



# I-CANUpdate

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March 16, 2017

INDIANA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS (1967-2017)

**HB 1287, CHOICE program, passed the Senate 28 – 20.** The vote was surprising after no opposition in the committee or on second reading. Apparently, there was some confusion about what the program changes entailed and its effects. Comments on the floor left the impression that fewer persons would benefit when the actual effect would be that more would be helped and at less expense. Committee amendments clarified some definitions; hence, **the bill will have to return to the House for concurrence. We expect the author, Representative Ed Clere (R - New Albany), to concur and the bill to be approved by the House,** which passed it 93 -0 earlier this session.

**House Family, Children and Human Affairs Committee heard SB 154, Asset limitation for SNAP eligibility,** authored by Senator James Merritt (R – Indianapolis), but **no vote was taken. It is being held to consider amendments and voted upon either next week or the following week.** Representative Julie Olthoff (R – Crown Point), the bill sponsor, was considering reducing the limit to \$5000 and removing some of the exempted assets such as children saving accounts. Representative Milo Smith (R – Columbus), is considering removing the asset limitation completely as was initially introduced in the Senate. **The discussion in committee centered on the errors and costs in administration and the typical family and circumstances of recipients.** Following the discussion, **Representative Olthoff is reconsidering her initial amendment. Representative David Frizzell (R – Indianapolis), chairman of the committee, agreed to hold the bill** as Representative Olthoff and others work with FSSA and proponents. **He also indicated that SB 9, SNAP and drug convictions, will be heard later this month.**

**ICC supports SB 154.** It is **important that current law be adjusted** in order that eligible families have access to food. Raising the savings amount will help families maintain dignity and reduce poverty. **Forcing families to reduce meager savings only exaggerates the problem** in subsequent weeks and months – forcing families to not be able to sustain themselves not only for food but for other needs as well.

**Senate Education Committee voted on several bills** that were heard last week. **HB 1004, Pre-kindergarten education, was amended** to reflect the Senate version of pre-K expansion (SB 376). Hence, **HB 1004 no longer contains the school voucher access in kindergarten for pre-K voucher students.** In addition, the **program was reduced from \$20 million to \$16 million,** \$2 million of which is for an online program. However, the **bill maintains current law which allows for parent choice of the program,** including religious and private as well as public. **ICC supports the expansion of the program** because it provides choice for low income families and allows religious and private entities to take part. **We are disappointed that school voucher is not included.** However, we expect **HB 1004 will go to conference committee for final**

**resolution. SB 376 is not likely to be moved. The bill passed 8 – 1 and will be recommitted to Senate Appropriations Committee.**

**HB 1079, School safety, was amended** to reflect the Senate bills passed regarding the same topic, employee background checks. The Senate bills, **SB34, SB398, and SB367, will not be heard in the House; HB 1079 will be the vehicle for this topic and likely will go to conference committee for final resolution.** The differences are not substantive, but deal with timing and some language differences.

Although a vote was expected on **HB 1024, Prayer in school, it was held in order to consider an amendment being drafted by the State School Boards Association.** Because the author, Representative John Bartlett (D – Indianapolis), had not yet seen it; Senator Dennis Kruse (R – Auburn), decided to **hold the bill until next week. The State School Boards Association raised concerns** about implementation of the bill. The **amendment is expected** to address this and not substantively change the bill. **ICC supports the bill** and the amendments may strengthen it. **We should know early next week.**

**SB 423, Sanctuary policies and postsecondary education, is still being considered by House Judiciary Committee.** An **amendment is being considered** that would reduce the impact on universities. Rather than creating a new law, **universities would be added to existing law** that applies to cities and other local government agencies. **This would be preferable** to current language. **No hearing has been announced as yet.**

The abortion bills, **HB 1128, Abortion matters, and SB 404, Abortion, child abuse and human trafficking, are getting a legal review before determining how each will move.** Because of lawsuit threats from ACLU, legislators want to be sure that certain provisions in each, parental notification of judiciary bypass for minors in SB 404 and the pill reversal notification in HB 1128 are vetted with legal counsel. Some provisions in each could be dropped or amended. And, depending on the final versions, the bills could be combined into one. **We should know next week what the decision is.**

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](http://www.indianacc.org)