



Governor previews legislative goals

Pence will focus on jobs and education

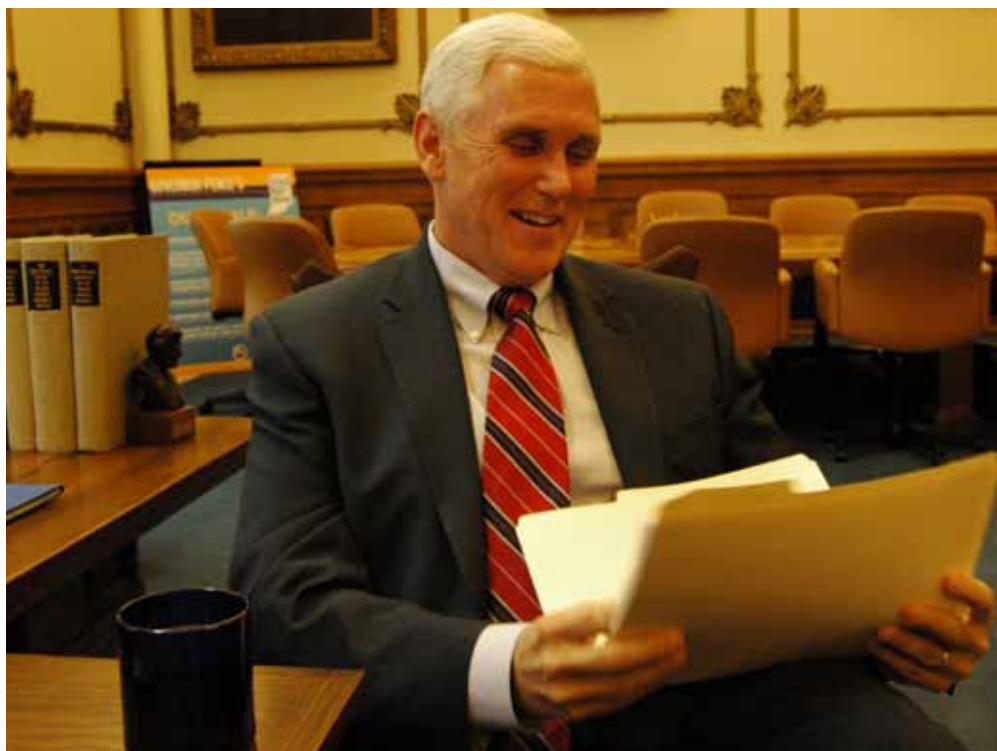
By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Mike Pence’s second Indiana General Assembly agenda will feature legislation on jobs and education.

In an exclusive interview with Howey Politics Indiana on Wednesday, Pence held a stuffed manila folder he said contained much of his agenda. “I could tell you everything, but then I’d have to kill you,” he joked.

Pence said he would unveil more details in early December when he gives what he calls “a major address that will outline our agenda.” But, he added, “I can tell you in very broad strokes a couple of things. My focus is going to be on jobs and schools. We’re going to continue to drive toward the six goals in our Roadmap for Indiana and our advanced policies about that.”

The Pence “Roadmap” began as a 2012 campaign brochure outlining his policy priorities. But since he took



office 10 months ago, the Roadmap has had a prominent station in his Statehouse office on an easel.

The priorities include:

- 1.) Increasing private sector employment: As**

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Pence will seek reelection

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Mike Pence plans to seek a second term in 2016, with senior administration officials dousing any notion of a potential presidential run.

“Follow the money,” a senior Pence administration official told Howey Politics Indiana on Wednesday.



While Pence has a national political action committee that could raise federal election money, the source told HPI that all of the governor’s fundraising activity is related to his Indiana gubernatorial campaign.

“He will seek a second term,” the



“Gov. Pence, through his newly created education agency, the Center for Education and Career Innovation, is undermining the exceptional work done every day by the Department of Education.”

- Supt. Glenda Ritz



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source said.

The revelation comes just as the activities around the 2014 Indiana General Assembly session begin to pick up next week. The General Assembly convenes for its annual Organization Day on Tuesday.

A shadow factor in Gov. Pence's initial 2013 session was one that dogged former Govs. Evan Bayh and Mitch Daniels, which was speculation on whether he will seek the presidency.

Pence flirted briefly with a 2012 presidential run in the winter of 2011. That came along with a tandem exploration by Gov. Daniels. With social conservatives Sarah Palin and Mike Huckabee opting out of the presidential race, conservatives such as Dick Armey, Jim Ryun and Club For Growth encouraged Pence, then the third ranking House Republican, to consider a White House candidacy.

Sources tell HPI that in order to keep two Hoosier Republicans from running, Daniels helped clear the decks for Pence to get the gubernatorial nomination. That resulted in Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman ending a brief campaign of her own, citing a "minor medical" condition.

In February 2011, Pence announced in Pendleton that he would conduct a multi-month "listening tour" that resulted in his official gubernatorial run that May. Later that month, Daniels stunned Hoosier Republicans when he announced that he, too, would not seek the White House, citing his family "female caucus."

Pence's name has come up in Indiana circles about a potential 2016 candidacy. The White House will be open after two terms by President

Obama.

But the presidential speculation can have repercussions. When Pence pushed his 10% income tax cut, there were several comments by legislative leaders that played the proposed cut as part of Pence's broader political plans, centering on 2016.

The senior administration official told Howey Politics that all of Pence's fundraising in 2012 has been in his Indiana gubernatorial campaign account.

The source said that Gov. Pence has received a number of invitations to speak in early presidential primary and caucus states of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina, and most have been turned down.

If Pence hits that circuit, the speculation on a 2016 presidential run would intensify. In turn, that kind of scrutiny during an Indiana General Assembly session can result in speculation on his ulterior motives.

That was often the case during Gov. Bayh's two terms. The worst kept secret in town was that Bayh had presidential ambitions. He was a regular on quadrennial veep-stake lists and keynoted the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Bayh finally launched a presidential campaign in 2006, only to abruptly end it in December of that year when it became clear that Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were going to dominate the nomination process.

There have been a couple of stories focusing on a Pence presidential run this year, but most of the gathering 2016 field has been focused on New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, U.S. Sens. Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and Rand Paul, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal (who will address the Indiana GOP Fall Dinner later this year) and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush. ❖





Pence priority, from page 1

measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

2.) New investment with emphasis on manufacturing, agriculture, life sciences and logistics:

As measured by investment (known as "total deals") reported by the Indiana Business Research Center at Indiana University;

3.) Improving math and reading skills of elementary students: As measured by I-READ3 and ISTEP+ results from the Indiana Department of Education;

4.) Increasing graduation rates:

Measuring by Indiana's non-waiver graduation rate from the Indiana Department of Education;

5.) Improving the quality of the Hoosier workforce:

As measured by the American Community Survey and STATS Indiana;

6.) Improving the health, safety and well-being of Hoosier families, especially children:

As measured by the Kids Count Data Center from the Annie Casey Foundation.

With some specificity, Pence talked of a "couple of broad strokes that I haven't mentioned anywhere publicly."

"We're going to have some proposals for tax reform that are specifically focused on spurring new investment and making Indiana more competitive with a particular eye toward our neighboring states," the governor said. "We are deep into a tough competition for jobs. We're holding our own in Indiana. We have actually added jobs in the Hoosier state, and we have significant encouraging numbers in the area of manufacturing. As I've been in these discussions pitching Indiana and talking Indiana, I know what our competition says about us and we'll have some proposals for tax reform that is specifically designed to ensure that we're going to make sure Indiana is competitive with our neighboring states."

He noted the 2020 Fund was included in the current biennial budget. "It was \$400 million in highway funding," Pence said. "That will take legislation for us to deploy those resources. We'll be going to the General Assembly with a plan to put those resources to work. Roads mean jobs, and I don't just mean road jobs. I was pleased when

Bond Buyer Magazine just named the East End Bridge at the top and most innovative project in the country. We're going to finish that under budget and ahead of schedule."

Pence continued, "I'm committed to finishing I-69 all the way to Indianapolis. Very shortly we're going to open up that bypass around Kokomo on 31. My inclination is to look at other infrastructure needs around the state and see where we can enhance infrastructure in the short term as we finish the longer term projects."

