



Inside the Pence metric puzzle

New governor seeks traction on legislative agenda, income tax cut

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The headline fixation in the fledgling administration of Gov. Mike Pence has been his 10-percent income tax cut. It is, what Chief of Staff Bill Smith observes, “the shiny object” and one that Senate Appropriations Chairman Luke Kenley partially restored this morning at 3% after it didn’t make the House Republican budget.

The narrative after 80 days is an administration that has groped for a voice and a gravitas on the issues. Gov. Pence said at one point, “We have to do a better job of getting our message out.”

But after spending several days deep in the gubernatorial warrens on the Statehouse second floor, what emerges is an array of numbers that when pieced together



in what is now an incomplete jigsaw puzzle, a different story line emerges.

Gov. Pence’s nine agenda bills are, for the most

Continued on page 3

Poised for polarization

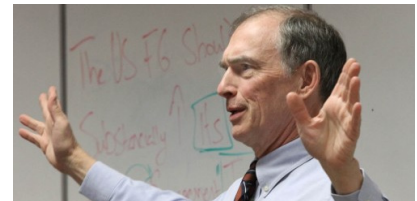
By **MAUREEN HAYDEN**
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – When a federal judge struck down key provisions of the state’s immigration law last week, it seemed anticlimactic.



In June 2011, U.S. District Judge Sarah Evans Barker had granted a temporary injunction that barred the law from taking effect that July while she weighed its constitutionality.

So it wasn’t much of a surprise when she issued her ruling that said portions of the law, including the provision that permitted warrantless arrests



“We can’t keep going on like this. We lurch from crisis to crisis. We don’t govern anymore.”

- U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky



Howey Politics Indiana

is a non-partisan newsletter based in Indianapolis and Nashville, Ind. It was founded in 1994 in Fort Wayne.

It is published by
WWWHowey Media, LLC
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Suite 300
Indianapolis, IN 46204

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of non-citizens, were unconstitutional.

With Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller's decision not to appeal the ruling, the court case is over. But the argument over the state's role in immigration enforcement is not.

Republican state Sen. Mike Delph made that clear to me last week, before Barker's ruling on legislation that he helped write.

The conservative legislator from Carmel was concerned about a story I wrote on an immigration bill currently in the General Assembly: Senate Bill 207. It's legislation that would partially roll back Indiana's two-year-old ban on in-state college tuition for the children of undocumented workers.

I wrote about the bill because I thought it reflected a dramatic shift going on nationally among Republicans courting the Hispanic vote. It was Republicans who pushed the in-state tuition ban two years ago, arguing that Indiana should no longer be a "sanctuary" for illegal immigrants. And now it's key Republicans who are pushing to roll back the ban, arguing it's unnecessarily punitive to the children of those immigrants.

But Delph said the bill signals something else — a polarizing fight within the Republican party over just how far to go to court the Hispanic vote.

Delph calls Senate Bill 207 a "purely political" piece of legislation.

"There is a concern that if we don't start doing this we're going to lose votes," Delph said. "My position has always been: You stand on principle, make your case, then you go sell the people on the case that you've made."

Here's his case: "There are a lot of people across the economic spectrum, the political spectrum and across the cultural spectrum that believe deeply in the rule of law; that everybody, regardless of race, national origin or economic circumstance should be treated exactly the same.

We're not doing that. ... We're focusing strictly on the human element and the consequence of the decision that somebody in that family made to purposely violate the law."

Delph believes some price needs to be paid before the state or the nation starts clearing a path for citizenship for the children of immigrants who came here illegally. One of his conditions, he said, is a mea culpa: "Some sort of public acknowledgement from whoever was in that child's life that made that decision to intentionally violate the law and as a result put that child in the situation they are in today."

Delph describes himself as the "most conservative" Republican in the Indiana General Assembly and acknowledges his views differ sharply from those Republicans who are shifting on immigration reform.

The shift is real. A Pew Research Center poll released last month found that 64 percent of Republicans now believe undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay in the United States legally; 34 percent of Republicans are opposed to such a proposition.

But Delph argues that backing off principle, just to broaden political appeal, is a mistake.

"By just looking at politics and votes, that is a horrible way to make public policy," Delph said.

"We need to do the right thing," he continued. "We need to do the just thing. I agree with that but we need to be anchored in law. ... To push that off to the side for political convenience I think is the wrong way to go and I think we will rue the day that we did it." ❖

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Pence, from page 1

part, progressing. There was a staff review of some 2,200 bills that emerged prior to this long session, one that the Pence team had just seven weeks to prepare. According to Senior Policy Director Marilee J. Springer, there have been 95 meetings on individual pieces of legislation over eight weeks. There have been 138 meetings between the new governor and legislators.

And when one surveys the nine Pence "agenda bills" only one, a bill for treatment of compulsive gambling, is dead. The governor's second priority, SB465 – the Indiana Works Councils – passed the Senate 49-0 and the House 94-0. Most others have passed by wide majorities.

If you want to find animation from Gov. Pence, a conversation about his agenda invariably leads to a large chart on an easel just south of his desk.

"The thick blue lines are the six goals," Pence said, pointing to the chart. "Those are the six goals of the next four years in this administration. There isn't a week that goes by that we don't meet with our economic development team, meet with our legislative team, and ask, 'Where are we when it comes to increasing private sector employment?'"

"We've been very, very serious about this," Pence continued. "Since we entered the race for governor two years ago, it's one of the reasons we just continue to keep our head down and work hard and really focus on results. I tell you, there is wisdom in the multitude. As I traveled around the state last year, one of the most responsive lines, in crowds large and small, in cities and small towns, was when I said to people that while this is Indiana's moment, this is the time to go from reform to results."

"From reform to results," Pence repeated after a pause. "Almost every head in the room would be nodding. You got the sense that Hoosiers know we went through a season where there was a lot of course correction, a lot of hard choices made, whether in fiscal reform, economic reform or education reform. But there's a real hunger now

for seeing the outcomes and the natural consequences of those bold policies come into effect. That's where we've been, in the policies we've been advancing, all of it is in the outcomes."

And there will be metrics. Employment? It will be measured by the Indiana University Business Research. Improving math and reading skills? ISTEP and IREAD3.

"There will be third-party measurables," Pence promised. "We are tying ourselves to third-party sources and we expect to be held accountable to these goals."

