

The marriage debate heads for GOP

Platform fight,
treasurers race to
headline convention

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – Sometime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. this Saturday in Fort Wayne, the Indiana Republicans will chart a course that could impact their position as Indiana's super majority party.

The supposed 1,775 delegates (not all will show up) will make a determination on whether the party's 2014 platform addresses the constitutional marriage amendment, and it will choose a state treasurer nominee who could expose the various fissures – Tea Party, establishment, money wings – of the party.

While the treasurer floor fight among Marion Mayor Wayne Seybold, Don Bates Jr., and Kelly Mitchell has been the long-anticipated event for the Indiana Republican Convention, it is the platform, normally an obscure, rote exercise that rarely influences voters, that could define Hoosier Republicans for the next several years. In 2012, neither Indiana Republicans



Terre Haute attorney Jim Bopp Jr., who lost his Republican National Committee seat in 2012 after proposing a party litmus test, is pushing the marriage platform plank.

nor Democrats took a platform stance on the marriage issue.

The Republican platform committee did not take

Continued on page 3

A doozy of a convention

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – The Indiana Republican State Convention, June 6-7 in Fort Wayne, is shaping up to be quite an event, promising to change this sleepy little election year into a good old-fashioned Hoosier barnburner.



In a phenomenon that happens every 12 years, the election ticket will be headed by the secretary of state race this year. Now don't get me wrong, the secretary of state is a very important office, but to John Q. Public, the race isn't the rallying cry to rush to the polls in November. Witness the pitifully low turnout on primary election day last month.



“It seems the governor has been everywhere of late but Indiana.”

- John Gregg, speaking to delegates at the Indiana Democratic Convention last weekend.



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WWWHowey Media, LLC
405 Massachusetts Ave.,
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Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Jack E. Howey, Editor
Mary Lou Howey, Editor
Maureen Hayden, Statehouse
Matthew Butler, Daily Wire

Subscriptions

HPI, HPI Daily Wire \$599
HPI Weekly, \$350
Ray Volpe, Account Manager
317.602.3620
email: HoweyInfo@gmail.com

Contact HPI

www.howeypolitics.com
bhowey2@gmail.com
Howey's Cabin: 812.988.6520
Howey's cell: 317.506.0883
Washington: 202.256.5822
Business Office: 317.602.3620

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In an effort to put a little pizzazz in an otherwise sleepy election year, the Indiana Republican Party solicited proposals from any community that might wish to hold the convention. This novel approach introduced some much-needed competition into the convention process. A dedicated group of Fort Wayne citizens presented a dynamic plan that offered a first-class convention center, financial incentives and a creative approach to offering an exciting and entertaining two days.

Frankly, political conventions have lost much of the allure of their former days. The last great gasp of state conventions in Indiana was in 1972, when I had the privilege of participating as an 18-year-old delegate. Gubernatorial candidates devoted months leading up to the convention to a furious schedule of private receptions intent on wooing delegate votes. The convention itself featured bands, receptions and every available form of retail politicking imaginable. Alas, direct primaries entered the picture and state conventions began the long trail to predictability and boredom as media experts transferred the battlefield from smoke-filled rooms to your television set.

While there have been a few interesting conventions for Republicans since 1972, the 1992 attorney general selection, the 2002 secretary of state battle and the 2008 attorney general nominations to be specific, most conventions for Republicans have been predictable affairs that left you scratching your head and wondering why you paid the delegate fee and drove down to Indianapolis. In short, conventions became pep sessions without much pep.

The 2014 convention has the potential to break the mold. Fort Wayne convention organizers have offered up a plan that kicks off on Friday night with keynote addresses by RNC Chairman Reince Priebus and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee. Candidates for secretary of state, auditor and treasurer will complete the session. At 7:30 the fun begins

with dinner catered by several well-known restaurants for all convention delegates, non-stop music provided by four bands after the dinner and parties throughout the night, capped off by fireworks at 10:30.

The real business of the convention begins at 10 a.m. Saturday. There will likely be a spirited debate of the platform committee report, particularly on the issue of marriage, and then will follow up with the nomination of secretary of state, auditor and treasurer candidates. The convention festivities will end with a free 8 p.m. concert by Kenny Loggins.

