

Session – Week 8
March 1, 2024

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



INCPAS Weekly Update

Click here for current Bill Track:

INCPAS	http://tinyurl.com/INCPAS-2024
INCPAS Tax	http://tinyurl.com/INCPASTAX2024

Thursday marked a key milestone of the Session. Committee meetings have concluded, and all amendments have been made to Senate bills in the House. Monday is the final day for the full House to consider Senate bills and Tuesday is the deadline for House bills in the Senate. We expect a few days of conference committee and a possible adjournment *sine die* next Friday. If that is the case, there will be no update next Friday. It will come early next week. If there is an issue of impact in conference next week, you will be notified in real time.

[HEA 1138](#) Professional Licensing Matters has passed the General Assembly. This is a priority bill for the Society that amends peer review statute. From this point it must be signed by the Speaker of the House, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, President of the Senate (Lt. Governor) before heading to the Governor. They are only attesting that the rules have been followed.

There are some tax bills that will likely be in conference. Things can change frequently at this time of year.

Thirteenth Check

[House Bill \(HB\) 1004](#), a priority bill for the House Republican Caucus and Governor Eric Holcomb, passed out of the House 97 to 0. This bill is authored by Rep. Bob Cherry (R-Greenfield) and sponsored by Sen. Brian Buchanan (R-Lebanon). HB 1004, as passed out of the House, provided a thirteenth check for members of the state's Public Employee Retirement Fund (PERF), Teachers Retirement Fund (TRF), and others in 2024. The combined cost to state and local government is estimated at \$60.8 million in FY 2025.

On Thursday, February 29, the Senate Appropriations Committee, heard HB 1004, and the Chairman, Sen. Ryan Mishler (R-Mishawaka), introduced an amendment that stripped the bill and inserted [Senate Bill \(SB\) 275](#), as it passed the Senate. Sen. Mishler stated that he preferred the language in SB 275 because it provides a permanent solution and stabilizes our pension funds. It does this by splitting the members before and after July 1, 2025, retirees before receiving a thirteenth check and retirees after receiving a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA). Laura Pendon with the Indiana Retired Teachers Association testified in support of the bill but expressed concern that implementation would not occur until after 2025. A delay that would leave retired teachers without a COLA or thirteenth check for two consecutive years.

The Retired Indiana Public Employees Association stated

their preference for a thirteenth check. They reminded the committee about the \$205 million in supplemental state reserves and that our retirees are struggling with increased costs and inflation. They noted that the average benefit is \$9700 annually and that 65% of PERF retirees have no retirement plan. As a result, 90% of retiree income is from social security and PERF.

Joel Hand, of the American Federation of Teachers, testified in support of HB 1004, noting that teachers are leaving the profession, and we need to protect and retain them. Sen. Liz Brown (R-Fort Wayne) asked Mr. Hand for data or survey information to correspond with young teachers leaving the profession due to retirement benefits. Mr. Hand noted that he spoke anecdotally about an uptick in mid-career level teachers leaving the profession to pursue other opportunities with more comfortable retirement benefits.

The bill narrowly passed out of the Senate Appropriations Committee 7 to 6. HB 1004 will be on second reading next week in the Senate.

Crimes and Election Workers

[SB 170](#), authored by Sen. Greg Walker (R-Columbus) and sponsored by Rep. Jennifer Meltzer (R-Shelbyville), passed out of the House Courts and Criminal Code Committee this week. The bill defines "election worker" and makes it a Level 6 felony to threaten, obstruct, interfere with, or injure an election worker. It was amended

in committee to provide additional clarity.