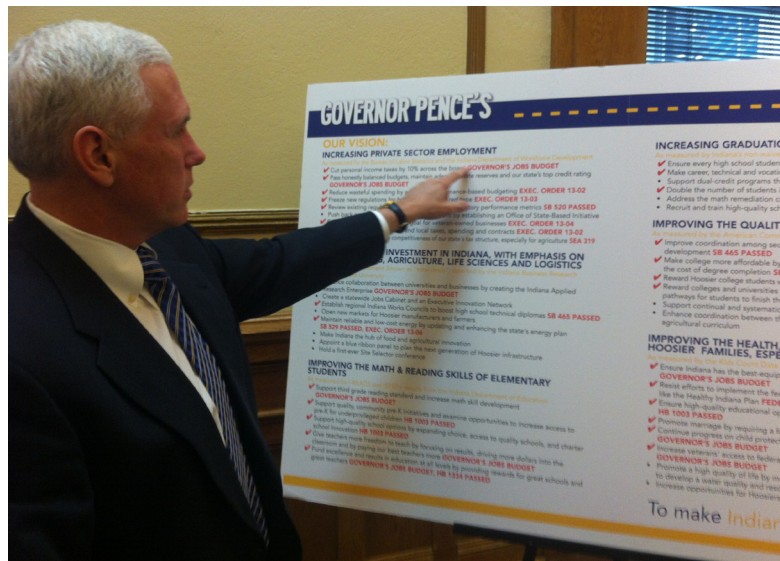
Metrics and tax cuts

For this new administration, the headline measurable may come down to Gov. Pence's 10- percent income tax cut. The buzz in the hallway is that while Pence has politely sparred with Speaker Brian C. Bosma and Senate President David Long in a dynamic where legislative leaders are reasserting themselves after eight years of Mitch Daniels' alpha leadership, he's likely to get something, as Kenley did this morning with the 3% tax cut.

"The late Russell Kirk used to say, 'Politics is the art of the possible,'" Pence responded after he was asked whether he'd accept a fraction of that 10 percent. "Look, I was a legislator for 12 years. As we move forward, we are going to continue to advocate strongly for what we think is going to get this economy moving again, get Hoosiers back to work and in the long term, serve the best interests of the people of Indiana. But I am really looking forward to the discussions and negotiations."

"Let me say," Pence continued, "I'm looking for opportunities to find common ground. As these negotiations move forward, I am confident we're going to have productive dialogue and I am confident in the end we're going to come together and produce the kind of budget that's fiscally responsible, funds our priorities and gives Hoosiers the tax break they deserve."

Reacting to the Senate budget this morning, Pence expressed concern over spending and described the Senate budget as a "pathway" and reemphasized he will seek



Gov. Pence points to his "Road Map" for his administration in a chart next to his Statehouse desk. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



“common ground.”

Senate President Pro Tempore David Long (R-Fort Wayne) said the plan will provide tax relief for all Hoosier families, funds education, and pays down taxpayer-funded debt. “I want to commend Sen. Kenley and the entire Senate Appropriations team on a job well done,” Long said. “In the midst of a tough economy, this is an honestly-balanced budget that funds our transportation and healthcare needs, increases funding for schools, promotes job growth, provides tax relief for all Hoosier taxpayers and successfully maintains our reserves.”

However, Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown told reporters this morning he was still concerned about the amount of spending in the Senate budget.

OMB Director Chris Atkins told HPI that the next budget forecast – coming on April 16 – will need to reaffirm last December’s forecast. “The budget we put together was based on December’s numbers and we showed that it clearly works,” Atkins said.

In the first jolt to the new governor, the House budget omitted the tax cut. And that led to the story line that the governor was “silent” on legislative issues, as the Indianapolis Star critiqued.

Policy Director Springer told HPI that the emphasis during the first half of the session was on positioning the Pence agenda bills. But the legislative and policy team also began a system of engaging with the authors of bills, then meeting on a weekly basis (or more) with key committee chairs. The other layer was Gov. Pence’s individual meetings with legislators. “He did a lot of listening,” said Heather Neal, his legislative director.

Of the 1,200 bills filed, 400 survived at the halfway point.

Pence prep

Another narrative is that Pence was unready for the session that began a week before he even took the oath of office. Less than 24 hours after being sworn in, his administration submitted a 144-page budget.

Did Pence have a working team focused on the General Assembly last fall?

“I’m someone who thinks elections ought to be about elections,” Pence explained. “We had a couple of

preliminary meetings over the course of a couple of months preceding the election where we had folks starting to think about the process of transition. I always thought that we were involved in a competitive campaign. We certainly were. We stayed focused on the task at hand through election day.”



Gov. Mike Pence and Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann meet with the press this morning to discuss the Senate Republican budget.

Indeed, an expected big win turned into a somewhat harrowing victory over Democrat John Gregg, with just 49% and a 2.7% plurality. Pence explained, “To be honest with you, the way we ran the campaign and the fact that we ran a completely positive, substantive campaign that laid out an agenda I think gave us advantages that we wouldn’t have otherwise had. Our Road Map for Indiana became on the morning after the election the road map for our administration.

We pulled a legislative team

together that began the process immediately of formulating bills that would move forward on specific items in our agenda.”

Pence added, “We also were dealing with mature legislative majorities in the Indiana General Assembly who had also run on specific agendas. By having the framework of our six primary goals in our road map, we were able to begin the process almost immediately of having input, beginning to distill where we might find allies to move bills that we were seeking to advance, but which were also consistent with our own goals. Because of the campaign we ran, we were able to make that transition more effectively.”

Building an administration

What followed the election was seven weeks of 18-hour days.

“For my part the biggest time consuming part was when you’re succeeding success, the first order of business is to maintain the policies and people who are working for the people of Indiana,” Pence explained. “For my part, I felt it was extremely important to sit down and meet the people who were leading these agencies and interested in staying on. Not only was I interviewing people on our senior team, and other people who vied for those positions, I was in back-to-back-to-back meetings in the little office across the way for 12 hours a day because I wanted to sit down with people who were in these key positions and re-



ally get to know them.”
 “I think personnel is policy,” Pence asserted. “That is a lodestar management principle for me that personnel is policy. You can create and articulate standards, and we have. You can articulate incentives, you can set up a system, but I think the success and failure of organizations large or small is entirely contingent on the quality, the caliber, the work ethic and the integrity of the people recruited into that. So I was very, very intimately involved in all of that.”

“I was sworn in on a Monday, we signed a raft of executive orders on Day One, I met with bipartisan leadership, our economic development team, and the next day we submitted our budget, 144 pages.”

It is that budget that will provide the fireworks, success or possibly failure for a governor who spent 12 years in Congress and is said to have presidential aspirations.

He ardently defends that budget and his tax cut before partisan crowds and those likely to be dismissive. “I’m very committed to the budget that we submitted,” Pence said.

He believes his 12 years in Congress will help him win over the Indiana legislature. “I have a tremendous amount of respect for people involved in the legislative process and it comes from the fact that I was a working legislator for 12 years of my life,” he said. “Whether it’s members here talking about their concerns or issues, or whether it’s in social settings, I get the sense they know that I have a lot of respect for what they do. People often ask me about the difference, what it’s like to transition from a legislator to an executive. I say I hope having been the one will make me better at the other because I know the sacrifices people make. I know they came to the General Assembly with priorities, goals and aspirations.”

He talks about “hearing them out and looking for ways to make their priorities advance.”



