



Mourdock seeks nationalized race



Gains Tea Party endorsement as the race shifts to money

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

GREENFIELD - Indiana Treasurer Richard Mourdock Saturday referenced Samuel Adams as a "burning ember" of the American Revolution and that because of the founders' foresight the revolution "comes back every two years. What genius is that?"

Murdock is seeking to nationalize his Republican primary showdown with U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar. In Mourdock's view, expressed at the Hoosiers for a Conservative Senate convention in a theater here and then at a rally on the mall of the Hancock County Courthouse, there is a "core of conservatives in the Senate" who need reinforcements. Thus, his insurgent candidacy.

Lugar, Mourdock told the crowd of about 300

people, has spent the last 50 years in public service and 35 in the U.S. Senate. "That is an amazing contribution," Mourdock said. "But when you've been in Washington that long, you become a victim of Potomac poison."

Murdock described spending under President Obama as "thievery" and reiterated his call against bipartisanship at a time when both Lugar and Sen. Evan Bayh have sought common ground across the aisles and ideologies in the Senate. Mourdock explained that, "We do not need bipartisanship. We need principle. It is bipartisanship that is taking us to the brink of bankruptcy." He likened it to the Democrats wanting to spend \$100 billion and Republicans countering with \$50 billion, "So they spend \$75 billion we don't have."

Seconds later, the Hancock Courthouse clock chimed twice for the hour, 10 strokes short of midnight.

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Fixing Social Security

By **JACK COLWELL**

SOUTH BEND - Nothing is seriously wrong with Social Security. The problem is with the politicians who won't fix what is wrong.

Relatively easy solutions now will become more painful, however, if delayed by continued political stalemate and scare tactics.

Democrats have used scare tactics in past elections, suggesting that Republicans want to destroy Social Security. Texas Gov. Rick Perry has of course given Democrats new ammunition for



"I think he is a terrific guy but I take him at his word that he is not going to run."

- Gov. Mitch Daniels, on New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie



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Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Jack E. Howey, editor
Beverly K. Phillips, associate editor

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☎ Call 317.627.6746

Contact HPI

Howey Politics Indiana
6255 N. Evanston Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46220
www.howeypolitics.com
bhowey2@gmail.com
☎ Howey's cell: 317.506.0883
☎ Washington: 703.248.0909
☎ Business Office: 317.627.6746

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that, calling Social Security a "failure" and "an illegal Ponzi scheme" that is possibly unconstitutional.

But most Republicans don't look on the program the way Perry does, as "something we have been forced to accept for more than 70 years." Republicans and Democrats alike who receive Social Security checks don't look on them as something they are "forced to accept."

While some in the GOP right wing who do regard Social Security as "socialism" and a part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal that should be repealed, most Republican candidates in recent years have talked of fixing, not abolishing, Social Security. And some of their suggestions have been for the relatively easy solutions that are needed. Some Democrats, not blameless in all this, have sought to portray any of the suggested changes as an attack on present and future check recipients.

Gov. Mitch Daniels said last week that the contentious exchanges between the GOP presidential candidates on the subject have not been helpful and statements could be "unnecessarily scaring people."

They are scaring people. Unnecessarily so, in seeking to link Social Security funding, which actually isn't in bad shape yet, with other deficit situations that are in terrible shape.

In a fact-filled rather than fear-filled Bloomberg New analysis, writer David J. Lynch says of all the scare tactics: "The air of crisis is striking, given that the program _ far from being broke _ can pay promised benefits for the next 25 years. After that, even without fixes such as higher payroll taxes or further increases in the retirement age, it could meet about three-quarters of its obligations through 2085, the latest report of the Social Security and Medicare Trustees shows."

Lack of funds for full payments in 2036 is calculated on projections of an increasing number of

retirees, with people living longer, and fewer workers to support them with payments into the program.

Despite the political scare tactics, the situation isn't as serious right now as it was back in 1983, when President Ronald Reagan and House Speaker Tip O'Neill worked together to provide the last needed restructuring.

Imagine that: A president of one party and a speaker of the other compromising for the good of the nation, providing Social Security soundness ever since.

The quicker some fixes are provided, the easier it will be.

There are all kinds of possibilities, some more popular than others. Not all will be needed if action comes before a crisis really does loom.

Lift the cap on income subject to Social Security taxes. Recommended by the bipartisan Simpson-Bowles Commission and an easy fix. The cap now is \$106,800. Raise the age of both early and standard retirement by a year to 63 and 68. Likely in some form to be part of the fix.

Eliminate the cost of living increases in benefits. Current recipients hate this. Increase the payroll tax for Social Security. A slight increase could keep the program solvent for 75 years.

Cut benefits. This is not popular, but just a little cut could go a long way for decades.

The plummeting of stock values weakens support for President George W. Bush's old "privatization" proposal. He wanted to let individuals invest some of their Social Security entitlement in private individual accounts. When a 401(k) became a 201(k) or less in the Great Recession, dangers of gambling retirement income on the whims of the stock market became apparent.

Also, setting up private accounts would siphon money from Social Security and certainly not strengthen it and extend ability to continue full payments. Social Security broke? No. Washington? ❖



Mourdock, from page 1

In the modern television age of Indiana politics, no sitting U.S. senator has seriously been challenged for the nomination, and the Bayhs, Hartkes, Lugas, Quayles and Coatses always maintained firm control of their parties.

Mourdock lashed out at U.S. Rep. Andre Carson and AFL-CIO leader James Hoffa for characterizing the Tea Party as a lynch mob and calling the debt ceiling battle a "downgrade," adding, "There was no Tea Party downgrade in August. But there will be in May."

With Mourdock's Tea Party endorsement on a 96-1 vote (yes, there was one vote for Lugar), he has finally consolidated his position, though the movement is hardly unified.

WISH-TV reported Mourdock took the stage minutes before the straw vote, bringing the delegates to their feet for an ovation when he said that it's time for the nation's tax laws to be rewritten. "We must change the tax code," he told the gathering. "We must get the boot of government off the necks of small businesses!"

While Lugar is advocating adopting the Fair Tax, Hoosiers for a Conservative Senate and other Tea Party groups have criticized Lugar for his support for the DREAM Act, which would help some illegal immigrants who came to the U.S. as children obtain citizenship, and his votes in favor of President Barack Obama's Supreme Court nominations." Co-chair Greg Fettig said Tea Party supporters also think Lugar has spent far too much time in the Senate and that during that time he's drifted to the left on the political spectrum. "The nation has a problem with not only a budget deficit, a severe one, but also a massive debt problem. He's been there for 36 years, but he hasn't done much to combat that, so it's time for somebody else," Fettig said.

Fettig told the rally that "government goes to the people who show up." As for talk from the Lugar campaign about the lack of unity among the Tea Party tribes, Fettig said, "Some say the Tea Party has many flavors. No it doesn't. It has one flavor."

The Hamilton County and Indianapolis tribes

held a separate event in Noblesville a few hours later and Mourdock did not attend, even though it began about an hour after Mourdock spoke in Greenfield. The Mourdock campaign had a booth at that event and the Lugar campaign had personnel at the event in Noblesville, but not at Greenfield. Speakers in Noblesville included State Sen. Mike Delph, WIBC talk show host Greg Garrison, and former congressman David McIntosh.



