



## Legislative Update

### 120<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

Day, Month, Day, Year

#### Week Two Overview

Greetings! The second week was very busy. Governor Holcomb presented his third State of the State address and Chief Justice Loretta Rush delivered the State of the Judiciary. Additionally, the committee meetings started to heat up with a couple of bills being referred to the opposite legislative chamber.

#### Points of Interest

##### *Governor Holcomb's State of the State Address*

Governor Eric Holcomb delivered his third State of the State address on Tuesday. His first state of the state in 2017 laid out his five-pillar strategy, and last year re-focused on developing a skilled workforce. This year Governor Holcomb advocated for more education funding for teacher pay, workforce development and skill training, progress in infant mortality reduction, and hate crimes legislation.

Governor Holcomb addressed the issue of low pay for teachers first. He said that his goal is for Indiana to have high quality teachers that make a difference. He said that one way for Indiana to get great educators is to make teacher pay more competitive. To accomplish this goal, he has requested K-12 funding increases of 2% over the next two years. This 4% increase would mean \$432,000,000 more in education funding, which Governor Holcomb hopes local school districts will use to increase teacher pay.

The Governors spoke about convening a group to examine safety in schools. After studying the group's final report, Holcomb has recommended more funding for school safety equipment, increased mental health services at schools, and more active shooter training.

The Governor also focused on the Department of Child Services. His office focused on implementing real changes that are making a difference like increasing caseworker salaries and improving the workforce culture.

Finally, the Governor mentioned that Indiana is one of only five other states without hate crimes law in place. He spoke about how the lack of a hate crimes law hinders businesses who might be interested in coming to Indiana, but he also mentioned the

human component of the bill stating that standing strong against targeted violence against a targeted group is the right thing to do.

### *State of the Judiciary Address*

On January 16<sup>th</sup>, Chief Justice Rush Delivered the State of the Judiciary. The two main topics she focused on were the opioid epidemic and the need for better technology in the Indiana Judiciary.

She stated that a couple major initiatives have been put in place to combat the opioid problem within the state. The courts have teamed with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, the Association of Indiana Counties, Indiana University Grand Challenges and all 92 counties to host an opioid summit to offer education to justice professionals from around the state. The second initiative the Chief Justice touched upon is that Indiana more than doubled the number of Family Recovery Courts to 18 in the last 7 years. These courts work with families to help create paths for parents dealing with an addiction to reunite with their families and preserve their families.

The next major focus for Chief Justice Rush is furthering the use of technology within the courts. Rush told the joint session of the Indiana House and Senate that courts continue to struggle with a lack of technology needed for today's state caseload needs. She pointed to progress in the form of 80 percent of all the state's new caseload being uploaded to a digital form in one case management system. Additionally, in May, the court text alert system was launched. This allows for individuals to be texted ahead of their court date. This is aimed to cut down on the number of hearings in which an individual fails to appear. The hope is that this system will help reduce the capacity of inmates in state jails.

She wrapped up with pointing out the need for elderly and low-income Hoosiers to have better access to legal resources. She finished with the statement, "Justice only for those customers who can afford it is not justice for all. In fact, it is not justice at all."



## **Session Floor Highlights**

### ***House of Representatives***

The House has had a slow start to the 2019 legislative session with a large number of bills still being handed down on first reading and assigned to committees during the second week of session. However, the deadline has passed to file bills and the committee report deadline is just around the corner. Many bills did get to second reading and the following bills were referred to the Senate:

*HB1060 School Corporation Fund Levy. (Rep. Steve Bartels)*

*HB1078 Commitment of Level 6 Offenders to DOC (Rep. Gregory Steurerwald)*

### ***Senate***

The second week of the legislative session in the Senate consisted of first readings, second readings, and the adoptions of committee reports. During this last week, the Senate passed the following bills over to the House:

*SB22 Pension Matters. (Sen. Phillip Boots)*

*SB28 Crimes Involving Synthetic Drugs (Sen. Mike Bohacek)*

*SB198 Controlled Substances in Penal Facilities (Sen. Mike Bohacek)*

*SB206 Child Support Modification. (Sen. Michael Young)*

*SB207 Probation. (Sen. Michael Young)*

### ***Looking Ahead***

Both the House and Senate will be adjourned on Monday in observation of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. They will reconvene on Tuesday, January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

To honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Indiana Civil Rights Commission (ICRC), Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Indiana Holiday Commission (MLKIHC), Indiana Black Expo and AFSCME local 725 will host the eighth annual Dr. King Day of Service from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 21 at Watkins Family Park Center.

Please feel free to contact a member of our legislative team should you have questions regarding the happenings in the Indiana General Assembly!

**Brian Burdick**

Office: (317) 231-7393

Email: [brian.burdick@btlaw.com](mailto:brian.burdick@btlaw.com)

**Joe Loftus**

Office: (317) 231-7213

Email: [joseph.loftus@btlaw.com](mailto:joseph.loftus@btlaw.com)

**Bill Moreau**

Office: (317) 231-7349

Email: [bill.moreau@btlaw.com](mailto:bill.moreau@btlaw.com)

**Sabra Northam**

Office: (317) 231-7323

Email: [sabra.northam@btlaw.com](mailto:sabra.northam@btlaw.com)

**Heather Willey**

Office: (317) 231-6448

Email: [heather.willey@btlaw.com](mailto:heather.willey@btlaw.com)

**Jake German**

Office: (317) 231-7538

Email: [jacob.german@btlaw.com](mailto:jacob.german@btlaw.com)