Gov. Pence hands a signing pen to State Rep. Tom Dermody on Tuesday after the governor signed a bill dealing with LaPorte County taxation. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Friction points

There are other friction points. From a stylistic standpoint, Pence is receiving good marks from people like House Minority Leader Scott Pelath, who has lauded Pence for his civil approach and outreach. On Tuesday, Pelath joined LaPorte County legislators for a small signing ceremony on a bill about the county’s taxation. “This is a good example of bipartisanship working on behalf of a county,” Pence said as he handed out signing pens.

What Pence has been spared is the kind of show-downs that Daniels had with former Speaker B. Patrick Bauer, who was overthrown by House Democrats last July. Neal told HPI, “Scott Pelath is everything a leader of the other party should be.” So is Senate Minority Leader

Tim Lanane, she said.

Pence and the minority Democrats are in an odd tap dance over the tax cut, with Democrats hoping it becomes an intra-GOP wedge.

The real point of contention – with ramifications that could last for years – is over Medicaid expansion.

“Indiana will not expand traditional Medicaid as it is under the Affordable Care Act,” Pence emphatically says. “I don’t think it serves the recipients very well and I don’t think it serves the state very well. I don’t think it serves the fiscal interests of the state. There is no doubt in my mind, with the federal government \$16 trillion more in debt, that there is going to be some significant course correction in the not so distant future at the national level. An area I think the state should be very cautious about is betting on the future promises of the federal government in the expansion of Medicaid.”

“But we would be willing to an expansion of coverage within the framework of the Healthy Indiana Plan and if doing so would be affordable to the state of Indiana,” Pence said. “Those are two co-equal objectives.”

Pelath and Lanane have warned that working-poor Hoosiers could be left without coverage. They have raised the specter of a special session.

“We do have a Plan B,” Neal said, adding that the administration won’t be trapped by an artificial deadline. If the feds reject HIP, a course correction could come during Organization Day in November.



So there is a waiting game from the Obama administration over whether the HIP waiver will come. There are eight or nine states seeking similar arrangements and the expectation is those determinations will come in a group. "This is not an access issue, this is about who picks up the costs," Springer said. And Pence emphasizes that his current budget fully funds a Medicaid expansion that will bring coverage to an additional 90,000 Hoosiers.

As far as the costs of HIP as a vehicle for a Medicaid expansion, Atkins told HPI, "It won't be cheap."

In this issue could be the seeds of a political fight in 2016 if the governor seeks a second term.

Good policy is good politics

So the Pence administration has asserted itself during the second half of the session. It pushed for tougher marijuana penalties in the criminal reform bill at a time when many states are liberalizing similar laws, if not outright legalization. The administration has come out against live table games at the two racinos at a time when new casinos in Ohio, Michigan and Illinois will crimp revenues here.

Gov. Pence was asked if he had read the Republican National Committee's 100-page self-assessment released last month and whether he's formed an opinion. "Not really," he responded. "I haven't read it in any great detail. I enjoyed seeing Chairman Priebus when he came to town. But I've been completely focused on the future of Indiana and not the future of the Republican Party. I tend to hold a general view on these things that if you do the right thing, politics will take care of itself. We'll stay focused here at home."

And then there's that other subplot: A potential Pence presidential run in 2016, with policy decisions made this year having political implications in the next two or three years within that prism.

"I haven't spent one second thinking about anything other than the future of the state of Indiana since I decided to seek this job," Pence said. He paused and emphasized, "Not one second."

He was in South Bend for Dyngus Day on Monday, the 45th anniversary of Robert F. Kennedy's big presidential splash there in 1968. "Occasionally people would come up to us and say kind things, but, you know, honestly this moment in the life of our state commands all of our attention and all of our focus. This is no ordinary time in the life of this state or the people of this state. We are poised for a period of extraordinary growth. In our economy, improvements in our schools and I'm going to continue spending every waking hour on how we can continue the kind of leadership that will meet this moment with common sense and common values that makes this state great." ❖

SENATE BUDGET PROPOSAL *MEETING THE REPUBLICAN ROADMAP*

Promote Hoosier Job Growth

- Cuts individual income tax rate from 3.4% to 3.3%, effective Jan. 1, 2015 (\$150 million per year)
- Eliminates state inheritance tax, retroactively effective to Jan. 1, 2013 (\$150 million per year)
- Cuts financial institutions tax rate from 8.5% to 6.5%, phased in over four years, starting in 2014 (Contained in SB 552; \$19 million per year)
- Includes funding for vocational education and workforce development initiatives contained in SB 465 (Indiana Works Councils - \$6M over the biennium) and HB 1002 (Indiana Career Council - \$750,000 over the biennium)

Funding Our Priorities: K-12 Education

- Increases K-12 funding by \$331 million over the biennium.
 - 2% increase in FY 2014 and 1% increase in FY 2015
- Provides performance funding opportunity for every public school.
- \$10 million per year for school resource officers (SB 1)
- Funds Principal Leadership Academy (SB 402)

Funding Our Priorities: Roads & Infrastructure

- Provides additional \$112 million to INDOT and \$101 million to local roads to match local commitment
 - Reallocates 1% of the sales & use tax distribution to the Motor Vehicle Highway Fund
 - Phases in a replacement of the Motor Vehicle Highway Fund appropriation for the State Police and BMV with state general fund dollars over two years
- Invests \$200 million per year for two years into the Major Moves 2020 Trust Fund for major highway expansion projects.



Zody will use this year to prepare to 2014 cycle

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – John Zody is getting his “sea legs” in his new role as Indiana Democratic chairman, all while completing his graduate degree at Indiana University. But there is little doubt that the new chairman feels time ticking away when it comes to positioning his party for its comeback.

Zody finds a Republican governor with super majorities in the Indiana General Assembly and a congressional delegation that is eight to three Republican, while his party holds only one of the statewide offices, Supt. Glenda Ritz in education. So 2013 is the year with no elections, but it is a time to keep the party’s infrastructure updated and begin candidate recruitment for the 2014 cycle.

“The last few weeks I’ve learned how the organization works, meeting payroll and reviewing operations” said Zody, a former Democratic Central Committee member who coordinated battleground states for President Obama’s reelection bid in 2012. Zody ascended to the state chair on March 16.

“The key is to keep the technology updated,” he said. His Obama campaign credentials, coming with an organization that achieved historic levels of data gathering and metric-driven resource allocation, is a critical element he brings to Indiana Democrats.

With three dozen new county chairs elected in March and 10 new members on the Indiana Democratic Central Committee, there is an emphasis to teach them how to use the voter files. “Technology is a powerful tool and it’s all about allocating resources, maintaining good lists and clean lists and knowing how to use them,” Zody said. “We won’t have time next year to do that.”

Beyond the infrastructure come the people – the candidates – who are needed to give the party a chance to claw into the Republican 69-31 House super majority and 37-13 in the Senate.

Over the past two election cycles, Indiana Democrats have witnessed a steady erosion of legislative seats, to the point where State Rep. Kreg Battles, D-Vincennes, is the only Democrat representing what could be described as a rural district. The party has retreated into university cities, Indianapolis, the Northwest Region and the South Bend area. In 2008, Indiana House districts represented by Democrats touched all or parts of 57 counties. The 2010 election reduced the area to 37 counties.