Treasurer Richard Mourdock with Tea Party activist Monica Boyer at the Hoosiers for a Conservative Senate rally in Greenfield on Saturday. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Delph has been a popular fixture on the Tea Party circuit. Multiple sources tell HPI that Delph has never forgiven Mourdock for the 2002 Republican Convention floor fight when Mourdock released a flier saying that Delph had dropped out of the secretary of state battle and was endorsing him. The flier ultimately doomed Mourdock's own candidacy, allowing Todd Rokita to win the nomination. One source told HPI that Mourdock appears to have a mindset where he believes that because he is an ardent conservative his ideology will allow him to prevail.

Delph introduced Friends of Dick Lugar director David Willkie, who told HPI he was politely received by the 150 people who attended the event.

Delph told HPI earlier this

month he did not expect to make a Senate primary endorsement.

There were rumors at HPI's deadline that Mourdock was expecting to receive a national Tea Party endorsement, possible from Dick Armey's FreedomWorks.

"They tell us Richard Lugar has \$3 million," said Monica Boyer, a Tea Party activist from Kosciusko County. "His millions will pale in comparison to boots on the ground. Our victory in 2010 was only a down payment. We should finish the job. Michele Bachmann has said the second step is voting in a conservative Senate. Can you hear that, Mr. Lugar?"

To underscore the point, a dump truck festooned with a "life and liberty" banner pulled up beside the rally and honked its horn as the throng chanted, "Dump Lugar, dump Lugar."



But the dilemmas facing Mourdock are money and conventional wisdom.

Gov. Mitch Daniels was asked about the race in Washington by The Hill newspaper and he called Lugar a "mentor" and an "extraordinary public servant." Daniels added, "I'm not sure he's in that much trouble. My sense is he's likely to win, he's working hard, and he's an icon in our state."

Fueling conventional wisdom is Mourdock's lackluster fundraising and the Lugar political machine that has geared up at a ferocious pace. With a critical FEC reporting deadline on Friday, the Mourdock campaign announced a "money bomb" strategy to raise \$50,000 from small donors this week. There is also a Dick Morris fundraiser in Evansville Thursday on Mourdock's 60th birthday. In a mayoral race or one in a congressional district, boots on the ground can be a critical component. But in a U.S. Senate race, money and gross rating points are the prevailing forces and Lugar maintains a \$3 million advantage.

Thus, Mourdock's best hope is to draw the conservative 527 groups into the fray and Lugar sticks out as one of the few remaining GOP primary targets even if Mourdock's campaign has created considerable doubt about them making such an investment.

Thus there was the endorsement from unsuccessful Nevada Tea Party candidate Sharron Angle, who lost a race against Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid that many observers felt a Republican should have won. Angle, too, ran a bad campaign, at one point opting for an airplane skywriting strategy (no, not making that up). She is seen in conventional quarters as an ideological kook who, along with Delaware's Christine ("I'm not a witch") O'Donnell cost the GOP a Senate majority. Angle is certainly not a trump card to use to attract independent voters.

But she raised \$14 million in the third quarter of 2010 and Mourdock can hope that some of that imperfect magic rubs off on his campaign.

"Guts – that's what my friend Richard Mourdock has in spades for putting it all on the line to primary



Indiana Senator Dick Lugar (R – In Name Only)," Angle wrote to supporters of her Our Voice PAC on Friday morning. "Senator Lugar is a 35-year career politician who represents dark red Indiana, but who recently told the Tea Party to 'get real.'" Angle then laid out Lugar's "liberal" voting record, pointing out his support for the auto and bank bailouts, President Obama's Supreme Court nominees and the DREAM

Act. "The 2012 election will only transform America if we elect constitutional conservatives, she said. "That's why I am endorsing Indiana Treasurer Richard Mourdock for U.S. Senate, and I urge you to consider backing him financially."

Mourdock and Hoosiers for a Conservative Senate - it's not clear if the group is a PAC or a 527, and it was unclear who paid for Saturday's events in Greenfield - launched a "money bomb" and said it would report in "real time" how much it had raised. With a little over two and a half days to go before Friday's deadline, the Mourdock website revealed it had raised about \$26,000.

Mourdock loves his history lessons, and on Saturday he talked of Winston Churchill praising the Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain, quoting, "Never, ever, ever give up."

"That's what this is about," Mourdock said. "His words rallied them."

An elderly Tea Party woman watched Mourdock raptly. "He is soooo good," she said quietly as those in the rally raised their flags and Mourdock signs.

"Every single seat in the Senate matters," Mourdock said. "There's a hard core group of conservatives in the Senate who need more conservatives."

Mourdock plays well to the true believers and the evangelical right that constitutes between 25 and 30 percent of the Indiana GOP.

The key to his success is reaching out to the other 70 percent of the Republican Hoosier universe as well as the independent voters the Lugar campaign will entice into next May's primary.

The 3rd quarter FEC reports that will be made public in mid-October will be critical to the Mourdock insurgency. ❖



Hoosier Tea Party members from 55 different groups rallied at the Hancock County Courthouse. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



Romney breezes into Indy as Daniels conspires with Gov. Christie

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Unless you were a big donor, Mitt Romney was a fleeting wisp in Indianapolis on Friday. He breezed in for a 5:15 speech at the JW Marriott attended by about 300 people, was out of the room 30 minutes later after a 20-minute talk and 10 minutes of Q&A from everyone's favorite Republican reporter, Eric Holcomb.

But the room pulsed with an array of subplots as Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels huddled with his New Jersey counterpart – Chris Christie – while hinting all week that he was “underwhelmed” by the GOP field, suggested it wasn’t too late for someone more plausible to get in, and then openly cavorted with the only Republican who has said “No, no, no” to questions about pursuing the nomination more than himself. This all came after Romney “won” a Republican debate in Florida the night before while Texas Gov. Rick Perry huffed and blinked and was at a loss for words, fueling speculation that he was only the August Flavor of the Month and was ready to melt after brazenly touching that third rail thingy.

After Daniels’ stunning exit from the race he never entered in May, there was always that hint that the governor wasn’t going to be limited to the “coulda, woulda” story line that broke the hearts of his ardent Hoosier supporters. Now we are witnessing Mitch as the kingmaker. At Ryder University, the rotund Christie and the chip shot Hoosier stood in contrast with each other’s physicality, but working off the same deep mindset, his Daily Show with Jon Stewart a simple mental aberration after a wonked out schedule.

Asked about a Christie candidacy, Daniels said he is “not taking ‘no,’ I’m taking ‘not yet’” in regard to Christie’s phantom presidential aspirations.

NJ.com reported that at a Ryder University with Christie, Daniels made no bones about what he thinks about Christie. “America loves your governor,” Daniels said.

And the website reported: Both men expressed disappointment with the current slate of Republican presidential candidates. Daniels said he’s worried that Republican candidates will simply try to run as the anti-President Barack Obama instead of staking out their own positions. Christie expressed concern the Republican candidates were not talking about the same topics he and Daniels were, like overhauling public employee benefits and changing entitlements. Christie said he thinks that is why people have frequently asked he and Daniels to run.

Daniels makes note of Christie in his book “Keeping the Republic” in the “Taking on the Status Quo” chapter. “In 2009, New Jersey elected as governor a tough-minded former prosecutor in Chris Christie,” Daniels writes. Christie “has drawn the national spotlight and wide applause for refusing to sugar coat his state’s fiscal mess. We will know in a few years whether he is able to alter the trajectory of his state.” He notes that Christie ended the gravy train for



Mitt Romney addresses a group of Indiana Republicans Friday at the same time that Gov. Daniels appeared to be courting New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie to enter the race. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Garden State employees “who didn’t pay a dime” for their health insurance. And there was Christie’s “heroic” effort to end collective bargaining, just as Daniels did in 2005.

