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House of Representatives

State of Iowa
Eighty-Third General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

COMMITTEES
Appropriations
Economic Growth
Education
Labor

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Economic Development,
Ranking Member

Newsletter #7
3-02-09

The best question a citizen can ask a person seeking public office is: why are you doing this? Every candidate should have a passion for what he/she is trying to accomplish and remember that passion each time he/she makes a decision. I was asked this question more than any other during the campaign. My answer is simple: I want to see more young people in Iowa. I grew up in Iowa and I want to do something about the young people that have chosen not to stay here and those that might think to leave in the future.

I serve on the Economic Growth Committee and we recently heard a presentation from the Generation Iowa Commission. I asked the presenter what deters young people from staying in Iowa after college. The answer was one word: jobs. I could not agree more. Young people will go where the best jobs are located. The current economic times will only reinforce this reality. In every decision a legislator makes this session, he/she needs to keep in mind the 80,000 unemployed Iowans and how we can help put them back to work. We *also* need to bear in mind those young people who want jobs in Iowa.

The Iowa Legislature needs to remember the big picture. The big picture is that Iowa's population is not growing quickly compared to other states. According to estimates from the Census Bureau for 2000-2008, Iowa ranks 42nd in population growth percentage. I have introduced a bill that will help retain and recruit young people to Iowa. This bill would allow college graduates who stay in Iowa to deduct the interest on student loan payments changing the limit from \$2,500 to \$5,000 annually. Students in Iowa graduate with the highest debt levels (\$26,208 on average) in America. This bill would give direct help to college graduates who are just starting a job and could use the relief in their pocketbook. It is in the best interest of the Iowa Legislature to reach out to our young people and ease their burden. This bill will help keep our young people where we want them: Iowa.

Peter Cownie (R-West Des Moines), represents District 60 in the Iowa House of Representatives. The district includes most of West Des Moines in Polk County. He can be reached via e-mail at Peter.Cownie@legis.state.ia.us or by phone at 281-3221.