



Friday, February 13th, 2026

Week Six Overview

The General Assembly had a full week of activity as committees and floor sessions continued moving legislation through the second half of session. Lawmakers considered a high volume of bills across a wide range of policy areas, reflecting the increased pace of work to meet upcoming deadlines. While some bills that did not advance by the prior deadline are no longer eligible for consideration, there are provisions from other measures that may still be incorporated into advancing legislation through amendments, a process commonly referred to as a “bill revival.”

Please see below for additional details on committee activity and highlighted legislation from this week.

Health

The House Public Health Committee met on Tuesday to discuss several health-related measures. **SB 90**, Consent for Pelvic, Prostate, and Rectal Exams, sponsored by Rep. Wendy McNamera (R-Evansville), would aim to clarify informed consent requirements for certain medical exams and strengthen licensure and provider transparency. Amendment #1 would clarify documentation and licensure requirements, explicitly align with current statute, and ensure no additional forms are needed. The amended bill advanced by a 12-0 vote. **SB 91**, Syringe Exchange Program, sponsored by Rep. Ed Clere (R-New Albany), would extend the sunset of the state’s syringe exchange program by two years, allowing existing local programs to continue. Amendment #8, would add a requirement for one-to-one exchange of needles, introduce ID verification and regional distribution boundaries, and introduce new data tracking, passed by consent. While supporters highlight the bill’s public health benefits, many stakeholders expressed opposition to the ID and exchange requirements due to effectiveness and participant access concerns. The bill passed with a 9-4 vote in Committee.

SB 225, Hospital Matters, sponsored by Rep. Brad Barrett (R-Richmond), would further regulate hospital medical debt collection and enhance transparency. Amendment #5 would lengthen the definition timeline for medical debt (from 60 to 100 days) and shorten notice requirements for closing hospitals (from 120 to 60 days). Amendment #6 would add support for veterans by updating funding purposes in the Department of Health (IDOH). Both amendments were adopted by consent, and the amended bill passed 13-0. The bill was recommitted to Ways and Means.



SB 180, Various Health Care Matters, sponsored by Rep. Lori Goss-Reaves (R-Indianapolis), would enact technical and workforce updates in health care policy. Amendment #8 was adopted, which would update credentialing for dental hygienists. The bill would also revise training requirements for home health aids, clarify that firefighters injured in the line of duty remain eligible for certain health coverage, and update regulation for respiratory care practitioners. The amended bill passed 13-0. **SB 293**, Pharmacist Licensure, sponsored by Rep. Robert Morris (R-Fort Wayne), would eliminate the separate law exam required for pharmacist licensure in Indiana, instead relying on integrated legal education within pharmacy degree programs and ongoing continuing education. This bill was held for further discussion.

Education

The Senate Education and Career Development Committee met this week to hear several provisions. **HB 1266**, Department of Education and Education Matters, sponsored by Sen. Jeff Raatz (R-Richmond), would revise education code in response to updated assessments and standards, including changes to the ILEARN test. Amendment #10 would remove duplicative language on testing proficiency, while Amendment #11 would clarify language about school accountability and support plans for underperforming schools. Both amendments were adopted by consent, and the bill passed in Committee 12-0. The bill was recommitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

HB 1423, Indianapolis Public Education Corporation, sponsored by Sen. Raatz, would restructure the governance framework and revenue flow for Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) and eligible charter participants within district boundaries. The bill intends to establish the Indianapolis Public Education Corporation (IPEC), a municipal corporation that will assume responsibility for the coordination and management of school facilities, transportation services, and allocation of property tax referendum revenue for IPS and certain charter partners. HB 1423 will clarify board membership structure, term limits, appointment procedures, and the relationship between IPEC and IPS, including how innovation network and charter schools may participate and opt out of shared services or facilities. The measure specifies that, prospectively, revenue from voter-approved referenda or capital projects for school facilities or transportation would be managed and distributed by IPEC, rather than remaining solely under IPS control. The legislation will further outline the authority of IPEC for the issuance of bonds, contracting, and execution of referenda advertising responsibilities; and provide for a transition in oversight of innovation network school contracts and related assets. Amendment #28 would limit inclusion to grade school and high school charters, set four-year term limits for the board, clarify charter leadership and appointments, provide a facility opt-out, and ensure referendum revenue is managed appropriately. The bill passed 9-4, and was reassigned to the Senate Appropriations Committee.



