

**House File 483 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 483

BY THOMSON

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to the design of certain public buildings,  
2 including by providing for the appointment of a state  
3 architect.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. NEW SECTION. **7G.1 Definitions.**

2 For purposes of this chapter, unless the context otherwise  
3 requires:

4 1. "*Applicable public building*" means any of the following:

5 a. A public school building, a building at a state-funded  
6 community college, a building at an institution governed by the  
7 state board of regents, a city building, a county building, and  
8 all buildings owned or financed in whole or in part by the state  
9 of Iowa.

10 b. A public structure, other than a public building, that  
11 costs or is expected to cost more than one million dollars to  
12 design, build, and complete. For purposes of this paragraph,  
13 the cost of a public structure shall be calculated using dollars  
14 adjusted for inflation using the federal bureau of economic  
15 analysis' gross domestic product price deflator and using 2025 as  
16 the base year.

17 2. "*Brutalist*" means the style of architecture that grew  
18 out of the early twentieth century modernist movement that is  
19 characterized by a massive and block-like appearance with a rigid  
20 geometric style and large-scale use of exposed poured concrete.

21 3. "*Classical architecture*" means the architectural tradition  
22 derived from the forms, principles, and vocabulary of the  
23 architecture of Greek and Roman antiquity and later developed  
24 and expanded upon by Renaissance architects such as Alberti,  
25 Brunelleschi, Michelangelo, and Palladio; such enlightenment  
26 masters as Robert Adam, John Soane, and Christopher Wren;  
27 such nineteenth century architects as Benjamin Henry Latrobe,  
28 Robert Mills, and Thomas U. Walter; and such twentieth century  
29 practitioners as Julian Abele, Daniel Burnham, Charles F. McKim,  
30 John Russel Pope, Julia Morgan, and the firm of Delano and  
31 Aldrich. "*Classical architecture*" includes such styles as  
32 neoclassical, Georgian, federal, Greek revival, beaux-arts, and  
33 art deco.

34 4. "*Deconstructivist*" means the style of architecture  
35 generally known as deconstructivism that emerged during the

1 late 1980s that subverts the traditional values of architecture  
2 through such features as fragmentation, disorder, discontinuity,  
3 distortion, skewed geometry, and the appearance of instability.

4 5. "Department" means the department of administrative  
5 services.

6 6. "General public" means members of the public who are not  
7 any of the following:

8 a. Artists, architects, engineers, art or architecture  
9 critics, instructors or professors of art or architecture, or  
10 members of the building industry.

11 b. Persons affiliated with any interest group, trade  
12 association, or other organization whose membership is  
13 financially affected by decisions involving the design,  
14 construction, or remodeling of public buildings.

15 7. "State architect" means the state architect appointed  
16 pursuant to section 7G.2.

17 8. "Traditional architecture" means classical architecture,  
18 and also includes historic humanistic architecture styles such  
19 as gothic, Romanesque, pueblo revival, prairie school, arts and  
20 crafts, successionist, Eastlake, Italian Renaissance revival,  
21 Victorian, Queen Anne, Spanish colonial, and other Mediterranean  
22 styles of architecture historically rooted in various regions of  
23 America.

24 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. **7G.2 State architect — certificate of**  
25 **need.**

26 1. The governor shall appoint a state architect, subject to  
27 confirmation by the senate, who shall serve at the pleasure of  
28 the governor. The state architect shall be attached to the  
29 department for administrative purposes.

30 2. a. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary,  
31 an applicable public building shall not be constructed unless  
32 the state architect first issues a certificate of need with  
33 respect to that applicable public building. Except as provided  
34 in subsection 3, the state architect may issue a certificate of  
35 need if the architect finds that all of the following apply:

1 (1) The proposed applicable public building is necessary to  
2 fill a genuine public need.

3 (2) The plans and proposed mode of construction for  
4 the proposed applicable public building reflect a reasonably  
5 prudent frugality in the use of state resources, taking into  
6 consideration the prominence of the proposed applicable public  
7 building, the purpose of the proposed applicable public building,  
8 the community in which the proposed applicable public building  
9 will be located, and the anticipated lifespan of the proposed  
10 applicable public building.

11 (3) The proposed design for the applicable public building  
12 complies with the policies of section 7G.3.

13 b. The state architect shall seek input from future users of  
14 a proposed applicable public building and the general public in  
15 the community where the proposed applicable public building will  
16 be located prior to issuing a certificate of need.

17 3. The state architect may issue a certificate of need for  
18 a proposed applicable public building that does not comply  
19 with the policies of section 7G.3. If the state architect  
20 chooses to issue a certificate of need to a proposed applicable  
21 public building that does not comply with the policies of  
22 section 7G.3, including a proposed applicable public building  
23 that utilizes brutalist or deconstructivist architectural styles,  
24 the state architect shall submit a report to the governor and the  
25 department, which shall include all of the following:

26 a. A detailed explanation of why the state architect believes  
27 approving the design is justified, including whether the design  
28 is as beautiful and reflective of the dignity, enterprise, vigor,  
29 and stability of the state of Iowa's system of self-government  
30 as alternative designs of comparable cost using architecture that  
31 complies with the policies of section 7G.3.

