

Legislative Agenda

Chamber Outlines Bill Positions

By Vanessa Green Sindors, president and CEO, Indiana Chamber of Commerce



We look forward to working with lawmakers, the Governor and other stakeholders to advance bills that move the state further ahead and increase its competitiveness, while also defending against legislation that hinders economic growth and free enterprise. Doing so will enable Indiana to rise even higher on the list of best states to do business and be a place where more people want to live, work and come visit.

The Indiana Chamber will be championing policies that fall under the six pillars of its recently released visioning plan for the state, *Indiana Prosperity 2035*: Workforce, K-12 Education, Economic Growth, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Superior Infrastructure and Energy, Quality of Place Strategies and Healthy, Prosperous Citizens and Communities.

This second edition of the Indiana Chamber's *2024 Legislative Agenda* outlines our positions on key bills that affect Indiana businesses and future economic prosperity for communities, families and individuals throughout the state. Indiana Chamber policy committees and executive groups, composed of statewide volunteer leaders, meet throughout the year and help define the positions that ultimately get matched to actual legislation.

Our 2024 top priorities are ones that impact the state's talent pipeline, the ongoing greatest challenge for employers:

House Bills 1001 and 1243 (enhancing work-based learning opportunities), Senate Bill 1 (improving reading proficiency among young Hoosiers), Senate Bill 2 (expanding efforts for more affordable and accessible childcare) and Senate Bill 8 (removing barriers to postsecondary attainment).

Please contact our government affairs team with any questions about the bills found in this *Legislative Agenda*.

Education/Workforce

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HB 1001 EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION MATTERS (Goodrich)

Chamber Position: Support

House Bill 1001 is both a refinement and expansion of last year's House Enrolled Act 1002, a wide-ranging bill supported by the Chamber that contained a variety of policy provisions and funding incentives aimed at "reinventing high school" by expanding work-based learning opportunities. House Bill 1001 adds measures that include allowing



students to use career scholarship account funds to obtain drivers' licenses (to remove job-related transportation barriers) and tap into state dollars (traditionally earmarked for college financial aid programs) to complete postsecondary coursework, credentials and job training aligned with workforce needs.

HB 1102 CHILDCARE (Heine)

Chamber Position: Support

Childcare access/affordability is a statewide infrastructure challenge with significant implications for student learning, labor force participation and economic development. With Indiana employers consistently citing childcare among their top workforce barriers, the Chamber supports efforts, including

those in this bill to simplify and streamline the state's complex and often burdensome childcare regulations while maintaining safety standards.

HB 1243 VARIOUS EDUCATION/WORKFORCE RELATED MATTERS (Behning)

Chamber Position: Support

This bill contains Chamber-backed provisions that include strengthening Indiana's high school diploma requirements with embedded postsecondary competencies, a computer science course requirement and ensuring more comprehensive and transparent reporting regarding the utilization and effectiveness of state workforce programs.



SB 1 READING SKILLS (Rogers)

Chamber Position: Support

Reading and literacy are the foundation of a highly skilled workforce. With nearly one out of every five Hoosier adults lacking basic literacy proficiency and thousands of Indiana students struggling to read by the end of third grade, the Chamber supports the proactive state policies in Senate Bill 1 aimed at better identifying and addressing reading difficulties sooner with early interventions and targeted supports grounded in evidenced-based instructional practices.



SB 2 CHILDCARE (Charbonneau)

Chamber Position: Support

Childcare access/affordability is a statewide infrastructure challenge with significant implications for student learning, labor force participation and economic development. Senate Bill 2 features several Chamber-backed policy provisions that include accelerating state rulemaking to streamline existing childcare regulations, expanding support for childcare workers and hard-to-serve areas, and ensuring greater data transparency and reporting regarding the state investments in early learning.



SB 6 READING PROFICIENCY (Raatz)

Chamber Position: Support

Consistent with the Chamber's backing for Senate Bill 1, we support this complementary legislation to better identify students with reading deficiencies in grades four through eight and provide clear guidance to local schools regarding proven interventions and supports to address these challenges.

SB 8 HIGHER EDUCATION MATTERS (Leising)

Chamber Position: Support

Increasing postsecondary education attainment is a top Chamber priority aligned with employer needs in a talent-

driven workforce and economy. This bill contains Chamber-backed provisions aimed at removing barriers to postsecondary attainment, including requiring all high schools to offer the "Indiana college core" coursework, streamlining the "reverse transfer" process for granting associate degrees to individuals with sufficient college credits and increasing the availability of accelerated bachelor's degree programs that can be completed within three years at the state's higher education institutions.

SB 147 CHILDCARE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION AND EVALUATION

Chamber Position: Support

Increasing childcare accessibility and affordability is a top Chamber priority tied to state workforce needs. As such, the Chamber supports financial incentives, including the property tax exemptions for childcare providers and employers in Senate Bill 147, aimed at expanding childcare access and capacity in local communities across Indiana.

