



ICAN Update

Indiana | Catholic | Action | Network

January 15, 2022

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

To act on these bills via action alert or by directly contacting your legislator, visit indianacc.org and click "Take Action" in the top right corner of the page. Advocacy tip: personalized messages are more effective than unedited messages.

Listed below are the bills the ICC is monitoring most closely. The list is not exhaustive yet highlights the issues of greatest priority and relevance within the legislative process.

Respect Life

1217 Coerced Abortion (Rep. King)

This bill requires that a woman seeking an abortion should receive information stating that a coerced abortion is illegal. The bill also includes provisions for providing resources and an alternate exit from the facility if necessary.

ICC supports this bill.

Status:

† Committee hearing scheduled for next week.

1077 Firearms Matters (Lawful Carry) (Rep. Smaltz)

This bill repeals the law which requires handgun owners to obtain a license before carrying a handgun. Last year, the ICC raised concerns that this bill would eliminate important community safeguards by removing a useful tool for law enforcement officers.

The bill's supporters argue that this measure furthers the constitutional right to bear arms. In contrast, the ICC and other bill opponents believe that the licensing requirement does not place an undue burden on gun owners and therefore should be preserved.

ICC opposes this bill.

Status:

† Passed House floor 64-29

Care for Creation

255 Climate Task Force (Sen. Alting)

This bill creates a 17 member task force that will examine and recommend policies that would mitigate climate change, promote statewide adaptation to a changing climate, and spur economic development in Indiana. The ICC supports this bill as a reasonable step to furthering the state's approach to caring for Creation.

ICC supports this bill.

Status:

† Awaiting committee hearing.

1136, 248, 313 Net Metering (Rep. Cook, Sen. Brown, Sen. Yoder)

Several bills affect the way utility solar customers are reimbursed for excess generated electricity. This reimbursement rate significantly impacts the cost of solar, particularly the time it takes for a solar installation to pay for itself. While each bill above is slightly different in scope, each has the potential to positively impact the financial feasibility of solar in Indiana.

Several Catholic parishes, schools, and religious orders in Indiana have already installed solar to help offset utility costs and care for Creation. In addition, a growing list of other parishes, schools, and religious orders are expressing interest in installing solar panels. Without the protections found in these bills, these communities would lose the reasonable financial incentives in the current reimbursement rates.

ICC supports these bills.

Status:

† All bills awaiting committee hearings.

Solidarity

1159 and 253 Small Loan Finance Charges (Rep. Hamilton, Sen. Alting)

These bills cap the allowable APR for small loans (such as payday and title loans) at 36 percent. Under current law, APRs can reach nearly 400 percent. These unreasonably high interest rates are undoubtedly usurious according to the Church's teachings dating back to the 12th century and earlier.

ICC supports these bills.

Status:

† Awaiting committee hearing.

327 TANF Eligibility (Sen. Jon Ford)

This bill reasonably expands eligibility and payment amounts for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The Church's concern for the wellbeing of the poor and emphasis on solidarity provides firm ground for supporting this expansion.

ICC supports this bill.

Status:

† Awaiting committee hearing.

200 and 1195 Driving Cards (Sen. Niezgodski, Rep. Karickhoff)

Allows Indiana residents who cannot provide proof of identity and lawful status to register for a driving record card. Driving record card holders are required to maintain insurance as required by state law. Similar laws have passed in other states with bipartisan support. There are compelling moral justifications for this legislation, as transportation is necessary for accomplishing many tasks which contribute to human flourishing. These tasks include purchasing groceries, accessing healthcare and social services, and attending school. In addition, the well-researched fiscal and safety benefits for the state are numerous.

ICC supports this bill.

Status:

† Awaiting committee hearing.

Other bills of interest to the ICC:

The ICC is closely watching many other bills at the beginning of the session, including bills that address **assisted suicide and euthanasia, assisting refugees in Indiana, gestational surrogacy, bail and sentencing reform, education and curriculum transparency, disposal of coal ash, decriminalization of marijuana, increased penalties for human traffickers,** and the **prescription of contraceptives**. As the session continues, some of these bills may be included in future reports as the need to advocate for or against bills fluctuates. In total, nearly 900 bills have been filed in the 2022 Indiana General Assembly.