



Legislative Update

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TO: INAAP

FROM: Bose Public Affairs Group

WHAT'S NEW?

Bills are flying as lawmakers wasted no time getting to work this shortened week. Wednesday in particular saw a whopping 15 committee meetings scheduled with 50 bills heard in committee!

Legislation will no doubt continue to move at this breakneck speed as the committee report deadlines for each chamber are creeping up on the horizon. See the remaining legislative deadlines below:

House	Senate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jan. 30 – Deadline for House bills to advance out of committee• Feb. 1 – 2nd Reading Deadline• Feb. 5 – 3rd Reading Deadline• Feb. 27 – Deadline for Senate bills to advance out of committee• Feb. 29 – 2nd Reading Deadline for Senate bills• March 4 – 3rd Reading Deadline for Senate bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feb. 1 – Deadline for Senate bills to advance out of committee• Feb. 5 – 2nd Reading Deadline• Feb. 6 – 3rd Reading Deadline• Feb. 29 – Deadline for House bills to advance out of committee• March 4 – 2nd Reading Deadline for House bills• March 5 – 3rd Reading Deadline for House bills
<i>Required Sine Die Date: March 14</i>	

2024 ELECTION

Beth White, a former elected official and longtime attorney, announced she is running for the Democratic nomination for Indiana Attorney General. White is the second Democrat to put her hat in the ring for this position along with former Democratic Secretary of State nominee Destiny Wells who made her campaign official back in November.

Valerie McCray, a clinical psychologist from Indianapolis, announced she is seeking the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate seat now held by Republican Mike Braun, who is running for governor. Keith Potts, a former Indianapolis City-County Councilor, recently dropped out of the race. Marc Carmichael, a former state representative and former president of the Indiana Beverage Alliance was the first Democrat to announce his intention to run last year.

REPUBLICAN READING PRIORITY BILL ADVANCES ALONG PARTY LINES

A Republican-led bill addressing Indiana's elementary literacy decline passed the Senate Education and Career Development Committee on a party-line vote.

[Senate Bill 1](#), which is a response to the high number of students failing the third-grade reading test, focuses on retaining students struggling to read. The legislation requires reading skill tests starting in kindergarten, parental notification of results, and summer school options for reading intervention. It also proposes students take the IREAD-3 exam in second grade.

Critics, including Democratic lawmakers, argue the bill doesn't address root issues and suggest delaying retention until the overhaul of the state's reading curriculum is complete.

The bill now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

COMMITTEE SUPPORTS SENATE CHILD CARE LEGISLATION

State Sen. Ed Charbonneau's child care bill received support from over a dozen advocacy organizations, child care provider associations, and government officials in a Senate Health and Provider Services Committee hearing.

[Senate Bill 2](#) aims to address staffing shortages in the child care industry by making child care workers categorically eligible for public child care subsidies. The bill also proposes biannual CPR training, lowers age restrictions for certain workers, and establishes a pilot program with three micro centers for providers caring for fewer than 30 children. While some testified that the eased restrictions would improve workforce retention and recruitment, concerns were raised about potential costs. The bill assigns new responsibilities to state agencies, including creating a subsidy dashboard and providing updates on efforts to incentivize businesses to offer child care support.

The legislation has been sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee for approval due to associated costs before it can advance to the full Senate body.

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION BILL CLEARS FIRST HURDLE

Legislation aimed at limiting prior authorization, a process used by insurance companies to ensure payment for services, was presented in the Senate Health and Provider Services Committee this week.

The bill's author, State Sen. Tyler Brown argued that prior authorization has become wasteful and impedes patient care. [Senate Bill 3](#) faces opposition from insurers and employers' associations concerned about potential cost increases.

The proposed legislation targets the use of algorithms in the prior authorization process and requires reviews by practicing doctors in the same medical specialty. It seeks to eliminate prior authorization for emergency services, routine care, and common prescription drugs, setting an overall cap on its use. Although acknowledging the need for reform, opponents argue that occasional issues don't undermine the fundamental value of prior authorization.

The bill passed the committee unanimously and now moves to the Senate Appropriations Committee for further consideration of fiscal impacts.

GOVERNMENT FUNDS REVIEW BILL RECEIVES FIRST APPROVAL

The Senate Appropriations Committee voted unanimously in support of [Senate Bill 4](#). The legislation comes as a result of the Government Reform Task Force and would create a regular review of state government funds and return any unused funding back to the General Fund. According to the bill's author, State Sen. Chris Garten, the State budget agency would prepare a report of unused funds every two fiscal years before the legislative session that the General Assembly will then review.

HOUSE EDUCATION PRIORITY BILL AWAITS FULL VOTE

A measure aiming to make fixes to a work-based learning bill from the 2023 session is on its way to the House Floor for a full vote next week. [House Bill 1001](#), authored by Rep. Chuck Goodrich, allows funds from the 21st Century Scholars program and Frank O'Bannon grants to be used by high school graduates for training by approved entities rather than for education costs at colleges or universities. It also permits career savings account (CSA) grants to cover drivers' license costs and extends the CSA application timeline. Democrats expressed concerns about spending caps and funding drivers' licenses.

