



February 11, 2016

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

This week began the second phase of the session. Leadership assigned bills to committees and Chairpersons determined which and in what order bills would be given hearings. Some committees began this week but it will pick up next and the following, as all bills must clear committee by February 29th.

House Family and Children Committee heard several bills on Wednesday, including **SB 132, Food stamp assistance after drug conviction**. Chairman Representative David Frizzell (R – Indianapolis) **did not take a vote** but heard compelling testimony from many persons. The bill **would allow persons convicted of drug felony to be eligible for SNAP assistance**, provided other requirements are met. Currently, Indiana bans persons with drug felony to receive food stamps. Even after paying restitution and reforming one's life, they would still be banned despite legitimate need. Approximately 40 states have lifted this ban. **ICC testified in support of the bill**. The **bill seems to have support in the committee and should be voted on next week; it passed the Senate 43-7**.

Another positive bill which will be heard next week in the House Family and Children Committee is **SB 325, Individual Development Accounts**. This bill **updates a program**, which **ICC supported when it was established in 1997**. **IDA supports low income persons** by helping them save for education, housing and rehabilitation; the bill would add a vehicle purchase as a qualified use for the funds. It also clarifies definitions and eligibility. **ICC supports the bill**.

And **SB 11, ABLE savings accounts for persons with disabilities**, will be heard in the same committee next Wednesday. The bill **provides tax credits** for contributions to accounts that provide **for care and needs of persons with disabilities**. ICC supports SB 11.

HB 1337, Abortion, will be heard in Senate Health Committee next Wednesday. The bill's primary focus is the **handling of fetal remains following an abortion**. Currently, remains are treated as medical waste; the bill would require that the **remains be treated with dignity** by being buried or cremated. It also **prohibits transporting aborted fetus into or out of Indiana** unless for proper burial. Recent investigation has uncovered aborted fetuses being transported into Indiana for disposal as waste. This bill would address this concern. HB 1337 also requires that the ultra sound be viewed as part of the consent process rather than as part of the abortion itself. **ICC supports HB 1337 primarily because it seeks to treat the fetus with the dignity it deserves**.

Two education bills are up for committee action this week. House Education Committee will hear **SB 334, Choice Scholarships, on Tuesday**. **SB 334 provides an opportunity for students to obtain a voucher for second semester**. The primary objective of the bill is to

address students who are expelled or have dropped out. Currently, voucher is only available for enrollment at the beginning of the school year. It also reduces an administrative burden of obtaining a second endorsement from parents for the second semester tuition payment from the State. **The bill passed on a bipartisan basis in the Senate 40-9.** But we **do expect adversarial amendments** regarding it, either in committee or on the floor. ICC supports the bill.

The second education bill will be heard in Senate Appropriations Committee on Thursday. **HB 1002, Next Generation Hoosier Educators Scholarship**, would **provide \$7500 scholarship** for students who become teachers and **teach for at least 5 years**. In total the scholarship would be worth up to \$30,000. This is in response to the reported teacher shortage. Teachers qualify if they teach in a public, charter or school in the voucher program. **ICC supports the bill.**

We expect committees to publish notice of hearings for other bills. This week and next will be very busy with hearings and floor sessions. **All bills must pass the respective chamber by March 4.**

We hope the following bills are heard before the deadline; ICC supports these bills.

- **SB 272**, Palliative Care and Quality of Life Advisory Council, provides for the promotion as well as assessment of palliative care in Indiana.
- **HB 1064**, Terminating parent child relationship, would allow a victim of rape to keep the rapist from interfering in her or the child's life.
- **HB 1340**, Long term small installment loans. This bill would create a study committee to look into payday lending industry.

In addition to the Update, one 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)