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## Statehouse Report

### APRIL 27, 2009

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Only three business days remain in the 2009 Indiana General Assembly. These final three days will see long nights as legislators seek to reach compromise on contentious financial issues such as the state budget and the insolvent unemployment fund. The session must officially end by midnight on Wednesday, April 29. The governor may call the legislature back for a special session if critical legislation is not passed in time, but that has not happened since 2002.

#### State Budget

Negotiations between the House and Senate on the state budget, [HB 1001](#), seem to be progressing. The two versions of the budget differ in several respects—most notably the one-year plan from the House compared to the traditional two-year Senate budget. The House version also uses a significant portion of the state's existing surplus, but the Senate was able to avoid using state surplus dollars because they began their efforts after the federal stimulus package was passed.

The biggest differences remain in education funding—both on K-12 school funding formulas and building projects at state universities. However, these issues have been negotiated in past budget years, and resulted in a bipartisan compromise.

The most serious disagreements so far appear to be between the legislature and the governor—with the governor threatening to withhold money appropriated in the budget if he felt it spent too much. The governor could also veto any budget compromise; however, a simple majority in each chamber is all that is required to override a veto.

#### Unemployment

House and Senate conferees on [HB 1379](#) are continuing to work toward compromise on a comprehensive solution to the insolvent unemployment insurance compensation fund. After the governor last week signaled his approval of the Senate plan, House conferees countered with a proposal that would increase both the wage base on which employers pay taxes, as well as the rates they pay. Currently, employers pay between 1.1% and 5.6% annually on an employee's first \$7,000 in wages. The House proposal aims to raise the nearly \$1 billion necessary to pay back federal loans by increasing the maximum rate to 10.2%, and collecting taxes on the first \$14,000 of an employee's wages—until all federal loans are repaid—at which point the base wage would decrease to \$9,000.

The most serious obstacles in negotiations remain how much of an increase in employer taxes is necessary to relieve the fund's structural deficit and whether to cut benefits to recipients of unemployment benefits. Last week, federal officials indicated that federal tax rates would be increased for Indiana employers if the loans made to stabilize the fund were not repaid by the state.

## Other unresolved issues

In addition to the two major fiscal bills left to be negotiated, legislation on a wide variety of topics is still in active consideration in conference committees. Decisions on state energy policy, transportation funding, foreclosure rights, smoking bans, puppy mills, and possible casino expansions are all still up in the air. With only three days remaining, agreement could be reached at any time, or the bills could die for the year. To stay abreast of debate on the floor of either chamber, live video feeds are available [here](#).

## Governor's Latest Actions on Bills

[SB 025](#) - 1977 pension fund military service credit. *Signed.*

[SB 027](#) - David Ford educational technology fund. *Signed.*

[SB 188](#) - 1977 fund disability benefit. *Signed.*

[SB 533](#) - IOSHA and labor administrative matters. *Signed.*

[HB 1012](#) - 1977 pension fund disability benefit. *Signed.*

[HB 1037](#) - Product transfers between beer wholesalers. *Became law without Governor's signature.*

[HB 1089](#) - Heimlich maneuver and CPR continuing education. *Signed.*

[HB 1107](#) - Compact for education for military children. *Signed.*

[HB 1116](#) - Report of missing persons to national data base. *Signed.*

[HB 1203](#) - Invasive species council. *Signed.*

[HB 1204](#) - Clean water Indiana fund. *Signed.*

[HB 1381](#) - Shoreline permits and enforcement of judgments. *Signed.*

[HB 1432](#) - County auditor income tax distributions to units. *Signed.*

[HB 1434](#) - Job recruitment grant. *Signed.*

[HB 1473](#) - Rental property in a flood plain. *Signed.*

[HB 1524](#) - State egg board. *Signed.*

[HB 1592](#) - Long term care employee flu vaccinations. *Signed.*

[HB 1625](#) - Stable value fund investment option. *Signed.*

## Concurrences

After a bill has passed both chambers, the author of the bill has two choices. They can either dissent with the changes made in the other body (and have a joint conference committee appointed to negotiate the bill further), or they can consent to the changes that were made and file a concurrence motion to enroll the bill and send it to the governor for his signature. Below are lists of concurrence motions made in both the House and Senate last week:

### Senate Concurrences

[SB 039](#) - Veterans' benefits.

