



Hi, friend!

The second half of Indiana's legislative session is in full swing. This week brought us the first week of committee hearings where senate committees are hearing house bills and house committees are hearing senate bills.

While some bills may have flown through their chamber of origin, they may face a harder time getting through the second chamber, which is why we must stay vigilant to ensure that good bills impacting youth and families are passed!

Read on to see what else happened this week and what is coming up at the Statehouse next week!

Have a great weekend!

Sarah



21st Century Scholars Program

[HB 1449 "Twenty-first century scholars' program"](#) received a hearing on Wednesday in the Senate Education and Career Development committee. This bill would require the commission for higher education to notify eligible students who qualify for enrollment in the twenty-first century scholars program. Currently, about half of eligible students do not apply for the program on time and miss out on the opportunity to have their college expenses covered. Enrollment in the 21st Century Scholars program would help students have more educational opportunities that could change the trajectory of their adult lives. MCCOY supports any efforts to help lift children out of poverty through the power of education.

This bill is currently being held in the Senate Education and Career Development committee. Contact Senate Education Committee members today and let them know you support HB1449!

[READ MORE](#)



FAFSA

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SB 167 "FAFSA" received a hearing on Wednesday and is currently being held in the House Education committee. This bill would require all Indiana students to apply for FAFSA in their senior year of high school, with some exceptions. A co-author of the bill, Sen. Jean Leising, said that college enrollment is down, especially among minority populations, and almost \$70 million in Federal Grant money was not used by Hoosier students. Sen. Leising believes this bill would help rural kids in her district attend college, since many do not even know that FAFSA exists.

MCCOY supports this bill because it would help close a large gap in accessing higher education for minority students and students in poverty. Please reach out to House Education committee members and let them know you support SB 167.

[READ MORE](#)



Juvenile Court Fees and Fines

Court Fees and Fines

HB1493, Elimination of Costs and Fees in Juvenile Court, will receive a hearing this upcoming Monday morning (March 13) in the Senate Family and Children Services Committee.

This bill would eliminate the costs and fees that accumulate when a young person goes through the juvenile court and often times puts them and their families in deep financial debt.

A recent national study conducted by the Juvenile Law Center reported that these financial penalties increase recidivism, push impoverished young people deeper into the juvenile justice system, exacerbate racial disparities, and increase economic and emotional distress for families that are already experiencing financial struggles. Other consequences for failure to pay include the inability to get records expunged as well as additional court visits that would lead to missed school or missed work. These consequences have long term effects on that young person's success as they grow into adulthood.



Foster Families

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SB151, Foster Families, will receive a hearing on Wednesday, March 15 in the House Ways and Means Committee. If passed, this bill will provide an appropriation for the Insuring Foster Youth Trust Fund and expand the Foster Care Tax Credit Program to donors of that trust fund. Additionally, the bill will empower Indiana's older foster youth with legal driving privileges and the opportunities those privileges afford, such as access to education and jobs that are essential to independence and self-sufficiency. Lastly, the bill would provide free access for foster families to Indiana State Parks, which is an initiative created by Girl Scouts of Central Indiana Troop 1937.

MCCOY supports this bill for all of the positive changes it will bring to young Hoosiers in the foster care system.

[READ MORE](#)

2023 State of the Child

March 15th 8:30-10:00am

Join our friends at the Indiana Youth Institute for the 2023 State of the Child presentation at the Indiana Statehouse. Learn about the key data on Hoosier youth well-being from the newly released Indiana Youth Institute 2023 Indiana KIDS COUNT® Data Book.

IYI's 2023 KIDS COUNT® Data Book examines the overall well-being of Indiana kids, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuation of racial and ethnic disparities in outcomes across four domains, Family & Community, Health, Economic Well-Being, and Education.

The event will also be [webcast live](#) from the Senate Chamber.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Contact Us

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