



I-CANUpdate

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INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS (1967-2017)

A few committees got in one last meeting on Monday morning. In addition, **this week brings an end to this phase of the legislative process.** Each chamber has completed its review of the other's bills and passed and altered those it found worthwhile. Hence, the **remaining weeks are devoted to either concurring with the changes made in the bills or working out compromises regarding the differences made by each body in conference committees.**

House Judiciary Committee unanimously passed SB 246, Child neglect defense, authored by Senator Travis Holdman (R – Markle), and sponsored in the House by Representative Martin Carbaugh (R – Fort Wayne). **SB 246 addresses concerns raised by Department of Child Services regarding baby safe devices.** The device allows a mother to surrender a baby (within 30 days of birth) should she be unable or unwilling to provide care. Although Indiana's Safe Haven law allows a parent to surrender an infant to emergency personnel; many babies are left to die rather than giving the child to someone. If anonymity is necessary, the baby safe device provides it. **The bill authorizes these devices at hospitals, who voluntarily agree to host it.** However, because two such devices are operational at firehouses in northwest Indiana, a **second reading amendment** by Representative Dave Heine (R – New Haven) **passed to grandfather them and allow continued operation.** The House passed the bill 92 - 4 on Thursday. **Senator Holdman is expected to concur with the grandfathered devices. ICC supports SB 246 as amended.**

SB 404, Abortion, child abuse, and human trafficking, passed the House 75 – 23 on a bipartisan vote. It now allows judicial bypass without parental notice but does contain **parental notice of a bypass request that is denied.** This was the topic of debate prior to the vote. **Parental rights are protected** by requiring that those consenting to an abortion for an adolescent prove parentage. Also, **aspects of HB 1128 are included in the bill.** These include licensing requirements for abortion clinics providing RU 486 and codification of abortion reports to the state. The abortion pill reversal information (in HB 1128) was removed. **The bill returns to the Senate** where its author, Senator Erin Houchin (R – Salem), must decide if she and the caucus accept the changes to the bill. **Concurrence is expected. ICC supports SB 404 as amended.**

The House unanimously accepted (97 – 0) SB 154, Asset limitation for SNAP eligibility. SB 154 updates the asset test for SNAP benefits by **increasing the savings amount to \$5000 and adding prepaid funeral and burial expenses to the exemption list.** The bill now returns to its author, Senator James Merritt (R – Indianapolis), to **decide if the changes are acceptable.** The **changes are significant** reducing the limit to \$5000 from \$10,000 and eliminating the self-attestation rather than the submitting multiple documents. **While the Senate version is**

preferable, the House version is an improvement. We should know Senator Merritt's decision next week. ICC supports SB 154.

House also passed SB 423, Sanctuary policies and postsecondary institutions, 72 -26. It returns to its author, Senator Michael Young (R – Indianapolis), for concurrence or dissent. The bill was amended in committee and removed much of the objectionable sanctions language. The amendment was vetted with Senator Young and he is expected to concur.

The Senate made many changes to HB 1001, Budget bill, before passing it along party lines. Along with the changes made by the Appropriations Committee, over 30 amendments were filed during second reading. Committee changes negatively affected the choice scholarship program; these included a separate line item for the choice scholarship rather than inclusion in the general tuition support budget and elimination of the escalator for the scholarship tax credit program. (It did retain the \$3 million increase for the scholarship tax credit.) The line item has the potential effect of capping the program; hence, our opposition. Also, the scholarship tax credit has run out the last two fiscal years and limits the funds available to supplement the choice program. The increase is helpful but may not be sufficient to meet the donations offered. Both topics will be addressed during conference committee in the coming weeks and are important to the long term viability of the choice (voucher) program. HB 1001 passed the Senate 39 – 9.

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