



February 14, 2019

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

Busy week in committees as it is the last full week of committee hearings. **House needs to wrap up committees by Tuesday morning next week. The Senate must conclude committee hearings on its bills by Thursday morning, February 21.**

**HB 1369 Assisted reproduction and gestational surrogacy**, authored by Representative Sean Eberhart (R – Shelbyville), **passed House Judiciary Committee 9 – 1. ICC testified in opposition.** While the bill provides regulation and protections during the surrogate process, the bill ultimately promotes or furthers the use of in vitro fertilization and surrogacy as a proper and acceptable process. The process results in multiple embryos being discarded or frozen indefinitely and others donated for research. Often multiple embryos are implanted and then selectively reduced and aborted. Also, **surrogacy commodifies the womb of the gestational mother, objectifying the woman.** Surrogacy is exploitive of women, particularly women who may be socially or economically vulnerable. **The bill will be considered by full House next week.** [Contact your Representative to oppose the bill.](#)

**Senate Health Committee amended and passed SB 201, Health provider ethical exemption**, authored by Senator Liz Brown (R – Fort Wayne). The **amendment provides conscience protection regarding abortion** procedures or actions **for all nurses, pharmacists, nurse practitioners and physician assistants.** The original bill included many other licensed individuals. **The bill passed 8 – 1. ICC supports the bill.** Current law protects physicians and hospital employees only. Abortion procedures and methods have expanded since Indiana law was enacted years ago. SB 201 updates the law. **The bill will be considered for second and third reading next week.**

**House Public Policy Committee heard HB 1211, Abortion matters**, authored by Representative Peggy Mayfield (R – Martinsville) and Representative Christy Stutzman (R – Middlebury). **The bill prohibits dismemberment abortion in Indiana.** Dismemberment abortion is a procedure that cuts the fetus into parts in order to extract the fetus from the womb. This type of abortion is typically done after the first trimester. While not common, the procedure is horrific as it is done while the fetus is alive. **The committee heard 4 hours of testimony** on Wednesday afternoon and evening. **The committee will vote on the bill on Monday; it is expected to pass committee and will be considered by the House next week. ICC supports the bill.**

**House Public Health Committee heard HB 1547, Consent to pregnancy services of a minor**, authored by Representative Cindy Kirchhofer (R – Beech Grove). This **bill is similar to SB 352** in the Senate. However, **Representative Kirchhofer amended the bill** to provide that health providers must first make a reasonable attempt to contact parent(s) before providing any service.

**The bill addresses the concerns raised in the Senate** in that parental rights are recognized as primary for consent of medical care of a minor. **The committee passed the bill unanimously. With the amendment, ICC is not opposed to the bill.**

**Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions heard testimony on SB 587, Consumer credit,** authored by Senator Andy Zay (R – Huntington), **but no vote was taken.** Many raised concerns about the bill as drafted. Even those who requested the bill agreed to bring fees back under the loan shark cap in Indiana law. **The bill would raise current limits on interest rates to a standard 36% cap.** Current law caps 36% for loans under \$2000 and rates are less for higher amounts. **The committee will consider amendments** for the bill. **These could be considered at next week’s committee meeting.** There is also a possibility that the bill will not be voted. **Unless it is changed substantially ICC will oppose.**

**HB 1643, Firearm matters, passed the House Ways and Means Committee this week.** It will be **considered by all Representatives next week.** The bill removes the prohibition of guns on school property where a church is attached if the church or property owner has a policy that allows it. Only persons with license to carry would be permitted to have their gun while at church for business or worship or volunteer activities. Since the church can prohibit guns on its property, **ICC is neutral on the bill.**

**On a vote of 63 – 32, the House defeated an amendment** by Representative Dan Forestal (D – Indianapolis), **which would have required Catholic schools, accepting scholarship/voucher students, to change its employment policy and expectations.** This comes as a result of a counselor being put on leave after discovering she was married to another woman. **Catholic and other religiously affiliated schools must be able to employ persons who will teach and support the mission and ministry of the school.** This is necessary to be authentic and have integrity with those who seek what the schools offer. **ICC opposed the amendment; this amendment may be filed on other bills during the session.**

**SB 440, TANF eligibility, will be heard in Senate Family and Children Services Committee on Monday, February 18.** The bill updates Indiana’s TANF law which provides support to families in poverty. **Indiana’s law has not updated its support for these eligible families since 1988.** In addition to increasing monetary support it also increases those eligible which has not been changed since the mid 90’s. The effect of the bill would be to allow families up to 50% of poverty level to be eligible. **ICC supports the bill.** The Church teaches that food and other basic needs is a human right and not just a number or statistic or faceless, but a human person.

**Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions will vote on SB 104, Small loans,** authored by Senator Greg Walker (R – Columbus), **next week Wednesday. ICC supports this bill** as it **will cap payday loan rates and fees at 36%.** These are small loans up to \$600. There **may be an amendment** to further restrict predatory online loans.

**Senate Commerce and Technology Committee is considering a hearing next Thursday for SB 613, Installment small loans,** authored by Senator Andy Zay (R – Huntington). **The bill is similar to payday loans** but increases the amount and loan term to as long as 180 days. APR would range in excess of 100% to as high as 390%. **ICC opposes the bill.**

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](http://www.indianacc.org)