

Advocacy Volunteer Toolkit 2024

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LETTER FROM INCPAS VP – ADVOCACY SHERRILL RUDE, CAE

Dear INCPAS Advocacy Volunteers,

I am delighted to extend you a warm welcome as a valued member of our esteemed advocacy team. We are truly grateful for your commitment to advancing the CPA profession through your time, expertise and legislative advocacy efforts.

Advocacy plays a vital role in shaping the future of our profession. As a group of dedicated professionals, our engagement in advocacy activities empowers us to address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead—and make a lasting impact on the profession and communities we serve.

Your role as an advocacy volunteer is of utmost importance. By actively participating in advocacy initiatives, you become the voice of the CPA profession, bringing your unique insights and expertise to the forefront of legislative and regulatory discussions. Your engagement helps to educate lawmakers on the critical issues facing CPAs, enabling them to make informed decisions that align with our profession's values and interests.

To help you navigate your role effectively, we have developed this Advocacy Volunteer toolkit that offers comprehensive information and guidance. This go-to resource provides valuable insights into your responsibilities as a volunteer, best practices for interacting with legislators, and a solid understanding of the legislative process. We encourage you to review this thoroughly to familiarize yourself with the necessary tools and knowledge to excel in your advocacy efforts.

Remember: each interaction with legislators is an opportunity for meaningful dialogue and relationship-building. Through open and respectful communication, we can foster understanding, build alliances and drive positive change. Your proactive involvement will not only benefit the CPA profession but also contribute to the betterment of the broader business community.

Once again, we extend our gratitude for your decision to join our advocacy team. Together, we create a powerful voice that champions the interests of our profession and safeguards the value CPAs bring to the table.

We look forward to working closely with you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sherrill M. Rude". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sherrill Rude, CAE
INCPAS VP – Advocacy

YOUR INCPAS ADVOCACY TEAM

The Society will do everything we can to assist in your role as an advocacy volunteer. If you need help reaching out to a legislator or have questions about legislation, do not hesitate to contact us.



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GRAC and TRAC liaison, Department of Revenue, Board of Accountancy liaison and oversees all INCPAS regulatory and advocacy initiatives.



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CPA Advocates and advocacy volunteer communication

INCPAS ADVOCACY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

While the INCPAS team has a full-time staff, lobbyist and leadership dedicated to lobbying and advocacy, individual members are needed to further elevate the INCPAS legislative agenda and other key policy topics that arise.

The beauty of advocacy is that there are many ways to get involved through a variety of volunteer roles.

At its core, any advocacy role involves becoming familiar with the Society's key initiatives. Then, if you are comfortable doing so, we encourage you to build relationships with your legislators. This could mean simply sending emails, while others may prefer to engage in in-person events or offer feedback on bills and guidance documents to help round out our communication with elected officials and state agencies.

The goal for all advocacy volunteers is to engage with issues related to the profession and share your insights on the business environment in Indiana.

CPA Advocate

CPA Advocates help represent the profession and INCPAS to state legislators.

You are encouraged to start this role by learning, listening and familiarizing yourself with the legislative process and players.

Once you're comfortable, you will start developing a two-way relationship with your state legislators and serve as a resource to them throughout the year. Take advantage of any opportunity to interact with your legislator—it is important to develop a relationship before you need to call on them about a specific issue.

Each month, you will receive an e-newsletter that highlights important advocacy issues facing INCPAS. You will get the inside scoop into what is happening at the Statehouse and gain insight into how our team is engaging in advocacy.

During the legislative session, CPA Advocates have priority access to a weekly Legislative Bulletin prepared by our lobbyist as well as a private online community that shares behind-the-scenes updates in real-time.

Time Commitment: While the time commitment is minimal, the strength of the relationships you build and maintain may make the difference in the outcome of future legislation affecting the profession and business environment in Indiana.

Indiana CPA Political-Action Committee (PAC) Trustees

PAC trustees oversee PAC fundraising and contributions to political campaigns in accordance with the laws of the state of Indiana.

The Indiana CPA-PAC is the only PAC that represents you and the CPA profession in Indiana. The PAC supports the campaigns of state legislators and candidates who support and represent the best interests of the public and CPA profession. It's important all INCPAS members contribute to the PAC in order for us to strengthen our voice in the legislative process.

Time Commitment: PAC trustees are appointed to three-year terms and participate in three meetings or conference calls a year.

Government Relations Advisory Council (GRAC)

GRAC members serve as regulatory and legislative advisors for INCPAS.

GRAC is responsible for considering legislative policies, current position statements and other legislative or regulatory activities as it relates to INCPAS. This group develops, monitors and responds to legislation, regulations or rules affecting the CPA profession.

It considers—but is not limited to—the AICPA, UAA, NASBA and Board of Accountancy as sources and evaluates the following topics: ethics, education requirements, other competing professions or designations, professional standards, professional liability, licensure, peer review, transparency, and matters which regulate fees and compensation or otherwise impose taxes, duties, or assessments.

In the fall of each year, GRAC prepares a legislative agenda which prioritizes issues for the GRAC's consideration and action. This agenda is submitted to the INCPAS Board of Directors and may be modified as appropriate and circumstances warrant.

Time Commitment: GRAC members participate in three to four meetings a year and often attend Board of Accountancy and other regulatory agency meetings.

Tax Resource Advisory Council (TRAC)

TRAC members serve as advisors to legislators, their staff and regulatory agencies related to tax.

TRAC is responsible for considering legislative policies, current position statements and other legislative or regulatory activities as they relate to tax issues—ultimately helping to further the development of fair and reasonable systems of taxation. This group develops, monitors and responds to legislation, regulation or rules affecting tax practice in the CPA profession.

It considers the AICPA, IRS, Department of Revenue and other taxing authorities as sources and evaluates the following topics: ethics, education, professional standards, professional liability, licensure, state and local taxes, compliance, enrolled agents and more.

TRAC serves as a resource to legislative bodies including the Indiana Ways and Means Committee and other tax related entities.

In addition, TRAC attends annual meetings with the Department of Revenue and IRS.

