



January 24, 2019

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

This week was a busy week regarding bills ICC is following. **Hearings were held and some bills moved to the floor.** Last bills to be introduced passed first reading this week and were assigned to committees. **Approximately 1300 bills have been filed this year**, not including resolutions. In the **Senate just under 650 bills** and the **House just under 700 bills.**

Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee held a 3-hour hearing on SB 104, Small loans, authored by Senator Greg Walker (R – Columbus), on Wednesday. **No vote was taken but proponents and opponents were able to present their case.** Senator Eric Bassler (R – Washington), chair of the committee, stated that the status quo regarding the payday industry cannot remain indefinitely and encouraged all to find a solution. That may be difficult because of the very different perspectives regarding the loans' effects on persons utilizing them. **The bill would limit payday loans to 36% interest, inclusive of interest and fees.**

Testimony time was limited but the committee members were able to ask questions and the ensuing discussion accounted for the lengthy hearing. **Supporters included** veterans and military groups, churches, and non-profit agencies that work with persons often caught in debt; and there were individuals who experienced the problem. **Opponents were** lobbyists for the payday loan companies. **It remains to be seen if the bill will move or not. ICC supports the bill.**

Senate Health Committee voted 10 -1 to pass SB 352, Consent to pregnancy services of a minor, authored by Senator Jean. Leising (R – Oldenburg). **The full Senate will consider the bill next week.** The committee **amended the bill and removed the provision to authorize contraception.** While removing the contraceptives provision is a positive step, the underlying bill potentially undermines parental responsibilities and rights. The bill's intent is to help minors who do not have parental involvement, but the bill does not specify that circumstance. Giving authority to minors weakens the parental bond and the parents' responsibility for her care and formation. **Public policy needs to recognize, respect and promote the rights of the family.** Notwithstanding the intent, **ICC does not support the bill due to its impact on parental rights.** You can contact your Senator [here](#).

Another topic ICC is following involves protection of religious liberty and integrity of our Catholic schools. The issue regards employment policies and the requirement of employees to abide by Church teaching regarding marriage.

This week Representative Dan Forestal (D – Indianapolis) filed an amendment on 4 education-related bills in the House. The **amendment would require** a Catholic school that accepts students on school scholarship to annually submit copies of teacher contracts or other documentation prescribed by the department to demonstrate compliance with hiring practices that

would allow persons in a same sex marriage to teach in Catholic and other schools. The **amendment would prohibit** hiring decisions based on religion, as well as gender, gender identity, sexual orientation. **Catholic schools do not discriminate on basis of sex, race, and ancestry or national origin, however, the integrity of the school and its curriculum do require that ministerial positions necessitate acceptance and practice of the faith. ICC and others are working to defeat such amendments,** as passage would eliminate Catholic schools from participating in the school scholarship program. Thus, many families and children would be unable to attend a Catholic or other religiously affiliated schools. **The amendment was not germane to the bills' content and therefore was not called.** We **do expect the same amendment** on other education bills during this session.

House Public Policy Committee voted 13 – 0 to pass HB 1517, Charity gaming, authored by Representative Ben Smaltz (R – Auburn). **HB 1517 updates the charity gaming laws and licensing requirements.** The code had been added to over the years and this is a reorganization, updating of prize limits and eliminating some burdensome and unnecessary regulations. As noted by the bipartisan vote, **this update is needed and an acceptable revision. ICC is monitoring** it as this affects many local parish and related organizations fund raising activities.

HB 1211, Abortion matters, was not heard in House Public Policy Committee this week. **It will be considered in February.**

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