



Session – Week 11
March 21, 2025

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Indiana Outdoor Management Association

Click here for current Bill Track:

<https://tinyurl.com/IOMA2025>

Week 11 was full of activity at the statehouse. The Senate Appropriations Committee met on Thursday to listen to public funding requests. On Monday, the School Funding Subcommittee met to hear from education groups for their funding requests. The Ways and Means Committee didn't schedule SB 1 - Property Tax Relief for additional discussions this week. Some local radio show hosts in Indianapolis held a property tax rally to support Governor Braun's original proposal, which Governor Braun, Lt. Governor Beckwith, and three House members attended and addressed. Later, leaders in both chambers agreed that they want 2026 property tax bills to be less than 2025 and are trying to find a path. We will continue to update you on this issue and your issues. Remember, click the link above to see your bill's status.

HB1531-Various Immigration Matters, authored by Rep. J.D. Prescott (R-Union City), requires state and local government units to comply with federal immigration orders. It also prohibits employers with ten or more employees from knowingly or intentionally recruiting, hiring, or employing an unauthorized alien after June 30, 2025. Violation could result in a total or temporary suspension of an employer's operating or business license (i.e., pesticide applicator).

Our concern, which we outlined in the House Judiciary Committee hearing, is the bill's vagueness regarding how the AG's office would be engaged to initiate an investigation and that whatever the method of initiating the engagement, our concern was that rival companies or individuals could use it to harass member companies.

We also shared our concerns with the AG's office. The AG's office promised to work with us on implementation if the bill passes. The AG explained that they intended it to be unclear how an investigation would commence to avoid creating a process that encouraged frivolous complaints and give the AG's office discretion on where to expend their limited resources.

They explained that their authority to initiate an investigation comes from broad authority to what is required to enforce the law through their power to issue a Civil Investigative Demand (CID). Then, if, based on the information provided, the AG has reason to believe (has probable cause) that

there is a violation, he may bring an action in court. If the Court finds by a preponderance of the evidence (it is more likely true than it isn't), the Court may order any of the penalties provided in the bill.

Other AG enforcement activities provide some examples of how the AG may come to be engaged. The Consumer Protection Division investigates and enforces cases of fraud and abuse of people by businesses. There is a portal where the public can file a complaint. Based on the information provided, the AG decides whether there is enough to warrant further investigation. Most complaints are common consumer disputes, don't rise to the level of fraud or abuse, and don't warrant additional investigation. However, if the information in the complaint is sufficient to show abuse or fraud, the CID process discussed above may be initiated.

The AG enforces prohibitions on labor trafficking. In one case, a local TV news outlet reported the Cass County Health Department complaints that showed inhabitants were living in some apartments that far exceeded occupancy limits and without any transportation. These are the kind of conditions that often accompany labor trafficking. So, based on the news report, the AG issued a CID to the Health Director to get more information and see if she could provide further evidence warranting an investigation. The AG believes the office will avoid unnecessarily harassing businesses because of their discretion and limited resources.

The Senate assigned the bill to the Senate Judiciary Committee. I have spoken with the Judiciary Chairwoman, Sen. Liz Brown (R - Fort Wayne), and shared our concerns. It will die if she chooses not to hear the bill before the committee deadline. Last week, we heard that the Governor's office supports sections of the bill. The bill contains many sections, and the sections concerning hiring unauthorized aliens are a section. Much of the rest of the bill involves local agencies and gives them the authority to enforce federal immigration laws. Given this information, we don't know if the governor's office is working to schedule a hearing behind the scenes. Sen. Brown posted her committee agenda for this Wednesday, and HB1531 isn't on the agenda. We must maintain vigilance and will continue talking with stakeholders and legislators and sharing what we learn. If there is any movement, we will continue to work with the Senate and maintain our lines of communication with the AG's office.

At the direction of the IOMA Board, we are supporting an effort to address what we believe is an unintended consequence of legislation passed in 2024—HEA 1179. As it passed, the law prohibited the transfer of intellectual property to businesses owned, operated, or controlled by foreign adversary governments. Intellectual property includes data. Purdue College of Agriculture conducts public research using products from Syngenta. Syngenta has a Chinese investor with a controlling interest. China is a Foreign Adversary, so Syngenta is a business controlled by a foreign adversary under the law.

We have agreed to help and support Purdue and Syngenta's lobbying efforts by bringing the industry's perspective. The effort aims to identify and amend a still-alive bill with language that distinguishes public research and intellectual property. When the bill passes and becomes law, it will provide the exemption for Purdue and Syngenta to continue their collaboration, which benefits our industry.

Trails and Economic Development

[SB 468](#) allows St. Joseph County and South Bend to establish the Midwest Continental Divide Commission. The five-member commission is tasked with developing a connected trails system through St. Joseph County that leverages the Continental Divide, state parks, and nature preserves within the region.

