



2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY UPDATES

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



On Early Childhood Education, advocates fell short of a more ambitious statewide program, but pulled the debate in the right direction – pre-K funding will double in the next biennium, allowing more communities to participate while protecting progress in existing pilot counties like Marion.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE



The final infrastructure funding deal meets our fundamental principles – increased appropriations for transportation needs (balanced between state and local priorities), with a sustainable revenue strategy that builds long-term confidence in our growth potential and position as the Crossroads of America.

MASS TRANSIT

While most of the mass transit action unfolded at the City-County Building, legislators expanded the regional transit statute to include adjacent townships in Hendricks County (where temporary connector routes already show the need to bring workers to the area's thriving logistics industry), increased funding for the Public Mass Transportation Fund (PMTF) and supported projects like the South Shore and Hoosier State Line (setting policy precedents that could advance Indy's transit plans in the future).



EQUITY in LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The Indy Chamber continues to lay the groundwork for a more equitable system of local government funding, analyzing potential solutions through our work with the Brookings Institution and encouraging regionalism by engaging with agencies and organizations like Indy's Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Central Indiana Council of Elected Officials (CICEO).

DIVERSITY



Sometimes, success is the status quo: The Indiana Competes coalition played defense on diversity, avoiding damage to Indiana's reputation as an inclusive, welcoming state for new talent and progressive employers, preserving local anti-discrimination ordinances in the process; a push for bias crimes legislation stalled, but has positive momentum looking towards 2018.



OTHER MAJOR SUCCESSES

STATE & LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Further supporting air travel connectivity and other regional economic initiatives through a \$30M Business Promotion & Innovation Fund, which can be used to support direct flights, local business development and entrepreneurship programs, etc.;
- Creating a Next Level Indiana Innovation & Entrepreneurship Fund, which could provide up to \$250M via (voluntary) investments from public employee retirement plans to spur promising new technologies, start-up companies and boost venture capital investment;
- Another \$20M for the Indiana Bioscience Research Institute (IBRI), the public-private biotech R&D center that is the anchor tenant of the 16 Tech innovation district in Indianapolis;

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

- The new infrastructure deal delivers increased revenues to close the persistent deficit in infrastructure funding - \$617M in new revenue for 2018, growing to \$1.2B by 2024 (consistent with needs identified by INDOT experts and representatives of private industry consulted by state transportation officials);
- New revenues for transportation infrastructure come from a 10-cent increase in the gas tax, along with special fuel and motor carrier taxes, and thereafter applies an indexed formula to these taxes so collections can grow with construction and labor costs;

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCING & MODERNIZATION

- The eventual passage of HB1005, which turns the Superintendent of Public Instruction into a Governor-appointed Secretary of Education after January 10, 2025, is mentioned in 'Education' – but also represents progress on a key principle of government reform: The election of policymaking roles and the appointment of administrative offices, to create clarity of vision and a clear choice for voters on important issues;
- HB1036 puts the justice system largely above politics by providing a non-partisan, merit-based selection process for Marion County judges, with an expert selection committee that also includes elected officials to reflect public opinion and community diversity (and retention votes for sitting judges);
- HB1470 supported 'open data' transparency standards, a positive move for government accountability that also allows the public sector to better harness the expertise and creativity of our tech community to help government 'work smarter' through technological innovation;
- The associated Management & Performance Hub is funded in the budget at \$12M, providing a central repository and ongoing system to measure outcomes from these high-tech, 'evidence-based' government initiatives;

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

- The budget includes \$2M to analyze and align STEM programs for the most effective classroom impact;
- It also appropriates \$10M for a STEM Teacher Recruitment Fund to attract and retain the best STEM educators to prepare future generations of high-skill workers.
- HB1008 creates a more streamlined, strategic approach to workforce programs under the Department of Workforce Development, supporting a long-term workforce plan (in collaboration with the Governor's Office and IEDC) and requiring the agency to provide consistently updated, data-driven analysis to the Commission on Higher Education (CHE), Ivy Tech and the DOE on certificates, skill and demand for high-wage jobs (adjusting programs based on skill demands, wage data, etc., and creating pilot initiatives to help students explore promising careers);
- Under this approach, Career and Technical Education (CTE) funding remains with DOE, but its allocation should be driven by DWD-supplied employment trend data;
- The budget also funds \$4M in 'Workforce Ready' grants to help incumbent workers enrolled in high-demand job training program (an approach the legislature favored over a tax credit-driven system that encouraged employer-based training and employee assistance programs);
- As noted before, the IEDC's Skill Enhancement Fund also earned a \$25M budget appropriation, to similarly offset education and training expenses associated with new job creation projects brokered by the economic development agency.
- SB312 (Use of Criminal History Information) was amended in a noteworthy victory for the Indy Chamber agenda, giving employers reasonable protection from civil liability in hiring ex-offenders, encouraging businesses to give second chances instead of shutting the door to opportunities (and increasing poverty or recidivism, or both);
- To further aid ex-offender re-entry, the HIRE (Hoosier Initiative for Re-Entry) program was funded at roughly \$1.3M – this DWD effort provides screening, consulting and other assistance to businesses that hire ex-offenders