



Hendricks County Chambers Weekly Statehouse Update

By Caryl Auslander • Feb 11, 2023

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General Statehouse Update



The clock is ticking, and committee deadlines are less than two weeks away. This week, legislative committee agendas were dense with proposals as lawmakers race to move large pieces of priority language across the midpoint. The state's two-year budget bill also made its first appearance in House Ways and Means committee. What will make it past the switch-over and on to the second half of the session? Only time will tell, and an uptick of Democrat bills up for committee consideration

is providing for a more bipartisan outcome than usual. There was a lot on the docket this week. Let's dive in ...

House Budget Bill Heard in Ways and Means

The House Republican version of [HB 1001](#), the biennial budget bill, was heard in [Ways and Means committee on Thursday](#), clocking in at a full five hours of discussion. In addition to funding K-12 education and mental health, the public testified in support of home health services funding, increases to the opioid settlement fund, regulations for local health departments, animal shelter needs, and an increase in pay for public defenders, amongst many other topics. Expect to see more committee discussion (and amendments!) next week and before this bill ultimately makes it to the House floor for approval.

Childcare Cost Relief Measure Advances

A bill to [expand income eligibility for the On My Way Pre-K](#) program gained committee approval this week. Under [SB 375](#), the income eligibility threshold would increase from 127% of the federal poverty level (just over \$35,000 annually for a family of four), to 200% (or \$55,500 annually). Additionally, families making up to 260% of the federal poverty level roughly \$72,000 per year), would still qualify for at least 25% of the subsidy. This would alleviate a benefits "cliff" where parents become ineligible for funding when their income increases slightly. SB 375 now heads to Senate Appropriations for further consideration after passing out of Senate Family and Child Services on Monday.

Earned Income Tax Credit Sees Unanimous Approval, Moves to Senate

[HB 1290](#), a proposal to help low to moderate income workers and families get a tax break, now moves to the Senate for consideration. The bill would let Hoosiers claim – as a state credit – up to 12% of what they received through the federal version of the credit. Those who qualify could use the credit to reduce taxes owed or increase a refund.

Work Share Proposal Passes out of Senate Committee

A bill to assist employers who [provide for employees](#) through a potential layoff period was approved by nearly all members of the Senate Labor and Pensions committee on Wednesday. Under [SB 347](#), the affected employees would retain their key benefits, like insurance, but would only be paid a percentage of their regular wages. The portion of their wages cut would be covered by unemployment insurance. This bill now heads to Senate Appropriations for further consideration.

Driving Card Legislation Advances to Appropriations

[Driving cards for immigrants](#) without documentation could become a reality for foreign-born Hoosiers living and working in the state. Currently, undocumented immigrants are not afforded the ability to travel to work, school drop-off, doctor visits, and other routine activities due to lack of a driver's license. Under [SB 248](#), drivers would have to show they pay taxes in Indiana, have proof of insurance, get fingerprinted and undergo a criminal background check, and renew the card every year. This driving card could not be used as identification for voting purposes. This bipartisan piece of legislation has the support of the business community, advocates for Hispanic affairs, and law enforcement around the state.

Housing Infrastructure Bill Gains Overwhelming Support

A bill to create a [Residential Housing Infrastructure Assistance Program](#) passed out of the House with overwhelming support on Tuesday. [HB 1005](#) was crafted in response to a Housing Task Force that met this past summer and fall and would specifically pay for the vital infrastructure needs not otherwise considered in alternate grants or programs.

The fund will be overseen by the [Indiana Finance Authority](#), and the money could be used for sidewalks, curbs, sewer, water, and other infrastructure. The overall goal of the bill is to increase the state's housing supply. The bill passed 91-6 and now heads to the Senate.

Legislature Considers Expansion to Birth Control Access

Numerous proposals to [expand contraceptive access](#) and prevent unintended pregnancies are being discussed in both chambers. [HB 1568](#) would permit pharmacists to prescribe birth control and advanced out of House Public Health committee on Tuesday, just before the full Senate approved [SB 252](#) by a vote of 49-0, which would allow Medicaid recipients same-day access to contraceptives.

Additionally, [SB 266](#) requires a hospital that operates a maternity unit to ensure that a woman giving birth in the hospital has the option of having a long-acting reversible subdermal contraceptive, like an intrauterine device (IUD), implanted after delivery and before the woman is discharged. Allowances for faith-based objections are included in the bill, which passed by an 8-4 vote in [Senate Health and Provider Services](#) committee on Wednesday, now moves to the Senate Floor.

Health Care Proposals Advance in Senate, Still Waiting in House

A priority Senate bill has advanced out of Public Health committee despite bipartisan support and bipartisan opposition. [SB 6](#) passed 8-4, with concerns voiced by all committee members. Expect continued debate on this proposal to [curb hospital prices](#) charged in outpatient care facilities, often known as “site of service.”

[HB 1004](#), a cumulative healthcare bill including fines for hospitals and tax credits for doctors who are unaffiliated with large healthcare systems, is awaiting final consideration in [House Public Health](#). Additionally, [HB 1003](#), which takes on the insurance component of this session’s collection of healthcare cost regulations, awaits final committee passage in the [House Committee on Insurance](#). Look for additional committee action on these to come down to the wire this week.

