

2023 Indiana Chamber Priority Legislation

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our Priority: Build on previous measures to enhance economic and destination development.

Legislation: HB 1001 – State budget; signed by the Governor

Lawmakers earmarked \$500 million for the next phase of the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative, also known as READI 2.0. Among other budget allocations, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation received \$500 million for both its deal closing fund and aggregate tax credit awards (with the option for more when needed), as well as \$150 million for site acquisition strategies. The Indiana Destination Development Corporation also received an allocation of \$40 million over the biennium to boost the state's marketing efforts and tourism, and the Sports and Tourism Bid Fund received \$10 million.

EDUCATION / WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Our Priority: Expand access to early childcare education for all Hoosiers.

Legislation: HB 1001 – State budget; signed by the Governor

With strong urging from the Indiana Chamber and a growing coalition of advocates, the Legislature took meaningful steps forward on several pre-kindergarten fronts. Most notably, lawmakers passed a state budget that significantly raised the family eligibility threshold for Indiana's "On My Way Pre-K" program from 127% to 150% of the federal poverty line and established a new employer tax credit to incentivize small- and mid-sized businesses to increase childcare capacity in their communities.

Our Priority: Put more low-income and first-generation college students on the path to earning postsecondary credentials tied to workforce needs.

Legislation: HB 1149 – 21st Century Scholars program and SB 167 – Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); signed by the Governor

Ensuring eligible low-income students will now be automatically enrolled in the state's 21st Century Scholars program, which pays for up to four years of postsecondary education/training, will be critical considering less than half of eligible students currently enroll. Another longtime Indiana Chamber priority that passed will require high school seniors to file the FAFSA (unless opted out by the student's parent, school counselor or principal). This will increase student access to the wide range of grants and scholarships available to pay for postsecondary education and training that has become essential in today's talent-driven economy.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Our Priority: Create an updated energy plan for Indiana.

Legislation: HB 1007 – Electric utility service; signed by the Governor

This legislation creates a much-needed new energy plan for Indiana – important as the previous plan launched in 2006. The bill provides that in decisions concerning Indiana's electric generation resource mix, energy infrastructure and electric service, the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission must consider the following attributes of electric utility service: reliability, affordability, resiliency, stability and environmental sustainability.

HEALTH CARE AND LABOR

Our Priority: Provide resources to combat the mental health challenges many Hoosier workers face.

Legislation: SB 1 – Behavioral health matters; signed by the Governor

Mental health concerns cost Indiana employers \$885 million annually in lost productivity, and it costs the state \$708 million per year in direct health care expenses. Senate Bill 1 received nearly unanimous support throughout the process and was quickly signed by Gov. Eric Holcomb. The budget bill (HB 1001) also funded the structure of SB 1 with \$100 million total over the two-year budget for community mental health (to establish certified community behavioral health clinics, provide crisis response services including mobile crisis teams and crisis receiving and stabilization services) and \$10 million for regional mental health facilities.

Our Priority: Improve the state's abysmal health metrics.

Legislation: SB 4 – Public Health Commission; signed by the Governor

This legislation implements many of the recommendations of the Governor's Public Health Commission to combat Indiana's consistently low health rankings. Most notably, SB 4 allows local health departments to opt into state funding to help provide core public health services to improve local health metrics. This optional opt-in allows local health departments the ability to tap into increased funding (via the budget bill) while maintaining local control of these vital services.

TAXATION AND PUBLIC FINANCE

Our Priority: Provide tax relief for small businesses.

Legislation: SB 2 – Taxation of pass-through entities; signed by the Governor

This was the first law signed by Gov. Holcomb in the session's early going. The bottom line is more than a half million Indiana business owners can enjoy tax relief and were provided certainty as they prepared their 2022 returns (since it was retroactive). Indiana's small businesses, especially, are in line to benefit. The state budget bill also accelerates the individual income tax phasedown by two years, providing additional tax relief.

TECHNOLOGY

Our Priority: Find a balanced data privacy policy to protect consumers' data without hindering business interests.

Legislation: SB 5 – Consumer data protection; signed by the Governor

This was a priority not only for the Indiana Senate but also the Indiana Chamber. Its passage, unanimous in both houses, was the culmination of an 18-month effort by us and our partners. It represents a win for industry and consumers concerned about where their data goes online and how it is used. Currently, there is no federal data privacy protections or consumer rights against companies that collect customers' personal information online, in the stores or at the gas pump and subsequently monetize it as part of their business operations or sell it to third parties.

Legislators Making a Difference

At the General Assembly, we have stalwarts who continually rise to the occasion to make Indiana a great place to live, work and raise a family. These individuals take on tough tasks and work diligently to see much-needed policy cross the finish line or at least meaningful debate started. They are often in legislative leadership or heading a critical committee.

WE ARE PROUD TO HONOR THESE SIX AS 2023 INDIANA CHAMBER LEGISLATIVE CHAMPIONS:



Rep. Robert Behning (Dist. 91 – Indianapolis), as the longtime House Education Chair, further burnished his record during a momentous session for education and workforce issues, successfully shepherding a number of policy priorities aimed at strengthening Indiana's talent pipeline and expanding K-12 and postsecondary educational opportunities.



Rep. Matt Lehman (Dist. 79 – Berne) provided vital leadership as majority floor leader to put the brakes on and find alternatives for several major pieces of business-hostile and even unworkable legislation. His leadership in 2023 really made a difference to protect Indiana's pro-growth, free enterprise system and reputation.



Sen. Rodric Bray (Dist. 37 – Martinsville), as president pro tempore of the Senate, showed real determination this session on tough measures, such as finding a solution to remove very dangerous and costly provisions in the anti-ESG investment legislation, while leading on a variety of pro-business and fiscal-responsibility measures that strengthen Indiana's future.



Sen. Linda Rogers (Dist. 11 – Granger) had an impressive first year as the Senate Pensions and Labor Committee chair, bringing forth hearings for major Chamber priority bills, including workshare, and limiting project labor agreements. She also stopped anti-business measures such as minimum wage increases, overtime pay changes and paid FMLA leave mandates, while authoring important measures in housing and education.



Sen. Liz Brown (Dist. 15 – Fort Wayne) showed real determination in protecting Indiana's business legal climate this session, as well as authoring key consumer data protection legislation and providing key leadership on occupational licensing, health and fiscal issues.



Rep. Craig Snow (Dist. 22 – Warsaw) distinguished himself as an up-and-coming fiscal leader as a new member of the House Ways and Means Committee. He successfully shepherded major tax legislation to provide more than \$50 million in federal tax savings per year, managed the annual Department of Local Finance legislation, and was a leader in the effort to boost investment in certified technology parks and the orthopedics industry.