ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our Priority: Support state efforts to attract and retain workers and prime each of Indiana’s regions for economic growth.

Legislation: SB 245 – Enhance the statewide sports and tourism fund; SB 361 – Economic development and talent attraction (including enhancements to the Venture Capital Investment Tax Credit originally in SB 223 and incentives for remote workers as outlined in SB 4); both signed by the Governor

Indiana must continue to build its skilled workforce and these bills enhance the state’s exposure and accessibility. Indiana and its communities lose events to other states and regions that have access to an established bid fund. Furthermore, modernizing economic development investment tools allows the Indiana Economic Development Corporation greater flexibility in using its various appropriations. Enhanced tax credits and new programs to attract and retain remote workers and enabling Indiana to compete (or at least be considered) for entertainment projects we have lost to other states with long-established incentives signifies movement in a positive direction.

EDUCATION / WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Our Priority: Support enhancing early childhood education and childcare access and quality

Legislation: HB 1093 – Early learning and childcare access; signed by the Governor

From student learning data, we know that kindergartners who lack a strong early learning foundation often start school behind their peers and are more likely to struggle throughout their education and find meaningful employment. What’s more, the lack of affordable, high-quality childcare across Indiana is one of the outside factors most negatively impacting attracting and retaining workers, making passage of this bill all the more critical.

Our Priority: Support policies to engage more Indiana high school seniors in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which will ensure that more Hoosier students have the opportunity to earn industry-recognized credentials and degrees with reduced or no debt.

Legislation: SB 82 – FAFSA expectation; signed by the Governor

After several years of advocacy, persistence paid off with this measure to spur greater FAFSA completion. That’s important because FAFSA qualifies students for a variety of merit- and need-based financial aid. Students often make their postsecondary education decisions based on finances and making sure financial aid opportunities are available to them will prevent them from missing out on grants and scholarships that can further their education and training.

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. 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.
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Our Priority: Support a statewide standard that would remove certain siting barriers for renewable energy sources.

Legislation: SB 411 – Commercial solar and wind energy; signed by the Governor

Allows for the voluntary adoption by local government of commercial wind and/or solar siting regulations. It provides some regulatory certainty for siting of this type of energy generation and is consistent with recommendations made in the Indiana Chamber Foundation’s energy study, Powering Indiana’s Economic Future.

TAXATION AND PUBLIC FINANCE

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

Legislation: HB 1002 – Various tax matters; signed by the Governor

Indiana’s business tax climate was improved with the passage of these measures, which included provisions to pay down unfunded teacher pension obligations, repeal the utility receipts tax and reduce income taxes.

TECHNOLOGY

Our Priority: Support a cohesive statewide policy on electric vehicles that includes research and development, manufacturing, testing and deployment.

Legislation: HB 1221 – Electric vehicles and electricity pricing; signed by the Governor

A new state law will improve Indiana’s position nationally and pave the way for more electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to be installed across Indiana. These stations are crucial because the big issue with electric vehicles is range of use. Now private companies, like gas stations, can buy and sell electricity from utilities that service their area for the purposes of providing it to their electric vehicle customers. It also establishes a plan for EV infrastructure in Indiana and serves as a first step in competing with our neighbors in this field and creating an EV policy for the state.

HEALTH CARE AND LABOR

Our Priority: Oppose government mandates that prevent businesses from making autonomous decisions about vaccination and testing requirements for employees.

Legislation: HB 1001 – Administrative authority/COVID-19 immunizations; nondetrimental version signed by the Governor

The initial bill interfered with and discouraged employers from imposing vaccination requirements for their employees and would have required employers in most instances to pay for the cost of testing that is above $50 for employees who claim a vaccination exemption and are subject to testing. Furthermore, it would have broadly allowed employees who are terminated for refusing vaccinations and testing to draw unemployment benefits. Due to opposition led by the Indiana Chamber, these and other dangerous provisions were removed from the bill prior to passage.

Our Priority: Support a cap on reimbursement for ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs).

Legislation: HB 1153 – Workers’ compensation cap; signed by the Governor

Having ASCs under the definition of a medical service facility now puts them on the same footing as hospitals and capped for workers’ compensation claims at a reimbursement rate of 200% of Medicare. Data says that adjustment for hospitals decreased costs while ASC costs continued to rise. The final bill provided that ASCs be reimbursed at 200% of Medicare rates and workers will receive a benefit increase of 3% clear across the board for injuries and disablements, plus maximum weekly wage and maximum benefits. Because the cost savings are greater than the benefit increases, employers should see no impact on their workers’ comp premiums.

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