December 2025
Monthly All-Staff Newsletter

Immanuel has launched a new Advocacy page, now available on the website. You can find it under the "Who We Are" tab and under "Advocacy." Action alerts and blog updates will be posted as the page grows. To receive more details on our advocacy efforts, sign up with your personal email. If you haven't signed up, follow this link. For assistance, contact Tara at tmuir@immanuel.com or 402-829-2931.

Federal Government, Shutdowns and Budgets

The federal government reopened in time for the Thanksgiving holiday, and both houses of Congress returned to work as of December 1. This is great, but serious issues remain in Congress. One issue that contributed to the shutdown is that healthcare insurance subsidies for insurance plans purchased through the Affordable Care Act (ACA)_marketplace are set to expire on December 30, 2025. Congress must either extend the subsidies or otherwise address the issue to prevent healthcare premiums from substantially increasing. A Senate hearing is set for December 3 entitled "Healing a Broken System". A vote is set for sometime in December to extend the subsidies in the Senate. The Congressional calendar has both houses working in session until December 18.

In addition, another deadline to finalize the federal budget looms on January 30, 2026, after which the country could face another shutdown. A must-do item on their agenda is passing the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), with a push underway to include technology-focused provisions such as temporarily limiting state regulation of artificial intelligence to allow the development of a federal regulatory framework. Some believe that Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding could be added. These additions may create roadblock to passing the NDAA, threating a second shutdown.

Why can Immanuel be political, but not partisan? Pastor Brian Maas, Immanuel's Vice President of Mission and Spiritual Care, summed it up well, and without all the complex legal tax. At Chapel on November 13, he began his talk,

> "I'm not going to be partisan. I'm going to be political. There's a difference. And those who've forgotten the difference are the ones who've made *politics* a four-letter word. The root of the word political is the Greek word *polis*, which in its simplest form means 'community.' Political matters are those which are about the community and about its well-being. If you remove the political, *the guidance for life in community*, from scripture there's not much left. Scripture is political."

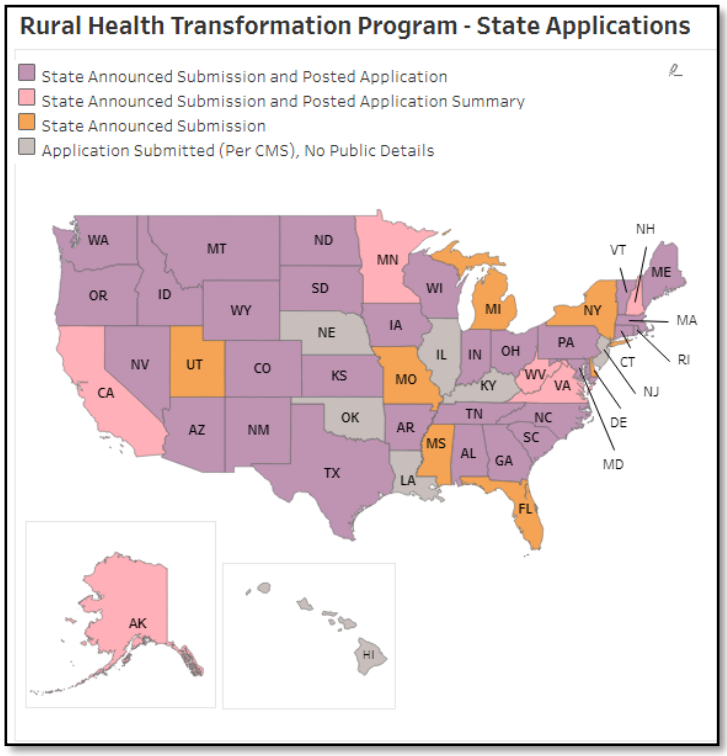
Immanuel is a nonprofit organization, which generally means Congress and the IRS have historically appreciated the contributions of businesses run like Immanuel (for people, not for profit) and have allowed nonprofits to be exempt from paying many taxes. Because of this tax exemption, nonprofits cannot be

partisan, but they can be political, as Pastor Brian describes it. Immanuel must remain non-partisan in all election year activities and advocacy and lobbying efforts. More on that in the coming months.

State Budgets

The budgets and laws passed or blocked in the U.S. Congress have a significant impact on Immanuel communities directly and through state budgets and laws. With the passage of the federal law, HR 1, the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," in July 2025, Iowa and Nebraska state budgets will soon feel this impact. **Iowa** does not currently have a budget deficit but is using over $900 million from its reserves to cover revenue shortfalls caused by tax cuts. **Nebraska** currently has a $471 million deficit. Both legislatures will have to address these budget issues when they convene in January. Statewide advocacy associations in both Iowa and Nebraska will be meet and organize around the sessions in December. As always, if any hot issues arise, we will let you know. Immanuel continues its work on a potential bill sponsored by Senator Spivey to raise Medicaid Income Eligibility limits for PACE® participants.

One piece of HR 1 was the Rural Health Transformation Program. The overall funding is $50 billion over 5 years, allocated at $10 billion per year. States must apply and be approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). One-half of the funding will be distributed equally among all approved states and the other half will be awarded to states based on criteria such as rural population percentage, health facility status, and application adherence to the current White House administration's priorities.



Every state submitted an application to CMS. Only a few states, including **Nebraska**, are not disclosing or making public what is in the application. See the map from the State Health & Value Strategies program supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. As the process continues, we'll provide more information.

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or comments.

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Immanuel Advocacy Philosophy

We aim to highlight and advocate for seniors across Nebraska and Iowa, and when necessary, in the U.S. Congress. As a faith-based, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation, we do not and cannot subscribe to the beliefs of one political party over another. When issues are critical to Immanuel, the people we serve, and our staff, we will advocate for what will benefit, not detriment.

Our goal with this monthly newsletter is to present the information objectively and unbiasedly. Some issues we focus on may fall further down one side of the traditional political spectrum than the other. In these times, many issues seem to become political that they never were before, such as access to food and housing.

Any call to action is completely voluntary and should not be viewed as an expectation relating to your role with Immanuel. All calls or efforts made should be done outside of your work hours, unless approved by your supervisor. As such, calls and efforts made outside of your working hours will not be compensated by Immanuel.

The Advocacy and Government Relations Coordinator is a member of the Legal and Compliance Team: John Sigmon is the Vice President of Legal and Compliance and General Counsel, Tracy Durbin is the Corporate Compliance Officer, and Ryan Lang is the Contract Administrator.