



Session – Week 3  
January 24, 2025

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

*The Corydon Group*  
— FIRST IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS —

## Indiana Outdoor Management Association

*Click here for current Bill Track:*

<https://tinyurl.com/IOMA2025>

The third week of the session saw a steady stream of activity despite the holiday-shortened week. The Governor's Office released his budget proposal, which will now go to the House Ways and Means Committee, where the House will craft its budget version. Budgeting is the sole authority of the legislature. The legislature will consider the wishes and concerns of the governor and, whenever possible, acquiesce, but the governor does not have any authority to make the budget.

Next week, Governor Braun will address the state and outline his plans for Indiana in the annual State of the State Address on Wednesday. We anticipate he will discuss his legislative priorities, including property tax reform, school voucher expansion, and Medicaid spending reform, amongst others. All will be addressed through legislation and likely resolved in the final days of the session.

As always, click the link above at any time for the latest status on any of your legislation.

HB1184—State Chemist, authored by Representative Steve Bartels (R - Eckerty), moves the office of the Office of the Indiana State Chemist from the control of the Purdue School of Agriculture to become a division of the Indiana Department of Agriculture in 2027. The bill transfers all the functions and requirements currently undertaken by the OISC. This includes educational programs. It transfers the money (\$10 from each annual registration fee) from the Purdue Pesticide Program currently in statute to "provide education on safe and effective use of pesticides." It transfers the money to the Pesticide Education Fund instead of a named program.

House leadership assigned the bill to the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, which hasn't scheduled it for a hearing yet. I will connect with the author and chairman next week to determine when they intend to hear it.

SB123-Unemployment Compensation, authored by Senator Scott Alexander (R - Muncie), reduces the maximum amount of regular unemployment benefits. Senate Pensions and Labor Committee heard it two weeks ago but held it for further discussion. The rationale behind the bill is that many Hoosier employers are starving for workers, but many people are still unemployed; reducing benefits will incentivize unemployed workers to fill a needed job. If enacted as written, the bill could negatively

impact seasonal employers. Seasonal employers pay higher unemployment taxes because they can only provide seasonal employment. Their seasonal employees collect unemployment benefits during the off-season. The bill is intended to incentivize unemployed people to seek new employment quickly, making them unavailable when the hiring season returns. We will continue to watch. The following committee schedule has been posted, and the bill isn't scheduled.

SB211-Clean Water Indiana Program, authored by Sen. Sue Glick (R-LaGrange), adds management of invasive species as a qualified expenditure of the program fund. The Senate passed the bill 49-0 on Thursday.

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### Budget Hearings in the House

The House Ways and Means Committee heard budget presentations from several state agencies last week. The agencies sought to provide lawmakers with updates on their key initiatives and explain their budget proposals for the upcoming biennium.

Chief Justice Loretta Rush, presenting for the Indiana Supreme Court, highlighted Indiana's progress in court technology. She cited the State's various online applications and initiatives including E-tickets and the Protective Order Registry as recent improvements. The Court's budget request included funding to refine a new jail management system that seeks to streamline communications and enhance public safety by communicating between counties.

The Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council provided an update on the high-tech crime program funded by the General Assembly in 2021 and 2023. With all ten labs operational, Executive Director Chris Naylor requested a funding increase from \$3 million to \$4.5 million, to ensure the continued operation of the program.

State Comptroller Elise Nieshalla requested a flat appropriation while touting that their budget maintains a 2% reserve. She also highlighted the addition of a Federal Grants Dashboard to the Indiana Transparency Portal and new technologies that have modernized payment systems and financial reporting across the State.

Attorney General Todd Rokita also presented a budget request without an increase over the previous budget. The Attorney General reported on the impact of the previous budget, which he said helped improve office technology and attorney retention. He highlighted that their office is returning \$14 to taxpayers for every \$1 allocated by the State through settlements, fee collection, and the unclaimed property division.

Crediting strategic investments, bonds, and deposits, State Treasurer Daniel Elliott informed the committee that the office returned \$545 million to the Indiana General Fund in 2024, with projections of over \$500 million returned in 2025.

Secretary of State, Diego Morales, requested an 18.8% increase in funding for his office's Election Division to support the development of the Indiana Voter Registration Database.

### Governor Braun's 2026-2027 Budget

Governor Braun's budget proposal, included in [House Bill \(HB\) 1001](#), addresses his campaign promises regarding universal school vouchers and property tax reforms. It also fully funds Medicaid coverage, makes a yearly 2% increase in education funding, resulting in around \$540 million for K-12 tuition support, and funds child care vouchers, eliminating the need for waitlists.

The proposed budget also eliminates retirement income taxes and creates sales tax holidays. To make up for the lost revenue, the budget includes a 5% cut in state agencies' budgets, lowering spending by roughly \$700 million. The proposal amends homestead deductions and caps property tax increases at 2% for some Hoosiers.

The House Ways and Means Committee will continue to hear testimony from state agencies over the next three weeks. Then both parties will present their own version of the budget in the form of an amendment for consideration and further action. The final budget will not be passed until April.

## Legislative Deadlines

125<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

Deadline to assign Senate bills to committee:

January 29, 2025

State of the Judiciary:

January 29, 2025

State of the State:

January 29, 2025

House and Senate committee report deadlines:

February 17, 2025

House and Senate second reading deadline:

February 19, 2025

House and Senate third reading deadline:

February 20, 2025

Crossover break:

February 24 – February 28, 2025

Second half of session begins:

March 3, 2025

## The Corydon Group

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