



# Key Chamber Issues, Initiatives

**T**here is usually no lack of debate in the short session of the Indiana General Assembly. That does not always translate into action, however, as the every-other-year short session means its election time for all 100 state representatives and one-half of the 50 senators.

In addition, 2004 features presidential and gubernatorial elections. The thoughts of many are on state and national politics, with the sooner the legislative session ends, the sooner the focus turns to May primaries and the November general election.

Nevertheless, the Indiana Chamber brings an aggressive business agenda to the Statehouse for 2004 and beyond. The Chamber sees the following as some of the critical issues it will either be defending against or lobbying for:

## Tax and public finance

- Possible attempt to roll back some of the business gains made in the 2002 tax restructuring due to the state's growing budget deficit
- Reaction to property tax reassessment leading to a potential shift of additional tax burden to business

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## Environment

- Three bills vetoed – SB 440 (New Source Review and data confidentiality), HB 1798 (wetlands, stormwater issues) and SB 533 (confined animal feeding operations) – in 2003 will be eligible for veto override or there will be introduction of “new and better” bills
- Additional issues include 8-hour ozone standards/multi-pollutants, special waste and the environmental crimes task force

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## Small business

- Expansion of the definition of distressed counties, allowing more widespread assistance
- Redefinition of the Hoosier Business Investment Tax Credit to assist additional companies
- Reintroduction of export assistance grants

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## Economic development

- Creation of focused incentives for target industries and removal of barriers to industry sector expansions
- Designation of the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Crane and Grissom Air Force Base as powerful economic development zones
- Addressing infrastructure funding/construction needs for Indiana's roads and eliminating barriers to expansion of Internet broadband service

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**The state's leading lobbying team: Theresa Jolivette, Reggie Henderson, Vince Griffin, George Raymond, Kevin Brinegar, Stan Pinegar, Mark Lawrance and David Holt.**

## Technology/venture capital

- Stimulate additional federal research and development funding for Indiana businesses
- Make Indiana's Research and Development Tax Credit permanent
- Promote and improve Venture Capital Tax Credit
- Promote technology transfer programs to commercialize ideas into Indiana businesses

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## Education

- Consideration of the Core 40 curriculum as a requirement for high school graduation
- Expand dual enrollment (allowing students to simultaneously receive high school and postsecondary credit) options

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## Labor relations

- Allowance of “moderate” increases in worker's compensation benefits, unlike unrealistic 2003 proposals that were defeated
- Issues that could arise include paid family medical leave, attempt to weaken employment-at-will doctrine and mandated collective bargaining for public safety employees

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## Health care

- Seeking moratorium on health insurance mandates
- Allowing issuance of minimum coverage/essential benefits health care plans

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