The commission will be able to acquire, develop, and manage lands and facilities, issue bonds, and engage in public-private partnerships. In House Ways and Means, author Senator David Niezgodski (D-South Bend) said the commission would play an important role in the uniform development of the multi-jurisdictional project.

The area already attracts six million visitors annually, generating an economic impact of \$1.2 billion. The author hopes that by establishing this commission and developing trails, Indiana will strengthen its growing ecotourism industry while fostering economic growth and promoting public health initiatives.

The [Monon South Trail](#) project, a part of former Governor Holcomb's [Next Level Trails](#) initiative, demonstrates the impact of trails, which has sparked housing developments, restaurants, and other growth.

Though Next Level Trail funds are not included in the current proposed budget, Sen. Niezgodski stated revenue for the Midwest Continental Divide project will come from city and county dollars, as well as private sources.

SB 468 passed out of the Senate on third reading 49-0. The bill is now in the House Ways and Means Committee awaiting an amend and vote hearing.

House Bills Move in the Senate

[HB 1660](#), authored by Rep. Beau Baird (R-Greencastle), was heard in the Senate Education Committee on Wednesday, March 19. The bill allows interested students to attend events offered by 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) through an excused absence from school. Such absences cannot exceed six days and students must remain in good academic standing to qualify. Testimony from the public expressed broad support for the inclusion of these programs under school absence requests. Lawmakers hope the bill will encourage the next generation of farmers, but the bill was held without a vote.

[HB 1615](#), authored by Rep. Shane Lindauer (R-Jasper) focuses on the effectiveness of Indiana's certified technology parks. It passed out of the Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy

Committee on March 18 with a vote of 9-0.

Certified technology parks serve as incubators, seeking to foster the growth of technology-focused businesses within the state. The Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) reports that Indianapolis has an expanding technology sector, with a 30% increase in tech companies over the last five years. The grant money allocated in the bill may attract more start-ups to the state.

Rep. Lori Goss-Reaves' (R-Marion) [HB 1572](#) passed through second reading on the Senate floor on Tuesday, March 18, with no amendments. It is now eligible for a final, third reading vote in the Senate.

The bill focuses on hearing aids and speech-language pathologists in the state. It allows for the sale of over-the-counter hearing aids by dealers who have either a certificate of registration or are a licensed audiologist.

If passed out of the Senate on third reading, it will head to the governor's desk and would be eligible for his signature, then becoming law.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

2025 UPCOMING DEADLINES

HOUSE: Senate Bills

Committees: Thursday, April 10, 2025
2nd Reading: Monday, April 14, 2025
3rd Reading: Thursday, April 15, 2025

SENATE: House Bills

Committees: Thursday, April 10, 2025
2nd Reading: Monday, April 14, 2025
3rd Reading: Thursday, April 15, 2025

HOUSE & SENATE

Anticipated Sine Die: Thursday, April 24
Statutory Sine Die: Tuesday, April 29

MIDPOINT STATISTICS

<u>Chamber</u> <u>Percent</u>	<u>Bills Filed</u>	<u>#Alive</u>	
House	708	185	26.2%
Senate	521	156	29.9%
Total	1,229	341	27.7%

HOUSE BILL 1001

Ways and Means Committee:

Amendment 11 adopted 14-8
Amendment 12 adopted by consent

House 2nd Reading Amendments:

Amendment 19 adopted by voice vote

Tracking:

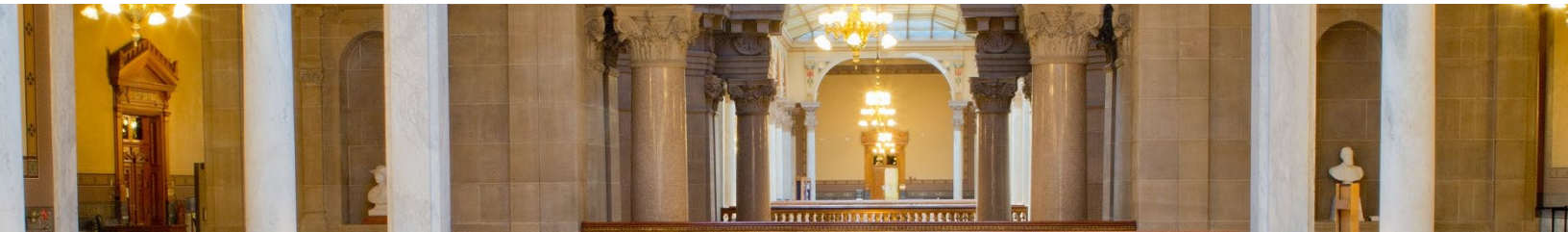
3.20.25 Testimony heard in Senate Appropriations

3.3.25: Referred to Senate Appropriations

2.21.25: Referred to Senate

2.20.25: Passed 3rd Reading on House Floor (66-28)

2.17.25: Passed House Ways and Means (14-7)



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