



January 10, 2019

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

The Indiana General Assembly opened last Thursday, January 3rd, with over 20 new members joining seasoned veterans. Thus far **several hundred bills have been filed; many more will be filed over the next week.** We expect 1500+ bills this session. The **state budget will be the major focus** of the session, and along with it comes **key discussions regarding education, transportation and safety net funding.** Of course, there will be high profile topics that grab headlines such as marijuana, sports betting, bias crimes, guns and responding to the opioid crisis.

ICC will focus on protection and dignity of human life and protecting the wellbeing of the family and the integrity and religious liberty of the Church and its ministries. Also, a priority is **protecting the vulnerable from exploitation.**

While many bills are yet to be introduced, **ICC has identified 50+ which we are tracking.** Many will only be monitored to be sure nothing is added along the way that would be contrary to the good of persons or society. Others we will actively follow and engage during the process. **Typically, in a budget year approximately 100 bills are followed.**

Hate crimes or bias motivated crimes is a high-profile topic and subject of several bills. This is the third year it has been discussed in the Senate. Thus far the bills do not establish a separate “hate crime”; rather **authorizes a judge to consider bias motivation as an aggravator when determining the sentence** for criminal actions. **In its current form, ICC remains neutral** regarding this issue.

Thus far, bills we are closely following:

SB 104, Small loan finance charges, authored by Senator Greg Walker (R – Columbus) **addresses the unjust interest charged by lenders in payday lending industry.** The bill will limit the amount of fees and interest to not more than 36% APR. Current practice has a limit of over 300% APR. **ICC supports the bill.** Current law and practice often puts persons and families into a debt trap by taking advantage of their circumstances. Usury and exploitation of people violates the seventh commandment. Lending practices that, intentionally or unintentionally, take unfair advantage of one’s desperate circumstances are unjust. **We are seeking a hearing in the Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee**, chaired by Senator Eric Bassler (R – Washington.)

SB 241, School choice scholarships, authored by Senator Aaron Freeman (R – Indianapolis). **SB 341 provides that, if a student leaves an eligible school during the school year and transfers during the same school year to a different choice school the student may use the amount remaining of the choice scholarship.** Under current law, if a student transfers before end of year

the scholarship is voided. SB 241 allows parents and families to exercise their responsibilities in formation and education of their children. **The bill was heard in Senate Education Committee on Wednesday; the committee will vote on it next week.** This same concept passed the Education Committee last year but due to potential fiscal impact did not pass Appropriations Committee. **Since a new state budget will be developed this year, it has a better chance. ICC supports the bill.**

HB 1211, Abortion matters, authored by Representative Peggy Mayfield (R – Martinsville), **prohibits dismemberment abortion unless a physician reasonably believes that performing the dismemberment abortion is necessary** to: (1) prevent serious health risks to the mother; or (2) save the mother's life. Dismemberment abortions are infrequent in Indiana; but the bill will save lives. **ICC will support this 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