



Bosma: On the 'cusp' of job creation

House Speaker reviews 2014 session

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**
and **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – House Speaker Brian Bosma highlighted his multiyear effort to reform the state's tax code and improve its business climate in order to attract investment and jobs to the state as he sat down with HPI on Tuesday as part of our

review of the 2014 session. It followed our interviews with Gov. Mike Pence

and Senate President David Long.

Overall, the Speaker echoed what Gov. Pence told us last week: No single tax cut or incentive attracts new investment and jobs to Indiana, but rather a whole host of attractive



factors. He stressed, like other leaders at the Statehouse, this is a work in progress and the challenge is to maintain and improve the pro-growth trajectory of the state. We discussed Indiana as the most manufacturing-intensive state in the union and the need to maintain that strength while also diversifying the economy with finance, biotechnology, tech start-ups, and services. He said recent reforms should be attracting more banks and insurance companies back to the state.

Looking forward, this could be the summer (or year) of health-

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Obamacare & power docs

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Seated across the table from me at Cafe Patachou were Drs. Tim Brown and Larry Bucshon.

Dr. Bucshon was a heart surgeon from Newburgh. Dr. Brown is an emergency room physician from Crawfordsville. What made this breakfast meeting extraordinary is that Brown is the powerful Republican chairman of the Indiana House Ways & Means Committee, which plays a huge role in developing \$30 billion biennial budgets. Bucshon is the Republican congressman from Southwestern Indiana.

The two were embarking on a statewide "listening tour." In more than three decades



“With Russian aggression on the rise, clearly conciliatory diplomacy has failed.”

- Gov. Mike Pence in Berlin delving into foreign policy. His remarks were given to Fox News in advance.





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of covering Indiana politics, I cannot remember a legislator and member of Congress doing anything like this. And it couldn't come at a better time.

The Affordable Care Act – or “Obamacare” – had just passed its first signup deadline. The Kaiser Family Foundation reported that 145,189 Hoosiers were eligible for coverage, 93,720 eligible for subsidies, 65,846 eligible for Medicaid, and 64,971 (through March 1) had selected a plan through the federal health exchange.

I had a personal bone to pick with these lawmakers. My 24-year-old son signed up for a plan that will cost him about \$100 a month. Good for him. A middle-aged friend of mine (“Richard”) qualified for a subsidy for his family of four and will be paying about \$6 a month. That is not a typo: \$6. Me? I'm a non-smoking 58-year-old self-employed single guy who has had a vasectomy. I earn

too much for a subsidy. The Anthem plan I was on last year cost me \$350 a month. Last fall I was told it would go up to \$444 monthly. And when the plan lapsed, I ended up on the federal Healthcare.gov website late last month. I had contacted MDWise after comparing rates through a broker. An employee stayed on the phone with me as I went to the federal exchange website (which worked flawlessly).

My total monthly cost? It came to \$718 a month.

I had shopped around prior to this and a broker from Mishawaka had warned me of “sticker shock.” Why, I asked, did the cost of my options go up so much? “Because you're paying for maternity and pediatric benefits,” she told me.

When I told a Republican friend about my premium increase, he was exultant. “See! I told you so,” he responded.

The news for me is not entirely dismal. Having a pre-existing condi-

tion, I had been on the pre-Obamacare death spiral. As a self-employed individual, I had a terrible time finding insurance and when I did, it cost more than my final Obamacare total. The fact that I could go to a website and in 30 minutes find coverage was truly a breakthrough that Obamacare loathing Republicans should not discount.

As Obamacare passed in 2010 on a straight partyline vote, we watched majority Democrats lard up the historic legislation with all sorts of things, like maternity/pediatric benefits for single older guys, and things like coverage and the 30-hour work week, which prompted a surge in



layoffs. The same thing happened to Doc Bowen's plan in 1987-88. Democrat U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly voted for the ACA and in doing so, said from the beginning that it would need to be tweaked. He later won a U.S.

Senate seat in Indiana despite his vote. Meanwhile, former Democratic congressman Lee Hamilton correctly observed that this kind of social re-engineering without bipartisan support is deeply flawed. And as I've written several times, when Republicans controlled Congress and the White House between 2001-2006 and had the opportunity to forge “market-based reforms,” they instead marched us into two wars that cost us more than \$1 trillion.

In the intervening four years since the ACA passed, was there any tweaking?

No. House Republicans voted more than 40 times to repeal the law when the GOP didn't control the Senate or the White House. Their office communication systems were not dedicated to public service, but anti-Obamacare propaganda. I am personally paying for their politics when all I really had hoped for was access to good coverage at a decent price.

So now we have these two powerful Republicans traversing Indiana (See pages 8-11). Both Brown and Bucshon ardently opposed the ACA, but both now acknowledge it's not going to be repealed. They also agree that two huge elements are in play. First, 10,000 Baby Boomers are retiring every day and that is going to stress the system. It would have done so with the old one. Secondly, we are on the precipice of wonder drugs, where human genomes will allow individualized cancer treatments, for instance.

As Chairman Brown notes, not everyone is going to be able to afford such treatments. "I don't think we as a society can say you can have whatever you want whenever you want it," he said. "We can treat with this drug, or x-drug that is more expensive."

And that will put you in bankruptcy, I said.

"And your family," Brown responded.

Bucshon is a true free-market disciple. He views Obamacare as "insurance reform" that "doesn't do any-

thing to bend the cost curve that's driving the cost of health care in the first place. There is no silver bullet."

With repeal not an option, are Bucshon and his colleagues in a mode to begin to tweak and reform ACA components?

"We are going to be in that mode of trying to address those things for a long time," Bucshon said. "It's going to be difficult."

So Drs. Brown and Bucshon are doing what true public servants should be doing. They are in a learning mode and will scour an unhealthy state that is home to great research universities and pioneering health industries.

They know that Congress and the Indiana General Assembly are facing tough decisions that will have multi-billion-dollar implications impacting hundreds of thousands of lives.

And my role? I will circle back with them at the end of their tour. ❖

Bosma, from page 1

care policy. By the end of the year Indiana will know a lot more about its healthcare situation after a statewide healthcare tour by Ways and Means Chairman Tim Brown and U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon, both physicians, summer study committees, and hearing back from HHS on the HIP waiver.

We asked Speaker Bosma if an unhealthy workforce – Indiana is consistently ranked toward the bottom in national health and wellbeing – deters businesses from relocating here and what can be done to improve this situation. The Speaker told us he was skeptical whether healthcare coverage expansion and programs like the Healthy Indiana Plan are adequate alone to tackle the problem, stressing that education is the key to improving the population's wellbeing. Most importantly on the healthcare front, Speaker Bosma said the General Assembly has been relying on the executive branch and the time has come to investigate, consider, and decide itself whether a state healthcare exchange is a good idea and whether expansion via HIP is desirable. It appears the Republican leadership of the General Assembly might have come to terms with the fact the ACA isn't going anywhere and that Indiana must weigh its options.

At the end of the interview we tried to find any lessons from the HJR-3 saga. The Speaker said he believes it was handled appropriately but that it was "painful" and he does not want it to be "strung out" during a future session.

HPI: It seemed that the GE deal came on the heels of this session's tax reforms and tax cuts. Can you put all of this into perspective?

Bosma: It's a fair topic and it's a topic that has been a high priority for our team since 2002. We've had an agenda every year and without exception, one of the most important issues every time is giving Indiana the best job creation atmosphere. Probably in 2002, my first election as the new leader, we really focused on what was wrong with Indiana from a job creation perspective. It was really a general environment perspective as well as education. We were at the bottom of every list when it came to job creation environment, "Site Selection," "CEO Magazine." Everybody had us near the bottom and we worked hard to change in a lot of different ways, from championing the repeal of the inventory tax, the elimination of the gross sales tax, and



the elimination of our three-phase corporate income tax to make it a single factor. That sounds very technical. We used to tax corporations who did business in Indiana on the number of employees in the state, the business assets in the state and sales. Well, that meant people wanted to locate in Illinois and do business in Indiana because they paid lower taxes. We've championed 19 tax or reforms in the past 10 years; that hasn't just been to cut taxes. It has been to attract employers, especially high wage and high

value employers and retain them. One of those reforms was to make the research and development tax credit permanent and doubled. That came out of a conversation with the Lilly CEO who said they had a choice of locating a research facility in Indianapolis or North Carolina. North Carolina has a 10 percent research tax credit, and it's permanent. They don't have to fight the fight every two years and wonder if it is going to be reenacted.

These were real life Indiana employers and real life companies which wanted to come to Indiana to create jobs. We picked up allies along the way, the last governor, the current governor and the Senate. We all see eye-to-eye on this and that wasn't always the case. The focus was on average Hoosiers and not just employers, though helping employers helps Hoosiers, but also for Hoosier taxpayers. That's why we have the lowest property tax burden in the nation in Indiana. We have the second lowest income tax burden of those states that have an income tax. I feel real good about those efforts. This year's effort to begin addressing the business personal property tax – with a lot of criticism from local units of government – and ultimately to continue to bring down our financial institution tax and our corporate income tax was a very strong addition to those past efforts. I've heard some criticism we aren't helping the middle class. My dad used to say the original Department of Health Education and Welfare was a good job. We have a skills gap and an opportunity gap here in Indiana. If we can close the opportunity gap by getting folks like GE propulsion manufacturing here, that's good for every Hoosier.