The 2014 Republican Convention will also serve up an extremely competitive race for Indiana state treasurer. Don Bates, Jr., Kelly Mitchell and Wayne Seybold are presently vying for the position currently held by Richard Mourdock.

The treasurer's powers are both constitutional and statutory, the constitution making him the chief financial officer of the state government and giving him control over all of the state's financial assets. Because of enlightened Republican management, the state operates with a large reserve fund; this gives the treasurer control over a large amount of money.

The Indiana General Assembly has assigned the treasurer additional statutory power and made him a member of the state board of finance, Indiana Finance Authority, Indiana Transportation Finance Authority, State Office Building Commission, Recreational Development Commission, Indiana Grain Indemnity Fund Board, Indiana Underground Storage Tank Financial Assurance Board, and the Indiana Heritage Trust Committee. Additionally, the treasurer is the vice chairman of the Indiana Housing Finance Authority and the Indiana State Police Pension Fund. As a member of these boards, the treasurer has a wide range of influence on the state's financial management.

The treasurer is also the head of several of the most important state financial organizations. The treasurer is chairman of the Indiana Bond Bank,

a state-controlled bank that provides financing to municipal government to allow for large infrastructure investments. The bank then sells the debts as secured bonds on the national market. This allows local governments to secure credit at low rate of interest. The treasurer is also the chairman of the Indiana Education Savings Authority which manages savings accounts for college educations. The treasurer chairs the Public Deposit Insurance Fund and the Board for Depositories that insure the deposits of municipal governments in the state, much as the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation insures private accounts, except without limiting the amount of the insurance.

In short, the Indiana state treasurer occupies the crossroads of money and power which may explain why so many people want a job that pays far below what a talented person might earn in the private sector.

Historically, the treasurer's job has not been a springboard to bigger and better political opportunities. Richard Mourdock was able to parlay the position to a U. S. Senate nomination, but that has been the exception and not the rule.

The battle lines in the treasurer's race have formed. Strong financial and legal interests from Marion County appear to be lining up behind Wayne Seybold, while Don Bates, Jr. appears to be using his impressive list

of statewide contacts, gleaned from his previous Senate and 6th District congressional runs, to put together a coalition of supporters similar to the one that nominated Attorney General Greg Zoeller over Jon Costas in 2008. Kelly Mitchell has been working the Lincoln Day circuit, as have Bates and Seybold, and will try and use her appeal as the only female candidate to her advantage. Her seemingly close ties to Richard Mourdock may work to her detriment at a convention with delegates still suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder after losing the Senate election to Joe Donnelly in 2012. Seybold has the endorsement of Richard Lugar, for whatever ill or good it will do him. Don Bates has the endorsements and support of a majority of the State Central Committee, this author included, and will seek to capitalize on a basic wariness of Indianapolis pushed candidates.

So for this political junkie, who longs for the good old days of popping corks, hoopla, merriment and smoke-filled rooms, I look forward to an exciting Republican State Convention in a great new venue at Fort Wayne. Let the Grand Old Party rock on! ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republicans.

GOP Convention, from page 1

a formal vote, with some suggesting the panel headed by Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann was split, which sources tell HPI could force the issue to the Resolutions Committee. It would then go to the delegates for an up or down floor vote coming shortly after the convention is gavelled into session at 10 a.m. Family advocates such as Curt Smith, Micah Clark and Jim Bopp Jr., have relentlessly pursued Platform and now Resolution Committee members to include a stance on the marriage issue.

It will come less than 18 hours after Republican National Chairman Reince Priebus addresses the opening session on Friday night, and a little more than a year after Priebus issued a starkly candid and brutal assessment of the party, after its stunning 2012 election in which it lost the White House and failed to take the U.S. Senate. This was partly due to the implosion of Indiana nominee Richard Mourdock and other Tea Party nominees over the past two cycles in Missouri, Nevada, Colorado and Delaware.



Republican National Chairman Reince Priebus will address Indiana delegates Friday night, just hours before a big marriage platform fight. (New York Times Photo)

On the marriage issue, the Growth and Opportunity Project said, "For the GOP to appeal to younger voters, we do not have to agree on every issue, but we do need to make sure young people do not see the party as totally intolerant of alternative points of view. Already, there is a generational difference within the conservative movement about issues involving the treatment and the rights of

gays, and for many younger voters, these issues are a gateway into whether the party is a place they want to be. If our party is not welcoming and inclusive, young people and increasingly other voters will continue to tune us out. The party should be proud of its conservative principles, but just because someone disagrees with us on 20 percent of the issues, that does not mean we cannot come together on the rest of the issues where we do agree."