SB 282 ABSENTEEISM AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (Donato)

Chamber Position: Support

Removing barriers to increased education attainment and workforce participation are top priorities for the Chamber and its members. To that end, habitually truant students are far more likely to drop out of school, have limited employment prospects and an increased risk of economic hardship. As such, the Chamber supports the proactive measures included in this bill to better identify, prevent and address the risk factors and root causes associated with habitual truancy.

Economic Growth/Tech

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SB 34 OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING (Rogers)

Chamber Position: Support

This legislation furthers the state's effort to reduce unnecessary barriers to enter the workforce for licensed professionals moving to Indiana from other states.

SB 150 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CYBERSECURITY (Brown)

Chamber Position: Support

This legislation helps Indiana policymakers understand issues concerning artificial intelligence and establishes a means for state and local agencies to guard against (potentially) debilitating cybersecurity attacks.

Free Enterprise

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Tax Climate

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SB 9 NOTICE OF HEALTH CARE ENTITY MERGERS (Garten)

Chamber Position: Oppose

As amended, this bill would require Hoosier health care providers and insurance carriers to notify the Indiana attorney general 90 days in advance of when they are going to complete a merger or acquisition. While scaled back from its original version, the Chamber remains concerned about setting a precedent that state government should now play a role in the merger and acquisition process. This market intrusion may cause a chilling effect on merger and acquisition activity and lead to regulatory uncertainty that negatively impacts the state's nationally ranked business climate.

Hoosier Health

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HB 1259 PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS (Barrett)

Chamber Position: Support

This legislation would help qualified nurses relocate and provide health care in Indiana. The Chamber considers this an important tool to help address the nurse shortage in certain areas of the state.

HB 1385 PAYMENT OF AMBULANCE SERVICES (Barrett)

Chamber Position: Oppose

This legislation would mandate that insurance carriers pay 500% of the published rate for out-of-network ambulance services, which is excessive. This payment amount could drive up health insurance premiums being shouldered by employers and employees.

SB 132 PROFESSIONS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (Brown)

Chamber Position: Oppose in Part

This legislation includes mandatory dental assignment of benefits, which could erode insurance networks and make dentists less likely to join the network. Fewer dentists in network leads to higher costs and less access for Hoosiers.

HB 1120 PROPERTY TAXES (Thompson)

Chamber Position: Support

The legislation extends the cap on the maximum operating referendum tax that a school corporation can levy. Once passed by voters, a school operating referendum establishes a maximum tax rate which is uncontrolled by the property tax caps. As the value of business and residential property increases, the tax liability grows as well. The Chamber supports reasonable controls on the growth of these taxes, and this bill strikes the appropriate balance between supporting the operations of a school corporation and protecting property taxpayers.

HB 1328 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE (Snow)

Chamber Position: Support

This legislation has significant implications for the business community in terms of property tax management, levy rates and local government finance regulations. The bill focuses on administrative and procedural changes in tax assessment, appeals and compliance, with an emphasis on improving efficiency and oversight within local government finance structures. It contains a provision that allows eligible businesses to apply for, and receive, a homestead property deduction.

HB 1387 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (Miller)

Chamber Position: Support

This legislation makes amendments to the Residential Housing Infrastructure Assistance Program including an expansion in eligibility for funding and changes to certain definitions to include age-restricted housing and residential housing development facilities that may be part of redevelopment commission programs. The Chamber supports expanding this program so that more housing developments can move forward.

SB 61 TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (Holdman)

Chamber Position: Support

The legislation allows for the creation of a tourism improvement district whereby the businesses and real property owners within the district are assessed a special benefits tax to support quality of place initiatives in the district. The Chamber supports, with adequate taxpayer protections, efforts to support quality of life initiatives and boost the vibrancy of communities, such as those included in this bill.

SB 228 VARIOUS TAX MATTERS (Holdman)

Chamber Position: Support

The Department of Revenue agency bill amends the economic threshold for sales tax nexus to remove the 200-transaction trigger, which requires retail merchants to collect and remit sales tax. This measure also makes positive changes to the pass-through entity tax that was enacted in 2023 with the Chamber's support. This is an example of thoughtful action taken to continuously improve Indiana's business tax climate.

Business Law Reform

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HB 1090 TRANSPORTATION MATTERS

(Pressel)

Chamber Position: Support

Included in the Indiana Department of Transportation agency bill are provisions that make important previously excluded information available to jurors at the damages stage of trials involving automobile accidents.

HB 1160 CIVIL PROCEEDING ADVANCE

PAYMENT CONTRACTS (Lehman)

Chamber Position: Support

This legislation expands the lawsuit lending statute to protect commercial litigants from being sued by a party that is funded by foreign adversaries interested in obtaining intellectual property through the court's discovery process.