HB 1004, Various Education Matters, sponsored by Sen. Tyler Johnson (R-Leo), would eliminate more than 17,000 words from code to reduce mandates and provide local flexibility for school corporations and charters. Amendment #26 addressing first-class mail notification requirements and #10 updating technical corrections were adopted. The bill passed 8-4. **HB 1408**, Education Matters, also sponsored by Sen. Raatz expands data access and reporting tools for the legislature and update Ivy Tech board roles and campus evaluation protocols to better align with workforce needs. Amendment #3 was adopted removing a provision at agency request. The bill passed as amended 12-0, and was recommitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee. **HB 1325**, Special Education, sponsored by Sen. Greg Goode (R-Terre Haute), would direct state agencies to collect and share data on special education and behavioral costs, supporting improved budgeting and cross-agency coordination. The bill passed 13-0. **HB 1242**, School Corporation and Charter School Report, sponsored by Sen. Spencer Deery (R-West Lafayette), would require the state to conduct a statewide efficiency review of school corporations and charter schools to identify opportunities for improved student outcomes and cost savings. The bill passed 13-0. **HB 1195**, High School Equivalency Programs, sponsored by Sen. Raatz, would require 16- to 18-year-old test-takers for the high school equivalency exam to complete the Indiana Career Explorer program, and would extend a pilot for alternative diploma attainment through June 2028. The bill passed, 13-0.

The House Education Committee also met this week to discuss several Education bills. **SB 78**, Wireless Communication Device Policy, sponsored by Rep. Jake Teshka (R-North Liberty), would require schools to adopt comprehensive policies limiting student access to wireless devices during the school day. The committee adopted four amendments: #6 would add new device storage methods as eligible under the school safety grant and clarifies use of newer notetaker devices, #11 would require the Department of Education (IDOE) to issue guidance on device storage, #12 would clarify required language about “secure” storage, and #13 would allow school-sanctioned laptops and tablets only if protected by network controls. The amended bill passed 12-0, and was recommitted to House Ways and Means.

SB 199, Various Education Matters, sponsored by Rep. Robert Behning (R-Indianapolis), would clarify technical areas in education policy and improve oversight. The committee adopted Amendment #6, which would move the threshold from 70% to 75% for determinant evaluation of reading skills, and #10 which would prevent kids 15 years old or younger from having social media accounts without parental approval submitted to social media providers. The amended bill advanced 7-4. **SB 204**, Various Education Matters, sponsored by Rep. Hunter Smith (R-Zionsville), would make several technical changes to licensing for teachers and credentialing. Amendment #7 limits initial practitioner’s license for charter school teachers to special education only, #20 (prevents health science programs from blocking clinical hours based on a student’s religious exemption for immunizations, and #21 ensures AP exam scores apply to college credit transfers were adopted. The amended bill passed 8-4.



SB 161, Education Matters, sponsored by Rep. Behning would remove certain taxpayer identity requirements and make further technical changes relating to SGO reporting and tax credits. Amendment #5 removing taxpayer identity provision and technical cleanup was adopted. The bill passed as amended, 7-4, and was recommitted to the Ways and Means Committee. **SB 88**, Various Education Matters, sponsored by Rep. Martin Carbaugh (R-Fort Wayne), would require Indiana public colleges and universities to accept the Classical Learning Test (CLT) as an alternative to the SAT/ACT for admissions. The bill would also require K-12 schools to teach a “success sequence,” which includes graduating high school, working full time, and waiting until marriage to have children. The bill is contentious due to concerns about the reliability and neutrality of the CLT and the curricular requirements. The bill was held for further discussion. **SB 239**, Various Education Matters, sponsored by Rep. Teshka, would require IDOE to publish a list of employers who provide incentives to students earning the employment honors seal, mandate notification to parents when students are at risk in math, allow districts more flexibility for voluntary charter conversion, and update innovation agreement and facility use laws. The bill faced opposition over charter expansions, “may” provisions, and fiscal penalties, but supporters highlight strengthened local options and public asset reuse. The bill was held. **SB 254**, Ivy Tech Community College, sponsored by Rep Danny Lopez (R-Carmel), would modernize Ivy Tech’s governance structure, clarify its statutory workforce development mission, and add dual credit/enrollment as part of the college’s role. Ivy Tech would be positioned to respond more flexibly to state workforce needs and alleviate regulatory inconsistencies. The bill was held for further consideration.