32 b. The total expected cost of adopting the proposed design,  
33 including estimated maintenance and replacement costs throughout  
34 the expected life cycle of the proposed applicable public  
35 building.

1 c. A description of the designs using architecture that  
2 complies with the policies of section 7G.3 that were seriously  
3 considered for the proposed applicable public building, including  
4 the total expected cost of adopting the proposed design,  
5 including estimated maintenance and replacement costs throughout  
6 the expected life cycle of the proposed applicable public  
7 building.

8 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **7G.3 Applicable public buildings —**  
9 **policy.**

10 1. It is the policy of the general assembly that applicable  
11 public buildings should uplift and beautify public spaces,  
12 inspire the human spirit, ennoble the state of Iowa, and  
13 command respect from the general public. Applicable public  
14 buildings should also be visually identifiable as civic  
15 buildings, and, as appropriate, respect regional architectural  
16 heritage. Architecture, particularly traditional and classical  
17 architecture, that complies with the policy of this subsection is  
18 the preferred architecture for applicable public buildings.

19 2. It is the policy of the general assembly that if an  
20 applicable public building diverges from the policy set forth  
21 in subsection 1, great care and consideration must be taken to  
22 choose a design that commands respect from the general public and  
23 clearly conveys to the general public the dignity, enterprise,  
24 vigor, and stability of Iowa's system of self-government.

25 3. When renovating, reducing, or expanding an applicable  
26 public building that diverges from the policy set forth in  
27 subsection 1, it is the policy of the general assembly that the  
28 feasibility and potential expense of redesigning the applicable  
29 public building to meet the policy set forth in subsection 1  
30 should be examined. Where feasible and economical, such redesign  
31 should be given substantial consideration, particularly with  
32 regard to the applicable public building's exterior.

33 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. **7G.4 Governor's council on improving**  
34 **state of Iowa civic architecture.**

35 1. The governor's council on improving state of Iowa

1 civic architecture is established within the department.  
2 The department shall, to the extent possible using existing  
3 appropriations, provide the council with such funding and  
4 administrative and technical support as the council may require.

5 2. The council shall consist of the following members:

6 a. Three members of the senate, appointed by the majority  
7 leader of the senate.

8 b. Three members of the house of representatives, appointed  
9 by the speaker of the house of representatives.

10 c. Seven members of the general public, appointed by the  
11 governor, to four-year terms of office and until their successors  
12 are appointed, except that terms of the initial appointees shall  
13 be staggered such that one member is appointed each year.  
14 Vacancies shall be filled by appointment of the governor for the  
15 unexpired term of the original appointee.

16 d. The state architect.

17 3. Members of the council who are not members of the general  
18 assembly shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed  
19 for actual expenses.

20 4. The council shall do all of the following:

21 a. Prepare and submit a report to the governor recommending  
22 updates to the department's policies and procedures to  
23 incorporate the policies stated in section 7G.3, including an  
24 explanation of how each recommended change accomplishes this  
25 goal. The council shall submit the report to the governor by  
26 September 30, 2027.

27 b. Advise the state architect on the propriety of the  
28 issuance of certificates of need.

29 5. Section 4A.5 does not apply to the governor's council on  
30 improving state of Iowa civic architecture.

31 EXPLANATION

32 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with  
33 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

34 This bill relates to the construction and renovation of  
35 certain public buildings. The bill creates the position of

1 state architect, who is appointed by the governor, subject to  
2 confirmation by the senate, and serves at the pleasure of the  
3 governor. The bill prohibits the construction of an applicable  
4 public building, defined in the bill, unless the state architect  
5 issues a certificate of need for the applicable public building.  
6 The bill allows the state architect to issue a certificate of  
7 need for an applicable public building if the proposed design  
8 for the applicable public building complies with certain policies  
9 of the general assembly, set forth in the bill, regarding  
10 the architectural style and public perception of the proposed  
11 applicable public building. The bill also allows the state  
12 architect to issue a certificate of need to a proposed applicable  
13 public building that does not comply with the architectural  
14 policies of the general assembly but requires the state architect  
15 to submit a report to the governor and the department of  
16 administrative services (DAS) detailing the state architect's  
17 reasoning for issuing the certificate of need.

18 The bill creates the governor's council on improving state  
19 of Iowa civic architecture within DAS. The council consists of  
20 three members of the senate appointed by the majority leader  
21 of the senate, three members of the house of representatives  
22 appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, seven  
23 members of the general public, defined in the bill, appointed by  
24 the governor, and the state architect. Nonlegislator members of  
25 the council serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for  
26 actual expenses. Under Code section 2.32A, legislator members  
27 of the council receive per diem and necessary travel and actual  
28 expenses. The bill requires the council to advise the state  
29 architect on the propriety of issuing certificates of need and to  
30 prepare and submit a report to the governor recommending updates  
31 to DAS' policies and procedures to incorporate the architectural  
32 policies of the general assembly. The council shall submit the  
33 report to the governor by September 30, 2027. The bill exempts  
34 the council from dissolution as provided in Code section 4A.5  
35 (boards and governmental entities — dissolution).