



### HPI Interview: Pence in Obamacare era

Governor gets his HIP extension, but remains reluctant to limited Medicaid expansion

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Fresh off a bureaucratic victory, where the Obama administration signed off on a one-year extension of the Healthy Indiana Plan, Gov. Mike Pence sat down with Howey Politics Indiana for the first extensive conversation of the looming Obamacare era and how it could play out in the state.

While much media attention has settled on the coming constitutional marriage amendment, and the education battles surrounding Common Core and the new collaboration agency he created last month, it is the Affordable Care Act that will have multi-billion implications on hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers, the state’s hospital system, and the next generation of state budgets.

Pence intends to use the one-year extension of HIP to press for a more permanent solution that he calls “consumer driven” that will “modestly” extend health insurance



coverage, but in a “sustainable” way. During Tuesday’s HIP announcement, Gov. Pence sized up the potential pool of Indiana residents poised for Medicaid coverage at 300,000. And he hinted that should the U.S. Health and Human Services Department reject HIP as the ACA extender, he would rely on existing hospitals, emergency rooms, non-for-profits

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### Our tattered safety net

By **MAUREEN HAYDEN**

**CNHI News Bureau**

INDIANAPOLIS – In the war over the Affordable Care Act, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence won a policy victory earlier this week when the Obama administration gave him a temporary pass to continue with the Healthy Indiana Plan, a high-deductible health insurance program that covers only about 37,000 low-income Hoosiers.



The federal reprieve came on the condition that the state “continues to consider its coverage options” for another 300,000 uninsured Hoosiers



**“There’s a very strong case made that Assad used chemical weapons to gas innocent fathers, mothers and children. Action is warranted.”**

- U.S. Rep. Luke Messer



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– mostly the working poor -- who've been left out in the cold by Pence's decision not to expand traditional Medicaid coverage, as 25 other states have opted to do under the ACA.

During a press conference to announce the decision, Pence called it a "victory for Hoosiers" enrolled in the program (which has a waiting list of 55,000) as reporters questioned him about other Hoosiers without health-care insurance.

**Pence said the lack** of insurance doesn't mean no access. He said there was a "broad range of services" available to the uninsured and suggested they get their healthcare through hospitals' charity care programs, emergency rooms, and public and privately funded clinics that serve the poor.

"Let's make sure there is a distinction in the language between health insurance and health care," Pence said. "Every person in this state has the ability, if they are struggling with illness, to walk into an emergency room and receive care."

Actually, according to the Indiana Hospital Association, about 2.7 million people walk (or otherwise transported) into emergency rooms in Indiana hospitals every year, many because they have no place else to go. That's more than a third of the state's 6.5 million population.

It's an expensive and not very effective alternative to the kind of wellness-focused care that Pence likes so much about the Healthy Indiana Plan.

**Pence's call for** hospitals to step up ignores the fact they're already stepped up – some beyond their capacity. According to a 2011 study by the Indiana Hospital Association, Indiana's hospitals "ate" about \$3 billion delivering uncompensated care to people who couldn't pay their hospital bills.

About \$1.7 billion of that was the "charity care" that, by Indiana law, non-profit hospitals are required to

deliver.

The hospitals didn't eat all those lost dollars. Those of us with insurance did, said Linda White, president of Deaconess Health Systems in southwest Indiana, where one out of every four emergency room patients can't afford to pay their medical bills. "Those costs are shifted to the people who can pay," White said,

"Access" to healthcare is in the eye of the beholder. Of Indiana's 92 counties, 30 no longer offer access to obstetrics care, according to the Indiana Rural Health Association. It's just too costly: hospitals that shut down their obstetrics services found that most of their patients either had no insurance or were recipients of Medicaid, which only pays about 30 cents for every dollar's worth of medical care delivered.

**"In 30 counties,** you can't birth a baby," said association President Don Kelso, who illustrates the problem by talking about the 70-mile stretch in west central Indiana filled with O.B.-less counties.

"Between Terre Haute and Avon, there's no place to birth a baby." Lack of access isn't a new issue, but Kelso fears it's getting worse.

There are 35 "critical access" hospitals located in medically underserved rural areas in Indiana. Eleven of them are losing money, Kelso said. "They're all under considerable strain."

Pence is correct in that there is a safety net for the ill and uninsured. But it's a tattered one.

That's what a 2012 report commissioned by the Indiana State Department of Health found. The report, authored by the Indiana Primary Care Association, looked at Indiana's healthcare safety net and concluded this: "Even with these various safety net options, providing health care services to all who need it remains a challenge. Approximately 1.5 million low-income Hoosiers have inadequate access to health care services."

Among the report's other find-





ings:

More than any other Midwestern state, Indiana residents put off getting needed health care due to cost. Indiana's Community Health Centers, which provide primary care to about 150,000 uninsured Hoosiers and 61,000 Medicaid recipients "are functioning at capacity and there are large areas of the state that remain without this valuable community resource."

The lack of insurance and poverty go hand in hand, according to the report: "In many areas, especially rural, the lack of physicians coupled with the physicians who will not see those without insurance make it difficult for the uninsured to obtain needed care."

Kelso said the governor was right when he said every Hoosier has "access" to health care, but that's not much of a boast.

"We do have access, but the health of Hoosiers is not good," Kelso said, before listing a litany of ills that include Indiana's high rate of diabetes, heart disease, obesity and infant mortality, which is related to lack of access to pre- and post-natal care.

The governor's own health commissioner, Dr. William VanNess, recently noted that an infant born in Indiana has a higher rate of dying before its first birthday than almost anywhere else in the nation. Indiana now ranks 47th out of the 50 states in infant mortality.

Kelso sees that as a signal of failure by both the healthcare industry and the state: "We're down near the bottom. We're right down there with Mississippi and Arkansas in the number of babies that are dying. Think about that." ❖

## Pence Interview, from page 1

and community health centers to offer medical care to the poor in a state has an unhealthy population.

Pence acknowledged that up to 300,000 Hoosiers are uninsured explaining, "We'll continue to explore our options" and said that his priority would be to preserve the state's "ability to innovate," but in a way that doesn't balloon future budgets.

Asked what his message is to the insured citizens who essentially subsidize the 300,000 uninsured, Pence talked about a "broad range of services" to the uninsured, citing hospital charity care, the Disproportion Share Hospitals like Wishard in Indianapolis and Parkview in Fort Wayne, and community health centers. "Health care is available to most Hoosiers," Pence said. "Every person has the ability to walk into an emergency room."

Pence also acknowledged that many community health professionals and local hospitals are concerned about what might happen if the federal government does not approve HIP for a full Medicaid expansion. Health care industry sources tell Howey Politics that the Healthy Indiana Plan is not designed for a full expansion and would likely be dramatically changed by the federal government if it were accepted. "It's an honest disagreement," Pence said, adding that traditional Medicaid expansion is not in the interest of future Indiana budgets.

I sat with Pence in his Statehouse office for about 75 minutes Tuesday afternoon to walk through how he will deal with Obamacare and its Indiana implications over the next six months.

