



Legislative Update

122ND INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20TH, 2022

 **Week One Overview**

Happy Thursday! The Barnes and Thornburg LLP Legislative Team hopes everyone had a great Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. In this winter season, the days are shorter but the committee discussions at the Statehouse are longer. The third week of the session this year involved productive discussions in both chambers and movement on key bills, which we will continue to provide updates on in our weekly Newsletters.

 **Point of Interest**

The Indiana General Assembly held hearings on several notable topics this week including Crime, Health, Firearm Permits, and Economic Development. Further details are below.

Crime: With Indianapolis experiencing a record-breaking 271 homicides in 2021, legislators are committed to passing bills that will hopefully tackle this issue immediately. A package of Senate Republican bills that were announced last month all passed committee votes this week and will advance. These bills included SB 6 from Sen. Michael Young (R - Indianapolis), SB 7 from Sen. Sandlin (R - Indianapolis), SB 8 from Rep. Freeman (R - Indianapolis), SB 9 from Sen. Walker (R - Indianapolis), and SB 10 from Sen. Crider (R - Greenfield). Together these bills intend to create stricter bail rules for violent crime arrestees, more regulations for nonprofit bail organizations, and new pilot programs for Marion County. A few members from the Senate Democratic Caucus opposed most of the bills, including Senate Minority Leader Greg Taylor (D-Indianapolis), who expressed frustration after the amendments he suggested were not adopted and that the bills were becoming too political.

Healthcare: The focus on health-related issues this week was healthcare costs. Indiana ranks #32 in overall healthcare. One way legislators plan on increasing the quality of care Hoosiers get is through reforming two key issues that have been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic – prescription drugs and telehealth. SB 88 and SB 284 from Sen. Charbonneau (R - Valparaiso), passed through the committee today. SB 88, if passed, would make the cost of an individual's health insurance coverage based on a price that is reduced by an amount equal to at least 85% of all rebates received by the

insurer in connection with the prescription drug at the point of sale. SB 284, in part, would allow for a practitioner to delegate consultation, treatment, and monitoring of a patient if the delegated health service is within the practitioner's scope of practice. With Telehealth being a crucial way for patients to receive virtual care with their health care providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, new laws regulating virtual doctor visits to streamline the process were very welcomed in committee, and the committee report was adopted unanimously.

Firearm Permits: Approximately 1.2 million Indiana residents hold gun permits, which last year's legislation removed the fee for. HB 1077 authored by Rep. Smaltz (R – Auburn) repeals the law that requires a person to obtain a license to carry a handgun in Indiana. Another bill on firearms, SB 14 authored by Sen. Jim Tomes (R – Wadesville), was introduced in the Senate and discussed by the Senate Judiciary Committee this week. The bill is similar to 1077, allowing a person over 21 to carry a gun without a license if they meet select criteria. Sen. Tomes' reasoning behind this bill stems from what he told the committee, "all the laws we have with reference to guns only apply to the lawful citizens out here. It's always the lawful law-abiding citizen. Criminals do what they do. No matter how many laws you write and how thick your law books are, they still do what they do." While HB 1077 has now been moved onto the Senate, SB 14 was immediately shut down by Sen. Liz Brown (R - Fort Wayne), announcing there would be no amendments and no vote on the bill by her committee.

Economic Development: Gov. Holcomb's 2022 agenda highlighted Indiana's commitment to refine its economy in order to see more persistent growth. Indiana has the world's second-largest automotive industry. To stay on top, Indiana plans on keeping up to date with electronic vehicle (EV's) advancements. HB 1221 from Rep. Soliday (R - Valparaiso), is a bill packed with rules to clarify electricity pricing and incentives to promote the use and purchase of EV's. If passed, a person that owns, operates, or leases an EV or its supplies can be compensated for electricity expenditure. Furthermore, this bill authorizes the utility regulatory commission (IURC) to approve: (1) time-varying price structures and tariffs; or (2) other alternative pricing structures and tariffs; for retail energy service. This bill will be on third reading in the House next week.

Session Floor Highlights

A few notable bills have been passed on the House and Senate Floors this week during their third readings. HB 1001, Majority Floor Leader Matt Lehman (R - Berne), passed (58-35). As mentioned in past Newsletters, this bill aims to provide exemptions for immunization requirements. SB 1 from Majority Caucus Chair Holdman (R- Ossian) passed (46-1). This removes a provision that requires taxpayers to have adjusted gross income tax liability to qualify for an automatic taxpayer refund. Another tax bill was approved today in HB 1002, authored by Rep. Brown (R - Crawfordsville), passed (68-25). The measure includes a mix of business tax cuts, eliminates certain taxes on utility ratepayers, and lowers the state's individual income tax over the next few years down to 3 percent. Business groups lined up in support, including the Indiana Manufacturers Association. An update on further passing and progression of bills will be included in next week's report.



Looking Ahead

On January 27th committee reports for the Senate are due, and January 25th House committee reports are due. 2nd reading deadlines are on the 31st for the Senate and January 27th for the House. The last day for 3rd reading of bills in the Senate is on February 1st, with the House's being on January 31st. As the mid-way point of session gets closer, expect critical updates in the coming weeks.

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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