[SB 098](#) - Mental health Medicaid quality advisory committee.

[SB 102](#) - Coverage of mental health services in CHIP.

[SB 174](#) - Repossession of motor vehicles.

[SB 202](#) - Lead-based paint activities.

[SB 221](#) - Confined animal feeding.

[SB 228](#) - End of route inspection by bus drivers.

[SB 236](#) - Sentence enhancement for feticide.

[SB 263](#) - Public school compensation payment schedules.

[SB 280](#) - Adoption.

[SB 307](#) - Silver alert for missing endangered adults.

[SB 356](#) - Military family leave.

[SB 376](#) - Line of duty disability from Parkinson's disease.

[SB 437](#) - Coverage for cancer chemotherapy.

[SB 465](#) - Department of labor administrative matters.

[SB 480](#) - Contact lens dispensing.

[SB 481](#) - Electronic birth and death registration.

[SB 487](#) - Underground plant protection.

## House Concurrences

- [HB 1028](#) - Self-directed in-home care study.
- [HB 1032](#) - Wabash River heritage corridor commission.
- [HB 1063](#) - Youth shelters.
- [HB 1077](#) - Special tool and common law liens.
- [HB 1133](#) - State employee job evaluation system.
- [HB 1165](#) - Public safety survivors tuition and fee exemption.
- [HB 1176](#) - Residential mortgage lending practices.
- [HB 1182](#) - Health care services for county prisoners.
- [HB 1191](#) - Fertilizer law matters.
- [HB 1198](#) - Technical corrections.
- [HB 1200](#) - Physical examinations of bus drivers.
- [HB 1205](#) - Injured volunteer firefighters.
- [HB 1219](#) - Grain buyers and warehouse licensing.
- [HB 1224](#) - Water resources task force.
- [HB 1246](#) - Use of credit information by insurance companies.
- [HB 1285](#) - Various gaming matters.
- [HB 1287](#) - Various probate and trust issues.
- [HB 1289](#) - Coordination of programs for vulnerable individuals and high ability.
- [HB 1343](#) - School dropout prevention.
- [HB 1344](#) - Property tax administration.
- [HB 1362](#) - Benefits for volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel.
- [HB 1365](#) - Tax assessment of land affected by flooding.
- [HB 1398](#) - Ethanol incentives.
- [HB 1419](#) - Student discipline.
- [HB 1455](#) - Autism training.
- [HB 1460](#) - Compliance reports of broker-dealers.
- [HB 1462](#) - Various education matters.
- [HB 1487](#) - The rights of owners in coal lands.
- [HB 1536](#) - Suspension of Medicaid for delinquent children.
- [HB 1578](#) - GPS monitoring and restraining orders.
- [HB 1589](#) - Electronic waste.
- [HB 1593](#) - Practicing as a surgical technologist.
- [HB 1671](#) - Nursing scholarships.
- [HB 1697](#) - Office of small business advancement.

## How to track legislative action.

The [web page for the Indiana General Assembly](#) is a free resource for the public that provides some helpful tools to follow the progress of legislative action during the session. You can [find out how to contact your legislator](#), read [all of the filed bills](#), and search the [Indiana Constitution, Indiana Code, and Indiana Register](#).

You can also watch live streaming video of the legislature while it is in session, as well as some committee meetings [here](#).

The regularly updated House and Senate Committee schedules are also available online, and contain links to legislation up for consideration in committee.

[House Committee Schedule](#)  
[Senate Committee Schedule](#)