Judiciary

The House Judiciary Committee met Monday to consider several measures related to probate law, bail, and family court procedures. **SB 71**, Various Probate Matters, sponsored by Rep. Chris Jeter (R-Fishers), would make comprehensive updates to Indiana’s probate and guardianship statutes based on recommendations from the interim probate code study committee. The bill would establish a new guardianship code revision task force to review and modernize guardianship laws, clarify procedures for claims involving minors, expand options for managing funds owed to minors without court hearings in limited circumstances, and make technical updates to powers of attorney, trust administration, and perpetuities statutes. The committee adopted Amendment #1, which would repeal the existing probate code study committee and merge its functions into the Judiciary Committee structure. SB 71 passed as amended, 9-0. **SJR 1**, Constitutional Amendment Concerning Bail, sponsored by Rep. Jeter, would amend the Indiana Constitution to allow judges to consider public safety when setting bail. Supporters argued the resolution would align Indiana with other states and provide clearer standards for pretrial detention decisions, while opponents raised concerns regarding due process, presumption of innocence, jail capacity, and potential disparate impacts. If passed by the General Assembly, the amendment would be placed on the ballot for voter consideration. The resolution was adopted, 8-1.



SB 3, Constitutional Amendment Ballot Language, sponsored by Rep. Jeter, would establish the ballot language voters would see for SJR 1 in November. Testimony focused on whether the language accurately and neutrally reflects the scope of the proposed constitutional change and whether it is accessible to voters. SB 3 passed, 7-2.

SB 171, Family and Children Matters, sponsored by Rep. Julie McGuire (R-Indianapolis), would modify jurisdictional rules governing adoption and CHINS proceedings, with the goal of providing more timely permanency decisions for children. Supporters emphasized increased notice, transparency, and protections for foster parents and children, while opponents raised concerns related to funding, jurisdictional overlap, court coordination, and potential unintended impacts on sibling placement and county resources. The committee indicated amendments may be considered to address these concerns. SB 171 was held for further consideration.

Roads and Transportation

The House Roads and Transportation Committee met to discuss two bills this week. **SB 179**, Indiana Department of Transportation, sponsored by Rep. Jim Pressel (R-Rolling Prairie), would be the annual Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) agency bill focused on operational streamlining. It enables INDOT to assume federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) responsibilities, which is expected to accelerate federal project timelines and reduce administrative delays. The bill would update technical references to modernize state coordinate systems and clarify single trip trucking permits, requiring expiration five days after issue to prevent abuse. It allocates \$75 million for previously denied Community Crossings Road grant applicants and accelerates matching fund distributions for local road and bridge projects. Section 2, which would limit engineering inspection liability, received substantial stakeholder testimony. The bill was held for further consideration.

SB 167, Relocation of Outdoor Advertising Signs, sponsored by Rep Doug Miller (R-Elkhart) would regulate the one-to-one relocation and modernization of existing billboards in Marion County. The bill would apply statewide spacing and lighting requirements, while not increasing overall billboard inventory or face sizes, limit new digital billboards, and preempt local zoning if state standards are met. Amendment #1, adopted by consent, would propose eliminating billboards outside I-465 except in digital form within historic districts. Industry and engineering stakeholders supported. The bill received support from billboard companies seeking clearer relocation guidelines, but was opposed by municipal and neighborhood representatives who objected to loss of local control and potential increases in unregulated digital signage. The bill was held in committee.



Insurance

The House Insurance Committee met this week to discuss one bill. **SB 189**, Nonparticipating Providers, sponsored by Rep. Barrett, would ban health insurance companies from imposing fees on hospitals that perform care for patients outside of the insurance network. Supporters stressed the need to break up the health insurance industry, while others suggested the health insurance industry is complicated and this will only add confusion. The Committee held the bill.

The Senate Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee also met this week. **HB 1116**, Virtual Currency Kiosks, sponsored by Sen. Scott Baldwin (R-Noblesville), would seek to curtail fraud at cryptocurrency kiosks. The bill would require training for workers in convenience stores containing these kiosks and warning labels to be placed on the machines. Amendment #14, which would greatly strengthen the bill by outright banning crypto currency kiosks in Indiana, passed 7-0. The crypto kiosk ban came after substantial evidence that these kiosks are used for fraudulent and illegal purposes. HB 1116 passed out of committee as amended, 6-1. **HB 1044**, Insurance Coverage for Public Safety Employees, sponsored by Sen. Kyle Walker (R-Columbus), is designed to expand health insurance benefits for public safety employees. If police officers or firefighters suffer a disability while on duty, the bill would require that local health insurance coverage also be extended to the employee's spouse and dependents. Supporters stressed the need to take care of State employees' families. HB 1044 passed out of committee, 7-0.

Utilities

The House Utilities Committee met this week to discuss one bill. **SB 6**, Extension of Water Services, sponsored by Rep. Hal Slager (R-Schereville), would require utility companies to provide notice to both the public and municipalities of new services and the effect on easements. Supporters highlighted the importance of notice for effects on property, while utility groups raised concern, citing the requirement could place undue burden on companies and reduce project efficiency. The Committee held the bill and plans to discuss in the coming weeks the proper scope of notice proposed in SB 6.



