



ICAN Update

Indiana | Catholic | Action | Network

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The Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops in Indiana regarding state and national matters.

Note: This first ICAN report covers the first two weeks of the ICC's involvement in the 2021 Indiana General Assembly. Weekly, the ICC will release an ICAN report in addition to the podcast found on our website and within our email newsletter.

During the first two weeks of the session, and despite legislators being limited to filing 10 bills, numerous bills have been filed and assigned to committee. Listed below are the bills the ICC is monitoring most closely. The list is not exhaustive yet highlights the issues of greatest priority.

HB1005 Various Schools Matters (Rep. Behning, Indianapolis) Expands the school choice program eligibility from 150 percent to 300 percent of Free or Reduced-Price School Meals (FRL). The bill also expands the number of “pathways” for school choice and creates state facilitated Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs). Increasing opportunities for school choice has long been a priority for the ICC. With expanded choice, more parents will have options for choosing the best educational setting for their children.

ICC supports this bill.

HB1074 End of Life Options (Rep. Pierce, Bloomington) Allows individuals to make a request to take life-ending medication. The Church has always opposed assisted suicide/euthanasia.

ICC opposes this bill.

HB1237 and SB 204 Health Care Advance Directives (Rep. Young, Franklin and Sen. Rogers, Granger, respectively) Clarifies the laws regarding health care advance directives, making it easier for individuals to understand the requirements for laying out their preferences for medical care if unresponsive. The ICC collaborated with interested parties on a similar bill last session.

ICC supports these bills.

HB1358 and SB 246 Pregnancy Accommodations (Rep. Negele, Attica and Sen. Alting, Lafayette, respectively) Requires and employers to provide reasonable employment accommodations for a pregnant employee. The House and Senate bills mirror each other. Supporting women in the workplace leads to healthier pregnancies and less stress on expectant mothers. The ICC worked on this issue last session.

ICC supports these bills.

HB1439 Coerced Abortions, Protection Of A Fetus, And Wrongful Death Or Injury Of A Child (Rep. King, Indianapolis) Requires that a woman seeking an abortion must be informed that a coerced abortion is illegal and increases penalties for intentionally coercing an expectant mother into having an abortion. The Church defends the sanctity of life through all stages.

ICC supports this bill.

SB249 Net Metering for Electricity Generation (Sen. Alting, Lafayette) Extends the time Hoosiers may use “net metering”, allowing solar customers to get market price for excess energy produced by solar panels. “Net metering” acts as an incentive for solar customers considering up-front costs of solar panels. The Catholic social tradition supports responsible transition to renewable forms of energy.

ICC supports this bill.

SEA148 Zoning and Housing Matters (Sen. Doriot, New Paris) From the 2020 session, the only bill vetoed by Governor Holcomb during that session. The bill prohibits local governments from regulating landlord-tenant relationships and opens avenues for speedier evictions. Should an SEA148 veto override or this language come into play during the 2021 session, the ICC will voice opposition. The preemptive repeal of local ordinances violates the Church’s understanding of subsidiarity, effectively stripping local governments from making decisions according to their housing needs. In addition, the bill would place tenants unnecessarily at risk of eviction.

ICC opposes this bill.