HPI: The GE deal is only 200 jobs, which is great for the Lafayette area, but it seems like we need 20 or 30 more of that type of announcement. Do you see that coming?

Bosma: I think we're on the cusp of that. We are in talks with another propulsion company.

HPI: Rolls-Royce? Pratt-Whitney? There are only so many.

Bosma: Not saying. There's a synergy. Just like Warsaw has become the hub of a lot of bio-mechanical devices, starting to have that propulsion discussion here is huge. Having the bio-science discussion here surrounding the Bio Science Institute is huge. So we've modeled somewhat after some of the successful stories in Silicon Valley, the Triangle in North Carolina. We're trying to do that kind of synergy here. Another tax reform idea I sponsored was brought to me by an entrepreneur: The no tax period on new patents. That was a House Republican idea. I was author of that bill for people doing research, usually entrepreneurs, but also our universities. When they get that patent it's tax free for 10 years. Cutting taxes has to be smart, it has to be strategic, it has to serve a positive purpose for Hoosiers, because we acknowledge it leaves the state with fewer resources. There are so many states having discussions about increasing taxes, it's an anomaly for tax cuts in a state that has lived within its means.

HPI: I asked the same question of Sen. Long. I'm

glad you put out the charts that showed 10 years of tax cuts. But then you match it with personal income, and I remember Mitch Daniels running in 2003-04 saying we've got to get personal income up. So I wasn't being necessarily critical. I was just saying it's "Showtime." Now it's time to see what you're doing kicking in. So are we just at the cusp?

Bosma: I think we are. We're seeing some result from it now. I've spent about as much time as anyone analyzing the Tax Foundation rankings, mostly in conjunction with last year's debate over individual income versus inheritance versus some other type of tax cut. My team and I worked hard to counter, "It's a correct citation of statistics, but there's a reason our tax burden is higher than average." There are two reasons for that: Our adjusted average income has gone down with respect to the rest of the nation over the 30-year decline in manufacturing in Indiana. We were at one point at 95% of national average



on average income, and now we're down to 87-ish. Last year when the governor and his team were saying that we increased our tax burden over the last 10 or 15 years, I knew for a fact that wasn't the case as a gross number, but as a percentage of national income because our average net to the national income has come down. So what we need to concentrate now on is

attracting the high-tech, high-wage, high-value jobs. That comes from the right environment for job creation and we have to have the right work force. You've seen our proposals on that. Last year we had the Career Council issue.

This year we had HB1003 that gives the IEDC the additional tools like Toyota University that's been so successful. Young people and some retrained workers in a two-year period acquire an associate degree at Vincennes University three days a week, and two days a week being on the floor of Toyota earning \$17 an hour. At the end of two years they have an associate degree, they have no college debt, they are ready and trained to work at the Toyota plant. There are other examples in Fort Wayne and other places. We've given IEDC the tools, the tax credits, EDGE grants to encourage these programs. They only get the credit if an actual job is extended. So I think that's what we need to look at. I changed my view. When I came into public service, I graduated from two research institutions (Indiana and Purdue universities) when everybody had to get a four-year degree. But it doesn't have

to be a four-year degree. I am now a believer in a strong associates program for somebody who is going to work in high-tech manufacturing. You've got to have the doctorates and the masters and bachelors to support the manufacturers but you have to have well-trained workers. The days of my classmates graduating from Beech Grove High School and getting an auto job, that's done.

HPI: Indiana is setting up its synergies as a manufacturing state par excellence. Are we putting too many eggs in the industrial basket? Should we be looking at tech startups and financial services?

Bosma: Yes, we can't be focusing just on the manufacturing end of these, although we're the No. 1 manufacturing state as a percentage of our workforce. The financial institution tax was cut down because we want banks and other financial institutions to locate here rather than tax them into other states.

HPI: Are banks relocating here?

Bosma: We ran out all of the insurance companies here by the insurance premium tax. House Republicans led the charge to reduce the same level as the financial institution tax. We have to make it right for people. It won't be the day you cut a tax for employers to locate here. It's on workers, it's on environment, it's on cost of living which is another reason why our national rankings are not good on the percentage of income because they don't take into account the low cost of living in Indiana. We have to address all of those issues. Do we want all of those eggs in that basket? Absolutely not. That's why the Bio Science Institute is so important. The financial and insurance industries are critical. A lot of those industries are expanding here rather than contracting as they were. I feel pretty good about where we are. It's not perfect, but it was as deep a recession and as slow a recovery as we've experienced since the Great Depression. Of course we can improve some things, but think we're on a good trajectory.

HPI: Indiana health and wellbeing ranks 40th in the nation according to Gallup Healthways. I could cite other studies that have Indiana in the bottom fifth quintile. I would think companies will look at the workforce and see health costs going way up. What's your plan for improving health and wellness? I don't think the Healthy Indiana Plan is going to be enough to do it.

Bosma: I'm not sure any insurance product is going to be enough to do it. We have to change mindsets. It's true in a lot of agricultural states, the workforce 80



years ago got adequate exercise in their daily work. It's not the case in a great proportion of Indiana workers. I don't know if the Healthy Indiana Plan or the expansion of Medicaid is enough to address those issues. Proper health care is a piece of the puzzle. These statistics are based on body fat, smoking, blood pressure, infant mortality. That may be one we can address. That is one of education, getting prenatal care for those who don't otherwise have it. Many times it's available through programs out there today. It's about educating people. It all comes together. I'm not discounting taking a look at these insurance issues. I assume we are with the summer study committees.

HPI: We've got the HHS and the HIP issue. The implications are immense. The Obamacare mandates are going to be there whether we take the money or not. Do you see that decision as the next big course changer? Corrector?

Bosma: It certainly has to be on the short list of items that are major challenges for the state in the next several years. I am supporting a study committee this summer that specifically looks at these issues: Whether it's advisable to have a state exchange, to expand Medicaid or rely on a waiver to expand the Healthy Indiana Plan. We've relied on both administrations to set the course on this issue. We have to make

sure the answers are the right ones at this point.

HPI: In the next couple of years the direction and policies of health care in Indiana will be much clearer?

Bosma: It's fair to say we'll know a lot more about where we stand in respect to the rest of the nation and the advisability of the course we're on right now. Hopefully we'll know some of that next year after the study committee completes its efforts.

HPI: We have probably never seen a political issue as polarizing as the ACA, but officials in your position must work within its legal and fiscal framework. Do you think going forward it would be politically possible to institute, for example, a state exchange for Indiana?

Bosma: I don't know if anything is impossible. I could probably toss out half a dozen issues that we've dealt with successfully in way or another in the last four years that people said you could never solve: Right-to-Work, to go back a little bit

further, Day Light Savings Time, toll roads. Nobody ever thought that could happen and we made it happen, not by twisting arms, but by getting the facts and working toward a majority consensus in the House. Sometimes these were not all Republicans or not all Democrats; frequently, it was a bipartisan decision like 90 percent of the decisions are around here. It's definitely worthy of discussion. The discussion has to move from the dysfunctional federal government to the functional state governments. We need to decide what we need to do.

HPI: Could you elaborate on the Pre-K Pilot Program that passed this session?

Bosma: One of the big successes for our team was the Pre-K program. I know some others are getting kudos on this and that is good. This was the third time we attempted it, the second time earnestly last year – a program almost identical passed the House this year. Selling the governor on the program was of course a huge portion of that, because he wasn't a fan of it last year, nor was the Senate. Together with his advocacy we were able to do it. That has the potential for a remarkable difference for Hoosiers in the future. I was visiting Saint Mary's last year with Suzanne Crouch, Bob Behning, and some others to build support for the program and the executive director handed to me a picture of three young guys, their arms around each other, big smiles on their faces – they were all minority. She said, "You pick which one of those three goes to prison, which one is on public assistance for the rest of his life, and which one has some potential for success the rest of his life." I said, "I'm not picking. Thank you." The target of this program, the lowest income families with the highest curriculum programs, is going to be just as strong a tool as our voucher program has been to change peoples' lives. Now, it's not going to change the Hoosier state for 3,000 kids to do this but I hope it's just the beginning.

HPI: Do you expect Pre-K to be fully funded next year? It took roughly a decade after Gov. Frank O'Bannon first proposed it.

Bosma: No. But when that decision was made, Jeff Espich said to me at the end of the session in 2012, "We've got X million extra dollars. Where do you want it to go?" We agreed on full day kindergarten. Hopefully there will be leaders who believe in what we've done this year and will fund it especially for the low-income families. Next year? No, I don't think so. I think we pushed the envelope as far as the financial folks were willing in the short term. It includes a study we're going to have to have a year or

two or three to see what kind of difference it's making in these kids' lives."

HPI: Why is the Pre-K Pilot Program under FSSA and not DOE?

Bosma: That's a great question. I went through all of this two years ago when we were formulating our agenda and we thought we had to put this under DOE. FSSA already administers a certain portion of federal funds for these programs. They have a 'Path to Quality Program' that ranks programs: A level 1 or level 2, which are non-curriculum and close to daycare; a level 3, is curriculum based; a level 4, is high curriculum based and preparatory to kindergarten. My mom is a 30-year kindergarten teacher. I know that a lot of kids are not prepared for kindergarten and I don't believe that they all catch up. If they can't read at third grade they are more likely not to graduate from high school. It's critical to have this in place

and I think it's a big step in the right direction.