In an interview with Politico last week, the Hoosier said there was time for another entrant. “As Rick Perry proved, even August wasn’t too late,” Daniels said while insisting to Politico he wasn’t recruiting anyone, but plainly thinks highly of Christie. “He’s different, right?” Daniels said.

Tuesday night at the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, at the invitation of former First Lady Nancy Reagan, Christie was “implored” to get into the race. The audience rose to applause and Christie, in an emotional moment,



responded: "I feel the passion with which you say it, and it touches me." The governor said he was listening to those urging him to run, adding that he was taking it in and "feeling it too." But he continued, "by the same token, that heartfelt message you gave me is also not a reason for me to do it. That reason has to reside inside me. That's what I've said all along. I know without ever having met President Reagan that he must've felt deeply in his heart that he was called to that moment to lead our country. And so my answer to you is just this, I thank you for what you're saying."

Christie's brother told the media he didn't think the governor would run. But Christie - who, as the questioner noted, has a reputation for straight talk - instead deflected the question with humor, pointing to a POLITICO montage of his adamant and repeated denials. "They put a minute and 53 seconds of my answers strung back-to-back to back together on the question of my running for the presidency," Christie said. "Those are the answers," he said. But he didn't issue a new denial up on stage as he listened to the crowd's pleas that he get into the race.

Daniels told WTHR-TV's Kevin Rader Wednesday night, "I think he is a terrific guy but I take him at his word that he is not going to run. One day I hope we will see him do this but I accept it will not be in 2012."

While Herman Cain and Jon Huntsman beat a path to Daniels' office after appearing at Holcomb's auditions, Romney found no governor to woo, though that didn't keep him from sending valentines via his Hoosier supporters. "Where's Mitch in your government?" one Hoosier asked at the Romney event. "Wherever he'd like to be," answered Romney. "Mitch is an extraordinarily capable guy."

While that conjured images of a Romney-Daniels ticket (much more plausible than that Michele & Mitch ticket or the Palin-Daniels version), Daniels found himself peppered by DC reporters about the veepstakes, much the same way the Statehouse scribes did for months. "I am not answering any more questions about" vice president, Daniels said. "There is no answer, right?" There is that Gen. Sherman mode. Told that one Indianapolis Star reporter wanted to know why he wouldn't say no, Daniels said, "Because I want to drive her crazy. And apparently this does."

As the governor traipses the nation and state push-

ing his new book, he leaves us only in speculation mode once again while driving Mary Beth Schneider crazy. Life is not fair.

As for Romney, he raised somewhere in the \$140,000 range, close to the \$150,000 he gleaned from a soiree at Dan Dumezich's home in Schererville earlier this summer. So presidential timber is coming in, making a few comments, raising big bucks while not saying much. Herman Cain and Huntsman took questions from the media. Romney did not, insisting that the jackal press be kept penned away in the back of the ballroom, left to mutter and joke among themselves.

A CNN/ORC International Poll had Romney trailing Texas Gov. Rick Perry 28-21%, coming after Perry's bad debate performances last week. Newt Gingrich had 10%.

Romney reminded the wide but thin pool of supporters that President Obama once said, "If I can't get the economy turned around in three years, I'm looking at a one-term proposition."

To which the one-term Massachusetts

governor said, "Well, I'm here to collect."

"He came in with the economy going down and instead of focusing his energy on the economy, he delegated that to Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid," Romney said. "Now, three years later, he's trying to make up for it, flailing around looking for answers. He does not know how to fix this economy. That's why he's going to be gone. Today you have 25 million Americans that are out of work. This president has failed, and it's time to get a president in office who knows how to create jobs."

Romney cited "uncertainty" in the business world, the Obamacare reforms, new banking regulations and the failed Cap-and-Trade proposals and added, "Each one of these things caused our economy to step back at a time it needs to pull forward."

Romney was asked by Chairman Holcomb about his reputation as a turnaround artist, such as the Salt Lake City Olympics revival. Romney said he was looking for 24,000 volunteers to work free for 17 days without tickets to any of the venues. He put out an appeal and 47,000 people showed up. Romney said the keys to turning things around are "focus," putting "a great team in place" and you "count on good people coming together."

Romney's problem is that at the very time he was talking, good people were coming together in New Jersey.



Govs. Chris Christie and Mitch Daniels at Ryder University last week in New Jersey. (Star-Ledger Photo)



Grubb's retirement signals continued House Democrat exodus

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

COVINGTON - State Rep. F. Dale Grubb, who has served in the General Assembly since 1988, announced Wednesday that he will not seek reelection in 2012 signaling a continued exodus of veteran House Democrats.

"I am thankful I had the opportunity to serve and help many of the people of the 42nd District and all Hoosiers," he said.



The House Democratic old guard is beginning to fade away as Ways & Means Chairman Bill Crawford will also not seek reelection, as did Dennis Avery in 2010. In 2010, long-time Democrats Bob Bischoff, Russ Stilwell, Paul Robertson,

Nancy Michael and Ron Herrell were defeated for reelection, Trent Van Haaften lost a Congressional race and Vern Tincher retired. State Rep. Bill Cochran was defeated for reelection in 2008.

In addition to those 10 Democrats, State Reps. Dennis Tyler and Craig Fry are running for mayor in Muncie and Mishawaka this November. Tyler is heavily favored to defeat Muncie Mayor Sharon McShurley.

Grubb's distinguished tenure in the House has been marked by his leadership in forging bipartisan consensus on many subjects. Fellow lawmakers often said his soft-spoken, unassuming manner helped settle many disputes. "Most of the issues I have worked on began as concerns or ideas brought to me by the people who live in the 42nd District," Grubb said.

Grubb has gained statewide recognition for a number of issues, especially the passage of legislation that has led to greater participation in organ donation programs. "Expanding the organ donor programs has given me the greatest satisfaction," Grubb said. "By encouraging more people to choose to

be an organ donor, as designated on their driver's licenses, we have helped to save the lives of many Hoosiers."

Other accomplishments worthy of note from Grubb's service include bills on renewable energy expansion and legislation that created an oversight board to handle student/parent appeals before the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA). He also has authored numerous bills benefiting Hoosier veterans and agriculture.

Among the many paying tribute to Grubb was State Rep. Bill Friend (R-Macy), who has worked with Dale on many issues impacting rural Indiana. "Dale is known for working regardless of politics to help all Hoosiers, and his efforts are a model for others to follow," Friend said. "Dale's decision is a loss for the legislative process. His constituents should be very proud of his accomplishments."

Indianapolis Mayoral: Kennedy poll

Indianapolis Democratic mayoral nominee Melina Kennedy revealed an internal poll showing her leading Mayor Greg Ballard 40-38% with 21 percent undecided (Howey Politics Indiana).

Just after Kennedy released the poll, Ballard began airing the first negative ad of his career, targeting Kennedy over her support for a 2005 income tax hike.

Earlier this month, the Ballard campaign said it had an internal poll showing the mayor with a sizeable, double-digit lead and an approval rating in the 70th percentile.

Adding to the confusion is the lack of independent media polling in the Indianapolis race, as well as close races in Fort Wayne and Evansville.