Non-Competes for Physicians

Additionally, a bill to [eliminate non-compete clauses in physicians' contracts](#) has advanced with the support of physicians and medical consumer groups in hopes that few restrictions on where doctors can practice will lower health costs by a vote of 95-5. The current version of [SB 7](#) would not affect existing agreements, but it would prohibit new ones after the law goes into effect. Ironically, on the national level, the [Federal Trade Commission](#) is considering a new rule banning all non-competes across all industries, nationwide.

Privacy Legislation Continues to Advance

Priority legislation to protect Hoosier consumers gained Senate approval on Thursday. The bill [creates a “bill of rights” for Hoosier data privacy](#) and would allow consumers to monitor how their data is used and provide an option to delete it. [SB 5](#) also includes a requirement for businesses to have annual data protection assessments and security checks. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 49-0 and moves to the House for further consideration.

Partisan School Boards Bills Update

[HB 1428](#), a bill to allow [local school boards](#) to decide whether or not school board candidates should disclose their party affiliation, passed out of House Elections and Apportionment committee on Wednesday. The bill was amended to allow school boards the decision to decide if they want to allow for partisan elections. The Senate heard their version of this proposal, [SB 188](#), in Senate Elections committee last week but has not yet been put back on the schedule for further consideration.

Optional Firearm Safety Training for School Employees

A bill to provide optional firearm safety training for school teachers passed out of House Education committee on Wednesday. [HB 1177](#) would reallocate funding from the Indiana Safe Schools and related funds for the training. State law already affords teachers and other staff the ability to carry a firearm on school grounds if authorized by their local school boards. The bill also provides funding for counseling services for students, teachers, school staff, and employees in the event of a school shooting. The bill passed out of committee by a vote of 9-4 and now heads to the full House for potential amendments.

Next Week

With committee report deadlines on February 21 and February 23 in the House and Senate, respectively, we anticipate committees will be meeting with extremely full agendas - especially in the fiscal committees as they tackle not only the House budget, but also bills that were recommitted for further consideration. Torchbearer Public Affairs will be there monitoring, testifying, and advocating for your needs. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

Hendricks County Chambers Update



Committee deadlines are fast-approaching. This week, schedules were packed and more controversial bills are starting to pop up in their respective committees. Many bills have already been referred to the Senate and are awaiting committee assignments, but we're seeing more bills having problems moving out of committees than in years past.

Most committees will have no more than one or two meetings before the next deadline - February 21st and February 23rd for the House and Senate.

Childcare/PreK:

- [SB 186](#), Senator Kyle Walker's bill which provides for a child care tax credit bill for businesses that provide child care for employees, was heard in Senate Appropriations committee this week. The bill drew out wide support (especially from many chambers of commerce), and was ultimately held in committee for future consideration. It has not been rescheduled at this time. Related article: [Indiana's labor participation dawdles as senators hear bill to help more parents work \(Indiana Public Media\)](#)
- [SB 375](#) is a child care assistance bill authored by Republican Senator Linda Rogers. The bill would raise the income eligibility limit for grants under the On My Way Pre-K program (program) to 260% of the federal poverty level (it is currently at 128%). SB375 was heard this week and passed 7-0. The bill will need to be recommitted to Ways and Means due to the fiscal component.

Housing:

- [HB 1005](#), this year's omnibus housing infrastructure bill, saw a third reading vote on the house floor this week and passed 91-6. It will move on to the Senate to be assigned a committee.

Workforce:

- For the first time in its legislative history, [SB 347](#), this year's work share bill, passed out of committee. Supported by a number of chambers of commerce, there was an amendment adopted in committee this week that dealt with fringe benefits, and the bill passed out of committee with only 1 NAY vote. It now moves to Senate Appropriations for further consideration, as it was recommitted due to its fiscal.
- [SB 248](#) provides that an individual who is an Indiana resident and cannot provide proof of identity and lawful status in the United States may apply for a driving privilege card to obtain driving privileges. As we reported last week, this was a widely discussed, and supported topic, during the interim study committee. A variety of stakeholders testified in support of the bill in committee this week, and it narrowly passed with a 5-4 vote. Related article: [Bill granting immigrants a "driving privilege card" advances \(The Statehouse File\)](#)

- [HB 1344](#) is Representative Teshka's Right to Start Act bill. It requires the state to encourage 5% of the total number of state contracts to be awarded to businesses that have been in operation for fewer than five years and whose principal place of business is in Indiana. It also requires the state to encourage 5% of workforce development funding, including funding allocated by workforce development boards across Indiana, to be used to support organizations or programs for individuals starting new businesses or to those organizations or programs that provide services to businesses established within the previous five years and whose principal place is located within Indiana. This bill has been scheduled for a hearing in the House Government and Regulatory Reform committee on Tuesday, February 14th.

Health Care:

- This week was a quieter week for the health care industry, publicly at least. [HB 1003](#) and [HB 1004](#) have yet to be scheduled for another committee, and that is likely to do main stakeholders (insurance companies and hospitals) doubling down on their efforts to fix the bills before they are voted out of their respective committees.

Please review your bill track list (below) and let us know if you have any questions - Chambers care about a lot of issues, so this list is very expansive!

Here is the [live link](#) to your bill track for 2023.

Action Items



- Please review your bill track and let us know of any bills of interest to you.
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