In the fall of each year, TRAC prepares and documents an annual legislative agenda which prioritizes issues for TRAC's consideration and action. This agenda is coordinated with GRAC and submitted to the INCPAS Board of Directors and may be modified as appropriate and circumstances warrant.

Time Commitment: TRAC members participate in three to four meetings a year and participate in tax-related meetings with regulatory agencies, review proposed guidance and tax legislation, and provide subject matter testimony to the General Assembly—often during January–April.

Technical Reviewers

Technical reviewers help review draft guidance documents from the Department of Revenue and other state agencies, then provide feedback to INCPAS staff on issues, concerns and questions.

Technical reviewers are encouraged to offer input for the various state agencies requesting feedback.

Time Commitment: Typically, this work is completed in less than four hours throughout the year.

ONLINE COMMUNITY

Much of the communication for advocacy volunteers occurs electronically and on the online community.

Additionally, all advocacy volunteers have access to the CPA Advocates group on the INCPAS Online Community (Open Forum). This is a great place for you to get up-to-date information related to your role as an advocacy volunteer, and to communicate with your peers.

We encourage you to bookmark the online community and set up your email notification preferences within the community. You'll have the option to select real-time notifications or receive a daily digest of everything that was posted throughout the day.

Visit the CPA Advocates Online Community and the Open Forum at incpas.org/OnlineCommunity.

INTERACTING WITH LEGISLATORS

CPAs play a crucial role in INCPAS advocacy initiatives. Building relationships with elected leaders helps them better understand issues facing the accounting profession and business community at large. This can lead to more informed policy decisions that benefit you, your clients and organizations. By engaging with Indiana state legislators, you will also help position INCPAS and our members as trusted advisors for policymakers.

In this section, we'll share resources on how to identify your elected leaders, best practices for communicating with them, and templates that can be used when needed.

Who Are My Elected Leaders?

When getting involved in the legislative process or learning how government works, it is critical to identify your legislators.

To find your elected officials in Indiana:

- Go to iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators.
- Enter your address, city, state and zip code.
- Results will show a current list of your elected officials.

For example: in using the Indiana CPA Society's address, Senator Scott Baldwin and Representative Victoria Garcia Wilburn represent constituents in this district.

State Senator



Senator
Scott Baldwin
Senate District 20

200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

800-382-9467
Republican Party

State Representative



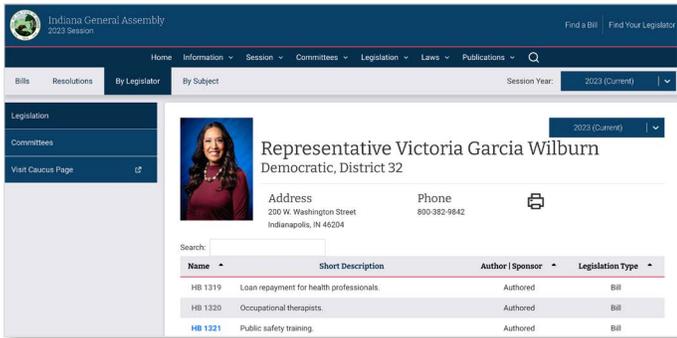
Representative
Victoria Garcia Wilburn
House District 32

200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

800-382-9842
Democratic Party

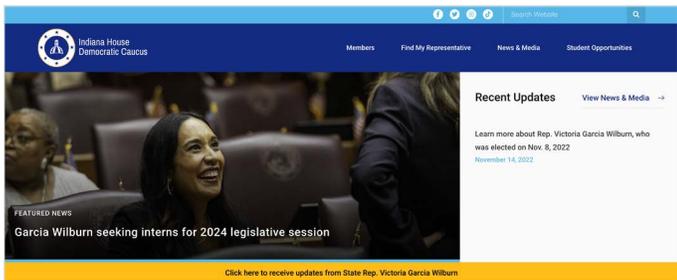
After you identify your elected officials:

1. **Review Additional Information:** Each legislator's profile will provide details on legislation they're involved with, committee assignments, contact information and their caucus website.



2. **Connect/Follow Your Elected Officials:** Visit your State Senator or State Representative's profile on their Caucus website to find their social media accounts, email address and newsletter sign-up forms. This is a great way to stay informed about the issues they are working on.

In the example below, you can see Rep. Garcia Wilburn's profile on her caucus page.



COMMUNICATING WITH LEGISLATORS

Effectively communicating your knowledge of and concern with issues to legislators is an essential part of our success at the Statehouse. However, navigating the complex world of legislative advocacy can be challenging, especially when it comes to the do's and don'ts of communicating with legislators.

Whether it's in writing or in person, presentation can be the deciding factor as to whether our correspondence is in the "first response" or the "reply later" file. By following these guidelines, you can make sure your messages reach your intended legislator and have the intended impact.

General Communication Tips

DO'S

- Mention (if possible) the specific bill in question. When you are writing about a specific piece of legislation, a House bill is identified as H.B. with a four-digit number and a Senate bill as S.B. with a two-digit number.
- Mention that you are a constituent or that your business is in the district. Ideally, you can mention a common thread you and the legislator share, such as children attending the same school.
- Clearly state the reason for your message early in your correspondence.
- Be prepared to address the "other side's" argument.
- Let INCPAS staff know about your outreach and any responses from legislators.

DON'TS

- Discuss political contributions.
- Use technical terms or acronyms—legislators are not experts on every issue.
- Remind the legislator you are a taxpayer.
- Guess, be vague or deceptive if you don't know the answer to a question—this can ruin your credibility.

Written Communication Tips

- Use your business letterhead.
- Address only one issue per correspondence.
- Clearly state the reason for your message early in your correspondence.
- Double-check the facts you are presenting to ensure they are accurate.
- Ask your legislator for a reply that states their position and include your return address/phone number/email address.
- Review your message for correct grammar and punctuation.
- Send your message before action is taken.
- Avoid using form letters. If there is a call to action, INCPAS will provide you with a template, but you are strongly encouraged to personalize this message.