After the report was released in March 2013, few Hoosier Republican leaders wanted to comment. U.S. Sen. Dan Coats and Gov. Mike Pence brushed aside questions from Howey Politics Indiana about the report. Pence would go on to back HJR-6, the constitutional marriage amendment. But the Indiana House and Senate removed the second sentence, and now

the earliest the amendment could appear on the ballot would be 2016, when Pence could face reelection unless he opts for the presidential race.

Twenty-three House Republicans voted against the second sentence. Three months later, State Reps. Rebecca Kubacki and Kathy Heuer were defeated in the Republican primary, in large part because of their vote on the marriage amendment, with both rejecting it outright. Family groups are threatening to "primary" other Republicans who have shifted on the issue.

The issue appeared to fuel large attendance at the Indiana Democratic Jefferson-Jackson dinner last weekend, as delegates and party leaders denounced the GOP's "divisive social issues."

The Growth and Opportunity Project set in motion what is likely to play out Saturday in Fort Wayne, which is that same-sex marriage is on course to become a source of significant division within the Republican Party, as social conservatives view the commitment to marriage as a sacrament between a man and a woman. Bopp pushed the platform committee to include a marriage platform plank which said: "We believe that strong families, based on marriage between a man and a woman, are the foundation of society." It also added language to recognize "diverse" family structures.

Bopp is no stranger to controversy. After pushing the RNC to adopt a litmus test for candidates, he lost his national committee post in 2012 to the more moderate John Hammond III.

One Republican Central Committee member told HPI on Monday, "Nobody is happy with that language." Social conservatives don't believe it is emphatic enough. Moderates fear it will cost the party independent and moderate voters. Indiana Democrats are praying for a donnybrook showdown and a defining issue for the November election.

Tossup treasurers race

The Indiana treasurers floor fight appears to be a tossup at this writing.

Operatives for Seybold believe he has commitments from about 700 delegates out of the 1,775. Supporters of Bates believe he is in the same range. There is a rough consensus that Mitchell has about 10%. How many delegates will show up ranges anywhere from 1,200 to 1,700, particularly with the convention in Fort Wayne.

Bates may have lost some Northern Indiana Tea Party support after Christy Stutzman, wife of U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, endorsed Mitchell.

The financier wing of the party, big county chairs and mayors are supporting Seybold. His floor team includes power attorneys Bob Grand, Brian Burdick, Dan Dumezich (the team which managed Todd Rokita's secretary of state floor fight in 2002); and he has the support of former party chairs Rex Early, Mike McDaniel, Murray Clark; big city mayors Greg Ballard of Indianapolis, Andy Cook of Westfield, Jim Brainard of Carmel, John Ditslear of Noblesville, Blair Milo of LaPorte, Lloyd Winnecke of Evansville, Duke Bennett of Terre Haute, Jon Costas of Valparaiso; and county chairs Kyle Walker of Marion, Pete Emigh of Hamilton, Mike O'Brien of Hendricks, and Steve Shine of Allen. And Seybold has support from Central Indiana legislators that include Sens. Pete Miller, Brent Waltz, Jim Merritt, Luke Kenley and Reps. Jerry Torr, Eric Turner, Greg Steuerwald; and from North Central Indiana legislators that include Reps. Mike Karickhoff, Kevin Mahan and Sen. Travis Holdman.

Bates has the endorsements of the CD chairs and vice chairs from the 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th CDs, and the 5th CD vice chair. His floor leader is Howard County Chairman Craig Dunn, and he has the support of legislators that include State Reps. Denny Zent, Tom Saunders, Randy Frye, Dick Hamm, Jim Lucas and State Sens. Scott Schneider, Greg Walker, Jim Smith, Allen Paul and Jim Buck.