Indiana Democratic Chairman John Zody outside of Howey Politics Indiana’s North American Headquarters on Massachusetts Avenue in Indianapolis. Zody not only is leading his party, he is also finishing up his graduate degree at Indiana University’s SPEA. (HPI photo by Brian A. Howey)

“We took a hit with redistricting,” Zody said of the 2011 reapportionment that helped swell the House majority from 60 to 69 seats. “We’ll look at what issues and what messages work with rural voters and then go back to the technology.” He said that House Minority Leader Scott Pelath and Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane “immediately reached out to me. I’ve asked what they need and I believe we are in sync.”

“Indiana is a moderate place,” Zody insisted, noting that U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly was elected in 2012 over a candidate who by the end of the campaign was perceived as



outside the mainstream. "The same message doesn't work everywhere." As for how to recover the "heritage" seats the party held for decades along the Ohio and Wabash river valleys and were then lost in 2010 and 2012, Zody said, "That discussion has been going on for a number of months."

Candidate recruitment will be critical and the state party is working with the House and Senate caucuses as well as the DCCC. "We've started working on that," Zody said, though he would not disclose any emerging candidates. "My job is to come up with the tools for our candidates, work with the House and Senate caucuses and see how we can coordinate. We need to start early and we've got to raise money."

Zody added, "If we do our job, the legislative majorities should begin to decline." He repeated a line that 2012 gubernatorial candidate John Gregg used about the Republican "overreach" in the current legislature, mostly on social legislation dealing with abortion restrictions, the Indianapolis City-County Council power grab, and encroaching on voter access. "We're not hearing much from the governor on his session agenda, and so Republicans go back to the divisive social issues. People don't like to see their power grabs," Zody said.

The Donnelly campaign of 2010, when he narrowly held off Republican Jackie Walorski in a year with a vivid GOP trend, and then his Senate victory last year underscored the notion that Hoosier voters do not like extremists.

"Joe Donnelly ran a tight ship," Zody said. "They had a good strategy. They knew that (U.S. Sen. Dick) Lugar would be weakened or defeated in the primary and they ran a coordinated ground game. Joe is a moderate guy, the quintessential Hoosier, and voters like his values."

It was Donnelly's imprimatur that thrust Zody, a former aide to Gov. Frank O'Bannon and U.S. Rep. Baron Hill, into the chair.

The battleground for 2014 will extend from the General Assembly to the 2nd and 8th CDs, where U.S. Reps. Walorski and Larry Bucshon won tight victories last year. Bucshon has been targeted for defeat in the GOP primary by Club For Growth.

Zody said the party is assessing whether any other CDs will come into play in a cycle that will be President Obama's second mid-term. Normally the second presidential mid-term is treacherous for his party, but the Obama presidency has obliterated conventional wisdom.

Asked whether 2012 nominees Brendan Mullen in the 2nd and Dave Crooks in the 8th will seek rematches, Zody declined to speculate. ❖

Ritz objects to mandatory guns in schools

INDIANAPOLIS – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz says she objects to a recent change to a school safety bill that would require armed personnel in every Indiana public school (Smith, Indiana Public Media). A House committee Tuesday amended a Senate-approved school safety bill to create what the bill calls school protection officers, employees who must carry guns. The definition includes teachers and principals. The bill mandates a protection officer in each building, and that is why State Superintendent Glenda Ritz says she does not support it.



"I am for those types of decisions being made at the local level, at the school district level and they should be the ones determining the officers and the types of officers that are going to be in their schools," Ritz says.

Senator Pete Miller (R-Avon), the bill's original author, says the House change is not what he had in mind for his bill, but he's not opposed to the concept.

"For me, I would be comfortable with that in my kids' school, if there was someone with a gun, but this is the legislative process so we will see how the public reacts and if we get a lot of push back we'll have to consider that," he says.

Miller says if the bill passes the House, he is not sure whether he will agree to the changes or take the bill to conference committee for both houses to work out the details.

COMMON CORE HALT REVIVED: An effort to halt implementation of the Common Core educational standards is back on after the Indiana Senate's Education Committee on Wednesday revived it in a House bill (Smith, Indiana Public Media). The Senate passed legislation earlier this session that would pause implementation of the Common Core, a nationally-crafted set of academic standards adopted by 45 states. But the bill stalled in the House, leading the Senate Education Committee to amend the language into a House measure. Under the amended bill, the state would halt implementation of the standards until a series of public hearings is held at the Statehouse. A legislative study committee would develop a recommendation and submit it to the state Board of Education, which still has the final say on Common Core's fate. House Education Committee Chair Bob Behning says he is not opposed to holding public



hearings on Common Core. "But don't stop implementation because we're two and a half years into implementation," Behning says. "I don't think it's fair to educators to play politics with things like standards." Senator Scott Schneider (R-Indianapolis), who authored the original Common Core bill, says despite Behning's objections, he thinks the full House will back his plan. "The majority of folks that I have talked to on both sides of the building, and on both sides of the aisle, for that matter, are in support of doing that stops further implementation and gives us a thorough review and an ability for us to look at everything," Schneider says. Schneider says he is confident the House will simply concur with the amended bill and avoid a conference committee where Behning might have more influence.

BOSMA DOING WELL: House Republican spokeswoman Tory Flynn released this statement this morning on Speaker Brian Bosma's condition: "He is great spirits, doing well, and is quickly recovering. We are in continuous communication with him and will keep you updated as he progresses. House Members will be signing the poster-size card to the Speaker today."



MORE FLEX FOR HIRING SUPERINTENDENTS: The Senate Education Committee also approved in its meeting a bill that would give Indiana school boards greater flexibility when hiring superintendents. The bill, already passed by the House, would no longer require school superintendents to be licensed as superintendents or teachers. The measure's supporters say it will allow school boards to look for people with specific skills, such as a scenario in which a board might want an incoming superintendent with financial expertise to get the district's budget in order. Kelly Bentley of the group Democrats for Education Reform-Indiana says that kind of flexibility is especially important in big school districts. "Larger districts, in particular, need people who have more diverse talents since they are expected to run a multi-million dollar organization," Bentley says. But Department of Education Legislative Affairs Director John Barnes says loosening the requirements so much could open the door to cronyism and nepotism. "Where there might be enough concern about cost that the view would be, 'Well, we can work out a deal with somebody who maybe had formerly held a political office. We'll hire them on for much less money and get it taken care of that way,'" Barnes says. The bill narrowly passed the committee by a six to five vote and now heads to the full Senate.

