



# Torchbearer Policy Update

By Caryl Auslander • Feb 13, 2023

Smart Brevity® count: 4.5 mins...1253 words

Welcome back! We hope you enjoyed your weekend. Thank you for allowing us to be your trusted source for news at the local, state, and federal levels.

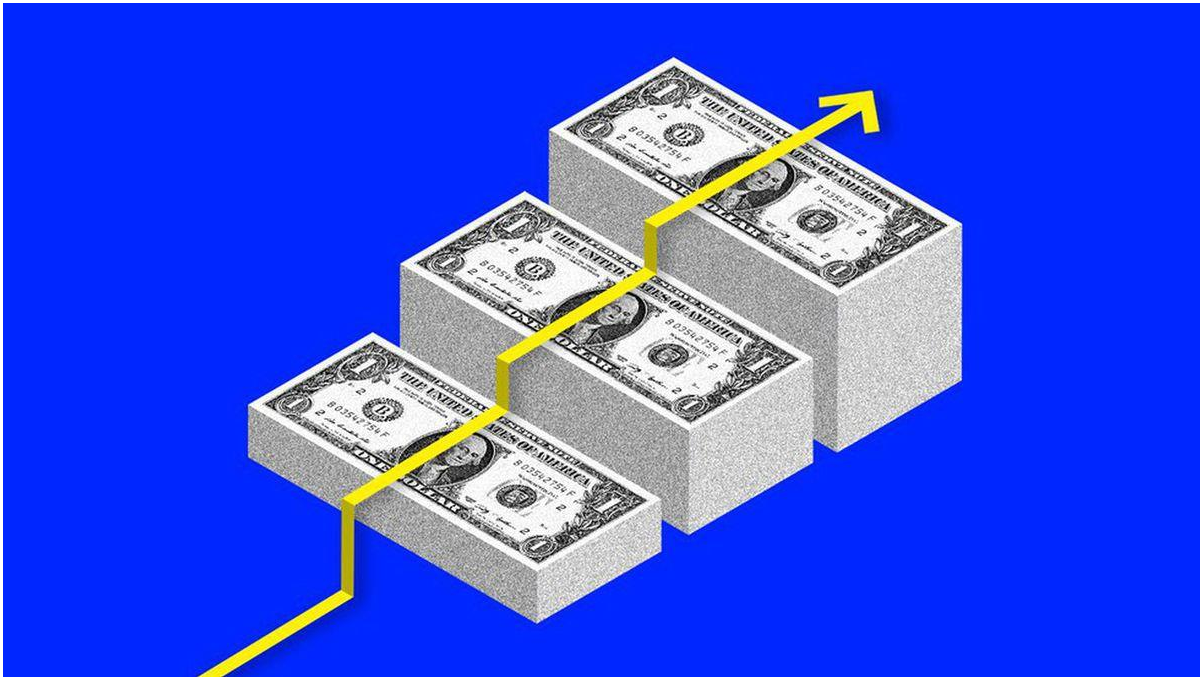
Local, state, and federal highlights in this week's memo include:

- **State Revenue Continues to Beat Estimates**
- **White House Taps Indiana, New Mexico Governors for Federal-State Council on National Security**
- **Rokita Joins Multi-State ATF Lawsuit**
- **Biden's Deficit-Cutting Plan**
- **Jill Biden Set to Visit Valparaiso**
- **Share the Torchbearer Newsletter with Your Network!**
- **Important Dates**

*Let's dive in.*

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## State Revenue Continues to Beat Estimates



**Breaking:** Indiana's revenue collections for January once again outpaced projections. The Indiana State Budget Agency said Friday that General Fund revenues last month totaled \$1.9 billion, which was 3.9% above the December 2022 forecast and 4% higher than the same month last year.

**Dig deeper:** The agency said better-than-expected collections from sales tax, individual income tax, interest, insurance, and miscellaneous revenues outweighed lower-than-expected collections from corporate taxes.

**By the numbers:** Sales tax collections totaled just over \$1 billion last month, nearly \$20 million higher than projections. Meanwhile, corporate taxes totaled \$19.5 million, which was nearly 40% below the monthly estimate.