**Pence:** I'm proud of my team and I am grateful to the administration. My conversations with Secretary Sebelius, and our teams' interactions over the last seven months have been characterized by good faith on both sides. It is fairly well known I have strong differences of opinion on health care policy with the (Obama) administration. All

the way through this morning when we received the formal paperwork and correspondence, I'm grateful for the way the secretary of HHS and all the officials with the Obama administration interacted with the state of Indiana.

**HPI:** Did it help that Secretary Sebelius was a former governor?

**Pence:** It did. I knew she had been in one of these chairs and we knew each other just a little bit from my tenure in Washington. There was a familiarity. We had some lengthy conversations that were very respectful and at the end of the day I think the outcome is a good one.

This is a program that is very popular and has been very successful for the enrollees. The opportunity to continue it, the opportunity to modestly expand and now the opportunity to continue the discussion about the health policy of Indiana with the Healthy Indiana Plan and consumer driven health care intact, I think is something that we very much look forward to.





**HPI:** Is Indiana the only state with this kind of waiver? I was told seven or eight other states were in a similar mode.

**Pence:** I have been told that. I was told the renewal of our waiver was the first. That underscores my appreciation for the willingness in the administration to engage us in a very substantive way. There were . . . some changes in the law with the passage of the Affordable Care Act that took away the tools that Indiana had used in the past to control cost and enrollment, so one of our challenges was how do we create a new framework for the program to be sustainable. There were changes in definitions the original Healthy Indiana Plan had used and the revenue that supports the program. We talked about the possibility of a cap that wasn't in the cards. We found an effective way to have that so Indiana could make modest expansion and be able to control costs.

**HPI:** During the legislative session the potential Medicaid pool was said to be 400,000 Hoosiers. You said this morning that it was 300,000.

**Pence:** We think it is closer to three (300,000).

**HPI:** That's still in the range of a 10-fold increase over the current Health Indiana Plan enrollment. Is there a scenario for that in the way you are sizing it up?

**Pence:** The number of uninsured in 2009 I think was 880,000. We think 500,000 will be eligible for participation in the premium tax credits for the health care exchanges. (There's) 36,600 now (in HIP); we think we can expand enrollment or have new enrollees at about 15,000. We'll be just shy of 50,000.

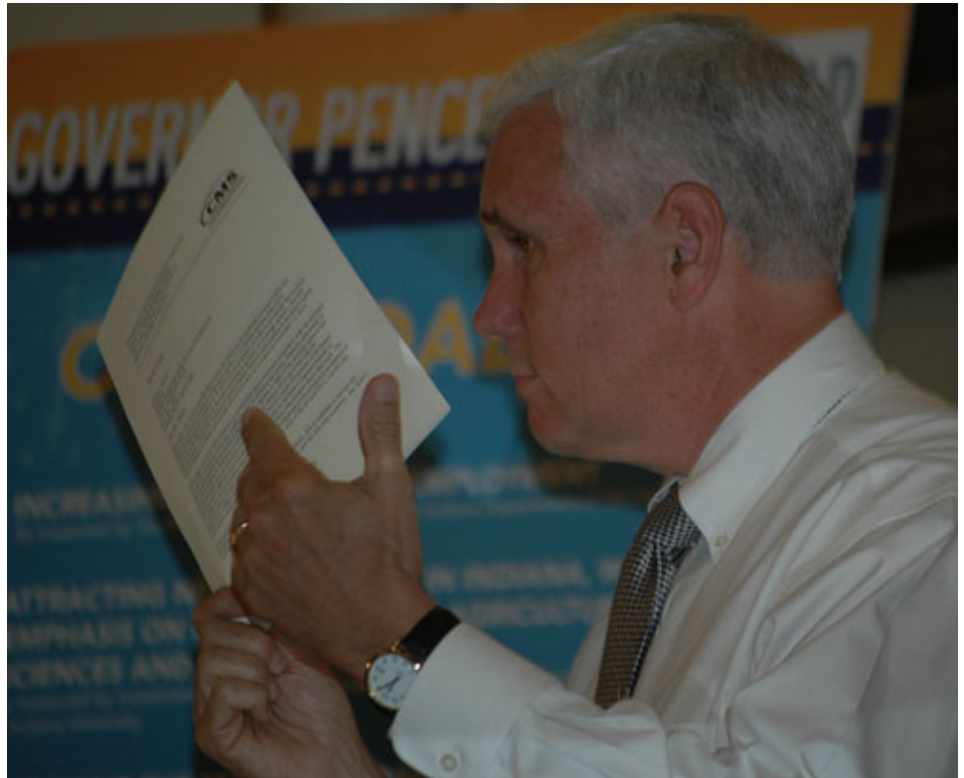
**HPI:** During the General Assembly session, you emphasized that your budget included an increase in traditional Medicaid at 90,000.

**Pence:** What I told the team was to use the highest projected number. We expected about 90,000 more enrollment through Medicaid.

**HPI:** Is that why that 400,000 is now 300,000, since there may be 90,000 more people in the traditional Medicaid?

**Pence:** Yeah. Our estimate is 300,000 when you factor in HIP will pick up more than before. Again, in terms of the where to go from here, we just cleared our first

prerequisite. My other two prerequisites in Medicaid expansion are: It has to preserve elements of the consumer-driven model of the Healthy Indiana Plan and it has to be fiscally responsible and sustainable. There's a lot of talk about (the federal government covering) 100% for three years and 90% in perpetuity. I am, obviously, very dubious about promises from Washington, which is awash in a sea of debt, particularly when it comes to this program. I don't remember a time where people in both parties weren't talking about some significant changes in Medicaid. If you look through Simpson-Bowles, if you look at Republican



Gov. Pence holds the letter from CMS extending the Healthy Indiana Plan. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

and Democratic proposals, one of the common denominators is either block granting Medicaid or making significant changes in Medicaid as part of the long-term fiscal solution in Washington. Leaving that aside, still that 10% we would have to pick up in the long term is a very significant expense for the state of Indiana. What I can tell you is that would, even after the three-year full subsidy, have a significant long-term impact on Indiana's fiscal picture. I just think we have to proceed with caution. That's why this consumer driven health care cost curve around the country is better for people's health because it creates incentives



for people to make better choices. It emphasizes preventive care, so people don't end up in emergency rooms, and I'm convinced it's better for the fiscal health of our state. As we have discussions over the next several months, can we consider any expansion with consideration for a consumer based health care law? Can we do it in a way that is fiscally sustainable? I don't know the answers to that. Let's keep what we've got and modestly expand.

**HPI:** A couple of thoughts: We've seen the federal deficit go from the T-word – trillion – to \$680 billion. That's still not acceptable but at least it's heading in the right direction. And then during the 2009 stimulus package, Gov. Daniels was a vociferous critic of that as he was with the ACA, but he took billions of dollars. Put that into context. I know you're concerned about the long-term commitment, but could Indiana take the money and then shift away after three years? People I talk to are concerned we may be leaving \$10 billion of taxes we've already paid on the table.