Pence said he was "excited" about his Blue Ribbon panel on infrastructure and said that when he brings those stakeholders together, he asks, "What does infrastructure look like in 20 years? In 30 years? In 50 years?"

The Pence legislative agenda will include expanding early learning programs. "I will tell you that we have been making a very careful study of early learning. I have been studying a number of pre-K programs around the state. I was in Evansville last week and (have seen those in) Northern Indiana and a couple in Central Indiana. We're going to have some proposals to expand access to quality early learning for disadvantaged families."

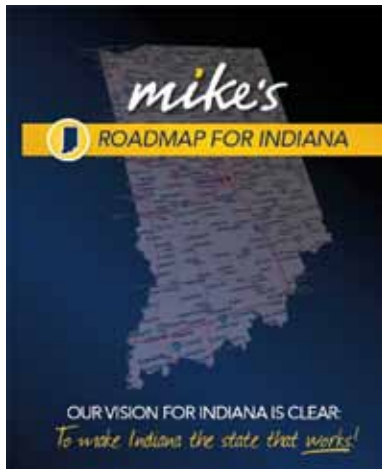
And the governor said he will be "leaning into" career pathway issues. "We'll have a proposal on focusing on making college more affordable," he said. "We made a little progress on that last session."

On the education front, Pence said there will be proposals "promoting more opportunities for our teachers. We've got a couple of very fresh ideas about promoting innovation in the classroom, for high performing teachers, making sure that we'll have some ideas on charter schools, making them more economically viable."

A couple of obvious things not on Gov. Pence's short list here are issues relating to the health of Hoosiers, as well as what House Speaker Brian Bosma has identified as the "skills gap."

In an interview with HPI last summer, Bosma observed, "We have to take substantive action to address two items: The skills gap, which is a consequence of almost a million Hoosiers not having the high tech skills to succeed in today's high tech economy, and what I believe I coined as the 'opportunity gap' which is having high growth opportunities for our high achieving graduates here, or high opportunity students, from our high schools to, more importantly, our colleges."

"This is the biggest issue we've got here – the opportunity gap," Bosma said. "It's the high potential students out of our high schools and universities. It's not just that we're losing kids. We had a debate this year on the tax burden and the right tax to cut. And the governor correctly identified that the tax burden on Hoosiers has increased over the last 30 years, compared to other states. The source of that increase was not higher taxes, it was a de-





crease in our per-capita income. We went from having 94 or 95 percent of the average per-capita income in the 1970s to, in the mid-80s, as a percentage of per capita income.”

When Bosma joins legislative leaders at Monday’s Indiana Chamber preview session, the speaker will almost certainly be talking about these gaps.

As for the relative unhealthy state of Hoosiers, Pence’s initial focus has been on the 7.7 per 1,000 infant mortality rate. Much of the rest of this part of a potential agenda is wrapped up in the Affordable Care Act, which has had an unprecedented disastrous rollout, placing the entire program in jeopardy.

Gov. Pence said that his administration is in talks with the Centers of Medicaid/Medicare Services and the U.S. Department Health and Human Services about using the Healthy Indiana Plan for his Medicaid expansion. Asked if the bad Obamacare rollout will influence negotiations with HHS, Pence said it is too early to tell.

“I saw you post that question,” Pence said of the HPI website. “I am preoccupied about this question of infant mortality in Indiana. I’m very, very pleased with the start that we’ve had, the first-ever summit. I’ve tasked Dr. VanNess with very specific objectives in this arena. I am convinced if we can continue to break down silos, have greater collaboration that we can, like states like Texas has done, we can impact of that. We can reduce the heartbreak in Indiana. The numbers in Indiana have got to change.”

Dr. William C. VanNess II is commissioner of the Indiana Department of Health.

But the same elements, a lack of access to public health facilities and insurance coverage, not only impact infant mortality but an array of other health metrics. That includes the gap between the 50,000 to 100,000 who could end up in an expanded Healthy Indiana Plan, while the uninsured pool in Indiana is estimated to be 900,000.

Asked if a future priority would be bridging that gap, Pence seemed open to the idea, but not in this short legislative session, particularly with so many questions sur-



rounding Obamacare.

“We are collecting the information and identifying what are the root causes here,” Pence said, adding that infant mortality and childhood poverty “weigh heavy on my heart.”

“On the broader question of health care, I strongly stand by Indiana’s decision on not having a state-based exchange,” Pence said. “My decision was based entirely on our analysis in the immediate days following my election that for the some \$25 million to operate the exchange, we would gain very little control over and above what Hoosiers would gain if the federal government operated the exchange. Other than enrolling people in Medicaid, the state exchanges haven’t had much more success than the federal exchange.”

“It’s a flawed idea,” he said of the ACA, which has enrolled just 700 Hoosiers. “I do think Obamacare was a mistake. What is happening to millions of Americans and tens of thousands of Hoosiers, losing the health insurance they like, was completely predictable. And was predicted by many of us who argued against this policy when it passed through Congress on party line votes.”

“The real health care reform is driven by consumer driven health care and transparency,” Pence said. “Both of which are being modeled every day here in Indiana.” ❖

NEXT WEEK: Looking into Indiana health care solutions.



Ritz dismisses SBOE as Pence calls for cooperation

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – As Gov. Mike Pence called on the State Board of Education to work “in a responsible and effective manner” Wednesday morning, Supt. Glenda Ritz abruptly adjourned a board session and left the meeting. The events happened just hours after Ritz said in a letter to the Indianapolis Star that Gov. Pence was orchestrating a “power grab.”

Pence told Howey Politics Indiana in an exclusive interview late Wednesday morning, “We are going to have a substantive and thoughtful response in the newspaper tomorrow.”

The governor added, “I will tell you my expectation on the State Board of Education is that they do the work the law requires them to do and they discharge their responsibilities in a responsible and effective manner. I just think we’ve got real momentum in education in this state. I am determined to continue to work in good faith with the superintendent, with the Department of Education, with members of the General Assembly to make sure we continue to build on the progress that we’ve made.”

In his letter to the Star, Pence said, “CECI consolidates the education and workforce responsibilities of the governor in a way that removes barriers that exist for our students, workers and employers. It does so without taking any authority away from the Department of Education. Education in Indiana is a shared responsibility. I take my responsibility to continue the progress we have made in our schools very seriously, but I do regret that the Department of Education and the superintendent have misunderstood my sincere desire to work with them on behalf of all the children of Indiana.”

Pence cited the NAEP scores released last week and said they put “Indiana solidly on top in terms of progress made in fourth and eighth grade reading. It was a tremendous affirmation of the reforms, the accountability, the expanded education opportunities that Indiana has been advancing in recent years. Hoosiers should be encouraged despite misunderstandings that emerge within the Statehouse.”

But as Pence spoke to HPI, the meeting Ritz chaired with the State Board of Education “imploded,” according to an account in the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette. WTHR-TV reported the meeting ended in “chaos” with

remaining board members huddling with attorneys from Greg Zoeller’s office. According to the press account, Ritz “abruptly left the room while the other members of the board remained to consider their legal options. At issue was a resolution the board wanted that would have allowed staff of the governor-created Center for Education and Career Innovation to review Common Core standards in addition to the Indiana Department of Education.”

At a news conference a few hours later, Ritz said she was elected as Indiana’s chief education officer to be an advocate for public education, to coordinate education policy and to serve as a “check and balance” to Gov. Mike Pence and the state Board of Education.

“Gov. Pence, through his newly created education agency, the Center for Education and Career Innovation (CECI), is undermining the exceptional work done every day by the Department of Education,” said Ritz.

Ritz said the rift is causing “great, unnecessary conflict in education which does nothing to serve Indiana’s children.” Ritz said a resolution written by CECI staff “improperly inserted State Board of Education staff working for the governor’s new education agency to take over the academic standards review process.”

On Tuesday, Ritz charged that the “Political struggles began immediately after my election. In the 2013 legislative session, large amounts of state money were taken from the Department of Education through the budget process. Pence used this money to help form, by executive order, a new agency called the Center for Education and Career Innovation (CECI). When he formed this agency, the governor pledged that it would work alongside me.”

