



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.

For insights on the most time-sensitive bills in this list, check out our latest podcast episode at indianacc.org/icanpodcast.

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. Bills are ordered by bill number.

ACTIVE BILLS:

SB389 Wetlands (Sen. Garten, Henryville)

SB389 has been amended to change Indiana's wetlands law rather than repeal it. The amended bill would eliminate protections for some wetlands, reduce protections for others, eliminate protections of ephemeral streams, among other provisions. While the amended version of the bill is not as harmful as the original bill, the ICC is still opposed to this legislation. The potential negative effects on wetlands would not be outweighed by the proposed economic benefits. As the Holy Father writes in *Laudato Si*:

Caring for ecosystems demands far-sightedness, since no one looking for quick and easy profit is truly interested in their preservation. But the cost of the damage caused by such selfish lack of concern is much greater than the economic benefits to be obtained (36)

Formerly, SB389 would have repealed all of Indiana's protections for state regulated wetlands.

ICC opposes this bill.

Status:

+ Heading to Governor for signature

HB1001 State Budget (Rep. Brown, Crawfordsville)

HB1001, the House version of state budget legislation, now contains important school choice expansion language. This bill gradually expands the school choice program eligibility from 150 percent to 300 percent of Free or Reduced-Price School Meals (FRL) and increases the scholarship amount a voucher student receives to 90% of state tuition. The bill also expands the number of "pathways" for school choice and creates state facilitated Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs).

The Senate Appropriations Committee amended the choice expansion in their budget amendment. They reduced the voucher financial eligibility proposed by the House to 200% and 225%. Their slight increase would

not go into effect until the second year of the budget. The 90% voucher tier was included, but it would not go into effect until December 31, 2023. The Appropriations Committee's amendment also stripped back the proposed ESA.

This bill now passed both chambers with the original House voucher expansions. It now awaits signature from the Governor.

ICC supports this bill.

Status:

† Heading to Governor for signature

HB1009 TANF Program (Rep. Chuck Goodrich, Noblesville)

Provides that a household participating in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program is not disqualified from the program if someone in the household is pursuing a postsecondary degree, workforce certificate, or apprenticeship. Additionally, this bill increases the state earned income tax credit (EITC) to 10% (instead of 9%). Recent amendments added the TANF related provisions from SB233, including expanding the eligibility requirements for TANF and raising the cash assistance amount. The Church's concern for the wellbeing of the poor and emphasis on solidarity provides firm ground for supporting this legislation.

ICC supports this bill.

Status:

† Heading to Governor for signature

HB1577 Telemedicine and Abortion Related Services (Rep. Mayfield, Martinsville)

This bill requires ultrasound images to be provided to pregnant women seeking an abortion, requires information about abortion reversal to be supplied to women undergoing chemical abortion, and prohibits the use of telemedicine for prescribing and dispensing abortion-inducing drugs after nine weeks post-fertilization. The Church's teaching supports robust protections for the unborn. This bill would help women choose to protect their unborn children after taking mifepristone and before taking misoprostol.

ICC supports this bill.

Status:

† Heading to Governor for signature

ENACTED BILLS:

SEA148 Zoning and Housing Matters (Sen. Doriot, New Paris)

During the 2020 legislative session, the Indiana Catholic Conference opposed the passage of SB 148, as it was rushed through the hearing process with little opportunity for input. Most importantly, the bill negatively impacted retaliation protections for renters. Unfortunately, the bill passed quickly and the negative language remained intact. The bill, however, stopped at the Governor's desk. Governor Holcomb vetoed one bill during the 2020 session: SEA 148, stating that "the language in the bill is overly broad...preventing almost any type of local control over landlord-tenant relationships." The Indiana Catholic Conference believes that an override would open avenues of harm for vulnerable renters in our communities, many of whom are served by Catholic social service organizations such as Catholic Charities and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

ICC opposes the veto override.

148 Status:

† SEA148 is now enacted.

SB204 Health Care Advance Directives (Sen. Rogers, Granger)

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 in advance. The ICC collaborated with interested parties on a similar bill last session. In addition, nothing within the advance directives legislation conflicts with the Church's robust teachings on medical ethics and end of life care. HB1237, the weaker of the two bills, failed to advance by the third reading deadline and died in committee.

