



# Hendricks County Chambers Weekly Statehouse Update

By Caryl Auslander • Feb 19, 2023

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## General Statehouse Update



Week 6 brought a flurry of committee action as the legislature stares down the final week of hearings before the switch-over. This was a week of firsts for marijuana policy, a controversial CRT bill was removed from committee calendars for a second time, and structural reforms for both Indiana's tax system and environmental regulatory bodies were considered. The final countdown to the Tuesday and Thursday committee deadlines is officially on. Let's dive in ...

### **House Republicans Drop Budget Amendment Ahead of Monday Hearing**

On Friday afternoon, House Republicans filed a [massive amendment](#) to the biennial budget bill that is set to be heard in Ways and Means on Monday. In the \$43.3B spending plan, they prioritize keeping a healthy reserve while investing a portion into one-time spending initiatives to help Hoosier families, promote economic development, and invest in infrastructure. A major takeaway of [HB 1001](#) includes an expansion of school choice vouchers to Hoosier families who make up to 400% of the

Federal Poverty Rate, or around \$220K a year. With this expansion comes an additional increase of the program from \$240M in annual expenditure to \$500M in FY24 and \$600M in FY2. Overall, K-12 education is set to see a \$1.6 billion increase in funding over the biennium - an almost 11% increase.

New language also accelerates the individual income tax rate cuts enacted in 2022 to lower the rate to 2.9% by 2026 instead of 2029 and deletes all triggers in current law. GOP budget drafters say they hope this will save Hoosier taxpayers \$470M over the biennium and \$1.6B between now and 2030. This budget accounts for more than \$155M in additional tax cuts for Hoosier taxpayers over the biennium, including increased income tax deductions for homeowners and renters, additional tax deductions for new parents, an increase to the earned income tax credit, and exemptions for active-duty military members and civil service annuity recipients.

On the health front - the budget amendment includes \$225M for public health, which is only 2/3rds of the Governor's request and less than half of what the Governor's Public Health Commission recommended. Other highlights include:

- Doubling the amount of funding for food banks
- Fully funding the proposed increases from the Supreme Court
- Providing funding to increase starting salaries for state troopers to \$70,000 per year
- Fully funding state employee pay raises granted by the Governor.
- \$500M for Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) grants
- \$500M for a “deal closing fund” for the Indiana Economic Development Corporation
- \$75M for a residential housing infrastructure assistance revolving fund

For additional information, please visit the [press release](#) or [slide presentation](#).

**Marijuana Decriminalization Bill Gets Historic Hearing**

For the first time in the state's history, [marijuana decriminalization language](#) was granted a committee hearing at the Indiana General Assembly. House Courts and Criminal Code committee chair, Rep. Wendy McNamara, said she decided to hear a bill to open up the discussion but ultimately decided not to take a vote this session. [HB 1297](#), authored by Rep. Heath VanNatter (R-Kokomo) would decriminalize possession of two ounces or less of marijuana.

### **Curriculum Bills Move To (And From) Committee Agendas**

[Several bills](#) aimed at the curriculum taught in public schools were set for committee hearings this week, but not all of them made it to the finish line. [SB 386](#), a [controversial "anti-CRT" bill](#), was scheduled for a hearing and then removed from the Senate's education committee agenda on Wednesday afternoon, for the second week in a row. To date, it has not been scheduled for another hearing.

[SB 12](#), a bill that would [prevent school teachers and librarians](#) from using educational value as a defense for providing certain books to school students, passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee on a 7-4 vote. It now heads to the full House for further consideration.

### **House Elections Committee Passes Bill to Add Vote-by-Mail Requirements**

The House Elections Committee voted along party lines to [advance the proposal](#) that would require voters submitting a paper application for a mail ballot to include new, additional pieces of documentation like a photocopy of their driver's license or at least two identification numbers, such as a driver's license number or the last four digits of their Social Security number. [HB 1334](#) now moves to the floor for amendments and full consideration by the House.

### **TIF Legislation Sees Substantial Committee Amendments**

A bill to address the [inner workings of Tax Increment Financing](#) or TIF districts in the state saw major additions this week. A 12-page amendment adopted during Ways and Means committee aims to provide more accountability and transparent formulas for how the revenue would be distributed throughout the district. The committee approved Rep. Clere's amendment and passed the entire bill on a 14-6 vote. [HB 1085](#) now heads to the House floor for further consideration.

### **Tax Task Force Legislation On The Move**

A [new task force](#) charged with analyzing property taxes, sales taxes, and income taxes is the focal point of [SB 3](#) and was heard in Senate Tax and

Fiscal Policy on Tuesday. The bulk of the work done by the new Tax Task Force would be handled by legislators who would serve on the panel, while organizations would be encouraged to participate in various subgroups. It is now on the second reading calendar to be discussed next week.

### **Law Enforcement “Buffer Zone” Bill Advances**

A bill to require a 25-foot area being [referred to as a “buffer zone”](#) around law enforcement officers passed the House this week. [HB 1186](#) creates a Class C misdemeanor offense for people who “knowingly or intentionally” get within 25 feet of law enforcement officers and who participate in “unlawful encroachment on an investigation” if the officers have asked them to back away. The bill passed the full House by a vote of 75-20.

### **Optional Firearm Safety Training for School Employees**

A bill to provide [funding for optional firearm safety training](#) for school teachers passed the House and now moves to the Senate. [HB 1177](#) would reallocate funding from the Indiana Safe Schools and related funds for the training. State law already affords teachers and other staff the ability to carry a firearm on school grounds if authorized by their local school boards. The bill also provides funding for counseling services for students, teachers, school staff, and employees in the event of a school shooting.

