

Insights

Take Five: 5 Things you Need to Know About Indiana Government - October 2023

October 4, 2023

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1. Medicaid Redetermination Continues

As health agencies across the country continue the Medicaid unwinding process due to the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, and the increased federal funding that accompanied it, **Indiana reported** a Medicaid enrollment population for August 2023 of 2,109,521 Hoosiers. This number is a slight decrease from the June 2023 reported number of 2,143,164 Hoosiers and down from the high water mark of 2,257,506 Hoosiers that were enrolled in April 2023 when the redetermination process started. Nineteen percent of the approximately 145,000 redeterminations that took place in August 2023 resulted in procedural disenrollment. While the state has implemented increased outreach to ensure that people enrolled in Medicaid are aware of the requirements for the redetermination period, **some lawmakers** are concerned that eligible Hoosiers will be removed from the program and lose health coverage due to unintentional errors.

2. Mayoral Election Updates

Cities and towns across Indiana will hold their municipal elections on Tuesday, November 7th. Residents of Indianapolis are seeing lots of TV ads as Mayor Joe Hogsett (D) faces a well-funded challenger in businessman Jefferson Shreve (R), while just to the north in Carmel, current City Councilor Sue Finkam (R) faces off against fellow Councilor Miles Nelson (D) in what is expected to be a close race. Evansville will get its first female mayor as candidates Natalie Rascher (R) and Stephanie Terry (D) compete for the distinction. There are also long-term incumbents facing strong challenges, as New Albany Mayor Jeff Gahan (D) tries for a fourth term against current State Representative Ed Clere (R) and Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett (R) seeks a fifth term against political newcomer Brandon Sakbun (D). In Northern Indiana, Michigan City Mayor Duane Parry (R) is running for re-election against current City Council member Angie Nelson-Deutch (D), while current State Senator Eddie Melton (D) is expected to prevail over Republican Andrew Delano in the Gary mayoral election.

The deadline to register to vote in Indiana's November elections is Tuesday, October 10. You can register to vote and check your voter registration status at www.indianavoters.in.gov.

3. 2024 Campaign Updates

In the midst of this year's municipal elections, 2024 candidates are already working hard to garner name ID and supporters. The most recent shake-up in the Republican gubernatorial primary is the entrance of Brad Chambers, Governor Holcomb's Secretary of Commerce, who stepped down from his position just over one month ago. He joins US Senator Mike Braun, Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch, businessman Eric Doden, and former Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill in the race. Chambers is expected to be well-funded and to attract votes from the moderate wing of the party, but in a race with this many well-known and well-funded candidates, the winning margin will likely be extremely thin. In the race for US Senate, the Indiana Republican Party took the step of formally endorsing US Representative Jim Banks for the position at their annual state party dinner in August. He is being challenged for the GOP nomination by political novice John Rust, a wealthy egg farmer from southern Indiana, though there are some questions as to whether Rust is eligible for the Republican ballot because he did not vote in the last two Republican primaries. The Democratic slate of statewide candidates remains unchanged, with former Republican Superintendent of Public Instruction Jennifer McCormick running for Governor and former Representative Marc Carmichael and Indianapolis City-County Councilor Keith Potts both running for US Senate.

4. Comptroller Tera Klutz Leaving Office

Indiana's Auditor of State and first designated Indiana State Comptroller Tera Klutz is leaving the office after 20 years of public sector service. She has served in her current position for 7 years after being appointed by Governor Holcomb in 2017 and winning election to the office in 2018 and 2022. One of Comptroller Klutz's big initiatives while in office was creating the Internal Controls Department aimed at reducing fraud. Governor Holcomb will work to find a new appointee for the position as Comptroller Klutz continues in her role through November 30.

5. New Legislators

Since the 2023 session gaveled to a close this spring, the body has seen an unusually high number of departures of members outside of their elected terms. When a legislator steps down from their seat outside of the election cycle, a caucus of precinct committeepersons is convened to elect the new representative. Rep. Ann Vermilion (R-Marion) announced her retirement right after session ended, and she was replaced by social worker and Indiana Wesleyan professor Lori Goss-Reaves. Rep. Randy Frye (R-Greensburg) was succeeded after his departure by attorney and former legislative staffer J. Alex Zimmerman, and Guilford business owner Randy Maxwell was chosen to replace retiring Sen. Chip Perfect (R-Lawrenceburg). Last month, Sen. Jon Ford (R-Terre Haute) announced that he was resigning, and the caucus to select his replacement has been scheduled for October 7. Most recently, long-time State Representative Jerry Torr (R-Carmel) announced that he will not run for re-election next year, though he will continue to serve in the legislature for the duration of his term.

In addition to these retirements, we send our sincere condolences to the family of State Senator Jack Sandlin (R-Indianapolis), who passed away unexpectedly on September 20, 2023.

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