INDIANA DEMS COMMENT ON SUPT HIRING: Indiana Democrats for Education Reform state director Larry Grau issued the following statement supporting House Bill 1357, which would eliminate the licensing requirement for Indiana school superintendents. The bill was scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Education and Career Development Committee this afternoon. "We support this bill because we believe that great superintendents are, at their core, great managers. You don't need a superintendent's license to be a great manager. "Last fall, voters elected Glenda Ritz to be the Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction, but she wouldn't be able to serve as a local superintendent because she lacks a license. Does it make sense that someone can be elected to run the Indiana Department of Education but be legally forbidden from running one school district? "If districts still want to hire superintendents with licenses, they can, but this bill empowers those districts with the right to expand their searches to other executives with the right skill sets to manage school operations." "Over the past decade, we have seen how bullying has affected schools and students around the country," Miller said.

ANTI-BULLYING BILL PASSES: Legislation sponsored by State Sen. Pete Miller (R-Avon) to curb bullying in Hoosier schools passed the Senate Committee on Education and Career Development today by a 8-2 vote. House Bill 1423 requires all schools to track and report the nature of bullying incidents, which would be included in the school's annual performance report. The Department of Education would then work with schools to develop guidelines to prevent, investigate and report cases of student bullying.

CYBER BULLYING ADDRESSED: The Senate will vote next week on a bill to tighten Indiana's definition of bullying, and require schools to craft a policy for addressing it. The bill adds cyberbullying to the legal definition of bullying, and borrows language from workplace harassment law to separate mere teasing from actions that create "an objectively hostile environment" (Indiana Public Media). Legislators hope to eliminate any excuse for inaction by spelling out that threshold. The revised definition covers actions which interfere with a student's ability to learn or participate in school activities, or which create a "reasonable fear of harm" or a "substantial effect on physical and mental health." More than 400 parents in West Lafayette signed a petition endorsing the law after Danielle Green's 14-year-old daughter killed herself last month, addressing her suicide note to her fellow eighth-graders. On a 7-3 vote, the Senate Education Committee rejected an amendment which would have excluded most verbal harassment from the definition. ❖



Republicans paying for years of racial politics

By **CHRIS SAUTTER**

WASHINGTON - The racial slur used by Alaskan Republican Rep. Don Young on a recent radio program in referring to migrant workers as "wetbacks" underscores the challenge facing the GOP in rebranding their party. Party leaders immediately denounced Young's pathetic faux pas. But after years of practicing racially divisive politics, Young's words come across as a Republican Party Freudian slip to many who question their sincerity.



The timing of Young's remarks couldn't have been worse. Just last month, Republican National Chairman Reince Priebus announced the party would launch a \$10 million "minority outreach initiative." The outreach is aimed at peeling off minority voters who have been punching the Democratic ticket in increasingly record numbers.

The Republican Party's outreach initiative comes on the heels of a 98-page "Growth and

Opportunity Project" report some have labeled an "autopsy" that was designed to get at the bottom of what went wrong in 2012. The report's underlying theme is that the party has marginalized itself because it is dominated by old white men whose views are intractably stuck in the past. Had his remarks become public a few weeks earlier, Don Young could have been listed in the report as "Exhibit A."

The report's diagnosis is accurate, at least as far as it goes. According to a February, 2013 Pew Research Center Survey, most Americans view the GOP as out-of-touch, extreme, and too resistant to change. In a Washington Post opinion piece, Pew founder Andrew Kohut asserts that Republican image problems are the result of a party hijacked by an ultra-conservative block with far right views on nearly every matter of public concern from the size and role of government to foreign policy to social issues. Kohut says this extremely conservative segment represents 45 percent of the Republican base, but that they are demographically and politically estranged from the American electorate as a whole.

While the Republican report acknowledges that the party's imagery has repelled minority voters, it fails to address the underlying policy positions that keep them from attracting minority support. Perhaps more problematic, Republicans intent on rebranding refuse to admit to years of racially divisive tactics that have been preventing many

minorities from participating in electoral politics at all.

Kohut believes that extremism within the Republican Party reached its apex during the two years following President Obama's election in 2008. But the reality is that the remaking of the Republican Party in the image of the John Birch Society began in the 1960's.

Though the roots are in Barry Goldwater's defeat in 1964, the conscious effort by Republicans to play racial politics began with Richard Nixon's "southern strategy" in 1968. In his 2nd try for the White House, Nixon faced not only a staunchly pro-civil rights Democratic opponent in Hubert Humphrey, he also faced a challenge from his right flank in the segregationist candidacy of independent George Wallace, the governor of Alabama.

Nixon, ever the political pragmatist, created a template for future Republican campaign playbooks. The concept was to win the white vote by using wedge issues and coded language to exploit white racial resentment without appearing to be overtly racist (although the intended result was to maintain the racial status quo in the South).

The Republican southern strategy amounted to writing off the African American vote nationally in order to maximize the white vote, particularly the southern white vote that had once been loyal to the Democratic Party. In effect, the parties of Abraham Lincoln and Jim Crow switched places.

But Nixon didn't want his campaign's racial politics to scare off moderate and liberal Republicans in the North and West, which explains why he insisted on tempered language, at least publicly. Nixon's repayment for southern support from the likes of Strom Thurmond came in the form of judges who would turn a blind eye to lax federal enforcement of newly passed civil rights laws.

The southern strategy worked for 40 years as the only Democrats to win the White House from 1968 to 2008 were Southerners Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton. Over time, though, Nixon's southern strategy seeped into other forms of racial politics.

Ronald Reagan played up to southern racial prejudice and the growing conservative element within his party, even traveling to Philadelphia, Mississippi a town where civil rights workers had been murdered, to deliver a message about his support for states rights—a way of signaling he would not press enforcement of voting rights laws.

George H. W. Bush's campaign manager, Lee Atwater, skillfully exploited racially charged tactics in Bush's 1988 campaign against Michael Dukakis with the infamous Willy Horton. And George W. Bush's top political advisor Karl Rove, an Atwater disciple, promoted restrictive voting laws and trumped up charges of voter fraud to minimize voter turnout among African Americans and other minorities. Many believe that passage of strict voter ID laws and cutting back on early voting ultimately boomeranged on



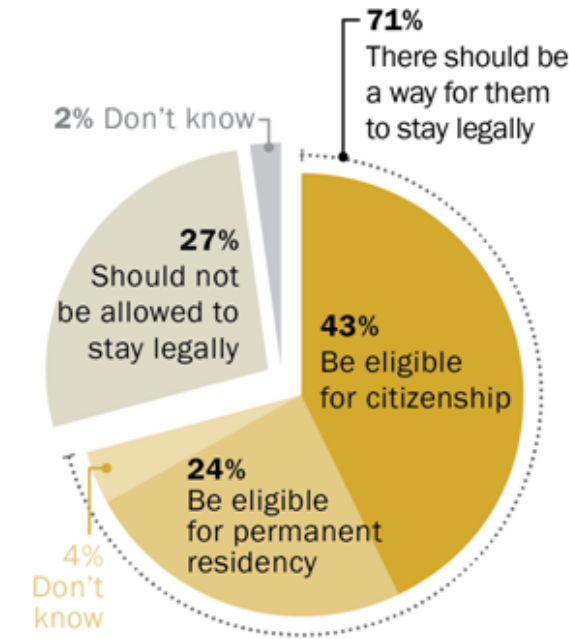
Republicans as African Americans and Latinos turned out in record numbers for President Obama in 2012.

