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INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS (1967-2017)

The session is coming to a close and should reach final negotiations on road funding and budget on Friday or Saturday. Along with these two major items, many others are still being determined. Hence, **final results will be known after the weekend.**

On a vote of 28 – 17 the Senate passed SB 154, Limitation for SNAP eligibility. The vote was similar to its passage the first time (34-16). **The bill now goes to the Governor for consideration.**

Conference committee convened to reconcile differences regarding HB 1079, School employment and teacher licensure. The **differences were not significant** and the bill now calls for criminal history background check and child protection index check to be completed within 30 days of hiring a new employee. It also requires criminal history background checks of all employees every five years. **The law applies to all schools, public and non-public.** It also requires that employers check references prior to employment. **It is expected that the caucuses will agree with the compromise.**

Along with roads and budget, another major topic for many advocates was the expansion of Pre-kindergarten program, On My Way Pre-K. The **Governor and House leadership wanted to expand the pilot to another 5 counties and increase \$ allocated to \$20M.** Another objective of the House was to allow students who receive the pre-K scholarship to be eligible for the school scholarship in kindergarten. The Senate reduced the allocation but intended to use federal program money to supplement the scholarship and allow the program to expand in that manner. It did not include the linkage to the school scholarship in kindergarten. **The money question will be determined in the final budget but the scope of the program and the kindergarten question were determined in HB 1004.** The compromise reached allowed for the school scholarship for kindergarten for pre-K students who are enrolled in a school that accepts vouchers to receive a voucher for kindergarten. Hence, it allows students to continue in the school setting and not have to switch schools. **The conference report also expands the program up to an additional 15 counties.**

Although SB 155, Capital punishment and serious mental illness did not move this session, there may be an opportunity to have further conversation this fall. The **Senate passed Senate Resolution 64,** authored by Senator Joe Zakas (R – Granger), **to have the topic be assigned to a study committee after session.** A **similar resolution is expected in the House.** While there is no guarantee it will be selected by leadership, it is a good sign that the topic is important and deserving of consideration.

In addition to the Update, you can obtain more detailed information regarding the bills, as well as detailed information about the legislative process and the Indiana General Assembly by clicking [here](#). You can also access the archived I-CAN Updates, ICC positions and other background information at the ICC website www.indianacc.org