**Pence:** For me, the first lodestar is to do what's in the best interest of Hoosiers. My passion ... for health care is that it holds the promises of improving the health and well being of the people of our state, so that remains the driving force behind my interest in promoting it. It's not an actuarial issue. It's just believing this program is the best thing for people's health. If we were to expand traditional Medicaid to 138% of the federal poverty level, even 10% of that over the long term is very significant. Someone who has been very, very supportive of not expanding traditional Medicaid is . . . Sen. Kenley. He can give you from his long-term perspective what the impact would be. I take promises of long-term subsidies from Washington from a very skeptical standpoint. Even if promises were kept, and you had 90% subsidy, the cost to Indiana in the long term would be very significant absent some innovative reforms. But hope springs eternal. Maybe there's more room for more innovation. For now we preserve what we have.

**HPI:** I believe Sen. Kenley worked into this biennial budget enough funding for a full Medicaid expansion. Does that give you some latitude to take it from "modest" to another couple of notches to bring in more people? And could you, I hate to say this, raise the cigarette tax if it meant bringing in another 50,000 or 100,000 people?



**Gov. Pence with FSSA Commissioner Debra Minott at Tuesday's press conference on the Healthy Indiana Plan. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)**

**Pence:** Today I want to focus on what we've been able to accomplish. I think it's a victory for Hoosiers enrolled in the Healthy Indiana Plan and those to be added to the rolls. I think it will keep Indiana in the forefront of consumer driven health reform in this country. I don't want to go any farther than that. Back to your other point, in the budget one of our non-negotiables . . . I was in New York two weeks ago making sure that our bond rating agencies knew that our budget fully funded Medicaid projections. We used the high end number. I'm going to say 90,000. When we were there, our whole fiscal team called on Stan-

dard & Poor's, we called on Fitch, because I wanted these people to look me in the eye and hear my commitment to maintaining the fiscal integrity of the state and fully funding our expected enrollment in Medicaid. It was a very important talking point. The General Assembly did make those resources available.

**HPI:** Did you get the sense that Secretary Sebelius learned things about the Healthy Indiana Plan that might make her wiser or more practical down the road?

**Pence:** Our conversations were respectful, and I think the administration's actions today keep faith with the President's oft-repeated phrase, "If you've got insurance you like, you can keep it." The Healthy Indiana Plan is very popular. Hoosiers like it and because of a collaborative effort, people are going to keep it. And more Hoosiers are going to enroll in it. I think we preserved a framework for discussions and we've been given time and the additional one year to see how the exchanges roll out, to see how the economy plays out and to continue to demonstrate the value of consumer-driven health care.

**HPI:** You and every other recent governor we've had stress the fiscal integrity of the state. That's your job. Yet I'm sure you're seeing the same alarming things I have: 1,000 meth lab busts so far this year, a soaring suicide rate, infant mortality a full percentage point over the U.S., prescription drug addiction hitting older females, 13.5% of Indiana households are "food insecure" and the 8.4% jobless rate. These are telltales of a society that is struggling. As a governor, how do you weigh the fiscal integrity of the state with the need to take care of people, some of whom fit the definitions in the Medicaid expansion?

**Pence:** For Indiana, our fiscal integrity is the foundation of our prosperity. I've used the phrase to the point





of cliché – we make job creation Job One around here. It’s what we think about every day. We had a series of good job announcements last week. There’s more to come.

I’m talking to business leaders around the country and starting this Thursday, traveling to Japan. I’ve got 29 meetings in six business days to tell Indiana’s story. In all of those conversations, the first thing business leaders want to talk about is Indiana’s fiscal strength. It is the first impression of Indiana as a pro-business state. And the recognition we’ve received: CEO Magazine ranked us the fifth best place to do business in America; Site Selection Magazine ranked us the second best place. Fiscal stability is the foundation of our prosperity because businesses are looking to make investments in a state and environment where their costs, including the cost of government, are predictable. It’s a key factor and one that we talk about a lot.

The second piece is pro-growth economic policies which include tax relief, tax reform, regulatory relief, and certainly Right to Work. Our lower taxes on income, the elimination of the death tax, our regulatory moratorium and our reputation as a state committed to cutting red tape, all contribute to making Indiana attractive to investment. The other two strategies have to do with the fact that this last session, we identified \$100 million in new infrastructure – \$200 million for local communities – the first in a decade. Roads mean jobs, and not just road jobs. It’s our ability to move products in and out of here on 18 wheels. Our airports and international ports play a role in that. In New York, the thing they wanted to talk most about was what we were doing with regional work councils and career vocational education in every high school as a priority.

When I got my briefing from a couple of Japanese companies because I’m going to be meeting with their CEOs, every one of them said, “Talk to them about your regional work councils.” The key to unleashing our full economic potential is to make sure we’ve got the best educated and best skilled workforce in the country. If we do this right, we’re going to be standing out even more, not only in the Midwest, but in the country. So when you talk about unemployment stubbornly over 8% for too long – 8.4% now – we’ve been driving relentlessly toward our goal of increasing private sector employment. We’re going to break that loose and get those quarter million people back to work. And grow our population and our economy. ❖



## Pence vows to work with Ritz as State Board of Ed rams through a surprise plan

**By BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – It wasn’t quite the baptism scene from the “Godfather.” But while Gov. Mike Pence told Howey Politics Indiana he didn’t “have any interest” in seeking an appointed superintendent and vowed to work with Supt. Glenda Ritz, just hours later the unelected State Board of Education rammed through a new strategic plan that left the elected school chief near tears.

Asked about a governor appointed superintendent even if current Democratic Supt. Glenda Ritz were grandfathered in, Pence responded, “I really don’t have any interest in that debate or discussion. The people of Indiana elected me to be governor. The people of Indiana elected Supt. Ritz to be superintendent. And I’m absolutely determined to work with her in a respectful and constructive way on behalf of Indiana’s kids and schools. I think she’s got a good heart, our staffs have worked well together over the last eight months on a broad range of issues and we’ll continue.”

His comments came after he announced the creation of the Center for Education and Career Innovation on Aug. 23, the timing of the event which caught Supt. Glenda Ritz and her staff unaware. High ranking sources on the Pence staff said that Ritz was told about the creation of the new agency, but she received only a 45-minute heads up on the Pence press conference at Warren Central HS. After the two offices traded press releases on the matter, Pence and Ritz chief of staff Craig Hartzler arranged a meeting between the governor and superintendent the following Monday.

**And the remarks came** a day before the unelected State Board of Education rammed through a strategic planning process introduced by Marian University President Daniel Elsener, a Republican ally of former Supt. Tony Bennett. Ritz, who had not seen the plan, asked for time to review on Wednesday, with Elsener demanding an immediate vote.

“The board wants a strategic plan and we’re going to move forward with it,” Elsener said (Carden, NWI Times). He said the board would set an independent “clear direction over the next six months so Indiana schools can “move forward faster.”

The board’s tone deaf action was a sharp departure from the sanguine, bipartisan comments made by the Republican governor just hours before.



"I enjoy a very positive, personal relationship with Supt. Ritz," Pence said in an exclusive HPI interview. "I am absolutely confident we are going to be able to continue to work together on behalf of Indiana's kids and our schools. There was just a natural affinity early on. We've worked together very well. I was grateful she came by on the Monday after we announced the reorganization of our offices under the Center for Education and Career Innovation."

