



February 22, 2018

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

House committee reports have to clear the floor by Tuesday afternoon next week. While a couple of committees will meet on Monday and Tuesday mornings, most completed their work this week. **The Senate has until Thursday afternoon,** so Senate committee will be meeting all week. The short time for committee work means that many bills passed by either body will not get a hearing. This does not mean the bills will not move. But it does call for creative work.

An example is **SB 11**, which provides SNAP eligibility for drug offenders who have served their prison sentence. The bill **is stalled in the House and did not get a hearing.** The **author**, Senator Michael Bohacek (R – Michigan City), is **seeking to amend it into a House bill in the Senate** on second reading. If successful, the House will have to concur on it to keep the initial bill. Or they could dissent to see if it can be removed during conference committee in March.

Another way bills survive, is to amend them into bills during committee hearings. This is how **SB 123, Newborn safety devices**, survived. House Judiciary Committee, to which the bill was assigned, did not have time to hear it. So the bill **was amended into SB 340**, Regulation of abortion, during the Public Policy Committee **on Wednesday.** The bill is related in that the consent form for abortion includes notification that a person can surrender the baby if one does not abort. **This amendment was unanimously supported.** Other attempts to amend SB 340 by lessening the regulations were rejected. **SB 340 passed 9 -4. It will be considered by the House next week.** All bills must pass second reading by Thursday in the House.

SB 65, Instruction on human sexuality, drew lots of attention; **12 amendments were filed** in the House Education Committee. **Only one amendment was accepted.** The amendment, offered by Representative Tim Wesco (R – Osceola), **requires that a summary of the content and nature of the instruction be given to the parent** for them to decide if the child is to participate or not. If the parent does not respond, a second notice is sent. If no response after second notice, the student would remain in the class. **The amendment tries to bridge the proponents and opponents concerns. ICC continues to support the bill** as it provides for parent rights and responsibilities regarding the education of children. **SB 65 passed 8 – 5.** Some on the committee believed implementation was too burdensome and preferred “opt out” provision only. **5 amendments were offered during second reading on Thursday.** Only one was accepted dealing with number of days between notices to parents; there was an attempt to require only the “opt in” response but it was defeated. **The bill will be eligible for third reading on Monday.**

SB 203, Crimes resulting in loss of fetus, unanimously passed the House Courts and Criminal Code Committee on Wednesday. The bill recognizes the life of the unborn child at any stage of development and should the fetus be killed during the crime against the mother, the perpetrator would receive an enhanced sentence for the loss of the unborn child. **ICC supports the bill** as it recognized the dignity and value of the unborn child as well as the mother. **House will consider the bill next week on second reading and third reading.**

Senate passed on third reading HB 1001, which provides for the shortfall in funding K – 12 education. More students were enrolled than originally budgeted. This provides for all students, public, charter and school scholarships.

SB 33, House of worship and firearms, passed House Public Policy Committee 10 -0. The bill was amended to clarify that during the school day and when facility is being used for school purposes firearms are still prohibited. **All churches retain the authority to prohibit firearms from being on campus at any time and who may or may not carry firearms.** The concern arose because some churches and schools share the same campus/site. Guns are prohibited on school property. **SB 33 removes the felony charge** should someone who lawfully carries a gun and on church/school campus for another activity during the evening or non-school time. **It now will be considered by the full House.**

HB 1007, Expanding mental health access, passed the Senate Health Committee 9 -0. The bill provides that an additional 9 treatment centers can be authorized by the Department of Mental Health. This will be an **expansion of the opioid treatment facilities.** **Full Senate will consider the bill next week.** It passed the House without opposition. **ICC supports the bill.**

A decision regarding HB 1319, Unsecured consumer installment loans, will be made early next week. The Senate Commerce Committee will meet on Thursday. **The Chair, Senator Mark Messmer (R – Jasper), is considering an amendment** to reduce the interest rates and terms. **Unless it will reduce the rate to the federal restriction that is required for active military, ICC will oppose it.** Interest rates and terms that are usury are unjust; regulating an unjust industry does not make it ok. The Catechism of Catholic Church states, (#2409) “Even if it does not contradict the provisions of civil law, any form of unjustly taking and keeping the property of others is against the seventh commandment: thus, deliberate retention of goods lent or of objects lost; business fraud; paying unjust wages; **forcing up prices by taking advantage of the ignorance or hardship of another.**” [Call or contact your senator](#) to oppose the bill.

Senate Judiciary Committee will meet on Wednesday; among the possible bills is **HB 1203, Qualified egg banks.** HB 1203 will allow women to select ova from around the county to create embryos in order to have a child. **IVF is an immoral procedure** and **expansion** of it, in particular the selection of ova from around the country **is commodification of human beings;** it is like shopping for a child. **ICC opposes the bill.**

The House must clear second readings by Thursday next week. Senate must clear committee reports by Thursday. **The session ends on or before March 14. Three weeks remain.**

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