So the breakdown is, regionally speaking, similar to the 2008 attorney general floor fight between Greg Zoeller, who was backed by many out-state social conservatives, and Valparaiso Mayor Costas, who had the backing then Gov. Mitch Daniels and from the Northwest Region as well as Indianapolis, the doughnut counties and the financiers. Zoeller won a 1,061-to-707 upset.

Asked who he thought had the advantage, State Sen. Jim Banks, who ran Zoeller's campaign, told HPI Monday, "I don't know ... It is really a bizarre race. I see strength in my counties for Bates as delegates are made up of many Tea Party types. I have been absolutely



Republican treasurer candidates (from left) Marion Mayor Wayne Seybold, Don Bates Jr., and Kelly Mitchell.

stunned, having managed convention race for 'Z' in 2008, of the lack of one-on-one contact with delegates. 'Z' was the master of that tactic and even sent his wife and (Attorney General) Steve Carter on the road to meet with those he couldn't get to. My wife is the only delegate in our house and she is still undecided. I hear from my friends they want to vote for 'candidate to be determined later.'

Banks, R-Columbia City, added, "I sense Bates and Seybold are probably neck and neck and Kelly isn't far behind with more delegates than usual waiting until the convention for someone to give them a good reason to vote for them making this a convention race where anything can happen."

The three candidates will address delegates Friday evening. Seybold was traveling the state, meeting delegates face to face in Evansville and the Jeffersonville/New Albany area on Monday, and will travel the state up until the convention.

Out-going Treasurer Richard Mourdock endorsed Mitchell late, and has had himself appointed as a delegate. Could that attract Tea Party support toward Mitchell and away from Bates? That's debatable since many Tea Party leaders were bitterly disappointed at how Mourdock self-destructed in the U.S. Senate race. But others believe he was shafted in 2012 by the Lugarites bitter about the primary loss. Mourdock's presence on the convention floor will add to what could be a spectacle and revive memories of the 2002 secretary of state floor fight when a Mourdock flier, produced by Jim Holden after the first ballot suggested that Delph had exited the race, blew up, setting up the win for Todd Rokita.

The challenge of the Grand/Burdick floor team for Seybold and the Dunn-led Bates team will be to get the delegates to show up, and then stay. In 2002, some 300 delegates left after the first ballot and with the race that would go to three ballots up in the air.

Bedeveling the candidates is what we call the "Randy Borrar Syndrome," where delegates will look a candidate in the eyes and commit. Borrar spent much of June 2010 personally visiting 3rd CD precinct officials following the resignation of U.S. Rep. Mark Souder and went into the caucus believing it was his race to lose. After the first ballot, he realized many precinct officials had defected and Stutzman won the caucus.

Since the 2002 secretary of state showdown among Mourdock, Rokita, Mike Delph and Dr. John McGoff, there are new technologies in place, with Facebook and Twitter now playing a role in this race. ❖

Republican Convention Agenda


Here is the agenda for the June 6-7 Indiana Republican Convention in Fort Wayne:

Friday June 6

Noon to 5 p.m.	Credential pickup
4 p.m.	Rising stars panel
5:30-7:30 p.m.	Speeches by RNC Chairman Reince Priebus and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, and candidates for treasurer, auditor and secretary of state
7:30-11:30 p.m.	Fun night at Parkview Field

Saturday, June 7

7:30-9:30 a.m.	Breakfast for delegates
8:00-9:30 a.m.	Breakfast candidates, state and local officials
9:30 a.m.	Doors open at Grand Wayne.
10 a.m.	Convention Convenes
8 p.m.	Kenny Loggins Concert at Embassy Theatre.



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Gregg provides the sizzle at Dem confab

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana Democrats gathered at the Indianapolis Convention Center to ratify their 2014 party platform and officially nominate their slate for state-wide offices up for election in November, but it was John Gregg who provided much of the sizzle.



This November's candidates aside, perhaps the biggest buzz at the convention was a potential candidacy for the governor's race in 2016. Almost half the delegates Saturday wore stickers that read "I Still Want" followed by a picture of a curled mustache, the unconventional campaign logo of 2012's mustachioed candidate for governor, John Gregg. Gregg lost by less than 3% to Gov. Michael Pence, a race not expected to be that close. Indeed, it is widely speculated that if the election had been delayed a week Gregg would have closed and squeaked out an upset.

