



# HPI Poll: Pence 10% tax cut stalls

## Only 39% back full Pence income tax cut

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Mike Pence’s top legislative priority, his 10% tax cut, was backed by 38.6% of respondents in a Howey Politics Indiana Poll, while 33.4% favored the Indiana Senate version that would deliver a 3.3% cut, while 17% said neither.

It shows that after months of pressing the issue, the new governor has found little political traction.

The poll of 600 registered voters was conducted April 18 through 21 by Bellwether Research and pollster Christine Matthews. It has a +/- error rate of 4% and canvassed 69% of respondents on land telephone lines and 31% on cell phones. The poll was conducted after the April 16 revenue forecast projected that Indiana would take in \$290 million more than the December forecast over the next 27 months. It also came after Americans For Prosperity began a \$60,000 TV ad campaign in the Indianapolis and Fort Wayne TV



Gov. Mike Pence faces a dramatic 72 hours if he is to attain his 10% income tax hike. Howey Politics Indiana Poll shows the proposal has had little traction. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

markets over the weekend and Monday pushing the Pence tax cut.

The HPI survey also found wide support for

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# Donnelly’s gay switch

By **CHRISTINE MATTHEWS**

WASHINGTON – On April 5th U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly announced his support for gay marriage and since then I’ve been interested to see how this would poll for him. Of course, since he is not up for re-election until 2018, polling on this now is pretty much an academic exercise. And with the rapid pace of change on this issue, it could be that his 2018 GOP opponent will have the same position.

In a not terribly surprising finding, a majority of Hoosier voters



**“What a complete charlatan. I was always taught such conduct could be grounds for disbarment.”**

- State Sen. Mike Delph, Tweeting about Attorney General Greg Zoeller



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(55%) oppose Joe Donnelly's decision to support gay marriage, while 36% support it. And when they say oppose, they mean it: 47% strongly oppose, while 27% strongly favor. Of course the results break along party lines: 59% of Democrats are supportive, as are 38% of independents, and 20% of Republicans. But age, as we know, is an important factor too: Three fourths of Democrats under the age of 45 support his decision, while 20% oppose it. Democrats over the age of 45 are more divided: 50% favor and 40% oppose. Nearly half (48%) of independents under 45 support Donnelly's position and 43% oppose it, but among independents over age 45, 29% favor and 60% oppose. Republicans are very negative, although younger Republicans are 10 points more supportive than their older counterparts.

**Interestingly**, college graduates are evenly divided: 46% support Donnelly's decision, while 47% oppose it. College educated women are supportive (50%-42%), while non college women run two to one against (30% favor - 60% oppose). Among college educated men, a very strong GOP cohort, 41% favor Donnelly's position and 51% are opposed, while just 31% of non college men are in favor and 63% are against.

Sen. Donnelly's favorability rating (36%) is where it was in our late October poll right before his election, and his unfavorable rating is down to 26% from 31%. But his colleague, GOP Sen. Dan Coats, betters this with a 44% favorable – 18% unfavorable rating, but after two years in office, 28% still have no opinion of the senior senator.

Donnelly's 2012 Republican Senate opponent Richard Mourdock doesn't fare so well. He has recovered some from his abysmal 30% favorable – 49% unfavorable rating from October, but he is the only one of 16 names tested with a net negative image at 27% favorable – 35% unfavorable. I went straight to gender in the

cross-tabs, but it wasn't that interesting. Men and women weren't terribly different. The interesting difference is by education: College graduates, both women and men, are really unfavorable to Mourdock (26% favorable – 47% unfavorable) compared to those with less than a college degree (29% favorable – 27% unfavorable).

**Hoosier voters** are divided, as they were in October, on whether or not the state should amend its constitution to define marriage as being between one man and one woman: 50% say they support or lean toward voting to amend the Constitution, while 46% say they would vote no or would lean against it. Party splits mirror our October findings: 59% of Republicans support/lean toward this amendment as do 50% of independents and 36% of Democrats. Support for the amendment is driven by seniors and to some extent Boomers. Eighteen to -29 year olds oppose the amendment and 30-44 year olds are divided.

We also tested options for expanding health care coverage to more poor and low income people, as the Affordable Care Act calls on states to do. Because Indiana is waiting to hear if it might be allowed to do this through its own program, the Healthy Indiana plan, we tested this option in addition to Medicaid. We also provided the option to do neither. The results align with the private polling on this issue I did last month. Hoosier voters want to extend health care coverage, and most support doing it through the Healthy Indiana plan (48%), rather than the Medicaid program (23%). Only 19% said the state should not extend coverage under either option and 10% were undecided. While Republicans don't support Medicaid expansion, they do support extending coverage through the state plan which encourages participation in the cost.

**On the education** front, Indiana signed up in 2010 to participate in The Common Core national



education standards, but a few legislators say Indiana should pause its implementation or pull out of the program. However, the majority (54%) of voters want to stay with The Common Core. Only the most conservative voters are divided on this (40% for and 40% against). Somewhat conservative voters overwhelmingly support staying with The Common Core (60%), as do moderates and liberals (57%).

**Nearly half of Hoosiers** say there is a gun in their household and 13% are members of the National Rifle Association (22% of gun owners). When asked how much the NRA reflects their own views, 46% of gun owners said the NRA reflects their opinions always or most of the time, a number slightly lower than the 50% Gallup found nationally among gun owners. The majority of Hoosier gun owners (54%) say the NRA reflects their views only some of the time or never, as do 72% of non gun owners.

More than eight in 10 gun owners as well as 88% of voters without guns support background checks to buy a gun in any circumstance (a more expansive question

than the policy that was being considered). It's enormously popular, but down a tad from a February, 2011 statewide poll I conducted in which we found 90% in favor of background checks under all circumstances.

**Also asked in February 2011** was whether gun laws should be more strict, less strict or kept as they are. In 2011, 50% of Hoosier voters said gun laws should be more strict compared with 45% on this poll but those who said they should be less strict was the same (8%). On this poll, 47% thought the laws should be kept as they are.

A plurality (49%) of women say laws should be more strict, compared to 40% of men. Democratic men and women are in agreement (82%) that gun laws should be more strict. It is independent and Republican women who are more likely to favor stricter gun laws than their male counterparts. ❖

**Matthews is CEO of Bellwether Research in Washington and a native of Kokomo.**

## HPI Poll, from page 1

expanded gun background checks – an issue that was defeated last week in the U.S. Senate – while U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly is not finding support for his shift on gay marriage, though he remains personally popular.

On the tax cut issue, Gov. Pence had heralded the April revenue forecast numbers, saying on April 16, "The April revenue forecast is great news for Hoosiers and good news for the budget process. The forecast projects stronger economic growth and \$290 million more in revenue than the December forecast and should be welcome news to every Hoosier struggling in these difficult times and to policy makers working to craft a balanced budget."

