



2024

PUBLIC POLICY & LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

We are the collective
voice of business and
economic development
leaders for the Evansville
Region on the local,
state and federal levels.

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2024 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

Our policy positions are a reflection of our members and proposals they believe will advance the growth and prosperity of our region. From upgraded infrastructure to talent attraction/investment and the elevation of regional partnerships, E-REP focuses on positive outcomes for our community through proactive and strong relationships with the Southwest Indiana legislative delegation and a grassroots support of our membership. We advocate for public policies that facilitate business success and a welcoming ecosystem for talent.

COMPLETE I-69

Support swift completion of Interstate 69 in Indiana and across a new Ohio River bridge into Kentucky.

UPGRADE INFRASTRUCTURE

Support a regulatory environment and funding streams that enable the creation of economic development sites and the movement of people, products, and information around our region and around the world; from increased broadband accessibility and capacity to expanded services at Evansville Regional Airport (EVV), to water and sewer piping and all the other investments that make the economy flow.

FORTIFY OUR TALENT

Support local and state efforts designed to grow our talent pool, enhance the skills of our workforce, and align our state's talent base with the needs of employers in a system that values the spectrum of educational options from vocational education to professional degrees.

ELEVATE REGIONAL SUCCESS

Support policies and projects designed to support regionally driven plans to stimulate and leverage public and private investment to make our communities even more livable, attractive and vibrant.

STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY HEALTH

Support policies and programs designed to improve the overall wellness of our workforce, including: reducing tobacco use, addressing the drug epidemic; ensuring access to affordable, high-quality physical and mental healthcare; supporting walkability initiatives; etc.

EMBRACE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Keep the value of diversity, inclusion, and equity at the core of all our efforts, embracing protections for vulnerable members of our community and working to eliminate legislation and regulations that have a more significant impact on minority populations.

2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

CREATE OPPORTUNITY

Leverage federal and state resources to support Hoosier businesses, workers, and families to stabilize today and create better opportunities tomorrow with an emphasis on areas with a strong return on investment, such as education, tourism, workforce training, and infrastructure.

- **HB1199 Economic Enhancement District (McGuire):** Made changes to Indy's EED (but did not repeal it)
- **HB1277 State Administration of Federal BEAD Program (Soliday):** Aligns state and federal rules re: broadband grant programs
- **SB190 State Disaster Relief Fund (Carrasco):** Improves options for using state disaster relief fund, including mitigation efforts vs. just relief efforts
- **SB256 Fiscal Matter (Mishler):** Amends IEDC rules re: Innovation Development District; extends the Funding IN's Roads for a Stronger, Safer Tomorrow (FIRSST) Task Force; other State Budget Committee rules changes

Reduce government interference and limit unnecessary regulations to maintain Indiana's reputation as a state that encourages businesses to operate freely and efficiently without significant state interference.

- **HB1102 Child Care (Heine):** Increases number of children to be cared for in child care home; amends licensing requirements; increases options for school-based child care
- **HB1003 Administrative Law (Steuerwald):** Moves Enviro ALJs to Office of Admin Law Proceedings (OALP); eliminates "deference" rules for state statute, rules, etc.
- **HB1276 Notice of a Public Hearing or Meeting (Soliday):** IDEM has 10 days after the last day of a public comment period to decide to hold a public hearing/meeting (designed to speed up permit issuance)
- **HB1387 Housing Development (Miller):** Further updates to housing infrastructure assistance program
- **SB2 Child Care (Charbonneau):** Progress on 1) improving effectiveness of childcare system, 2) addressing shortages in childcare workforce, 3) increasing access to care in underserved areas, and 4) more data for further improvements

STRENGTHEN OUR WORKFORCE

Create programs and incentives designed to attract more people to choose Indiana as a place to live and work.

- **SB34 Occupational Licensing (Rogers):** Pro Licensing Agency (PLA) to study universal occupational licensing laws in other states and make recommendations for IN by 10/31/2025

Encourage policies that support lifelong learning and increase the educational attainment level of Hoosiers across the state.

