

Kevin Koester
Iowa House District 38



Official Biography

Kevin Koester is serving his fifth term in the Iowa House.

Koester is a lifelong Iowan and an alumnus of the University of Iowa. His wife, Linda, teaches Psychology for DMACC. Kevin and Linda have three grown children who are graduates of Ankeny High School. They also have ten grandchildren.

Kevin served thirty years as a school administrator in Ankeny. He now serves as Executive Director of Neveln Center, a non-profit human services center in Ankeny. Kevin also served as President of the National Community Education Association in 2004.

His local leadership record demonstrates diverse and meaningful commitments to his community. He has been elected to serve as a board officer for numerous community organizations, including the Ankeny Chamber of Commerce, Iowa Dollars for Scholars, Ankeny School District Foundation, Ankeny Service Center at Neveln, YMCA, Employee and Family Resources, and United Way. Additionally, the Ankeny Chamber honored him as the 2003 Citizen of the Year.

Koester is also the recent recipient of Iowa Legislator of the Year awards from associations dealing with a variety of issues including brain injuries, education, health, insurance, and libraries.

(Legislative Biography, [Accessed 9/21/17](#))

ALEC membership/ties

In 2014, ALEC claimed that all members of the Iowa Legislature were members of the organization. According to a letter from then House Democratic Leader Mark Smit, all Democrats “informed the Chief Clerk of the Iowa House that no dues or fees were to be paid to ALEC on our behalf and none of us have applied to ALEC for individual membership.” However, since we have no evidence that a similar letter was sent by Iowa Republicans, we assume all Iowa Republicans are ALEC members. (Iowa House Democrats, [1/9/14](#))

ALEC model legislation authored/sponsored/supported

Bill Title/Number	ALEC Model Bill	Sponsored/Authoried
HJR 1	Right to Work Act	Sponsored
HF 368	No Sanctuary Cities for Illegal Immigrants Act	Sponsored
HF 295	Living Wage Mandate Preemption Act	Voted yea
HF 95	Voter ID Act	Sponsored
HF 291	Public Employer Payroll Deduction Policy Act, Public Employee Freedom Act, and other ALEC legislation	Voted yea
HF 589	Animal and Ecological Terrorism Act	Voted yea
HJR 2007	Freedom of Choice in Health Care Act	Sponsored

Koester sponsored a joint resolution proposing a so-called right-to-work amendment to the Constitution of the State of Iowa. HJR 1 (2013) would prevent unions from negotiating contract provisions that require all workers, including non-members, to contribute to the costs of worker representation on the job. It is very similar to the ALEC template. (Bill text, [1/15/2013](#))

Koester voted to preempt municipalities from establishing a local minimum wage. HF 295 rolled back wage increases in Polk, Johnson, Wapello, and Linn counties, mandating that no local minimum wage exceed the state level of \$7.25 an hour. In opposition, Rep. Amy Nielsen (D) stated, “for the state to come in and take away the right of communities to decide how their values systems, what they want to make a priority in their communities — I believe it’s an overreach. And I believe it’s not our place.” In addition to preventing cities and counties from setting their own minimum wages, the bill also prohibits them from requiring things like paid family leave. (The Des Moines Register, [3/9/2017](#))

Koester sponsored burdensome photo ID and proof of citizenship requirements. This bill is similar in effect to ALEC legislation and would disenfranchise minority voters. ([CMD](#))

Koester voted to strip public employees of their collective bargaining rights. HF 291 dismantled collective bargaining rights for public workers and required public sector unions to conduct

recertification votes ten months prior to the expiration of employment contracts; if the union is decertified, the union's contract with their employer is null and void. This bill banned unions from negotiating with their employers over issues such as health insurance, evaluation procedures, staff reduction and leaves of absence for political purposes. Republicans developed the bill behind closed doors and broke tradition to limit debate on the measure. Senate Minority Leader Robert Hogg, D-Cedar Rapids, called passage of the legislation a "travesty of the democratic system" that will reduce the wages of public-sector employees. All Democrats and six Republicans voted against the bill. (Des Moines Register, [2/16/2017](#); Tri State Public Radio, [9/21/2017](#))

Koester voted for a bill that became the nation's first "Ag Gag" law. According to *The Atlantic*, this bill allows factory farms to hide animal and ecological abuse from the public. It criminalizes investigative journalists and animal protection advocates who take entry-level jobs at factory farms in order to document the rampant food safety and animal welfare abuses within. (The Atlantic, [3/20/2012](#); Food Safety News, [3/1/2012](#))

Koester sponsored an amendment to Iowa's constitution, HJR 2007 that would prohibit the legislature from requiring individuals to purchase health insurance or imposing penalties for not purchasing insurance. (Bill text, [1/26/2010](#))

Other Hits

Koester voted to defund Planned Parenthood. Erin Davison-Rippey, director of public affairs at Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, said Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of Iowa's current family planning program for low-income people, assisting about one-third of the clients. She warned that Texas has embarked on an initiative similar to what Iowa Republicans are proposing with "devastating" consequences that have resulted in less access to women's health care. (The Des Moines Register, [2/13/2017](#))

Koester voted in favor of the nation's strictest abortion law, the fetal heartbeat bill. The law would ban abortions after six weeks when embryonic cardiac activity is detected, which is before most people know they are pregnant. Except for narrowly defined cases of physical medical emergencies, reported rape, and incest doctors face losing their licenses for performing the procedure in instances of unreported rape and "psychological conditions, emotional conditions, familial conditions, or the woman's age". According to Iowa's ACLU, "This virtual ban is made even more harmful for women by the minimum 72-hour waiting period law that the Iowa Legislature passed last year. (That waiting period is currently blocked and awaiting decision from the Iowa Supreme Court.) If that 72-hour wait took effect and the six-week ban also took effect, even if a woman learned of a pregnancy very early, she would then be delayed by the mandatory wait period law—and then could no longer access abortion services." The ACLU, Planned Parenthood, and Emma Goldman Clinic of Iowa City filed a lawsuit to invalidate the law. The judge in the case placed a temporary injunction on the law until the case is settled. In June, the Iowa Supreme Court struck down 72-hour abortion waiting period. [ACLU Iowa, [5/15/2018](#); NPR, [6/1/2018](#); Iowa Public Radio, [6/29/2018](#); SF 359 [signed into law](#) 5/4/2018]