HPI: On the subject of FSSA and daycares accepting CCDF vouchers, what do you think of Rep. Kevin Mahan's daycare safety reforms (HEA 1036) signed into law?

Bosma: I think the legislature came to an appropriate middle ground on that issue. Most agree that every daycare, whether it's ministry-based or other, needs to have the same basic safety regulations and that's where we basically ended up. We've had that debate for many years with well-intended folks on both sides, but I think it ended up on the right spot.

HPI: Do you think there should be some form of curriculum requirements for daycares accepting CCDF vouchers to prepare children for Pre-K and/or kindergarten?

Bosma: Now you're getting into the 'Paths to Quality' question. There are many daycares that are just not set for curriculum. Of course, those high-curriculum programs are much more expensive. The average is \$6,800 year round which shocked me. Requiring every daycare to participate at that level I just don't think is feasible.

HPI: During the 2014 session the legislature allocated \$400 million additional spending to transportation. Pointing to a \$2 billion state surplus, some question why the legislature does not budget more toward transportation?



Bosma: Let's put this in context. That \$400 million additional is on top of a near record \$430 million to state and local projects during this biennium during last year's budget. The total on that is \$830 million during this biennium that is allocated to big infrastructure projects. You're only going to find anything close to that once in our state's history and that's the 2006 adoption of Major Moves. So, this is a very significant investment which again House Republicans have championed. We announced last year we were going to champion in making the Crossroads of America what we say it is. I'm thrilled about it. It's definitely the right investment to make. That additional \$400 million didn't count toward the \$2 billion in reserves, that was separately accounted for. That \$2 billion in reserves, which is the second highest in the nation, is still intact.

It's important to have that and to be judicious as we dip into that because it's still not clear that our nation is pulling out of this dreary economy. I see very positive signs but I would not say it's a certainty we are on the cusp of a boom. The decision by Republican legislative leaders to leave \$2.1 billion in reserves as we funded education at the highest level it's ever been funded in our state, as we put more money on roads with one exception has ever been put on roads, and as we funded other critical priorities was a good one. That comes from experience. I've been around when we've gone through boom and bust, when we've had to cut expenditure substantially and where we had to raise taxes substantially. Having money in the bank is a great program for families, for businesses, for government. After the 2004 election I became the Speaker and had to fill a three-quarters of billion dollar hole in money owed to cities, towns, schools, and universities and another billion dollars of prior spending of which there was no available funding and had to be the guy to tell Mitch Daniels no to a tax increase to fill the bucket, not on my first watch as Speaker. We were going to have to find a way to do it without a tax increase and we did.

HPI: What was that like, telling Gov. Daniels no on raising taxes in 2004?

Bosma: Well, Bob Garton got up and walked out of the room after there was an exchange of words. I stayed and gave some kind of a monologue. They say the Speaker of the House is the most powerful person in the state when the legislature is in session, but I have to quibble with that. I can tell you, from personal experience, that if the Speaker of the House wants something it's probably going to happen and if the Speaker of the House doesn't it's probably not going to happen – if he

or she sticks to their guns. I've used that as a civics lesson when people ask what the Speaker of the House does. I looked at Mitch Daniels and commented on coming in on this huge wave of success and said, 'No, we're not raising taxes.' I had some years under my belt, not as Speaker but floor leader; a rookie might have crumbled but we were just not going to do that under my watch. I think he was happy we didn't raise taxes, in retrospect. It forced everyone to look for creative solutions.

HPI: What are the lessons from HJR-3?

Bosma: I made two commitments on HJR-3, publically on Organization Day: First, every Hoosier would have a voice through their representative by a vote on the floor; and, second, that every member would have the opportunity to vote their conscience. That is exactly what happened. I didn't think it was appropriate for the demise of the debate to occur in committee on an issue that had been dealt with here for 10 years and had its demise orchestrated in committee. That was news to some of our newer members who didn't know that history. I feel very comfortable that it came to the floor. Everyone had the opportunity to participate and vote their conscience and I consider it to be a successful story for democracy. It was a painful success story but it turned out the way it should.

HPI: Did you see and expect the cultural shift on HJR-3? One of the most fascinating aspects was that Republicans from small towns and rural areas were amongst those in opposition.

Bosma: That may be fair. I think our polling over the last several years has seen some shift but it hasn't been a dramatic one. I'm still confident a majority of Hoosiers supported the amendment in either form. There was polling to the contrary on that.

HPI: So you think a majority of Hoosiers would have supported an intact HJR-3 with the second sentence?

Bosma: I think ultimately yes. The second sentence raised a lot of questions, in some cases, valid questions. And, I had expressed my reservation about it in the past. I guess I prefer it doesn't get strung out for another session but again democracy worked.

HPI: Our sources very close to the governor say they think HJR-3 is dead and they don't want it an issue in 2016.

Bosma: Well there are all kinds of possibilities. The courts may obviate action by the legislature. David (Long) and I made the decision two years to hold it while the courts sorted through. No determination. We haven't had one discussion about it. We'll have to see. ❖



Drs. Bucshon, Brown on health care tour

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**
and **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – It’s somewhat ironic but Indiana’s most unhealthy congressional district is represented by the delegation’s sole physician, heart surgeon Larry Bucshon. His 8th Congressional District in the state’s southwest was found the least healthy of all nine districts and ranked 401st out of the nation’s 435 congressional districts. At least that’s the findings of Gallup-Healthways’ 2013 State of American Well-Being Index.

His district should not be construed as a Hoosier outlier. The general impression for the entire state is not good. Seven of the nine districts fall in the bottom 40% of the nation with health rankings ranging from 271st to 401st. As a whole, the state did not fare well on the 2013 Well-Being Index, ranking 40th in the country. Neighboring Ohio and Kentucky are reportedly worse off at 46th and 49th, respectively. Illinois (22nd) and Michigan (37th) fared better. West Virginia was ranked last while Hawaii was first. Overall, the rust-belt and south comprised the entirety of the fifth quintile (bottom 20%). If one were to average all six categories of Gallup’s Well-Being Index, Indiana falls in the fifth quintile of states.

In terms of individual categories, such as ‘Physical Health’ and ‘Healthy Behaviors,’ Indiana is an abysmal 41st and 44th, respectively. We score 38th in ‘Emotional Health’ and 31st in terms of ‘Basic Access’ to healthcare. From heart disease to air quality, the Hoosier health care system has so much stacked against it. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reports 23% of adult Hoosiers smoke and 31% are obese. Another 16% of Hoosiers reported having “poor or fair health.” Our teen birth rate is 40 per 1,000 (the national average is around 30) and 8.3% of all newborns have a low birthweight.

All of this compounds our abysmal infant mortality rate of 7.7 deaths per 1,000 for 2010; the national average is 6.1 and only five states were worse than Indiana. There are some especially jaw-dropping figures at the local

level. In Newton County, for example, 43% smoke and in Howard County 38% are obese.

To be fair, these statistics represent longterm issues and trends for the state and every congressional district. Dr. Bucshon is only in his second term and has made health care a central focus of his time in Washington. Indeed, he readily admitted and described the poor rankings and indicators before the Indiana State Medical Association Tuesday.

“Southwestern Indiana, I can tell you, is called the heart attack belt,” he told the gathering. “The reason is we have a pretty significant incidence rate of obesity, cigarette smoking, and other poor quality lifestyle choices. We have some challenges we need to work on. We’re not doing that well compared to the rest of the states.”

Dr. Bucshon believes health care will only become

an evermore pressing priority (and liability) for the state and nation. Going forward, he believes a comprehensive look at Indiana’s healthcare landscape and trajectory demands getting out and listening across the state to practitioners, patients, and the wider industry. With this in mind he approached House Ways and Means Chairman Tim Brown, a physician colleague, if he would be interested in a statewide healthcare listening tour. Dr. Brown was and the two began a statewide tour Monday in Indianapolis at Riley Children’s Hospital.



Dr. Tim Brown (left) who chairs the Indiana House Ways & Means Committee and Dr. Larry Bucshon, the 8th CD congressman, talk to Howey Politics exclusively at Cafe Patachou on Tuesday as they embarked on their statewide health tour. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Howey Politics Indiana sat down to an exclusive, hour-long interview with the two doctors Tuesday morning before they continued their tour across the state. With some 11 stops scheduled and each tackling a thematic topic such as mental health, rural health care, veterans, and medical devices, it promises to be broad in scope and substantive in detail.

“Going around the state, for me, is going to be kind of like a listening tour, hearing from different aspects of healthcare,” Bucshon said. “I don’t think you can be a good representative, whether that’s in federal or state government, if you really don’t know what’s happening out there on the ground. A lot of it’s going to be hearing information from people in whatever their niche in healthcare is.” Whereas Bucshon no longer practices surgery, he does stay informed on day-to-day hospital happenings through

his wife, a practicing anesthesiologist. Dr. Brown practices emergency medicine in Crawfordsville.

Probably not since Gov. Otis "Doc" Bowen has there been such medical expertise in elected high office for the state. This is not lost on either Brown or Bucshon. "We thought it was a unique opportunity since you have a physician in Congress and a physician in the Indiana House with a high-ranking committee chairmanship," said Bucshon. "It's going to be very valuable for me to hear what Dr. Brown has to say about the state and about where the state is going."