**Asked the controversy** surrounding the CECI rollout, Pence said, "God isn't finished with me yet. What I can tell you is the superintendent and I had a very good, productive conversation. I'm just absolutely confident we're going to be able to work together."

Ritz, an Indianapolis Democrat, upset Supt. Tony Bennett last November on the same day that Republican Pence won the governor's race.

StateImpact reported on Tuesday that Bennett had made "appointed state superintendent" the eighth bullet point on a draft of his nine-point 2011 legislative wish-list. There has been talk since the Indiana General Assembly adjourned in April and news stories of emails between Bennett and then-Gov. Daniels that legislative Republicans would likely introduce legislation making the superintendent a gubernatorial appointment. The Indiana Constitution only calls for the "selection" of a state superintendent. In a Bennett interview with StateImpact in October 2012, he said, "You're talking to the guy who wanted this position to be an appointed position so money didn't have to be raised. We had very little question that there could possibly be outside interests who would come in and make large expenditures against us. Frankly this is a campaign. This is a political race."

Bennett's upset, ironically, didn't come after a money dump by the National Education Association as his campaign anticipated, but with an extensive social media campaign using Facebook and Twitter that ignited a grassroots uprising via a network of teachers, friends and families upset by many of Bennett's reforms. Bennett raised close to \$2 million, while the Ritz campaign had about \$300,000.

**Pence added that his** relationship with Ritz won't be without problems. "That doesn't mean there won't be the occasional misunderstanding," he said. "It's not to say she and I don't have some different philosophies and positions, but particularly in this area of workforce, we are both committed to making that a reality and have been since the first time we talked about it." Talking about the work councils, Pence said, "When we get this done, it will be one of the great examples of what Hoosiers can get done when both parties work together. You had legislation creating the work councils that passed the House and Senate unanimously." ❖

## Messer supports strike; Bucshon opposes

**By MARK SCHOEFF JR.**  
**Howey Politics Indiana**

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Luke Messer, R-6th CD, is the first member of the Indiana congressional delegation to support a U.S. military strike against Syria, while Republican colleague Larry Bucshon will oppose.

Messer stated his position on Wednesday during a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee that featured Secretary of State John Kerry, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It came on the same day the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 10-7 approving limited strikes.



"There's a very strong case made that [Syrian President Bashar al-] Assad used chemical weapons to gas...innocent fathers, mothers and children," Messer told reporters in a conference call after the hearing. "Action is warranted."

President Barack Obama is seeking congressional authorization to launch a military strike designed to degrade Syria's chemical weapons capability and deter future use. The administration asserts that the Syrian government deployed deadly toxins in an Aug. 21 attack in Damascus that killed more than 1,400 people, including 426 children. Syria is in the midst of a civil war.

Obama has "a lot of work to do" to achieve a congressional majority for a resolution authorizing force, Messer said. But he's optimistic that it can be done over the next week, when votes are likely to occur in the House and Senate. "I believe there's a high likelihood it could pass," Messer said.

The United States must move against Syria in order to control weapons of mass destruction in the region, according to Messer, who sits on the Middle East and North Africa subcommittee of the House foreign affairs panel.

**"If we do not stand** strong on this red line (with) Syria, it will be hard to stand on the red line with Iran on nuclear weapons," Messer said.

Although he's supporting the president's call for a strike against Syria, Messer was critical of the administration's handling of the Syrian crisis.

"I'm not a fan of the Obama administration's foreign policy," Messer said. "It has left us in a situation where there are no good choices."



Each member of Congress must make his or her own decision about the use of force, Messer said. "People of good conscience can come to a different conclusion based on the same facts," Messer said.

Politics should not factor into the equation, according to Messer. "It should be nonpartisan, not bipartisan," he said. Whatever the outcome, Obama must abide by the congressional vote, Messer said. "If he doesn't, it will create a constitutional crisis," Messer said.

Here is where the Indiana Congressional delegation is lining up on military action in Syria:

### **Supporting or leaning toward on a strike**

**Sen. Joe Donnelly, D-Granger:** "What we are trying is to make sure the Syrian government is not in a position to attack their own citizens again."

### **Against a strike**

**U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon, R-Newburgh:** "I just don't think there's clarity, and I think even if you would argue that there is, it's too late," he told the Evansville Courier & Press Wednesday.

### **Leaning against a strike**

**U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Howe:** "I am deeply skeptical of American military involvement in Syria. After ignoring his own 'red line' in recent days, President Obama again outlined no clear strategy or objective today should we take military action.

**U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, R-Indianapolis:** He is "skeptical of intervention in the Syrian conflict at this time,

as I do not see a clear and imminent threat to the United States."

### **Waiting for more information**

**U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, R-Indianapolis:** "The real question, though, is what do we do about it, and how do we do it, and what will the consequences be," Coats told the NWI Times on Wednesday.

**U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks, R-Indianapolis:** "What are the objectives if we were to have a military strike?"

**U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Merrillville:** "I have no position yet on whether we should launch an attack," Visclosky, a Merrillville Democrat, said during a visit to Indiana University Northwest. "I appreciate the President wanting to consult Congress."

**U.S. Rep. Todd Young, R-Bloomington:** I hope this is more than a symbolic gesture, and that the administration actively engages us throughout the process because many questions remain unanswered. Have we utilized all instruments of national power, and exhausted all other options?"

**U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, D-Indianapolis:** "While the images we have seen from Syria are horrific and cannot be ignored, we must be deliberative when it comes to military action."

**U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski, R-Jimtown:** "The president's red line was already crossed, yet it still remains unclear how his recent consideration for a 'limited, narrow act' will deter the Assad regime, and I look forward to hearing the Administration's specific plan." ❖

## **In genocide, an Indiana congressman stood tall**

**By BRIAN A. HOWEY**

BLOOMINGTON – Genocide in a fractured far-away country, coming during a brutal civil war; a young, vacillating Democratic U.S. president; a deeply divided Congress; and calls from the American heartland for a NATO bombing campaign.

This seems like the scenario unfolding before our eyes as President Obama weighs military action in Syria following what the administration described a week ago as a sarin gas attack that killed more than 1,400 Syrians, including hundreds of children. On Saturday, President Obama made an abrupt reversal, saying he would seek a war resolution from Congress. It prompted U.S. Rep. Luke Messer, R-Shelbyville, to call for the "immediate return" of

Congress to Washington.

"Given the urgency of this matter, I believe Congress should return immediately to debate and address the issue," Messer said Saturday. "Under the circumstances, a nine day delay is not appropriate. A decision must be made."

**U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Howe,** voiced concern about U.S. intervention. "I am deeply skeptical of American military involvement in Syria," Stutzman said. "After ignoring his own 'red line' in recent days, President Obama again outlined no clear strategy or objective today as to whether we should we take military action. The American people deserve to have their voices heard regarding the United States taking military action in this volatile region and I look forward to hearing the thoughts of Hoosiers as well as the analysis of our intelligence community, and the strategy of this administration in the coming days."

But the scenario described in the lead paragraph





actually developed in 1991 and the voice from the heartland was a liberal congressman from Bloomington, U.S. Rep. Frank X. McCloskey.

