



April 25, 2019

Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is the public policy voice of the Catholic bishops in Indiana regarding state and national matters.

The 2019 legislative session ended on April 24, several days ahead of the deadline of April 29. While many bills were left undetermined, the legislators took care of their primary responsibility, establishing Indiana's biennial budget. As with all sessions, there are those who are happy with outcomes and there are disappointments. And this is exactly the outcomes from ICC perspective.

HB 1001, 2019-2020 budget, passed mostly along party lines. The budget saw a **significant increase for K-12 education**. Also included was the change to **increase voucher amount for families with incomes just above the full voucher support**. Families with incomes between 101 and 125% of free and reduced income will **now be eligible for 70%** rather than 50% tuition support. Families between 125 – 150 % of lunch guidelines will continue to receive the 50% voucher. Also, there was an **increase in the scholarship tax credit**, which allows for an opportunity to raise more funds for scholarships.

Conference committee report HB 1004, School safety, passed both Senate and House after undergoing several changes. The controversial parts of **funding for mental health services and participation in the Youth Risk behavior survey were removed** from the bill. Remaining were requirements for schools to conduct a threat assessment before July 2021 and an active shooter drill each school year. **Accredited non-public schools are eligible for matching grants from the secured school fund.**

Both chambers approved HB 1284, Self-defense, defense of others and firearm matters. As noted last week, the conference report included provisions that permits churches with a school to allow persons with gun permit to carry a gun on church property. This is a **significant change in state law which** forbids guns on school property except for security and law enforcement personnel.

2019 wrap-up

The 2019 session held **mostly success regarding life issues**. **Both pro-life bills passed and were signed by Governor Holcomb**. **Dismemberment abortion (HB 1211)** will be prohibited; and nurses, physician assistants and pharmacist (**SB 201**) will also have conscience protection regarding abortion procedures. Another life affirming bill (**HB 1547**) **also passed**; health providers can now assist pregnant minors who do not have parental involvement. Under current law medical care could only happen if the minor's health was in danger. Now care can be provided in the best interest of both the mother and child. In addition, the bill providing for **assisted reproduction and gestational surrogacy (HB 1369)** **was stopped in the Senate**. And although bills were filed, **physician assisted suicide was stopped without a hearing**.

School choice was protected, and with the **addition of the third tier** for support the program was enhanced. In addition to the added support for families, **the state increased access by adding an opportunity during second semester for a family to receive a voucher**. More importantly, **religious liberty of schools was protected**. Efforts to require Catholic schools, accepting scholarship/voucher students to **change employment policy and expectations failed each time it was proposed**.

While the attempt to cap payday loans was not successful, the bill (SB 104) was heard and **passed out of committee**. The **major victory was stopping another bill (SB 613)**, which would have expanded predatory lending. On the other hand, the **failure of changing TANF eligibility (SB 440) was a disappointing outcome**; the proposed change would have impacted families very positively.

ICC focus for each session is the protection and dignity of human life, protecting the wellbeing of the family, defending the integrity and religious liberty of the Church and its ministries and protecting the vulnerable from exploitation. **For the most part these objectives were achieved during the 2019 session**.

In addition to the Update, **more detailed information regarding the bills, as well as detailed information about the legislative process and the Indiana General Assembly can be obtained by clicking [here](#)**. Archived I-CAN Updates, ICC positions and other background information can be accessed on the ICC website www.indianacc.org