In-Person Communication Tips

- In-person communication is best if you can secure an appointment, arrange a call or virtual visit, or meet the legislator in the district over coffee or lunch.
- Be on time and realize you may only have a few minutes with the legislator or their aide.
- Come prepared to discuss the issue at hand. If you are visiting a legislator on behalf of INCPAS, the Advocacy team will send you talking points.
- If you are asked a question and are not sure about the answer or position, be honest and say you will get back to them with an answer. Then, be sure to do so.
- Members who are most successful in building relationships with their legislators take the time to invite them to their office to meet with staff periodically, or host a breakfast or lunch at a local restaurant and invite other CPAs for information discussions.

LETTER/EMAIL TEMPLATES

Whenever INCPAS asks you to reach out to your legislator, we will include sample templates for you to easily personalize. Refer to the following pages for a few suggested templates for common situations advocacy volunteers will come across.

Introduction Letter or Email to Legislator

It's important to begin to develop a relationship with your elected officials. The introduction message lets your senator or representative know who you are and how the Indiana CPA Society can be a valuable resource to them throughout the year.

[Insert Date]

The Honorable [Insert Senator's Name]
Address City, State, Zip Code

Dear [Sen./Rep.] [Insert Last Name]: On behalf of CPAs throughout your district, I want to thank you for the important work you do and to wish you a successful 2024 session of the Indiana General Assembly.

I am a constituent in your district and am a Certified Public Accountant or accounting professional. As a trusted business advisor, I understand many of the complex issues you will be faced with in this upcoming legislative session. I hope you keep myself and the Indiana CPA Society in mind and reach out to use us as a resource.

In addition to its membership of nearly 7,000 CPA and accounting professionals, the Society has several advisory councils that research and discuss how proposed legislation will impact not only the CPA profession, but also Indiana businesses. CPAs serving on the Government Relations and Tax Resource Advisory Councils, as well as ad hoc working groups, are extremely knowledgeable and look forward to being of assistance when needed.

During your term in office, if the Indiana CPA Society or I can be of any assistance to you, please contact me at [Contact Information]. I look forward to the opportunity to work with you during this legislative session.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]
[Contact Information]

Invite Letter or Email to Legislator

When INCPAS has a specific legislative event, advocacy volunteers will receive a sample letter or email with the event details. When writing to your legislators on INCPAS's behalf, please forward a copy of your letter or email to Sherrill Rude, INCPAS VP – Advocacy, at srude@incpas.org.

[Insert Date]

The Honorable [Insert Senator's Name]
Address City, State, Zip Code

Dear [Sen./Rep.] [Insert Last Name]: On behalf of CPAs throughout your district, I want to thank you for the important work you do and to wish you a successful 2024 session of the Indiana General Assembly.

Although you received an invitation from the Indiana CPA Society, I would like to extend a personal invitation to you to join me at the [Name of the Event]. The event information follows:

Name of the Event
Date
Time
Location
Address

Please RSVP to: [email address] or [phone number]

When you arrive, let a staff member know we are meeting so they can locate me. I look forward to seeing you.

During your term in office, if the Indiana CPA Society or I can be of any assistance to you, please contact me at [Contact Information]. I look forward to the opportunity to work with you during this legislative session.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Contact Information]

Support/Oppose Bill Letter or Email to Legislator

When INCPAS has a call to action, CPA Advocates will receive a sample letter or email addressing the specific talking points related to the bill the Society is supporting or opposing. When writing to your legislators on INCPAS's behalf, please forward a copy of your letter or email to Sherrill Rude, INCPAS VP – Advocacy, at srude@incpas.org.

[Insert Date]

The Honorable [Insert Senator's Name]
Address City, State, Zip Code

Dear [Sen./Rep.] [Insert Last Name]: As a CPA and a constituent of yours, I urge you to [support/oppose] [Name of Bill]. [Give a few strong reasons why you are in support or opposition of the bill and how it will impact you, your business, clients or employer, and/or the CPA profession. INCPAS staff will provide you with the key points.]

[If possible, include a personal story.]

[Insert INCPAS talking points.] (these will be provided to you in advance)

[Tell your representative how you want him/her to vote on the issue and ask for a response. Be sure to include your name and address on your letter and your envelope.] Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Contact Information]

GUIDE TO ATTENDING LEGISLATIVE EVENTS

When attending a virtual or in-person legislative event or fundraiser on behalf of INCPAS, there are some practical guidelines to follow to ensure your time is well used. Based upon law, ethics and/or common sense, the following do's and don'ts will help maximize your impact when attending events.

Do's

- Recognize that a fundraiser and a legislative event have very different purposes.
- If you're participating in a virtual event, treat it like you would an in-person event. Turn your camera on (if that's an option), stay muted if you aren't speaking, stay engaged and ask questions. Also, don't forget to introduce yourself.
- Keep in mind that a fundraiser is primarily a social function. Take advantage of this more casual setting to get to know your legislator better. If you went to the same school or church, have kids on the same teams, etc. mention it to help the

legislator more easily remember you as a trusted business advisor in the community.

- Legislative events like the INCPAS Legislator Chats and similar events are slightly different than a fundraiser. Do your homework before you go. If a legislator or their staff member asks what issues are important to the CPA profession, be prepared to respond in a brief, concise manner (more lengthy discussions are best saved for a separate meeting, unless the legislator wants to continue the discussion). INCPAS will provide background information on the legislator and a brief synopsis of issues INCPAS is advocating for at your request. Remember—if you aren't concerned about an issue, it is unlikely the legislator will be either.
- Understand all sides of an issue. To speak about an issue, you must be able to counter your opponent's arguments if necessary.
- Know when it is appropriate to ask for a meeting to discuss an issue at a later date. As an advocate for the CPA profession, INCPAS may periodically ask you to contact your legislator regarding an issue. Such discussions should take place at his/her office or over the telephone. A fundraiser is not an appropriate place to ask a legislator to take action on an issue.
- Follow through with any request a legislator makes in a timely manner. If you are unable to meet the request, let the legislator know why. INCPAS staff can assist you with follow up.
- Send or email a short "thank you" note after the event. It is a great way to reinforce your relationship and let the legislator know you enjoyed attending the event.
- Copy the Society on all correspondence. This can help the staff know what issues were discussed as well as which topics are important to the legislator. This step is important for our staff and lobbyist to know about in case the legislator reaches out to us.

