

Insights

Take Five: 5 Things You Need to Know About Indiana Government - October 2021

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1. Redistricting process and Congressional district changes

Indiana has completed the process of redistricting and reapportionment as of October 4, when Governor Eric Holcomb signed **House Enrolled Act 1581** into law. The biggest changes to the **new Congressional districts** come in districts 5, 6, and 7 surrounding Marion County. Congressional District 5, currently held by Congresswoman Victoria Spartz, loses all of its Marion County territory to the 7th District, held by Congressman Andre Carson, leading to much safer districts for both members. The 7th district takes the new territory in northern Marion County and loses territory in southern Marion County to the 6th District, held by Congressman Greg Pence. The partisan lean of Indiana's Congressional maps remain at 7 Republicans, 2 Democrats, and it is expected that all of Indiana's current Congressional delegation members up for election in 2022 will seek re-election.

2. Analysis of new House maps and retirements

The **new Indiana General Assembly House of Representatives districts** are expected to result in the status quo—a supermajority split in favor of Republicans, who currently hold the chamber at 71-29 – for the immediate future. According to a press release from the Indiana House Republicans, the new House map increases the number of counties wholly contained within on House district from 26 to 32. There are also 22 fewer townships split between multiple House districts. Some highlights from the new House map include:

- Longtime Ways and Means Committee Chair Rep. Tim Brown, a retired emergency room physician, recently announced his retirement from the legislature. His hometown of Crawfordsville has now been drawn into HD 44, represented by Rep. Beau Baird.
- District 22, which includes Warsaw and most of Kosciusko County, now houses both Rep. Curt Nisly and freshman Rep. Craig Snow. Expect a primary showdown between these two incumbents in May.
- District 16 includes Rep. Doug Gutwein and Rep. Don Lehe, who have both announced their retirement.

- Two new districts (without incumbents) promise to be competitive: HD 82 (Fort Wayne) and HD 32 (portions of northern Marion County and southern Hamilton County).
- Rep. Cindy Ziemke (HD 55) has announced she will retire after the 2022 session.
- Rep. Steve Davisson (HD 73) passed away earlier this year. His son, J. Michael Davisson, is eyeing a run for his father's seat, which has been drawn into a district with Rep. Jim Lucas.

3. Analysis of new Senate maps and retirements

The **new Indiana Senate districts** are also expected to yield a similar Republican supermajority to the current 39-11 split. Indiana Senate Republicans claim that the new Senate map increases the number of whole counties contained in one Senate district from 49 to 65, keeps 96% of all townships whole, and keeps 92% of all cities and towns whole. Some highlights from the new Senate map include:

- Sen. Tim Lanane (D-Anderson) saw his SD 25 lose portions of Muncie, gain all of Madison County, and add some Hamilton County townships. The former Senate Minority Leader is now in the same district as incumbent Sen. Mike Gaskill (R) who has announced he will run for re-election.
- Sen. Karen Tallian (D-Ogden Dunes) of SD 4 has retired from the legislature.
- Sen. Lonnie Randolph (D) and Sen. Frank Mrvan (D) of Northwest Indiana were drawn into the same district (SD 2), which covers East Chicago, Hammond, Munster, and Whiting.
- A new, open SD 1 was created in Northwest Indiana and is expected to be highly competitive. It includes St. John, Griffith, Highland, Dyer, and portions of Merrillville.
- A new district was added in Marion County that represents much of downtown Indianapolis (SD 46). This open seat is expected to be won by a Democrat.

4. Public Policy Committee Licensure issue

This year, the Interim Study Committee on Public Policy was charged with studying the topic of interstate occupational licensure reciprocity. During the course of two committee hearings earlier this summer, study committee chair Sen. Ron Alting (R-Lafayette) narrowed the discussion to health care professional licenses, and the committee heard a variety of testimony on the topic. At the final meeting on October 5th, the committee made a series of findings and adopted eight formal recommendations, which you can review **here**. Specifically, the committee recommended that the Indiana General Assembly: (1) enact licensure compacts for audiologists/speech language pathologists and psychologists, and maximize the use of other health care compacts where possible; (2)

adopt universal reciprocity legislation for health care providers; (3) expand Indiana's telehealth statute to allow physical therapy assistants, all mental and behavioral health professionals, and speech-language pathology students and fellows to use telehealth; and (4) invest \$690,000 in the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency for information technology improvements. Look for these recommendations to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive effort by the Indiana General Assembly to address Indiana's pressing health care workforce shortage.

5. Executive Authority

A Marion County judge ruled that the Indiana Constitution does give the legislature the authority to call themselves into a special session, thus upholding the provisions contained in HEA 1123. That legislation authorized the legislature to reconvene itself in an emergency session when the governor has declared a statewide emergency. Governor Holcomb vetoed the legislation but lawmakers overrode the veto, forcing the Governor to ultimately file suit against the legislature. Marion County Superior Court Judge Patrick Dietrick said that the ability to "schedule legislative sessions is inherently legislative," and thus does not violate the Constitution. A spokesperson for Governor Holcomb said that the office was reviewing the ruling and had not yet decided how to proceed.

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