Since health care policy is so intertwined with issues of federalism, Brown believes the partnership and tour are very appealing. "I enjoy the interaction so we can talk about the federal-state interaction. At the state level we control Medicaid and state employees, the two biggest groups, but a lot of the multi-state corporations are under ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) law which is federal guidelines. So, you try to look at what's happening to impact the citizens of the state of Indiana. There is a lot of federal and state interaction going on."



The two physicians' primary concern with health care is cost inflation. The focus of their tour is learning about myriad ways to staunch healthcare inflation and other cost-driving issues. Incorporating more price transparency, consumer-driven incentives, and utilizing high-quality data will, they argue, lower costs while increasing access and coverage without sacrificing quality, but rather improving it. They shared with HPI their views on topics such as the role of ERs and rural hospitals in Indiana as well as important trends such as malpractice tort reform, hospital consolidation, and a looming physician shortage for the state. Overall, the two alluded to a multifaceted approach to health care reform with no silver bullets and no overnight solutions.

Reforming the Medical Marketplace

Over the past decade the Republican stance on health care reform has spanned from vacuous talking points to hard-nosed substantive reforms, but almost all of them invoke the idea of making health care more consumer driven. "To me that's having some consumer accountability and consumer knowledge about the price and cost of health care," Dr. Brown told us. "The price of what a CT scan is, those sort of things." He said 80% of patients use health care three times or less per year. He thinks under the right conditions they can understand most of their

health care costs and make informed decisions that will result in personal and system-wide savings.

Of course it's nearly impossible to be a savvy healthcare consumer without price transparency for services. Within the state capital an Indianapolis Star study found prices for the same procedures can vary widely from hospital to hospital. "In general, what is billed is not what the facilities get paid," Dr. Bucshon was careful to state. "For example, if you're a surgeon and you do a certain surgery, you bill everyone the same amount. What you get paid depends on what type of coverage you have. To put out billing data is really a very inaccurate assessment of what facilities or physicians actually get paid for what they do. The problem is there is no price transparency on what providers are actually paid."

He admits that reforms at the state and federal level would take time to make greater price transparency "ubiquitous to the system." Bucshon explains, "Try to take it in the context it is today, yeah (consumer-driven health care) would be tough."

The utter opaqueness of medical pricing and billing is a product of the health care policy landscape, according to Dr. Brown. "I'm going to blame the federal government because a lot of this problem with pricing started with Medicare," he said. The program for seniors doesn't encourage price flexibility, say lower prices for those paying in cash. "You commit fraud if you

charge less than what you charge Medicare," he said. "We have to have some allowance of how we negotiate private contracts with the individual without committing Medicare fraud. I would love to give you a deal if you paid cash at the time of service."

In broadly defined terms, they both want to replace the "price-fixed" economics of health care today with more free-market forces and consumer-driven choice. Collecting and interpreting quality data can drive these decisions and allow practitioners and policymakers to arrive at what is the best quality care. Instead, the current system is based, in their experience, on open-ended costs.

"That doesn't mean limit access to health care," Bucshon said. "What that means is having more data on what the best therapies are for certain conditions and having more patient-physician driven standards of care. That way we know what works and can do what is the most efficient." Building consensus on such therapies even with "quality data" and how one balances cost with the latest, cutting-edge biotechnologies will not be easy, to say the least.

Malpractice Tort Reform

A perennial issue to Republicans regarding health care is medical malpractice tort reform. Some states are notorious for malpractice suits, driving away both insur-

ance providers and doctors. "Indiana is a good state to practice in," Bucshon commented Tuesday on our malpractice and tort regulatory environment. "It protects patients too," added Brown. "When you look at a study by the Indiana State Medical Association, we give more money to patients than even Ohio which doesn't have some of things we do. So it protects patients as well as the providers." Brown explained the key to Indiana's malpractice regulations dates to the administration of Gov. Bowen. Lawsuits were driving malpractice insurers out of the state and forced the state to grapple with reforms before most of the country was faced with the problem.

Indiana aside, both Brown and Bucshon are convinced medical malpractice suits are a problem that exacerbates and elevates the cost structure of the national health care system. "Tort health reform is one of the pieces of healthcare reform that has to happen if you're going to get a handle on healthcare costs. States can do it and the federal government can encourage it," Bucshon said.

It has long been argued and largely proven that the threat of malpractice lawsuits encourages the widespread usage of defensive, if not excessive, medical practices. "Some people estimate these add hundreds of billions of dollars in extra costs every year across the nation," Bucshon explained. "The issue is not that it will help decrease physicians' malpractice insurance – it will do that – the issue is to get the cost of health care down. "Even though Indiana is a good state, many states don't have that level of tort reform. It's a national issue."

He also added the tort issues surrounding medical device companies and other healthcare firms further add to systemic costs.

Working in an ER, Dr. Brown knows doctors must practice defensive medicine. He alluded to real life examples, such as car accident victims who are often given unnecessarily excessively cautious care and diagnostics. Doctors are faced with the possibility of being in court years later, according to Brown, being asked, "How did you make sure there wasn't a problem with a patient?" In order to preempt the possibility, Brown says, "I scan them from head to belly which is about four scans, which is about \$7,000 to \$10,000 and yet they climbed out of the car themselves."

As a surgeon, Bucshon alluded to extra steps taken before rather routine surgeries, like an appendectomy. "Now that we have CT scans, if you come to the ER and you've got belly pain, you get a CT scan period. If a

patient goes to surgery the physician now has cover; he can say look, we performed a CT scan, here is the picture, and it looked like appendicitis. That's an example of defensive medicine, it just is, and it adds to costs. Anybody who comes in with a severe headache, depending upon their risk factors, you really don't have a choice. There is no way of getting around testing."

Indiana's Doctor Shortage

With the aging of the Baby Boomers and pro-

longed life spans, a growing concern for the state is whether there are enough providers. "The physician shortage in Indiana, not just primary care but specialists, is substantial," Bucshon told us. A whole host of factors is deterring sufficient numbers from entering medical school, such as concerns over reimbursement issues under not only Medicaid/Medicare but also insurance, the mounting paperwork and regulatory compliance issues surrounding medi-

cine, the less time doctors are able to spend with patients, and the escalating cost and time commitment for medical education.

In order to be a heart surgeon, Bucshon explained, requires roughly fifteen years of study, a residency, and a fellowship. Lifestyle choices and greater pay are also diverting too many medical students from being primary care physicians and rural doctors. Brown added that college students considering medical school and those already enrolled weigh their options. "Fear of the unknown," he observed, "and fear of the change" were key factors to consider.

Both agree that without reform the medical field will remain unappealing to a necessary number of talented individuals, especially when general and rural practitioners are already hard to come by.

Part of the doctors' tour involves visiting with Indiana University medical students and asking what specialties they are pursuing and if they plan to remain in Indiana and whether they wish to serve urban or rural areas. They hope the survey results and discussion can help direct providers to medically underserved specialties and regions.

Medicaid Expansion and HIP

Both Republican doctors predictably do not want to expand Medicaid as the ACA calls for without drastic reforms. Bucshon supports making the program block-



grant based for states and thinks the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) is the right step in that direction. He told the Indiana Medical Association on Tuesday that he could not predict how HHS would rule on granting the state a waiver to continue and expand the program, especially after the recent resignation of Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, but he believed there was tremendous pressure on the Obama Administration to allow these state-based innovations to Medicaid.

Reforming Medicaid to be more efficient and provide better access depends upon cutting costs. To both doctors that requires introducing consumer incentives to any reforms. "One of the key components of what the congressman and I talk about is that we want to have some consumer ownership of any Medicaid expansion and we haven't really seen that, save the Healthy Indiana Plan model which has some ownership parts to it," the House Ways & Means chair explained. Medicaid dollars take up a sizable chunk of his budget every biennium.

"Secondly, I think, and I authored some legislation this year at the Statehouse that will hopefully make it through the legislative council process, to study the people who are costing us the 80-90% of the money and can we manage them better and not impact the other 85-90% of the population. I felt like I got good support from the other side; Rep. Edward Delaney was very interested in talking about this idea."

Tackling this 80/20 pattern (the Pareto Principle) to healthcare costs could save trillions upon trillions. Dr. Brown is quick to add that Indiana and other states have expanded Medicaid in the past and it has not resulted in an improved program or, for so many, improved health outcomes. "We have expanded Medicaid around the edges," Brown said, citing CHIP, pregnancy coverage, and waivers.

"Everybody said it's a dysfunctional system. Providers don't like it. Patients don't like it. We don't like it in government when we get complaints. So why do we keep expanding this system that nobody really likes? Let's reform it."

"The premise that expanding Medicaid will cut down on expensive healthcare and ER visits is absolutely false – it's going to do just the opposite," Bucshon added. "It's not good coverage. They're going to find outside the ER people don't accept it and that's only going to get worse. You haven't really solved the problem."

"The key Medicaid program is to reform and from a federal official's standpoint, the flexibility for the states to innovate," said the congressman. "My fear is a federal expansion without innovation, without the ability to use programs like HIP, or whatever state-based programs to manage those federal dollars, is just perpetuating a system that is not effective and fails patients because of

access issues. I only see those access issues getting worse as the dollar amounts of reimbursements continue to drop. You have to be really careful in expanding a system that is not working well for patients. I'm in favor of Medicaid block grants to the state and let them use the money how they see fit."