Ritz added, “Writing the letter of action for the State Board of Education outside of a public meeting without my knowledge to take the calculation of A-F grades away from the Department of Education, was in violation of state law. The lawsuit I filed was about stopping what is not right: Illegal actions by the State Board of Education and CECI.”

She concluded her letter by saying, “I must not tolerate a power-grab of the Department of Education’s authority and ability to conduct business for Indiana students. Last November, Hoosier voters said very clearly that they want me to fight for public education in our state and to serve as a check and balance to the governor. It is now clear that Gov. Pence is not seeking a power-grab, but rather a complete takeover of education. That is the real threat to our children.”

HPI asked Pence how he could change what is ob-





viously a poisoned relationship between the Democratic superintendent and the board that was appointed by him and former Gov. Mitch Daniels. He responded, "I will tell you my expectation on the State Board of Education is that they do the work the law requires them to do and they discharge their responsibilities in a responsible and effective manner."

Pence explained, "The State Board of Education is comprised of some extraordinary talented men and women, Republicans, Democrats and independents, who volunteer their time and take their duties under the law very seriously. I am grateful for their service. I am hopeful as we continue to move forward, and as the State Board of Education fulfills its statutory responsibilities, and the Department of Education discharges its responsibility, that we will see the policies advance that will continue to build on the momentum that's been developed."

The Republican governor added, "I am encouraged that last week's State Board of Education with last year's A to F grading system was resolved and it passed unanimously on completing the work on last year's A to F grades. I've been very clear that the delay in producing the A to F grades for the 2012-13 school year has been working a hardship on our schools. Teacher pay raises have been delayed. I've insisted the State Board of Education get the work done. I was pleased that, while it didn't get much attention last Friday, the resolution passed unanimously. It's time for that work to be completed in a collaborative and cooperative way."

But just minutes later, Pence board appointee Andrea Neal told the Journal Gazette, "The breakdown of trust is serious" as members mulled over how to respond.



Internal GOP debate simmering over marriage

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – With the constitutional marriage amendment looming just over the horizon, the Indiana Republican Party is hardly one happy family living in a big tent.



Multiple sources are telling Howey Politics Indiana that a distinct majority of the Indiana Republican Central Committee opposes HJR-6, the resolution that would place the marriage constitutional

question on the November 2014 ballot.

In addition, there is a roiling debate in the majority House and Senate caucuses, sources tell HPI. While there is not a "tipping point" near where the issue could be sidelined, there is an ongoing, often emotional, internal debate over whether the GOP would suffer at the ballot box if the referendum moves forward.

Sources say that both House Speaker Brian Bosma and Senate President David Long are under relentless pressure from advocates of the referendum and those opposing. That will come to the fore next Monday when the topic will almost certainly come up at the Indiana Chamber's annual legislative preview luncheon, both during the event and the inevitable press scrum that follows.

Then on Tuesday – Organization Day – the topic will almost certainly garner the most attention. What is

concerning to many legislative Republicans is that the state has a persistent 8% jobless rate, and faces multibillion dollar issues surrounding the Affordable Care Act and the Pence administration's course to reject more than \$10 billion in federal Medicaid money. This comes as an array of health metrics, ranging from obesity and diabetes to a "deplorable" infant mortality rate and skyrocketing statistics on meth lab busts and sexual assaults on teenage girls, will need to be addressed.

Gov. Mike Pence told HPI on Wednesday that he wants the General Assembly to act. "You know where I stand," Pence said

when asked whether it is a priority. "I think it's important that we let Hoosiers decide. I have every confidence that the people of Indiana can take up this issue, hear all sides, respect all viewpoints. At the end of the day I think we should let Hoosiers decide and I'll continue to support efforts of the General Assembly to send this question to the people of Indiana."

The Ball State/WISH-TV Poll



State Rep. Sean Eberhart became the fourth House Republican to oppose HJR-6, calling the second sentence "bigotry."



conducted by Princeton Research showed opposition to the amendment increased from 54% in 2012 to 58% this past month, while support held steady at 38%. Another 4% said they were undecided. The poll's margin of error was plus or minus 4.8 percentage points.

Prof. Joe Losco of BSU's Bowen Center observed the amendment's chances "depend a lot on voter mobilization next year." Opposition was at 77% among Democrats and 40% among Republicans.

In the April 23 Howey Politics Poll, 50% favored the amendment and 46% opposed. This compared to an October Howey/DePauw Indiana Battleground Poll that showed 48% favored the amendment and 45% opposed.

Last June, Bosma told HPI, "It will take 95 percent of the energy and 50 percent of the coverage," but he added that it won't be "so over-arching" that other priority items won't get done. "Opinions have changed and evolved."

Bosma also said that "If I had my druthers, Part B would not be there. I think the first part is very clear. Part B raises a question. But virtually every statute raises some question."

Sources say that Bosma is under intense pressure from referendum advocates such as Curt Smith, Micah Clark and Eric Miller from the family advocacy groups to pursue the final placement on the ballot.

But Republican Sens. Luke Kenley and Pete Miller, along with Reps. Ed Clere, Jud McMillin, Sean Eberhart and Ron Bacon have made public statements indicating they will not vote for HJR-6. There are at least a dozen other House Republicans, sources tell HPI, who are debating whether to support the measure again. Others are concerned about switching from a yea to no vote. The default position will likely be the "let the people decide" option.

Last week, Eberhart told the Shelbyville News that the second sentence in HJR-6 – "Provides that a legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized" – is essentially "bigotry."

Rep. Bacon, R-Boonville, called the second sentence "a step too far." Rep. McMillin said that it would be irresponsible to install an amendment to the Indiana Constitution when the U.S. Supreme Court could "rule on something that may alter our ability to do that."

Sen. Miller, R-Avon, added, "It's already illegal. What's to be gained other than ostracizing a whole section of the population? If we're trying to attract the best and brightest people to work in Indiana, this doesn't help. It's not just putting out a sign to gays and lesbians saying, 'You're not welcome.' It sends a signal to a lot of talented young people that we're not a welcoming place."

Society and parts of Indiana government are al-

ready beginning to comply with federal regulations regarding same-sex marriage. On Oct. 3, the Indiana National Guard began issuing identification cards to its members on orders from the Pentagon. U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel identified Indiana as one of nine states that did not immediately comply with that order when it was to be instituted on Sept. 3. The Internal Revenue Service is also changing tax-related rulings on a federal level that states will ultimately have to recognize.

There are two scenarios emerging in the legislature. Sources tell HPI that the mood within the Senate Majority Caucus is to deal with the issue in the opening days – if not hours – of the General Assembly, which commences Jan. 7. The second is to delay dealing with the issue until after the Feb. 10 primary filing deadline, when incumbents will learn if they have opponents in the May 6 primary.

Another option would be to delete the controversial second sentence, which essentially starts the entire process over again, putting off a potential referendum to 2020. Opponents of the referendum believe that public opinion will overwhelmingly shift against the measure by then.

Proponents of the referendum are spreading the word that past legislative supporters will face primary challengers if they opt to change their votes. But Mike Gentry of the House Republican Campaign Committee tells HPI that it has been "unusually quiet" on the challenger front. HRCC likes to launch its candidates in November of the year before an election, giving them a full year to mount a campaign. Primary challenger candidates are more likely to surface in January and through the filing deadline.

There have been rumblings of a potential Tea Party challenge to State Rep. Rebecca Kubacki, R-Syracuse, and another against State Rep. Jerry Torr, R-Carmel, fueled by opposition to mass transit.

Torr, several sources say, is opposed to the amendment and has said that if HJR-6 ends up in his House Rules and Legislative Procedures Committee it won't pass.

Others close to the Republican Central Committee say there is widespread concern that HJR-6 will impact the party in the 2014 and 2016 elections. "How many groups of people are we going to piss off?" one influential Republican asked HPI. "We can alienate gays, the business and academic communities. And if it fails next November, it's still the law. Is that a way to spend our political capital?"

Two seeking open HD33

At least two Republicans are lining up for the caucus to replace State Rep. Bill Davis in HD33. One is economic development consultant Greg Beumer, who owns Beumer Consulting. His wife is a Randolph County commissioner.

The second is Randolph County Republican Chair-



woman Claudia Thornburg, who is a deputy county clerk.