Over the evenings of September 20-21, the Marion County Democratic Party conducted a survey of 403 likely voters in Marion County. The research was conducted by Jim Riggs, Ph.D., of Riggs Research Services, a locally-based professional public opinion polling firm.

Ballard and Kennedy stayed on message Tuesday in their second of six debates (Berman, WIBC). In a mostly low-key debate at the downtown Rotary Club, Ballard touted his record of delivering a balanced budget even as property and income taxes declined. Kennedy renewed her call for preschool programs, using \$150 million from Ballard's sale of the water utility: She criticized Ballard for not lobbying legislators against funding cuts for the Indianapolis Public Schools. Ballard jabbed Kennedy for lying low on the state takeover of



State Rep. Dale Grubb continues the exodus of longtime House Democrats. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



four IPS schools, which he calls part of "the most important education reforms in our state's history." Ballard backed the takeovers, while successfully lobbying legislators to allow him to seek city control of those schools. The candidates largely focused on themselves and not their opponents, though Kennedy criticized a rise in assaults, including on the Monon Trail, as evidence crime has gotten worse. Ballard notes homicides have gone steadily down in his four years in office, and says Kennedy is cherry-picking numbers. Ballard waited till his closing statement to blast Kennedy's old boss, former Mayor Bart Peterson, for taking a 15-year loan to balance the city budget. He pledged that's something he'll never do. Kennedy suggested Ballard is too quick to point to problems he inherited, while not mentioning he also inherited a top-level bond rating and a charter school program -- items he now lists among his accomplishments. The former deputy mayor says she'd join about 600 members of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, which has been lobbying for federal and local limits on gun sales and where weapons can be carried. Six Indiana mayors, all Democrats, have signed on already. The candidates agreed on a need for a regional referendum on a mass transit plan, though Kennedy tweaked Ballard for not settling on a plan yet. Ballard says draft plans have been modified twice following public input, and he expects to release a final plan soon. The candidates previously met September 1 at the Chamber of Commerce "HobNob" forum. They'll debate again next Wednesday at Butler's Clowes Hall. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

Evansville Mayoral: Split endorsements

Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel sent a fundraising letter on behalf of Indiana Democrats: "Six weeks from today, we'll take our first step toward victory in 2012 when voters get the chance to elect mayors, city and town council members and dozens of other local offices across Indiana. These campaigns often aren't glamorous, and I know firsthand how difficult the jobs are going to be now that Gov. Mitch Daniels has "balanced" his budget on the backs of local governments and schools. But these municipal elections are critical: Democrats need to win so we can build a strong foundation for next year's statewide and Congressional races."

Weinzapfel, however, has yet to endorse Democrat nominee Rick Davis and multiple sources tell HPI he is unlikely to do so after Davis announced his candidacy last fall before the mayor had made a decision on whether to run for governor or a third term.

Democratic sources also tell HPI that the Indiana Democratic Party has yet to give the Davis campaign any help.

The Evansville Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) endorsed Republican Lloyd Winnecke. "I am pleased to earn the endorsement and grateful to the FOP and the officers

for their support," said Winnecke. "I am committed to the men and women who put their lives on the line each day to protect the residents of Evansville. This is about upholding public safety. "In early August we published a detailed position paper outlining our vision and goals for public safety in Evansville," said Winnecke. "Few issues impact the quality of life more than public safety and security." Winnecke was the first candidate to outline a plan to combat meth. "Our administration will focus on giving law enforcement the tools and training it needs to combat meth, while also educating property owners and youth about how to spot and report meth labs," said Winnecke. "We appreciate the FOP's endorsement of our plan to combat this epidemic and uphold public safety."

On Sept. 15, the Evansville Professional Firefighters chose Democrat Rick Davis (Sarkissian, Evansville Courier & Press). Leaders from both groups said their choices for mayor and City Council positions were nonpartisan and selected for their belief in preserving public safety. Mike Dickinson, co-chair of the Professional Firefighters political action committee said the mayor has an impact on several facets of their careers. "Obviously whoever runs the city is important to us because they're going to be the decision makers," Dickinson said. "They're dealing with our jobs, our equipment, our contracts and our fire stations." FOP President D.J. Thompson said another issue was how a candidate would help the city grow. With the economic downturn tightening the purse strings of government coffers, the choice has become even more important, Thompson said. "After spending almost two years on our contract we realize we need candidates who are going to grow the city," he said. "If the city doesn't grow, it doesn't matter how well we do or who we endorse." Like other candidates who also won endorsements, Davis said he was humbled and stressed the importance of public safety in the community. "Public safety is the number one role of government, period, end of story," Davis said. "To have an organization like Professional Firefighters Local 357 endorse me means the world, and I am truly honored and humbled to have their support." Davis also said he felt his opposition to right to work legislation also was key. Winnecke said his efforts to reach out to law enforcement on a personal level helped convey his commitment. "It's an endorsement I think every officeholder covets," Winnecke said. "People know the great sacrifice the men and women of law enforcement put forth every day. "I will be an advocate for not only them but the entire community." **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

Fort Wayne Mayoral: Berry enters fray

State Auditor Tim Berry said Wednesday the City of Fort Wayne is more than a half-a-billion dollars in debt. With the recent controversy, Auditor Berry reviewed the city's financial reports to check the long-term debt numbers.



The reelection campaign of Mayor Tom Henry had put out a statement earlier this week charging that Hughes and Berry need to "check their facts."

"Fort Wayne deserves a mayor who puts taxpayers first. Fort Wayne needs Paula Hughes," Berry said. "After reviewing the City of Fort Wayne finances, I agree with numbers published in 2010 City of Fort Wayne Comprehensive Annual Finance Report (CAFR) that were certified by Tom Henry, Pat Roller, and the State Board of Accounts. City debt now exceeds half-a-billion dollars, a 25% increase since Mayor Henry took office." The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has stringent guidelines to ensure consistency and transparency in financial reporting. "The Henry administration correctly reported their debt but now they want to change the rules to make the numbers look better for them," Berry said. "In this campaign and leading the city, we need leaders who play by the rules and are honest with the voters." "Paula Hughes has a record of putting taxpayers first," Berry said. "She voted to reduce the 2007 property tax levy, voted against Tom Henry's push to increase the wheel tax, and even proposed a direct property tax rebate as President of County Council in 2010."

David Bergstein of the Henry campaign said in a statement Wednesday, "Hughes has consistently issued inaccurate and misleading statements about Fort Wayne's city debt. It's important that candidates and public officials are held accountable and answer questions honestly, and here are some basic questions Berry should answer:

1. The Journal Gazette noted that Fort Wayne has a lower per capita debt than the state. If Fort Wayne is in such bad shape, is the state in worse shape?

2. State law (5-10.3-11-4.7) explicitly states the state is responsible for \$88 million in public safety pensions. If the state is required to pay for this, how is it a city liability?

3. State law (36-9-23-18) says that the utility bonds "are not a corporate indebtedness of the municipality." In other words, utility debt is not city debt. Do you disagree with state law?

4. Is there ever a time you think bonding is good?

Bergstein also had questions for Hughes:

1. You've admitted to the Journal Gazette that public safety pensions aren't a city debt. Why do

you claim they are in your television ad?