But Hoosiers were almost evenly divided on the two plans, with 33% backing the Senate version presented by Appropriations Chairman Luke Kenley, who has insisted that with the phasing out of the inheritance tax and reductions in corporate, financial institutions and a third of what the governor wanted, the state will deliver \$525 million in total tax relief, a number similar to Pence's objective. The House Republican budget omitted the Pence tax cut.

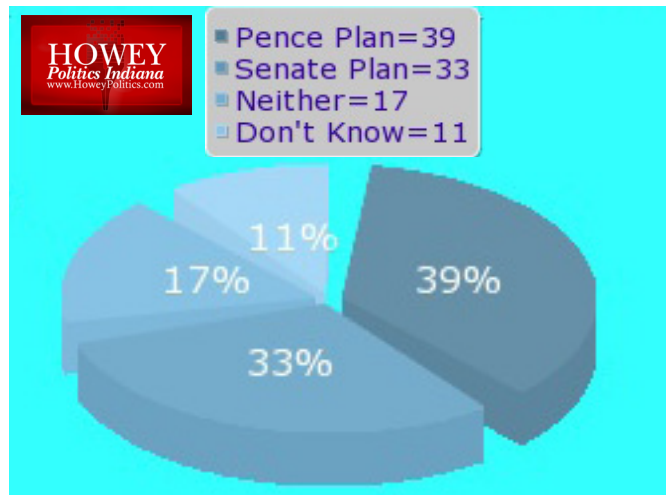
The poll asked the

question this way: You may have heard that Governor Mike Pence wants to cut income taxes by 10%. He says Indiana can provide taxpayers with relief and still increase education funding by 1% annually, put more money toward transportation, and set aside a reserve. The Republican controlled Senate recently proposed phasing out the inheritance tax and cutting income taxes by 3% in order to increase education and transportation funding beyond what Governor Pence's plan calls for. Which approach do you support?"

Additionally, 11% did not know, meaning that 61.4% of respondents were not backing the Pence tax cut. Another way to gauge this is that the combined support for the Pence and Senate plans amounts of 72% wanting a cut.

The Indiana Poll, conducted last November for Ball State University's Bowen Center for Public Affairs by Princeton Survey Research, asked the question differently – whether Hoosiers wanted the income tax cut or spend money on jobs and education – but the results were similar: 31% favored the tax cut and 64% favored jobs and education spending.

While Pence, since last July, repeatedly touted the tax cut on the gubernatorial





campaign trail and then as governor, and Americans For Prosperity has sunk close to \$200,000 into Indianapolis and Fort Wayne media market in TV, radio and web ads, he is at risk of failing to galvanize his base. The Association of Indiana Counties, which is now about 80% Republican, favors more road funding in lieu of the tax cut, and a similar dynamic is in place with the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns. House Speaker Brian Bosma wrote a letter to all 92 Republican county chairs stating his opposition to the cut and only a handful of the party officials have come out publicly for the tax cut.

The HPI Poll reveals that just 47.1% of Republicans back the Pence cut, while 33.3% favor the Senate plan and 9.1 support neither. The numbers trail off significantly from there, with 35.3% of independents backing the Pence plan (31.7% back the Senate version) and 28.2% of the Democrats in favor, with 33.5% backing the Senate version.

Regionally, the Pence plan is backed by 39.6% in Democratic Marion County, and 40.7% in the heavily Republican doughnut counties, and it trails off to 33.2% in the 8th and 9th CDs.

While the full Pence tax cut appears to be stalling, and many legislative observers believe he will end up with a percentage of the cut, Hoosier voters like Gov. Pence. His favorable/unfavorables stood at 52/20%, while 23% had no



Former Gov. Evan Bayh (right) with House Speaker Brian Bosma at the 2005 inaugural of Gov. Mitch Daniels. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

hard opinion.

Of the 16 political figures polled in an effort to establish baseline numbers for those possibly on the 2014 or 2016 statewide tickets, only former U.S. senator and governor Evan Bayh had a better fav/unfav ratio at 60/16% with similar universal name awareness as Gov. Pence. Bayh confidants tended to eschew a potential return to gubernatorial politics late last year, but one of them told HPI recently, "Evan misses public service." Others who have talked recently with the former two-term governor tell HPI that Bayh has inquired about the 2011 redistricting and whether Democrats can recoup some of the "heritage" House seats it lost

in the Ohio and Wabash river valleys in 2010 and 2012. Historically, Bayh runs well in the valley counties and has long coattails.

HPI polled the potential Democratic challenger field for the 2016 gubernatorial race and Bayh would clearly be the biggest threat to a Pence reelection. Democratic 2012 nominee John Gregg's fav/unfavs stood at 25/16% (with 35% unaware); former congressman Baron Hill was at 13/15% (with 42% unaware) and Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. stood at 8/5% (with 66% unaware). Pence nipped Gregg 49 to 47% last November in a race most observers did not expect to be that close.

The Pence campaign was burdened with the U.S. Senate campaign of Republican Richard Mourdock, who imploded in late October with his "God intends rape" remark in New Albany. Mourdock has been rumored as a possible 8th CD or Indiana auditor candidate in 2014 (he is term-



## Potential 2016 gubernatorial candidates



	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion	don't know
<b>Gov. Mike Pence (R)</b>	52%	20%	30%	5%
<b>Evan Bayh (D)</b>	60%	16%	19%	5%
<b>John Gregg (D)</b>	25%	16%	24%	35%
<b>Baron Hill (D)</b>	13%	15%	30%	42%
<b>Mayor Tom McDermott (D)</b>	8%	5%	22%	66%



limited as treasurer) but his fav/unfavs are still toxic at 27/35%. His unfavorable mark is by far the largest in the survey.

Pence's legislative sparring partners – Republican Speaker Brian C. Bosma and Senate President David Long – aren't nearly as well-known as the governor, but both have robust if limited fav/unfav ratios. Bosma's stood at 24/12% (with 44% unaware) and Long's at 13/6% with 56% unaware.

### Other legislative issues

While Pence has a great deal of work to do on the tax cut during the final 72 hours of the session, he is getting a tailwind on one other issue while losing support on others. On the question of whether to extend Medicaid as called for under the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), 23% preferred that while 48% back Gov. Pence's position of extending coverage through the current Healthy Indiana Plan. Another 19% do not want to extend coverage to the poor and 10% did not know.

On one aspect of the criminal code reforms – decriminalization of marijuana – the numbers are moving against Gov. Pence, who weighed in on the reforms last month, calling for greater penalties instead of downgrading them. However, the HPI Poll this April found 56% favor decriminalization and 38% oppose, compared to 54%



Gov. Pence meets with the press after pushing for his tax cut last week. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

favoring decriminalization in the October Howey/DePauw Indiana Battleground Poll while 37% opposed.

