



Session – Week 1  
January 10, 2025

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



## Indiana Outdoor Management Alliance (IOMA)

*Click here for current Bill Track:*

<https://tinyurl.com/IOMA2025>

The legislature reconvened for the 2025 “long session” on Wednesday. During a long session, that legislature is constitutionally required to pass a balanced budget before the statutory April 29th deadline.

Over the next four months, the legislature will consider legislation on reform, energy availability, school and Medicaid program funding, and because forecasts show revenue dropping in 2026 and 2027, looking for ways to cut spending and save money. Of the expected approximately 1,300 bills, there are about 500 that are viewable. As the legislature releases additional bills over the next week, we will add them to your live bill track, which you can access anytime by clicking the link above. We will also provide real-time updates when impactful legislation is released. We expect all the bills to be available at the end of next week or early the week after.

HB1184—State Chemist, authored by Representative Steve Bartels (R - Eckerty), moves the office of the state chemist to the Indiana Department of Agriculture in 2027 and moves all functions and employees to the state of Indiana from Purdue University. Rep. Bartels told us earlier in the summer of his intent. He wanted to make the change in the last session but could not because it would have impacted the budget in a non-budget year. The change will have a nominal, if any, impact on the industry. It will ensure that the office and its employees are directly responsible to the state and an elected official—in this case, the Lt. Governor.

SB202—Department of Agriculture, authored by Senator Jim Buck (R - Kokomo), provides for the Department of Agriculture to once again be an executive office under the governor. Constitutionally, the Lt. Governor does not have charge of any agency, and their only duty is to serve as Senate President, break legislative ties, and succeed the governor, were the governor to be unable to serve. The Lt. Governor overseeing the Department is a relatively new development and was put into statute under Governor Mitch Daniels. Under Daniels, the Department of Commerce, which had traditionally been under the Lt. Governor, was moved to become the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), an executive agency, and the Department of Agriculture was moved along with the Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), which oversaw and administrated rural grant programs, to the Lt. Governor to develop the Agriculture Industry further. Governor-Elect Braun wants to take a new approach to economic development and has moved all offices back to the governor, not statutorily assigned to the Lt. Governor. The Department and OCRA are the only agencies statutorily assigned to the Lt. Governor. The effort will likely meet some resistance from supporters of the Lt. Governor. We will continue to watch this.

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SB123—Unemployment Compensation, authored by Senator Scott Alexander (R - Muncie), reduces the maximum amount of regular unemployment benefits. If enacted, this policy could be detrimental to seasonal businesses whose employees would be forced to find other work during the down season, limiting the likelihood of them returning to previous roles. We will connect with the author and the chair of the assigned committee next week, and keep everyone updated.

Stephen M. Wolff, Esq.  
The Corydon Group  
[swolff@thecorydongroup.com](mailto:swolff@thecorydongroup.com)  
317.956.4606

### New Legislators at the Statehouse

Following the 2024 election, the Indiana General Assembly convened on Wednesday, January 8, to begin another year of lawmaking. This year marks a budget session, characterized by a nearly billion-dollar Medicaid budget shortfall, as well as the first time in eight years that there will be a new Governor, Mike Braun.

The Governor-elect is not the only fresh face in the Indiana Statehouse with several new members across both chambers. Notably, the partisan balance remains unchanged following elections, with Republicans maintaining a 40-10 super-majority in the Senate and a 70-30 super-majority in the House.

In the Senate, District 3 is now represented by Senator Mark Spenser (D – Gary) and District 34 is now represented by Senator Lakeisha Jackson (D – Indianapolis). Both Senator Brett A. Clark (District 24 – Avon) and Senator Daryl Schmitt (District 48 – Jasper) have joined the Senate Republican Caucus.

The House Republican caucus welcomed eight new members: Representative Garret Bascom (R, Lawrenceburg), Representative Matt Commons (R, Williamsport), Representative Andrew Ireland (R, Indianapolis), Representative Tony Isa (R, LaGrange),

Representative Ethan Lawson (R, Greenfield), Representative Danny Lopez (R, Carmel), Representative Alaina Shonkwiler (R, Noblesville), and Representative Hunter Smith (R, Zionsville). Joining the Democratic caucus in the House are Alex Burton (D, Evansville), and Wendy Dant Chesser (D, Jeffersonville). All 14 of the above members were sworn in on November 19<sup>th</sup>, Organization Day. However, on Monday, Representative Alan Morrison (R-Brazil) resigned to serve as the Director of Natural Resources in the incoming Braun Administration, leaving a vacancy in the House of Representatives. There will soon be an additional legislative freshman appointed to fill his seat.

### Braun's Inauguration

Former Senator Mike Braun will be inaugurated on Monday, January 13. The 124<sup>th</sup> General Assembly has already convened to canvas the vote and certify Governor-elect Mike Braun, his Lieutenant Governor-elect, Micah Beckwith, and other victorious candidates for their positions. Braun's inauguration festivities will span three days, beginning with a gala at the JW Marriott on Saturday, January 11. Mass will be held at 10 a.m. the next day in Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral followed by the Hoosier Heritage Family Day in the afternoon. On the morning of the ceremony, First Lady

Maureen Braun will host a breakfast honoring Indiana's female entrepreneurs.

Much of Braun's policy agenda stems from proposals outlined during his gubernatorial campaign. The new administration looks to tackle issues ranging from healthcare and education to property taxes and economic development. The Governor-elect has been quoted saying he wants to "wear [legislators] out with collaboration." Braun hopes that his concert with lawmakers will create an understanding that "what is practical [will] get done out of the gate."

There are additional agenda items that Braun, as the state's new chief executive, can enact on his own. Many of these proposals are oriented towards reorganizing the executive branch, reforming state agencies, and authorizing a commission to outline an energy and water plan for the state.

## Legislative Deadlines 125<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

Deadline for Senate bill filling: January 9, 2025  
Gubernatorial Inauguration: January 13, 2025  
Deadline for House bill filing: January 14, 2025  
Deadline to assign Senate bills to committee: January 16, 2025  
State of the Judiciary: January 29, 2025  
State of the State: January 29, 2025  
Committee report deadlines for House and Senate bills: February 17, 2025  
Second reading deadline for House and Senate bills: February 19, 2025  
Third reading deadline for House and Senate bills: February 20, 2025  
Crossover break: February 24-February 28, 2025  
Second half of Session begins March 3, 2025



## The Corydon Group 2024 Legislative Team

CHRISTOPHER M. GIBSON, ESQ.

Managing Principal

KIMBERLY S. WILLIAMS

Senior Advisor, Association Management

MORGAN E. PERRILL

Senior Vice President

AMELIA D. MCCLURE, ESQ.

Vice President

JOHN COCHRAN, ESQ.

Senior Advisor

TRISTAN M. FRIEDERCH

Legislative Intern

LOUIS M. BELCH

President

RACHEL M. GIBSON

Senior Vice President

J. CAMERON CARTER

Vice President

STEVE M. WOLFF, ESQ.

Vice President

RYAN P. KENNEDY

Manager, Communications & Policy

GRACE A. SARRAZIN

Legislative Intern