ANTI-SEMITISM LEGISLATION MOVES TO SENATE

Indiana House lawmakers passed a bill defining antisemitism in educational settings, introduced by Rep. Chris Jeter. [House Bill 1002](#) adds antisemitism to the state's public policy on educational institutions. It passed unanimously, but protesters expressed concerns about its impact on free speech.

The bill passed 81-0, with 17 members excused.

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW PROCEEDINGS MOVES FORWARD

[House Bill 1003](#) is on track to pass the House of Representatives next week. The bill would eliminate the Office of Environmental Adjudication (OEA) and transfer proceedings to the Office of Administrative Law Proceedings (OALP), making it the ultimate authority in any administrative proceeding under its jurisdiction. It is intended to better support taxpayers and business owners who interact with state agencies by creating a more efficient and balanced appeals process that is presided over by administrative law judges.

READY-TO-DRINK COCKTAILS BILL MOVES TO SENATE

The Indiana House of Representatives on Tuesday approved legislation in a 74-20 vote that would allow beer wholesalers to sell liquor-based ready-to-drink cocktails. The bill's author, Rep. Ethan Manning said [House Bill 1025](#) would create competition within the wholesale tier where it does not currently exist by putting liquor-based mixed beverages under a wine license. Opponents, including spirits wholesalers, argue that it creates an unlevel playing field and does not allow them to compete for beer wholesalers' products.

The bill now moves to the Senate, where the same bill died last year without a committee hearing.

ELECTIONS COMMITTEE CONSIDERS SCHOOL REFERENDUMS

Indiana school boards, superintendents, and teachers' groups across the state testified in opposition to [House Bill 1376](#), which seeks to limit school ballot referendums to general elections.

The bill's author State Rep. Bob Behning argued the measure is "taxpayer-friendly" and aims to increase voter engagement. Critics, including the Indiana School Boards Association, expressed

concerns about potential budget issues as schools finalize budgets before Election Day, making it challenging to predict voter support.

Despite no public support except from Behning, the bill was advanced by the House Elections and Apportionment Committee 8-5, with one Republican joining Democrats in voting against it. The measure now moves to the full House for consideration.

INDYGO'S BLUE LINE IN JEOPARDY AFTER BILL HEARING

The fate of IndyGo's Blue Line project is uncertain as lawmakers in the Senate's Appropriations Committee considered [Senate Bill 52](#), which proposes a ban on dedicated lanes for future public transit projects statewide starting July 2025.

The Blue Line, a 24-mile project connecting the Indianapolis International Airport to downtown and the far east side, faces potential changes if the bill becomes law. The bill's author, State Sen. Aaron Freeman, argues that dedicated lanes would impede traffic flow on Washington Street. The hearing sparked emotional and contentious discussions, with supporters advocating for pedestrian safety and infrastructure improvements, while opponents, including business owners, expressed concerns about traffic and business impacts.

The bill passed the committee 7-5 and now moves to the full Senate for a vote.

NUMEROUS CANNABIS BILLS FILED BY BOTH PARTIES

Twelve different bills have been introduced this legislative session that are related to cannabis (hemp or marijuana). Gov. Eric Holcomb has previously said he will not legalize marijuana in the Hoosier state until it is federally rescheduled, squashing hopes of any action this year.

The only cannabis-related bill to move so far this year is State Rep. Jake Teshka's [House Bill 1079](#). This bill increases quality control standards and consumer protections for hemp products on the market place today, for example by adding age restrictions and increasing testing requirements. The bill also re-legalizes the sale of craft hemp flower at retail.

The House Committee on Commerce, Small Business and Economic Development passed the bill out with a 9-3 vote.

BILLS HELD IN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Two bills were held from a vote in the House Financial Institutions Committee with the intent to return next week.

[House Bill 1084](#) is aimed at protecting the privacy of Hoosiers owning firearms by prohibiting government entities or others from keeping a registry or list of firearms or firearm owners. The bill would also prohibit credit card companies from tracking firearms sales and ensure they cannot refuse to process the lawful purchase of a firearm or firearm accessories. State Rep. Jake Teshka said the bill is in response to activism by large corporations and global organizations who sought to institute new merchant category codes to track firearm purchases. Financial institutions have expressed concern the bill could burden them with hefty compliance costs.

[House Bill 1284](#) would clarify Indiana law regarding contract agreements for deposit accounts with financial institutions. The bill provides that continued use or silence can be considered acceptance for agreements between a depository financial institution and a deposit to be changed or amended. Supporters included bank and credit union representatives who said the

current system has been burdensome for their operations. However, the Indiana Community Action Poverty Institution felt the proposal gave financial institutions too much ability to change or add new terms to agreements without customer consent.

WHAT'S NEXT?

To see what committees are scheduled in the Senate, click [here](#). View the House's docket [here](#).

Visit iga.in.gov to access bills, view the latest session calendars, and watch session live.

Please contact your BPAG Professional with any questions regarding the topics above.

PRIORITY LEGISLATION