

KEY BILLS I SUPPORTED DURING THE 2011 SESSION

✓ **PARENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY:** Parents play vital roles in shaping children's ability to succeed in school and have regular attendance. Lawmakers approved allowing local school superintendents to address habitual truancy by reporting it first to the student's parents and then possibly to the Indiana Department of Child Services or local juvenile court.



✓ **ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION:** Indiana legislators sent a clear message on illegal immigration with SEA 590, which requires all state agencies and local governmental units to confirm citizenship of new hires through the federal E-Verify system. The law denies certain tax deductions to business owners who knowingly hire illegal immigrants and tasks the Indiana Office of Management and Budget to calculate the cost of illegal immigration to Indiana taxpayers.

✓ **UNEMPLOYMENT FUNDS:** SEA 86 protects scarce unemployment insurance funds by suspending benefits for individuals failing to take or pass drug tests and thus making themselves ineligible for employment. The proposal also allows Indiana residents to take advantage of extended federal benefits, providing up to 13 additional weeks of help for those who are ready to work, yet still out of work.



✓ **PROTECTING THE UNBORN:** Legislators passed a measure to reduce the number of abortions and prohibit Hoosier tax dollars from funding abortion providers. This law also calls for physicians to inform pregnant women considering abortions that fetuses might feel pain and requires patients to view fetal ultrasound imaging, unless they decline in writing.

✓ **VOTING CENTERS:** Counties statewide can now choose to replace traditional precinct polling sites with more centralized voting locations. Tested in the 2008 election cycle, results showed centralized voting locations placed in high-traffic areas, like grocery stores, provide convenience and can help reduce expenses for contracting, staffing and equipping polling sites.



✓ **FIREARM RIGHTS:** SEA 292 will help align local firearms restrictions across Indiana with those already set by state law. Inconsistencies between local ordinances and state code create a confusing patchwork of regulations and put the rights of licensed firearm-carrying Hoosiers at risk. This is a huge step for the 250,000 law-abiding Hoosiers who hold firearms licenses.



STATE SENATOR GREG WALKER

SERVING SENATE DISTRICT 41

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STATE SENATOR GREG WALKER

Dear Friends,

Indiana's Constitution specifically charges the Indiana General Assembly with drawing new legislative and congressional districts after each national census, so representation is apportioned fairly.

Republican senators for years have advocated objective redistricting guidelines that would – whenever practical – preserve traditional neighborhoods and local communities of interest; protect minority voting rights; create simply shaped, compact districts; and respect county, township and precinct lines. We stood by these principles during this session's important redistricting process.

Nine public field hearings were hosted across the state to seek input from local leaders, community groups and private citizens. Ours was the most open Indiana redistricting process in memory. In the end, the new legislative and

congressional maps were accepted with bipartisan Senate votes.

Shifting populations and applying fair guidelines resulted in many district boundaries changing – for the benefit of constituents, not politicians. For some of us lawmakers, it will mean reaching out to new neighborhoods and learning how to effectively represent the wants and needs of those areas at the Statehouse.

Whether you are a new acquaintance or a familiar friend, I want you to know I am just a phone call, mouse click or mailbox away.

Sincerely yours,

Greg Walker
State Senator



MAP OF NEW
SENATE DISTRICT 41



SEN. GREG WALKER

SERVING SENATE DISTRICT 41 TAXPAYERS



2011 Focus: Low-Tax, Pro-Job Policies

Senate Republicans were on the job the entire 2011 legislative session, preserving and building on Indiana's low-tax, pro-growth state policies.

While government doesn't effectively create jobs, government policies can encourage private-sector investment. Lawmakers this year remained committed to helping Indiana recover faster and better by keeping our state policies employer-friendly.

Passing a balanced budget, avoiding job-killing tax hikes and maintaining prudent reserves remained top priorities for Senate lawmakers. With the national recession reducing state revenues to 2005 levels, legislators insisted on tight spending limits, just as Hoosier families, farmers and employers do every day. We prioritized education and essential services, while protecting Indiana taxpayers.

Hoosiers have historically been generous in funding needs of K-12 education, but today demand the best education possible for those taxpayer funds. About \$150 million in additional, statewide school funding was approved, including monies for full-day kindergarten and rewards for outstanding teachers. Beyond controlling government spending and providing for a well-educated workforce, Senate Republicans of-

fered several job-related proposals to positively impact Indiana's economy for generations to come:

Attractive, Competitive Taxes: A Senate-initiated 2010 bipartisan study concluded the state's relatively high corporate tax rate could be hurting efforts to keep and attract employers and jobs they provide Hoosiers. Indiana's current rate is among the highest

"Buy Local": Gov. Mitch Daniels implemented the "Buy Indiana" program in 2005 to help revive the state's economy by promoting state purchases from Hoosier companies. Senators introduced and passed a measure this year to help revitalize hometown economies by encouraging local governments to reinvest through area vendors. "Buy Local" helps Indiana employers compete with larger, often out-of-state companies.

