



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

123RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 2024

Week One Overview

Happy New Year and welcome to the start of the second session of the 123rd General Assembly. This year the legislature will meet in a short session, as the budget will not be discussed. The legislature convened on Monday, January 8th and statutorily must conclude business no later than March 14th. The leaders in the House of Representatives and State Senate have released their 2024 legislative proposals. You may access the proposals at the live links below:

[House Republican Caucus](#)

[Senate Republican Caucus](#)

[House Democrat Caucus](#)

[Senate Democrat Caucus](#)

In addition to the legislative chambers introducing their agendas, Governor Holcomb unveiled his Next Level Agenda on Monday, January 8th. For more information about the Governor's announcement, please visit [Governor: 2024 Next Level Agenda \(in.gov\)](#), or contact a member of the Barnes & Thornburg team. On Tuesday, January 9th, Governor Holcomb delivered his State of the State address reiterating his 2024 legislative agenda. A copy of the Governor's speech may be accessed at [Governor: 2024 State of the State Address \(in.gov\)](#). Additionally, on Wednesday, Chief Justice Loretta Rush of the Indiana Supreme Court delivered the State of the Judiciary. You may access the Chief Justice's speech at [Indiana Judicial Branch: State of the Judiciary](#).

Points of Interest

Although the 2024 legislative session is a shorter session, state legislators have introduced hundreds of bills on a variety of noteworthy topics during this first week. Several committees have already met to push bills forward, while keeping the fast approaching deadline in mind. Because it is the start of the session, a majority of introduced bills are still being assigned to committees or awaiting hearings. However, several bills did make it to their respective committee floors for votes. Highlights of some of these bills are below.

Health: Providers Services, Childcare, and Mental Health will be key themes for the 2024 legislative session. In addition, Governor Holcomb's State of the State Address championed his historic investment in local health departments through Health First Indiana (HFI). As we head into this session, legislators are proposing bills aimed at strengthening funding, infrastructure, and services in the realm of public health. On Wednesday, the Senate Health and Provider Services committee met to hear SB 45, Trauma Informed Care – Sen. Michael Crider (R – Greenfield). SB 45 would require licensed nurses to complete a trauma informed care training program every two years. The aim of this program is to increase transparency, develop practical strategies, and establish universal precautions for trauma care. However, some testified against the bill due to the frequency of required trainings, and the stress this requirement would place on licensure. Katherine Feley of the Indiana State Nurses Association testified that SB 45 is not practical as it would create a heavy workload for nurses. The bill was held in committee. SB 110, Social Work Licensure Compact – Sen. Michael Crider, was also heard this week. SB 110 aims to expand capacity in the mental health care space for clinical social workers. The compact, which the bill would create, states that licensed clinical social workers in one state, can provide services in other states that are members of the compact. Seven states would need to pass this legislation for the proposed compact to take effect. The bill passed in committee (11-0).

Education: In the State of State Address, Governor Holcomb highlighted the continued investment in Indiana's education system, and what he believes still needs to change as he enters his final year as governor. Third-grade reading standards and policies will need to be improved to assure Hoosier children master the skill. Computer science courses will be required to graduate high school to better prepare students to enter a digitally driven world. Through the collaboration of state agencies and public universities, the state will need to work to make college more accessible by developing additional three-year and associate degree programs. On Wednesday, the House Education Committee met to hear several bills including that of Rep. Chuck Goodrich's (R – Noblesville), HB 1001, Education and Higher Education Matters. This bill aims to widen the scope of the Career Scholarship Account program, which was established by HEA 1002, Education and Workforce Development, last session. The program offers eligible high school students financial assistance for applied learning experience, work-based learning, and credential attainment experience. HB 1001, among other things, aims to amend the law passed last session to allow annual grant recipients to use their scholarship account to cover commute expenses. Rep. Goodrich stated that he believes transportation has been a barrier for applicants. This bill passed in committee with amendments (9-4). Also heard in committee was HB 1042, Transition to Teaching Scholarships – Rep. Dave Heine's (R – Fort Wayne). This bill provides that any remaining balance in the Hoosier Educator Scholarship Fund may be used to fund additional Transition to Teaching scholarships. When the Transition to Teaching program opened in the fall, there were over 300 applicants in 15 minutes. HB 1042 would allow more applicants to be awarded, and support opportunities to increase teachers in Indiana. The Education committee passed the bill (13-0). Rep. Chris Jeter (R – Fishers) also brought forth HB 1002, Enforcement of Educational Opportunity, which defines antisemitism and makes it clear it should not be taught in K-12 and higher education. HB 1002 passed (12-0).