2. Beyond \$30k of your potential salary, can you explain exactly what you'd cut from the city's budget?

3. You were appointed to the board tasked to deal with city utilities new federal mandate. You never publicly disagreed with the conclusions of this board. You told the Journal Gazette that you see no current alternative to bonding for sewer upgrades. How can you complain about utilities debt when you haven't ever offered an alternative?

Horse Race Status: Tossup

Columbus Mayoral: Brown irks Scalf

A comment by Republican Kristen Brown that ethics reform is needed in city government prompted Democrat Priscilla Scalf to ask if she was being accused of accepting bribes, during a mayoral forum at YES Cinema (Columbus Republic). More than 100 people attended the Leadership Bartholomew County event Monday to hear each candidate make a case for why she would be the best choice to lead Columbus for the next four years. The candidates answered questions about their goals for Columbus, how they would set priorities for their administrations and how they could attract the brightest young people to become tomorrow's leaders. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Brown

Terre Haute Mayoral: Nation's issue

Last week our analysis was that Democrat Fred Nation had yet to hang an issue on Republican Mayor Duke Bennett. This week, Nation called for an Indiana State Police investigation into the Terre Haute Fire Department, long a hotbed of political unrest in city politics.

According to the Terre Haute Tribune-Star, Nation also accused Bennett of trying to ignore what Nation sees as long-standing problems within the city fire department.

"Today I am asking Mayor Duke Bennett to request the Superintendent of State Police to do an expedited investigation of the complaints many of us have heard for months from the firefighters union and members of the department who are concerned about the fire department's reputation and its operation," Nation said in a press conference outside City Hall. Bennett, however, disagreed that ISP would investigate if asked, because, he said, no criminal allegations exist.



Democrat Fred Nation (left) and Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett (right) debate Tuesday night. (Terre Haute Tribune-Star)



"Everything is purely accusations," Bennett told the media who gathered inside his city hall office after Nation's press conference. "If he's got this proof, we'd love to see it," Bennett said of Nation's claims of impropriety. "It's political grandstanding."

If the first debate is any clue, the 2011 mayoral campaign in Terre Haute will not be boring (Foulkes, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). Bennett and Nation squared off in a 90-minute debate Tuesday night in the Ohio Building in front of members of the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce. The pace of the debate was rapid with both candidates in the Nov. 8 election showing a strong command of facts during an often passionate dialogue. Nation spent much of the evening on the offensive, accusing Bennett of "bureaucratic talk," a lack of leadership, delaying the Margaret Avenue project and paying too much money to outside attorneys and auditors for city-related work. "I don't see that passion for growth evident in the current administration," Nation said in a five-minute opening statement. Bennett, meanwhile, stressed his desire to run the city "from a business perspective," nailing down funding sources before starting projects and noted the large decline in city revenues he has managed in the past three years. He also said there are several new initiatives in the works, such as the Rural Health Innovation Collaborative, a railroad relocation project and a parks department master plan. "We have to live within our means," Bennett said in his opening comments. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Bennett

New Albany Mayoral: Bridge an issue

The four candidates for New Albany mayor in the general election squared off in a debate Thursday night at Scribner Middle School that touched on issues that included city finances, economic development and the problems caused by the closed Sherman Minton Bridge (Louisville Courier-Journal). The question of the biggest issue facing the city went first to Democrat Jeff Gahan, the city council president. "The biggest issue right now is our revenue is ... what we don't like it to be," Gahan said, adding that there is no quick fix for the problem. "We're going to have to look at every dollar we spend ... over the next few years," he said. Libertarian Tom Keister called the closure of the Sherman Minton on Interstate 64 between New Albany and Louisville the biggest issue for the city. "The effect on downtown business ... is going to be noticable sooner rather than later," he said. Independent Jack Messer, also a city councilman, called lack of communication in city government the biggest problem. "We need to have open government," Messer said. "I will open the doors." Republican Dale Bagshaw said the chief problem facing New Albany is a lack of vision. "We haven't been pro-business, pro-development," he said. The candidates were asked

what the city should do to make the best of the bridge closure. "I wish I had an answer for that," Keister said. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Gahan

Goshen Mayoral: GOP distance

The Indiana Republican Party distanced itself Thursday from an issue pushed by Goshen Republicans, saying the defeated attempt to change the city's civil rights ordinance in 2009 is not an issue for state Republicans (Elkhart Truth). The attempt started as a bipartisan effort to add "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to the city's civil rights ordinance, but it ultimately failed. Jake Teshka of the Indiana Republican Party said Thursday the issue isn't one on a script for local campaign poll calls for which the party paid. "It's definitely not on the script," Teshka said. "It's not one of our issues." Earlier in the week Republican Don Riegsecker, running for mayor against incumbent Democrat Al Kaufmann, said the issue was on the script for the calls, saying, "if people can't come up with an issue we look at traffic, crime, there's probably six or seven of them and we do list that ordinance." Thursday, though, Riegsecker said he may have been confused about whether it was on phone scripts or in-person scripts used by local campaign workers. "I've got so much going through my head," he said. Local Democrats claimed that Republican campaign callers are raising the issue in push polls. Teshka and Riegsecker said the calls are not push polls, which generally lead recipients in one direction or another while acting as a simple poll. Riegsecker said it's possible that local campaign workers go off the script, but said that practice doesn't help gather accurate poll data. "There's an 'other' on there, and if you get to that, what do you do," Riegsecker asked. "We all know the ordinance is an issue in town." **Horse Race Status:** Likely Kaufmann

5th CD: Brooks announces campaign team

5th CD Republican candidate Susan Brooks announced members of her campaign team assisting her effort to gain the GOP nomination for the new 5th Congressional District (Howey Politics Indiana). Whitney Gehlhansen will serve as Political and Policy Director. Laken Sisko will serve as Finance Director. Hollon McKay will serve as Scheduler and Communications Assistant. Dollyne Pettingill Sherman is managing media and communications. ❖



Life's cruel irony when Phil turns 64

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**
Indianapolis Business Journal

INDIANAPOLIS - Sir Paul McCartney famously and whimsically fretted back in 1967 whether he would be needed or fed when he turned 64. Life's cruel irony was that when Paul actually turned 64, he was being taken to the cleaners for millions in divorce court by his one-legged ex.



Ahhhh, life

Which gets me to State Rep. Phil Hinkle. This we know for sure: The 64-year-old Republican answered a Craig's List inquiry from an 18-year-old black man seeking a "sugga daddy." It ended up being splashed on the front pages of the Indianapolis Star with an array of sordid, albeit unsubstantiated "he said, he said" controversy that stemmed from a series of emails, phone

calls and interviews. The original story tended to suggest criminal confinement when the young man told a reporter he wanted to leave the JW Marriott after what ever it was they did together, and the legislator allegedly prevented him from doing so. It might have been as innocent as viewing - together - the Indiana Statehouse bathed in light from the 25th floor. Perhaps there was consensual sex. For some reason, \$80 was exchanged, among other things. But things became complicated as sisters and wives entered the picture.

IMPD is not investigating a crime, and no official activity has been forwarded to Prosecutor Terry Curry, a Democrat.

If Rep. Hinkle is guilty of anything, it is bad judgment swaddled in blatant hypocrisy. The Republican who authored legislation for the "In God We Trust" license plates and who's voted for every anti-gay marriage Constitutional amendment, is in a political pickle. House Speaker Brian Bosma wants him to resign, as does Marion County Republican Chairman Kyle Walker.