Living under and reforming the ACA

Neither Brown nor Bucshon sees the ACA's mandate and heavily subsidized exchanges as bolstering a consumer-driven model. Simply expanding coverage haphazardly will not dampen costs, they argue. "The ACA doesn't address, in my view, the cost to the system now,



it tries to address coverage. It says you have to have coverage," Bucshon said. "Well, that's fine but it doesn't do anything to bend the cost curve of what's driving the cost of healthcare in the first place which is a multitude of things. There is no silver bullet so it's going to take awhile. If we cannot get the cost of healthcare down, people are not going to be able to afford the exchange policies."

In terms of the ACA, this is a crucial period for the future of Indiana. The mandate to Medicaid expansion puts millions of dollars in play. To complicate matters, Speaker Brian Bosma told Howe Politics earlier this week he wants the legislature to consider with an open mind the possibility of a state exchange and Medicaid expansion, something that sounds somewhat out of step with the governor's office.

Drs. Brown and Bucshon will complete their tour by the end of April. "This is the first time we've done this and we're looking to potentially see if we can do this a couple years from now and how we can even do more," Bucshon said, already looking toward the future. As they review their findings and information, HPI will follow up with both the chairman and the congressman to get a better sense of the status of healthcare in the Hoosier state.



Seybold has money lead; lawsuit against Bates surfaces

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Marion Mayor Wayne Seybold continues to hold a significant cash-on-hand and fundraising lead over his two Republican state treasurer opponents.

Seybold raised \$40,204.86 for the quarter and posted \$47,651.86 cash on hand. Don Bates Jr. raised \$20,129.50 and posted \$23,555.40 cash on hand. Kelly Mitchell raised \$22,015.50 and had \$11,455.87 cash on hand.



Seybold had a \$44,488-to-\$22,116.55 money lead over Bates at the beginning of the period. Key Seybold contributors include James O'Connor and James Cook at \$5,000 each; Kelly Ganley and Bridgett O'Connor at \$2,500 each; and Brian Burdick, Bob Grand, Bryce Donaldson, Jeffrey Shreve, Doug Rose, Mark Slaby and John Janisick at \$1,000 apiece. Dan Dumezich contributed \$750.

Major Bates contributors included \$2,500 from Franklin Jackson, \$1,000 each from Howard County Republican Chairman Craig Dunn and Ron Neuenschwander, and \$3,844.50 from Wessley E. Jackson.

Mitchell is networking with Republican women, raising \$5,000 from Christine Dooley, \$100 each from Sandra Huddleston, Cheryl Musgrave and Shannon Kiely, \$250 from Judy Singleton and Elaine Bedel, and \$300 from Lawren Mills. Former Sen. Thomas Weatherwax contributed \$300 and former Rep. Nelson Becker gave \$100.

Secretary of State Connie Lawson led the statewide candidates with more than \$355,000 in her coffers, raising \$41,000 in the first quarter. Recently appointed State Auditor Suzanne Crouch raised the most money this quarter, bringing in more than \$207,000 with \$289,000 cash on hand.

Beth White, Democratic secretary of state candidate, raised more than \$76,000 to report about \$158,000 in cash on hand, while auditor candidate Mike Claytor raised \$17,268 with \$20,677 cash on hand. His campaign reported \$15,000 in debt.

Bates responds to church lawsuit

The Bates campaign has been subjected to an array of blog posts concerning a lawsuit filed in 2010 from the Bible Missionary Church in Winchester in Randolph Superior Court and his lapsed financial planning license.

Sources tell HPI that a preliminary hearing is set for April 24 and a trial for next August. The suit is based on a land transaction between two churches and a road right-of-way claim by the State of Indiana involving \$7,900. Since the suit was filed, Bates has sought a U.S. Senate nomination, the 5th CD and now Indiana treasurer.

The Bates campaign responded by providing HPI a four-page affidavit notarized in January 2014 in which the North Central District Bible Missionary Church, Inc., says the Winchester church is no longer affiliated with the denomination. It includes affidavits from Larry Pettit, a denomination moderator from the North Central District; and Rodger Moyer, the senior General Moderator of the Bible Missionary Church, Inc. Both said that the suit plaintiff, Frank Keener, resigned as pastor of the church in 1974.

Moyer said, "First, I want to let you know that the plaintiff in the referenced lawsuit does not represent our organization, nor did the plaintiff have our permission to file suit against any of the defendants, including Don Bates, Jr. Moreover, the Bible Missionary Church, Inc. does not condone or support this action against Don Bates as we are aware of nothing Don Bates, his family or Pilgrim Nazarene Church has done to defraud the Bible Missionary Church, Inc. In fact, the change of affiliation from Bible Missionary Church, Inc. to Pilgrim Nazarene Church was conducted in accordance with our church policy."

Bates said in a statement to HPI, "It's a shame that my opponents would falsely attack me for serving as a church leader. Our campaign will continue to focus on the best ways to protect Hoosier taxpayers as our next state treasurer."

Huckabee to keynote GOP convention

Former Arkansas governor and presidential candidate Mike Huckabee will keynote the Indiana Republican convention this June in Fort Wayne. RNC Chairman Reince Priebus is also scheduled to be on hand.

HD22: Kubacki/Nisly into tossup

Curt Nisly's challenge to State Rep. Rebecca Kubacki is now rated by HPI's Horse Race as a "tossup." Nisly is using dozens of Tea Party volunteers to drop off leaflets at homes across the district. A letter to the editor campaign is also taking place in the Warsaw Times-Union and the Kosciusko County news web page StaceyPage.com.

Kubacki began running newspaper and radio ads this week and has sent out three mailers. The Indiana Chamber PAC is working closely with the Kubacki campaign. Multiple sources close to both campaigns believe the race has closed in recent weeks. Nisly is the husband of Elkhart County Republican Chair Mary Nisly. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD91: Behning, Scott race heating up

House Education Chairman Robert Behning is facing a rematch with Michael Scott who polled just 37%

of the vote in 2012, and there are indications this race is tightening up. Scott, sources say, is testing a negative message in recent polling. We're also hearing that a number of groups are taking a hard look at this for the supplemental funding season. Behning is running cable TV ads and has begun a direct mail campaign, and he's got a volunteer phone bank running. Given the success of the anti-school reform movement in 2012 and Behning being the point man on the Daniels/Bennett reforms, it's not a stretch to believe those forces are now taking aim. We'll be keeping a close eye on this one, which we previously had classified as "safe" for the incumbent. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Behning.

Reps. Heuer, Morris up on media

In the Allen/Whitley county area, State Rep. Kathy Heuer is now running radio ads in her HD83 primary race as she seeks to stave off a challenge from Christopher Judy and Steve Hivley. Of the challengers, Judy has been more active. Heuer has also sent out mailers this week. In HD84, State Rep. Bob Morris is now running cable TV ads. His challenger, Fort Wayne attorney Michael Barranda, has conducted an active door-to-door campaign but has not begun his media campaign. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Heuer, Leans Morris.

Rep. Smith begins media

State Rep. Milo Smith began running newspaper ads in the Columbus Republic this week as he tries to stave off a challenge from Bartholomew County Councilman Ryan Lauer. Smith is also conducting an active door-to-door campaign. Lauer has not begun his media. Polling after the end of the Indiana General Assembly showed Smith with a comfortable lead. Gov. Mike Pence attended a fundraiser for Smith. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Smith.

Farm Bureau endorses Fries

Allen County Sheriff Ken Fries received the endorsement of the Indiana Farm Bureau ELECT. "It is a privilege to be honored by Indiana's farmers," said Fries. "This endorsement means a lot to me because of the comprehensive process the Farm Bureau goes through to learn about candidates' views and how they will impact Indiana residents." Last week, Fries picked up the endorsement of the Indiana Manufacturers Association. Former Fort Wayne Councilwoman Liz Brown began running broadcast TV ads on Sunday. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Fries.

SD39: NRA rates Bassler highly

Washington Councilman Eric Bassler says that he has received the highest candidate rating from the National Rifle Association (NRA) in his run against State Sen. John Waterman. "I am pleased to receive this rating," Bassler said. "I am proud to be a member of the NRA and I am pleased several fellow members are involved in my campaign. I will never waver in my support for the 2nd

Amendment and I'll fight to protect individual sovereignty and private property rights." **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

Little money activity in CD races

The best indicator this will be a quiet election year in Indiana: Besides Joe Bock in IN-2, no challenger has raised more than \$30,000 for the cycle (and none, sans Bock, has raised more than \$14,000 for the quarter). While Bock raised just over \$100,000 this quarter, that's only about half of what he brought in last quarter, that is, if you count the \$30,000 he loaned his campaign on Dec. 31. Failing to make the DCCC target list clearly removed what little wind might have been in his sails. Incumbent fundraising, meanwhile, remains strong as every member of the delegation raised at least \$100K this quarter, and everyone but Pete Visclosky has raised at least \$600,000 for the cycle (Visclosky still clocks in at \$596K):

CD1

U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky: \$112K Raised Quarter, \$596K Raised Cycle, \$289K COH
Mark Leyva: No Report Filed

CD2

U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski: \$238K Raised Quarter, \$1.18M Raised Cycle, \$783K COH
Joe Bock: \$113K Raised Quarter, \$317K Raised Cycle, \$208K COH, \$30K Debt
Dan Morrison: No Report Filed
Douglas Carpenter: No Report Filed
Bob Kern: No Report Filed

