

2019 Priority Legislation

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / INNOVATION / TECHNOLOGY

Our Priority: Support Indiana adopting a meaningful bias crimes statute, with the overriding goal being to remove Indiana from the short list of states without one.

Legislation: Senate Bill 198 – Establishes sentencing guidelines, including for hate crimes; signed by the Governor.

Authorizes a judge to increase a defendant's sentence if the defendant committed the crime because of the defendant's bias toward the victim. Passing a hate/bias crimes law was essential for Indiana and the business community because we are in such an intense battle for attracting and retaining talent as employers struggle to find enough skilled workers.

Our Priority: Support increased investment/efforts to deploy broadband in rural parts of the state.

Legislation: Senate Bill 460 – Broadband development expansion; signed by the Governor.



The Chamber's Mike Ripley (l) worked with Rep. Steve Davison (R-Salem) to make the new state guidelines for substance use and treatment more meaningful for all Hoosier employers.

The expansion of broadband is critical to long-term economic development. This legislation promotes a higher level of broadband deployment in unserved and underserved portions of the state.

Our Priority: Support maintaining and enhancing our attractive tax climate.

Legislation: Senate Bill 563 – Economic development, including the venture capital investment tax credit (VCI) transferability; signed by the Governor.

Makes a variety of positive changes to tax policy and incentive programs intended to promote and enhance economic development. Of note, the bill allows an investor to transfer all or part of a VCI tax credit, subject to certain limitations, beginning in 2020.

EDUCATION

Our Priority: Support better alignment of the state's various education and workforce programs, with overall efforts inclusive of business community needs

Legislation: House Bill 1002 – Career and technical education matters; signed by the Governor.

The measure includes a number of recommendations from the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, including strengthening career-technical education programming for Indiana high school students and increasing the state's investment in the Next Level Jobs training grants for individuals and employers.

Vote Selection Criteria and Scoring

The Indiana Chamber has well-established criteria for selecting votes to be included in the *Legislative Vote Analysis (LVA)*. Bills included meet the following four criteria:

1. Votes on all subject matter used in LVA are based on and best reflect the Chamber's legislative policy as determined by the Chamber's board of directors and expressed in *Legislative Business Issues*, *Legislative Agenda* or other Chamber communications to legislators.
2. Each member of the Indiana General Assembly is informed of all bills the Chamber is following, including the Chamber's position on each, the reasons for the position and the name and contact information of the specific Chamber issue expert to contact for more information.
3. Each member of the Indiana General Assembly is informed of the Chamber's position on the issue and bill prior to the vote. This notification was provided in editions of the *Legislative Agenda* or other communications with legislators.
4. Only floor votes for which there is a public record are used.

Base scores for each legislator are calculated as a percentage of votes cast in agreement with the Chamber's position on the bills included in LVA. Select pro-economy, pro-jobs legislation has been double-weighted to reflect its importance. A modest adjustment factor (positive or negative) has been added to the LVA scoring model to factor in very important legislative activities outside of floor votes on bills the Chamber has taken a position on, including whether a legislator sponsored/authored these bills and whether committee chairs held hearings or killed these bills. This adjustment factor is applied as a net positive or negative number of additional scored votes and is capped at +/- 10 votes.

School accountability and workforce development efforts also included.

Our Priority: Support moving up the effective date for making the state superintendent of public instruction an appointed position to 2021 instead of 2025.

Legislation: House Bill 1005 – State superintendent of public instruction; signed by the Governor.

The new secretary of education role will ensure that the Governor and superintendent are in agreement on the key education objectives, which is so important for the state’s future workforce.

Our Priority: Support suitable testing for students and accountability measures for all involved in the education process

Legislation: House Bill 1404 – School accountability improvements; signed by the Governor.

We applaud the move to integrate meaningful outcome measures into the state’s A-F school accountability system, including student completion of industry-recognized credentials and student enrollment in postsecondary education and training programs. This moves to bridge the disconnect between what we measure and the outcomes we expect to see by acknowledging the critical role Indiana high schools play in preparing students for success in work and in life.

Our Priority: Support the fiscally-responsible expansion of publicly-funded preschool initiatives for children from low-income families.

Legislation: House Bill 1628 – Pre-K expansion; signed by the Governor.



Water policy – including funding for the Water Infrastructure Assistance Program – often brought the Chamber’s Greg Ellis (I) and Rep. Ed Soliday (R-Valparaiso) together this session.

After June 30, 2019, in addition to the counties currently participating in the pre-kindergarten pilot program, it will now include eligible providers in any county in Indiana. The Chamber supports efforts to expand student access to quality early childhood education as proven drivers of student achievement and economic development.

ENVIRONMENT / INFRASTRUCTURE

Our Priority: Support significant investment in Indiana’s water infrastructure and prudent planning for the future. Safe, affordable and reliable water supplies are critical for health, safety and economic development.

Legislation: House Bill 1406 – Water infrastructure assistance fund and program; signed by the Governor.

Annually appropriates \$20 million to the Water Infrastructure Assistance Fund. The measure promotes sustainability of water resources and attempts to keep costs as low as possible.

Our Priority: Support significant investment in Indiana’s water infrastructure and prudent planning for the future. Safe, affordable and reliable water supplies are critical for health, safety and economic development.

Legislation: Senate Bill 4 – Water and wastewater utilities and runoff; signed by the Governor.

This bill establishes study areas and requires the Indiana Finance Authority to conduct annual meetings in the study areas with water utilities. The goal is to set priorities and needs for investment in infrastructure as well as the prudent management of water resources. This builds on the Chamber’s 2014 water study.

TAXATION

Our Priority: Support maintaining and enhancing our attractive tax climate.

Legislation: Senate Bill 233 – Business personal property tax exemption; signed by the Governor.

This bill increases the acquisition cost threshold for the business personal property tax exemption from \$20,000 to \$40,000, which will significantly raise the number of taxpayers who qualify for the exemption. The average tax liability of taxpayers exempted under this is \$145; it costs them more to prepare or pay for the preparation of a return than they ultimately owed in tax.

NOTE: A policy we continue to actively engage on when needed – sales tax on services – was once again not even introduced in legislation. This is in part due to our dogged efforts explaining why this would be bad for Indiana’s tax climate. Sales tax on services would be very detrimental and harm our overall attractive tax structure.