Don'ts

- Attempt to threaten or bribe legislators. Promises to vote for or contribute to a legislator's opponent will help ensure they will not support the CPA profession on the issue at hand—or any other issue.
- Use the fundraiser as an opportunity to "lobby" the legislator. Remember it is a social event for the legislator. They may not want to talk "shop" outside of the office. It is not appropriate at a fundraiser.

HOW TO READ A BILL

Every year, the INCPAS Advocacy team, the Government Relations Advocacy Council, Tax Relation Advocacy Council and CPA Advocates review legislation.

To understand what is happening in the legislature, it's critical to know how to read a bill. A bill is a proposed piece of legislation sponsored by the legislator and written by the Legislative Services Agency (LSA). The LSA is a government agency made up of attorneys and staffers who ensure the proposed legislation is written in the correct format relating to currently Indiana code and to provide research how a bill will affect the state both fiscally and policy wise.

Each proposed bill will be assigned a number (4 digits for the House and 2 digits for the Senate) and letter depending on whether it was proposed originally in the Senate or the House. An example of this is HB 1001 which means it was the first bill proposed in the House. In this case HB 1001 is always the State budget bill.

Once a bill is passed, the bill number will change to SEA or HEA indicating that it is now called Senate Enrolled Act or House Enrolled Act. An example of this would be SEA2 pertaining to PTET that was passed this year.

The bills will also have the legal citation that is affected by the proposed legislation, as well as the synopsis of what the bill is about. Lastly, it will have the effective date and the last name of the Legislator(s) who sponsored the bill. This an example:

HOUSE BILL No. 1327

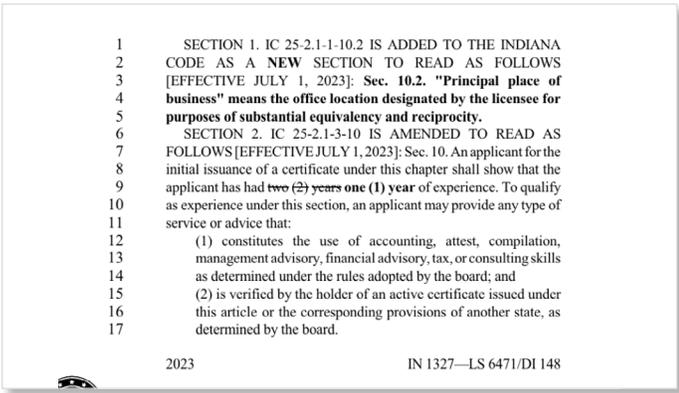
DIGEST OF INTRODUCED BILL

Citations Affected: IC 25-2.1.

Synopsis: Accountancy. Defines "principal place of business". Requires a certified public accountant applying for an initial issuance of a certificate to have one year of experience. (Under current law, an applicant must have two years of experience.) Requires a licensee to hold a license in good standing to convert it to inactive or retired status. Provides that nothing in the statute precludes an inactive or retired status certified public accountant from: (1) providing uncompensated services; (2) participating in a government sponsored business mentoring program; (3) serving on the board of directors for a nonprofit or governmental organization; or (4) serving on a government appointed advisory board.

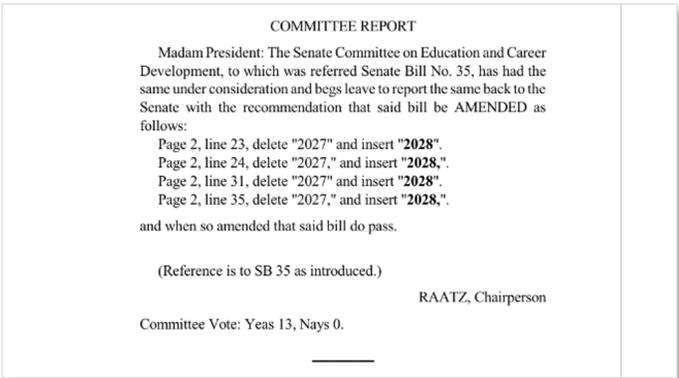
Effective: July 1, 2023.

Carbaugh



By reading through the bill, any text that has been deleted or removed from the original legal citation will be represented as a bold strikethrough (**like this**). If there are new amended changes to the law, those will be represented with bold black lettering (**like this**). That represents what the bill is changing in the existing law.

The final portion of the bill, if it has been amended, will have a detailed report on where the edits have taken place. Here is an example:



On the Indiana General Assembly page that discusses a particular bill, you can see the journey of the bill throughout the legislative session under bill details and bill actions. You'll find when the bill was first introduced, each version that has been submitted, the progress of the bill from inception, its committee assignment, and if other legislators have been added as authors and co-sponsors onto the bill. You will also see if the bill makes it out of committee into the House or Senate. It is also important to review the Latest Fiscal Note. Fiscal notes are important as a critical factor in evaluating the bill. These simple instructions and tips should be able to help you navigate a bill and understand its impact these bills have on Indiana.

What to Look for When Reviewing a Bill

Ask yourself the following questions to help identify any potential issues:

- Is the bill doing what it says it is going to do?

- Is the effective date realistic?
- Who originally sponsored the bill and who is co-sponsoring the bill? Knowing committee chairs and other legislative leaders can be helpful here.
- What number is the bill? Generally, the top 10 bills from either chamber means it is a top priority of the majority party and/or a big bipartisan issue.
- What committee is this bill being assigned to?
- Does this bill fall within my area of expertise?
- How will this bill affect my organization? Organizational issues can range from HR issues to any business tax changes.
- How will this bill affect my clients and/or business partners?
- Can INCPAS benefit from my knowledge?

