



# Hendricks County Chambers Weekly Statehouse Update

By Caryl Auslander • Mar 10, 2023

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## General Statehouse Update



**Lawmakers returned to Indianapolis this week** after a brief mid-session break, and committee action has started back up, albeit at a much slower pace. Education and Judiciary Committees in particular, met this week and sent several bills to the House and Senate chambers.

As a reminder, this is the portion of the legislative session where all bills passed in their initial chamber, will have a second set of eyes put on them from the opposite chamber. Bills move through the same process – committees, second reading amendments, and third reading final votes – over the next 6 weeks. From there, bills are sent back to the original author. If the bill has changed at all in the second house, the bill author can either consent to the changes and the originating chamber will vote to concur, or the bill author can dissent to the changes and the bill will be sent to Conference Committee. Those changes are negotiated largely during the last two weeks of the session, where a bill’s ultimate fate lies. And as always, Torchbearer Public Affairs will be on the ground to keep you informed along the way.

In the meantime, here’s the rundown of this week’s activity. Let’s dive in ...

### **Increase in Juror Pay Gets Initial Committee Green Light**

For the first time in nearly three decades, Hoosiers serving jury duty would [see an increase in pay](#) under [HB 1466](#). In addition to an increase to the existing fee, the bill also creates a brand-new fee to help local units of government cover the new expenses.

The bill would double the daily appearance pay to \$30 and then \$80 per day to sit on the jury for the first five days. Starting day six, jury pay would increase to \$90 daily. HB 1466 passed unanimously out of Senate Judiciary Committee and now heads to Senate Appropriations Committee where lawmakers will consider the fiscal impact.

### **Expansion of Childcare Costs for Fathers Passes Committee**

Senate Judiciary Committee also gave unanimous approval to [HB 1009](#), which would add two more additions to the list of expenses fathers would be lawfully required to help cover: “other necessary expenses” related to birth, and “postpartum” expenses. Indiana law already allows court orders to include cost-sharing for prenatal and postnatal care, delivery, and hospitalization.

### **Education Committees Dive Into Robust Discussion**

Education committees in both chambers wasted no time getting down to business during the second half of session. On Wednesday, Senate

Education Committee heard measures to establish a robotics program in schools aimed to increase STEM engagement among K-12 Hoosiers. [HB 1382](#) also sets forth grant funds for which schools could apply for from IDOE to help fund the program.

The committee also furthered the discussion on [HB 1449](#), a measure that seeks to automatically enroll eligible students in the Twenty-First Century Scholars Program. This is part of the education package recommended by Governor Holcomb and has seen strong bipartisan support and authorship.

In House Education Committee, the committee took up [SB 167](#), which addresses waivers given by school administrators when a student applying for FAFSA cannot obtain their parent's information. The committee is also considering [SB 342](#), which adds reporting requirements for schools to report to the Department of Education if a school hires or contracts with an employee under certain circumstances and gives local school boards the power to approve the hire.

### **Budget Bill Begins Second Set of Hearings in Senate**

After successfully passing out of the House, [HB 1001](#) begins its hearings and budget presentations in Senate Appropriations Committee. This week, the committee reviewed presentations given by statewide officeholders and departments on Tuesday and finished the week on Thursday by hearing from the state's higher education institutions.

### **Up Next Week**

More budget hearings are on deck next week, where the Indiana Finance Authority will present the state's debt overview along with several other state agencies, including the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Department of Workforce Development, and the Department of Education, presenting their budget proposals. In addition, the Senate School Funding Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee will hold a hearing on all issues K-12 education funding on Thursday. Look for much more activity in committees and second reading amendments starting next week. As always, 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.

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## **Hendricks County Chambers Update**

**The first week of the second half** started off extremely slow with light committee calendars, virtually no bills on the floor calendar, and Senate Republicans choosing to caucus on Monday only. Committee agendas for next week are more robust, but still relatively light for this time of year. This is a signal that one of two things are going to happen: committee agendas will be jam-packed leading up to committee deadlines, and/or a lot of bills are going to die. If the latter is true, that means the remaining bills will be targets for omnibus language during conference committee.

### **Childcare/PreK:**

- [HB 1591](#) is an omnibus education bill authored by Representative Behning and was heard in the Senate Education committee this week. It was amended in the House to include language that gets rid of the term “pilot” for On My Way Pre-K, making the program permanent throughout the state after 12 years. The bill drew out wide support, including from several local chambers of commerce. The bill was held in committee for future consideration (likely next week).

### **Housing:**

- As we have reported previously, [HB1005](#) is an omnibus housing infrastructure bill and it was assigned this week to the Senate Appropriations committee. We spoke with the author a few weeks ago on a separate housing issue, and he mentioned that he potentially sees this bill being used for some TIF language. We will want to keep track of any changes that are made to this bill.

### **Workforce:**

- [HB1451](#) deals with unemployment compensation and increases the number of earnings someone can keep when they work part-time while drawing unemployment insurance. The bill saw wide support and was heard and held in committee, but has been added to the calendar for an amend and vote hearing in Senate Pensions and Labor committee on Wednesday.
- [HB1528](#) deals with addressing the teacher shortages and allows for a scholarship of up \$10,000 for remaining education needed for teachers’ license. The bill saw unanimous supportive testimony and was held in committee for future consideration (likely next week).
- [HB 1002](#) is a House priority bill that is a “re-branding” of the high school diploma. We’ve reported on this bill in past reports, and it has

been assigned to the Senate Education committee. It has not been scheduled for a hearing at this time.

- [HB 1160](#) is a workforce training pilot program bill that made it through the first half. The bill requires the commission for higher education to establish an education and career support services pilot program. The bill targets workforce training for unemployed or underemployed individuals who are eligible for the TANF program. The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Family and Children services and has not been scheduled for a hearing at this time.

### **Health Care:**

- [HB 1003](#), Representative Snow's health care bill, deals with inefficiencies in the insurance area of the health care system and incentivizing employers through tax credits. The bill would incentivize employers through tax credits to use "health reimbursement arrangements" rather than a traditional health care plan for their employees. Of the numerous House health care bills aimed at lowering costs for Hoosiers, HB 1003 has been met with the most support from stakeholders. The bill has been assigned to the Senate Committee on Insurance and Financial Institutions. It has not been scheduled for a hearing at this time.
- [HB 1004](#) is a health care bill that deals with what hospitals can charge for services. The bill would create a penalty for hospitals that charge above the national average for services, which is 260% of the federal Medicare reimbursement rate. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Health and Provider Services. It has not been scheduled for a hearing at this time.

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.**

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## Action Items

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

*Tuesday, April 11th - House Committee Report Deadline*

*Thursday, April 13th - Senate Committee Report Deadline*

*Thursday, April 13th - House 2nd Reading Deadline*

*Monday, April 17th - Senate 2nd Reading Deadline*

*Monday, April 17th - House 3rd Reading Deadline*

*Tuesday, April 18th - Senate 3rd Reading Deadline*

*Thursday, April 27th - Anticipated Sine Die*

[Senate Session Calendar](#)

[House Session Calendar](#)

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Please feel free to reach out with any questions. Have a great weekend!

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