Even as Republicans made the calculation that minority voters were unnecessary for their electoral success, they have given minority outreach lip service from time-to-time. Nixon sidled up to Sammy Davis, Jr. and other black celebrities during his 1972 re-election campaign. Reagan even promised to reintroduce's Lincoln's legacy of equality to the Republican Party as a way to attract black voters, though he never supported using the federal government to enforce civil rights.

It's safe to say that with all their self-evaluation, Republicans are in panic mode. They have lost the popular vote in five of the last six presidential elections. In 2012, they lost a presidential race many believe they should have won and blew a chance at control of the U.S. Senate. What has Republicans rattled is not just that they lost, but how they lost and demographic realities that suggest the party as currently constituted will not become truly competitive in presidential politics any time in the foreseeable future.

The GOP is banking on its "minority outreach" program along with passage of immigration reform to get them back in the game. But the party's past continues to haunt their efforts now. After years of voter suppression aimed at minorities, Republicans courting minority voters is a little like asking

How to Handle Immigrants Living in the U.S. Illegally?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER March 13-17, 2013.

black basketball players to attend the University of Kentucky under Coach Adolph Rupp. Why would you join that team?

Meanwhile, immigration reform is showing signs of falling the way of gun control. While an immigration bill in some form is likely to pass the Senate, House Republicans are much cooler to the idea. That's because so many Republican-held House districts are disproportionately dominated by the same white conservatives Pew founder Andrew Kohut says have hijacked the national Republican Party.

As Kohut points out, the conundrum for the GOP in reinventing itself is that the extreme element that keeps Republicans in Congress also prevents the party from winning the White House.

The racially inclusive Democratic Party has become the party of national success while the racially challenged Republican Party can never be more than a legislative party. That fact won't change because Republicans drop millions on "minority outreach."

Republicans have to also demonstrate through their policies and their actions that they truly welcome Latinos and African Americans into their party.



Sautter his a Democratic consultant based in Washington, D.C. He is an Indiana native.

Negative Statements About the Republican Party

Next, please tell me one or two specific things you dislike about the Republican Party?

	National adults	Republicans	Independents	Democrats
	%	%	%	%
Inflexible/Unwilling to compromise	21	26	17	22
For the rich/Protecting the wealthy, not the middle class	12	2	10	20
Don't stand up for their positions/Give in too easily	9	14	7	3
Inconsistent/Dishonest/Say one thing and do another	5	6	5	1
Choice of candidates/party leaders	4	7	3	2
Positions on social issues	4	3	3	8
Abortion/Women's policies	3	2	3	6
Only worry about themselves	3	2	4	4
Spend too much money/Increased budget deficit	3	4	4	2
Too conservative	3	2	3	3
Favor big business/corporations too much	2	*	2	4
Influence of religion on party	2	1	2	4
Economic policies	2	*	3	3
Immigration policies	2	2	*	4
Foreign policy/War issues	1	*	2	2
Gun policies	1	0	2	2
Position on gay marriage	1	1	1	3
Not conservative enough	1	1	*	1
Other	10	12	9	8
Everything	2	0	2	4
Nothing	17	19	18	15
No opinion	17	14	20	10
	125	118	120	131

Totals add to more than 100% due to multiple mentions.

* Less than 0.5%

March 20-21, 2013

GALLUP



RFK blazed across Indiana 45 years ago

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND — Forty-five years ago, Bobby Kennedy came to South Bend for the wildest of all Dyngus Days. Kennedy would have been president if he had lived long enough.



I was far from sure on that Dyngus Day, as Kennedy campaigned here in a "must win" 1968 Democratic presidential primary, that he would win the presidency.

Never have I ever seen more enthusiasm for a candidate. But could he win nationally with a Democratic Party torn apart over the war in Vietnam?

The center for Dyngus-ing, then as now, was the West Side Democratic & Civic Club. As political writers often did in days of greater importance of newspapers in political campaigns, I rode in a convertible with Kennedy to interview him as he traveled from a courthouse speech, attracting a crowd of 6,000, to the West Side Club.

The late Sen. Vance Hartke, also to ride along, and I were whisked to the car as the speech ended. Kennedy climbed in as cheering admirers surrounded the car. Hartke and I were obstacles in the way as hands reached out to touch Kennedy, shake his hand or thrust pens and pencils and items for autographs. Hartke lost his glasses as we hit the floorboard for safety.

On one trip here, someone reaching to shake hands held on too long and pulled Kennedy from the convertible. Quick dental repair was needed. Crowds lined streets leading to the West Side Club - people of all ages waving, shouting, cheering, holding home-made signs.

This was significant in the Polish-American neighborhoods near the club. Kennedy needed solid support from that ethnic group, so powerful then in St. Joseph County politics, in a race in which the state Democratic organization was determined to beat him.

Kennedy was opposed in the primary by Sen. Gene McCarthy, whose early showing of anti-Vietnam War support had caused President Lyndon Johnson not to seek re-election, and Indiana Gov. Roger Branigin, the state Democratic organization's "favorite son" candidate in an

effort to stop Kennedy.

At the packed West Side Club, with an overflow crowd outside, Kennedy spoke greetings in Polish, sang a Polish song, waved a Polish flag, ate kielbasa (Polish sausage), hailed Revolutionary War contributions of Polish patriots and introduced his brother-in-law, a real Polish prince, Stanislaus Radziwill. He sought always to connect with his audience, black or white, young or old, union or business, ethnic Polish or Italian or Irish. They all would respond.

A formidable obstacle was the Indianapolis Star, the state's largest newspaper, then unabashedly political. The Star refused to print where Kennedy would campaign, seeking to diminish his crowds, while reporting wildly exaggerated claims of Branigin crowds and endorsements.

With McCarthy siphoning off anti-war votes, Kennedy could lose to Branigin if the party organization really stood solidly for the governor. On that Dyngus Day, Kennedy knew that one key organization figure, Ideal Baldoni, then St. Joseph County Democratic chairman and influential in state politics, wasn't an enthusiast for Branigin for president. At the Club, Kennedy told the throng: "Mr. Baldoni, your county chairman, every once in a while smiles at me. I think it means something."

It did. Baldoni, bound by organization ties to of-



officially endorse Branigin, was personally for Kennedy. He declined to put organization roadblocks in Kennedy's path or criticize Kennedy.

On another ride with Kennedy, as we got to the LaPorte County line, where I was to leave the motorcade, he said: "Well, you've asked me a lot of questions on these rides. Could I ask you one?"

Of course, and he asked:

"The Indianapolis Star says I have no chance. That Gov. Branigin has this race won. What do you think?"



My answer, not some political prognostication but for me a certainty, was:

"You'll win big in Northern Indiana. Gov. Branigin isn't popular around here. He'll come in third here, behind McCarthy. And statewide, you'll win comfortably."