The increased understanding of how potential legislation impacts both Indiana and the profession will go a long way in helping shape INCPAS' approach to relevant issues, as well as make sure we are always ahead of the curve.

THE STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

The state representatives and senators who serve as our voice in the legislative process are the cornerstone of government. They are the source of many laws, regulations and policies that affect you and your profession. Hundreds of bills are introduced each session, but few are ever enacted into law. The deliberative process that determines whether proposals become law is often long and complex, taking months or even years. Conflicts of power, bargaining and compromise are inevitably involved in making or changing public policy. Even in all its complexity, concerned citizens can still impact legislation. This section explains the legislative process and demonstrates how and where you can make a difference.

Your Role in the Process

Legislators must comprehend hundreds of different issues, and then determine how to vote and how to best represent their constituents' views. (Imagine you were required to be an expert on every facet of your organization or your clients' professions, as well as your own.) Clearly, your legislator's job can be complex,

and they can benefit from your advice as a trusted business advisor.

Legislators receive information on new proposals from media, trade and professional associations, public interest groups, law firms, labor unions and businesses—which often serve as their dominant information sources.

Lawmakers are seldom approached by groups representing a broad cross-section of interests from their home district, so it's important to leverage your business acumen. Offer thoughtful, constructive and balanced options while the legislation is still in the formative stage at the subcommittee or committee level. Such an approach is welcome by lawmakers and can effectively influence legislation.

As an advocacy volunteer, you can help colleagues in your business or in the CPA profession develop a constructive and positive approach to issues. If you then communicate your views to your lawmakers, they will be able to better represent those views as the legislation is being developed.

State Power Centers

As you become involved in the legislative process, it is important to remember—in addition to constituent input—there are other powerful forces at work when legislation is considered. The process also may be heavily influenced by two major power structures within the state legislature—political party leadership and committee leadership.

Party leadership is the most long-standing power center within state and federal legislatures. The Indiana House and Senate are each controlled by the party dominated by the majority of the chamber's members. The members of the major political parties in each chamber elect their own officers. Also, the total proportion in each house determines the proportion of majority members to minority members on each committee.

Both the House and the Senate elect Majority and Minority Leaders who coordinate the conduct of business in the two chambers and manage legislation on the floor. They are elected by their political party's caucus principally for their party standing, and legislative leadership ability. These leaders develop strategy on how a piece of legislation will be moved through the various checkpoints in the legislature and onto the Governor's desk.

- **Speaker of the House:** The Speaker of the House is the presiding officer of that chamber and is the leader of the majority party. The speaker is that

party's chief strategist and devotes a great deal of time to promoting the legislative policies of that party. The Speaker also exerts considerable influence over assignments of individuals to committees and influences the fate of legislation by deciding when it will be debated.

- **Senate Pro-Tempore:** The Majority Leader of the Senate is known as Senate Pro-Tempore. Like the Speaker of the House, the Pro Tempore acts as the principal legislative strategist for the majority party and influences decisions regarding committee assignments. The Pro-Tempore and the Speaker of the House are arguably the most powerful individuals within the Indiana legislature.
- **Committee Leadership:** Committee leadership is the next layer in the power structure and includes the standing committee chairs. Committee chairs derive their power from control over bills referred to their committees, and may determine whether or not bills will be considered. Committee chairs can delay, block or expedite action on measures with few restrictions. The chairs also select subcommittee chairs under their jurisdiction or choose to serve as subcommittee chairs themselves.
- **Ad Hoc Groups and Caucuses:** These groups are composed of lawmakers who share common viewpoints and are an informal power structure that has developed within the legislative decision-making process. Such groups serve as information and control centers on issues and can become powerful blocks on bills they deem important.

Given this system, it may seem party leaders and committee chairs have more influence over the course of legislation than the constituents back home do. That is not the case. Politically active and involved constituents are still a lawmaker's priority and can have a tremendous impact on the system when they organize and lobby on an issue. That's why the power of the seniority system and centralized political parties has diminished, and grassroots lobbying is flourishing.

HOW A BILL BECOMES A STATE LAW

The following is a brief description of the state legislative process and the key points where grassroots action has the greatest impact.

I. Introducing a Bill

When a bill is being prepared to be introduced into either the House or the Senate, a member of that body must sponsor it. Often, the member will send a “Dear Colleague” memo to all other chamber members to seek additional co-sponsors. A bill may be introduced in either chamber or both simultaneously. Under the Constitution, budget bills must originate in the House of Representatives; otherwise, there are no restrictions as to where the measure originates.

There are many different types of bills, and each has a title and number. A bill originating in the House is designated by “H.B.” followed by a number. A Senate Bill is designated by “S.B.” followed by its number.

Bills designated “H.J.R.” or “S.J.R.” are joint resolutions. While in practice, there is little difference between the content of a bill and a joint resolution—the latter is commonly used to extend the life of an existing law.

Bills designated “H.C.R.” or “S.C.R.” are concurrent resolutions that must be approved by both chambers. Bills designated “H.C.R.” or “S.C.R.” are simple resolutions concerning the operation of either chamber alone. They are used mainly to create special investigating committees, change rules, or express the will of the chamber on a particular matter.

Sources of legislative proposals are unlimited and diverse, and can include:

- Members of the Indiana General Assembly
- Individual constituents or constituent groups
- Coalition groups and lobbyists representing constituent groups
- Legislative committees

Knowing the source of proposed legislation can reveal a great deal about it, including the chance of passage. Many bills never get beyond this first step.

II. Committee Assignment

Upon introduction of a bill, the Speaker of the House or the Pro Tempore of the Senate refers it to the committee having proper jurisdiction. Each committee has jurisdiction over issues in several areas. Most committees also have some subcommittees.

III. Action Committees

These committees are perhaps the most important phase of the legislative process. They carry out the central functions of the Indiana General Assembly, including:

- Processing bills that have been introduced.
- Investigating the need for new legislation.
- Overseeing the Executive Branch within their own particular areas of jurisdictional interest.
- Overseeing the administration of laws that the General Assembly enacts in the area over which the committee has legislative jurisdiction.
- Relieving the heavy workload of committees, subcommittees have been formed for some standing committees—especially in the House.

