



## NEWS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release:*  
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### **General Assembly approves Sipes legislation**

INDIANAPOLIS— The 2010 legislative session of the 116th General Assembly ended on March 13, with 115 bills sent to the governor for final action. State Senator Connie Sipes (D-New Albany) sponsored or authored a number of bills that gained approval by the legislature and are awaiting action by the governor or set to become law. These include:

#### **Floyd County Courts**

**Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 307**, authored by Sen. Sipes, redistributes the Floyd County Circuit Court's caseload for better court efficiency. The bill provides that in Floyd County, the Circuit Court would have exclusive jurisdiction over probate and trust matters, and proposes that the Floyd Circuit Court and Floyd Superior Court No. 3 have concurrent juvenile jurisdiction. SB 307 permits juvenile cases, which comprise 22 percent of the Circuit Court's workload, to be shared between the two courts. The bill was passed by a unanimous vote in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The bill is awaiting final consideration by the governor. If enacted, SEA 307 will become effective immediately.

#### **Establishment of the Office of Minority Health**

**SEA 387**, coauthored by Sen. Sipes, establishes the Office of Minority Health within the State Department of Health and places it into statute. The office currently exists within the ISDH and is funded with appropriations from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement Fund and federal grants. The bill was approved 48 to 2 in the Senate and 97 to 0 in the House. SEA 387 was signed into law by the governor on March 12 and takes effect July 1.

#### **High school athletics**

**House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1168**, sponsored by Sen. Sipes, requires the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) in collaboration with the Department of Education to study and prepare a report to the General Assembly by December 31, 2010 concerning the impact and the feasibility of allowing a high school student who attends a nonpublic nonaccredited school, a nonpublic school or a charter school that is not a member of an interscholastic athletic association to participate in high school athletics at a public high school that is a member of an interscholastic athletic association if the public high school is located within the legal settlement of the student. The bill was approved by a unanimous vote in both chambers and is awaiting final action by the governor. If signed into law, HEA 1168 will take effect July 1.

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### **Government ethics**

**HEA 1001**, cosponsored by Sen. Sipes, will bar legislators from entering a lobbyist position for a year after leaving office, require universities to report the tickets and gifts they provide to legislators, require more lobbyist disclosure of gifts by lowering the threshold for reporting a meal or gift from \$100 to \$50 for a single day, and bars the governor from raising campaign funds during the budget session of the legislature. HEA 1001 was approved unanimously in both chambers has been sent to the governor for final action. If approved, the new law will become effective January 1, 2011.

### **School fund flexibility; third grade reading remediation**

**HEA 1367**, cosponsored by Sen. Sipes, allows a school district to transfer up to five percent of the capital projects fund levy to its general fund. The bill also allows a school district to transfer up to 10 percent of the capital projects fund levy to its general fund with certain stipulations. The legislation is a result of action taken by the governor in early January when he imposed funding cuts of \$300 million on K-12 education as state tax collections continue to fall below expectations. Another provision requires the Department of Education to evaluate the cost of holding back 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students who cannot read and return to the legislature if any additional funding or re-allocation of school resources is needed to implement it. The bill was approved by a unanimous vote in both the Senate and the House. HEA 1367 is awaiting final consideration by the governor. If enacted, these provisions will become effective July 1.

For more information on Senator Sipes, her legislative agenda or other State Senate business call 1-800-382-9467 or visit [www.senatedemocrats.in.gov](http://www.senatedemocrats.in.gov).

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