Additionally, racino wagering and riverboat wagering collections both exceeded projections.

Year-to-date, General Fund revenues totaled \$11.6 billion, which is \$91.2 million above the December forecast and 4.9% higher than the same period in the previous fiscal year.

**More information:** You can connect to the full January 2023 revenue report by [clicking here](#). ([Inside Indiana Business](#))

# White House Taps Indiana, New Mexico Governors for Federal-State Council on National Security



**What's new:** President Joe Biden announced Thursday the appointment of Govs. Eric J. Holcomb, an Indiana Republican, and Michelle Lujan Grisham, a New Mexico Democrat, to a special bipartisan board that strengthens the federal and state partnership on matters pertaining to national security.

**Tell me more:** [The Council of Governors](#) consists of 10 members selected by the president to serve a two-year term, with no more than five members from the same political party.

**Dig deeper:** The goal is to “increase coordination around preparedness, resilience, and response between the Federal government and state governments, and strengthen the Federal-State partnership that’s critical to protecting our nation from threats to our homeland security,” according to a White House fact sheet.

The White House said in a statement that this year the council will focus on “supply chain resiliency and Federal-State cooperation to mitigate risks to defense critical infrastructure.”

There have been major supply chain issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war that have contributed to inflation and disruptions in the flow of goods.

The White House said that Holcomb and Lujan Grisham will replace former Govs. Kate Brown of Oregon, a Democrat, and Bill Lee of Tennessee, a Republican, both of whom have finished their terms.

**Dig deeper:** The Council of Governors was authorized in 2008 by the National Defense Authorization Act, a must-pass defense measure, and established in 2010 by an executive order during the Obama administration.

The council focuses on homeland security; homeland defense; civil support; state and federal military activities in the United States; and matters involving the National Guard.

**What they’re saying:** “Federal-State cooperation is critical to protecting communities given the evolving challenges and threats facing our country, which range from extreme weather to domestic and international terrorism to a global pandemic,” the White House said.

The other governors sitting on the council include:

- Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, Co-Chair
- Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, Co-Chair
- Delaware Gov. John Carney
- Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards
- Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer
- Utah Gov. Spencer Cox
- Vermont Gov. Phil Scott
- Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon

[\(Indiana Capital Chronicle\)](#)

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## Rokita Joins Multi-State ATF Lawsuit



**What's new:** Attorney General Todd Rokita joined a multi-state lawsuit against the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and

Explosives (ATF), claiming a recent rule change infringes on Hoosiers' gun rights.

**The backstory:** The federal agency [amended rules in January](#) for stabilizing braces and how their use meshes with the classification of a firearm as a rifle or short-barrel rifle. Frequently, the rear attachment on a firearm is used to shoot the weapon from the shoulder.

The new classification puts certain pistols equipped with the brace under the same category as short-barreled rifles, which changes its governing regulations and requires registration by May of this year.

**What he's saying:** "As long as I'm attorney general, we will never willingly cede Hoosiers' cherished liberties to the whims of federal bureaucrats," Attorney General Rokita said. "This is a clear case of overreach by the executive branch, and we fully expect to prevail in this lawsuit."

**Dig deeper:** Rokita cites the use of braces by those with disabilities, which the ATF explicitly excludes from the rule change, those with muscle weakness and beginners. Registering a firearm with the attachment would require users to provide ATF with their fingerprints. ([Indiana Capital Chronicle](#))

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## Biden's Deficit-Cutting Plan



**President Biden** will make deficit reduction a centerpiece of his 2024 budget, [coming March 9](#) — and aims to pressure Republicans to focus on government revenue, not just spending, *Axios' Hans Nichols has learned*.

- **Why it matters:** The White House is seeking a tactical advantage in its showdown with congressional Republicans on the debt limit — and wants to test the GOP's commitment to lowering annual deficits.

**The big picture:** The White House — and most of Washington — is preparing for a massive debate about the national debt. Both sides want to position themselves as a prudent steward of the country's finances.