While on a fact-finding mission in Croatia, McCloskey was one of the first outsiders to enter the village of Vocin after a Yugoslav massacre by Vojislav Seselj, whose withdrawing Chetniks had murdered 53 people, most of them elderly men and women. McCloskey found himself looking into the faces of the mangled corpses. Appalled by the atrocity, McCloskey went to Zagreb, held a press conference and used the term "genocide" for the first time to describe what had happened, with Muslim civilians shot in the head, burned to death and dismembered by chainsaws. From Zagreb, McCloskey went to Belgrade where he accused Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic of war crimes to his face, according to an account in Wikipedia.



**State Rep. Ed DeLaney** said of McCloskey in 2003, "I went from being an establishment lawyer to within a year sharing a bombed out apartment with him on a hill in Sarajevo." Bosnia would become McCloskey's call in service to his country.

He clashed with President Clinton, at one point writing a New York Times op-ed article where he told Clinton to fire his secretary of state. McCloskey would break with the Clinton administration and at one point, according to accounts, looked Secretary of State Warren Christopher in the face and demanded he resign for his conduct of policy toward Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Then there was the famed White House Christmas reception line where McCloskey greeted President and First Lady Clinton, saying, "Mr. President, bomb the Serbs. You don't know how good it will make you feel." McCloskey went back to the end of the line, and approached the Clintons for a second time, repeating what he had said minutes before.

McCloskey was defeated for reelection in 1994 by John Hostettler, a Republican who became one of the only members of his party to vote against the Iraq war resolution in 2003. Despite his tough race at home during the growing Republican tsunami that would give the GOP control of the House for the first time in a generation, McCloskey drew attention to the "ethnic cleansing" in the villages and towns of ex-Yugoslavia. McCloskey brokered a broad coalition of Democrats and Republicans to back legislation called the McCloskey-Gilman amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995, which was intended to lift the arms embargo first against Bosnia and

then Croatia. The McCloskey-Gilman amendment passed the House of Representatives 244-178 on June 9, 1994. In the U.S. Senate, a similar bill was sponsored by Sens. Bob Dole and Joe Lieberman. It was defeated by a 50-50 vote on July 1, 1994.

Following his defeat, McCloskey convinced DeLaney to go with him to Bosnia to what he described as a chance to create a new order. He helped convince the shapers of the new maps to keep Vukovar in Bosnia, in the maps that would eventually form the Dayton Accords and end the first phase of the Balkan war. "There are thousands of people who would be dead if it wasn't for Frank McCloskey," DeLaney said in 2003 at

a tribute dinner at French Lick as the former congressman and Bloomington mayor battled cancer that would claim his life the following November. The two went and found themselves in "what was one of the worst places on earth."

At one point, DeLaney said, he became fed up and told McCloskey, "Goddammit Frank, I can't live with a saint. Can't you just be a jerk?"

Following his congressional defeat, both houses of the 105th Congress passed a bill to lift the U.S. arms embargo on Bosnia by a veto-proof, two-thirds majority in 1995. President Clinton vetoed the legislation in August 1995, instead launching a diplomatic initiative that would result in the Dayton Peace Accords. The Dayton Accords were reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris on Dec. 14, 1995, putting an end to the first phase of the genocidal conflict after three and a half years.

**President Clinton opted** for a bombing campaign following renewed genocide in Kosovo in 1998-99, with the strikes running from March 24 to June 10, 1999, in what was the second major NATO military action called Operation Noble Anvil. It came weeks after the U.S. Senate impeachment trial acquitted Clinton. The 1999 bombings led to the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo, the establishment of UNMIK, a U.N. mission in Kosovo, and put an end to the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. The U.S. did not put boots on the ground and suffered no military casualties during the bombing campaign.

McCloskey addressed the room of more than 100 people that included Gov. Frank O'Bannon in August 2003, nervously jangled his keys and change in his pockets and told how his role in Bosnia "changed my life."

"Some say politics doesn't work and you can't do anything," McCloskey said. "But one person deciding to do things can change the world." ♦



## Reading tests show gap for at-risk students

By MAUREEN HAYDEN  
CNHI News Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS — More Indiana third graders are passing the state’s reading proficiency test, but students who live in poverty or don’t speak English as their native language are failing the test at a higher rate than their counterparts.

Final results of the state’s IREAD-3 test, released Wednesday, also show a racial disparity: Just over 94 percent of white students passed the test, while only 81.5 percent of black students did. Just over 85 percent of Hispanic students passed the test.



The numbers released Wednesday also reflect a rise in test scores for those students who received intensive remediation over the summer after failing the IREAD-3 the first time they took it in

the spring. Overall, 86.1 percent of Indiana third-graders passed IREAD-3 last spring; after the test was re-administered in the summer to students who’d received the extra help, the final overall pass rate went up to 91.4 percent.

When the test was administered in 2012 – the first year for the test – just over 90 percent of third-graders passed, including students who had to re-take the test.

The Indiana Reading Evaluation and Determination assessment, known as IREAD-3, is given to third-graders in March. Part of Indiana’s sweeping education reform efforts, it’s aimed at identifying students who need intensive help before they can move on to fourth grade.

The state’s test results were released by the Indiana Department of Education, with a brief statement from Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz, who’s been a sharp critic of the IREAD-3 test.

**In it, the Democrat Ritz** thanked “the many educators and families who are making reading proficiency a priority throughout Indiana.” But she made no mention of her so-far unsuccessful efforts to eliminate the test, which was introduced by her predecessor, Republican Tony Bennett.

Ritz briefly mentioned the IREAD-3 results during a meeting of the Indiana State Board of Education Wednesday. The board has rebuffed efforts by Ritz to institute other reading measures that she’s argued would give teachers better information about an individual student’s progress in reading proficiency. During the meeting, the board also unanimously approved a resolution hiring its own executive

director and staff, a measure that Ritz opposed.

While Ritz has argued that the IREAD-3 doesn’t give teachers enough information about individual students, the results do show an “achievement gap” in reading scores that shows up when tests results are broken out by demographics and other factors.

**For example, just 79%** of students whose families have low enough incomes to qualify for the free and reduced lunch program passed the IREAD-3 test when it was given in March. The final pass rate went up to 86 percent after students who’d failed the March test went through intensive remediation at their schools and re-took the test this summer.

Just under 64% of students who don’t speak English as their native tongue -- classified as “English language learners” – passed IREAD-3 when it was given in March. The pass rate went up by 10 points, to just over 74 percent after failing students received remediation and were tested again.

Janet Boyle, assistant director of the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis said the disparity in test results is a national issue.

“This is not just happening in Indiana,” Boyle said.

It’s a critical issue, though. Third grade is when students are expected to move from learning to read to reading to learn. “By the fourth grade, the curriculum expands to include science, social studies and other subjects where learning content becomes important,” Boyle said.

**Boyle said the disparity** issue is a difficult one for teachers to address. She noted that families who live in poverty, for example, change schools and school districts more often than their middle-class peers. That makes it more difficult for teachers to identify a student’s reading needs and track that student’s progress.

She also noted that multiple studies show that students who lag behind in their reading proficiency have difficulty catching up in higher grades without intervention and are at higher risk for failure.