The candidate's wife, Ethel, riding with him on that trip, leaned over and planted a kiss. Not exactly what a reporter expects or wants in political coverage.

Kennedy did win in Indiana.

If he had asked about winning the presidency, I would have disappointed Ethel, saying only that he cer-

tainly had a chance.

Looking back at how close Hubert Humphrey came to defeating Richard Nixon, despite rioting at the Democratic National Convention and a party torn apart, Kennedy would have been a unifying candidate for the party and president of the United States.

Except for a bullet in California that June. ❖

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

The immigrants who came to NW Indiana

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE — There is a plaque at the Ellis Island/Statute of Liberty National Park that has a welcoming message for the immigrants who entered this country.

And from 1892 to 1924, some 12 million immigrants entered this land through Ellis Island.



Many of those immigrants ended up in Northwest Indiana working in the building trades and steel mills.

Their descendants remain today, working in many of the same jobs, but under much better circumstances, thanks in large part to the advent of labor unions – the very unions that Republicans in Indiana are trying to destroy.

That plaque, in part, tells those entering the country: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled

masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore, send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

There should be an asterisk at the end of that poem, which was written by Emma Lazarus, that says, "Except for Indiana."

It is becoming increasingly clear that Indiana won't expand its Medicaid program through the Affordable Care Act that has become known as Obamacare.

That is the way Gov. Mike Pence wants it. That is the way House Speaker Brian Bosma wants it. And that is the way Republicans in both chambers want it. And any Republicans who don't want it that way are afraid to say so.

Instead of expanding Medicaid, the state would follow its existing Healthy Indiana Plan – a high-deductible insurance program that requires low-income participants to contribute up to \$1,100 a year for health care. When you don't have a crumb in the cupboard, \$1,100 can be a staggering amount of money.

In reference to HIP, Bosma said, "It's a plan that's receiving recognition from all over the country as a consumer-driven alternative for health care for those who can't afford it themselves. Our team is generally in agreement with the governor and the Senate leadership that the blanket expansion of Medicaid is not the right course now." House Minority Leader Scott Pelath, D-Michigan City, said he doesn't see the federal government allowing Indiana to substitute its own health care program, which then would leave 400,000 Hoosiers uninsured.

Republican governors in Michigan and Ohio have said they will expand their Medicaid programs.

Even though there will be no cost to the state for new Medicaid clients for two years, the state's share gradually increases to 10 percent between 2016 and 2020. Even with little cost to the state, Bosma doesn't want any part of it.

"The better course is to be prudent in not entering a plan that's not clearly in the best interest of Hoosiers, and move thoughtfully in a process rather than rush in and try and get out later," Bosma said.

Not clearly in the best interest of Hoosiers? Oh yeah, I guess the poor Hoosiers don't count.

And it doesn't matter what that sign at Ellis Island says to the world when it comes to Indiana. ❖

Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for The Times of Northwest Indiana.



We'd be better off if political parties were still relevant

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – A few weeks ago, the Republican National Committee issued a 100-page report aimed at reviving the GOP after its poor showing in last November's elections. It was remarkably blunt about the specifics of the party's shortcomings — its lack of inclusiveness, its hapless data initiatives, its poor grassroots organizing. What it did not take on, however, was an issue the RNC can do little about: The diminished influence, if not irrelevance, of both major parties in American politics.



In the early years of my political career, the parties were pretty much the only game in town. If you wanted to be a candidate, there was no one else to turn to for help with building a campaign organization, finding

volunteers, making contact with activists and donors, or creating a network of supporters. People could and did win elections without official party support — but not often, and not easily.

The parties also registered voters, turned them out on Election Day, and provided much of the campaign funding. They not only articulated policy and kept the other party honest, but also served to forge a policy consensus among the disparate coalitions that made them up, striving to make themselves as inclusive as possible.

All this is much less evident these days. At the very top, once the nomination is sewed up, presidential candidates run independently of the party. They have their own staffs, do their own fundraising, and build their own organizations. I'll be stunned if we don't see future presidents take a leaf from President Obama's playbook and form their own grassroots organizations outside the party apparatus to pressure Washington lawmakers.

The rise of increasingly influential outside players has done much the same thing for candidates lower down. They can now hire their own signature-gatherers for petitions, their own pollsters, their own consultants and specialists in virtually every aspect of modern campaigning. Scores of groups representing various factions within

a party have emerged as significant players in the political process. The parties are simply outmatched in resources and organization. They've even lost control of campaign funding, as special interest groups with their own organizations — the NRA, say, or the Club For Growth — not only put money behind or against candidates, but also turn out voters on behalf of their favorite issues.

The parties' loss of influence is especially obvious when you look at primaries. Where party approval once was tantamount to nomination, today it's anything but. In last year's elections, any number of party-approved candidates were beaten by well-funded outside challengers. It's one of the reasons that building consensus on Capitol Hill has become so difficult: with congressional districts drawn to favor one party or another, incumbents live in fear of taking a stance that might draw a challenger with special-interest backing.

At the state and local level, party organizations are finding it harder than ever to recruit volunteers interested in building the party itself, rather than in promoting a favored cause by trying to take over its apparatus. Where volunteers once put in many hours licking stamps, walking the streets to identify and register voters, or getting people to the polls, today far fewer people feel they can justify the time unless it's on behalf of a particular candidate or issue.

Obviously, the parties are not entirely out of the game. Some roles only a national party can play, as with the presidential nominating process. But where they once were able to exert control, now they can at best hope for a bit of influence.

I favor strengthening the role of political parties in our system. They once played a central role in identifying candidates, articulating ideas and positions, and identifying talent for government; today, those jobs often are not performed at all. Robust political parties might even help break the impasse in Washington. They used to bring a wide array of Americans together under one banner, and pressed their members to learn how to build consensus on behalf of a larger cause. This was a skill that carried over to Capitol Hill. Independence from the party may be a fine thing for self-expression, but it carries a cost to the country. ❖

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.



Morton Marcus, Howey Politics Indiana: The news last week about Indiana's economy was a mixed bag. According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), Indiana ranked 16th in growth of personal income among the 50 states. Our 3.7 percent increase over 2011 beat



out the national figure of 3.5 percent. Contained within these positive numbers are a few disturbing facts. The difference between the Indiana growth rates, quarter by quarter, and the U.S. rates declined over the course of 2012. The advantage (+0.2 percent) we had in the first quarter turned negative (-0.5 percent) by the fourth quarter.

Relatively then, Indiana slipped compared to the nation as the year progressed. In the fourth quarter our 1.4 percent growth ranked 48th or the 3rd slowest in the U.S.

One reason for this slower Hoosier growth lies in the nation's unusual fast growth in dividends, interest and rent. We depend less on this form of income than do other states. Sixty-eight percent of our personal income growth came from earnings compared to 63 percent nationally. In addition, Indiana is not noted for having large numbers of heavily compensated executives. In 2012, executive compensation ballooned at the end of the year boosting the data for both Indiana and the U.S. Both of these factors were in anticipation of higher federal personal income tax rate. Therefore, we may expect a decline in earnings nationally in the first quarter of 2013.