There are time-test axioms you hear as a freshman candidate gunning for the Statehouse. Make sure you're up-to-date on your child support. Explain that DUI decades ago as a teachable moment or youthful indiscretion. Don't beat your girlfriend at a Jimmy Buffett concert wearing a parrot head shirt. If you're checking into a hotel room for an extramarital fling, don't use your real name ("Clay Mar-

rott" will suffice). Spurned wives can mean bad press. And, for crying out loud, don't get caught in bed with a dead girl or a live boy.

Rep. Hinkle appears to have broken the most obvious rule and at the end of the night, his Blackberry and Ipad were in the possession of this young man, who's intent is as murky as Hinkle's own morality.

It makes you wonder what happens to these middle-aged men we read about five or six times a year in the press. The prominent and respected end up doing strange, strange things in the Claypool Courts restrooms or in city parks, get busted, do perp walks, and then resign while family members cringe and ponder forgiveness or fetch an attorney. There are notions of sexual repression, loveless marriages, aged unions with accommodations, or thrill seeking. The sad thing is that after a career of public service, this bad judgment - whether it was a one-time event or a serial crawl into depravity - becomes the nut graph in the obit. In Phil Hinkle's case, when the Star's Matt Tully asked him about multiple dalliances, the Republican responded, "We're not going there."

Whew.

All indications are that Rep. Hinkle is going to ignore the calls for his resignation. In addition to his clothes, confidentiality and dignity, he has been stripped of his committee chairmanships. He will be sans seniority, relegated to the back bench. If Bosma can figure out a way, he may not even be seated there, but in a broom closet or down in the boiler room. He almost certainly won't be invited to GOP caucus. All of his bills will end up in the doomed Rules Committee. He will be a pariah in a place with a middle school attitude when it comes to tolerance and redemption.

Fellow legislators suggest that Hinkle's motivation for hanging on to his seat is financial. He recently lost his job at Wayne Township schools and needs the \$50,000 or so he'll make as a legislator for the rest of his term.

Hinkle's foray into serial bad judgment essentially robs his constituents of full-throated, maximum clout, now muted in scandal. He maintains he went close to the edge, but not over the edge, but the people he represents will when it comes to festering issues such as right to work and government reform.

And it complicates things. When the parents of Vera, Chuck and Dave talk to legislative staff about internships and paging, the questions about Rep. Hinkle abound. When he enters a room, the interns will scurry. Eyes will roll. Snickers and bad jokes will be endless.

Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm 64?

The cruel answer at the Indiana Statehouse, Rep. Hinkle, is no. ❖

This column appeared in the IBJ Forefront.



Who is responsible for poor Hoosier showing?

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - "I'm outraged and appalled," Lucas Locost says. "Indiana ranks 41st in the nation in its rate of growth in personal income. Our per capita personal income is now 15 percent below the national average and 41st among the 50 states. So where are our leaders?"

"Who are these leaders you're talking about?" I ask.

"The guys in government, of course," he answers.

"Have you considered that the problem is not government but the Hoosier business community itself?" I respond.

Lucas looks puzzled. I continue, "Maybe the problem is the business community refuses to examine itself. Maybe the problem is the insistence on blaming government for the shortcomings, timidity, and lack of initiative in the private sector."

Now Lucas is starting to fume. "How dare you," he says. "Business is the backbone of the nation."

"A weak backbone," I reply, "always looking to government to prop it up or bail it out. Why are corporations holding onto cash instead of investing? Why aren't banks making loans to people and businesses willing to take risks?"

"A simple example," I offer. "Business looks to government to subsidize worker training. Why? If a company needs workers and has trouble finding qualified people, why doesn't that firm or its industry association fund the necessary training?"

"**It is common place to say** that Indiana's problem is its workforce. Maybe the problem is Indiana's companies are not sufficiently competitive to pay higher wages to attract better workers. Labor is mobile, and if we had higher paying jobs, qualified workers would move here. Good wages are possible when firms make products or produce services that are highly valued in the market place. And that is the primary responsibility of management not workers."

Lucas is glowering. "How dare you!" he exclaims. "It's government taxes and regulations holding down business in America."

"Wrong," I reply with equal vigor. "Government

spending and regulations provide businesses and consumers with necessary services and protections. Where government goes wrong is providing inappropriate and sustained subsidies to businesses and localities."

"Like what?" Lucas asks.

"**Take two examples,**" I say. "First, ethanol. A benign subsidy helped establish ethanol plants, but it was inappropriate to require the use of ethanol in gasoline. By subsidizing the construction of ethanol plants, the entry costs were reduced, but requiring use of ethanol created an artificial demand for the product and has raised corn prices excessively."

"Second, local roads. The Cline Avenue Expressway in Lake County (SR 912) links the Indiana Toll Road (I-90) and the Chicago Skyway to the Borman Expressway (I-80/94). Through a deficit of responsibility, the state allowed a key bridge to deteriorate to the point it must be removed, leaving a massive gap in the expressway and requiring the use of an inferior detour."

"Cline Avenue, to the best of my knowledge, is primarily a local route of benefit to a few businesses and acting as a physical barrier between Hammond and Gary. As with most local projects, and unlike the Minton Bridge (I-64) connecting New Albany and Louisville, Cline Avenue is not a key link for interstate travel."

"And how would you finance new industries and local infrastructure?" Lucas demands.

"**Federal or state loans or loan guarantees,**" I shoot back.

"So you would saddle firms and local governments with debt?" he retorts.

"It would make business and localities more responsible and get them off the handout list," I assert.

"You're the most conservative liberal I know," Lucas laughs.

"Or am I just a realistic conservative?" I ask.



Mr. Marcus is an independent economist, speaker, and writer formerly with IU's Kelley School of Business.





10 years of community justice in Marion County

By **BEVERLY PHILLIPS**

INDIANAPOLIS - On Thursday, Sept. 29, Marion Superior Court will host an open house/community day (1:00 - 4:30 p.m.) at Indiana's only Community Court located in Fountain Square, (Justice Center, 902 Virginia Avenue, 46203). There are 48 problem solving courts across Indiana and several in Marion County, including courts with special dockets for low-level misdemeanor crimes, drug treatment, mental health, US Veterans and DOC re-entry. Judge David Certo presides over Marion County's Community Court created in 2001.



HPI: How does Community Court differ from traditional courts?

Judge Certo: First, we are community-based in Fountain Square, versus the City-County Building where most people go to court. We cover 29 police beats and the Southeast and Downtown portion of Indianapolis. Defendants eligible for Community Court must be willing to plead guilty to low-level misdemeanor, and this is very important, non-violent crimes, such as public intoxication, prostitution, disorderly conduct, criminal mischief, possession of alcohol by a minor, drug possession, public indecency, shoplifting, criminal trespass, vehicle violations, indecent exposure, and resisting and law enforcement. Unlike a traditional criminal court, Community Court works closely with defendants, using a non-adversarial approach to determine the root causes of their behaviors that may have contributed toward their offenses. We have an afternoon court docket five days a week.

HPI: Is Community Court a court or a social service agency?

Judge Certo: Problem solving courts have judicial powers to court-order certain requirements be met by defendants just like a traditional court. However, unlike a traditional court, we have a variety of community partnerships to provide services at our Justice Center and off-site referrals. At the Justice Center, defendants can receive on-site mental health services through Midtown Mental Health, and STD testing and counseling through the Marion County Health Department and the Damien Center. Twice a month we have a special docket for Veterans working with the US Veterans Administration. We can court-order defendants to address mental health or substance abuse issues, or require that they seek employment or attend job readiness

classes. Community Work Service and attending Community Impact Panels are also sentencing options.