Commerce and Technology

The Senate Committee on Commerce and Technology met this week to discuss a variety of bills. **HB 1424**, Farm and Homestead Food Sales, sponsored by Sen. Brian Buchanan (R-Lebanon), would seek to deregulate the sale of home and farm-produced foods by simplifying Indiana's food production laws, removing quantity and sales limits, and allowing direct-to-consumer sales. The bill would eliminate certain safety regulations, such as time-temperature controls, ServSafe certification, and building/fire codes for small producers. HB1424 garnered strong support from small producers and local food advocates for expanding home and farm direct-to-consumer food sales, while food safety experts and commercial producers cautioned that relaxed regulation could heighten consumer safety risks. The bill was held in Committee.

HB 1147, Licensure of Certified Public Accountants, sponsored by Sen. Linda Rogers (R-Granger) would permit candidates to sit for the CPA exam upon earning a bachelor's degree with an accounting concentration or after meeting the existing 120-credit hour requirement. This change will align Indiana's process with developing degree programs and expand the accounting talent pool. The bill passed in Committee, 11-0. **HB 1230**, Professional Licensing Agency, sponsored by Sen. Rogers, would revise Title 25 to increase efficiency and consumer protection, including consolidating duplicative language, updating licensing boards, extending correction periods for rule violations, and expanding penalties for license infractions. The bill will also eliminate the restriction that prohibits a licensed salon owner from serving as a board member in cosmetology. The bill passed in Committee 11-0.

HB 1252, Broker Companies, sponsored by Sen. Scott Alexander (R-Muncie), would require broker companies to provide written disclosure to clients at the time of referral if the broker company can be compensated for a referral. This measure is intended to improve transparency in real estate transactions and address issues highlighted in recent federal legal settlements. The bill passed, 11-0. **HB 1360**, Access to Public Records, sponsored by Sen. Liz Brown (R-Fort Wayne), would propose the creation of an electronic portal for public records requests, require human verification, prioritize in-state and civic requests, and authorize fees for non-Indiana resident requests. The bill aims to address the increasing burden from automated data scraping and out-of-state records requests, ensuring government resources can focus on genuine local needs. Local government officials expressed support for HB1360's streamlined electronic public records request process to address data scraping and automated demands, but media and open government advocates opposed the bill due to concerns about limiting access for legitimate requestors. The bill remains in Committee.



Local Government

The House Local Government Committee met this week to consider several bills addressing confidentiality protections, firearms regulation, annexation procedures, and township government structure. **SB 191**, Electronic Record of Confidential Address, sponsored by Rep. Garrett Bascom (R-Lawrenceburg), would revise procedures connected to the Attorney General's address confidentiality program to better protect participants when recording property documents. Testimony from county recorders explained that confidential participant information has, in limited instances, been inadvertently recorded through electronic filing processes. The bill would allow participants to submit documents in person so recorders can properly separate and safeguard protected address information. SB 191 passed, 10-0.

SB 176, Firearms and Shooting Range Regulations, sponsored by Rep. Ben Smaltz (R-Auburn), would prohibit local units of government from using zoning or permitting ordinances to restrict lawful shooting ranges and would clarify that retired judicial officers may carry firearms in locations otherwise restricted, similar to retired law enforcement officers. Amendment #3, adopted by consent, would require a local unit to review and act upon certain permit applications. Supporters testified that ranges have faced barriers to expansion and repair due to local zoning practices. SB 176 passed as amended, 9-2. **SB 59**, Notice of Annexation Outreach Meetings, sponsored by Rep. Slager, would require municipalities to notify county commissioners and county plan commissions of annexation outreach meetings and proposed annexations. Supporters stated the bill enhances transparency and ensures county officials are aware of potential jurisdictional changes affecting their constituents. SB 59 passed, 12-0. **SB 270**, Township Mergers, sponsored by Rep. Slager, and authored by Sen. Rick Niemeyer (R-Lowell), would require the Department of Local Government Finance (DLFG) to evaluate township governments using a performance-based point system and designate certain townships for mandatory mergers. Townships assigned at least four points would be required to merge with a township assigned three or fewer points, subject to an appeal process, with mergers completed by January 1, 2028. Testimony focused on efficiency, cost savings, and structural reform. SB 270 was held.

