



Hi, friend!

Happy St. Patrick's Day! Wishing you and the families and children you serve all the luck this year!

This week brought us more committee hearings where we found movement on several good bills impacting families and children in Indiana. We also were pleased to attend the 2023 State of the Child presentation at the Statehouse earlier this week where our friends at IYI shared important new data on children and families in our state, which can now be found in the [2023 Kid's Count Databook](#).

Read below about what bills are moving their way through the Statehouse and are approaching the finish line (along with one bill that we are excited to see will likely die!)

Have a great weekend!

Sarah



Parental Rights Bill is Likely Dead

We received some good news this week from the Statehouse-- [HB 1407, Parental Rights](#) is likely dead for the 2023 legislative session. This bill would have removed the rights of DCS to intervene in cases where a child is in danger from living in a non-affirming environment where critical medical and psychological care is withheld.

The bill has been assigned to the rules committee where Senators typically send bills to die. Spokeswoman, Molly Fishell told reporters that "Sen. Bray (Senate President Pro-Tem) has serious concerns about the legislation and, citing the pending court case on the matter, doesn't see a path forward for the bill."

MCCOY is pleased to hear that this bill is likely dead. We support the policies already in place at DCS for determining if a home is unfit for a child and we will continue to fight for appropriate gender affirming care for youth who require it.

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Action Alert: Police Interrogation

SB 415, Admissibility of a Statement by Juvenile in Custody, would protect youth against deceptive police interrogation tactics. Though it has passed through the Senate with bipartisan support, it has not yet been scheduled for a hearing in the House Courts and Criminal Code Committee.

We need your help to get this bill heard! Please [email Committee Chair, Rep. Wendy McNamara](#), to express your support for the legislation and ask her to hear the bill.

Here is what is at stake for children:

- Police deceptive tactics increase the occurrence of false confessions.
- Youth are less able to think rationally about their options and are more likely to misunderstand or underestimate the legal implications of confessing to a crime.
- Youth are more susceptible to interrogative pressure and are more likely to change their statements when authority figures implicitly communicate dissatisfaction with their answers.

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21st Century Scholars Program

HB 1449 “Twenty-first century scholars’ program” passed out of Senate Education and Career Development Committee on Wednesday 13-0. It is now being sent to the Senate Appropriations Committee to discuss its financial components.

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.

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FAFSA

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SB 167 "FAFSA" passed out of the House Education committee earlier this week 11-1. This bill would require all Indiana students to apply for FAFSA in their senior year of high school, with some exceptions. This bill will give students more money to go to college and convince more of them to enroll in higher education in the first place. By filling out a FAFSA form, students will be considered for federal financial aid such as grants, loans and scholarships. States and colleges also use the FAFSA to determine eligibility for their respective aid programs.

MCCOY supports this bill because it would help close a large gap in accessing higher education for minority students and students in poverty.

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Foster Families

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SB151, Foster Families, received a hearing earlier this week 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.

Contact members of the House Ways and Means Committee and tell them to support SB151!

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TANF

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SB265, TANF Eligibility, passed out of House Family, Children, and Human Affairs Committee this week with a vote of 10-0. If passed, this bill would raise the income limit to qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and would automatically adjust to inflation. Indiana currently has one of the strictest thresholds in the country. Currently in Indiana, more than 66,000 families in Indiana fall below the 50% of the poverty line threshold. Of those, only 4,300 receive TANF benefits.

MCCOY supports expanding TANF eligibility because it will help lift families in need out of poverty.

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2023 Kids Count Data Book

Earlier this week was the 2023 State of the Child presentation at the Indiana Statehouse where Indiana Youth Institute staff shared 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.

Download the 2023 Kids Count Data Book today for up-to-date information on young people in our state!

[DOWNLOAD DATABOOK](#)

Contact Us

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