ICC supports these bills.

Status:

† Signed by Governor

HB1309 Pregnancy Accommodation (Rep. Karen Engleman, Georgetown)

This bill allows an employee to request an accommodation for the employee's pregnancy without retaliation. However, it does not require an employer to make any reasonable accommodation. This bill, while well intended, falls short of the important provisions in other legislation (such as HB1358 and SB246). Because this bill is weak, the ICC is opposing while hoping for more robust legislation for pregnant women in the workforce.

ICC opposes this bill.

Status:

† Signed by Governor

SB263 Religious Activities as Essential Services (Sen. Koch, Bedford)

Prohibits the state from imposing restrictions on a religious organization that are more restrictive than the restrictions imposed upon other businesses and organizations that provide essential services to the public. Permits the state to require a religious organization to comply with a neutral and generally applicable health, safety, or occupancy requirement to the same extent as other organizations, if the requirement is otherwise allowable under Indiana's religious freedom law.

ICC supports this bill.

Status:

† Signed by Governor

DEAD BILLS

SB233 TANF Eligibility (Sen. Ford, Terre Haute)

Provides an update to Indiana law concerning the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which is funded by a block grant from the federal government. This bipartisan bill would expand the eligibility requirements for TANF, as Indiana has one of the lowest eligibility thresholds in the country (17 percent of poverty). In addition, it would raise the cash assistance amount from \$288 for a family of three (an amount set in 1988) to a rate tied to Social Security cost of living. 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.

233 Status:

- + Dead Bill, failed to pass third reading deadline

SB252 Death Penalty (Sen. Boots, Crawfordsville)

This bill assigns the topics of the death sentence and life without parole to an interim study committee. The ICC supports looking more deeply into the moral and financial costs of the death penalty in Indiana, and ultimately hopes for its abolition.

ICC supports this bill.

252 Status:

- + Dead Bill, failed to pass third reading deadline

SB319 Driving Cards (Sen. Niezgodski, South Bend)

Allows undocumented Hoosiers to register for Driving Privilege Cards (DPCS). Also requires proof of insurance for DPC holders. 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, healthcare, accessing social services, attending school, and many others. In addition, the well-researched fiscal and safety benefits are numerous.

ICC supports this bill.

SB357 Cemeteries (Sen. Mishler, Bremen)

Among other provisions, this bill limits the fee charged by a cemetery owner for opening and closing a burial lot of a family member that is one of at least two burial lots purchased in the same transaction. Catholic cemeteries around the state have raised concerns about the implications of this legislation. It would complicate the multi-stage process of opening and closing burial sites and restrict the cemetery to unnecessary price limits for opening and closing fees. These fees cover the cost of maintenance on a burial site forever. Burying the

dead is one of the corporal works of mercy, and this bill would harm the ability of our Catholic cemeteries to do this important and merciful work.

ICC opposes this bill.

357 Status:

- † Dead bill, failed to pass third reading deadline

SB373 Carbon Credit Market (Sen. Glick, Lagrange)

SB373 has been amended to require the Indiana Department of Agriculture to study and make findings and recommendations concerning the potential role of the state in a voluntary carbon credit market and submit that report to the General Assembly. Additionally, the bill was amended to include immunity for an Indiana company preparing to sequester carbon dioxide underground in a 2023 project. Due to the changes in the amended bill, the ICC has shifted from support to a neutral position.

Formerly, SB373 would establish a state program to allow private investing in carbon sequestering land use practices.

ICC is neutral on the amended version.

Status:

- † Dead bill, failed to pass adjournment deadline

HB1358 and SB246 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 Church's social tradition speaks strongly to the rights of workers, particularly in the social encyclicals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition, St. John Paul II writes directly about supporting women and their unique traits in the workplace in *Laborem Exercens*.

ICC supports these bills.

HB 1369 Firearms Matters (Rep. Ben Smaltz, Auburn)

This bill would repeal the law that requires a person to obtain a license to carry a handgun in Indiana. In 2020, the USCCB urged the faithful, as a pro-life stance, to advocate for laws that reduce gun violence. States with permit-less carry laws see a 13-15% increase in gun violence.

ICC opposes this bill.

Status:

- † Dead Bill, failed to pass third reading deadline

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.