The Senate Local Government Committee met to consider measures related to emergency medical services and local governance. **HB 1251**, Emergency Ambulance Services, sponsored by Sen. Michael Crider (R-Greenfield), would designate ambulance services as an essential service and require counties to identify and address underserved areas. Counties could meet this requirement by operating their own service, contracting with a public, private, or nonprofit provider, or using another available option. The bill would leave implementation decisions to county officials rather than imposing a uniform statewide model. The committee adopted Amendment #2, which would clarify that county commissioners are immune from liability related to decisions under the bill, restating existing protections in Indiana law. HB 1251 passed as amended, 10-0, and was recommitted to the Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee.



HB 1161, Local Government Matters, sponsored by Rep. Brett Clark (R-Avon), would update various local government statutes. The bill would provide that members of certain local boards and commissions serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority in counties without a consolidated city. It would allow certain county executives to set a county administrator's salary, require written personnel policies for county employees, and require executive approval before park boards may take certain major actions such as large contracts or property acquisitions. The bill would also allow public defenders to restrict their home address from public property databases. Amendment #9 was adopted which would stagger the terms of a nine-member local board of health. HB 1161 passed as amended, 10-0.

Appropriations

The Senate Appropriations Committee met this week to consider several bills. **HB 1002**, Electric Utility Affordability, sponsored by Sen. Eric Koch (R-Bedford), would mandate levelized utility rates for consumers. The bill aims to address concerns for consumers that see major spikes in utility bills during the coldest and warmest months of the year, placing strains on Hoosiers living paycheck-to-paycheck. The bill would empower the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) to stabilize utility costs by averaging rates over longer periods, helping consumers avoid seasonal spikes. Revenue from the sales tax on utility bills is estimated to remain unchanged by this bill, as rates are averaged over time. Supporters emphasized the issue of energy affordability, and HB 1002 passed out of committee, 9-0.

HB 1056, Resisting Law Enforcement Conflict Resolution, sponsored by Sen. Brett Clark (R-Avon), would raise criminal penalties for resisting law enforcement. The bill would raise the penalty to a level 5 felony if a defendant resists law enforcement while using a deadly weapon or while operating a vehicle in a manner that creates a substantial risk of bodily injury to another person. The bill is estimated to increase state expenditures, as higher penalties would shift more offenders from local jails to Department of Correction (IDOC) control. HB 1056 passed out of committee, 9-0.

HB 1277, Long Term Care, sponsored by Sen. Crider, would require the FSSA Secretary to apply to the federal government for a new Medicaid waiver to provide assisted living services. The bill would also specify that an individual is no longer covered by Medicare dollars if they have received nursing facility services for more than 100 days, instead hoping to strengthen community care centers. Supporters emphasized the need to cut Medicare costs and preserve the program, while others believe the reforms will kick too many off the welfare program. The bill would have an indeterminate effect on state expenditures. HB 1277 requires more reporting, but the new requirements can likely be performed by existing FSSA personnel. The Committee held the bill for further consideration.



Ways and Means

The House Ways and Means Committee met this week to discuss several bills. **SB 92**, Community Corrections Trust Funds, sponsored by Rep. Greg Steuerwald (R-Avon), would require counties that operate community corrections programs to establish a dedicated community corrections trust fund. The fund would be managed by county personnel. The bill's intent is to better support community corrections programs and alternatives in incarceration. SB 92 passed out of committee, 22-0.

SB 275, FSSA Fiscal Matters, sponsored by Rep. Lopez, would require the Bureau of Disability Services, which is housed within FSSA, to approve or deny benefit increases within a 120-day time frame. SB 275 would also focus state Medicare dollars to lower-income individuals by lowering the income limit for benefits. Supporters believe these reforms would strengthen the financial sustainability of Medicare by reducing State costs, while others objected on grounds it could restrict access to rural hospitals and home health care. The Committee held SB 275.

SB 281, Income Tax Credits, sponsored by Rep. Lopez, would require the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) to commit \$35 million each fiscal year to redevelopment tax credits. The bill would direct more State funds to regional development initiatives and require more cooperation between regions. Supporters emphasized the importance of development and growth, while others expressed concern that many of these tax credits could go towards data centers, thus harming communities and driving up utility costs. SB 281 passed out of committee, 20-0.

Courts and Criminal Code

The House Courts and Criminal Code Committee met this week to discuss several bills related to regulation and public safety. **SB 140**, Doxxing, sponsored by Rep. Alex Zimmerman (R-North Vernon), intends to strengthen Indiana's laws on doxxing by clarifying and expanding prohibited conduct. It would incorporate drone-related harassment and provide a more detailed definition of "personal information," now requiring multiple identifiers to trigger the statute. Redactions for railroad crew members involved in fatal incidents would also be added, and language will be adjusted to ensure applicability. Amendments adopted include: #3, drone language and cleanup, #8 expands personal information requirements, and #5 addresses railroad information, with additional technical modifications by the chair. The bill passed Committee, 13-0.

