



I-CANUpdate

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February 23, 2017

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS (1967-2017)

All bills had to clear committee this week. In the House, all bills must clear second reading on Thursday and third reading next week Monday. The Senate's schedule is second reading on Monday and third reading on Tuesday. This will conclude the first part of the session and is known as crossover. **All bills that pass each chamber will be considered by the other** beginning March 6. **The process starts over with only those bills that have passed going through committee hearings and floor votes.**

HB 1128, Abortion matters, was reassigned to committee in order to clarify the amendments added last week. Concerns were raised about requiring ultrasound for determining gestational age of the fetus. Hence, this was removed; another amendment also required redacting identifying information on the abortion report should the report be released to the public. The amendments were acceptable and the **bill was voted out of committee 7 -5. Three amendments were considered on second reading;** one would have **stripped out the reversal information;** it was **defeated.** Two amendments were accepted; one to provide a different timeline for abortion reports, the second adds provisions to protect patient privacy. The bill will be on **third reading on Monday. ICC supports the bill** as it provides helpful information to a woman who regrets her decision and seeks to reverse it. Contact your representative [here](#).

House Education Committee passed (10-2) HB 1024, Prayer in schools, authored by Representative John Bartlett (D -Indianapolis). The title overstates the bill and its effect. The bill primarily affirms a student's right to express religious views in assignments and other activities in appropriate ways; it also provides that religious clubs and religious speakers should be given the same consideration as secular associations and events. It also encourages the study of world religions in high school. Case law has already established this; however, there is inconsistency in application in schools. The Carmel High School student whose adoption/abortion poster was removed this fall spoke in favor of the bill citing a need for protection of religious expression within the same guidelines as all other organizations. She was eventually able to display the poster after several months with the involvement of attorneys. **The bill was amended** to provide that schools do have right to limit behaviors that violate citizenship and moral code. **ICC supports the bill** as affirming the protection of conscience and religious liberty.

Senate Family and Children Services Committee amended and unanimously passed SB 246, Child neglect defense, authored by Senator Travis Holdman (R – Markle). The bill's title does not fully explain the content of the bill. A couple of years ago the **legislature provided for an additional manner in which a baby may be given up** should a parent be unable to provide care. Indiana law allows for parent to surrender a baby to be given to a hospital, police or fire personnel without being charged with neglect of a child. **In some other countries another possibility allows someone to surrender a baby in a safe place with anonymity.** Hence, **Indiana passed such a law,** and there are two "baby boxes" at fire stations in northeast Indiana. However, **Department of Child Services is concerned about the well-being of the baby** and that the surrender should be made to an individual. **SB 246, as amended, would allow these baby boxes to be installed at hospitals near emergency rooms.** The baby boxes are wired with alarms to ensure that the baby is attended to immediately. **ICC supports the bill** as it provides another alternative to save the life of a child.

The two boxes in fire houses have not had one baby surrendered but a **hotline that is connected to the baby box campaign has received over 1000 calls** resulting in 142 referrals to pregnancy centers, 4 adoptions and 6 face to face surrender of the child. The boxes thru the hotline are helping to save lives. **Cost of the boxes as well as the hotline and PR campaign is financed by private funds;** in particular the **Knights of Columbus has been very instrumental.**

Senator Rodric Bray (R – Martinsville), chairman of Senate Public Policy Committee **did not bring SB 155, Capital punishment and severe mental illness, to a vote last week and did not have a vote this week.** He believes that due to **concerns raised by committee members** the bill would not pass and hence held the bill. **Several Senators raised concerns** regarding inclusion of PTSD and bi-polar diagnoses; they believed these could be misused by defendants. **By not taking a vote and holding the bill, it is dead for this session.** However, the **content or parts of it could be amended into other bills** dealing with the same code cites in other bills. While theoretically possible it is difficult and given the topic not likely. **It is hoped that over the summer by working with legislators this topic can return next year** and address the concerns raised to give it better chance of passage.

SB 404, Abortion child abuse and sexual trafficking, authored by Senator Erin Houchin (R – Salem), **passed Senate Judiciary Committee 6 – 4.** However, it is **expected to be amended on second reading** in order to address several concerns raised during testimony regarding court procedures and questions of what constituted aiding and assisting an unemancipated pregnant minor. The **ACLU testified that it would file suit** regarding this under First Amendment rights and that the notification of the parent may cause an undue burden to access to abortion. An amendment did clarify that aiding and assisting a juvenile to seek a judicial bypass was exempt. **The intent of the bill is to address the person who takes the juvenile to the abortion clinic.** The other part of the bill requiring ID for parental or guardian consent was not challenged; and raising the age of notification of child abuse to 16 was not challenged by witnesses. **ICC supports the bill.** Contact your senator [here](#).

SB 467, Public safety funding, returned on Tuesday but was drastically amended. All references to safety fees were eliminated. The only provision calls for insurance payments to voluntary fire departments as well as full time/ professional fire department.

SB 423, Enforcement of federal immigration laws, authored by Senator Mike Young (R – Indianapolis), passed **Senate Corrections and Criminal Code Committee 7 – 2.** SB 423 **prohibits state universities from establishing policies that restrict their cooperation with federal immigration officials.** The bill was prompted because following the presidential election, some students asked universities to declare sanctuary status. However, university officials confirmed that **universities have no such policy and will cooperate with all lawful requests by law enforcement agencies.** Testimony by many opposed the bill fearing that it would cause further fear and misunderstanding among students. **SB 423 was amended to make clear that DACA students were exempt from the intent of the bill.** Because the bill is not needed and is perceived by many to be targeting immigrant community. **ICC opposes the bill.**

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