On the question of whether Common Core standards should be adopted, 54% favored Indiana's current course of adopting the standards, 26% opposed and 20% did not know. Pence is straddling this issue, saying earlier this month that he is reassessing Indiana's participation in the standards. In June, he will have the opportunity to appoint half of the State Board of Education, which currently backs Common Core. Republicans

back the adoption of Common Core by a 50.5% to 33.4% margin; independents 53% to 24% and Democrats 60% to 16%. Earlier this month, the Republican National Committee adopted a resolution opposing Common Core and there is active legislation pushed by conservative Republicans to "pause" implementation of the standards until the state schedules statewide hearings.

On the issue of whether to allow race track casinos to convert electronic games into those using human dealers, 62% favor and 19% oppose. That legislation could be included in a late budget deal, though Bosma and Pence have termed it as an "expansion of gaming." Voters – even Republican voters – 54.6% to 23.2% favor the legislation that could create up to 600 new jobs.



## HPI Poll Fav/Unfavs Potential statewide 2014, 2016 candidates

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion	don't know
<b>Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann</b>	19%	6%	31%	45%
<b>Sec. of State Connie Lawson</b>	15%	3%	27%	55%
<b>Supt. Glenda Ritz</b>	26%	11%	22%	41%
<b>Marion Co. Clerk Beth White</b>	9%	4%	20%	68%
<b>Marion Mayor Wayne Seybold</b>	5%	2%	18%	75%
<b>Atty Gen. Greg Zoeller</b>	34%	7%	32%	28%
<b>Treasurer Richard Mourdock</b>	27%	35%	30%	8%



And on a cornerstone social issue in Pence's political career – whether to back a constitutional amendment saying marriage should be between a man and a woman – 50% favor and 46% oppose. This compares to 48/45% in the October Howey/DePauw survey. So this issue isn't evolving as quickly in Indiana as it is nationally. The constitutional amendment was tabled this session as legislative leaders await the decision on two related U.S. Supreme Court cases, but will likely resurface in 2014.



U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly in his Capitol Hill office last week. (HPI Photo by Chris Sautter)

On the abortion issue, we asked which comes closest to your view, and 20% said "always legal," 19% said "most of the time," 45% said "illegal except for rape, incest or life of the mother," and 16% said "illegal without exceptions."

On another issue before the General Assembly – whether to extend in-state tuition to students who graduate from Indiana high schools but are not legal citizens (softening coming into the state illegally with their parents at a young age), 69% were against that and 31% were for. The breakdown by party is interesting: 18/82% should/should not among Republicans, 31/69% among independents and 50/50 among Democrats.

### Guns, gays and senators

Both U.S. Sens. Dan Coats and Joe Donnelly have

positive fav/unfav ratios, though Donnelly may be taking a hit after changing his stance for gay marriage earlier this month. Coats stood at 44/18% fav/unfav and Donnelly at 36/26%. But when it came to Donnelly's stance on marriage, only 36% favored and 55% opposed. Among Democrats it was 59/33% fav/unfav, 38/51% among independents and 20/73% among Republicans.

When it comes to gun background checks Donnelly supported and Coats opposed, 72% strongly favored the expanded checks and 11% favored for 85% approving and 15% opposing. The question was worded this way:

Do you favor or oppose requiring all gun buyers to pass a criminal background check, no matter where they buy the gun and no matter who they buy it from. If (favor/oppose) do you feel strongly or not so strongly about this?

We asked the question, do you feel laws covering the sales of guns should be more strict, less strict or be kept as they are now, 45% said more strict, 8% said less, and 47% said kept as they are.

On the question, how often does the National Rifle Association reflect your view on guns, 10% of respondents said always, 30% said most of the time, 30% said only some of the time, and 30% said never. For NRA members, those figures were 28% always, 52% most of the time, 14% some of the time, and 5% never. Only 13% said there was an NRA member in their household and 85% said no. As for the question, does anyone in your household own a gun, 47% said yes and 45% said no. ❖



## HPI Poll Coats, Donnelly U.S. Senate Favorables

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion	don't know
<b>U.S. Sen. Dan Coats (R)</b>	44%	18%	28%	11%
<b>U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly (D)</b>	36%	26%	30%	9%

### Do you favor or oppose Sen. Donnelly's decision to support gay marriage?

Total	Democrats	Independent	Republican
36% favor	59%	38%	20%
55% oppose	33%	51%	73%



## 83% line up to support gun background checks

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – Eighty-three percent.

There's always something in Howey Politics Indiana polling that raises at least one eyebrow, and sometimes both.

And in the survey we present in today's edition, it is that 83% of people support expanded gun background checks.

Bellwether Research pollster Christine Matthews, who has polled for former Gov. Mitch Daniels and the Indiana Republican Party, posed the question like this: "Do you favor or oppose requiring all gun buyers to pass a criminal background check, no matter where they buy the gun and no matter who they buy it from. If (favor/oppose) do you feel strongly or not so strongly about this?"



This came during the same week that U.S. Sen. Dan Coats joined a majority in the U.S. Senate in

blocking the Manchin-Toomey legislation that would have expanded background checks to gun shows. In the ramp up to that vote, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and others like former congresswoman Gabby Giffords had cited national polling that showed support in the 90th percentile.

But . . . this is Indiana. This is a God, guns and guts state. I hear that from Republicans and Democrats. The HPI poll reveals that 47% of our respondents said there was a gun in their household.

So this 83% in favor to 15% opposed is surprising . . . no, it's shocking.

Let's mine down into the top lines and cross tabulations and see what's going on here.

As for the top lines, 72% "strongly favor" the expanded check and 11% said they favor it. There were 11% who strongly opposed and 4% who oppose. And only 2% said they didn't have a position. That is an extremely low number, suggesting that Hoosiers are willing to take a stand.

**The opposition** to background checks almost matches up with the 13% who say someone in their household is a member of the National Rifle Association, while 85% said no.

In the cross tabs, 76.7% of men favor the expansion and 89% of women. Among Republicans, 77.7% favored expansion and just 19.4% opposed. Among indepen-

dents, 77.2% supported and 21.9% opposed and among Democrats it was 94.5% to 3.8%.

Let's look at Republican women: 86.2% support the background checks and 70.4% "strongly favor."

**As in any poll, there** is data that seems to collide. When we asked, in general, do you feel the laws covering the sale of guns should be more strict, less strict or the same, 45% said more strict, 8% less strict and 47% said keep them the same. With respondents in households with guns, 36% said more strict, 10% less strict and 54% wanted to keep the status quo. In non-gun households, 59% wanted stricter laws, 4% less strict and 37% the same.

Another thing that jumped out at me was in John Gregg's fav/unfavs, among NRA members 13.3% had a favorable impression and 23.9% unfavorable and my thoughts were this: That just ain't fair, as I know for a fact that Gregg and his two sons hunt on the Sandborn spread and surrounding environs.

