



Legislative Update

123RD INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2022

Week One Overview

Happy Thursday! The second week of the 2022 legislative session was jam packed with several committee hearings and the introduction of the final set of 2022 bills from both respected chambers. Most restrictions that were in place at the Indiana Statehouse from the 2021 legislative session have been pulled back, which has led to an increase in attendance from eager Hoosiers. On Tuesday night, Governor Holcomb used his State of the State address to thank everyone for following COVID-19 precautionary measures and urged everyone to get vaccinated from the Coronavirus if not already done so.

Point of Interest

The Indiana General Assembly has introduced several bills which will be topics of significant discussion this session. Notable topics with hearings this week included Healthcare, Education, and Taxes. Further details below.

COVID-19: While the Supreme Court re-imposed the stay of Vaccine-or-Test rule in their decisions this week, the Senate and the House also sought to continue their stance on COVID-19 and mandated vaccines. The most notorious of these bills thus far has been HB 1001 by Sen. Lehman (R – Berne), which we mentioned in last week’s newsletter. As a reminder, this bill provides exemptions for COVID-19 immunizations in the workplace. An employee may provide an exemption for either medical or religious reasons. Additionally, if an employee has tested positive for and recovered from COVID-19, they will be exempt from the vaccine for the next 6 months. Several amendments were introduced for HB 1001 this week. One notable amendment allows the secretary to issue an emergency declaration for the purpose of participating in SNAP emergency allotments authorized under the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

The Senate also has a slew of similar bills that have yet to be introduced in committee, but will be important to keep an eye on. Among those is SB 286, Sen. Kruse (R – Auburn). SB 286 prohibits an employer from requiring an employee to receive an immunization as a condition of employment or as a condition of receiving additional compensation or benefits, and allows for a civil action against an employer for a violation. Stay tuned to future Newsletters on what direction the Senate will take on

COVID-19 immunization bills, as it will give good insight on their approach with HB 1001.

Healthcare: The Senate introduced SB 239 from Sen. Boehnlein (R – Greenville) for discussion on Wednesday. This bill was written in hopes of promoting transparency between patients and medical professionals. If passed, SB 239 would set in place on January 1, 2023, that any practitioner holding a license issued from a list of specific medical institutions, committees, boards, etc., would be subject to disciplinary actions if the professional does not display themselves properly. Meaning that if the practitioner deceives or misleads the public of their respected medical specialty or fails to visually or verbally identify their titled license to patients, repercussions can ensue.

In other health related news, Rep. Slager (R – Schererville) introduced HB 1112, which would raise Medicaid reimbursement rates to current Medicare rates for emergency and non-emergency ambulance services. Several members of the House Ways and Means committee voiced concerns on the fact that Medicaid reimbursement rates have not been raised in 45 years. As medical costs continue to rise, legislators will look to this bill and others to help minimize surprise billing and high costs burdens on Hoosiers.

Education: The controversial HB 1134, Rep. Cook (R – Frankfort), moved up through the House on Wednesday as it was amended and passed following the nearly five hours of testimony on Monday. HB 1134, which focuses on how schools present conversations on race, politics, and religion, has a similar bill in the Senate that focuses on curriculum transparency, SB 167, Sen. Baldwin (R – Noblesville). After also going through several hours of testimony last week, this bill was held this week.

SB 144, Sen. Baldwin (R – Noblesville), will look to change school board elections. This bill will require that candidates for election will need to choose a political affiliation that voters can see when they vote. This bill has been assigned to Senate Education and Career Development and has not yet been heard in committee.

Recently hazing incidents have been steadily more prevalent on major media networks. This sparked the need to reform associations that have partaken in this harmful activity. While many actions have been implemented already, HB 1403, Rep. Austin (D – Anderson), aims to restrict hazing further. This bill would do so by requiring any postsecondary or national organization that has student body members to create a program that educates its members on how to identify and report hazing situations. If an organization receives an allegation that involved bodily injury or had a risk to cause injury from one of its members, it must report that allegation to its respected institution for further review. Furthermore, punishments for hazing could not only fall onto the assailant but any members that are involved that do not intervene and/or report the situation to their respected organization.

Taxes: Personal property taxes became an interesting topic this week, with the first reading of SB 378, Sen. Buchanan (R – Lebanon). The bill would increase the acquisition cost threshold for the business personal property tax exemption from

\$80,000 to \$250,000. This would also require the department of local government finance to reduce the minimum valuation percentage for depreciable personal property from 30% to 25% over a two year period.



Session Floor Highlights

The second week of Session primarily involved introducing new bills and amending those that caused discrepancies from last week. HB 1077 from Rep. Cook (R – Auburn), has been passed through the House and is now referred to the Senate. This bill allows the purchase of a handgun without a permit. The category that was of high priority this week was healthcare. With COVID-19 still at the forefront of importance, expect to see more discussions and bills in the upcoming weeks on this matter.



Looking Ahead

Next Monday will be Martin Luther King Day. The Indiana General Assembly will not meet on Monday in recognition. The rest of the next week is likely to follow the trend of several bills being heard. Please refer to your tracker at any time for updates on a bill.

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

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