- **HB1001 Education & Higher Education Matters (Goodrich) -** Expands Career Scholarship Account options; increases transparency re: higher ed degree data; adds teaching to Next Level Jobs Training Grant Program
- **HB1002 Enforcement of Equal Education Opportunity (Jeter):** Defines antisemitism with goal to reduce discrimination
- **HB1093 Employment of Minors (Culp):** Aligns state and federal law; increases days and hours teens may work
- **HB1243 Various Education & Workforce Related Matters (Behning):** Variety of changes to diploma requirements and waivers; increases local school budget transparency
- **SB8 Higher Education Matters (Leising):** Requires college core classes in all HS's to increase college credit before graduation; requires all state higher eds to offer "Degree in 3" programs; reviews VU and Ivy Tech offerings to look for expansion options
- **SB146 Youth Employment (Rogers):** Allows 18+ to serve and "ring up" alcohol in certain conditions makes other changes to youth employment rules

Support efforts at the state and local level to decrease and ultimately eliminate the drug epidemic seen throughout Indiana.

Support increasing the cigarette tax as an effort to decrease smoking rates, lower healthcare costs, and improve the health of Indiana's workforce.

ENSURE AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE

Support continued increases in public health funding and monitor progress toward a healthier workforce with lower employer healthcare costs.

- **HB1121 Property Taxes (Thompson):** various property tax changes designed to limit growth; community behavioral health center grants (originally in SB233); no "sister cities" in adversarial countries
- **HB1385 Emergency Medical Services (Barrett):** Community Cares Initiative Grant

Pilot (originally in SB10); other EMS provider changes

Support efforts to increase transparency of healthcare cost drivers and create opportunities to reduce costs for employers and employees while protecting and enhancing the quality of care provided to Hoosiers.

- **SB132 Professional Services (Brown):** FSSA risk-based managed care changes; dental insurance “assignment of benefit” changes

Drive Regionalism

Implement READI 2.0 and support ongoing policies and programs that incentivize and maintain regional collaboration and planning to catalyze quality of place and talent attraction projects.

Invest in Education

Support levels of funding for education from early childhood to K-12 to Higher Ed to implement and maintain programs that support future employment needs, attract high quality educators to lead classrooms, and maximize resource allocation through high-functioning systems.

- **SB1 Reading Skills (Rogers):** Increases reading deficiency remediation plans; eliminates most exemptions for passing students who don't pass 3rd Grade Reading skills tests
- **SB6 Reading Proficiency (Raatz):** Identifies students in 4-8 grade who previously didn't pass reading skills evaluations; develops plans to improve
- **SB270 Various Education Matters (Rogers):** Requires study re: allowing Ivy Tech to award bachelor's degrees and VU to offer more programming; makes changes to the \$1 law for underutilized school buildings

Support initiatives that maintain Indiana school board members as non-partisan elected officials responsive to the community they serve.

Other Bills of Interest:

- **HB1121 Local Income Taxes (Thompson):** various LIT changes, including some specific community issues (none EVV)
- **HB1183 Foreign Ownership of Agricultural Land (Culp):** Prevents persons from “adversarial countries” from leasing/owning farmland anywhere in state or any land within 10 miles of military installation; some exceptions
- **HB1329 Local Government Matters (Pressel):** wide variety of local government rule changes, including allowing Vanderburgh Co. Solid Waste Management District to grant/loan money to county for road paving within 1 mile of landfill (most other changes are re: septic systems)
- **SB4 Fiscal & Administrative Matters (Garten):** Gives legislators greater oversight re: administrative rulemaking, esp. over proposed rules with an implementation/compliance cost of \$1M+
- **SB15 Veterans' Benefits & Services Poster (Tomes):** DOL and Vet Affairs will develop new poster re: veterans' benefits for display by all employers with 50+ employees
- **SB20 Municipal Riverfront Development District Permits (Holdman):** Allows towns inside a Riverfront Development District to access increased alcohol permits (already allowed in cities)
- **SB37 Oversight of (Lake County) Convention & Visitor Bureau (Niemeyer):** Gives County Council greater oversight of Lake County CVB
- **SB58 Restaurant Carryout Sales (Holdman):** Helps at least 1 (maybe others, but very narrow definition) “specialty market” increase alcohol carryout sales
- **SB148 Workforce Data Collection (Brown):** Increases data required for submission to DWD and public access to that data – goal: improve programs to match workforce needs
- **SB206 Environmental Matters (Niemeyer):** IDEM update bill; allows for electronic communications; changes anaerobic digestion facility rules
- **SB228 Various Tax Matters (Holdman):** Variety of sales tax changes re: nexus and other specific community changes (none EVV)

If you would like to look at the details of a bill, you can do so at www.iga.in.gov. Choose the search function near the upper right and type in the bill number. From there you can see the full text of the bill, actions, vote totals (roll calls), etc.



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