A couple of weeks ago, I wrote a column saying I just couldn't understand how expanding background checks is an infringement on 2nd Amendment rights. But every Republican Member of the Indiana Congressional delegation brought that up as a qualifier, and Sen. Dan Coats ultimately lined up against Manchin-Toomey.

"While I appreciate the good-faith effort of Senators Manchin and Toomey, I am concerned their legislation would result in more problems with our existing background check system and would not address the underlying issues with gun violence," Coats explained. "As a father and grandfather, the tragedy at Newtown impacted me as it did every Hoosier parent. Both our government and society need to do more to reduce violence and ensure guns do not end up in the wrong hands." Coats said of his alternative, "This legislation is a sensible approach that will help protect our communities while still protecting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens."

**Coats is three years away** from reelection, and while he gets an "A" from the Indiana NRA, his national rating is a C+. To his credit, his new legislative effort seeks to fix the current background check system and address mental health and school safety issues. But you wonder how his political team processes numbers like these.

When we asked the question, how often does the NRA reflect your views on guns, 10% said always, 30% said most of the time, 30% said only some of the time, and 30% said never. If you combine the "some of the time" (which you could reasonably expect to find strong support for the background checks our top lines suggest, and the "never" crowd), that's 60%.

Politics is the art of perception. To listen to Coats and House Republicans, you'd have thought the top line numbers would be in reverse. But they aren't.



What is a political reality is that the NRA will come in and lay down a lot of bucks (greenbacks, that is) and shoot out a lot of mail in scantily attended Republican primaries. That is the big driver here. Perhaps only U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon is in a truly competitive district over the next two election cycles, and that is marginal. No, the political nightmare is, as Chris Chocola might put it, to get "primaried" when only about 10% of the voters show up. That is where great mischief takes place.

**But even that is beginning** to change. In the Illinois 2nd CD election to replace U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson

Jr. this past winter, Bloomberg's PAC dumped \$2.2 million into Chicago media, which, of course, bleeds over into Northwest Indiana and his candidate, Robin Kelly, won. In the 1st and 2nd CDs, 85.7% favored the background check expansion, compared to 80.7% in both the Northeast and Southwest Indiana CDs.

So the billionaire Bloomberg is about to change the dynamic on associated political spending. And part of the facade that Hoosiers don't want any change is showing some hairline fractures and cracks these days. ❖

**Howey is publisher of Howey Politics Indiana.**

## Jury selected in Butch Morgan trial

By ERIN BLASKO  
South Bend Tribune

SOUTH BEND — Jury selection Monday in the forgery trial involving former head of the county Democratic Party Butch Morgan and party member Dustin Blythe focused on the political affiliation of the prospective jurors and what influence, if any, that might have on the outcome.

Both sides — the state, represented by special prosecutor Stanley Levco, and the defense, represented by public defender Jeffrey Kimmell (Blythe) and William Stanley (Morgan) — asked the jurors whether they were loyal to a particular political party and, if so, whether that might affect their ability to decide the case in an impartial manner.

"Do any of you, because of your political affiliation, feel you are leaning one way or another?" Levco asked.

Some said yes, others said no. In one case, Kimmell flat out asked a group of 14 prospective jurors whether any of them identified as Republican.

A few raised their hands.

**Levco also asked** whether any of the jurors felt the alleged crimes were not serious or should not be prosecuted so many years after the fact. Again, on both points, some said yes while others said no.

Despite the considerable amount of local and even national media attention paid to it over the past 18 or so months, less than half of the 41 prospective jurors ques-

tioned on the matter admitted to any prior knowledge of the case.

Some did, however, admit to knowing one or both of the defendants and/or one or more of the potential witnesses. In the end, it took about three and a half hours to select 14 jurors — four males and 10 females, including two alternates — from a pool of 56. A roar erupted from the jury room when the final three entered about 5 p.m.

**Morgan and Blythe** are accused of conspiring to forge signatures on petitions to place then-Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton on the state Democratic primary ballot in 2008. Morgan faces two counts of conspiracy to commit petition fraud, a Class D felony, and two counts of conspiracy to commit forgery, a Class C felony, while Blythe faces nine counts of forgery and one count of falsifying a petition.

The two sat next to each other Monday. Morgan wore a dark suit with an open-collared dress shirt. A cross hung low around his neck. Blythe wore a pair of khaki dress pants and a white dress shirt. He also wore a tie. The two spoke to each other on occasion during the selection process but otherwise sat quietly.

Two other defendants in the case — Pam Brunette, the former Democratic head of the county Office of Voter Registration, and Bev Shelton, who worked under Brunette in the office — admitted guilt prior to Monday and are awaiting sentencing.

**Brunette pleaded guilty** to one count of Class C felony forgery, one count of Class D felony official misconduct and one count of Class D falsifying a petition, while Shelton pleaded guilty to one count of forgery and one count of falsifying a petition. Both are expected to testify later this week on behalf of the state.

The four defendants were charged in January following a joint investigation by The Tribune and Howey Politics Indiana into alleged fraud involving petitions to place Obama and Clinton on the state Democratic primary ballot in 2008. Morgan resigned as party chair in the wake of the investigation, and Shelton and Brunette were replaced. ❖







## Jobs, Common Core, local government poised as 2014 issues

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — This is the time of the session when key players and vulnerable reps and senators begin looking over their shoulders and mulling what votes they cast will show up in mailers in 2014 reelection campaigns.

Look for job related bills - in this session's case live table games and Medicaid expansion - as potential issues. Another would be Common Core, which, despite the HPI Poll showing wide support, could be an issue that will inspire primary challenges against Republicans. And, of course, there is always the big boogie man - being "soft on crime" which may be holding up the criminal code reforms.

And when SB621 - the Marion County reorganization bill - was heard in the House, Indiana Democratic Chairman John Zody and Marion County Chairman Joel Miller were in the gallery, watching House Minority Leader Scott Pelath push a series of what one observer described as "good government votes." Many of the votes were opposed by Republicans who Democrats believe will be vulnerable to what they describe as a "power grab."

As State Rep. Ed Delaney put it during second reading, SB621 will create "the second-most powerful" politician in Indiana, and it will give the Mayor of Indianapolis unchecked power over the state's most-populous city as well as a key component of its economic engine. "That is a pretty big responsibility now," observed blogger Jon Easter. "It's a lot of power." And Hoosiers are very skeptical about power grabs, right Tony Bennett?

Another emerging theme is conservative opposition to legislation that many Hoosiers see as common sense, such as Sunday alcohol sales and the conversion of electronic table games to live dealers at racinos. House Public Policy Chairman Bill Davis stands out as a one-man obstacle, using his own personal beliefs to uphold what many consider to be archaic laws.