Mike Gentry of the House Republican Campaign Committee told HPI that a couple of other potential candidates are exploring a run.

Bassler takes aim at Waterman mailings

State Sen. John Waterman's Republican primary challenger is targeting his franked mail as a campaign issue. Eric Bassler called on Waterman and Senate officials to provide information on taxpayer-funded political mailings and the collection and use of citizen data for political purposes.

"Within the last month, Senator Waterman has mailed out at least three overtly political mailings to voters in the district at taxpayer expense," explained Bassler. "On top of that, several email communications have been sent to voters promoting Senator Waterman."

Bassler has asked Senator Waterman to provide information on three issues related to these taxpayer-funded

activities:

1. An itemization of the total costs of this year's state-funded mailings to constituents in Senate District 39 from or on behalf of Senator John Waterman.

2. An explanation of the source of voter email addresses used for email messages sent by Waterman, the Indiana Senate or the Senate Majority Campaign Committee communications to voters in Senate District 39.

3. A copy of the Indiana Senate's data privacy rules and procedures for the collection and use of constituent data and, if no such policy exists, a statement clarifying what rules and procedures will be put in place regarding the use, sharing or dissemination of Indiana citizens' data by the Indiana Senate and its agents.

"I have two concerns about all of this," explained Bassler. "First, how much are taxpayers paying for Senator Waterman's political mailings? These are dollars taken from families trying to feed kids, coal miners paying mortgages and retirees on fixed incomes. It is a blatant waste of taxpayers' money."

"Second, I am deeply concerned about the collection and use of citizens' private data by state government- especially because this data has been used for political purposes," continued Bassler. "We need to protect Hoosiers from the political abuses of their data and privacy."



"...to disarm the people - that was the best and most effectual way to enslave them."

George Mason - co-author of the Bill of Rights

George Mason was right.

Disarming people enslaves them.

Just look at the former Soviet Union, where Communist Party officials banned anyone but fellow communists from owning firearms.

During their reign of terror, it is estimated at least **3 million** human beings were murdered by their government.

And then there's Adolph Hitler and his fellow socialists in the German Nazi Party, who prohibited Jews from owning guns by the 1938 German Weapons Act.

By 1945 the Holocaust had claimed an estimated **6 million** human beings - ruthlessly slaughtered for nothing more than their religious beliefs.

Folks - if you think that can't happen here, think again.

EVERY DAY many of our fellow Americans are pushing to take away this fundamental right to bear arms - and MAKE US SLAVES.

Indiana is ranked one of the most pro-gun states in the country by the NRA - and I work EACH AND EVERY DAY to keep it that way.

Sen. Landske has lung cancer

State Sen. Sue Landske announced Wednesday she has been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Landske, R-Cedar Lake, will begin treatments immediately at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. She and her doctors are confident that she will make a full recovery. Landske has no plans to step away from her official duties in the Indiana Senate, and plans to continue serving her constituents in northern Indiana.

"Understandably this is a very personal issue," Landske said. "However, I've worked hard throughout my tenure at the state Senate to be upfront and honest with my constituents, and in that spirit I wanted the public to know about my health condition. I'll continue to serve Hoosiers as long as I'm healthy enough to do so, and plan on taking each day one step at a time. I appreciate all of your thoughts and prayers and want to thank all of you for your support during this time."

On Aug. 2, she officially announced, "I am running again."

"I am just a lawmaker, not an administrator, but I can help walk people through the process to achieving what they need. I have a fantastic staff in Indianapolis that work very hard for this area," Landske said. ❖



It's blastoff time for Bock vs. Walorski

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Blastoff.

The 2nd Congressional District race is starting off in a way to gladden the hearts of TV station general managers and owners.

On the day last week when Notre Dame administrator Joe Bock officially announced candidacy for the Democratic congressional nomination, the National Republican Congressional Committee blasted him for votes involving taxation that he cast in 1991 and 1992 as a Missouri state legislator.



The Republican organization no doubt began research on Bock as soon as it was reported that he was planning to run. They dug up something to blast him as "the mad taxer" on the day he announced.

announced.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee blasted too, saying Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, the Republican incumbent, faces "a tough re-election fight" and "will be dogged by her history of supporting tax increases (national sales tax) and working to privatize Social Security."

The Democratic organization already had extensive material gathered from Walorski's two races for Congress, losing in 2010, winning in 2012. It also has her votes in Congress. Her "No" vote on the bipartisan agreement to end the government shutdown will be referred to just a few zillion times.

All this makes the TV execs smile.

Why?

Well, when Democratic leaders searched for months without success for someone they regarded as a formidable challenger to Walorski, it seemed she might have a virtual free ride in 2014. And that would mean a lack of those political ad blitzes that bring huge revenue to the stations. Viewers don't like them, but the TV stations do.

The last really noncompetitive congressional race was in 2008, when Democratic incumbent Joe Donnelly was seen as a sure winner and Republicans couldn't find a formidable challenger. They recruited a little known Goshen businessman named Luke Puckett, who had no chance. There was no big TV spending on a race with a known

conclusion. I remember a TV station general manager joking - sort of - that he might have to hold a bake sale or car wash in the station parking lot to make up for some of the lost political advertising.

With congressional Republicans hitting new lows in favorability after their failed strategy to force defunding of the Affordable Care Act with a government shutdown and threat of default on the debt - and now with Bock's candidacy - Democrats are enthused. They see a real race, a real chance.

But it's way too early for Democrats to count on a win or the TV execs to count on big revenue from 2nd District ads.

The Obama administration's inept roll out of the Affordable Care Act is erasing more and more of the Democratic advantage from the Ted Cruz strategic debacle.

Walorski heads toward a million dollars in fundraising by the year's end. Bock starts calls to folks he knows, asking for \$500 or a little more or less. Republican-drawn redistricting gives Walorski a big advantage.

And will Bock become a formidable candidate like 2012 Democratic nominee Brendan Mullen? Bock will first face a Democratic primary challenge. Dan Morrison, who darn near upset Mullen in the 2012 primary, plans to file again. In a surprise showing, Morrison won nine of the 10 counties in the district. Mullen did just well enough in winning St. Joseph County to obtain the nomination.

The alphabet helped Morrison. He was listed ahead of Mullen on ballots in all counties. In the counties where neither was much known, a lot of voters just picked the first solid sounding name.

Mullen's strategy of saving money in the primary and assuming he could win without a better effort to get known district-wide was almost fatal. It cost him early momentum, especially in the counties he also lost in the fall.

Alphabetically, Bock is before Morrison. But Morrison had more than the alphabet last time. He did things his way, not attracting much news media attention but using yard signs and door-to-door campaigning. He will do it his way again.

The blastoff?

Each side finds the other's taxation stuff silly. Silly or not, will something stick? ♦

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



Band parents, mayor help Goshen school referendum

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – Never underestimate the power of high school band parents.

That may be one of the lessons coming out of the special elections held earlier this month when voters in four Indiana communities were asked to raise property taxes to provide more funding for their local schools.



Three of those referenda went down to defeat. The fourth sailed through with no organized opposition.

Michigan City voters said no to a \$5 million request to close a budget gap in their schools' general fund; Mishawaka voters said no to a \$28 million request to repair their aging schools, and Muncie voters said no to a

\$3 million request to keep the schools buses running.

Meanwhile, voters in Goshen – a city of 32,000 people of relatively modest means -- said yes to a request for \$17 million to be spent, among other things, on a big new school pool, bigger and better band rooms, a new baseball field, and a remodeled cafeteria to accommodate an increasing middle-school student population.

How did that happen?

Here's where those band parents come in: In Goshen, they were part of a broad coalition of school supporters who convinced voters that paying more taxes would be a wise investment in their community's future.

Goshen Mayor Allen Kaufmann was part of that coalition, too. Earlier this week, contemplating the Goshen vote, the three-term mayor credited a well-organized effort to gain voters' trust, which was years in the making, for the outcome.

"You can't just presume these things are going to happen," said the three-term Democratic mayor.

This contrasts with Muncie, where first-term Mayor Dennis Tyler favored the referendum that would have kept the school buses running, but did little to help it pass. The seven-year referendum would have imposed a tax rate not to exceed 39.39 cents for every \$100 of assessed property value, the Muncie Star Press reported.