Committees and subcommittees are considered the “working level” of the General Assembly, where the decisions are made about the content and language of a bill, and the actual details of legislation are hammered out. It is at the subcommittee and committee level that laws are formulated and should be balanced with public comment. Once a bill has reached the House or Senate floor for a vote, it is more difficult for it to be reshaped or defeated because the majority of members will defer to the “experts” on the committee that studied and reported the bill. Clearly, public comment to adjust a law’s content must occur well before the bill reaches the floor. Committee action generally falls into one of two categories:

Hearings

Members of the legislature, public officials and professional people, private citizens, experts and other interested groups are invited to offer their opinions on a particular issue being considered by the committee. The purpose of a hearing can be to:

- Determine the possible impact of proposed legislation.
- Seek and obtain information.
- Test public opinion.
- Build support for proposals.
- Delay action on a bill.

- Provide a forum for parties to be heard.

Reporting Bills

The full committee may report the bill out as it was introduced with amendments, or as a “clean” bill. If a committee fails to report a bill, the measure is dead—with few exceptions it cannot proceed to full House or Senate consideration. This is the stage where most bills die, as few are ever reported from committees.

IV. Scheduling

If a bill receives a favorable recommendation from a committee, it must be scheduled for a floor vote. In Indiana, the decision to schedule a floor vote is made by the legislative leadership, although some other states have a separate committee for this function.

V. Floor Vote

At this stage, members decide the fate of the bill. This is a critical time when all members should be informed of the Indiana CPA Society’s position on the bill. The Indiana General Assembly allows debate and amendments at this time, and grassroots communications can be critical.

VI. Second Chamber Action

If the bill passes, it is sent to the second chamber where the same basic procedure is followed. If the second chamber amends the bill, the original chamber must concur with the amendments. If concurrence is not reached, the second chamber may either withdraw its amendments or request a conference committee. If the bill passes in the same form it passed the original chamber, it is sent to the Governor for his signature.

VII. Conference Committee

A conference committee is appointed when the two chambers pass different versions of the same bill. Committee members include both Majority and Minority members from each chamber, and it is their job to resolve differences in the two bills. Grassroots lobbying may be useful here in trying to revise problems in the bill. All conference committee members should be contacted while they are working on a compromise.

VIII. Conference Report

If they are able to resolve differences in the bills, the conference committee issues a conference report which is signed by a majority of the delegation from each chamber. Both chambers must then approve the report. The chamber where the bill first originated votes first. If the conference committee reaches no agreement, the bill is usually dead. If the bill passes both chambers, it is

sent to the Governor for his signature.

IX. Action by the Governor

After a bill is received by the Governor’s office, the Governor has a limited time period to act on the legislation. The Governor can sign the bill into law, allow it to become law by not signing it, or veto it and return it to the legislature along with an explanation of the veto. The legislature can then override the veto with a two-thirds majority vote.

INCPAS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA: THE WHO, WHAT & HOW BEHIND THE SELECTION PROCESS

While the Indiana legislature is only in session part of the year, advocacy never stops. That’s why the INCPAS team is at work year-round to support members and the profession.

This work may seem like somewhat of a mystery, but we have an organized process to cover and vet any and all topics or issues of concern that might come into play. This process is heavily reliant on member input, expertise and engagement.

How INCPAS Works to Identify Key Issues

The number of issues and legislative topics that could impact the profession is extensive—and so is our process for staying on top of them!

Identifying our key issues is a year-round activity that involves members’ input, perspective and expertise and keeping up with multiple organizations, councils and other states.

“We generally are checking with any other organizations that are related to business issues, licensure and tax,” Sherrill Rude, CAE, INCPAS VP – Advocacy, explained.

This can include:

- National organizations such as AICPA, NASBA, ARPL (Alliance for Responsible Licensing), other state CPA societies and similar organizations for

other professions in Indiana to stay on top of overall licensing policy issues and changes.

- Agendas from legislative caucuses, including the Republican and Democratic caucuses for both the House and Senate, and the Governor. They help us stay up-to-date on their key legislative issues that could impact our members and the profession. We also refer to the Black Legislative Caucus, particularly for issues related to DEI, education, internet access, and other issues that tie into our overall pipeline and DEI initiatives and will create a stronger workforce.
- National and local groups that have influence with legislators, including the National Council of State Legislatures, the American Legislative Exchange Council, Americans for Prosperity and Governors' Councils.
- Related organizations and councils like the Council on State Taxation and the Multi-State Commission. These groups typically develop model pieces of legislation that states can copy and tweak. "We pay attention to what they have on their agenda and what model legislation they are developing," Rude said. "Those are things we will normally talk about with the different member groups that are meeting and forming the legislative agenda. We'll discuss the model legislation and ask, is this something we need to be concerned about? What are the pros and cons? Is it something we need to address or not?"
- Other general issues emerging across the country. Many times lobbying groups target states that don't have extensive resources to fight an issue, like licensure deregulation in states with a small CPA society staff or none at all, because they know there won't be much of a battle. They typically target several states each year with the expectation something will stick. "These are things we have to pay attention to, and work with the national organizations who are always looking at the same thing," Rude explained.

We also look to our relationships with organizations where we share common ground, like the Indiana Department of Revenue and the Indiana Chamber.

How do we keep track of it all? In addition to the support of our lobbyist, the INCPAS team maintains a list of links to various organizations. It's reviewed and updated regularly.

We also develop an extensive keyword list of what to be on the lookout for before and during each legislative

session. The current list is approximately 150 keywords long and includes items like artificial intelligence, blockchain and bitcoin, expungement of crimes, firm ownership, interest and penalty, license reciprocity, tax holiday, and more.

Building the Agenda

The Government Relations Advisory Council (GRAC) and Tax Resource Advisory Council (TRAC) are leaders in building our legislative agenda. Both are made up of INCPAS member volunteers. GRAC members primarily work with the Indiana Board of Accountancy and the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency and address issues related to licensure, business, and accounting and auditing. TRAC focuses on state and local tax, conformity with Internal Revenue Code and tax court decisions, taxpayer advocacy and promoting an overall positive business climate in Indiana. They primarily work with the Indiana Department of Revenue.