**GAMING AGREEMENT HELD UP BY DAVIS:** With final negotiations underway on the fate of legislation aimed at helping Indiana's gaming facility, House and Senate sponsors still have a fundamental disagreement on the bill (Indiana Public Media). The Senate version of the gaming bill authorized live table games at racetrack casinos,

replacing electronic games, and allowed riverboats to move their facilities on land. The House removed those provisions. Rep. Bill Davis (R-Portland), the bill's House sponsor, says a gaming bill that contains live table games and inland casinos will not be considered an option. "We think that we have the bill in a position right now or in a place that does what we were setting out to do and that was to help an industry that's starting to get a lot of competition," he says.

**BOOTS SAYS LIVE DEALERS WILL NOT KILL GAMBLING REFORM:** Lawmakers remain at odds over whether a bill meant to bolster the gambling industry in Indiana should authorize live dealers at the state's horse track casinos (Weidenbener, Statehouse File). But Sen. Phil Boots, R-Crawfordsville, said he won't let the dispute kill other key provisions in Senate Bill 528, including a tax break for casino marketing expenses. "The most important thing we can do is the tax break on the free play, the promotional play," Boots said of the coupons casinos send to customers to entice them visit. "That's the most advantageous thing we can do." Lawmakers from the House and Senate met Monday in a conference committee to start hammering out a compromise on the legislation that is intended to help casinos deal with competition from other states. Since new casinos started opening in Ohio, gambling operations in southeast Indiana have lost about a quarter of their business. Lawmakers have all but agreed to the tax cuts for promotional play. But the Senate-passed bill also called for letting the water-based casinos move onto land and the horse track casinos use live dealers. The House stripped those provisions out of the bill. But during Monday's conference committee, advocates of the horse track casinos in Shelbyville and Anderson urged lawmakers to let them hire live dealers for their table games. Anderson Mayor Kevin Smith told lawmakers the issue is not about gambling; it's about jobs. But some key leaders - including Gov. Mike Pence - said that would be an expansion of gambling. "I am not prepared to engage in a massive expansion of gaming just to keep revenues up," Speaker Bosma said. "We'll make decisions not based on revenues but on whether it's right for the state of Indiana." But Boots said he's not giving up. "It's my intention to restore the table games and moving into the footprint," he said.

**TAXES, NOT HORSE RACING, WILL LIKELY FUND IMA ASSISTANCE:** After nearly crashing in the Indiana House last week, a bid to help the Indianapolis Motor Speedway with proposed improvements appears back on track (WIBC). Senate leaders in both parties have blasted an attempt to transfer \$10 million from the state's horse racing tracks to the motorsports industry. State Sen. Mike Young pronounced that idea dead on arrival at the start of negotiations on the bill. Instead, legislators are likely to





return their focus to sales and income taxes collected at the Speedway. But Young's receptive to another change, requiring the Speedway to repay the money.

#### **ROCKPORT PLANT STILL ON LEGISLATIVE AGENDA:**

Top House and Senate officials have identified a new bill into which they plan to insert legislation that could determine the fate of the \$2.8 billion coal-to-gas plant proposed to be built at Rockport (Bradner, Evansville Courier and Press). After they finalize that measure — which could be a tricky and hotly-contested process — it will go into Senate Bill 494, House Speaker Brian Bosma, R-Indianapolis, said Monday. The move comes after House leaders decided to let another bill dealing with Rockport die. That happened because they are seeking another regulatory review of the project and determined that changes made to the bill on the chamber's floor had watered it down to the point of ineffectiveness. Bosma said he wants negotiations over a final draft of the legislation to start with the much tougher version that passed the House Utility Committee, before those changes took place. "There's a lot of discussion about what the proper factors for IURC review are; some discussion about whether or not that should be an appealable review or one that would be final," Bosma said. "We're trying to meet the goal of the IURC looking at it again to make sure the deal makes sense for ratepayers, but doesn't unnecessarily put a drag on the deal for years to come." Bosma appointed Rep. Suzanne Crouch, the Evansville Republican who had championed the legislation that developers said would kill the project, as his top negotiator on the joint House-Senate conference committee that will hammer out the final draft of SB 494. House Democrats, meanwhile, appointed Rep. Kreg Battles of Vincennes, who has supported the Rockport project in votes.

#### **IMMIGRANT TUITION BILL HEADS TO PENCE:**

Indiana legislators have approved allowing in-state tuition rates for people who entered the country illegally and were attending a public college when a state immigration law passed two years ago (Associated Press). The Senate voted 34-15 Monday in favor of the bill, which was previously approved by the House. Affected immigrants still couldn't receive state college financial aid and new students wouldn't be eligible for in-state tuition. The bill now goes to the governor for consideration.

#### **PARTS OF CRIMINAL CODE REFORM MIGHT HAVE**

**TO WAIT:** Legislative negotiators believe they have a deal on the biggest overhaul of Indiana's criminal code in three decades. But they're leaving some of the work for next year (WIBC). House Judiciary Chairman Greg Steuerwald (R-Avon) says he believes there's agreement from the other three negotiators on a final compromise to be approved be-

fore the legislature's planned Friday adjournment, though he cautions he can't speak for them. The draft takes advantage of legislators' plan to delay implementation of the changes until July 2014, by putting off decisions on the few remaining areas of disagreement until next year's session, with a study committee to continue work over the summer. Differences remain over how much leeway to give judges to suspend sentences, and how much mandatory prison time repeat and habitual offenders should face. And unless budget negotiators address the issue, Steuerwald says one piece that will wait for next year is funding for Indiana counties.

#### **MULTIPLE EDUCATION BILLS REMAIN BEFORE**

**DEADLINE:** The General Assembly could adjourn as late as April 29, but lawmakers say they hope to wrap up this week (Moxley, State Impact). Voucher expansion — albeit much narrower than originally proposed — still needs to pass conference committee. And it's hard to say what will happen to a plan to halt Common Core implementation as the legislature winds down the 2013 session.

#### **LEGISLATURE MULLS OVER THE PRICE OF STATE-**

**WIDE PRE-K:** Count Sen. Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn, among those skeptical it will take \$6,800 per pupil to launch a high quality, state-funded preschool program (Moxley, State Impact). "I don't know where they got that high figure," Kruse told StateImpact. "Who in the world needs \$6,800 for pre-K?" A proposal to create a small-scale pre-K pilot fizzled last month when it reached the panel he chairs, the Senate Education Committee.

#### **CRIMINAL EXPUNGEMENT BILL HB1482 HEADS TO**

**PENCE:** Thousands of criminal convictions could disappear under a bill given final approval by the Indiana House Monday (Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). House Bill 1482 passed 78-19 and now goes to Gov. Mike Pence, who has not indicated his position on the legislation. "Making a mistake doesn't mean that you're necessarily a bad person. Making a mistake means you are a human being," said Rep. Jud McMillin, R-Brookville, author of the bill. "They shouldn't have to live with it forever."

#### **NEW SUPERINTENDENT RULES BILL HEADS TO**

**PENCE:** School district superintendents would no longer have to hold an Indiana superintendent's or teacher's license under a proposal that won final legislative approval on Monday (Associated Press). The House voted 55-40 to approve the bill that cleared the Senate this month only after Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann cast a tie-breaking vote in favor of it. The bill requires the district superintendent have a master's degree, a change from the current state requirements.



