

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE 124<sup>th</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 2025

Happy New Year! Thank you for allowing Barnes and Thornburg LLP to represent you during the 124<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. This past Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, the legislature reconvened for the 2025 legislative session. The session will be a long session and business must statutorily conclude no later than Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>.

This week, the House and Senate caucuses started releasing their priorities for the 2025 session. The Senate Republican Caucus agenda focuses on property tax reform, lowering healthcare costs for Hoosiers, and increasing state government efficiency. More information can be found here: <u>Senate Republican 2025 Agenda</u>.

The House Republican Caucus agenda will be released next Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>.

The House Democratic Caucus released their agenda on Wednesday with Leader GiaQuinta delivering remarks on the House floor about their priorities. Their plan focuses on decreasing the cost of living, funding public education, and supporting public safety and veteran initiatives. The full agenda is linked here: <u>House Democrats 2025</u> <u>Agenda</u>.

The Senate Democratic Caucus announced its priorities in a noon press conference on Thursday. Their caucus plans to focus on increasing Medicaid reimbursement services, relieving medical debt, funding public education, and expanding tenant rights. An article detailing the goals is linked <u>here</u>. The Senate Democratic Caucus also has new leadership this session. Senator Shelli Yoder (D- Bloomington) has been elected to serve as Minority Caucus Leader. Senator Andrea Hunley (D- Indianapolis) will serve as Assistant Minority Leader and Senator Rodney Pol (D- Chesterton) will serve as Minority Caucus Chair.

Only two (2) committees met this week: Senate Judiciary and Local Government. Details of proposed legislation in these committees are discussed below.

# **JUDICIARY**

The Senate Judiciary kicked off the legislative session by hearing four (4) bills. The first was SB 80, Code Publication authored by Sen. Aaron Freeman (R- Indianapolis) proposes to repeal and relocate certain sections of Indiana's legal code. The bill makes no substantive changes to the law as introduced. SB 144, Parental Rights authored by Sen. Liz Brown (R– Ft. Wayne) prohibits government entities from withholding information about a child from their parents. The bill received support from several parents and attorneys. However, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Indiana opposed the bill, citing its vague nature. Sen. Freeman and Sen. Cyndi Carrasco both made statements in the committee confirming concerns about the vagueness of the language and noting that it could become problematic. Sen. Brown mentioned adding an amendment to exempt judges and public defenders from the bill. The bill was held and will be voted on next week.

The Committee also heard SB 142, Eviction Issues authored by Sen. Brown (R-Ft. Wayne) which would automatically expunge evictions after a period of seven (7) years providing that judgement against the tenant was paid in full. Sen. Freeman expressed opposition to the bill, as manually expunging evictions after seven (7) years citing concerns that the administrative requirements needed to implement the bill may cause a significant strain on the court system. Sen. Eric Koch also agreed with this concern.

Finally, SB 11, Minor Access and Use of Social Media authored by Sen. Mike Bohacek (R- Michiana Shores), was also heard in Senate Judiciary. As introduced, the bill would limit access to social media for children under the age of fifteen (15). Sen. Bohacek suggested several amendments, which will be considered by the committee in an upcoming hearing.

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Senate Local Government Committee met Thursday and passed one bill which will now be sent to the Senate floor for further consideration. SB 127, Battery Charged Security Devices authored by Sen. Jim Buck (R -Kokomo) was presented in the committee. The bill would prohibit a county, city, or town from adopting an ordinance that would impose requirements on certain battery charged security devices. This bill passed and will move forward to the Senate floor.

SB 144, Political Subdivision Retirement Plans (Sen. Vaneta Becker), would require a political subdivision offering an employee retirement plan to annually present the plan to its respective county council. Sen. Becker plans to add an amendment to the bill for the committee's consideration. The bill was held in the Committee.



**Points of Interest** 

# **GUBERNATORIAL TRANSITION**

Governor-Elect Mike Braun unveiled his incoming administration's Freedom and Opportunity Agenda late last year. The Governor-Elect's agenda can be found <u>here</u>. The Governor-Elect will be inaugurated on Monday, January 13, 2025. This weekend will celebrate Governor-Elect Braun with public and sponsored events planned starting Saturday. Information about the upcoming events can be here: <u>Inauguration Weekend</u> <u>Schedule of Events</u>

With a new Governor comes a new administration. Please see the new administration roster below:

#### Cabinet Members:

Mike Speedy, Secretary of Business Affairs David Adams, Secretary of Commerce Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education Suzanne Jaworowski, Secretary of Energy and Natural Resources Dr. Gloria Sachdev, Secretary of Health and Family Services Lisa Hershman, Secretary of Management and Budget Jennifer-Ruth Green, Secretary of Public Safety Matthew Ubelhor, Secretary of Transportation and Infrastructure Anthony Scott, Superintendent of the Indiana State Police Brigadier General Lawrence Muennich, Adjutant General of Indiana Micah Beckwith, Lieutenant Governor Joshua Kelley, Chief of Staff

# Senior Staff:

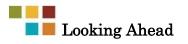
Jason Johnson, Deputy Chief of Staff, Legislative Affairs Jessica Wedgewood, Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations Patrick Price, Governor's Legal Counsel

# State Agencies and Departments:

Steve Russo, Executive Director of the Indiana Public Retirement System Holly Lambert, Insurance Commissioner Lindsay Hyer, Executive Director of the Professional Licensing Agency Thomas Fite, Director of the Department of Financial Institutions James Michaels, Superintendent of the Indiana School for the Blind Dr. David Geeslin, Superintendent of the Indiana School for the Deaf Dr. Lindsay Weaver, Commissioner of the Indiana State Department of Health Steve Cox, Director of the Indiana Broadband Office Dan Huge, Chairman of the Indiana Finance Authority Don Lamb, Director of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture Lloyd Arnold, Commissioner of the Department of Corrections Alan Morrison, Director of the Department of Natural Resources Kevin Garvey, Commissioner of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles Mitch Roob, Secretary of the Family and Social Services Administration Jake Adams, Department of Veterans Affairs Fred Glynn, Executive Director of the Office of Community and Rural Affairs Brandon Clifton, Indiana Department of Administration Commissioner Pete Miller, Executive Director of the Indiana Management Performance Hub Kent Abernathy, Indiana Department of Transportation Commissioner Adam Krupp, Director of the Department of Child Services



The first week of session primarily involved introducing bills and attending to procedural formalities. Next week, more committees will convene to hear bills, and bills will start to move to the House and Senate floors for debate.



The deadline for filing <u>Senate</u> bills has passed, but <u>House</u> bills can be filed until Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for assigning bills to Senate committees is Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>.

Please use the live link sent in your weekly report email to keep up to date with new bills.

Please feel free to contact a member of our legislative team should you have questions regarding the happenings in the Indiana General Assembly!

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