



February 21, 2019

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

Final week for committees to meet determining the fate of bills in their chamber of origin. Bills not heard and passed are considered dead for this session. **House bills must pass third reading on Monday; Senate bills must pass by end of day on Tuesday, February 26.**

Senate Children and Family Services Committee **passed SB 440, TANF eligibility**, authored by Senator Jon Ford (R – Terre Haute), **on a bipartisan vote of 9 – 0**. The **update is needed** because **TANF support** has not been changed since 1988 and **eligibility guidelines** since mid-1990's. **ICC testified in support** of the bill. **The Senate will vote it next week.**

House Public Policy Committee **passed HB 1211, Abortion matters. 9 -4** on Monday. The bill prohibits dismemberment abortion. **It passed the House 71-26. ICC supports the bill.**

On a vote of 78 – 18 the House passed HB 1369, Assisted reproduction and gestational surrogacy, authored by Representative Sean Eberhart. (R – Shelbyville) The **bill now goes to the Senate** for consideration where it is sponsored by Senator Vaneta Becker (R – Evansville). **ICC opposed the bill** as it uses in vitro fertilization and furthers the commodification of children and women. The rationale used by supporters was that since women and families are involved with this procedure, it provides protection for those who are involved. However, the procedure is inherently immoral, and **regulating a practice that debases and commodifies women and children does not and cannot transform it into something good and worthwhile.**

SB 104, Small loan finance charges, passed the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee **6 – 2**. The **bill will be considered next week**. The Catholic Church condemns usury and the Indiana Catholic Conference has been working to stop expansion of these types of loans and to curb excessive interest and fees on payday loans for several years. **SB 104 caps interest and fees to 36% APR. Please contact your Senator asking them to support SB 104 [here](#).**

SB 587, Consumer credit, was withdrawn by the author, Senator Andy Zay (R – Huntington); **no amendment was offered, nor vote taken** in Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee. Rather, **an amendment with features from this bill was added to SB 613.**

On the last day and during the final hours for Senate committees to consider **SB 613, the Senate Commerce Committee stripped the bill and inserted a 69-page amendment**; the **bill is titled, Consumer credit**, and authored by Senator Andy Zay (R – Huntington). The **bill now creates several new consumer credit products and expands current consumer credit offered by loan companies**. It provides installment loans up to 12 months and up to \$1500 for payday lenders. Interest and fees for these loans vary from 160% to 190%. Also, **loan companies under the bill could charge as high as 36% for all types of loans**. The proponents claim persons with subprime credit need these products and competition would be beneficial to consumers. **ICC is opposed**. How is society better or the common good advanced if persons or families are saddled with interest rates that take advantage of their need? The committee with **several hesitant yes votes passed the bill 8 -2**. **Please contact your Senator asking them to oppose SB 613 [here](#).**

The **biennial budget**, HB 1001, is the **primary legislative responsibility** of the General Assembly. The Ways and Means Committee's budget included an **increase for the Tax Credit Scholarship Program** to \$15M the first year and provides for an increase the second year up to \$18M. Also, **a positive change in the voucher program was included**. It increases the voucher award amount from 50% to 70% for students with a family income between 100%-125% of free/reduced lunch. Current law provides for 90% support for students at or below 100% free/reduced lunch and 50% support for students with family incomes 101-150% FRL. The overall budget increases education funding for all schools and many other programs. 50% of state budget is for K -12 education and another 12% is for universities. **As typical, it passed Ways and Means Committee 16 – 6 with Republicans voting for and Democrats opposing**. It will be **considered for final vote on Monday, February 25**.

SB 201, Health provider ethical exemption, authored by Senator Liz Brown (R – Fort Wayne) **passed the Senate 40 – 0**. The bill extends conscience protection for nurses, pharmacists, nurse practitioners and physician assistants. **The bill moves to the House for consideration next month. ICC supports the bill**.

HB 1547, Consent to pregnancy services of a minor, passed the House 95 - 0. The bill provides that a minor between the ages of 16 – 18 may consent for pregnancy, labor and postpartum care, provided that a health provider first attempts to reach the parent and is unable to make contact or the parent refuses to give consent. The bill calls for the doctor to respond in the best interest of the mother and the baby. The genesis of the bill is to address maternal and infant mortality. **ICC is monitoring the bill to ensure that parental rights are maintained**. A **similar bill failed** in the Senate earlier this session because contacting the parent was not required prior to giving the minor authority for consent. **The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration**.

HB 1547, Charity gaming, passed the House 95 -2. HB 1517 **updates charity gaming laws and licensing requirements**. The state agency governing charity gaming and many non-profit groups collaborated on these changes. **ICC continues to monitor the bill** as it affects many local parish and related organizations' fund-raising activities.

SB 12, Bias motivated crimes, authored by Senator Michael Bohacek (R – Michiana Shores) **passed the Senate Public Policy Committee 9 – 1**. The bill does not create a new crime but provides that **a judge may consider bias when sentencing someone who has committed a crime**. An amendment on second reading removed the list of characteristics to be considered; the **amendment added the term bias to existing law** giving discretion to judges when imposing the sentence for criminal acts. **ICC is neutral on the bill but continues to monitor it**.

SB 219, Statute of limitations, authored by Senator James Merritt (R – Indianapolis) **was amended** by the Senate Judiciary Committee **to call for a study committee** to consider a **change in Indiana's statute of limitations** for a civil cause of action against a person or entity whose negligent or intentional act or omission led to the sexual abuse of a child. The initial bill called for an extension of the statute for persons with pending or past cases until July 2022. **The amended bill passed the Senate 40 – 0. ICC is neutral on 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