CD3

U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman: \$180K Raised Quarter, \$812K Raised Cycle, \$431K COH
Jim Mahoney: No Report Filed
Mark Baringer: No Report Filed
Justin Kuhnle: No Report Filed
Jim Redmond: No Report Filed
Tommy Schrader: No Report Filed

CD4

U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita: \$201K Raised Quarter, \$922K Raised Cycle, \$1.2M COH
Kevin Grant: No Report Filed
John Dale: \$4K Raised Quarter, \$4K Raised Cycle, \$2K COH
Howard Pollchik: No Report Filed
Jeffrey Blaydes: No Report Filed
Roger Day: No Report Filed
John Futrell: No Report Filed

CD5

U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks: \$206K Raised Quarter, \$920K Raised Cycle, \$631K COH

David Stockdale: No Report Filed; \$13K Raised Cycle, \$7K COH on last report
 David Campbell: No Report Filed
 Allen Davidson: \$400 Raised Quarter, \$523 Raised Cycle, \$0 COH, \$4K Debt
 David William Ford: \$7K Raised Quarter, \$7K Raised Cycle, \$5 COH
 Shawn Denney: No Report Filed

CD6

U.S. Rep. Luke Messer: \$112K Raised Quarter, \$721K Raised Cycle, \$380K COH
 Lane Siekman: No Report Filed
 Susan Hall Heitzman: No Report Filed
 Corinne Westerfield: No Report Filed

CD7

U.S. Rep. Andre Carson: \$150K Raised Quarter, \$697K Raised Cycle, \$579K COH
 Curtis Godfrey: No Report Filed
 Pierre Pullins: No Report Filed
 Mmoja Ajabu: No Report Filed
 Erin Kent Magee: No Report Filed
 J.D. Miniear: No Report Filed
 Gordon Smith: No Report Filed
 Catherine "Cat" Ping: No Report Filed
 Wayne Harmon: No Report Filed

CD8

U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon: \$135K Raised Quarter, \$750K Raised Cycle, \$505K COH
 Andrew McNeil: \$14K Raised Quarter, \$28K Raised Cycle, \$5K COH
 Tom Spangler: No Report Filed

CD9

U.S. Rep. Todd Young: \$258K Raised Quarter, \$1.28M Raised Cycle, \$835K COH
 Kathy Heil: No Report Filed
 Mark Jones: No Report Filed
 Bill Bailey: \$5K Raised Quarter, \$11K Raised Cycle, \$2K COH, \$8K Debt
 James R. McClure: No Report Filed
 William Joseph "Billy" Thomas: No Report Filed
 J.S. Miller: No Report Filed.

Bayh uncommitted on 2016 candidacy

The Indiana winter continued to invade the Hoosier Spring early this week, laying down a thin layer of snow and ice on the emerging flora. And in Bloomington on Monday, the former governor and senator Evan Bayh continued to freeze the 2016 Democratic gubernatorial field with an artful equivocation after he was asked whether he might be a candidate in 2016.

Appearing before the Bloomington Chamber of

Commerce, Bayh said, "Indiana is always our home and public service will always be important to us. There are ways other than electoral office to do that, and so that's just a long-winded I don't know."

While informed and reliable Democratic sources tell Howey Politics that Bayh won't run for governor, these two sentences from the Democrat who led Indiana from 1989 to 1997 essentially puts a freeze on the field. And it comes after some influential Democrats have urged Bayh to make his intentions known soon.



The reason Bayh freezes the Democratic field is that he sits on a campaign war chest of around \$10 million. It's a déjà vu sequence not unlike 1987 when all eyes were on the young

secretary of state. When Bayh finally announced he would run in 1988 and challenge two decades of Republican dominance at the Statehouse, Senate Minority Leader Frank O'Bannon got out of the race and joined forces, with that ticket defeating Lt. Gov. John Mutz.

With Bayh still pondering, the potential field of 2012 nominee John Gregg, 2012 lieutenant governor nominee Vi Simpson, former congressman Baron Hill and Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., are dormant. None of them is acting like a potential candidate. House Minority Leader Scott Pelath is reportedly considering the race. The two most probable candidates, Gregg and Southern District Attorney Joe Hogsett, both pulled back. Gregg said he had "suspended his active campaign" last fall after touring the state following his narrow loss to Gov. Mike Pence in 2012. Hogsett took himself out of the running earlier this year.

Bayh said in Bloomington that he would make a decision after his twin sons graduated from high school later this Spring. It comes as the Indiana Democratic Party finds itself in as bad a shape as Bayh found it when he ran for secretary of state in 1986.

Many Democrats such as Mayor McDermott, who also chairs Lake County Democrats, are still angry with Bayh over his stunning retirement in 2010 from the U.S. Senate, which set in motion the "Bayh dominoes" that resulted in the loss of several Indiana House, Senate and the 8th CD. Indiana Democrats have yet to reclaim any of those seats. Bayh said that Democrats can make themselves "relevant" by concentrating on issues that impact the everyday lives of Hoosiers. "That's one of the problems we have in politics today," Bayh explained. "People say, it's just a mud fight. They don't care about me. They're just all in it for themselves, so focus on what really matters to people and give them a reason to believe that we can make a difference if we just elect the right kind of people."



Bock looks beyond the May primary

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – With help from Democratic leaders, the alphabet and Republican Paul Ryan, Joe Bock seeks to challenge U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski for Congress in Indiana's 2nd District.

Bock is in a four-candidate contest for the Democratic congressional nomination. But he looks beyond the May 6 primary election, declining to debate his primary opponents and concentrating on a race with Walorski, the Republican incumbent. She is unopposed in the Republican primary.



"We're focused on beating Jackie and not getting distracted," Bock says.

"It's about priorities," he says of differences with Walorski. "And partisan games."

Priorities of Walorski and other House Republicans are spelled out in Ryan's budget proposal, Bock says. He contends the Wisconsin Republican's budget would hurt the middle class by ending

traditional Medicare, trimming health benefits and education programs such as Pell Grants for college students and ignoring infrastructure needs.

He says partisan tactics that led to the government shutdown have hurt economic recovery by creating uncertainty in the business sector. But before Bock can engage Walorski in a fall campaign, he must win the nomination.

Of the three opponents Bock faces in the primary election, the only serious threat comes from Dan Morrison, who came close to winning the Democratic nomination in 2012. Morrison carried nine of the 10 counties in the 2nd District but fell short in the largest county, St. Joseph County, losing to Brendan Mullen, the party organization choice. Mullen went on to run a close race in losing to Walorski.

The organization choice now is Bock. And Morrison runs again, contending he would be more forceful in a contest with Walorski and be a better choice than someone picked "in the back room" by party leaders.

The alphabet helped Morrison before. He was listed ahead of Mullen in the alphabetical listing on all the ballots. In areas outside St. Joseph County where neither candidate was known, a significant number of voters, as they do in such situations, tended to select the first nice sounding name.

This time? Bock is listed first; Morrison fourth.

Morrison says he is campaigning harder this time

and won't suffer from an alphabet effect. Bock says he isn't taking the nomination for granted and has been campaigning in all 10 counties. He also cites work of volunteers and interns in the campaign headquarters he shares with the St. Joseph County Democratic organization in downtown South Bend.

For the campaign, Bock has stepped aside as director of global health training at the University of Notre Dame's Eck Institute for Global Health. He continues as a teaching professor.

Morrison keeps pushing for a debate. Bock declines. Conventional political wisdom holds that a front-runner shouldn't risk giving opponents debate exposure and a chance to inflict wounds. There was, however, a televised issue-oriented program with the four Democratic candidates last week on "Politically Speaking" on WNIT-TV, hosted by Elizabeth Bennion, Indiana University South Bend professor, who was fair and also persistent in conducting one-on-one interviews.

Bock, though cautious in his answers, also seeks to be precise, even on abortion, where many candidates want only to say they are "pro life" or "pro choice" and refrain from any nuances. Bock stressed on the television program that he is "pro life" and would oppose use of any federal money for abortion.

In a later interview, he initiated a detailed explanation of exceptions to his opposition to abortion, including rape and incest as well as the life of the mother.

Bock says he became convinced of the exception for rape while directing Catholic Relief Services and American Refugee Committee programs abroad, including in the former Yugoslavia regions, where ethnic cleansing horrors included rape used "as an instrument of war" against women.

"A loving God" would not want a woman to be forced to carry a child conceived in such a brutal rape, Bock believes.

So he isn't avoiding a debate in order to keep from detailed answers on touchy issues. He wants to focus on the fall race. With help from Democratic leaders, the alphabet and Republican Paul Ryan. ❖

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

Want a better teacher? (ask the students)

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – The state may be back where it started, encumbered with a flawed teacher grading system, a year after implementing what were meant to be tough new standards.

That was the general consensus of the State Board of Education days after teacher evaluation data were released last week. Of 50,000 public school teachers graded by their principals, less than one-half of 1 percent were deemed “ineffective.”



Almost everyone else – 97 percent – was considered good or good enough.

“Clearly the system failed,” said board member Gordon Hendry, before calling for a new way to get more accurate results.

Much of the criticism focused on the law that mandated a new evaluation system. It was meant to tie teacher pay to performance rather than tenure – a

sweeping change for Indiana. But, as in the past, the law let local school districts pick their own rating models.

As a result, weight given to student test scores or the observations of principals ranged wildly. Some districts gave most teachers the highest mark of “highly effective.” Almost two dozen districts couldn’t find a single teacher who fit into that category.

