



Session – Week 4
January 31, 2025

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Corydon Group
— FIRST IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS —

Indiana Outdoor Management Association

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<https://tinyurl.com/IOMA2025>

In the fourth week of session, Governor Mike Braun (R) gave his first public address as Governor in the annual State of the State Address, where he outlined his “Freedom and Opportunity Agenda.” The Governor’s speech also heralded several pieces of legislation that will lower property taxes, health care costs, and enhance education opportunities for all Hoosiers.

Next week, the House Ways and Means Committee will begin budget hearings. As February opens, Committee chairs will work to ensure all agenda bills get heard and voted on or before the first Committee Report Deadline on February 17. You can always check the latest status of any of your bills by clicking the link above.

HB1184—State Chemist, authored by Representative Steve Bartels (R - Eckerty), would transfer the office’s reporting line, including its duties, authorities, and employees, from Purdue to the Indiana Department of Agriculture in 2027. The office would continue to exist, but instead of reporting to the Dean of the School of Agriculture at Purdue, it would report to the State Agricultural Commissioner, who reports to the Lt. Governor.

For a bill to become law, some thresholds must be cleared before pre-set deadlines. The first threshold is a committee hearing and vote. All bills are assigned to a committee, and a chairperson runs each committee. Committee chairs are powerful because they decide what bills their committee will hear and which they won’t. The first important deadline is the Committee Report Deadline, the last day that committees can meet and vote on bills. That day is February 17.

HB1184 was assigned to the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee, and I spoke to Chairman Rep. Mike Aylesworth (R - Hebron). He told me he does NOT plan to hear the bill. So, according to Chairman Aylesworth, it is going to die.

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 three weeks ago but held it for further discussion. Employers pay into an Unemployment Insurance

Fund, which provides unemployment benefits. An employer's UI rate is based on several variables, but one of the most significant is the number of workers who receive UI benefits. Seasonal industries pay more than non-seasonal industries because their workers use UI benefits.

The UI fund must always be solvent, and if it ever becomes insolvent, statutory countermeasures are triggered to bring the fund back to solvency, including increased UI rates and decreasing benefits. Indiana's fund is solvent. I spoke with the author, and the bill is intended to disincentivize unemployed workers from remaining unemployed and instead filling open jobs. For seasonal employers, the problem the bill intends to solve—finding workers to fill unmet needs—will be exacerbated, as they will be unable to find employees when the next hiring season opens. We will continue to monitor.

HB1418-Employing an Unauthorized Alien, authored by Rep. Jim Lucas (R - Seymour), prohibits an employer from intentionally employing an unauthorized alien or entering into an agreement with an employer (even as a subcontractor) who employs unauthorized aliens. It allows a person to allege a complaint against an employer alleging a violation that the Indiana Attorney General must investigate.

I spoke with the Employment, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman, Heath VanNatter (R - Kokomo), and he told me he would not hear the bill.

Stephen M. Wolff, Esq.
The Corydon Group
swolff@thecorydongroup.com
317.956.4606

Governor Braun's State of the State Address

Governor Mike Braun, who served as a state representative from 2014 to 2017 before representing Indiana in the United States Senate from 2019 to 2025, returned to the Indiana House Chamber on Wednesday, January 29, to deliver his first [State of the State address](#).

In his speech, Governor Braun outlined his 2025 legislative priorities and his proposed biennial budget. The budget bill, [HB 1001](#), will move through both chambers this session and see significant revisions before it is passed.

Central to his budget proposal is a five percent cut across executive agencies. These funds will be reallocated to support education appropriations and tax reform.

Braun's "Freedom and Opportunity Agenda," which was the theme of his speech, seeks income and property tax relief, education reform, and health care transparency. He highlighted the agenda bills reflective of these priorities that are already moving in the legislature: [HB 1003](#) Health Matters, [HB 1004](#) Nonprofit Hospitals, and [SB 3](#) Fiduciary Duty in Health Plan Administration.

Braun also discussed how he has restructured the executive branch. Since taking office earlier this month, he has reorganized all executive agencies under eight cabinet secretaries. The move is intended to streamline government and enable innovation and collaboration among agencies.

Celebrating Indiana's successes, the governor applauded Indiana's ascension to sixth nationally in fourth grade and eighth grade reading scores.

Governor Braun's legislative agenda will continue to take shape as further priority bills and the budget move through the legislative process.

Chief Justice Loretta Rush's State of the Judiciary Address

Chief Justice Loretta Rush opened her address touting the improvements made by the Court in the last year.

Highlighting the Court's commitment to children in Indiana, she shared that more than 100,000 cases involved children in the courts last year saying, "We play a crucial role in shaping their future and often a judge is the only constant figure in their lives."

She went on to honor several judges who found creative ways to become a part of the communities they serve. One Indiana judge decided to send each adopted child home with a gift and asked the community for help. Area parents and grandparents came through with ample donations and the judge now has a closet full of 500 Squishmallows for adoptees.

Rush also celebrated that fact that Indiana tripled the number of problem-solving courts over the past decade – including the new safe-haven courts that focus on helping abused or neglected children and their families. Several successful graduates of the problem-solving courts' programs were in the audience and received a standing ovation from the legislature when the Chief Justice shared that 93% of treatment court graduates are not rearrested.

The Court has also worked to increase accessibility by adding cameras into many court rooms and publishing more documents online.

The Chief Justice concluded the speech by honoring the new administration.

Legislative Deadlines

125th 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

2025 Legislative Team

CHRISTOPHER M. GIBSON, ESQ.

Managing Principal

MORGAN E. PERRILL

Senior Vice President

AMELIA D. MCCLURE, ESQ.

Vice President

RYAN P. KENNEDY

Manager, Communications & Policy

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GRACE A. SARRAZIN

Legislative Intern