“It doesn’t mean the door is closed for them,” Boyle said. “The game isn’t not over for them, but the clock is ticking.”

In her brief press announcing the IREAD-3 results, Ritz touted her Hoosier Family of Readers initiative, a voluntary program which had more than 127,000 participants this summer.

“The department encourages schools to join the Hoosier Family of Readers by developing their own initiatives to promote and support reading outside of the school day,” the news release said. ❖



## Marriage & the separation of church and state

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – Instead of getting all upset and breathless about the recent United States Supreme Court decision on the Defense of Marriage Act and the upcoming battle in the Indiana Legislature over House Joint Resolution 6, I started thinking about an idea that might be palatable to both sides of an issue that will surely enflame our state in the coming months.

I have had several discussions with social conservatives who are staunchly against gay marriage and I have had discussions with proponents of gay marriage. Through those discussions, I have arrived at a solution that might be able to be worked out that would address most parties' concerns.



Let me state that I do not speak for the Republican Party. I speak only for myself.

Marriage is a religious ceremony. It predates recorded history. In fact, the "marriage" of religious recognition of marriage and governmental recognition of marriage did not begin until 1756 in England. Until then marriage was strictly a religious affair with the canons of the church ruling the

institution. During the Reformation, marriages conducted by Catholic priests were voided. Then, during the Anti-Reformation, marriages not conducted by a Catholic priest were voided.

In other words, marriage was subject to the same disfunctionality of doctrine and dogma that make for beheadings, pogroms, stonings, crusades and inquisitions on many other issues of a religious nature.

**Government has** absolutely no business interfering in any way, shape or form with the religious institution of marriage. Marriage is the strict domain of religion and its rules and practices should be established by each church, synagogue, temple, mosque or shrine as they see fit. Our United States Constitution is clear on the separation of church and state. Government should stay out of the business of the church, period.

However, contract law is the rightful domain of government. Government has the right to allow and acknowledge contracts between consenting parties. Like any good contract, the document should lay out the rights and responsibilities of each party to the contract and address

any remedies available in the event the contract is terminated.

I think that we all would concur that if Bob agrees to mow Bill's yard every week and rake his leaves and Bill agrees to provide Bob food and shelter in exchange, we would have no problem with that concept. It is, after all, a simple contract.

**We also enter into complex** contracts every day. Have you ever read a charge card contract or a cell phone contract? The creative minds in the legal world have thought of just about everything in these frequently used documents. I even think that I read in my cell phone contract that in the event of nuclear holocaust or zombie apocalypse I still am obligated to pay my bill.

There should be absolutely no reason why government cannot create a contract to be executed before two people bind themselves in a legal personal relationship. Some would call this a civil union. I call it an executed contract. Furthermore, those wishing to enter into this legal personal relationship, be they gay or heterosexual, would be required to sign the contract and have it witnessed by a notary. We do it with wills and trusts. We can extend the practice to legal personal relationships.

Now back to the issue of marriage. Each religion and church would be free to establish their guidelines for marriage. If church A is willing to marry a gay couple, so be it. If church B refuses to marry a gay couple, so be it. It is the right of each church to establish and follow the rules that they will follow in regard to marriage.

Government should not and cannot interfere with the rights of each religion. That right is guaranteed by the United States Constitution. This means that government cannot sanction a church for refusing to marry any couple, gay or heterosexual. Laws protecting the civil rights of gay people would stop at the door of the church.

**Government cannot** regulate whether a church does infant baptism, sprinkles or dunks or whether the church uses music in its services. That is the business of the church.

The flip side of the equation is that the church should not try to interfere with contract law. Remember, the only difference between bad legislation proposed by religious doctrinaires that we agree with and bad legislation proposed by crazy Islamic fascist fundamentalists is just a matter of numbers. Elect enough crazy Islamic fascist fundamentalists to the Indiana Legislature and we'll all be wearing burqas and beards to work.

Think I'm overstating the possibility? Take a look at the effect of a burgeoning Muslim population in England, France and that most foreign of locales, Detroit. They love their religion and would like to see it reflected in the laws of the land. They are electing representatives and they





are activists. They also have the ability to quote their holy document, the Koran, to suit their purpose.

I am sure that this column will please no one. I am not advocating for gay marriage nor am I advocating the prohibition of a contract that binds two parties to a relationship agreement. I am calling for the strict separation of government and religion and a bar to the interference of either in the affairs of the other. It's kind of like rendering

unto Caesar what is Caesar's. Our words of support for the Constitution of the United States are hollow unless we extend the protections guaranteed by it to people with whom we do not agree and also protect the separation of church and state. ❖

**Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.**

## The jobs deficit and political noise

**By MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — Governors and mayors normally talk as if they are personally responsible for bringing jobs to their states and communities. This is nonsense. Outside of jobs with the government itself, elected officials have little to do with employment decisions.



Tens of thousands of private sector decision makers are in control. The best elected officials can do is blow the horn for their home areas, as Governor Pence is doing with his 15-second ads on a Times Square digital billboard.

It is, however, in the nature of things that politicians will pose and prance as if their programs were the decisive factors in increasing employment. None of them will admit the possibility that those same actions

could be the reason for unemployment.

Let us then look at the size of the tasks our governor and mayors face. As of July this year, Indiana's jobs (full and part-time) numbered just 28,100 fewer than our July peak of 2007. That is less than one percent of the current number of jobs. You could say Indiana is within easy reach of wiping out the job deficit of the Great Recession.

Three Indiana metro areas (Columbus, Indianapolis-Carmel and Lafayette) had more jobs in July 2013 than they did in July 2007, having reached new historic peaks for that month. They are in the best shape among the Hoosier 14 metro areas defined by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The remaining 11 metros have job deficits off their peaks ranging from two percent in the Evansville metro to 20 percent in Anderson's metro. The peak July for Evansville was reached in 2006, whereas Anderson, in a long-

term downdraft, last peaked in July 1995. No other metro has a longer period of struggling to regain its former level of jobs.

Elkhart-Goshen's shortfall of 17,400 jobs is 15 percent of its current employment level, off a peak reached in 2006. Kokomo's metro and that of South Bend-Mishawaka had July peaks in 2005 and also (along with Michigan City-LaPorte) have deficits in the double digits (12 and 11 percent).

Lesser deficits are to be found in the Fort Wayne and Terre Haute metro areas (five percent each) as well as in Bloomington, Gary and Muncie areas (four percent each). While these latter figures are numerically small, they remain blotches on the shining face each mayor would have for his or her community.

Job growth is not really a local matter. In each community, businesses depend on the economic vitality of the region and the general health of the national economy. Other than that, economic development as practiced by localities and states is a form of beggar-thy-neighbor.

Draw jobs from others by competing to have either the best of services or the lowest taxes. Make claims about the quality of your labor force while existing employers complain about the deficiencies of that same body of workers. These are the tactics of job creation our leaders know best and employ the most. ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an independent economist, writer and speaker.**



## In Washington, ideology need not reign supreme

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – As I speak to people about the Congress, one question arises more than any other: Why is Congress gridlocked? People are perplexed and disappointed with its performance, and are searching hard for an answer.

