KRIEG DEVAULT

Insights

Take Five: 5 Things You Need to Know About Indiana Government - July 2026

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1. Statewide Candidates set for November Ballot

The Indiana State Republican Party hosted its convention June 19-20, sending 1,789 delegates from all over the state to Fort Wayne to select candidates for Secretary of State, Treasurer, and Comptroller. After two rounds of voting, delegates ousted incumbent Secretary of State Diego Morales in favor of newcomer Max Engling. Engling, a staffer for U.S. Senator Jim Banks, entered the contest just over a month before the convention but quickly garnered the support from the broader GOP establishment. Engling got 867 votes in the final tally, while Knox County Clerk David Shelton amassed 627. Morales received 134 votes. Long shot Jamie Reitenour was the first to drop off the ballot as the low vote getter in the first round. Incumbent Treasurer Dan Elliott and Comptroller Elise Nieshalla were unopposed and will also appear on the ballot in November.

Indiana Democrats also met in June to select candidates for statewide elected offices. Like Republicans, Secretary of State was the only contested race for delegates to decide. Blythe Potter and Beau Bayh both entered the contest, pitting a progressive newcomer against the scion of the Bayh family political dynasty. The party ultimately chose Bayh by a total of 1,385 to 883 votes. Coumba Kebe and Jessica Bailey accepted nominations for State Treasurer and State Comptroller, respectively, but the spotlight will be on the Secretary of State's race in the fall.

2. Garten Resigns from Senate Majority Leader Post

State Senator Chris Garten (R- Charlestown) recently announced that he would resign his position as Senate Majority Floor Leader, stating that he no longer possessed a “seamless alignment” with the current Senate leadership. In a June 4th letter to fellow Senate Republicans, Garten announced his resignation from the post which had been, “the privilege of (his) legislative career,” but he said that continuing in the role would not be appropriate given that he could no longer fully support the current direction set by Senate leadership. In the letter, Garten stated that, “Continuing in this role without unequivocal support for that direction would be a disservice to the office, to leadership, and most importantly, to all of you.” And while Garten did not specify what specific issue or issues led to his decision, he was a vocal supporter of the redistricting efforts late last year, while Senate President Pro Tempore Rod Bray voted against the measure. Pro Tem Bray has not yet named a new Majority Floor Leader, and Senator Garten has not yet indicated what his future plans may involve.

3. Interim Study Committee Appointments Made

Committee appointments for 2026 legislative interim study committees were announced last week, and the first meeting announcements will be taking place soon. Legislators will spend the coming months examining topics approved by the Legislative Council and developing recommendations for potential consideration during the 2027 legislative session. A full list of committee rosters is available on the Indiana General Assembly's Interim Committees webpage: 2026 Interim Committees.

As a reminder, for the 2026 Interim, a House member will Chair each committee.

The committees that received assigned topics include:

- Child Services
- Corrections and Criminal Code
- Courts and the Judiciary
- Education
- Employment and Labor
- Financial Institutions and Insurance
- Fiscal Policy
- Pension Management Oversight
- Public Health, Behavioral Health, and Human Services
- Roads and Transportation
- Agricultural Promotion and Regulation Task Force
- Code Revision Committee
- Medicaid Oversight Committee
- State Fair Advisory Committee

These committees will study topics ranging from high school Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) rights, workers' compensation trends, private credit fund regulation, and criminal justice issues to childcare funding, property tax assessment methodologies, sexual assault response systems, Medicaid policy, digital driver's licenses, and agricultural regulatory structure. The full list of topics assigned can be found here.

Interim committees are expected to meet throughout the summer and fall and will submit recommendations to the Legislative Council before November 1, 2026. Our Governmental Affairs team will continue monitoring committee activity and provide updates as hearings are scheduled and discussions begin on these assigned topics.

4. Governor Braun Appoints New Commerce Secretary

Governor Braun appointed former State Representative and Gaylor Electric CEO Chuck Goodrich as Indiana’s new Commerce Secretary. In this role, Goodrich will oversee the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and the Indiana Destination Development Corporation, which both play key roles in the Governor’s economic agenda. In the announcement, Governor Braun praised Goodrich’s business success and experience in

economic development matters during his time in the legislature. Goodrich replaces former Secretary David Adams, who is staying on in a senior advisory role in the life sciences domain through the end of 2026.

5. Flurry of Action at the Federal Level Focuses on AI, Housing, and other Key Issues

While most of the media coverage at the federal level has focused on the continued conflict in the Middle East and related energy issues, a number of other items have flown under the radar but impact the business community and Hoosiers in general.

Last month, President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO) on Artificial Intelligence (AI). The EO, which is titled "Promoting Advanced Artificial Intelligence Innovation and Security," establishes a voluntary framework permitting developers of certain advanced AI models to voluntarily provide the federal government with model access prior to public release for cybersecurity and national security assessments.

Congress passed bipartisan legislation, the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, which aims to speed the construction and availability ?of more affordable housing while limiting institutional investors in housing. It now goes to President Trump to ?be signed into law, but he has refused to move on the measure until Congress passes the SAVE Act to overhaul certain election laws and voting requirements.

Congress also passed Concurrent Resolution 86, directing the President, pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, to remove United States Armed Forces from hostilities with Iran. The measure, which is only a resolution, will not become law. It is a symbolic vote of Congress’s effort to reassert its role over war powers directed at Iran.

The United States District Court for the District of Columbia issued an opinion on June 22, 2026, which blocks the U.S. Department of Agriculture's approvals that permitted state pilot programs restricting the use of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase unhealthy foods in five states. The ruling halts these state-level waivers, deeming them in violation of federal law and the congressional definition of food. Indiana is not one of the five states impacted by the opinion, but there could be future litigation on the issue.

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