Legislative Accomplishments

Moving Indiana Forward: 2011-2012

Right-to-work for employees (2012)
Prohibits unions from forcing Indiana workers to join or pay dues and fees to a labor union to get or keep a job in this state; makes it the employees' choice. Does not eliminate unions or collective bargaining. Also further distinguishes Indiana from neighboring states and gives companies another big reason to bring their business and jobs here.

Statewide smoking ban (2012)
Outlaws smoking in the majority of workplaces (bars/taverns, gambling institutions are biggest exceptions), all restaurants and within eight feet of a building's public entrance. Local governments may enact stricter ordinances.

Elimination of the state's inheritance tax (2012)
Effective at the end of the 2012, the more favorably-treated Class A category of inheritors expands (to include stepchildren and children's spouses) and the amount excluded from the tax increases from $100,000 to $250,000. Beginning next year, the inheritance tax will be phased out equally over nine years – going away completely in 2022.

Protection of property owner water rights (2012)
Clarifies the water usage laws to confirm that private property owners, not municipalities, have control of the underground wells on their property. Water utilities are also now required to report usage to the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission; only 15% of utilities previously did so. Both are needed steps toward a statewide plan for the protection and effective regulation of Indiana's water resources.

Unemployment insurance tax relief (2011)
Mitigates effects of unemployment tax increase on employers by placing them in a much lower tax bracket through 2020. What's more, the law overhauled the state's unemployment system to bring revenues and benefits more in line with each other. Saves Indiana employers $2 billion over 10 years.

School choice scholarships/vouchers (2011)
Provides scholarships to low- and middle-income students to help pay the cost of tuition and fees at a public or private school that charges tuition. That means parents can redirect a portion of state dollars assigned to their children's education to a school that better fits each child's needs. This will give those students a better chance for success in school and throughout their lives.

Charter school expansion (2011)
Removed administrative barriers limiting charter school growth, while also bringing more accountability into the authorization process and performance review. In addition, permitted under-used public school facilities to be utilized by charter schools – a win for taxpayers and prospective students.

Corporate income tax rate reduction (2011)
Decreases Indiana's rate, one of the highest in the nation, from 8.5% to 6.5%. This reduction makes Indiana even more competitive and brings its corporate rate in line with other states. Existing C corporations and their employees will realize the benefits through increased investments in jobs, equipment and company growth.

Teacher performance evaluations and merit pay (2011)
A boost to the teacher evaluation process; it provides for performance-based pay and establishes a meaningful annual performance evaluation that holds teachers more accountable.

Expanded tax abatement (2011)
Expands the tax abatement statute to provide an up to 100% exemption from property taxes for new equipment purchases.

Decade of Policy Victories: 2000-2010

Tax restructuring (2002)
Monumental tax restructuring plan put in place to trim business taxes by $800 million per year. This was achieved through, among other provisions, the inventory tax elimination, reduction in school property taxes, corporate group income tax elimination and creation of the Venture Capital Tax Credit.

Education grand slam (2005)
Four significant K-12 policies were realized: 1) Core 40 curriculum requirement for high school graduation; 2) dual credit enrollment option for all qualifying high school students; 3) revised state graduation rate calculation that provides for more accurate numbers; and 4) school dropout age raised from 16 to 18 years.

Creation of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (2003)
Public-private group established to manage and expand the state's economic development initiatives, involving substantial private sector visioning and oversight from leaders throughout Indiana.

Telecommunications reform (2006)
Many businesses and residents had been unable to benefit from the latest broadband technology. This bill deregulated the telecommunications industry in the areas of broadband, advanced services, telecommunications and mobile services, plus utilized state video or cable franchising.

Major Moves (2006)
A $4.2 billion road improvement and job creation plan funded by the leasing of the Indiana Toll Road. Communities throughout the state have and will continue to benefit from being able to place numerous road and bridge projects (over 200) on the fast track to completion.

Observance of daylight saving time (2005)
Put the entire state on daylight saving time and in-line with rest of the country, ending a decades-long debate over the issue. Indiana had negatively set itself apart from neighbors and all major economic development centers outside of the state by being on "Indiana Time." This led to confusion, missed appointments, logistical problems with shipments and the delivery of goods, plus inconvenience factors in doing business and recreational activities.

Removal of most township assessors (2008)
Eliminated nearly 1,000 township officials and transferred property assessing duties to county assessors. The impetus was to create the best possible property tax assessing system by having uniform and equal assessments, as required by the state constitution.

Variety of tax credits expanded (2005)
Substantial improvements were made to the state's economic toolkit with the extension and expansion of TIF (tax increment financing) and tax abatement, as well as expansions to the EDGE Tax Credit, the Hoosier Business Investment Tax Credit, the Venture Capital Tax Credit and the R&D Tax Credit.

Health care policy wins (multiple years)
Beginning in 2004, various bills that would have increased the cost of health care insurance for both employers and employees have been defeated, one by one. These include mandates for coverage of certain medical conditions and the assignment of benefits concept (directly paying out-of-network providers for medical services provided), which would jeopardize the integrity of networks. On the positive side, the state insurance program – the Healthy Indiana Plan – was established in 2007 to provide affordable insurance coverage for individuals who do not have access to insurance. This means less cost shifting now takes place among those who pay for insurance to compensate for those uninsured.

Labor policy wins (multiple years)
Concepts repeatedly defeated: allowing employees to bring their gun onto employer property; paid family and medical leave that would be treated by many employees as another 12 weeks vacation; attempts to expand state age discrimination law beyond federal law; and putting responsibility of ensuring people can lawfully work in this country on employers rather than the proper governmental entities charged with immigration matters.