HPI: Does Community Court lessen the strain on our county jail system?

Judge Certo: By offering an alternatives to jail, Community Court saves public resources and can provide customized, court-ordered intervention services for defendants. Studies by the Center for Court Intervention and the National Institute for Justice support that problem solving courts do reduce crime, save public resources and can decrease future victimization. Our goal is to stop the revolving door of repeat offenders who create disorder and chaos in the community, which decreases the quality of life for those who work and live in Indianapolis. Community Court is the "Fixing Broken Windows" theory in action, in that these low-level offenses can lead to larger public safety problems for neighborhoods.

HPI: Why does the Community Court catchment area include offenses specific to downtown Indianapolis?

Judge Certo: Offenses that create disorder in this area have a direct economic impact on restaurants, retailers, sporting and cultural event attendance. If citizens and out of town visitors perceive downtown to be unsafe, they won't go there. We attempt to educate defendants that their offenses - for example public intoxication or disorderly conduct in downtown Indianapolis - is not a victimless crime. These offenses can have a ripple effect in that they create fear for downtown visitors.

HPI: Is it a sustainable court model?

Judge Certo: Yes, I believe it is, but there are economic realities. We are going on ten years now, but there is the reality of the current economy and reductions in municipal, state and federal funding for the all levels of the judiciary and public safety agencies. We are working to develop a 501(c)(3) foundation to expand our funding sources, including foundation grant funding, to support the model and perhaps even increase services and community partnerships.

HPI: Why are we not seeing more courts of this kind statewide?

Judge Certo: I would imagine funding is the main issue. And those in the judiciary must be willing to advocate for community-based courts. We were very fortunate in Marion County, ten years ago, to have many active and vocal advocates for the creation of Community Court, including our founding judge, Judge Michael Keele, and (then Commissioner) Judge Annie-Christ Garcia. Former Marion County Prosecutor Scott Newman played an important role too. He was a great believer in involving neighbors in community-based justice and creating ways for citizens to work with the criminal justice system to address crime issues unique to their area. ❖



Tax cap credits and local budgets in 2012

By **LARRY DeBOER**

WEST LAYAYETTE - It's budget season for Indiana local governments. Our counties, cities, schools and other units will adopt spending plans for 2012 by the end of October. To make a spending plan it helps to know how much money you've got to spend. Our new property-tax caps make this a bit tougher.

Under the caps, homeowner tax bills are limited to 1 percent of the home's assessed value, other residential property and farmland taxes are limited to 2 percent, and business property is limited to 3 percent. The taxpayer gets a credit if a tax bill exceeds the cap. The credit is a part of the tax bill that isn't paid, so it's revenue that local government doesn't collect.



That's a problem for budgeting. To know how much money will be available to spend, a local government

needs to know total tax credits, the part of the levy taxpayers don't pay. A taxpayer's credit depends on the sum of taxes paid to the county, city, school and other units.

During the budget process each government doesn't know what the other governments will do. It won't know how big total tax bills will be, so it won't know the level of tax-cap credits. Therefore, it can't know how much property-tax revenue will be received.

An unexpected increase in tax-cap credits can create a budget shortfall, where there's not enough money to deliver the planned level of services. That happened to many governments in 2011. Statewide, tax cap credits increased by \$143 million in 2011. Credits were 7.2 percent of the total levy in 2010 and 9.2 percent in 2011.

We don't know what will happen to tax cap credits in 2012, but we know the reasons why credits went up in 2011. Let's look at those reasons, and ask whether they'll happen again.

The tax reform of 2008 replaced homestead tax credits with homestead assessment deductions. In 2011 the last of the state homestead credits phased out. The credit rate averaged 4 percent in 2010. The final phase out increased homeowner tax bills in 2011, which made homeowners eligible for more tax credits.

There are no more state homestead credits, so

there can't be another phase out. That means tax-cap credits might not increase as much in 2012.

In 2011 local income-tax distributions fell by 16 percent statewide. In some counties, some of this revenue is used for local property-tax credits, to reduce property-tax bills. With less local income-tax revenue, the property-tax credits were smaller in 2011. That increased tax bills, and made taxpayers eligible for more tax-cap credits.

The state budget agency has already announced local income-tax distributions for 2012. Almost half the counties will see their distributions frozen at 2011 levels. Statewide, distributions are down only 1 percent. Without a big income-tax drop, property-tax credits funded with income taxes won't decrease as much in 2012. Tax-cap credits might not rise as much.

Property assessed values for 2011 taxes were based on selling prices from 2009. The economy hit bottom in 2009, which drove down property prices and reduced new construction. Assessed value in 2011 dropped by 1 percent statewide. If the tax levy stays the same or increases, a lower assessed value means higher tax rates are needed. Higher tax rates increase tax-cap credits.

Our erratic recovery was underway in 2010 so assessed value might not fall for 2012 taxes. We won't know until the new assessments are available. But if tax rates don't rise as much in 2012, tax-cap credits won't increase as much either.

Tax-cap credits depend mostly on local events. If a local government increases its tax rates, all the overlapping governments could see more tax-cap credit losses. Local governments ought to let one another know about their budget plans, especially if they're going to increase their tax rates substantially.

But in 2012 there will be no state homestead credit phase out, no big drop in local income-tax distributions, and (perhaps) no big drop in assessed value. These are reasons to think that, statewide, tax-cap credits won't increase as much in 2012 as they did in 2011. ♦

Prof. DeBoer teaches agricultural economics at Purdue University.



Mark Kiesling, NWI Times: In kind of a weird way, it was the perfect collision of two ways to view the recent history of Northwest Indiana. Earlier this week, Gov. Mitch Daniels new book came out in which he excoriated Northwest Indiana for having a climate of public corruption, hinting broadly that we are too close to Chicago for our own good. Or the good of the state. Then bang! On Thursday came the news of a one-two pair of indictments that do, in fact, tend to show how corrupt Lake County (specifically) can be. Bad timing for Lake County, good timing for Mitch, one would think. Unless one was the chairman of the Lake County Democratic Party, Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott Jr. Sure, we can all expect McDermott to make the usual hemming and hawing noises about the indictment of Lake County Coroner Tom Philpot on theft and fraud charges and three county cops accused in the illicit sale of 74 machine guns. But McDermott wondered something I wondered after Daniels made the disparaging comments: If he knew about all this corruption, why hasn't he done anything about it during his seven years as governor? "They do just as dirty things in Indianapolis," McDermott told me Friday, although this does not excuse our home-grown corruption. But he goes on to say, "Mitch is the governor of the whole state. He is the governor of Lake County. Now you say you knew about all this corruption and did nothing about it? He should formally apologize to Lake County. "He's been governor for seven years. If he knew about all this corruption, he didn't do anything about it and instead writes a book and makes money off of it." McDermott has a point, although he is still deflecting the question of the depth of public corruption in the county. His point: The governor has the Indiana State Police and the attorney general's office under his command. If he knew of specific instances of corruption in Lake and (possibly) Porter counties, why not let the dogs of war loose? Frankly, I think the reason is that he just does not care about this quadrant of the state. ❖