Tyler hadn't taken a public stance on the referendum, but had spoken in favor of it. "Of course I'm disappointed," Tyler told The Star Press. "As mayor you're always concerned that your children are going to be escorted

safely to and from school, and with the school buses that was al-ways something we could rest assured would happen. But the voters have spoken and they soundly defeated the bus referendum. Most of the people on the south side are absolutely convinced that the school board has made up their mind that Muncie Southside as a high school is going to be part of the elimination ..."

Other school districts have learned that the hard way, in the five years since the Indiana General Assembly capped property taxes and changed the way school districts can levy taxes for construction and operating expenses. Of the 88 school referenda since 2008, just slightly half have passed. Those asking for money for building costs – like Goshen's referendum – fared worse than those that asked for operating expenses.

Ball State University economist Michael Hicks points to several reasons, including concerns of voters who shot down referenda that their school leaders had failed to make tough and politically unpopular decisions about spending priorities as revenues were decreasing.

Hicks also makes this argument: After 1973, when the father of property tax relief, the late Gov. Otis Bowen, made it so much harder for local government units to raise tax levies, most local leaders gave up. They stopped pitching the idea of more revenue as an investment worth making the community. "The experience with an informational campaign is lacking in local government," Hicks said. "We've now had two generations of local leaders who lack that expertise."

Goshen may be the exception. While Kauffman helped champion the tax increase for his community's schools, he credits recently retired Goshen superintendent Bruce Stahly for helping create trust with voters.

In 2010, as Goshen schools were feeling the crush of capped property taxes and a cut in school funding from the state, Stahly created a citizens task force that spent months studying the school district's finances. The task force's recommendations were supported by Stahly and adopted by the school board. (Kauffman followed the model to create a citizens' task force that looked at city finances.)

Stahly also earned the trust of parents: As the Goshen schools absorbed an increasing number of low-income students and immigrant students just learning English, the Goshen schools were also winning state and national accolades, including those for their arts and music programs and their International Baccalaureate diploma program.

Senior citizens are notorious for voting against school referenda that raise taxes, apparently believing they have no skin in the game. But among the supporters of the Goshen schools referendum: Residents of a large retirement community in Goshen. They'd been assured by Goshen's new superintendent, the well-liked Diane Woodworth,



that they could have access to the new school swimming pool.

Stahly and Kauffman are no fans of the property tax caps that have caused communities and school to lose millions in revenue. But other school districts may learn

from their response. "It was easy to get money for a long period of time," Kauffman said. "And it was easy to raise the tax rate and whatever you didn't have money for, you just raised property taxes to do it. So in a way, we do have to become better sales people." ❖

Obama's poll dive could be difficult to recover

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

COLUMBUS, Ind. – The perils of the second term of President Obama are beginning to be realized, as a new Pew Research Poll shows his job approval in free-fall a year after his reelection. It comes as his signature achievement – the Affordable Care Act – has staggered out of the gates and the jobless rate is up to 7.3%.

Obama's overall job approval is at 41%, down 14 points since last December, with 53% disapproving. The latest national poll by the Pew Research Center, conducted Oct. 30-Nov. 6 among 2,003 adults, finds that Obama's second-term job ratings have followed a similar downward trajectory as those of his predecessor, George W. Bush.

A year after his reelection, 36% approved of Bush's job performance, down from 48% in December 2004. In contrast, the two prior presidents who won reelection – Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan – enjoyed positive ratings over the course of the next year. At comparable points in their fifth year in office, 58% approved of Clinton's job performance while Reagan's job rating stood at 62%.

The new survey finds that majorities disapprove of the way Obama is handling four of five issues tested, with terrorism the lone exception (51% approve, 44% disapprove). For every issue, including terrorism, his ratings are lower than they were earlier this year. Just 31% approve of the way Obama is handling the economy, while 65% dis-

prove. Obama also gets negative ratings on health care policy (37% approve, 59% disapprove). In January, views of Obama's handling of health care policy were mixed (45% approved, 47% disapproved).

In October 2012, as Obama was fending off the challenge from Republican Mitt Romney and despite a high jobless rate and tepid recovery from the Great Recession, Howey Politics Indiana highlighted the book by Fort Wayne author Alfred J. Zacher, "Presidential Power in Troubled Second Terms."

Zacher wrote, "Historically, the second term be-



The peril of 2nd term presidencies

Of 20 who served twice, only 9 were deemed successful by Fort Wayne author

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – The case against a second term for President Obama has been, thus far, centered on the legal economy, opposition to the Obamacare health reforms and the stimulus package. His supporters point to his drone-led assaults on Al Qaeda, his ending the American combat in Iraq, his rescue of the American auto industry and the move toward more fuel-efficient cars and trucks.

But from a historical perspective, there have been 20 presidents who have had second terms and by the accounting of Fort Wayne author Alfred J. Zacher (pictured, left) in his new book "Presidential Power in Troubled Second Terms" (Telemanus Press), only nine of them could be considered a success. And one of those, President Abraham

Lincoln, had a second term lasting only five weeks before he was assassinated. Any list of America's greatest presidents is dominated by those who have been elected to a second term. As historian Michael Benedicks (who is speaking at the Benjamin Harrison home in Indianapolis tonight) stated, "One of the best things a sitting President can do to burnish his reputation among future generations is to get reelected." It is the second term that not only tests the mettle of the

Continued on page 3



The peril of polling

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – Close elections show the perils of polling. All polls have a plus/minus error factor, and always include the usually ignored point that they are "snapshots" of a given day or days when the poll was taken.

HowClearPolitics is the best site to see the cumulative effect of most polling organizations, but even it has limitations. Wednesday they showed Obama with a combined polling lead of 3.2%, which is within the margin of error but a significant lead. But two outliers, CNN and Gallup, distorted the



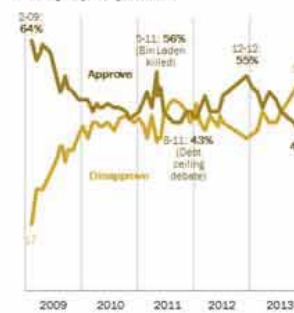
"It's also important for me - just as it was for the White House last night by the way - to say that the statements were inappropriate and in my view, a disgraceful statement on the part of our administration to apologize for American values."

- Republican nominee Mitt Romney



Obama Approval Falls to New Low

Approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as president?



Source: Pew Research Center Oct. 30-Nov. 6, 2013

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



came a time of trial or triumph. Vision, leadership, courage in the face of adversity, honesty, and political skill embodied in the character and temperament of a president interplay to affect his leadership through the four long years of a second term. The ability of a president to survive and sometimes triumph through what can be the fire of the second term tells much about the American people and their idea of what a president ought to accomplish. The public will approve and even applaud innovation in a



president; but this must conform to the following deep-seated convictions which appear not to have changed significantly from the founding of the nation, namely those implicit in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the writings of the founders."

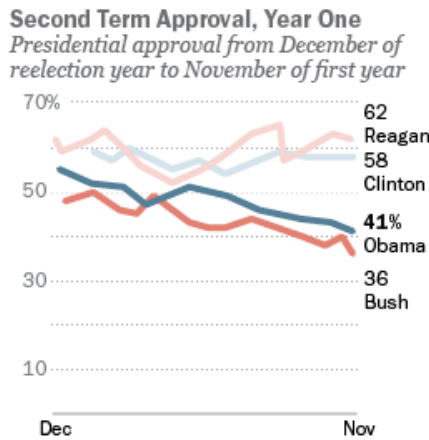
In Zacher's view, of the 20 presidential second terms prior to Obama, only nine could be viewed as successful, and one of those – President Abraham Lincoln – lasted only five weeks before he was assassinated. The successful second terms include Presidents George Washington, Andrew Jackson, Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. Failures included Presidents Thomas Jefferson, U.S. Grant, Franklin D. Roosevelt, George W. Bush, Richard Nixon, Lyndon Johnson and Harry Truman.

Of Obama, Zacher observed, "There can be no question that Obama lacks experience in government as a governor, as a long-term member of Congress or in any phase of the business world. Further, his background in academics and as a community organizer offers no evidence of someone who has the fire in his belly to be a leader. Obama obviously had to learn all that was to be required to be a President through on-the-job training. Only Lincoln came into office with so little experience."