SB 226 ATTORNEY'S FEES (Gaskill)

Chamber Position: Support

This bill provides a much needed update to a law that will help both plaintiffs and defendants engage in meaningful settlement discussions.

Energy/Environment

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HB 1242 Excess Liability Trust Fund

(Morrison)

Chamber Position: Support

This bill expands the use of the Excess Liability Trust Fund (ELTF) while protecting the solvency of the fund, which has long been an environmental policy priority of the Chamber. The fund has grown due to better regulatory oversight of claims

submitted for reimbursement to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Expanding the use of the ELTF to clean up or replace with aboveground storage tanks is an equitable solution for all contributors to the fund.

HB 1276 NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING (Soliday)

Chamber Position: Support

The bill gives the Indiana Department of Environmental Management commissioner until 10 days after the last day of a public comment period to decide to hold a public hearing or meeting regarding the issuance or denial of a permit, based on information received during the public comment period. This legislation promotes efficiency and regulatory certainty.

HB 1383 WETLANDS (Morrison)

Chamber Position: Support

There has long been confusion over who regulates and what is regulated when wetlands are involved. This bill clarifies the Indiana Department of Environmental Management procedures, definitions and practices regarding wetland interpretation and regulation. It does not reduce the protection of wetlands and streamlines and simplifies compensatory mitigation.

HB 1399 PFAS CHEMICALS (Lindauer)

Chamber Position: Support

The Chamber supported HB 1189 in 2020 (and HB 1341 in 2023), which established protections for firefighters using PFAS and defined PFAS/PFOA. The current definition in Indiana Code is based on the more hazardous soluble firefighter foam cells. However, non-soluble PFAS/PFOA is an important product that is safe and used in various industries and products including medical devices, pharmaceuticals, metals, automotive and food packaging. This legislation would help clarify the difference and ensure non-soluble PFAS/PFOA can be used..

SB 206 IDEM AGENCY BILL (Niemeyer)

Chamber Position: Support

The Chamber supports several provisions in this bill that would streamline Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). These include: existing easements to be identified in a corrective action plan before an environmentally restrictive covenant is approved and IDEM making a determination within 90 days regarding prior approval for constructing or expanding a biomass anaerobic digestion facility or biomass gasification facility. Initially, the Chamber opposed parts of this bill, but it was amended to remove sections that dealt with restrictive covenants and called for a private right of action for when a party was undertaking remedial actions and access to property was denied.

Various Matters

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HB 1003 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

(Steuerwald)

Chamber Position: Support

The Chamber opposed the introduced bill based on concerns that an administrative law judge with enough expertise/experience to preside over complex environmental cases would not be required and procedural issues with the record being submitted. However, the bill has been amended to address those concerns. The legislation now addresses select gaps in Indiana law and streamlines the process. Further amendments to allow deference to the agency interpretations if the court determines they are warranted are encouraged.

SB 4 FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (Garten)

Chamber Position: Support

This bill streamlines administrative processes and helps eliminate dedicated funds that are not being used by state agencies and where funds are sitting by reverting those funds to the state's General Fund.



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2024 Quick Reference: Chamber Positions

House Bills

Bill	Bill Title	Position
HB 1001	EDUCATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION MATTERS	Support
HB 1003	ADMINISTRATIVE LAW	Support
HB 1090	TRANSPORTATION MATTERS	Support
HB 1102	DEREGULATION OF CHILDCARE	Support
HB 1120	PROPERTY TAXES	Support
HB 1160	CIVIL PROCEEDING ADVANCE PAYMENT CONTRACTS	Support
HB 1242	EXCESS LIABILITY TRUST FUND	Support
HB 1243	VARIOUS EDUCATION/WORKFORCE RELATED MATTERS	Support
HB 1259	PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS	Support
HB 1276	NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING	Support
HB 1328	DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE	Support
HB 1383	WETLANDS	Support
HB 1385	PAYMENT OF AMBULANCE SERVICES	Oppose
HB 1387	HOUSING DEVELOPMENT	Support
HB 1399	PFAS CHEMICALS	Support

Senate Bills

Bill	Bill Title	Position
SB 1	READING SKILLS	Support
SB 2	CHILDCARE	Support
SB 4	FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS	Support
SB 6	READING PROFICIENCY	Support
SB 8	HIGHER EDUCATION MATTERS	Support
SB 9	NOTICE OF HEALTH CARE ENTITY MERGERS	Oppose
SB 34	OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING	Support
SB 61	TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS	Support

SB 132	PROFESSIONS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	Oppose in Part
SB 147	CHILDCARE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION AND EVALUATION	Support
SB 150	ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CYBERSECURITY	Support
SB 206	IDEM AGENCY BILL	Support
SB 226	ATTORNEYS FEES	Support
SB 228	VARIOUS TAX MATTERS	Support
SB 282	ABSENTEEISM AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE	Support