"Anyone is invited to participate on these councils," said Courtney Kincaid, INCPAS president and CEO, noting that diverse representation across the board is important for these councils.

These councils meet at least twice a year to discuss the issues at play. During this time, they refer to INCPAS' policies and position statements as well as our internal decision-making framework that helps provide deeper clarity on whether an issue or topic makes sense for INCPAS to have involvement.

All of these conversations help determine what issues we will Lead, Engage and Monitor, though they may change as bills are introduced and work through the Statehouse.

Official conversations start in spring following the end of the legislative session and continue over the summer months. During this time, we meet with regulatory agencies to discuss their legislative priorities and monitor the work of interim committees for issues that may be legislated.

During these conversations, other considerations that come into play are feedback from CPA Advocates (we often ask their opinion on topics and issues via online community and the monthly newsletter) and any additional member feedback we receive at town hall events, during conferences, via calls, and at other meetings and events.

Increasingly, we also use ad hoc committees or working groups. These are made up of members and stakeholders we recruit with specific expertise who can help provide a better perspective on an issue.

Once GRAC and TRAC have agreed on the agenda, they present it to the INCPAS Board of Directors in the fall.

How We Work with Legislators

Developing our agenda is just one piece of the advocacy puzzle. Developing relationships with legislators is critical to advocacy work. For INCPAS, this comes in a few forms.

INCPAS works with a dedicated lobbyist, Lou Belch, from The Corydon Group. On a day-to-day basis, he helps us stay in tune with what's happening at the statehouse, providing weekly legislative updates and tracking the progress of bills we're monitoring. When key bills or issues arise that are on our legislative agenda, Belch also communicates directly with legislators on our behalf to share our views and work toward influencing legislation. But our lobbyist isn't the only connection we have to legislators. Rude and Kincaid are also registered lobbyists for the statehouse and able to represent INCPAS at committee meetings and public hearings.

We always encourage our member advocates to follow and reach out to their legislators. Some members go above and beyond by attending events their legislator holds or having coffee with them—both opportunities for face-to-face time that helps position them and INCPAS as trusted business advisors with expertise on the state of business.

"We rely on those members to keep us in the loop," Rude said. Oftentimes after a meeting with a legislator, a member will call her to discuss what the legislator is interested in and if it makes sense for INCPAS to support or aid in drafting legislation.

"It's helpful to know what they're working on because we have members who are in just about any industry in the state," said Rude. "So if a legislator says, 'my legislation is going to deal with medical insurance' and we have members who work in that area, we can put them in touch with that legislator and they would have access to that resource."

Being at the Table

In a perfect world we could take a stance on an issue or bill, voice our thoughts to legislators, and have everything we say taken into consideration. But this process isn't perfect. In fact, it can be quite messy, Rude shared.

There has to be a balance of feasibility. There's give and take. When there's a firm stance on something, like when a bill goes into effect, and other players at the table aren't willing to bend, it becomes about creating the most positive outcome.

"We have to ask, what are the next best things that we can go for in order for us to successfully pass this legislation in a way that is beneficial or as implementable as possible for our members?" said Kincaid.

2024 INCPAS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The INCPAS Legislative Agenda is typically published in late November after being approved by the INCPAS Board of Directors. Below is the 2024 INCPAS Legislative Agenda.

LEAD

We either work to have legislation introduced or we work with others (legislators, agencies, coalitions/partners) to have it introduced, and we actively support their efforts.

- ★ Introduce licensure legislation to align Indiana with current Peer Review processes.
- ★ Enact a law to automatically align with the Internal Revenue Code, unless the General Assembly disagrees within 30 days to separate from any of its provisions.
- ★ Introduce legislation to allow accountancy to be considered a STEM subject under technology.
- ★ Introduce legislation to exempt Indiana not-for-profits that were inadvertently affected by legislative changes to sales tax in the 2023 Legislative Session.

ENGAGE

We adhere to our advocacy policies in determining the level of our engagement and may support, oppose or remain neutral on a bill or issue. We may provide member's expertise in the form of testimony or in meeting with influencers.

- ★ Oppose licensure legislation that is not in the public interest and would be detrimental to CPAs' ability to provide professional services to the organizations and clients whom they represent.
- ★ Support legislation that promotes broadband access and expansion to rural and underserved populations and areas in Indiana.
- ★ Assess the Indiana Black Legislative Caucus' legislative agenda for common-ground issues to advance diversity, equity and inclusion related to equity and excellence in education, pipeline and workforce.
- ★ Support legislation to clarify the use and application of Indiana's Research & Development Credit for Indiana's businesses.
- ★ Protect CPAs from licensure-related discipline for providing professional services to clients in the marijuana or other federally controlled substances industry who are legally operating according to state law.

MONITOR

We are watchful of legislation and issues, assessing risk of escalating our involvement and determining if/when we should take action or weigh in based on our advocacy policies.

- ★ Monitor cybersecurity bills with negative implications for CPAs and business in Indiana.
- ★ Monitor Indiana Department of Revenue and Professional Licensing Agency's legislative initiatives, and support efforts benefiting taxpayers and licensees in Indiana.
 - Legislation regarding tax implications for multistate employees
 - Business personal property tax threshold
 - Regulation of money transmissions



QUESTIONS?

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INSIDE THE INCPAS DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK: HOW THIS TOOL GUIDES THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Building the INCPAS legislative agenda is a year-round work in progress for our advocacy team, which includes member volunteers, leadership, staff and the Society's lobbyist. We are constantly monitoring our statehouse, caucuses, fellow CPA organizations, and dozens of other groups that could present legislation that impacts our members and the CPA profession. As a result, there are countless issues at play each year.

But just because an issue is on the radar doesn't mean it becomes one INCPAS chooses to engage with over the next year.

So, how do we determine if an issue, bill or topic is right for our legislative agenda? This is where our member advocates and the decision-making framework come into play.