Rich James, Post-Tribune: When I heard that the Lake County Republican Party was planning its 5th annual Reagan Breakfast, it got me thinking again about the party's fascination with the late president. I met Ronald Reagan in 1980 in the press trailer after he gave a campaign speech at Saint Mary's College in South Bend. He was a friendly guy, although much shorter than I had anticipated. He had a sandwich and a soft drink and chatted about some of his movies before moving on. In the eyes of some Republicans — make that many Republicans — he is considered deity today. Perhaps that's because over the last 50 years, Republicans haven't had much to cheer about when it came to presidents. Richard Nixon did one thing right — getting us out of Vietnam. But then he disgraced

the office as a result of Watergate. Gerald Ford wasn't president long enough to distinguish himself but was a heck of a nice man. George H.W. Bush, too, was a fine fellow, but I think he got blinded by those thousand points of light he kept talking about. George W. Bush may have been the most deceitful in the history of the presidency. That brings us back to Reagan, who was known as the Great Communicator, which might have been his biggest asset. He made Americans feel good about themselves. And that's a good thing. Shortly after becoming president in 1981, the nation went into a deep recession. Reagan raised taxes several times after cutting them too much immediately after taking office. But what really endeared Reagan to Republicans was his directive in June 1987 when he said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." Of course, he was talking about the Berlin Wall and the communist occupation of Eastern Europe. It was a heckuva statement, and remains so today. ❖



Eric Bradner, Evansville Courier & Press: Two years ago, Republican Larry Bucshon was a heart surgeon in Newburgh — a political novice about to run his first campaign. Now, he's a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

It was an impressive rise, really. But keeping that newfound political career intact at the end of the next 14 months looks likely to be more difficult. He's faced with two tough elections to win re-election to the 8th District House seat, and any decision he makes to help his positioning for one might hurt him in the other. First up is a May 2012 primary against Kristi Risk, the Tea Partier who brings to the table a kind of ideological purity that Bucshon can't provide. The clearest example of this difference was the vote to raise the debt ceiling. Bucshon said it needed to be done to prevent economic calamity; he argued that the spending cuts Republicans got from Democrats in the agreement were worth his "yes" vote. Risk, though, says she believes Congress should approve no additions to the debt, period. As it relates to Risk, Bucshon's biggest mistake could have come after the May 2010 primary. That's when Bucshon, who was recruited and backed by establishment Republicans, narrowly escaped a field that included a host of other candidates who courted the tea party and pulled votes that might otherwise have gone to Risk. Risk said then that she would help Bucshon — and Bucshon said he wanted her to do so. "I'm absolutely hoping to have her involvement in my campaign," Bucshon said then. "It all depends on what Kristi wants to do and what she's willing to do." Afterward, though, the two didn't do much to connect. Since then, Bucshon hasn't joined the House's tea party caucus. Now, what Risk is "willing to do" is try to knock Bucshon out of office. ❖



Zoeller, Indiana to contest reforms

WASHINGTON - Indiana was one of 26 states that asked the U.S. Supreme Court today to consider their legal challenge to ObamaCare. Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller announced the "cert petition" formally asking the Court to decide if "it is constitutional for Congress to mandate private individuals to buy health insurance or face a financial penalty – and if not, whether the entire health care law must

be invalidated." U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar, who was an early opponent of the bill and voted consistently against it, asked Zoeller on January 5, 2010 to analyze the bill on constitutional grounds. Lugar supported the two constitutional point of order votes against the bill during senate consideration. Both were defeated by votes of 60-39. In July 2009, Lugar said that President Obama, instead of focusing his presidency on his health care plan and financial regulation, should have focused "each day on restoration of jobs, strengthening of housing opportunities, new growth in small business and large industries, and banks that are not only solvent but confident of normal lending. In essence, the task facing national leadership is truly monumental. A national and international recession has not ended and many economists predict that unemployment in the United States will grow in coming months." Responding to the President's address to Congress at the beginning of the month, Lugar said, "We desperately need tort reform to clear the economic dampening from nuisance lawsuits."



Daniels draws big crowd on book tour

FORT WAYNE - Mitch Daniels warned he'd probably mangle the Latin pronunciation: "Exitus in Dubio Est." The phrase, printed on some early American currency, means "the outcome is in doubt." Indiana's governor told a Fort Wayne crowd Wednesday the expression remains apt. "We face a survival-level threat to the America we know," he said. Daniels addresses that threat in his book, "Keeping the Republic: Saving America by Trusting Americans," which he discussed Wednesday as the first guest of IPFW's 2011-12 Omnibus Lecture Series. The "little effort," as Daniels calls the book, is not an autobiography or a manifesto, he said, but a collection of ideas on how to address the national debt and jobs crisis. A tie-less Daniels seemed relaxed, and for good reason – many in the audience gave him a standing ovation before he'd said a word. IPFW staff said Daniels drew about 1,400 people to the lecture hall, which holds about 200 more.

Plush digs for Hoosier Lottery

INDIANAPOLIS - The Hoosier Lottery's new Meridian Street headquarters may not look like much from the outside, but inside, it's impressive (Segall, WTHR-TV). The 35,000-square-foot office is visually stunning with lots of new artwork and furniture, and the lottery's director says the new offices are also practical, as well. "We have a lot more meeting rooms. We have small meeting rooms. We have large meeting rooms. We have made the employee break room very, very large," explained Kathryn Densborn last week as she gave WTHR a tour of the new headquarters. "I never expected to do this, and then

all of a sudden I had to do this so we dug in. It appears the lottery "dug in" to their checkbook, and 13 Investigates has the numbers. Furniture for gigantic break room cost more than \$28,000 – that does not include thousands more for new artwork and appliances. New furniture to fill nine conference rooms totals almost \$50,000. The lottery spent more than a quarter million dollars in new employee work spaces, even though 13 Investigates discovered many of them sit empty more than six months after the lottery moved into its new offices. 13 Investigates found invoices for \$200 clocks, \$319 mirrors, \$553 chairs, \$800 bar stools, \$11,500 work tables, and state-of-the-art exercise equipment in the lottery's brand new workout gym that totals more than \$25,000. Densborn says a new headquarters was badly needed. "For a lot of reasons it just made incredible sense," she said last week. "We needed to do some upgrading and we were running out of space." But that is not true, according to some current and former lottery employees who talked to 13 Investigates. "I don't think we were using space very efficiently at the old headquarters, but I wouldn't say we weren't running out of space," said one former employee who asked not to be identified for fear of retaliation. "No, we had open offices still available, plenty of open spaces on some of the floors."

St. Joe budget brings raises

SOUTH BEND - The St. Joseph County Council is considering an across-the-board raise for county employees next year for the first time in close to a decade (South Bend Tribune). During a budget meeting Tuesday, council members agreed to include a 3 percent raise for all county employees.



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Weekly Briefing on Indiana Politics

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It's Jackie Walorski's race to lose in 2nd CD

By **JACK COLWELL**

SOUTH BEND - I ❖

Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune.





in the proposed 2012 county budget. The decision adds about \$750,000 to the proposed budget, which now stands at about \$65.75 million. Last year's approved budget totaled about \$66 million. Council members also considered a 2 percent raise, which would have added about \$500,000 to the budget, in addition to no raise. Members in support of a 3 percent raise included Democrats Mike Hamann, Corey Noland, Mike Kruk and Mark Catanzarite. Republican Dan Herbster supported a 2 percent raise, and council President Rafael Morton, a Democrat, and Republican Dale DeVon could not decide.