The roots of Congress's dysfunction are complex. But the fundamental reason is that real differences in ideology and principles about both government and governance exist among the voters. At heart, the reason it's become so hard for Washington to act is that the two parties are being driven by fundamentally incompatible views.



Conservatives place a heavy emphasis on liberty, individual freedom, and self-reliance. They have little confidence in government's ability to play a role in improving society or the economy, and many of them look

upon government as destructive, a force that undermines our basic freedom. They are fearful of centralized power, opposed to redistribution of any kind, and opposed to new government programs — or even to improving existing government programs they'd rather see cut. They reject entirely the notion of raising taxes or imposing new regulations on the private sector.

Moreover, a belief has taken hold among some conservatives in recent years that compromise and accommodation are betrayals of their cause. This has put great pressure on GOP leaders not to budge in their negotiations with the White House and Senate Democrats.

**Meanwhile, on the "progressive" side** — a label that has come to supplant "liberal," in part because Republicans in the 1980s and 1990s were so effective at demonizing liberals — there is much greater emphasis on using government to narrow economic disparities and help those at the bottom of the income scale. They emphasize its role in providing equality of opportunity for all and individuals' responsibility to the community around them. Because they have more confidence in government as a constructive force, they have no trouble with the notion of expanding government's scope to improve Americans' lives.

In fact, unlike conservatives, they think government can expand freedom when it's properly applied, by reining in the power of monied interests. While they do

not favor a radical centralization of power in the federal government, as some conservatives charge, they are more willing to accept government action — and the legislative compromises that make it possible. Because they have less confidence in the market to solve all problems, they support both the taxes they believe necessary to run programs they like, and regulations to limit the private sector's more predatory impacts on the environment or society.

**The gap between these** views appears unbridgeable. It is not, nor are the differences between the two sides as wide as they appear.

That is because most Americans find themselves somewhere between the extremes, able to see merit in both conservative and progressive ideas. When I was in office, I often found myself thinking that many of my constituents were conservative, moderate, and liberal all at the same time. That hasn't changed. As a whole, Americans do not want excessive government or heavy-handed bureaucracy, but they do want programs that help them, like Social Security and Medicare. They are dedicated to both individual freedom and opportunity and to community obligation, and they don't see them as mutually contradictory. More than anything else, especially these days, they want to see moderation and cooperation from their political leaders.

**There may be dysfunction** in Washington, but the system can still work. When policy makers gather (I've seen this countless times) ideology fades, pragmatism rises, and the question becomes, What can we do to fix the situation? That's where most Americans find themselves. They do not see government as evil, though they are often disappointed in its practice and its practitioners. They are wary of excessive government, but again and again they turn to government at some level to help solve the problems they complain about, and they want it to work effectively and efficiently.

In the end, Congress usually ends up about where most Americans are and want it to be. So I'm not surprised to find how, when dire problems confront them, both conservatives and progressives in Washington find their inner pragmatist. ♦

**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.**



## Being a Lake sheriff means you have an ego

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – I don't know what it is with sheriffs in Lake County. Perhaps it's an ego thing.

It seems that once a sheriff has served the state-limited two terms in office, he needs another office to move into.



Because of the attention that is showered on sheriffs, it apparently is tough going from on-high to nothing.

I guess that is kind of like giving up cigarettes cold turkey. Take former Lake County Sheriff Roy Dominguez for example.

Dominguez was elected sheriff in 2002 after Sheriff John Buncich completed his second term.

Four years later, Dominguez was re-elected during a very heated campaign against Buncich, who hoped for a comeback after sitting out for four years.

Dominguez was a fairly popular sheriff who was tainted at the end of his second term by a weapons scandal involving some of his high-ranking deputies.

Early in his second term as sheriff, Dominguez got the notion that he would run for governor in 2012. To fulfill that dream, Dominguez spent the better part of a year traveling the state in quest of support in the next governor's primary.

For a number of reasons, his unofficial gubernatorial campaign never became official. Electing a Lake County Hispanic as governor does seem to be a dream. After leaving office in January 2011, Dominguez was a man without a country, so to say. He began practicing law, but most of his energy was focused on seek another office.

**In the spring of 2012**, Dominguez ran against incumbent county Commissioner Gerry Scheub in the Democratic primary. It was an intense campaign with both men spending a ton of money. The cash didn't help Dominguez who was buried by Scheub.

Dominguez isn't the sort to let an old-fashioned drubbing keep him down.

Less than a year after losing the commissioner's primary, Dominguez was still thirsting for another elected office. He set his sights on running for county auditor in the 2014 primary. After all, Dominguez thought, the auditor's office wouldn't have an incumbent because auditor Peggy

Katona would be running for county treasurer because of the two-term limitation on auditor.

But, county Treasurer John Petalas faces the same term-limit situation and is going to run for auditor.

**Because Petalas is a pretty** popular guy in Democratic circles, there have been some folks trying to talk Dominguez out of running.

With the passing of Labor Day, the 2014 primary is in full swing. Dominguez continues to talk about taking on Petalas. While Dominguez hasn't been successful in winning another office after sheriff, others have. Former Sheriff Leslie O. Pruitt also served as county treasurer and auditor. And former Sheriff Stephen R. Stiglich was elected auditor after failing to win the clerk's office.

That brings us to Buncich, who was encouraged by some to seek another office after his first two terms as sheriff. Buncich declined, saying sheriff was the only office he desired. After sitting out for eight years, Buncich was again elected sheriff in 2010. And he will be a heavy favorite to win re-election next year. ❖

**Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years.**

## Locals seek state tax accountability

GOSHEN — As Elkhart County and city leaders prepare their 2014 budgets, many concerns weigh on their minds, but on a state level, they want to make sure lawmakers understand that accountability and accuracy is at the top of their list, especially when it comes to income taxes (Elkhart Truth). The mayors of Elkhart, Goshen and Nappanee along with Elkhart County officials met with state legislators Wednesday, Sept. 4, including Sen. Ryan Mishler and Reps. Wes Culver, Rebecca Kubacki and Tim Wesco. Errors in the collection and distribution of local option income taxes have been a long-time issue for Elkhart County, commissioner Mike Yoder told the panel of lawmakers.

Yoder pointed to more than \$200 million in income tax revenues that were not accurately reported and reallocated across the state in 2010. Two years later, the Indiana Department of Revenue had to make additional distributions to counties. "As we move funding from an emphasis on property taxes to local option income taxes, we need to have some level of confidence that all this money is coming back," Yoder said. "Frankly, if they're not doing a good job, the money ends up in the state general fund, so there's not a lot of incentive for the state to actually fix the problem, except for it's the right thing to do."