The INCPAS Decision-Making Framework

This framework, developed by the INCPAS Advocacy Council, is an internal guide that helps us develop the most effective legislative agenda. It's particularly used to guide conversation among members of the Government Relations Advisory Council (GRAC) and Tax Resource Advisory Council (TRAC), as well as our Board of Directors.

"As our members' services and roles expand, so does the scope of business issues members expect the Society to weigh in on. Utilizing the decision-making framework helps us and our member advocates consider issues outside of the traditional licensure and tax areas," said Sherrill Rude, INCPAS VP – Advocacy.

GRAC and TRAC, made up of INCPAS member volunteers, meet at minimum twice a year to draft the legislative agenda. During this time they rely on the framework, alongside other existing organizational position statements, to guide what issues we Lead, Engage and Monitor.

What the Decision-Making Framework Includes

Examining each issue through discussion and applying the decision-making framework is a thorough process and includes questions related to our organization, member interests, risks, public interest and more. Here's a peek at what all it entails.

The INCPAS advocacy focus areas

The first question on the decision-making framework is whether an issue is related to our five advocacy areas identified by INCPAS. These five areas include:

- **Business Ethics.** Legislation that supports and encourages high standards for business behavior based on ethical values.
- **Fiscal Responsibility.** Fiscal policies that support the citizen's needs, ensure adequate funding for the state's economic growth and public infrastructure, and overall encourage governmental and personal fiscal responsibility.
- **Government Transparency.** Legislation that encourages and supports the transparency of governmental processes and financial reporting by all state and local governmental entities and all public schools in Indiana.
- **Professional Issues & Licensing.** Professional issues, including professional licensing, regulatory compliance and ethics.
- **State and Local Tax Policy.** Sound and transparent tax policy that creates a favorable tax environment for individuals and businesses.

Sometimes the issue may be labeled a secondary or emerging issue, and therefore something that still garners conversation.

Policy and position statements

Does INCPAS already have a policy statement in place about the issue? This can include organizational position statements and Board policies.

Organization alignment

Does this issue align with our mission, vision and core values (Integrity, Advocacy, Knowledge, Leadership, Community)? Does it align with or affect our value to members?

Public interest

Does this issue impact how our members are able to serve the general public, including providing services with integrity, competency and quality? Is it something that could enhance members' success? Does it focus on

services, programs and initiatives that members/firms/ companies cannot do on their own, or that would not be as effective if undertaken on their own?

General interest

Who else might care about this issue? Sometimes there's an opportunity for forming coalitions. It's also important to consider if supporting or becoming involved in an issue could jeopardize our relationship with other organizations and entities.

In addition, is there a general interest from members? Would their employers have an interest? Their client?

Risk and benefits

Is there any risk to the organization and our members to support an issue? To not support an issue? What are the general benefits of getting involved? What is the cost of resources to be involved, and are we willing to spend it?

Credibility and expertise

Are we the right organization for this issue? We want to make sure that we are seen as a credible voice. We also want to make sure we have the right expertise, and if we don't, examine what it would take to get it.

Why This Process Impacts You

Members are at the center of INCPAS's advocacy efforts. Our yearly process to build the legislative agenda is thorough to make sure we're taking the right steps to create a positive impact on you, your clients and the CPA profession.

Whether you choose to be an engaged advocate or not, our team is always working on your behalf. But member involvement can only strengthen our efforts.

INCPAS DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK: WORKSHEET

Advocacy volunteers and staff can use this worksheet to determine if/when INCPAS should engage in an issue. For additional insight into how the INCPAS decision-making framework guides the legislative agenda, check out page 18.

What is the issue being considered? _____

Policy Areas

- Business Ethics
- Fiscal Responsibility: Government
- Fiscal Responsibility: Personal State and Local Tax Policy
- Government Transparency
- Professional Issues and Licensing

Is this issue related to the identified primary advocacy issues? **Yes** **No**

Is it a secondary issue? **Yes** **No**

Is it an emerging issue? **Yes** **No**

Policy and Position Statement:

Do we have a stated policy and position related to this issue? **Yes** **No**

Alignment with INCPAS Mission:

Our mission is to enhance the professional success of our members while respecting the public interest; to encourage and facilitate the adherence to high ethical and professional standards; to facilitate relationships that will benefit our members; to promote a better understanding of services rendered by CPAs; and to represent our profession.

Does it align with our Mission? **Yes** **No**

Alignment with INCPAS Core Values:

- Advocacy
- Community
- Integrity
- Knowledge
- Leadership

Does it align with our Core Values? **Yes** **No**

Value Proposition:

How does it affect our value proposition with members? _____

Public Interest Filters:

- Does it help our members provide current and future services with integrity, competency and quality?
Yes **No**
- Does it focus on services, programs, and initiatives that members/firms/companies cannot do on their own or that would not be as effective if undertaken on their own? **Yes** **No**
- Does it represent something members value and enhance member's success? **Yes** **No**
- Does it align with value proposition, core values, vision and mission statements? **Yes** **No**

Risk:

What is our risk if we engage on the issue? _____

What is our risk if we do not engage in the issue? _____

Benefit of Involvement:

What is to be gained if we engage on the issue? _____

Who else cares:

Is there a coalition opportunity? **Yes** **No**

Is there a chance of jeopardizing our relationship with an organization/group? **Yes** **No**

Other Organizations:

Government agency or entity:

Other Questions to Consider:

Does the CPA member care? **Yes** **No**

Does their client care? **Yes** **No**

Does their employer care? **Yes** **No**

Additional Considerations:

Are we credible on this issue/in this space? **Yes** **No**

Cost and people resources to be involved? **Yes** **No**

Are we willing to spend the political capital? **Yes** **No**

Do we have the expertise? **Yes** **No**

What would it take to get the expertise? _____

Will members support it? **Yes** **No** (Actively?: **Yes** **No**)

Will they engage influencers on the topic? **Yes** **No**

What is our objective? _____

What does success look like? _____

Do we engage on this issue? Yes No