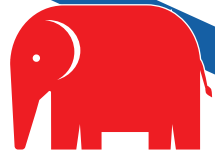
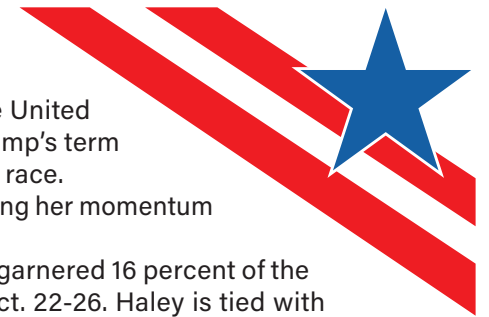
The former governor has also advocated for mental competency tests for politicians over 75 years or older and holds strong on her record of diplomacy during her time at the United Nations. Haley touts her accomplishments, including the Abraham Accords, leaving the Iran Nuclear Deal, and staying tough on China.

She has been criticized for her state's courting of Chinese-owned companies while she was governor, however, which she has denied.

Haley is endorsed by 72 Iowa elected officials, holding key endorsements from Iowa Reps. Jane Blummingdale, R-Northwood; Brian Lohse, R-Bondurant; and Casey's founder Don Lamberti.

Haley received \$14.1 million in donations to her 2024 campaign and has spent \$7.1 million as of a Sept. 30 campaign disclosure report. Haley has \$11.5 million cash on hand.

She has recently seen a surge in support among Iowa Republicans and national organizations. Haley recently received the endorsement of Koch-funded Super Pac Americans for Prosperity which pledged operational and organizing support.



## CHRIS CHRISTIE



Age: 61 years old



Home state:  
New Jersey



Occupation:  
Former New  
Jersey Governor

Chris Christie, the former New Jersey governor, built his campaign as a hardline critic of former President Donald Trump.

Christie, who has yet to step foot in Iowa during the caucus season, is a Trump ally-turned-critic who made his debut early on as the candidate unafraid to say what he thought about the front-runner, Trump.

He last ran for president in 2016 but suspended his campaign after a poor showing in the New Hampshire primary. Christie's largest rebuke of Trump is over his false claims that Trump won the 2020 election.

Christie is also the former chair of the Opioid and Drug Abuse Commission created by Trump. While on the commission, the panel compiled a report recommending solutions to the opioid epidemic.

The issue has since become Christie's signature issue. Christie has echoed others' calls to secure the southern border and questioned pathways to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

In an October *Des Moines Register*/NBC News/Mediacom Iowa Poll, Christie garnered 4 percent of the vote among 3,028 respondents in the study of Iowans' public opinion from Oct. 22-26. Christie received \$5.4 million in campaign contributions and spent \$1.5 million as of a Sept. 30 campaign disclosure report.



## ASA HUTCHINSON



Age: 72 years old



Home state:  
Arkansas



Occupation:  
Former Governor  
of Arkansas

Former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson built his campaign on his brand of traditional conservatism, espousing the values of former Republican leaders like George H.W. Bush and Ronald Reagan.

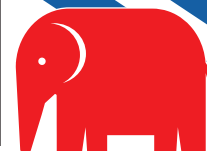
Hutchinson also has a long track record of leadership. He served as the Arkansas governor from 2015-23 and as the U.S. Rep. for Arkansas' 3rd Congressional District from 1997 to 2001. He then became the Administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration from 2001 to 2003, and the first Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Border and Transportation Security from 2003 until 2005.

"We need a new direction, and it starts with Iowa," Hutchinson said in September at an Iowa rally.

Hutchinson's platform focuses on traditional conservative values, but Hutchinson honed in on the current political climate during his announcement and said he wanted to appeal to America's best instincts, not its worst.

In an October *Des Moines Register*/NBC News/Mediacom Iowa Poll, Hutchinson garnered 1 percent of the vote among the 3,028 respondents in the study of Iowans' public opinion from Oct. 22-26.

Hutchinson received \$1.1 million in campaign contributions and \$924,015 as of a Sept. 30 campaign finance report.





# WHO WILL



# CHOOSE?





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