

CHAPTER 1184

LIMITATIONS ON GUBERNATORIAL AUTHORITY — CLOSURE OR REGULATION OF PLACES OF WORSHIP — STATE OF DISASTER EMERGENCY PROCLAMATIONS

H.F. 2694

AN ACT relating to the regulation of certain places and activities by the governor.

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Section 1. NEW SECTION. 7.19 Regulation of places and practices of worship — limitation.

Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the governor shall not close, place a mandate on, or otherwise regulate a place or practice of worship for any reason, including through the proclamation of a disaster emergency pursuant to chapter 29C or public health disaster pursuant to section 135.144. For the purposes of this section, “*place of worship*” means a building in which an active congregation is devoted to worship.

Sec. 2. Section 29C.6, subsection 1, Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

1. a. After finding a disaster exists or is threatened, proclaim a state of disaster emergency. This proclamation shall be in writing, indicate the area affected and the facts upon which it is based, be signed by the governor, and be filed with the secretary of state. If the state of disaster emergency specifically constitutes a public health disaster as defined in section 135.140, the written proclamation shall include a statement to that effect. A state of disaster emergency shall continue for thirty days, unless sooner terminated or extended in writing by the governor. The general assembly may, by concurrent resolution, rescind this proclamation. If the general assembly is not in session, the legislative council may, by majority vote, rescind this proclamation. Rescission shall be effective upon filing of the concurrent resolution or resolution of the legislative council with the secretary of state. A proclamation of disaster emergency shall activate the disaster response and recovery aspect of the state, local, and interjurisdictional disaster emergency plans applicable to the political subdivision or area in question and be authority for the deployment and use of any forces to which the plan applies, and for use or distribution of any supplies, equipment, and materials and facilities assembled, stockpiled, or arranged to be made available.

b. A measure dictated in a state of disaster emergency shall not do any of the following:

(1) Authorize a change to established laws, policies, or regulations governing a local, county, or state election for public office absent prior approval of the general assembly.

(2) Regulate conduct within a private residence.

(3) Require a vaccination.

c. A measure dictated in a state of disaster emergency that constitutes a public health disaster, as defined in section 135.140, shall not require but may recommend that a private business operating within this state cease the business’s lawful operations.

Approved June 2, 2026