Obama's biggest problems are the economy with a jobless rate of 7.3% and the tortured rollout of the Affordable Care Act, for which he apologized on Thursday. The seeds of his unpopularity have come with Obamacare and the lack of bipartisan support when the law passed Congress in March 2010 by party line votes.

Former Indiana congressman Lee Hamilton, who heads Indiana University's Center on Congress, told an IU-South Bend lecture the "ram it through" nature of the Affordable Care Act ensured that it would be a lasting partisan issue. Hamilton called consensus building with compromise and respect "the most important political skill there is."

Alex Roarty, writing for the National Journal, observed that Obama's approval will not likely bounce back. "Historically, presidents whose approval plummets in their second term don't recover," Roarty said. "Such was the case for Harry Truman back in 1950, according to Gallup surveys. After reaching a high of 46% in July of 1950, the 33rd president's approval never rose above 35% during the last two-and-a-half years of his presidency. The precipitous drop coincided with America's involvement in the Korean War. Another war helped bring about a more recent presi-



dent's downfall. George W. Bush never topped 50% after March 2005 and spent most his remaining tenure mired in the low to mid-30s, thanks in part to the unpopularity of the Iraq War. His approval further declined near the end of his presidency, when the financial crisis of 2008 left the economy in tatters."

"In fact," Roarty said, "no president in the last 60 years has watched his approval ratings bounce back during their second term. Either they didn't make it to another stint in office (Ford, Carter, and George H.W. Bush), never dipped in the first place (Eisenhower and Clinton) or were removed from office at the nadir of their popularity

(Nixon). Lyndon Johnson recovered somewhat, but only after announcing he would not seek another term. Ronald Reagan dropped from the low 60s to the high 40s amid the Iran-Contra scandal, and his popularity never recovered entirely until his last months in office. But it also never fell to lows experienced by Truman or Bush."

"In a second term, once a president's numbers decline, they never come back up," Ed Goetas, a Republican pollster, told reporters last week during a breakfast hosted by the Christian Science Monitor. "There's a good reason for that: They don't have a reelection campaign going on. They don't have the air cover on air. They're not putting back together a campaign in contrast to the opposition."

Obama, however, has defied conventional wisdom in his decade on the national stage. The first African-American president not only toppled Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton in the 2008 primaries, carried Indiana and North Carolina in the general election, then won reelection with a jobless rate over 7.5% in 2012.

In March 2012, Howey/DePauw Indiana Battleground pollster Fred Yang of Garin-Hart-Yang, observed at DePauw University, "When you look at all the historical numbers, there's really no way Barack Obama should be reelected. The right direction for the country has increased tremendously in our last national poll. It's at 33%. We were in the teens in 2011. We're feeling good as Democrats because the right direction of the country has increased dramatically. But it's at 33%. That's a tough number. If you're an incumbent and two-thirds of the people aren't happy with how things are going, that's a problem."

When the dust settled, Obama won a 51-47% win over Republican Mitt Romney and an Electoral College victory of 332-206.

In talks with Republicans over a "grand bargain" to deal with debt, deficits and an archaic tax code, Obama appears to lack that "fire in the belly" many Americans



thought they detected during his meteoric rise during his 2008 presidential campaign.

He has found traction on Syria, which is dismantling its chemical weapon arsenal after the U.S. threatened to bomb, and the administration is in serious talks with Iran over defanging its nuclear arsenal. The combat mission in Afghanistan ends next year, and the U.S. economy is beginning to accelerate with a surprising 2.8% third quarter growth. The U.S. is poised to become the world's top en-

ergy producer in 2015, bypassing Russia and Saudi Arabia, the International Energy Agency announced. It is expected to be energy self-sufficient in the next generation.

If somehow, some way, Obamacare does what it is designed to do, there is his silver lining playbook.

But today, the polls are leading indicators that another failed second term is materializing before our eyes.



Not the time to emphasize our negatives

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – What is the number one complaint of Hoosier employers? The labor force is outdated. We do not have enough workers with the training and experience to compete with other states and nations. Some employers would supplement that concern with the high percentage of applicants who cannot pass drug tests.

Our schools, by virtually every measure, are inadequate. They have produced a generation of ill-equipped, under-educated adult workers.

There is an epidemic of obsolescence in our towns and cities that is easily seen in downtown areas, roads, bridges, civic and governmental organizations. It is as though we are still in the 20th century fighting to retain the conditions of the 19th century.



When we have a chance to join with progressive movements, we resist. Instead, we embrace regressive initiatives. Examples:

■ Replacement of property tax revenues by an increased sales tax that helps the wealthy,

■ A repressive voter registration law and rejection of improved voter

access methods,

■ Antiquated child care oversight and child protection services,

■ Rejection of expanded Medicaid for approximately 300,000 Hoosiers,

■ Acceptance of a right-to-work law.

Now a group of companies and institutions have the courage to come forth and say: "Enough is enough!" Led by Lilly, Cummins, the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and IU, a coalition formed to block legislative pas-

sage of a resolution to put a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage on the ballot in 2016.

Indiana already has a law that bans same-sex marriage. Proponents of that measure want to make it harder to repeal the law by placing the ban in the state's constitution. Worldly wise companies and institutions have said, "No!" They know how Indiana is viewed from elsewhere already. Why make things worse?

From outside the Hoosier Holyland, we look like a retrograde southern state. We were late to integrate our schools. We opposed (and still do) federal aid for a long list of infrastructure and social projects. We celebrate an agricultural heritage that has been in relative decline for 100 years.

We delayed multi-county and interstate banking until our banks were swallowed by banks from our neighboring states. Only lately we recognized the importance of manufacturing and logistics in our economy.

Specialists in Hoosier Hype tell companies how business friendly we are. They don't mention the fact that we are unfriendly to those who work. They talk about our low workers' compensation taxes without any mention of the resultant inequitable benefits for injured workers.

With all the negatives stacked against Indiana, we must commend successive administrations for keeping those good-cheer press releases coming. Although the gains cited and the honors awarded are mainly trivial, the flow of carefully crafted happy news is energetically maintained.

Same-sex relationships have become an increasingly important touchstone of contemporary thinking. For some these relationships are sinful; others find them acceptable. The latter view is becoming dominant in the Western world.

The companies and institutions who know that world do not want to see us pile more on the slag heap of our negatives. ❖

Marcus is an independent economist, writer and speaker. Contact him at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com



The Tea Party and the moochers and takers

By **SHAW FRIEDMAN**

LaPORTE – It's been hard to watch in recent weeks as Tea Party radicals in the Republican Party led a charge against food stamp benefits for the poor, many of them using homespun bromides claiming the "value of work" and "self reliance" would be taught to those these food stamp recipients mercilessly kicked off the rolls. The Tea Party radicals readily describe those receiving government assistance as takers and moocher for having to rely on food stamp benefits.



Never mind the fact that of the 930,000 Hoosiers who rely on food stamps, most are children and while 306,000 are unemployed adults, there is a work requirement already attached and some 115,000 adult

food stamp recipients are working.

The number of those who are "scamming" the system is relatively small and belies the rhetoric. The U.S. Agriculture Department reported earlier this year that only 2.8 percent of all food stamp benefits had been provided to people who were ineligible or had received a larger payment than they should have, and it said the majority of overpayments had been the result of inadvertent mistakes by caseworkers or recipients.

As for Tea Party radicals' oft-repeated claims of food stamp recipients allegedly selling food stamps for cash, the department reports that such trafficking involves only 1 percent of benefits.

I'm a former deputy prosecutor who used to prosecute welfare fraud and I can attest to the fact from time spent on the frontlines that the incidence of prosecutable fraud is miniscule. The fact that the program has more than doubled from \$38 billion some 10 years ago to \$82 billion is explained by the fact this country has in that time suffered under a horrible recession surpassed only by the Great Depression. A study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in August found that most of that increase in food stamp rolls was attributable to the recession.