**The administration plans** to dust off a variety of proposed tax increases on corporations and wealthy Americans — including Biden's plan to boost rates on billionaires — to narrow the gap between what the government takes in and spends.

**Biden also plans** to slow the rate of some spending. Republicans have called for cuts without specifying which ones.

- **He hinted** at that in his [State of the Union](#): "The plan I'm going to show you is going to cut the deficit by another \$2 trillion."

[Keep reading.](#) ([Axios](#))

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## Jill Biden Set to Visit Valparaiso



**Breaking:** Jill Biden is scheduled to visit Valparaiso next week. The White House announced Wednesday the First Lady plans to “highlight the Biden Administration’s commitment to strengthening our economy and building pathways to good-paying jobs through career-connected learning.”

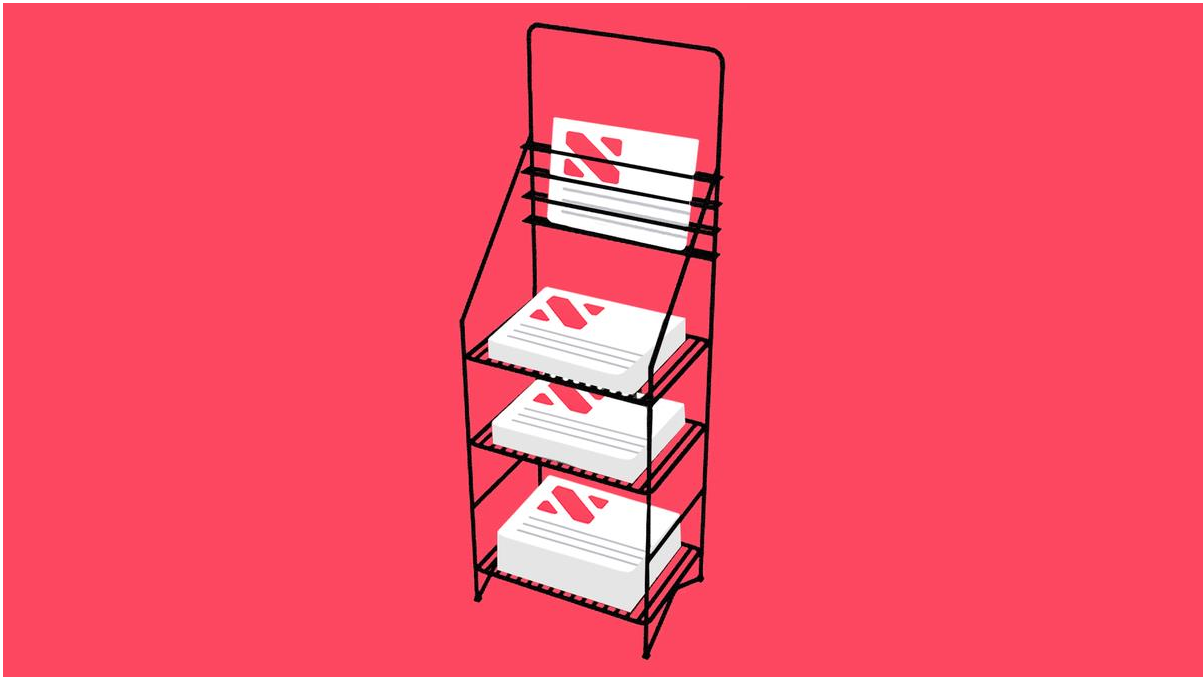
**The details:** Biden will travel to northwest Indiana next Friday, Feb. 17 following a trip to Mesa, Ariz. on Monday.

**More to come:** The White House did not provide specific details on a time and location for the event in Valparaiso. ([Inside Indiana Business](#))

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## Important Dates:



*Tuesday, February 21st - House Committee Report Deadline*

*Thursday, February 23rd - Senate Committee Report Deadline*

*Thursday, February 23rd - House 2nd Reading Deadline*

*Monday, February 27th - Senate 2nd Reading Deadline*

*Monday, February 27th - House 3rd Reading Deadline*

*Tuesday, February 28th - Senate 3rd Reading Deadline*

*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\*](#)