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General Assembly Overview

The 121st Indiana General Assembly kicked off on January 6, 2020. With the passing of the biennial budget last year, this will be considered a "short" session and is expected to conclude the second week of March. By law, legislators are required to finish business by Mar. 14.

This year saw an unprecedented fast start to the session as committees were being held on the very first day. As of writing, just over 450 bills have been released to the public with several hundred more expected to hit the system within the next few days. Bose Public Affairs professionals will continue to monitor each bill to locate priority issues for clients.

The makeup of each chamber remains the same as last year, with Republicans holding super majorities in each chamber. The GOP holds 67 seats in the House, compared to 33 for the Democrats. In the Senate, Republicans continue to hold 40 seats to the Democrats 10.

Retirements and Newcomers:

While the party numbers remain the same, the persons serving have changed, and will see further changes once session concludes. After serving 34 years in the Indiana legislature, and 12 as the Speaker of the House, Rep. Brian Bosma (R-Indianapolis) announced he will not be seeking another term after session. House Republicans voted unanimously for Rep. Todd Huston (R-Fishers) to become speaker-elect and shadow Bosma during the upcoming session.

In addition, Rep. Woody Burton (R-Whiteland), Rep. Ron Bacon (R-Chandler), Rep. David Wolkins (R-Warsaw), and Sen. Mark Stoops (D-Bloomington) all announced the 2020 session will be their last.

[Indiana Weighs Later Poll Closing Time](#)

USEFUL LINKS

[Indiana General Assembly](#)

[Governor Eric Holcomb](#)

[Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch](#)

[Attorney General Curtis Hill](#)

[Secretary of State Connie Lawson](#)

[State Treasurer Kelly Mitchell](#)

[State Auditor Tera Klutz](#)

[Indiana Register](#)

Rep. Burton has served in the House for 32 years and is currently the chairman of the House Committee on Financial Institutions. Rep. Bacon will complete a decade of representing the Evansville area and previously served as the vice-chair of the House Public Health Committee. Rep. Wolkins will step down after 32 years of service and has been chairman of the House Environmental Affairs Committee for several years. Sen. Stoops served in the State Senate for seven years and has been a champion of gun safety and public transit legislation.

Each chamber also welcomes new members to their respective caucuses. Sen. Stacey Donato (R-Logansport), a former Cass County Councilwoman, is the newest member of the Indiana State Senate. She assumed office on Sep. 11, 2019 replacing former Senator Randy Head, who stepped down in August for a job as a deputy prosecutor in Pulaski County.

In the House, Rep. Dollyne Sherman (R-Indianapolis) was selected to replace Rep. David Frizzell, who resigned from his seat this past summer. Rep. Sherman is from Indianapolis and has served with former Governor Daniels and Governor Orr. She is joined by Rep. Ann Vermilion (R-Marion) who is filling the seat of former Rep. Kevin Mahan who also resigned this past summer. Rep. Vermilion was previously the administrative director at Marion General Hospital and is a graduate of Indiana University.

Priorities of the Legislature:

As expected, the 2020 legislative priorities of Governor Holcomb nearly replicate the priorities of the House and Senate GOP caucuses. Each agenda highlights key issues in education, health, and overall fiscal responsibility.

In education, Republicans hope to hold teachers and schools harmless from the poor 2019 ILEARN results and provide more flexibility in teacher licensing and training. While the rising concern of teacher pay has yet to be directly addressed, the Governor has hinted at potential one-time action to address the issue.

Bringing an end to “surprise billing” is at the forefront of the Republican agenda. Legislators will also be empowered by recent federal government action that raised the smoking and vaping age to 21 in order to increase the age in Indiana. Legislators will likely address health care costs transparency as well.

Lastly, with Indiana revenue performing above projections, spending portions of the state surplus on capital projects is a priority for the Republican legislators.

A unique component of Governor Holcomb's agenda includes cracking down on distracted driving. In the announcement of his agenda, the Governor expressed his desire for a ban on cell phone usage while driving in favor of hands free technology. While the ban is not included in either the House or Senate Republican priorities, the ban is expected to be considered this session.

Democratic leaders in each chamber responded to Republican priorities with their own agenda items. Among them include doing more to address inadequate teacher pay, addressing the issue of gerrymandering (2020 marks the final year the redistricting process can be altered before maps are redrawn), demanding increased gun safety and marijuana decriminalization, and fighting to lower the costs of health care.

Deadlines:

Deadlines mark the days where bills *must* progress past a certain point, otherwise the bill will be considered dead. Below are important deadlines to note as session gets underway:

House of Representatives:

Committee Report Deadline – Tuesday, January 28

Second Reading Deadline – Thursday, January 30

Third Reading Deadline – Monday, February 3

Senate:

Committee Report Deadline – Thursday, January 30

Second Reading Deadline – Monday, February 3

Third Reading Deadline – Tuesday, February 4

What's Next?

Governor Holcomb will hold his annual "State of the State Address" this coming Tuesday, Jan. 14 at the Statehouse where he is expected to elaborate further on his agenda and give Hoosiers a snapshot on important issues in Indiana. The day after, Chief Justice Loretta Rush will give the State of the Judiciary address.

The House and Senate will both convene on Monday, Jan. 13 at 1:30 PM. To watch session or any committee live, go to iga.in.gov.

Committee Meetings:

House Insurance

Wed., Jan. 15, 2020, 8:30 AM, Rm. 156-A

HB1004 OUT OF NETWORK BILLING FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES. (SMALTZ B)

HB1080 COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING. (BARRETT B)

Senate Insurance: no meeting.

Priority Legislation

Attached is a track list with potential legislation of interest. Please let me know if any bills need to be added or removed.

For more information



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