Community Development: At the beginning of the week, the Governor stressed the importance of having strong local communities in a thriving state, and these sentiments are echoed in a current Senate bill. SB 190, State Disaster Relief Fund, Sen. Cyndi Carasco (R – Indianapolis) would modify the requirements for an eligible entity to receive financial assistance from the Disaster Relief Fund. SB 190 would also modify the calculations used to determine the amount of financial assistance an eligible entity may receive. The bill intends to incentivize the implementation of disaster preparation and mitigation measures by increasing the amount of aid a county can receive in a disaster. The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Transportation. It is scheduled for hearing on Tuesday, January 16th at 9:00 AM in room 233.

Utilities and Energy: The House Utilities, Energy, and Telecommunication Committee met on Tuesday to hold an informational meeting regarding Electric Utility Preparedness for Off Nominal Events. Several key electric utility providers testified before the Committee, including Duke Energy, CenterPoint, Indiana Michigan Power (I&M), NIPSCO, and the Indiana Energy Association. The Senate Utilities Committee also met on Thursday of this week to discuss SB 5, Customer Owned Lead Service Lines, introduced by Sen. Eric Koch (R – Bedford). The hearing opened with expert testimony from called witnesses. Two amendments were then proposed and adopted: Amendment 2 (Sen. Koch), which deletes language that allows utility to go on to the property of a customer who is resisting replacement; and Amendment 5 (Sen. Hunley), which addresses a gap in the financial authority’s ability to accept funds to oversee lead testing and mitigation in schools. SB 5 passed, as amended, and moved to the Senate floor for a second reading.

Public Policy: The House Public Policy Committee heard HB 1025, Mixed Beverages – Rep. Manning (R – Logansport), which concerns the sale of alcohol products—specifically the sale of ready-to-drink (RTD) canned mixed beverages. The bill adds a definition of “mixed beverage” into state law defining it as a “prepared cordial, cocktail, or highball that is in a can or container that holds not more than twenty-four ounces” and contains between 0.5% and 15% alcohol by volume. The intent of this bill is to allow competition within the alcohol industry as malt beverages and RTDs are marketed, merchandised, and geared toward beer consumers but are currently only able to be sold by liquor wholesalers, not beer wholesalers. HB 1025 would allow beer wholesalers to sell these mixed beverages if they hold a wine wholesalers permit. Wine wholesaler permits can be concurrently held with a beer wholesale permit or a liquor wholesale permit. HB 1025 passed committee (8-3) and was read for a second time in the House on Thursday.



Session Floor Highlights

While the first week of session primarily involved introducing bills and attending to other procedural formalities, we have already seen several bills discussed in committee and voted to their respective chamber floors. Even with the upcoming shorter week, we expect several bills to be heard and voted on the floor as this is a short session and the deadline is already fast approaching.

 **Looking Ahead**

The deadline for filing Senate bills was January 9th, while the deadline for filing House bills was Thursday, January 11th. The General Assembly will reconvene on Tuesday, January 16th, as they will take Monday off in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The last day for the third reading of House bills in the House is Monday, February 5th. The deadline for the third reading of Senate bills in the Senate is Tuesday, February 6th. Furthermore, the last day for third reading of Senate Bills in the House is Monday, March 4th, and the last day for third reading of House bills in the Senate is Tuesday, March 5th. The last day for adjournment of both houses, under IC 2-2.1-1-3, is Thursday, March 14th.

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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