### **Bill Zeroes In On IDEM Regulations**

On Tuesday, a House committee passed a bill that affects the [regulatory process](#) of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). The amended [HB 1263](#) restricts IDEM from imposing any regulations on all coal-powered electricity generators that are stricter than federal requirements. The bill would also require pre-approval from the Governor for emergency and interim rules, and gives both the Governor and Attorney General the power to overturn some rules.

### **Legislation To Expand Birth Control Continues To Advance**

[SB 266](#) would require a hospital that operates a maternity unit to ensure that a woman giving birth in the hospital has the option of having a long-acting reversible subdermal contraceptive, like an intrauterine device (IUD), implanted after delivery and before the woman is discharged. This is the second bill to expand access to birth control to move to the Senate floor after last week’s approval of [SB 252](#).

### **SNAP Simplification Language Moves To House**

A bill to allow seniors and people with disabilities to [stay on SNAP](#) without having to renew their application for up to three years gained unanimous approval on Monday. [SB 334](#) also codifies an existing requirement that Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration provides information on how to apply for SNAP to anyone on Medicaid. The bill now moves to the House.

### **Next Week**

With committee report deadlines next Tuesday and Thursday in the House and Senate, respectively, committees will be busy with last-minute legislation at the top of the week and then shift to very full second and third reading floor calendars the latter part of the week. The latest budget language will be up for discussion early on in the week as it is on the Ways and Means schedule for Monday. Contentious legislation opposed by the LGBTQ+ community under consideration is expected to bring an array of community members to the statehouse throughout the week. Also on the docket is the omnibus health care legislation, [HB 1004](#), for a final hearing in House Public Health Committee, and [HB 1008](#) the ESG legislation in House Ways and Means. Torchbearer Public Affairs will be there monitoring, testifying, and advocating for your needs. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions or concerns.

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## Hendricks County Chambers Update



**Week 6 is in the books**, and many committees have met for the last time until bills crossover after halftime. If a bill does not get passed out of committee by Tuesday, for the House, or Thursday, for the Senate, it can be considered dead. Keep in mind that it isn't uncommon to see "dead" language resurface into other bills throughout the session. We will keep a close eye on changes that happen to the alive bills for the remainder of session. As always, we will keep you posted with relevant changes.

### **Childcare/PreK:**

- [\*\*HB 1591\*\*](#) is an omnibus education bill authored by Representative Behning and was heard in committee this week. An amendment was discussed (but not voted on) to end the pilot provision for On My Way Pre-K, making it a permanent program. The amendment clarifies eligible providers to include K-12 schools that operate preschool programs. It also includes a provision about incentivizing providers who increase wages for employees who are obtaining additional credentials. Many local chambers testified in support of the amendment. There was discussion in committee that House Republicans may be willing to add a fiscal component in the House Budget, which would increase the eligibility for the program. That provision was included in the House Chairman's amendment that was released Friday evening. The bill was held in committee, but we anticipate that the amendment will go in this week. It has been rescheduled for a hearing on Monday morning.

### **Housing:**

- [\*\*HB 1085\*\*](#) is a housing TIF bill that would require an automatic pass through to schools. There is a significant push back from local governments, and now some chambers of commerce, saying that this bill hinders economic development. This bill will be eligible for a third reading floor vote on Monday.

### **Workforce:**

- As we reported, [\*\*SB 347\*\*](#), this year's work share bill, made it out of committee for the first time in its legislative history. The bill was recommitted to Senate Appropriations committee and we are unsure of its future at this time as it has not yet been scheduled for a hearing.



- [SB 248](#) provides that an individual who is an Indiana resident and cannot provide proof of identity and lawful status in the United States may apply for a driving privilege card to obtain driving privileges. The bill passed out of committee and was recommitted to the Senate Appropriations committee due to its fiscal component. It has not been added to the committee agenda at this time.
- [HB 1344](#) is Representative Teshka's Right to Start Act bill. It requires the state to encourage 5% of the total number of state contracts to be awarded to businesses that have been in operation for fewer than five years and whose principal place of business is in Indiana. It also requires the state to encourage 5% of workforce development funding, including funding allocated by workforce development boards across Indiana, to be used to support organizations or programs for individuals starting new businesses or to those organizations or programs that provide services to businesses established within the previous five years and whose principal place is located within Indiana. The bill was heard in committee and received wide support. It was held for future consideration and has not been rescheduled at this time.

### **Health Care:**

- [HB 1003](#), Representative Snow's health care bill, deals with inefficiencies in the system and incentivizing employers through tax credits. The bill would incentivize employers through tax credits to use "health reimbursement arrangements" rather than a traditional health care plan for their employees. Of the numerous House health care bills aimed at lowering costs for Hoosiers, HB 1003 has been met with the most support from stakeholders. The bill passed out of committee and was referred to the Ways and Means committee due to the fiscal impact. It has not been scheduled for a hearing at this time.
- As we've reported, [HB 1004](#) is a healthcare bill that deals with what hospitals can charge for services. The bill would create a penalty for hospitals that charge above the national average for services, which is 260% of the federal Medicare reimbursement rate. The author anticipated that it would get a hearing last week, but that did not happen but it is on the agenda to be heard this week.

Please review your bill track list (below) and let us know if you have any questions - Chambers care about a lot of issues, so this list is very expansive!

Here is the [live link](#) to your bill track for 2023.

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## Action Items



- Please review your bill track and let us know of any bills of interest to you.

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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\*](#)

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Please feel free to reach out with any questions. Have a great weekend!

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