Among the favorable details of these data is the slight rise in relative per capita personal income (PCPI) for Indiana. The state now ranks 39th in PCPI and is 14 percent below the national figure. These data represent a continuing, but slight improvement over the past five years.

The problem with PCPI, although it is used widely as a measure of collective well-being, is that does not tell the story of the average household and is limited for policy purposes. Personal income includes earnings by workers and proprietors; it also includes, as noted above, dividends, interest and rent (DIR), plus transfer payments. DIR are not necessarily received by people. They are credited to states and counties based on federal income tax returns. Yet for many of us, whatever DIR we get goes into a retirement account we may not touch for decades.

Transfer payments include unemployment compensation which means the worse the economy, the higher this component of personal income. Also included are social security payments which depend on the numbers of persons

over 65 or on disability.

Not included in personal income are withdrawals made by individuals from their savings. These may be simply bank accounts, certificates of deposit, all forms of IRAs, mutual funds, annuities, stocks and bonds. Given our demographics, this omission becomes more important annually. Fortunately, BEA is working on the problem. These shortcomings do not invalidate the data. They do suggest that Indiana's political leadership a few years back made a mistake in hitching its wagon to PCPI as an indicator of its success. We can hope the current administration will not make the same mistake. ❖

Doug Ross, NWI Times: It makes sense that Lake County Democratic Party Chairman Thomas McDermott Jr., of all people, would be a strident liberal, eagerly embracing the party line on every issue. After all, Lake County is one of the most heavily Democratic counties in Indiana. When we recorded this week's nwi.com Political Roundtable, I asked McDermott about school vouchers, after the Indiana Supreme Court upheld the far-reaching law. Everyone knows Democrats hate school vouchers because of their effect on traditional public schools.

Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz, one of the Democratic stars of last year's election, was propelled to office in part because of her stance against vouchers. So it was surprising to hear Lake County's top Democrat say this week, "I happen to be a fan of the vouchers." McDermott's reasoning makes sense, though. McDermott is mayor of Hammond, a city fighting to stabilize and regrow its population. And schools, as we all know, are a primary consideration in determining where we want to live. Parents want a good education for their children. Vouchers make private schools affordable for more parents, so they allow parents more choices in where to send their children to school — especially in Hammond, which has some good private schools. The College Bound program McDermott started is aimed at convincing parents to live in Hammond. McDermott hopes to wean that program off casino revenue and fund it with water revenues, to make the program more stable. But what good is College Bound if the students aren't well prepared for college when they graduate from high school? So McDermott's stance on vouchers makes sense. "I know that doesn't sound very Democratic, because most of the people in my party don't support the voucher system, but I'm mayor, and mayors have to deal with real-life issues," McDermott said. "And I can tell you that in Hammond and in Northwest Indiana, the urban communities are losing population. And we've got to stop that bleeding, or else we're in trouble." ❖





Donnelly target of petition drive

FORT WAYNE - Online petition drives are urging Sen. Joe Donnelly, D-Ind., to support same-sex marriage. The liberal advocacy organization MoveOn.org identified Donnelly as among eight Democratic senators who are "holdouts on marriage equality." On its website, MoveOn has linked the names and photos of the lawmakers to petitions asking them to oppose the Defense of Marriage Act. The petition for Donnelly had been signed by 2,522 people by Tuesday evening, according to the website. Only the petition for Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., had more signatures -

3,632. MoveOn on Tuesday issued a "victory update" after one of the eight senators, Delaware's Tom

Carper, announced he now supports gay marriage. Also Tuesday, Illinois Sen. Mark Kirk became the second Republican in the chamber to give his support, joining Ohio's Rob Portman. Meantime, a Columbus, Ind., blogger for the liberal website Daily Kos is asking readers to sign an online petition encouraging Donnelly to back same-sex marriage. "Senator Donnelly's office is aware of the petitions and welcomes Hoosiers on both sides of the issue to contact his office," Elizabeth Shappell, communications director for Donnelly, said Tuesday in an email.



'Kids don't fight; they shoot'

FORT WAYNE - Upon news of what could be Allen County's 15th homicide this year, all shooting deaths, a Wednesday forum on domestic vio-

lence quickly turned into a discussion on guns and culture (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). "We have had more homicides than I can ever remember" in the first three months of a year, said Jonathan Ray, president and chief executive officer of the Fort Wayne Urban League. About an hour later - after complaints about easy access to firearms, negligent parents, ineffectual lawmakers and shoot-'em-up video games - a self-described felon tried to sum up the mood in the room and the city. "Now it's affecting everybody," Armond Dowdell said about gun violence. Andre Patterson said cultural changes are partly to blame for the spate of violence. "Kids don't fight anymore. They shoot," he said.

Group pressures senators on guns

SOUTH BEND - A progressive public policy and research organization on Wednesday called on the state's two U.S. senators, Democrat Joe Donnelly and Republican Dan Coats, to support "common sense" reforms aimed at curbing gun violence in America, including criminal background checks on all gun purchases (Blasko, South Bend Tribune). As Congress considers new gun legislation in the wake of the fatal school shooting in Newtown, Conn., Donnelly, of Granger, and Coats both have faced pressure in recent weeks from gun-control groups, including Mayors Against Illegal Guns, to support tougher background checks as part of wider reform efforts. "There is no other way to ensure that those people who have committed rape or murder, or who are on a terrorist watch list, won't get those guns," former Virginia congressman Tom Perriello, president of the Center for American Progress Action Fund, said from in front of the St. Joseph County Courthouse down-

town. Perriello noted that, according to a poll conducted by Mayors Against Illegal Guns, of which South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg is a member, 89 percent of Indiana residents support universal background checks. He said 90 percent of gun owners do too.

Lake Council eyes 1.5% income tax

CROWN POINT - The Lake County Council is preparing to take its first vote this month on adopting as much as a 1.5 percent personal income tax on residents and workers to bail local government out of either cutting services or increasing debt (Dolan, NWI Times). The seven-member council will begin discussing the politically incendiary subject Thursday morning at its workshop meeting and could take the first of several votes at its 10 a.m. regular meeting Tuesday in the Lake County Government Complex auditorium. Council President Ted Bilski, D-Hobart, said Wednesday, "This is not a cure all. We are in a position where we cannot completely cut our way out and we cannot tax our way out of the situation we are in."

Child abuse cases up 15% in Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS - Reports of child abuse and neglect in Indiana grew 15 percent during the past two years, a top official in the state's child protection agency said. Department of Child Services Chief of Staff John Ryan said the agency received about 151,000 reports in 2011, and 173,000 in 2012. "Reports are up, but that doesn't necessarily mean there's more abuse or neglect taking place," Ryan told WRTV-TV. "What it hopefully means is people are more aware of abuse and neglect and are stepping forward and reporting it."