But the facts don't get in the way of those Tea Party Republicans who are utterly blind and unwilling to address real instances of "welfare fraud," the corporate kind that is sucking the life out of this country's tax collec-

tion efforts. A study by the Congressional Research Service found that subsidiaries of U.S. corporations operating in the top five tax havens (the Netherlands, Ireland, Bermuda, Switzerland and Luxembourg) generated 43% of their foreign profits in those countries in 2008, but had only 4% of their foreign employees and 7% of their foreign investment located there. Who are the scammers? Come on!

Nah, better to inveigh against the so-called "undeserving poor." John Kasich, the Republican governor of Ohio finally spoke up for moderates in his party when he decried this effort among some of his fellow Republicans: "I'm concerned about the fact," said Kasich, "there seems to be a war on the poor. That, if you're poor, somehow you're shiftless and lazy."

Too many Tea Party Republicans have blinders on when it comes to seeing who the real moochers are. Food stamps are far from an extravagance. The average allocation is \$1.40 per person per meal. (Try it some time.) A few years ago, this program, which was largely responsible for taming hunger and malnutrition in the deep south and Appalachia and provides a basic level of subsistence for many of our most desperate fellow citizens, was renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP to perhaps help change the image perpetrated about a bunch of freeloaders who were undeserving or didn't want jobs.

This hostility to the poor has resulted in the almost unbelievable refusal by many state governments – including our own – to participate in Medicaid expansion that would almost all be paid for by the federal government and would benefit hospitals and the local economies.

When will we see criticisms from the Tea Party Republicans ever turn to scofflaw multinational corporations who are walking away from their obligations to this state, this nation and its citizens? At a time of record corporate profits, U.S. corporate tax dodgers are parking more of their profits offshore, taking advantage of tax loopholes and questionable shelters and dodges to shield billions from U.S. and state taxes, according to a March 2013 analysis by the Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg.

The nonprofit, nonpartisan Multi-State Tax Commission based in Washington, D.C., estimates a loss to Indiana every year of \$340 million due to multi-state corporations sheltering Indiana earned income in offshore tax havens or using techniques like transfer pricing to shift revenues to lower tax states.

You'd think Tea Party Republicans who claim to be concerned over deficits and spending not matching up with revenues ought to be screaming bloody murder over the truly "non-deserving" among us who are not paying their fair share in taxes.

How about the CEOs who head banks that received total taxpayer bailouts of more than \$2.5 trillion from the



Federal Reserve and Treasury and nearly caused our economy to collapse? Those same CEOs who outsource tens of thousands of Hoosier jobs to China and other low-wage countries, forcing their workers to receive unemployment benefits.

How is it possible that some highly profitable Fortune 500 companies are exploiting tax loopholes that allow no taxes to be paid even in years when billions are reported in profits? As Arizona Republican Senator John McCain told the New York Times last May 21, "The general

American public should not have to make up the balance as corporations avoid paying billions in U.S. taxes."

Truly, who are the takers and the moochers? I would respectfully submit there are far more residing on Wall Street than those receiving paltry food stamp benefits.



Shaw R. Friedman is a LaPorte attorney who is former legal counsel to the Indiana Democratic Party.

Critical Illiana decision coming in next month

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – Northwest Indiana next month will make the area’s most critical transportation decision since the completion of the Cline Avenue extension 30 years ago.



At issue is the proposed 47-mile Illiana Expressway that would run from Interstate 65 just north of Lowell to Interstate 55 near Wilmington, Ill. The highway, which would be built as a toll road, has been approved by transportation planners in northeast Illinois and awaits the same consideration in Indiana. The Transportation Policy Committee of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the Illiana at its Dec. 3 meeting. The vote will be advisory, with the key vote coming Dec. 12 when the

52-member NIRPC board meets.

It will be a highly contentious vote, based on the comments at public forums over the last year. South Lake County residents are unified in opposition to the highway, which would run between Lowell and Cedar Lake. Opponents argue that it will destroy property values and create drainage and air pollution problems.

The stance of Thomas M. McDermott Jr. is interesting. At least publicly, he hasn’t made a decision. McDermott is mayor of Hammond, the county’s largest city, and chairman of the powerful Lake County Democratic precinct organization. His voice carries more weight than most in the county.

McDermott said the Illiana would divert traffic off

the Borman Expressway, meaning some Hammond businesses – largely restaurants – would be hurt. But one of the primary reasons for building the Illiana is to draw traffic off Interstate 94, one of Indiana’s busiest highways. McDermott said he also has concerns the Illiana would draw folks from the northern part of the county, adding to the problems of sprawl from north to south.

While the Illiana would be confined to Lake County in Indiana, the NIRPC representatives from Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties, which is NIRPC’s fingerprint, will vote too.

There is a general feeling that some Porter County representatives will oppose the Illiana because of a fear the highway would be extended in the future into Porter and LaPorte counties, connecting to I-94 near Michigan City in LaPorte County. When the Illiana was on the front burner several years ago, the plan was to run it from Illinois to Michigan City and Porter County residents were adamantly opposed.

Although Republican Gov. Mike Pence is a supporter of the Illiana, many south Lake County Republicans, including state Rep. Rick Niemeyer of Lowell, are opposed.



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



What didn't the president know?

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – In the summer of 1973, television viewers who wished to escape re-runs were treated to the great drama of the United States Senate Watergate hearings. Throughout the long and seemingly endless hearings, one could often hear Tennessee Sen. Howard Baker Jr. plaintively ask one of the most famous questions to ever pass the lips of a politician, "What did the President know and when did he know it?"

In the face of the current administration's numerous scandals of Fast and Furious, Benghazi, IRS politicization, NSA domestic and international spying and Obamacare, and the President's feigned lack of knowledge of any details, I am moved to ask the most salient question of our time, "What didn't the President know and when did he know that he didn't know it?"



I don't want my president taking time out of his day to deal with the minutiae of scheduling tennis court time for his staff such as Jimmy Carter was wont to do. Further, I don't want my president taking time each day to draw up his enemies list, a la Richard Nixon. I damn sure don't want my president stashing interns in the knee well of his desk like Mr. Hillary Clinton once did. The presidency is an important job and I want the man occupying the oval office to be competent and have a reasonable command of the world around him.

Which brings us to President Barack Obama: I swear, if they ever do a remake of Hogan's Heroes, the part of Sgt. Schultz must be played by Barack Obama. I know nuthink! I see nuthink! I hear nuthink! Is it really plausible that we have twice elected a man, who MSNBC would have us believe is the smartest man who ever lived, who knows absolutely nothing about what is going on around him? I implore you, Chris Matthews, stop your tingling leg for just a moment and ask the question, "For God's sake Mr. President, what do you do all day?"

We are left with an ugly question that begs an answer which can only be adequately determined by mainstream media. Is the President terminally ignorant and inept or is he a pathological liar? All of the above may be an acceptable answer. I'll let you draw your own conclu-

sion, but let's examine the facts:

President Obama's Justice Department authorized the sale of guns to Mexican drug cartels who then used the weapons to murder American DEA agents. The President claimed he had no knowledge of this until he read about it in the newspapers.

Our ambassador to Libya was deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in Benghazi and pleaded with the State Department for beefed up security. A desperate plea for assistance came from the ambassador and was ignored. The ambassador and three security men died at the hands of terrorists. The President claimed he had no knowledge of this request for assistance.

The IRS systematically targeted conservative advocacy groups and misused its considerable power to impede and punish the groups. The IRS official in charge of this area, Lois Lerner, took the Fifth in front of Congress. During this timeframe, IRS officials made over 146 visits to the White House. The President said that he knew nothing of it and condemned that it happened.

The National Security Agency launches a massive domestic eavesdropping program targeting our telephone conversations along with our internet activity. In addition, the NSA targets world leaders for electronic surveillance. When the spy practices are revealed to the public, the President denied knowing anything about it.

As the disastrous and misnamed Affordable Care Act is rolled out, we learn that we may not be able to keep our current insurance plan, may not be able to keep our own physicians, may not be able to get coverage, may not be able to even sign up and may not be able to afford the affordable. The President repeatedly claimed that we could keep our current plans and physicians and that signing up would be cheap and a breeze. He now states that he didn't know that these things were false.