Young Entrepreneurs: Small businesses create six in 10 new jobs – most resulting from new business start-ups. Clearly, small businesses are key to economic recovery. This year, GOP senators advocated a "Young Entrepreneurs Program" to complement universities' business curricula by matching first-time employers with Indiana communities, so business plans can be better tailored and more Hoosiers can be put to work.

Foreign Markets: Senators pushed for a proposal ensuring Hoosier grain producers are at the forefront of foreign exports. Without it, Indiana had no certification process guaranteeing to world markets that our commercial feed manufacturers follow industry standards. Purdue University and Indiana Farm Bureau advised us on this proposal intended to help our rural economies and urban logistical hubs.



nationwide, giving our state higher combined federal and state corporate taxes than Germany or Japan. An adopted Senate plan will reduce our state rate, making Indiana more attractive and fostering private-sector job growth.

PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST



REWARDING EFFECTIVE TEACHERS, REFOCUSING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Indiana is blessed with many dedicated educators who drive student success. But unfortunately until now, teacher pay raises and layoffs were determined largely by seniority, not classroom effectiveness or academic growth.

That's why lawmakers this year supported requiring robust, locally designed and administered performance evaluations of teachers and principals based in-part on student learning. Comprehensive evaluations will help identify and reward great educators and provide valuable feedback for those needing improvement. Current teachers will not lose pay as a result of the new plan, but future compensation increases will be based on a teacher's effectiveness, instructional leadership positions, ability to meet the academic needs of students and experience.

Another new measure will return collective bargaining for teachers to its original intent – salaries and wage-related benefits. This restored approach removes bureaucratic underbrush from labor contracts and gives local school leaders freedom to run schools more efficiently and effectively. Topics like textbook selections, student discipline and class sizes must be discussed and may be detailed in other written school policies.



NEW HIGH-QUALITY OPTIONS FOR HOOSIER STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Indiana will for the first time allow qualifying families to use a portion of their child's state tuition support to help pay costs at participating non-governmental schools. "Choice Scholarships" will be available to families who meet prescribed income guidelines. Hoosiers below free- and reduced-lunch income levels will be eligible for 90 percent of state tuition support; Hoosiers with slightly higher incomes will be eligible for 50 percent tuition support. A maximum scholarship amount is set at \$4,500 for grades 1-8, with the only limit for upper grades being the school's tuition and fees. Lawmakers capped the number of "Choice Scholarships" at 7,500 for the 2011-12 school year and 15,000 for 2012-13.

A separate reform will help ensure students and parents have access to other high-quality options by expanding authorizers of charter public schools statewide. This law specifies that all charters are to be open to any students living in Indiana and requires random drawings be conducted at public meetings if applicants outnumber openings. The enrolled act also gives parents more power in determining whether struggling, traditional public schools should be converted into less-regulated public charter schools in hopes of making innovative improvements. To assure quality, charters will be held to rigorous accountability standards like other public schools. Indiana's virtual (online) charters will be granted more flexibility to function like bricks-and-mortar charters in terms of authorization, funding and accountability.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGHER ED, TECHNICAL TRAINING

Hoosier students who study diligently to complete high school requirements one year early will be eligible for new \$4,000 state-funded scholarships to attend Indiana colleges or technical schools. Students would be required to be enrolled at approved postsecondary education institutions within five months of graduating early from high school to receive the scholarships.

Lawmakers worked to preserve 100 percent college-tuition reimbursement for currently enrolled sons and daughters of deceased and disabled Indiana veterans. To ensure funds are available in the future for deserving children of those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, lawmakers reformed a few eligibility requirements. One change includes a provision to confirm an applicant's mother or father was a resident of Indiana at the time of enlistment or had been a resident of Indiana for at least five years prior to applying for these scholarship benefits.

Despite tough economic times, Indiana legislators also fully funded the state's popular 21st Century Scholarship program. Under the plan, low-income 7th and 8th grade students who stay out of trouble with the law, remain drug-free and perform well academically through high school graduation will continue to be eligible for these full college-tuition scholarships.