The former speaker of the Indiana House worked tables at the party's Friday night Jefferson-Jackson dinner and various cocktail parties afterward. At the convention, Gregg spoke to all nine congressional caucuses and was seen meeting and greeting delegates throughout the halls. He was also not shy with media on hand.

Gregg was given an opportunity to address the full convention when he introduced the candidate for auditor. His remarks included elements of his 2012 stump speech: "I'm John Gregg, the guy with two first names." He also did not hesitate to attack the record of his former opponent. Walking to the podium with a suitcase prop, he said Democrats were already helping pack Pence's bags to leave after 2016.

"It seems the governor has been everywhere of late but Indiana," Gregg observed, alluding to speculation

Pence is entertaining a 2016 presidential run. It was a repeated attack at the convention: Pence has his eye more on primary states, Fox News, and national conservative events than being governor.

Perhaps the best sign that Gregg is considering a rematch with Gov. Pence came when he said was ready to hit the stump for legislative candidates this fall, saying, "I look forward to working with them through election day and beyond." He punctuated the last word with a conspicuous wink to the crowd which elicited an uproar of applause and cheers. Gregg's official campaign Twitter account was active during the convention and did not hesitate to retweet and favorite activity that encouraged him to run again.

Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott was at the Jefferson-Jackson dinner Friday evening, and told HPI that many were encouraging him to make a gubernatorial run in 2016. Two-term governor Evan Bayh, sitting on \$9.8 million in campaign funds and undecided about his future political plans, did not attend the dinner or convention.

The Democrats' 2014 platform supports full marriage equality and opposes any amendment to the state constitution to define marriage. Democratic legislative leaders Sen. Tim Lanane and Rep. Scott Pelath told the gathering this puts them in stark contrast with their op-



Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott (left) and 2012 gubernatorial nominee John Gregg embrace at the Jefferson-Jackson Dinner Friday night. The two appear to be on a collision course for the 2016 nomination. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

ponents, highlighting Republican efforts earlier this year to put the marriage question before voters in November. Many Democrats said the battle over HJR-3 rejuvenated Indiana Democrats, to the point where 1,100 turned out for Friday night's dinner.

Next weekend at their convention in Fort Wayne, Republican delegates might engage in a floor battle on whether to include language which defines marriage between one man and one woman. Republicans will also then nominate their candidate for state treasurer.

At the top of the Democrats' ticket will be Marion County Clerk Beth White running for secretary of state. Her opponent will be the Republican incumbent Connie Lawson, who was appointed by past Gov. Mitch Daniels when Charlie White was convicted of voter fraud. Beth White calls attention to her experience in running elections, 13 and counting, in the largest jurisdiction in the state and says she would apply that to easing voter access statewide.

During her acceptance speech White took multiple swipes at Lawson's administration and Indiana's voter laws, intimating Republican efforts to suppress, or at least discourage, election turnout. "We have some of the strictest voting laws in the country," White told HPI. "It is hard to vote in Indiana and because of that we have some of the lowest voter participation in the country." She is quick to admit, however, "I am not averse to the voter ID law." But she believes Indiana should broaden the official IDs it accepts at the polls and ease access to state-issued IDs at the BMV. "There has been no assistance for voters; voters are on their own," she asserted.

White also took issue with how Republicans have crafted voter registration requirements. "We have a new registration scheme here in Indiana where if you're assisting registration you have to give people your home address and people don't want to do that," she told HPI. "We have the longest time in the country between the close of registration and when voting actually occurs."

White said Lawson was instrumental in eliminating satellite voting, which was popular, and has recently mishandled the rollout of voter list maintenance efforts. Several weeks ago Lawson's office announced the state would begin scrutinizing voter lists and send postcards explaining the process to voters. "It was confusing," White said, "absolutely a botched rollout." She told HPI as Marion County clerk she was officially notified of the voter list purge a week after the postcards were sent. "I have gotten so many calls from so many people who are so confused about what's been going on. Again, it's failed leadership.

Voter list maintenance is important, but how about we do it in a manner that is helpful and transparent."

For state auditor the Democrats have tapped Mike Claytor, a former treasurer of the party and employee of the State Board of Accounts. He will face Republican incumbent Suzanne Crouch, appointed by Pence. Claytor is quick to mention he is the first CPA ever nominated for the financially concerned position. As Gregg introduced the nominee to the crowd, he played up his professional resume, billing him as 'Claytor the Calculator.'

