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# Lifeline bill helps young adults learn from mistakes

By [Aurora Dreyling](#)

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Last month, the Indiana Statesman ran an article about the Indiana Lifeline Bill and its provisions. In the legislative process, however bills go through a series of amendment opportunities and this bill is no exception. The Lifeline Bill has since been amended, so I've got an update on it for you.

At this point, the SB 274 (as the Indiana Lifeline Bill is officially called) has passed both the House and the Senate. However, since the bill was amended in the House, it must return to the Senate (known as the house of origin) so that the amendment can either be accepted or rejected. If the author of the bill chooses not to accept the amendments in the House, a conference committee will be scheduled to resolve the differences between the version that passed the House and the version that passed the Senate. This would not likely happen until after bills have finished with the second chamber, so probably not until next month. If the Senate approves the changes made in the House, then the bill will go to the governor for his signature.

The current bill has some changes from the original bill; it's now slightly more than a page long. It's short, sweet and to the point: protecting underage drinkers whose health may be in danger. According to the updated bill, any person underage who wishes to be affected by this bill must either request emergency medical assistance for themselves or work with someone else to request emergency medical assistance. This means that if you drink underage and are in danger of alcohol poisoning, you can get emergency medical help and be subject to the other provisions of the bill, which I'll get to in a moment. This would also apply to underage drinkers who are not in danger of alcohol poisoning themselves, but are with a friend who is. They would be able to call for emergency services for their friend and fall under the provisions of the bill.

The provisions that would encourage students to contact emergency services involve immunity from criminal prosecution as an intoxicated person under age. However, the bill is very specific about how to qualify for this protection. Individuals must cooperate with emergency assistance as well as the police, which include providing their name and any other relevant information. If they are requesting help for their friend, they must remain at the scene until emergency assistance arrives. Additionally, if the police officer arrives at a party due to a noise complaint or something similar and underage drinkers are present, they cannot simply request emergency assistance to avoid the consequences.

Despite these qualifications, this bill is important for the safety of college students who drink illegally. After this bill passes, students will not have to fear criminal prosecution if their friend is in danger and they get emergency help to save their friend's life. Alcohol poisoning is a serious problem for students who do not drink responsibly, and giving students the ability to help their friends who over-consume without fear of repercussion. While obviously students should not be drinking underage or drinking to excess, it does happen and this is a great way to protect the lives of those students. Everyone makes mistakes and it is important to allow people the opportunity to learn from those mistakes and change their behavior.