

2024 Key Legislative Issues



Our Top Priorities

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Support local recognition of state XBE certification.** The Indiana Chamber backs administrative and legislative changes at the state and local levels to minority, women and veteran business enterprise (XBE) policies and practices to make certification, recertification and bidding activities efficient – as well as efforts for uniform definitions and universal recognition of state certifications at the local level and partnership agreements among state agencies.
- **Support driving privilege cards.** Driving privilege cards will improve public safety and increase the number of insured drivers. Further, undocumented residents of Indiana who hold driving cards will feel a greater sense of security and responsibility when driving and/or interacting with authorities.

EDUCATION / WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- **Support additional efforts to enhance early childcare access and quality.** The lack of affordable, high-quality childcare across Indiana is one of the outside factors most negatively impacting attracting and retaining workers. Building off of the positive 2023 legislation, the Indiana Chamber supports non-fiscal measures to 1) accelerate the state rulemaking process to streamline childcare regulations based on third-party evaluation findings; 2) expand support for hard-to-serve areas by allowing childcare workers to automatically qualify for childcare vouchers and free skills training through Indiana's Workforce Ready Grant; and 3) ensure greater data transparency regarding the utilization and sufficiency of childcare subsidies and their intersection with economic/workforce development strategies and investments.
- **Support further strengthening career-connected learning expectations and opportunities for Indiana students, building on last year's House Enrolled Act 1002.** Indiana has a talent and quality worker shortage that is leaving too many positions unfilled and negatively affects attempts to lure companies to relocate to the state. Continuing momentum from the landmark 2023 legislation, the Chamber supports: 1) giving employers greater voice in determining, prioritizing and incentivizing in-demand skills and credentials of value aligned with workforce needs; 2) clarifying the role, responsibilities and sustainability/support structure for regional "intermediary organizations" charged with coordinating/managing the delivery of career coaching and related readiness activities; and 3) strengthening cross-sector data collection and reporting for work-based learning experiences (internships, apprenticeships, etc.) with an emphasis on access, quality and workforce alignment.

ENERGY / ENVIRONMENT

- **Support revised Indiana Code definition of PFAS/PFOA.** The current definition is based exclusively on the firefighter foam, but PFAS/PFOA is used extensively in various industries, including medical devices, pharmaceuticals, metals, automotive and food packaging.

HEALTH CARE

- **Support increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates to medical providers.** Reimbursement rates are too low and that results in a shift to commercial payers making up for the losses providers incur on Medicaid patients.
- **Support cigarette tax increase of \$2 per pack.** The cigarette tax has not been raised since 2007; increasing it by \$2 per pack would reduce the number of smokers in Indiana by about 100,000 and generate over \$370 million in new revenue in the first year. That would provide ample revenue to help fund increasing Medicaid obligations. What's more, the \$2 hike would curb smoking. Indiana's adult smoking rate is the eighth highest in the nation and has been too high for years. Such an increase in the cigarette tax will also keep an estimated 24,500 youngsters from becoming adults who smoke or vape and help 50,000 adults quit smoking – and save nearly 20,000 lives.
- **Support expanding the scope-of-practice for low-level providers that would increase access to care.** Urging an examination of the scope-of-practice laws that govern mid-level providers and determine whether policy changes could facilitate a safe increase in primary care practitioners.

LABOR RELATIONS

- **Support banning union-only project labor agreements (PLAs).** The Indiana Chamber believes that PLAs and responsible bidder ordinances are not in the best interest of the vast majority of Hoosiers. Taxpayer-financed construction projects must be open to competition among all qualified bidders regardless of their labor policies or the collective bargaining choices of their employees.

TAXATION / PUBLIC FINANCE

- **Support increasing the threshold for business personal property exemption.** If the acquisition cost of all business personal property is less than \$80,000 within a county, the taxpayer's business personal property is exempt from taxation. The exemption is meant to streamline tax administration by relieving businesses of their burden to pay or file if they have less than \$80,000 in total business personal property. At issue is that the costs incurred in preparing a return exceed the amount of tax owed for a substantial number of taxpayers.

TORT REFORM

- **Support tort reform.** Improving Indiana's legal climate for existing and prospective businesses, and business owners, will benefit the state's long-term economic prosperity. The Indiana Chamber intends to add to and improve existing statutes that are unfavorable – and sometimes unfair – to businesses and industries that include, without limitation, commercial vehicle operators and owners, business property managers and owners, parties beholden to customer service agreements and litigants caught up in frivolous lawsuits.