



# Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana

## Legislative Action Guiding Principles

- Legislative actions undertaken by the Commission on Improving the Status of Children in Indiana (Commission) must focus on issues connected to the organizational Mission, Vision, overarching principles, or Strategic Plan goals and the core Commission principle of fostering cooperation across branches of government and state agencies.
- Legislative actions are communications with legislators regarding legislation currently under consideration by the Indiana General Assembly. This may include written correspondence with legislators, meetings with legislators, and providing verbal or written testimony to a legislative committee.
- Legislative actions with a potential state agency impact should only take place following consultation with the state agencies impacted.
- Legislative actions related to the work of a Commission committee or subcommittee should only take place following consultation with that committee or subcommittee.
- Legislative actions representing the Commission are to be performed by the Commission's Executive Director or staff of the Commission as delegated by the Executive Director.
- Any testimony will note the Commission support or concern regarding the issue addressed by the legislation while providing factual, impartial education and information on the issue.
- For purposes of identifying the category of testimony to be provided on legislation, "neutral" should be indicated unless the entirety of the legislation falls under "support" as determined through Commission vetting.
- Issues considered for legislative action should go through one of the following processes:
  - (1) Vetting and unanimous approval by the Commission Executive Committee with all three branches of state government and bipartisan representation present, followed by vetting and approval by the full Commission.
  - (2) When timing does not allow for the process above and when the Executive Director identifies that clear alignment with the mission, vision, overarching principals, and/or Strategic Plan goals exists, vetting and unanimous approval by the Commission's Executive Committee with three branch and bipartisan representation may substitute until vetting by the full Commission is possible. Actions will be limited to education and information on specific issues within the legislation, with "neutral" being the only allowed category for testimony.

**Additional Notes and Considerations:**

- Monitoring and reporting to the Commission, its committees, or subcommittees on legislation with a potential impact on children is not considered a legislative action but may be a tool for identifying issues for potential action.
- Informing legislators about the Commission, its activities, and ways that the Commission can act as a resource is not considered legislative action, but rather legislative engagement covered by the Commission's Legislative Engagement Agenda.
- Creation of the Legislative Engagement Agenda should involve setting benchmarks such as speaking to committees, caucuses and new legislators and other opportunities to interface with legislators regarding the work of the Commission.
- It is recommended that potential legislative actions be reviewed at the December and February Commission meetings to prepare before the commencement of the legislative session and to plan for final legislative actions prior to sine die, respectively. Recommended timing for approving the Legislative Engagement Agenda is at the December meeting of the Commission.