



FROM: Bose Public Affairs Group

DATE: May 29, 2020

RE: Weekly State Government COVID-19 Update

BIG PICTURE IN INDIANA

As of Friday, May 29, the Indiana State Department of Health ("ISDH") reported 33,558 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Indiana, which is an increase from the 30,409 cases reported last week. ISDH also reported 1,946 deaths in Indiana, up from 1,791 last week. Track the latest reporting numbers from ISDH [here](#), which includes statistics on demographics, testing, and hospital capacity that are currently helping Indiana navigate through the pandemic.

With the positivity rate continuing to decline and the number of available ICU beds and ventilators remaining steady, the Holcomb administration remains cautiously optimistic as Indiana continues to reopen gradually. ISDH Commissioner Dr. Box stressed that many of the 213 testing sites statewide still have the capacity to handle testing and encouraged Hoosiers at high-risk of COVID-19 to go get tested. Indiana is approaching the 250,000 landmark of total people tested.

Governor Holcomb and other state officials will now hold a virtual press conference every Wednesday and Friday at 2:30 PM ET for the next two weeks. This week, there were only two press conference due to the holiday weekend. To see a summary of each press conference, click [here](#).

STATE ANNOUNCES SMALL BUSINESS RESTART FUND

Indiana will be using \$30M in federal CARES Act money to establish the [Small Business Restart Fund](#), which will aid small businesses in reopening by covering expenses related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The fund, designed for businesses unable to get PPP loans, will provide up to \$2,500 or \$5,000 depending on the amount of revenue loss a business demonstrates. A business is eligible if: 1) it is registered to operate in Indiana; 2) has 50 employees or less; 3) had less than



\$5M in revenue in 2019; 4) been profitable in 2019; and 5) demonstrates a monthly revenue loss of at least 40% compared to pre-COVID-19 revenues. The program is scheduled to launch next week.

INDIANA PRIMARY JUNE 2

Candidates across Indiana are making their final pitches to voters before in-person voting begins June 2. This year's primary election has several key races to watch as candidates battle to replace state legislators who retired last session, such as Speaker Brian Bosma (R-District 88), Rep. Woody Burton (R-District 58) and Rep. Dan Forestal (D-District 100), among others.

Due to the drastic increase in absentee ballots, the Secretary of State's office has already said results could take up to a week to finalize. On Thursday, the [Marion County Clerk requested an extension of the deadline](#) for the Clerk's Office to receive mail-in ballots over a concern absentee voters might not have their votes counted. Voters still have the option to go to voting centers or drop off mail-in ballots if they are concerned their ballots will not be counted.

MARION COUNTY ENTERING MODIFIED STAGE THREE

With COVID-19 metrics continuing to trend in the right direction, Marion County leaders announced the county will enter a [modified version of Governor Holcomb's Stage Three plan](#) on Monday, June 1. Marion County's plan mirrors Governor Holcomb's plan in allowing retail stores to open at 75% capacity, the opening of gyms, fitness centers, tennis courts, basketball courts, and similar facilities at 50% capacity and the allowance of campgrounds to open. Both plans still require bars, movie theatres, museums and other entertainment venues to remain closed.

The two plans differ in a few ways, including Marion County now allowing religious services to resume indoors, but only at 50% capacity and with mandatory face coverings. Restaurants can now allow indoor seating at 50% capacity. Marion County also limits public gatherings to 50 people, unlike the Governor's plan which allows up to 100 people to gather.

DEMOCRATS INTRODUCE NEXT FEDERAL RELIEF PACKAGE

On May 12, House Democratic leadership introduced a massive, \$3 trillion COVID-19 relief bill, the [Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions \(HEROES\) Act](#). While the bill is unlikely to become law in its current form, the HEROES Act lays down a marker for Democrats' priorities as negotiations with the Senate and the Trump Administration commence. Read the Bose Public Affairs Group's full summary memo of the HEROES Act [here](#).



LIABILITY CONCERNS FACE SEVERAL BUSINESSES IN REOPENING

As the economy begins to slowly reopen in Indiana, one of the largest concerns facing business owners are liability claims regarding consumers potentially contracting COVID-19 in their business. [Indiana Speaker of the House Todd Huston \(R-Fishers\) recently acknowledged](#) this concern and said state lawmakers are monitoring federal action regarding the liability issue. He also noted that school corporations and other public sector entities share the same concern. Huston affirmed state lawmakers are ready to act to protect Hoosier businesses if lawmakers in Washington do not.

IURC TO INVESTIGATE COVID-19 IMPACT ON UTILITIES

On Wednesday, the [Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission \("IURC"\) agreed to hear a claim](#) submitted by 10 Indiana utilities requesting rate increases to offset revenue shortfalls caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The claim, submitted May 11, said utilities are experiencing "significantly reduced load and revenue," and the proposed rate increases would ensure consumers have power available around the clock. The request did not clarify how much rates would increase.

The IURC will also investigate the extension of certain ratepayer protections that have been granted during the pandemic, including the moratorium on utility disconnects and the waiver of all deposits and fees.

USEFUL LINKS

[BME PPP Use of Funds and Forgiveness](#) (Updated May 19, 2020)

[SBA Coronavirus Relief Options](#)

[Indiana SBDC COVID-19 Resources](#)

[BPAG COVID-19 Resources](#)

[BME COVID-19 Resources](#)

