



*Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative
Policy Workgroup*

2017 Legislative Information Report – Bills of 2017 – March Edition

There are a number of 2017 legislative bills that impact policy concepts that we support because the evidence suggests that they will improve physical activity, nutrition and obesity in Indiana. To understand more about the legislative process please [visit this state resource](#).

**Improving Food Access –
Healthy Food Financing Initiatives**

Because of the clear connection between Healthy Food Financing Initiatives and improving access to healthy foods, the Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative supports the creation of Healthy Food Financing Initiatives in Indiana. See our [policy paper](#) for more information about Healthy Food Financing Initiatives and how they interact with increased nutrition.

Senate Bills

- [Senate Bill 277](#) – Establishes the healthy food financing initiative program to be administered by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority to assist new businesses, existing businesses, and other legal entities to offer fresh or unprocessed foods within an underserved geographic area.
- For more information contact: [Indiana Healthy Food Access Coalition](#)
- Or contact the legislator directly:
 - Senate Bill 277 - [Sen. Randall Head](#), [Sen. Jon Ford](#), [Sen. John Ruckelshaus](#).

Notes: SB 277 passed out of the senate without an appropriation. The current primary strategy is to make sure the program is codified into law with or without money attached. The secondary aim is to seek an appropriation during budget negotiations. If the program is created but not funded this year, advocates for the program will seek funding in future years.

House Bills

There are no bills related to this originating from the House that we are tracking at this time.

Improving Food Access –

Improving Hoosier's access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Indiana

Because low-income populations are more likely to suffer from poor nutrition, low food access, and obesity the IHWI supports efforts that reduce Hoosiers' barriers to getting and using SNAP.

Senate Bills

- [Senate Bill 9](#) - Seek to lift restrictions on Hoosier's convicted of felony drug charges. Currently convicted drug felons are not eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Lifting these restrictions would allow Hoosiers reentering society to better access fresh fruits and vegetables.
 - For more information about this bill contact: [Feeding Indiana's Hungry](#)
 - Or contact the legislator directly



- [Sen. James Merritt](#), [Sen. Jean Breaux](#)

- [Senate Bill 154](#) – This bill seeks to do away with certain asset calculations for SNAP recipients. Currently SNAP calculates the value of a variety of assets before granting SNAP. By using the assets in the calculations such as money in an CD or child’s savings account, advocates say that SNAP recipients are not able to build the wealth needed to lift themselves out of poverty.
 - For more information about this bill contact: [Feeding Indiana’s Hungry](#)
 - Or contact the Legislator Directly
 - [Sen. James Merritt](#), [Sen. Vaneta Becker](#), [Sen. Jon Ford](#).

Notes: Both bills passed out of the Senate. The focus is now on finding support with House members.

House Bills

There are no bills originating in the house that we are tracking at this time.

Increasing Physical Activity and Nutrition Activity in Schools

The IHWI recognizes that schools play a key role in the lives of Hoosier children with regard to physical activity and nutrition. We support efforts to more systematically include physical education, physical activity, and nutrition efforts in schools. This can be addressed in multiple ways including using the changes to federal education policy because of The Every Student Succeeds Act 2015 (ESSA). You can see how the IHWI thinks that might regarding ESSA changes via our [ESSA Policy Paper](#).

Senate Bills

There are no Senate Bills that we are tracking at this time related to this priority.

House Bill

- [House Bill 1337](#) – Improves healthcare organization’s ability to perform telemedicine in Indiana. Existing pilot programs in rural, Indiana schools are using this to good effect. This technology may be used for obesity, nutrition, or physical activity related interventions from healthcare providers in school settings.
 - Indiana Rural Health Association is piloting the “telemedicine in schools” efforts currently.
 - Contact the Legislator directly
 - [Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer](#)

Note: This bill is not explicitly designed to support physical activity and nutrition efforts but could be used to implement healthcare professional responses to obesity in schools.

Increasing Active-living in Hoosier Communities by Supporting Changes to the Built Environment.

We know that many communities in Indiana lack opportunities to be physically active. Many communities do not have adequate sidewalks and walking infrastructure. New communities and



developments are built without regard for modes of transit other than the car. In many communities the streets are unfriendly to walkers, bikers and pedestrians while schools are built far from communities making walking and biking to school difficult and unsafe. The Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative supports policies that increase active-living in Hoosier communities by supporting changes to the built environment.

Senate Bills

- [Senate Bill 85](#) – Seeks to allow communities to use TIF funding to fund school transportation and public transit
 - For more information about this bill contact: [Health By Design](#)
 - Or contact the legislator directly
 - [Sen. Liz Brown](#), [Sen. Ed Charbonneau](#).

House Bill

- [House Bill 1174](#) – Establishes an Indiana bicycle taskforce to study concepts to connect existing bike trails, estimate costs of concepts, present ways to fund these concepts and develop an estimated timeline.
 - For more information about this bill contact: [Health By Design](#)
 - Or contact the legislator directly
 - [Rep. Wes Culver](#)

The IHWI does not lobby on behalf of or against any bill. Nor do we ask our stakeholders to lobby on behalf of or against any bill. None of the information contained in this report should not be construed as a call-to-action. It is intended to be informational and to raise awareness around legislative policy that is impactful to our work. Each individual and organization must decide on their own, what if any, actions to take regarding legislative policy.