

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

January 7, 2022

2022 INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY WEEK 1

- The 2022 “short” legislative session is off to a fast start and is now complete. By statute, the Indiana General Assembly must adjourn by March 14th. However, it is widely presumed that legislators will conclude their business earlier than that.
- The deadline to file bills for consideration this year is January 7th (today) in the Senate and next Tuesday January 11th for the House of Representatives. There are now just over 2 weeks for committee hearings to be held, and all bills must clear the first chamber or be “dead” for the session in just over 3 weeks.
- Governor Holcomb will deliver the State of the State address to a joint session of the General Assembly on Tuesday evening, January 11th, during which he will outline his priorities for the session.
- Governor Holcomb unveiled his 2022 Next Level legislative agenda to the public on Monday this week. His top priorities are as follows:
 - Economic development: Focus on working with the legislature to eliminate the business personal property tax on new equipment and modernizing the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) toolkit to: create a new funding mechanism to more competitively invest in transformational economic development opportunities; provide greater flexibility within existing economic tax credit incentive programs; and incentivize and attract more remote worker jobs to Indiana. Gov. Holcomb will also collaborate with legislative leaders to ensure more than 900,000 Hoosiers receive the upcoming automatic taxpayer refund.
 - Education, training and workforce development: Focus efforts on strengthening early learning opportunities and concentrating on better preparing students for kindergarten. Direct the Department of Education (DOE) to establish an Office of Kindergarten Readiness to partner with the early childhood team at the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) and a revised Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) to support kindergarten readiness. DOE also will move forward with the Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed, a new school performance dashboard which will focus on how students are building skills for success beyond the classroom. DOE is also building a new teacher supply-and-demand marketplace that will connect educators with job opportunities in Indiana. Additionally, the state is strengthening its data-driven public workforce system to connect unemployed Hoosiers with employers, jobs and training programs.
 - Public health and wellness development: Removing the stigma of mental health by creating easier access to people in need of services, building awareness and expanding education and growing the workforce in mental health. The agenda supports the Governor’s Public Health Commission as it develops recommendations to improve public health infrastructure and resources throughout the state. The legislative agenda includes expanding data collection surrounding sudden unexplained infant deaths to understand the root cause which will better support future programming and services. Additionally, it prioritizes creating guidelines for universal lead screening and connecting children with the proper care.

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- **Community development:** Assist communities in establishing safeguards to strengthen cybersecurity efforts by developing a grant program that will help local governments develop improvement plans. Continued commitment to overseeing the implementation of the \$500 million READI program as the 17 regions begin developing their projects. The agenda calls for continued progress on capital projects that were authorized in the current budget and building better infrastructure to connect communities for future generations by completing roads, trails, broadband and facility projects.
- **Good government service:** Focus on firefighter safety by establishing a program that collects and properly disposes of PFAS, chemicals found in firefighting foam that can have adverse health effects. Also, address the regulatory and statutory changes prompted by the third-party review of the state's law enforcement agencies. Work with legislative leaders to enhance membership of the Law Enforcement Training Board to include more civilians as well as all satellite academy directors as voting members; establish personnel at the Law Enforcement Training Board to expand development and oversight of statewide training and curriculum that includes implicit bias and cultural awareness; develop a strategic plan for Indiana State Police to accomplish recruiting and diversity goals; and modernize state law enforcement information systems to better track and analyze performance metrics.
- Both the House of Representatives and Senate Republicans also announced their legislative priorities for the session. Those priorities include protecting individual rights and jobs and ending the public health emergency (though the House and Senate differ on how to accomplish this), returning money to Hoosiers through tax cuts and taxpayer refunds, strengthening the nursing workforce pipeline, and increasing public safety efforts.
- Below is a list of key dates for the first half of the 2022 legislative session:
 - January 11th - Governor Holcomb's State of the State address
 - January 12th - Chief Justice Loretta Rush's State of the Judiciary address
 - January 17th - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - no session
 - January 25th - House committee deadline
 - January 27th - Senate committee deadline
 - January 31st - 3rd Reading deadline for House bills
 - February 1st - 3rd Reading deadline for Senate bills
- The General Assembly will get back to business for the second half of the session on Monday February 7th.
- Legislators in both the House and Senate are limited to how many pieces of legislation they can introduce during a short session. In the House, the limit is 5 bills per legislator and in the Senate, the limit is 10 bills.
- Issues being discussed this session include potential tax cuts, education curriculum, covid-19 vaccines requirements, cannabis regulation, changes to eminent domain policy, firearms licensing, economic development and local government matters. Committees have already held multiple-hours-long hearings on some of these topics.
- On the utility front, legislation related to water and wastewater, as well as electric vehicle charging and net metering may be on tap.