SB 9, Victim Impact Statements at Sentencing, sponsored by Rep. Joanna King (R-Middlebury), would require a defendant to be physically present at sentencing hearings unless otherwise excused, and will more clearly define "victim" for these proceedings. The bill also updates procedures related to show cause hearings. Amendment #3, which formalizes the definition of "victim" and clarifies the presence requirement, was adopted by consent. The bill passed Committee, 13-0.



SB 2, Bail Procedures, sponsored by Rep. Chris Jeter (R-Fishers), would update pretrial release processes, clarify the purpose and structure of bail, and specify preventative detention for repeat violent offenders. Amendment #3 will remove the need for an additional hearing before bail fees may be deducted, while Amendment #4 will clarify timing for bail hearings, allow flexible payment of bail, and remove restrictions on cross-examination of witnesses at bail hearings, deferring to court discretion for due process. SB 2 drew tentative support from both prosecutors and public defenders following amendments enhancing bail hearing due process, though some stakeholders remain concerned about the removal of procedural safeguards for indigent defendants. Both amendments were adopted and the bill passed out of Committee 12-1.

SB 251, Penalties for Prior OWI Convictions, sponsored by Rep. Jeter, aims to standardize county OWI procedures and prevent license suspension before conviction for first offenses, it will also mandate chemical testing in serious traffic incidents. Amendment #5 taken by consent will give courts discretion to suspend licenses pre-conviction after probable cause. The bill will also clarify sentencing and good-time credit calculation for OWI offenses. The bill, as amended, will receive broad support including from prosecutors, public defenders, and public safety groups and advance with a 13-0 vote. SB 250, Regulation of Hemp, sponsored by Rep. Garrett Bascom (R-Lawrenceburg), is expected to address the “farm bill loophole,” bring state law into compliance with the evolving federal definition of hemp, and prohibit sales to individuals under 21. Two major amendments are under consideration: Amendment #5 would align state law with the federal definition and permit out-of-state shipments and Amendment #8 would regulate hemp products under a licensing system similar to liquor. No vote was taken, and the bill will remain pending for further consideration.

SB 160, Public Safety, sponsored by Rep. Danny Lopez (R-Carmel), would permit courts to consider wearing a mask during the commission of a crime as an aggravating factor in sentencing, and will create a new malicious littering offense targeting intimidating or threatening conduct. Amendment #4 clarifies use of the term “refuse”. Amendment #5, seeks to limit law enforcement use of masks. Law enforcement and municipal organizations endorsed the bill’s provisions enhancing penalties for masked criminal activity and malicious littering, while civil liberties groups expressed apprehension about unintended impacts on constitutionally protected protests. The bill will advance as amended with a vote of 11-1.



Family and Children Services

The Senate Family and Children Services met this week to discuss multiple provisions. **HB 1036**, Children in Need of Service, sponsored by Sen. Linda Rodgers (R-Granger), would address oversight deficiencies in child safety. The bill would require the Department of Child Services (DCS) to conduct in-person verification of a child's living situation at least 30 days prior to case closure, ensuring decisions are based on current circumstances. The bill passed out of committee 9-0. **HB 1018**, School Age Child Care, sponsored by Sen. Stacey Donato (R-Logansport), would amend provisions to facilitate the use of the School Age Child Care fund for transportation services, particularly benefiting rural communities. The bill clarifies that transportation costs are an additive, not a reallocated, expense and aims to remove administrative barriers to access. HB 1018 passed out of committee 9-0. **HB 1257**, Child Services Matters, sponsored by Sen. Donato, hopes to establish enhanced legislative oversight of child fatalities and ensures standardized, transparent reporting. The bill adds four legislative appointments to the Child Fatality Committee and mandates DCS to provide timely and comprehensive information on child fatalities and prior agency contact. Amendment #3, adopted by consent, further requires fatality reports to detail circumstances, abuse history, and provide 90-day publication. HB 1257 passed in committee with a 9-0 vote. **HB 1307**, Department of Child Services Ombudsman, sponsored by Sen. Donato, would strengthen ombudsman authority by revising statutory language, changing "may" to "shall", to require the office to act on complaints. The measure seeks to increase agency accountability and passed with an 8-0 vote in committee. **HB 1357**, Child Services Provider Background Checks, sponsored by Sen. Greg Walker (R-Columbus), would streamline background check processes for service providers, permitting a single background check to satisfy requirements across multiple programs. Amendment #1, adopted by consent, would add clarifying language regarding compliance. This measure passed in committee with the proposed amendment, 8-0.