**POLICE DOG BILL HEADS TO PENCE:** The House sent Gov. Mike Pence a bill Monday that will mean police agencies can collect damages when their dogs are killed in the line of duty (Munch, Statehouse File). A judge could order someone convicted of killing or disabling a police dog to pay restitution to the agency or officer, whoever owns the dog.

**BLACK LAWMAKERS WANT VETO OVER CALUMET**

**BILL:** Northwest Indiana's black state lawmakers want Gov. Mike Pence to veto legislation that would force Calumet Township to reduce its administrative spending and potentially enable Griffith to leave the township (Carden, NWI Times). State Sens. Earline Rogers, D-Gary, and Lonnie Randolph, D-East Chicago, told reporters Monday they have sent a letter to the Republican governor asking him to reject House Bill 1585. ❖

## Criminal code reform stalls over the funding

By **MAUREEN HAYDEN**

INDIANAPOLIS — If the criminal code reform bill passes through the Indiana General Assembly, it'll likely be missing a critical element: The money to make it work.

One of the bill's original goals was to divert low-level, non-violent offenders out of state prisons, where the worst offenders belong, and into community-based programs proven to reduce recidivism.



But with just days to go before the session's end, nowhere in the legislation or the \$30 billion budget bill are the dollars for local jails and community correction facilities to run the drug rehabilitation programs that criminal justice experts say are needed to make a real dent in crime.

It's as if lawmakers have forgotten what started the rewrite of the state's criminal code three years ago by a commission the legislature appointed: Fears that our addiction to incarceration was fiscally unsustainable.

So here's a brief reminder: In the first decade of the 21st century, the number of people living in Indiana grew 6.6 percent. Over that same decade, the number of people living in our prisons went up by 47 percent, driving prison spending up by 37 percent. The biggest increase was in low-level drug and theft offenders, many of whom were rotating through the justice system.

**Here's what else we know:** As in other states across the nation, a majority of our current prison inmates — maybe more than 75 percent — were sentenced for some drug-related crime. They were selling drugs, stealing to buy drugs, or committing other crimes while on drugs or to acquire drugs.

Republican state Sen. Randy Head of Logansport has been tough on the criminal code reform bill, concerned

it was a little too soft on some crimes. The former deputy prosecutor succeeded in amending it to beef back up some penalties, which is one reason why the bill went into last-ditch negotiations between its House and Senate authors.

Now one of his concerns is that bill, if it does get passed and signed into law, will fail if there's no money for community-based drug treatment programs.

**"Nothing we do is going to have its maximum effect unless we deal with addicts,"** Head said. "There is a certain level of people who are going to commit crimes to fuel their addiction. They're going to get caught, they're going to go to prison, they're going to get out, and they're going to do it again regardless what the sentences are. Until we can correct that, we're going to have a problem on our hands, and it's going to be costly."

So why, in a \$30 billion budget bill that includes a mix of \$500 million in tax cuts and leaves intact a hefty surplus, is there no money to invest in what Head and others call crime prevention?

His answer: There's "no political will to spend the money."

I get it. Earmarking hard-earned Hoosier taxpayers' dollars for law-breaking drug addicts doesn't charm the voters like a tax cut does.

**But other fiscally conservative states** are doing it. Among them is West Virginia. The legislature there just passed a bill that mandates every county must have a drug court program — like those in about one-third of Indiana's 92 counties — which offer non-violent offenders drug treatment and testing as an alternative to prison. And the legislation adds \$25 million in state funding for local communities to provide increased supervision and drug treatment for recently released inmates.

It's not the perfect bill — that's not how the legislative process works. But it seems a step closer to the often-stated goal of criminal code reformers here in Indiana who've promised to move the state from "tough on crime" to "smart on crime." ❖

**Maureen Hayden covers the Statehouse for the CNHI newspapers. She can be reached at [maureen.hayden@indiana](mailto:maureen.hayden@indiana)**



## Strange bedfellows in Lake County politics

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE - Talk about politics and strange bedfellows.

That is what is transpiring in Lake County. And, this coupling is the strangest of the strange. There will be a coming out party of sorts for the unlikely couple on April 29.



That's when Democratic Lake County Commissioner Gerry Scheub and former Lake County Republican Chairwoman Kim Krull will be among the leading participants in a rally at the county fairgrounds.

They will speak against the proposed 1.5 percent county income tax.

Officially, the event is being hosted by Lake County Taxpayers Against Additional Taxation.

While the group bills itself as a nonpartisan organization that was formed to oppose the proposed tax, it bears a striking resemblance to what is known as the tea party in Lake County.

Interestingly, the group is opposing the income tax before it knows how the money will be spent.

The division of the money is being worked out by legislators, who must come to a decision by April 29, which is the day of the rally.

**Sen. Ed Charbonneau**, R-Valparaiso, is author of the bill that would outline how an income tax could be spent. What is interesting about the bill is that – at least at this point – it would allow some expenditures not previously permissible with an income tax.

Scheub has opposed an income tax even though the Legislature froze all Lake County levies in 2007 because the

county refused to enact the tax.

Scheub rightly said the state had no right to force the county to adopt what is known as a "local option" tax. Yet, Scheub has watched the negative impact the freeze has had on local government. Despite the freeze, county government has done nothing to challenge the constitutionality of the freeze. The only challenge came from two county police officers well after the freeze was put in place. Not surprisingly, that lawsuit languishes in the court system.

**Adding to the tax dilemma** is the political wrench that Rep. Hal Slager, R-Schererville, threw into the mix a week ago.

A day or so after the County Council, which is 5-2 Democrat, gave first reading approval to the tax, Slager convinced the Republican-controlled House to lift the levy freeze.

Slager, who is a former Schererville town councilman, can appreciate what the levy freeze has done to local government.

But don't be fooled by Slager's benevolence. Lifting the freeze is simply intended to make Democrats look bad for voting for the tax.

Slager vehemently denied the political intent. County Democratic Chairman Thomas McDermott first put

Slager's feet to the fire, alleging the move was nothing more than politics.

While few folks embrace tax increases, an income tax could mean many advances for Lake County.

**Besides the** property tax relief an income tax would bring, Charbonneau's initial intent was for a portion of the tax to be used as a local match for funding for expanded commuter rail, bus service and other economic development projects.

That would be a blessing of sorts for Lake County government that has refused face the political consequences of adopting a special tax for any of those transportation initiatives. ❖

**Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for NWI Times.**



State Rep. Hal Slager is playing tax politics on the home front.



## Graffiti sets off Michiana school panic

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – A graffiti-type message left in a women’s restroom at an Elkhart license branch kept thousands of kids from school on the day of the Boston Marathon. The scrawled message, found back in January, was brief. It suggested that 20 students would be killed at five schools in St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties on April 15.