Joe Gramelspacher isn’t an education policy maker but a teacher who’s given evaluation systems a lot of thought. An Indianapolis native, he started his career in a Colorado district that helped pioneer the idea of performance pay.

Missing from Indiana’s metrics and most models, he argues, are the opinions of students.

“No one spends more time watching teachers at work than their students,” said Gramelspacher, who majored in economics at Indiana University and came to teaching through the Teach for America program. “Who’s in a better position to evaluate how we’re doing?”

Gramelspacher, who works at an inner-city Indianapolis school, is borrowing on work done by Harvard University economist Ronald Ferguson.

More than a decade ago, Ferguson started researching the use of classroom surveys to measure student engagement. He was looking for a way to narrow the race-based achievement gap. He ended up with a finely tuned survey of student perception that became a

framework for incorporating student feedback into teacher evaluations.

Gramelspacher said he was surprised the first time he used a Ferguson-inspired survey of his teaching methods.

“They were brutally honest” he said of his students. “But it helped.”

The students were better observers of his teaching than his school principal, who’d visited his classroom an average of once a month, he found.

“They knew my strengths and weaknesses,” he said. “They pointed out weaknesses I didn’t know I had.” He took their input to heart, changed some techniques, and now gives himself a higher grade.

A handful of school districts around the country are incorporating sophisticated student surveys into teacher evaluations, and they’re using the results to craft plans to help teachers improve. In doing so, they improve student results.

Gramelspacher is a true believer in student feedback. But he’s met plenty of skeptics, he said, especially among educators who think students are too immature, biased or just too mean to render a fair evaluation.

“Who do you serve as a teacher? You serve your students,” he said. “If you don’t value your students’ feedback, one, you’re not going to be a very good teacher, and two, maybe you’re in the wrong profession.

“If you don’t want to hear from your customers, then you’re in the wrong business.” ❖

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Non-waiver grad rate rises

INDIANAPOLIS - More Indiana students are meeting the state’s exit requirements before graduating high school, according to data the Department of Education released Wednesday (Moxley, State Impact). Though the state’s overall graduation rate was virtually unchanged between 2012 and 2013, the non-waiver graduation rate increased about a point — up to 81.7 percent from 80.5 percent.

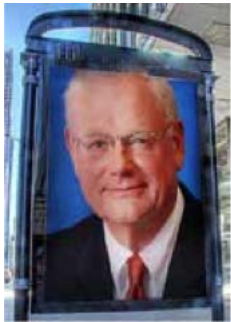
“While the overall graduation rate is largely the same as it was in 2012, when you dig into the data it becomes clear that more of our students are graduating without a waiver and passing their end of course assessments,” says state superintendent Glenda Ritz. “This is a crucial step in ensuring that our students graduate from high school both college- and career-ready.” ❖

Dr. Borlaug, the man who fed the world

By **BOB KRAFT**

CARMEL - In late March most of the United States pretty much ignored the 100th anniversary of the birth of Norman Borlaug, the man most responsible for the current phenomenon of engineered food in the world's diet.

The one notable exception to the general indifference to Borlaug's centennial was that of his native state of Iowa, which used the occasion to enshrine him as one of that state's two honorees in the National Statuary Hall in the U. S. Capitol. To do so, Iowa had to remove the statue of James Harlan, a college president, U.S. senator and secretary of the interior in the Andrew Johnson administra-



tion. (For the record, Indiana's two honorees are Civil War Gov. Oliver P. Morton and Civil War general and Ben Hur author Lew Wallace).

Dr. Norman Borlaug, born and raised on an Iowa farm, was a plant scientist and innovator who is widely known as the father of the Green Revolution. In the 1950s Borlaug introduced a dwarf gene from one wheat strain into a tropical wheat

native to Mexico. This innovation led to a short stubby hybrid wheat plant that could support heavy seed heads; seed heads that were made heavy by chemical fertilizers. This combination of bioengineering and high fertilization led to a quadrupling of Mexican wheat production. The plants and methodologies developed by Borlaug and his colleagues were used to increase grain and rice production with similar results on the Indian sub-continent and in the Philippines.

In 1968, the well-known Stanford biologist Paul Ehrlich wrote, "The battle to feed all of humanity is over...in the 1970s and 1980s hundreds of millions will starve to death." While famine still plagues much of the world, the scientific advances and uses of technology pioneered by Borlaug to increase the production of basic foodstuffs were accepted and adopted by governments and farmers in many of the world's most populated countries, with the result that Ehrlich's dire prediction of imminent famine and starvation fell considerably short. Officials at the U.S. Agency for International Development were quick to identify this phenomenal increase in agricultural production as the Green Revolution.



The impact of Borlaug's work was so significant that in 1970 he was awarded the Noble Peace Prize. In presenting the prize the Nobel Committee stated, "More than any other single person of this age, Dr. Borlaug has helped provide bread for a hungry world, we have made this choice in the hope that providing bread will also give the word peace."

Over the last several years, the Green Revolution and Borlaug have come under attack from some environmentalists and nutritionists. It is interesting that the specific criticisms directed at the Green Revolution in developing countries closely parallel the arguments of the more vocal critics of modern agriculture here in the United States. There are those who so value traditional farming practices – whether subsistence farming in Latin America or Asia or a return to American Gothic image in the United States – that they disparage anything that hints of modern agriculture. Similarly, those who, for whatever reason, have a fear of food resulting from the genetic modification of organisms (GMOs) use that fear to denigrate modern agriculture both in the United States and around the world.

Borlaug listened to these criticisms but he didn't agree with them. He argued that the only way to increase food production was through GMOs. The world's supply of arable land is finite, he noted, while the world's population growth is not. While he devoted his career to the supply side of the world's food crisis, he never lost sight of the need to control the demand side. Indeed, this was one of major points of his 1970 speech accepting the Nobel Peace Prize. In his address, he stated, "Most people still fail to comprehend the magnitude and menace of the 'Population Monster'." In further defense of GMOs, he noted, "We've been genetically modifying plants and animals for a long time. Long before we called it science, people were selecting the best breed."

When it became fashionable in the 1980s to find fault with high-yield agriculture, environmentalists and the emerging Green political parties in Europe pressured their governments and the major charitable foundations who had historically supported much of Borlaug's work not to fund or otherwise support him in Africa, where by then he was focusing his attention. His response to this criticism not only communicated the disdain he felt for those who were attacking his work but also articulated the passion he felt for his life's work and the sense of urgency with which he pursued it.

Norman Borlaug said, "Some of the environmental lobbyists of the Western nations are the salt of the earth, but many of them are elitists. They've never experienced the physical sensation of hunger. They do their lobbying from comfortable office suites in Wash-

ington or Brussels. If they lived just one month amid the misery of the developing world, as I have for 50 years, they'd be crying out for tractors and fertilizer and irrigation canals and be outraged that fashionable elitists back home were trying to deny them these things."

Dr. Norman Borlaug remained active until his death at the age of 95 in 2009.

The Green Revolution and the arguments over its impact and the impact of GMOs continues. However

one might feel about modern agriculture and engineered crops, the fact remains that the work of Dr. Borlaug and the Green Revolution is credited with saving over a billion people from death by starvation. This undoubtedly is worthy of a statue in the U. S. Capitol. ❖

Kraft is the former head of public affairs for the Indiana Farm Bureau.

Mayor McDermott's worst kept secret

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – Probably the worst kept secret in Lake County politics is that Hammond Mayor Thomas M. McDermott Jr. would like to one day replace U.S. Rep. Peter Visclosky, D-Merrillville, in Congress. Because Visclosky is virtually unbeatable, McDermott would have to wait for him to retire before having a chance.

One thing that could give McDermott an advantage once Visclosky has stepped down is the fact that he is the Lake County Democratic chairman and has firm control of the organization.

McDermott took a rather bold step about a week ago when he said converting Lake County into a single municipality is the best way to achieve true regionalism. But, McDermott said, the only way to make that happen is for the General Assembly to approve legislation to mandate Unigov far down the road. While that likely isn't going to happen, McDermott has moved the Unigov issue to the front burner, at least for the time being.



There has been new emphasis on regionalism in recent months because of the proposal

to expand the South Shore railroad to Dyer on the very west side of Lake County. Visclosky, who is pushing the South Shore extension, has been asking county government and the county's 19 municipalities to commit up to 30 percent of their county economic development income tax for the next 30 years for expansion of the commuter railroad.

The CEDIT was approved last summer and took affect Oct. 1.

The reaction to Visclosky's request has been mixed. Some communities have voted to provide 30

percent of their CEDIT collections. Others have offered as little as 5 percent.

Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson has been a leader in the effort, vowing to ask the city council to commit 30 percent. That is a strong offering in that Gary residents don't stand to immediately gain from a train running to Dyer. The existing South Shore makes three stops in Gary.

McDermott wants an environmental impact study done before he commits Hammond money. He emphasized that 30 percent of Hammond's CEDIT would be \$900,000 a year or \$27 million over 30 years. McDermott said that while he is committed to regionalism, his first responsibility is to the people of Hammond. That all would change with a unigov form of government.

Some candidates gain by leaps and bounds simply because of the actions of an opponent during a political campaign. Lake County Commissioner Roosevelt Allen, who is seeking reelection, is one of them.