Environmental Affairs

The House Environmental Affairs Committee met this week to vote on one bill. **SB 277**, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, sponsored by Rep. Beau Baird (R-Greencastle), would recodify and streamline Indiana's Title 13 environmental statutes. The bill would eliminate outdated or duplicative requirements, consolidate administrative reviews, clarify statutory references, update various permitting processes, and reduce mandated reporting. It is intended to increase regulatory efficiency and predictability for both IDEM and regulated entities without altering underlying state or federal environmental protections. Key provisions would include clarification of administrative appeal procedures, establishment of periodic review for non-rule policies, modernized permitting and hearing processes, and removal of obsolete language, as well as technical updates reflecting current federal law. The bill would retain IDEM's full authority to enforce state and federal environmental laws while modernizing regulations. Business and regulatory stakeholders testified in favor of the bill, citing regulatory efficiency and clarity, whereas environmental organizations opposed the measure, warning it could dilute state oversight over environmental protections. SB 277 passed as amended, 6-5.



Public Policy

The House Public Policy Committee met this week to move several bills. **SB 5**, Suspension of Permit, sponsored by Rep. Greg Steuerwald (R-Avon), would give the Alcohol and Trade Commission (ATC) the authority to suspend the alcoholic beverage retail permits for establishments where repeated crime is prevalent. The bill would allow the ATC to suspend permits for retailers that fail to reasonably prevent serious crimes from being committed on their premises, such as murder, rioting, and sex crimes. Amendment #2, which would require the ATC to hold a hearing on the suspension within three business days, was added to SB 5 by consent. The bill passed out of committee, 9-0. **SB 185**, Alcohol and Tobacco Matters, sponsored by Rep. Heath VanNatter (R-Kokomo), would mandate that a person cannot sell a tobacco or electronic cigarette at wholesale without a tobacco sales certificate. The bill would also prohibit the sale or distribution of e-liquids and ingredients that are manufactured or imported by a foreign adversary. Amendment #9, which specifies that the bill targets the ingredients and not the batteries in electronic cigarettes, was adopted by consent. SB 185 passed out of committee, 10-0. **SB 23**, Alcoholic Beverage Permits for County Fairs, sponsored by Rep. Alaina Shonkwiler (R-Noblesville), would allow the ATC to issue alcohol sale permits to local counties for use during county fairs. Under current law, counties can serve alcohol at many other community events, but not county fairs. Supporters emphasized that the bill only allows counties to obtain permits if they choose, and that alcohol revenue could help struggling county fairs stay operational. SB 23 passed out of committee, 9-1.

The Senate Public Policy Committee met to consider legislation related to gaming operations and administrative law. **HB 1038**, Relocation of Gaming Operations, sponsored by Sen. Justin Busch (R-Fort Wayne), would establish a process to relocate the Ohio County riverboat gaming license to an inland casino in either Allen, DeKalb, Steuben, or Wayne County. HB 1038 would allow the legislative body of an eligible county to place a public question on the 2026 general election ballot seeking voter approval for casino gambling. The bill would also require county applicants to commit at least \$500 million in development investment to accompany the project. The Indiana Gaming Commission would be required to review applications and issue a final decision by April 15, 2027. Supporters cited economic development, tourism growth, and revenue generation, while opponents raised concerns regarding community impacts, addiction, and long-term fiscal effects. HB 1038 passed 7-3 and was recommitted to Appropriations.



HB 1052, Various Administrative Law Matters, sponsored by Sen. Ron Alting (R-Lafayette), would make comprehensive updates affecting the Indiana Horse Racing Commission, Indiana Gaming Commission, and Alcohol and Tobacco Commission. The bill would revise licensing and disciplinary provisions for horse racing, expand the voluntary exclusion program to include sports wagering certificate holders, define and establish civil penalties for certain sweepstakes games, and make changes to alcohol permitting, tobacco certification and enforcement, and related regulatory matters. The committee adopted several amendments by consent. Amendment #22 removed THC-related language. Amendment #26 clarified that peer-to-peer poker is not included within the bill's sweepstakes game provisions. Amendment #23 restored certain newspaper publication requirements for Alcohol and Tobacco Commission notices. Additional amendments made agency-specific and technical updates to align enforcement and administrative procedures. HB 1052 passed as amended, 8-0.