School systems in the two counties notified parents of the threat and included assurances that police were ready with increased security \_ just in case.

Results from the restroom graffiti: Nearly half of South Bend Community School Corp. students

stayed home on April 15. Just 61 percent attendance was reported in Mishawaka schools.

About a third of students in the Penn-Harris-Madison system were absent. Elkhart Community Schools reported attendance plummeting to between 30 to 40 percent.

And remember, the decisions to keep kids home came before the horror at the Boston Marathon later that day. If that bombing had come the day before, how much lower would attendance of have been?

This reaction of parents in Michiana raises many questions.

Can some prankster or sickie or kid looking for a day off from school scribble a warning in a restroom and keep schools in two counties from operating normally? Yes. It happened.

**School officials and police** were virtually certain this was not a real threat. Real terrorists and perpetrators of school massacres - such as at the Boston Marathon, at Sandy Hook and on 9/11 - don’t give advanced notice of when and where.

So, should schools and law enforcement not disclose such probably silly graffiti?

They really had no choice. The fact that it was probably silly isn’t good enough. What of the chance, though minuscule, that the threat was real?

What if there had been some scrawled warning before Sandy Hook and authorities didn’t notify parents? The authorities would never forgive themselves. And nobody

else would forgive them either.

A tougher decision comes with copycats. What if some students wanting days off from school as the weather warms start leaving messages with threats of school violence?

The climate of fear since Sandy Hook - no doubt enhanced now by Boston - is shown in reaction to the graffiti warning.

**A question posted on** The South Bend Tribune’s Facebook page on April 15 asked: “Did you keep your child home from school today and why?”

That question and the responses quickly drew more than 5,000 views. Not a record, but an extremely high total for such a posting, according to Terry Bland, the paper’s Web editor. He cited some other postings of presumed interest that drew only a few hundred views.

The written Facebook responses as well as the volume of folks viewing the discussion showed the concern. Comments included:

“I wasn’t gonna let some idiot who writes on a bathroom wall interfere with my son’s education.”

“It was one day of school. I didn’t take that chance of losing my kid.”

“Would you keep them home all year if there were daily threats?”

“They were scared, and if it took for them to stay home for 1 day to ease their minds, then so be it.”

“Can’t live in fear of empty threats. Don’t want my daughter to live that way.”

Another said it was a personal parental choice and that “neither side should be ridiculed.” Indeed.

We do respond in different ways to fear.

At the Boston tragedy, there were security and medical personnel and marathon runners who raced into the smoke and carnage of the bomb to provide assistance. Fear? Certainly. But they overcame it and did what they felt they had to do.

**In the U.S. Senate**, as votes came on closing background check loopholes to keep criminals, terrorists and the insane from easily obtaining guns, there were senators who ran the other way, afraid of the gun-sales lobby opposing them politically.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt inspired the nation to confront the Great Depression with these words in his first inaugural address:

“The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

Today, we have many things to fear - the threat of terrorists with bombs and crazies with arsenals. But the most dangerous threat of all is that we could succumb to fear itself. ❖

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



## Questions on higher ed completion rates

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — Spring is really here. Baseball is being played, the Cubs are already tragic, and Faye of the Forest reappeared on the back deck. She was parked on the railing as I sat down to write this column.



"What's your topic this week?" she asked.

"I could write about the Higher Education Commission and the campaign to get more students to complete their courses of study," I answered.

"You mean the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE)?" Faye said. "I never thought of them as being for higher education, only about

it."

I admitted by a grunt I did not understand her remark.

Faye continued: "They crunch numbers and make pronouncements, but I don't see them as advocates for higher education in Indiana. They have been around since 1971 and I cannot point to anything they have done to advance the cause of higher education in the state.

"The commission has a vague charge to coordinate the missions of the universities with the needs of the state and to make recommendations about their budgets to the General Assembly. But does anyone listen to them?"

"I think," I said, "they are being listened to these days."

"Oh," Faye said, "the completion bit. They want students to complete their degrees in some magical amount of time and for schools to limit increases in tuition costs. That's a package of unsliced bologna if I ever saw one."

"You don't agree that students are better off if they complete their degrees?" I asked.

**"Of course they are," she said.** "As long as employers are blind to what is behind the certificate or degree, that piece of paper is worth money. But completion of a course of study without obtaining the necessary knowledge is a fraud. It is likely to be a dominant fraud when schools are pressured to put their stamps of approval on unqualified graduates."

"You are questioning the integrity of the schools and the intelligence of the students and their parents," I charged.

"Yes," she admitted. "Second rate becomes the ac-

cepted norm when funding from the state is tied to completion rates. Unless there is an outside party certifying the quality of the learning, fraud is to be expected."

"You mean an accrediting agency like AACSB (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business)?" I asked.

"No," Faye shot back. "Traditionally, AACSB has focused on inputs rather than outcomes. They don't provide a uniform, unambiguous set of standards."

**"So you want testing before certification or degree granting?"** I insisted.

"Yes, if possible," she said. "But mainly I deplore the state micro-managing the schools. They treat higher education the same way they treat primary and secondary education.

"The legislature cuts the money to the schools and then complains about the need those institutions have to raise funds. Taxes or tuitions rise and the legislature complains about this necessary consequence of their own budgeting."

"So what do you want?" I asked frustrated.

"If completion rates are a problem, I want evidence to that effect," she said. "We've had ICHE declaring a falling sky before as when they got on a kick about the so-called brain drain. Where's the evidence of harm to the state?"

As ever, when Faye departed, I was left with much to think about. ❖

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**Eric Bradner, Evansville Courier & Press:** As Indiana lawmakers enter the final week of this year's legislative session, Republican Gov. Mike Pence is now all but guaranteed to get at least a little bit of the income tax cut he wants, after all. A new Indiana revenue forecast released last week showed the state taking in \$257 million more over the next two-year budget period. As revenue forecasts go, that's almost a rounding error. But for Pence, it could make a huge difference. Now, the question is whether a governor who invested much of his first-year political capital in getting a 10 percent reduction in Indiana's individual income tax phased in over two years can plausibly claim victory over something less than that. The projections led Republican leaders in the House and Senate to feel comfortable that they could give what they're publicly going to bill as \$500 million in tax cuts over the course of that two-year budget period. I say publicly bill because it's really \$300 million in tax cuts. The other \$200 million comes through reductions in Indiana's corporate income tax — a decision lawmakers made two years ago, and that no one is seriously considering going back on today. Also, lawmakers already want to devote some of that to eliminating the state's inheritance tax, which would save those taxpayers about \$150 million over those two years. That leaves between \$150 million and, if the inheritance tax cut is scaled back, \$300 million that could go toward Pence's tax cut proposal. That's far short of the \$780 million reduction in state tax collections that would have taken place if Pence got exactly what he wanted — a 5 percent cut in the state's income tax rate the first year of the budget and another 5 percent in its second year. Still, it's enough to allow Pence to save face. ❖