**Erika Smith, Indianapolis Star:** When it comes to following politics, I like to think of myself as sufficiently jaded. As someone who doesn't descend into a fit of rage every time an elected official ignores reality and gambles with other people's lives in order to prove an ideological point. But Gov. Mike Pence, you got me on this one. I'm mad. For the life of me, I can't understand why Pence is celebrating a compromise he made with the Obama administration this week to pass up expanding Medicaid coverage to tens of thousands of Hoosiers and instead stick with our limited Healthy Indiana Plan. OK, maybe I do understand why he's celebrating. Pence, after all, is one of the nation's most vocal opponents of the Affordable Care Act, commonly known as Obamacare. He and many other Republicans say Indiana can't afford to expand Medicaid under the act. Many others say otherwise. Pence also says that the Healthy Indiana Plan, with its requirement to share the cost of care, encourages participants to take responsibility for their decisions. I say that's political posturing for his ideological allies. Because here's the reality: Thanks to Pence's decision, hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers who are poor and don't have health insurance will remain without it for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, only about 40,000 of the state's residents are enrolled in the Healthy Indiana Plan, with tens of thousands more on the waiting list. Oh, and enrollment is capped. This seems like one heck of a gamble to be making with people's lives. With people's families. I could almost -- almost -- get on board with what Pence is proposing if the situation in Indiana was better. If the state's unemployment rate wasn't so high. If we didn't have so many people below the poverty line. If we had companies lining up to give people jobs. If we didn't have so many people who, because our level of personal income is so low compared to the rest of the nation, don't make enough money to support their families but still make too much to qualify for food stamps and other benefits. If we didn't have so many people going hungry, being forced to choose between buying groceries and buying medicine. But that's not the situation in Indiana. ❖

**Doug Ross, NWI Times:** Fifty years ago, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. told the world, "I have a dream." This is a report card on that dream. "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character," King said on Aug. 28, 1963. I was a little child, just 4 years old. A few years later, I went on a family vacation down south where I saw drinking fountains labeled "White" and "Colored." If only the labels referred to the color of the appliances, rather than the

people using them. But change was coming. There are still people who resist change, even when it brings us closer to the all-American ideal of "all men are created equal." King's dream is coming true — it must come true — but we're not there yet. That's why Gingerich, Klein and everyone else — including you and me — must continue working to make Northwest Indiana "the beloved community" King dreamed of. ❖

**Thomas Friedman, New York Times:** The Obama team has clearly struggled with its Syria policy, but, in fairness, this is a wickedly complex problem. We need a policy response that simultaneously deters another Syrian poison gas attack, doesn't embroil America in the Syrian civil war and also doesn't lead to the sudden collapse of the Syrian state with all its chemical weapons, or, worse, a strengthening of the Syrian regime and its allies Hezbollah and Iran. However, I think President Obama has the wrong strategy for threading that needle. He's seeking Congressional support for a one-time "shock and awe" missile attack against Syrian military targets. The right strategy is "arm and shame." Let me explain. Count me with the activists on the question of whether the United States should respond to the Syrian regime's murder of some 1,400 civilians, more than 400 of them children, with poison gas. If there is no global response to this breaching of a universal taboo on using poison gas, the world will be a much more dangerous place. And only America can spearhead a credible response: Russia and China have rendered the United Nations Security Council meaningless; Europe is a military museum; the Arab League is worthless; all others are spectators. We are out front — alone. We may not want to be, but here we are. So we must lead. But upholding this norm in the context of the Syrian civil war is not a simple matter. Start with the fact that probably the only way to produce a unified, pluralistic, multisectarian Syria is for an international army to come in, take over the country, monopolize all weaponry and referee a long transition to consensual rule. Syrians can't forge that on their own now. But such a force is not possible in this century, and Iraq demonstrated how hard it is for even that option to work. Thus, the most likely option for Syria is some kind of de facto partition, with the pro-Assad, predominantly Alawite Syrians controlling one region and the Sunni and Kurdish Syrians controlling the rest. That's why I think the best response to the use of poison gas by President Bashar al-Assad is not a cruise missile attack on Assad's forces, but an increase in the training and arming of the Free Syrian Army — including the antitank and antiaircraft weapons it's long sought. ❖





## 13.5% of Indiana homes face hunger

INDIANAPOLIS - New data released today by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reveals that 49 million people (including 6 million children) are food insecure in the United States. In Indiana, 13.5 percent of Hoosier households remain food insecure – meaning roughly 1 in 7 households had difficulty at some time during the year in providing enough nutritious food for their family. Prevalence of food insecurity in Indiana has risen in recent USDA reports, particularly with the very low food insecure--those who report reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns--rising to 6.3 percent in this report from 4.8 percent in the previous three year average, ranking Indiana 12th in the nation. This updated data comes as the U.S. House of Representatives is expected to consider a bill this month with a \$40 billion cut to federal food assistance. "When it comes to food insecurity rates, any number is too high," said Emily Weikert Bryant, executive director of Feeding Indiana's Hungry. "Our Indiana network of food banks distributed 73.7 million pounds of food last year—about 61 million meals—to Hoosiers at risk of hunger. But charity alone cannot solve the problem of hunger that we know exists in every county in our state. It's because of numbers like these that we need to maintain strong federal and charitable food assistance to get enough food to those in need. This means strengthening and protecting federal nutrition programs." The proposed \$40 billion SNAP cut in the House bill would result in millions of Americans seeing their food assistance reduced or lost



entirely, resulting in over 15 billion lost meals for struggling families over the next ten years according to Feeding America estimates. These cuts would come on top of benefit reductions for all SNAP recipients that will take effect on November 1st and will average about \$36 per month for a family of four.

## Hospital chief eyes Medicaid expansion

ELKHART — Some key deadlines in implementation of the Affordable Care Act loom, and representatives from the area health care sector, local leaders and others gathered Wednesday, Sept. 4, to discuss the matter (Elkhart Truth). There's been a lot of debate among U.S. leaders about the health care overhaul, also known as Obamacare, but one of the panelists, Elkhart General Hospital President Greg Losasso, said now isn't the time to discuss repeal, as sought by some. Losasso said Indiana and the local community would be "disadvantaged" without the federal funds that would come with a Medicaid expansion. Another panelist, Heart City Health Center Chief Executive Officer Vernita Todd, said it would be a let down if the expansion doesn't occur, but she maintained a hopeful tone over other elements of ACA implementation. "We're hopeful and believing things are going to get better," she said.

## Sebelius appoints region director

WASHINGTON — Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius today announced that Kathleen Falk will be appointed Region V Director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Said Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, "Kathleen is

a devoted public servant, who brings with her extensive experience from her time as county executive of Dane County and assistant attorney general in the Wisconsin Department of Justice. As we continue to implement the Affordable Care Act, we look forward to adding Kathleen's many strengths to the HHS team and are excited to have her on the ground working with the Region V community." The HHS Region V office is based in Chicago, Illinois, and works with officials in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

## Pence departs for Japan

INDIANAPOLIS - Gov. Mike Pence will hold a media availability at 10 a.m. Thursday at the Indianapolis International Airport before he departs to lead his first gubernatorial overseas economic development and jobs mission to Japan.

## A to F review panel selections

INDIANAPOLIS - Both Gov. Mike Pence and Senate President Pro Tempore David Long each appointed four members to the Accountability System Review Panel Wednesday (Howey Politics Indiana). The Accountability System Review Panel, created by the House, Senate, governor and the Indiana Department of Education will advise the State Board of Education in its assignment to create new designations of school performance, as required by a new law enacted this year. The panel will consist of 17 members. The IDOE, Senate, House and governor will each appoint four members, with each entity's appointments including a teacher, principal, superintendent and a technical advisor. The superintendent of public instruction will also serve.