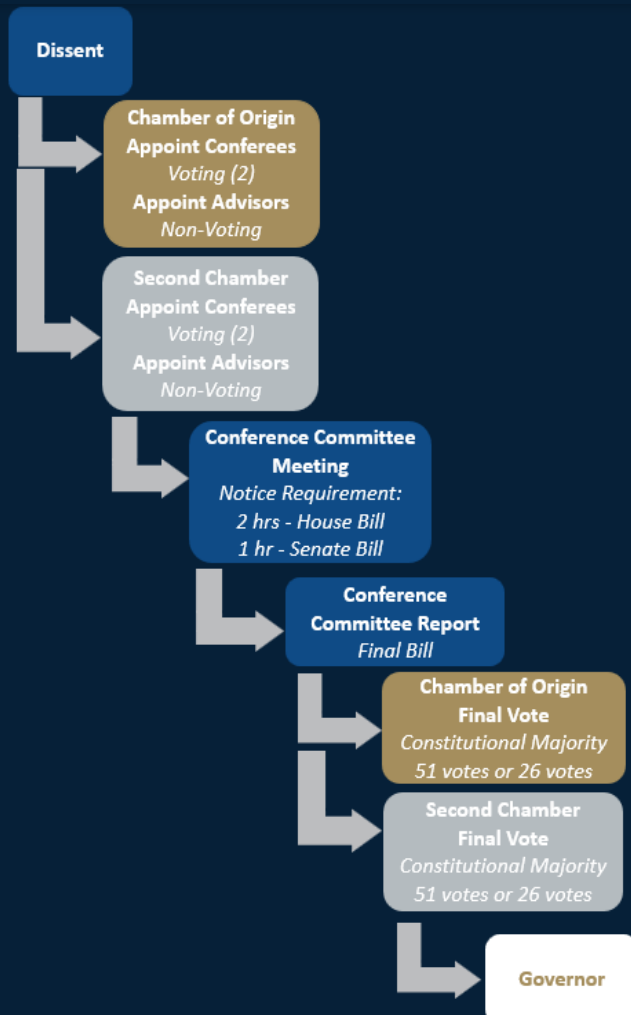
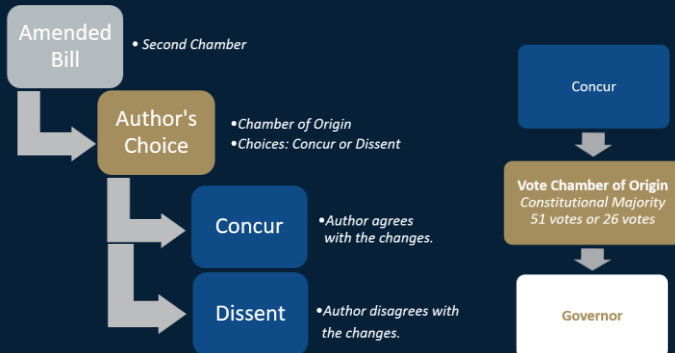
The committee heard testimony from the Indiana League of Women Voters, the Monroe County Clerk, and the Association of Indiana Counties all in support of this bill. The organizations touched on how it is already difficult to recruit and retain election workers. They believe SB 170 will help people feel protected and will increase the retention rate of election workers.

SB 170 was presented on the House floor for second reading on Wednesday, February 28. Rep. Justin Moed (D-Indianapolis) introduced a 16-page amendment. The amendment was essentially an honoring resolution to the retiring representatives. It addressed how different representatives have helped him along the way. Rep. Moed honored them by naming buildings after them or authorizing appropriations for them.

SB 170 passed on second reading without any new language. It sailed out of the House without a single no vote and will return to the Senate author, Sen. Greg Walker, with amendment for further action.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

The conference committee process is the process of reconciling bills to guarantee that every piece of language receives a constitutional majority vote in both chambers before it becomes law. Please see the graphic below which helps explain the conference committee process.



2024 UPCOMING DEADLINES

HOUSE

Senate Bills

3rd Reading: Monday, March 4

SENATE

House Bills

2nd Reading: Monday, March 4

3rd Reading: Tuesday, March 5

HOUSE & SENATE

Anticipated Sine Die: Friday, March 8

Statutory Sine Die: Thursday, March 14

FINAL REPORT NOTICE

If the legislature, adjourns Sine Die, on or near the anticipated date of Friday, March 8, your weekly report will be delayed. We will send a more robust summary of the 2024 legislative session later the following week.

2024 GOVERNOR'S BILL WATCH

Click on the link below to see if your bill arrived on the Governor's desk and if it has been signed into law.

[2024 BILL WATCH LINK](#)