**Lesley Weidenbener, Statehouse File:** It seems all but impossible now that Republican Gov. Mike Pence will get his full 10 percent cut in the state's 3.4 percent income tax rate. Even the governor has acknowledged that the final budget will probably include a package of tax cuts, one that includes the elimination of the inheritance tax, which Republican legislative leaders say is their priority. Lawmakers also want to reduce the financial institutions tax. And so they're concerned there's no room for the governor's full proposal, which would cost about \$525 million a year when fully implemented. To appease Pence, they're looking to give him a fraction of the income tax cut he's seeking. Initially, the governor seemed none too pleased. But legislative leaders have mounted what can only be described as an impressive public relations campaign that just may win Pence over. They're cobbling together all these various tax cuts — and then adding in a corporate

tax reduction passed into law two years ago — to come up with what they say would be cuts totaling some \$525 million annually. "We're right in line with what the governor was seeking," Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, said earlier this month. ❖

**Ronald Brownstein, National Journal:** The outcome of Wednesday's dramatic Senate vote on expanding background checks simultaneously demonstrated the difficult geography confronting gun-control advocates in the Senate and the potentially daunting math facing gun-rights proponents in the Electoral College. One way to understand these divergent trends is to examine the Senate vote on the critical amendment to offer background checks through the prism of the Electoral College. The amendment drew unified support from both senators in 21 states representing 261 Electoral College votes. By contrast, both senators opposed the amendment in 17 states representing just 146 Electoral College votes. Senators from the remaining 12 states, with a combined 128 Electoral College votes, split their vote on the amendment. ❖



**Dana Millbank, Washington Post:**

Is there nobody who can tell Ted Cruz to shut up? The young senator from Texas has been on the job for about 100 days, but he has already turned the Senate's ancient seniority system upside down and is dominating his senior Republican colleagues. He's speaking for them on immigration, guns and any other topic that tickles his fancy; Republican leaders are seething at being outshone yet are terrified of challenging him. Consider his news conference this week to promote the Republican alternative to gun control. With Cruz on the stage in the Senate TV studio: the bill's primary author, Chuck Grassley of Iowa, a 32-year Senate veteran and longtime chairman or ranking member of the finance and judiciary committees; Lindsey Graham of South Carolina (10 years in the Senate and eight in the House); and Dan Coats of Indiana (12 years in the Senate and eight in the House). But Cruz took over the lectern and refused to relinquish it. He spoke 2,924 words for the cameras, more than Grassley (904), Graham (1,376) and Coats (360) — combined. Factoring in his dramatic pauses to convey sincerity and deep thought, Cruz's dominance was even more lopsided. The others shifted uncomfortably and looked awkwardly around the room. At one point, Graham requested a chance to speak. "Can I?" he asked Cruz. Cruz is 42, the same age Joe McCarthy was when he amassed power in the Senate with his allegations of communist infiltration. ❖



## Zody, Holcomb spar over Cantor

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana Democratic Party Chairman John Zody has weighed in on the choice of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, R-Va., to speak at Monday evening's Allen County Republican Party Lincoln Day Dinner (Francisco, Ft. Wayne Journal Gazette). "Congressman Cantor is a career politician who's staunchly opposed health care, women's rights and growing our middle class during his tenure," Zody said Monday in a statement. "We've seen the same from Republicans in Indiana, and we can clearly see this is the direction their party will continue to travel."

Naturally, Zody's counterpart at the GOP doesn't share those views. State Republican

Party Chairman Eric Holcomb said in a statement that Cantor's "leadership at the federal level has been crucial in serving as a check against the Obama Administration. "And if our federal government is to achieve more jobs, less debt and lower taxes the way we have in Indiana, it will come from time-tested Republican policies, not from President Obama's tax-and-spend plans," Holcomb said. Holcomb is scheduled to speak at the Allen County GOP dinner. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-3rd, arranged for Cantor's appearance and is to introduce him. Cantor also is scheduled to attend a campaign fundraising reception for Stutzman before the dinner.



## Zoeller turns up heat on Congress

INDIANAPOLIS - Amidst concerns that the Boston Marathon

bombing may derail federal action on comprehensive immigration reform, Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller is turning up some collective heat on Congress to move ahead (Hayden, Anderson Herald Bulletin). The Republican Zoeller, representing 35 state attorneys general, traveled to Washington D.C. last week, three days after the deadly explosion, to appear at a press conference with congressional authors of a newly introduced bill that would overhaul the nation's immigration system. He stood with the bipartisan legislative group known as the "Gang of Eight" to make a point: "We've got a broken system and it needs reform," Zoeller said, after returning home. "Those members of Congress should get no quarter in explaining why they can't do their job."

## Pence to lead bio tech trip to Chicago

INDIANAPOLIS - Governor Mike Pence is leading a small delegation of state officials to Chicago for the 2013 BIO International Convention this week (WIBC). The trip is part of Indiana's recruiting and trade efforts in the biotechnology sector which is growing in the state. The show is expected to host more than 16,500 leaders from 65 countries. Indiana's life sciences sector includes giants Eli Lilly, Biomet, Cook Group and Dow AgroSciences. A BioCrossroads report says Indiana's biotech sector generates about \$50 billion a year, represents 1600 life sciences firms and employs 55,000 Hoosiers.

## Indiana child deaths rise in 2011

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana's Department of Child Services officials reported Monday that of 292 children who died across the state between

July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011, 40 were substantiated as victims of abuse or neglect (Black, South Bend Tribune). DCS Chief of Staff John Ryan at an Indianapolis press conference listed the findings of the agency's annual child fatality report. Last year's annual child fatality report showed 25 children died from abuse in fiscal year 2010, from July 1, 2009, until June 30, 2010. That was a drop from 38 abuse deaths in fiscal year 2009. Officials credited the increase in abuse deaths to a rise in the risk factors and a law that went into effect a year ago that mandates that DCS save earlier reports of abuse and neglect that are determined to be "unsubstantiated."

## Bush approval starting to improve

DALLAS - George W. Bush will return to the spotlight this week for the dedication of his presidential library, an event likely to trigger fresh public debate about his eight fateful years in office (Washington Post). But he reemerges with a better public image than when he left Washington more than four years ago. Since then, Bush has absented himself from both policy disputes and political battles. A new Washington Post-ABC News poll suggests that the passage of time and Bush's relative invisibility have been beneficial to a chief executive who left office surrounded by controversy. Days before his second term ended in 2009, Bush's approval rating among all adults was 33 percent positive and 66 percent negative. The new poll found 47 percent saying they approve and 50 percent saying they disapprove. Among registered voters, his approval rating today is equal to President Obama's, at 47 percent, according to the latest Post-ABC surveys. Majorities said they still disapprove of Bush's performance on the Iraq war and the economy.