Allen, who is a Gary funeral home owner, faces a Democratic primary challenge from Lita M. Iatarola Filippo. Filippo has struck out at every turn in her fight against Allen before the county election board. She first filed a complaint alleging that the lottery for ballot position was rigged. She charged that election board members could see the names that were drawn from a clear bottle and intentionally picked Allen. The complaint was dismissed.

She next was escorted from the County Government Center after causing a disturbance over demands for documents on public payments of veterans burial benefits to Allen's funeral home.

Finally, she filed a complaint with the election board alleging that Allen's reelection billboard was in violation of state, city and federal laws. The allegation is that the billboard went up more than 30 days before the election, which is the window for political signs on private property. She also said the billboard is on public property, which is an election law violation.

The election board dismissed her complaints. ❖

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.

Doug Ross, NWI Times: Lake County has more municipalities, libraries, school districts and other units of local government than you can shake a stick at — and don't tell me you haven't been tempted. Is Lake County collapsing under the weight of all its government? And is there an alternative? Those questions are all the more relevant during the E-911 consolidation anguish and the decades-long struggle to expand commuter rail service in Lake County. Enter Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. and his discussion of Unigov during his Wednesday visit with The Times Editorial Board. "If you really want to go beyond the parochialism, you've got to think big," he said. That means thinking about Unigov, which merged Indianapolis and Marion County when Dick Lugar was mayor there. "They think regionally, and they're highly successful," McDermott said. And then there's Lake County, where achieving unity is a struggle. McDermott's selling point for turning Lake County into one large city — the second biggest in Indiana — is the clout Lake County and its mayor would gain downstate. That's also one of the biggest fears expressed by many politicians who would be key in accomplishing that merger. Their fears are valid and have to be taken into consideration. This is Lake County, after all. McDermott's proposal is to push the merger years into the future — at least a decade — so the details can be worked out. That gets the current mayors out of the way so it doesn't become a battle for the new supermayor job. ❖



Lesley Stedman Weidenbener, State-house File: When Indiana lawmakers voted this spring to reduce the corporate income tax rate, they were joining hundreds of other legislators across the nation considering tax cuts. But history shows these tax cut splurges can cause significant problems for states when their economies go south — leaving policy makers to face much tougher decisions about increasing revenue or reducing services. At least 30 state legislatures have considered or are still considering tax bills this year — and most of them would reduce revenue, according to Stateline.org, a nonprofit website that tracks state policy. The goal is to bolster tax revenue by increasing the number of taxpayers. The idea has merit in theory. A broader, more diverse tax base is a stabilizing factor during a recession. But the race to lure business development is just that — a race. No state is standing still. Gov. Mike Pence boasted that when Indiana's new tax cut is fully implemented, the state will have the second lowest corporate rate in the nation. But there's little chance that will actually be true. That's because the move by Indiana to reduce its income tax on businesses will likely spur other states to do so as well. Already this spring, New York lawmakers have approved a corporate tax cut — although its rate will not fall as far as Indiana's. But there's another problem with focusing on tax cuts. Reduced revenue puts funding for government services in

jeopardy. And ironically, business leaders — the ones who are making the decisions about where to locate — care a lot about government services. Corporate execs don't want to locate to areas without good schools, medical care and cultural amenities. If Indiana policy makers look back at their own history, they'll see that some of their past tax cutting sprees left them vulnerable. When former Democratic Gov. Evan Bayh left office in 1997, the state boasted a huge budget surplus — much bigger than today's when considered as a percentage of total spending. But lawmakers frittered much of it away with a series of tax cuts meant to give some kind of reduction to almost everyone in the state. They realized later that the benefits were spread so widely that no one person noticed that big of a break. ❖

Jonathan Allen, Bloomberg News: Mike Pence has spent more than a decade courting the deep-pocketed small-government cadre that has come to dominate Republican politics: The Koch brothers, the Club for Growth and the Heritage Foundation. He turned their heads by opposing President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" education bill in 2001; captured their imagination by leading a revolt against the expansion of Medicare into prescription drug coverage in 2003; and won their loyalty with a 2004 speech to the Conservative Political Action Conference that took the GOP to task for "veering off course" into "big-government Republicanism." Now, Pence is in his second year as governor of Indiana, and some of the very same Republicans who once thought of the former radio talk-show host as their voice on the U.S. House floor want him in the 2016 Republican presidential contest. "I have no doubt that he would make a great president," said Steven Chancellor, the chief executive officer of Evansville, Indiana-based American Patriot Group, the parent of a company that makes ready-to-eat rations for the Pentagon. "He certainly distinguished himself in the House" and is "off to a great start as governor." White knight or dark horse, Republicans are searching for a candidate who can unite the party's pro-business establishment with its small-government activists, particularly now that New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's bridge scandal has left a void in the presidential field. Pence's allies say the temperate-toned executive has a record that pleases the staunchest defense hawks, anti-tax groups and abortion-rights opponents. When he ran for governor, billionaire industrialist David H. Koch poured \$200,000 into the campaign, according to Indiana campaign finance records. Angie's List co-founder Bill Oesterle of Indianapolis kicked in \$100,000, and Waltham, Mass.-based buyout specialist J.W. Childs added \$50,000 to Pence's coffers. "We've had people talking about that with us," Pence told the newsletter Howey Politics Indiana of a possible presidential bid. "Our decision on making any kind of decision on re-election will come sometime in the next calendar year." ❖

Lake Station mayor indicted

LAKE STATION - Prosecutors say a federal grand jury has indicted a northwestern Indiana mayor, his wife and a former city employee on corruption charges (Associated Press). The charges announced Wednesday allege Lake Station Mayor Keith Soderquist and his wife, Deborah, conspired to commit wire fraud by taking cash for gambling and other purposes from a campaign finance account and a city food pantry. Deborah Soderquist, while serving as an administrative assistant to her husband, assisted in the food pantry's operations. The grand jury also indicted former city employee Miranda Brakley for allegedly stealing funds from the city about 5 miles southeast of Gary and the Soderquists for allegedly helping her hide the theft.



Dorer released after bond reduced

MUNCIE — Delaware County Treasurer John Dorer was released from the Delaware County jail on Wednesday after his bond was reduced from \$400,000 to \$50,000 (Muncie Star Press). The 50-year-old Dorer — elected treasurer in 2008 and re-elected in 2012 — had been arrested Monday after being charged with 47 crimes stemming from his alleged mishandling of county funds. Delaware Circuit Court 1 Judge Marianne Vorhees granted his request for a bond reduction at a Wednesday morning hearing that also saw her schedule his trial for Aug. 25. By noon, Dorer had posted a \$5,000 surety bond and left the jail. Defense attorney Donald McClellan waived formal reading of the counts against his client, telling the judge Dorer would be pleading not guilty "to each and every one of those charges." In asking for a reduc-

tion in bond — initially set at \$400,000 because of the 46 felony counts against Dorer — McClellan noted his client had lived and worked in Delaware County for decades, working as a restaurant manager for 28 years before his election as treasurer. "Your ties to Delaware County are pretty deep?" he asked his client. "That's correct," responded Dorer, who was handcuffed and wearing an orange jail uniform. In 44 of the charges, Dorer is accused of failing to properly deposit public funds. McClellan said in those counts, his client allegedly "just deposited (county funds) late." Twenty-seven of the 44 "late deposits" were "one day late," he added.

Ex-Vigo treasurer may owe \$26,000

TERRE HAUTE — Former Vigo County Treasurer David Crockett could be required to personally pay back more than \$26,000 to reconcile a bookkeeping discrepancy discovered in 2012 during an audit from the Indiana State Board of Accounts (Terre Haute Tribune-Star). In a committee meeting of the Vigo County Council on Wednesday, Crockett said the issue was first brought to his attention in 2012, during an exit meeting with the state agency for the 2011 budget year. His office in July 2012 began researching a balance shortfall, he said. The State Board of Accounts, from January through the end of December of 2012, reports a shortfall of \$26,105.81 for cash on hand in the county's cash book versus bank deposit balances.

Anderson mom arrested at school

ANDERSON - An Anderson mom was arrested after police say she took a loaded gun to her son's school (WISH-TV). Police say 27-year-old

Bonnie Trahan set a meeting up with officials at St. Mary's School Wednesday morning, to discuss the way the school was handling a matter between her eight-year-old son, and another child. Detective Joel Sandefur, with the Anderson Police Department, said Trahan thought her son was not safe at school, and to prove a point, she brought her gun to the meeting. "Bonnie Trahan said, 'It's easy to get a gun into the school, and I want to demonstrate how easy it is to get a gun into the school.' She said, 'In fact I've got one in my back pocket... and slammed it down on the table,'" said Sandefur. Sandefur says the gun was in a holster, but loaded. "This is something that's very dangerous. Someone could have gotten hurt, someone could have gotten killed. This is no place for that type of behavior," Sandefur added.

Indiana mom joins Bloomberg on guns

BLOOMINGTON - A group co-founded by an Indiana mom is joining former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg to lobby for additional gun control measures (Indiana Public Media). Bloomberg, Mayors Against Illegal Guns and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America are forming a group called Everytown for Gun Safety. Bloomberg plans to donate \$50 million to the campaign to help combat interest groups like the National Rifle Association, which has a \$250 million annual budget. Shannon Watts founded Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and says she will finally be able to go toe to toe with Washington lobbyist. "We are going to do that by educating, and reaching out to moms and American's person to person, that's what grassroots is all about," Watts said on a conference call Wednesday.