Pensions

The Senate Pensions and Labor Committee met this week to hear two bills. **HB 1302**, Various Labor and Safety Matters, sponsored by Sen. Linda Rogers (R-Granger), would update certain labor and safety statutes, including requiring employers to timely add, modify, or remove information in the youth employment system database and eliminate provisions related to a belt examiner certificate. The committee adopted Amendment #4, which would transfer administration of specified age-related provisions to the State and codify certain age discrimination standards. HB 1302 passed as amended, 8-0. **HB 1145**, Thirteenth Check, sponsored by Sen. Scott Buchanan (R-Lebanon), would provide a supplemental retirement benefit, similar to a cost-of-living adjustment, for certain retired public employees. The committee adopted Amendment #1, which would allow participants in the State Excise Police Gaming Agent, Gaming Control Officer, and Conservation Enforcement Officer retirement plan to elect a joint and survivor option for the payment of their retirement allowance, consistent with options available under other public retirement plans. HB 1145 passed as amended, 10-0, and was recommitted to Appropriations.



Session Floor Highlights

With third reading deadlines now complete in both chambers, bills that advanced have moved to the opposite chamber, where they are currently proceeding through committee hearings and floor consideration. Further updates will be provided as legislation is taken up on the floor. Please see the bills listed below that passed the opposite chamber this week, along with final vote totals.

A complete list of legislation that remains eligible for consideration this session can be found here: [Bills for 2026 Session](#)

Bills Passed in the Senate:

- HB 1035, Permissible Unsupervised Activity – Sen. Carrasco (R-Indianapolis). Passed, 48-0.
- HB 1058, Annexation – Sen. Clark (R-Avon). Passed, 50-0.
- HB 1150, Local Regulation – Sen. Freeman (R-Indianapolis). Passed, 37-10.
- HB 1267, State Board of Accounts – Sen. Baldwin (R-Noblesville). Passed, 50-0.
- HB 1296, Mental Health Services – Sen. Clark (R-Avon). Passed, 50-0.
- HB 1429, Appraiser Statute of Limitations – Sen. Alexander (R-Muncie). Passed, 49-1.
- HB 1048, VFD Clothing and Automobile Allowances – Sen. Crider (R-Greenfield). Passed, 48-0.
- HB 1088, Technical Corrections – Sen. Freeman (R-Indianapolis). Passed, 47-1.
- HB 1131, Licensed Estheticians and Electrologists – Sen. Rogers (R-Granger). Passed, 44-3.

Bills Passed in the House:

- SB 13, Motor Vehicle Equipment Retirements – Rep. D. Miller (R-Elkhart). Passed, 93-0.
- SB 80, Code Publication – Rep. Engleman (R-Georgetown). Passed, 94-0.
- SB 222, Family and Social Services Administration Matters – Rep. Barrett (R-Richmond). Passed, 95-0.
- SB 241, Utility Service Enhancement Improvement Costs – Rep. Soliday (R-Valparaiso). Passed, 91-3.
- SB 258, Nuclear Facility Permits – Rep. Soliday (R-Valparaiso). Passed, 64-28.
- SB 25, School Board Candidates – Rep. Prescott (R-Union City). Passed, 91-4.
- SB 55, Agricultural Programs – Rep. Baird (R-Greencastle). Passed, 94-1.
- SB 56, Veterinary License – Rep. Baird (R-Greencastle). Passed, 94-1.



- SB 112, Candidacy Documents – Rep. Culp (R-Rensselaer). Passed, 72-24.
- SB 230, Department of Agriculture – Rep. Aylesworth (R-Hebron). Passed, 95-0.
- SB 240, Surplus Interconnection Service – Rep. Soliday (R-Valparaiso). Passed, 96-0.
- SB 249, State Chemist – Rep. Culp (R-Rensselaer). Passed, 94-2.
- SB 291, Court Security – Rep. Steuerwald (R-Avon). Passed, 95-0.
- SB 76, Immigration Matters – Sen. Prescott (R-Union City). Passed, 61-28.

Points of Interest

Sen. Nick McKinley (R-Marion) was sworn in this week as the new state senator for District 17 by Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Loretta Rush in the Senate Chamber. He succeeds former Sen. Andy Zay, who resigned January 8 following his appointment to the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission. McKinley will serve the remainder of the term through November 2026, representing Grant, Huntington, and Wabash counties.

Looking Ahead

Thursday, February 24, marks the final day for House bills to pass third reading in the Senate and for Senate bills to pass third reading in the House. Remaining legislative deadlines for the 2026 session can be found here: [2026 Legislative Deadlines](#)

Thank you for allowing us to work with you during the 2026 legislative session. Please feel free to contact any member of our legislative team if you have questions, would like full copies of bills or amendments, or need additional information on matters pending before the Indiana General Assembly.



Please feel free to contact a member of our legislative team should you have questions regarding the happenings in the Indiana General Assembly!

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