As I ponder the incredulity of the President's ignorance, I harken to the words of one of my spiritual advisors, Gomer Pyle. He said it pretty clearly, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." Frankly, I've lost count of exactly how many times that our President has asked me to suspend reasoned thought and believe that he just didn't know. I liken this to when my oldest son was 10 years old. You could follow his muddy footprints all through the house, up to his bedroom to where you would find a pair of mud clogged shoes and he would respond to my complaints with, "Don't ask me who tracked mud in, I didn't do it." Harry Truman had a sign on his desk that said, "The buck stops here." Obama's sign says, "What buck?"

It is almost laughable the derision and scorn that Justice Samuel Alito received for shaking his head and mouthing, "Not true" during a State of the Union speech



delivered by President Obama. Congressman Joe Wilson encountered equal contempt for audibly saying, "You lie" during another Obama speech before Congress. While both of these examples may speak to the decline of civility in American politics, they do serve as examples of the rare occasions when the President has been called out for telling whoppers. I never thought that I would state that Nancy Pelosi is more honest than President Obama. However, her admission that the Affordable Care Act needed to be passed so that we could know what was in the bill is far more truthful than the President knowing since 2010 that Obamacare, in reality, would look nothing like the snake oil that he sold the American people during its passage. Score one for Nancy!

Somewhere along the fuzzy developmental path of Barack Obama, he must have stumbled upon comedian

Richard Belzer's book, "UFOs, JFK, and Elvis: Conspiracies You Don't Have to Be Crazy to Believe." In his book Belzer states, "If you tell a lie that's big enough, and you tell it often enough, people will believe you are telling the truth, even when what you are saying is total crap." I could have quoted Joseph Goebbels on the same subject, but the media gets its panties in a knot when you do that.

Regardless, and no matter how more palatable Richard Belzer may be than Goebbels, the outcome is the same. President Barack Obama tells big fat whoppers and expects a gullible and uninformed American people to swallow it hook, line and sinker.

So far it's worked. ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

Scott Rasmussen, Real Clear Politics: Washington's political class fundamentally misunderstands the role of politics and government in American society. They act as if government is the central force in American life and that its decisions guide the course of the nation. In historical reality, societal trends embrace new technology and the deep currents of public opinion lead the way. Government follows along a decade or two behind.

A quick review of our nation's history shows that the first 200 years were characterized by changing technology and expectations moving us to a more centralized nation. The trend towards centralization was everywhere. Rather than small businesses serving a local community, big corporations made their appearance. Oil, steel and railroad companies operated on a scale never before seen. The Sears catalog became a fixture in millions of homes and trains delivered the exact same products on the exact same terms to millions of distant households. Government, of course, played a role in all of this. Sometimes it helped move things forward, and sometimes it was an obstacle to progress. But government never drove the process. Society changed and government adapted. As society became more centralized, so did the government. Politicians were happy to ride the wave of societal trends as it brought them more power and money. But the trends changed starting in the 1970s with the launch of cable television networks. That gave individuals more choices in the 1980s, and the Internet expanded those choices in the 1990s. Now we've reached a level of personalization powered by more than 100 million smartphones. The culture of individual choice and customization is so strong that no two of these smartphones are alike. We have different apps, music and more. Over the past 30 years, as society has moved away from centralization, the

political class has resisted. Government has grown ever more centralized. In fact, the federal government today directly controls a far larger chunk of the nation's economy than it did just a generation or two ago. That disconnect exists partly because politics and government always lag behind. It's also partly because politicians are not thrilled with riding the new wave that disperses power away from the political class. The disconnect cannot continue. Sooner or later, the politicians will concede and the government will catch up. Simply put, a one-size-fits-all central government cannot survive in the iPad era. ❖



Ezra Klein, Washington Post: President Obama's second term began with two clear projects. The first was to successfully launch the Affordable Care Act. "If we don't get that right, nothing else matters," Obama would tell his staff. The second was to pass comprehensive immigration reform. Today, both efforts are in tatters. The Affordable Care Act continues to struggle, and despite the White House's insistence to the contrary, there's mounting skepticism that HealthCare.gov will be functioning smoothly come December 1st. The result is a real challenge to the law: Congressional Democrats are defecting and considering legislative "fixes" that could undermine the law once it is functional. Meanwhile, Speaker John Boehner hammered a final nail into the coffin of immigration reform on Tuesday. Speaking after a closed-door meeting of House Republicans, he ruled out a vote on comprehensive immigration reform. "The idea that we're going to take up a 1,300-page bill that no one had ever read, which is what the Senate did, is not going to happen in the House," Boehner said. He also warned that "We have no intention of ever going to conference on the Senate bill." ❖



Just 701 Hoosiers sign up via ACA

INDIANAPOLIS — Just 701 Indiana residents chose a health insurance plan through the federally run online exchange during its glitch-plagued first month of operation, the federal government announced Wednesday (Associated Press). Figures released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also showed the insurance exchange had nearly 16,000 completed applications from Indiana from Oct. 1 to Nov. 2. Those applications sought coverage for nearly 32,000 people, and more than 19,000 of them have been found eligible to enroll in a plan through the exchange, figures showed. More than 11,300 people have been found to be eligible for Medicaid, the state-federal health plan for needy people, or the federally subsidized Children's Health Insurance Program, the figures showed. Those people might still be awaiting a state determination of eligibility. The HHS figures did not indicate how many Indiana residents selecting a health plan have started paying premiums. Indiana Family and Social Services Administration spokesman Jim Gavin said the agency had no comment Wednesday on the Indiana numbers released by HHS. More than 500,000 uninsured Indiana residents are believed to be eligible to purchase plans through the federally run exchange under the health care overhaul. Indiana, like more than 30 other states, opted to have the federal government run the exchange for Indiana rather than operate its own. Many questions still remain unanswered about the status of expanding Medicaid coverage for Indiana residents. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld last year the



federal mandate that people must own insurance, but struck down a provision forcing states to expand Medicaid.

Dems threaten to abandon ACA

WASHINGTON — Anxious congressional Democrats are threatening to abandon President Obama on a central element of his signature health care law, voicing increasing support for proposals that would allow Americans who are losing their health insurance coverage because of the Affordable Care Act to retain it (New York Times). The dissent comes as the Obama administration released enrollment figures on Wednesday that fell far short of expectations, and as House Republicans continued their sharp criticism of administration officials at congressional hearings examining the performance of the health care website and possible security risks of the online insurance exchanges. In addition, a vote is scheduled Friday in the Republican-controlled House on a bill that would allow Americans to keep their existing health coverage through 2014 without penalties. The measure, drafted by Representative Fred Upton, the Michigan Republican who is the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, is opposed by the White House, which argues that it would severely undermine the Affordable Care Act by allowing insurance companies to continue to sell health coverage that does not meet the higher standard of Mr. Obama's health care law.

Indiana GOP blast Obamacare

WASHINGTON - Indiana Republicans seized the paltry Obamacare numbers and blasted away at the law. "Across the country, far more people

have lost the health care plans they liked than have enrolled in new plans under Obamacare," said U.S. Sen. Dan Coats. "These numbers are yet another sign that this law is not working for Hoosiers and Americans nationwide." U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski said, "The writing is on the wall with Obamacare. So far, a mere two percent of Hoosier applicants have selected an insurance plan through the health care exchange website. This report does not specify how many individuals have actually purchased these selected plans. After years of preparation, this is simply unacceptable to our families." U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman said, "Today's numbers from the Obama Administration confirm that ObamaCare is failing the American people. Despite President Obama's promise that they could keep their health insurance, millions of Americans find themselves in the heartbreaking situation of being forced off plans they wanted to keep and pushed into a system that just won't work. President Obama can no longer defend the indefensible."

\$600k for Mounds Lake reservoir

MUNCIE — The next phase of funding for the Mounds Lake reservoir project will be supplied by the state of Indiana — to the tune of \$600,000 (Muncie Star Press). Proponents of the years-long effort to build a 2,100-acre reservoir from the heart of Anderson in Madison County to near Daleville in Delaware County on Wednesday announced that funding had been secured for a phase 2 feasibility study of the project. The Indiana Revolving Loan Fund has approved a \$600,000 grant to cover the next steps of the project. "I think the state's going to be the perfect partner to advance this to the next level to determine the feasibility of this project," project administrator Rob Sparks told The Star Press.