During their speeches, Gregg and Claytor said the auditor's office has been a revolving door for political appointees. Following Tim Berry's resignation to become the Republican state chairman, the position was only briefly filled by Pence appointee Dwayne Sawyer who abruptly resigned, leading to Crouch's eventual appointment.

Claytor says the auditor should be a "watchdog" for the people's money. "The auditor's position has become very ministerial, they just process payments, there is no auditing function in the auditor's office," Claytor told HPI. "There is no attempt to find and correct errors which are now found by the State Board of Accounts maybe a year later." He said a more competent and proactive auditor would quickly find and correct issues like the nearly half a billion dollars found in 2012 during the Daniels Administration and then under Berry. Claytor told the delegates that any accountant who made such an error should be looking for a job, not promoted.

The suitcase prop used by Gregg on Saturday was actually borrowed from Claytor's campaign. Claytor is questioning whether the governor's out-of-state travel is in the service of the state's business or to advance his 2016 presidential prospects. "Do you agree with me," he asked during his nomination speech, "that we need a watchdog watching the governor to make sure he does not have free and unfettered access to the state's checkbook."

As for running for statewide office, Claytor told HPI, "I'm having a barrel of fun. We've been to 57 counties and are trying to get the rest of the way." Claytor has been proactive in his campaign, having announced he was seeking the office last year, has held several press conferences, and has a detailed website up and running for months.

This stands in stark contrast to treasurer candidate Mike Boland who rounds out the Democratic slate. Boland, a recent transplant to Indiana in order to be closer to grandchildren, is a former teacher, Illinois state representative, and candidate for that state's lieutenant governor. Both White and Claytor have been campaigning for months, whereas Boland's candidacy was announced the Friday before Memorial Day weekend.

Boland told HPI he was only contacted by State



John Gregg greets a delegate at Saturday's Indiana Democratic Convention, with half of the delegates wearing his new button. (HPI Photo by Matthew Butler)

Chairman John Zody three to four weeks ago about running; Boland had not even considered running for the position before he was approached. Undoubtedly behind in fundraising, he assured the delegates, "Nobody ever outworked Mike Boland in a campaign."

Both Boland and Claytor stressed, if elected, they could monitor the Republican governor and super majorities' control of budgets and spending. Both said they would bring balance to the three-member State Board of Finance which also includes Gov. Pence. The two hopefuls said Republican control of this body's oversight of agency appropriations allowed for the creation last year of the Center for Education and Career Innovation, which is widely alleged among Democrats as an attempt to circumvent Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz who heads the Department of Education.

Indianapolis City-Council President Maggie Lewis served as the convention chair and emceed the event. Just over 1,700 delegates were in attendance Saturday. She wanted Hoosier voters and Republicans to know, "Yes we are meeting. Yes we have a plan. Yes we will take control of the state of Indiana." The series of elected officials and candidates highlighted traditional Democratic issues such as raising the minimum wage, equal pay for women, funding public education, and fully implementing the ACA.

Democrats used the opportunity to make an 'I told you so' argument regarding Medicaid expansion and Gov. Pence's HIP 2.0 proposal. "After months of nay saying," Rep. Pelath said, "the governor found out Democrats were right." Sen. Lanane echoed this line of attack, saying Pence can label Medicaid expansion whatever he wants, but it proves both the ACA and Democrats were correct on the issue.

Unions were also mentioned frequently. Rep. Pelath told the delegates, "We are going to be the first state in the union to repeal right-to-work twice." Evidently that promise must be a long-term pledge.

The greatest applause and largest standing ovation of the entire event came early in the proceedings when U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly spoke. His main message was party unity and working together to elect as many Democrats as possible. U.S. Rep. André Carson was also warmly received. After both these two officials spoke, the ranks of delegates in attendance thinned slightly but noticeably before the statewide candidates were introduced. As for the other member of the delegation, U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky was neither seen nor really mentioned during the proceedings (or in the hallways).

Perhaps another notable feature was the prominence of J.D. Ford. He is challenging Sen. Mike Delph for the 29th Senate District in November and was working the convention workshops and hallways. He was the only General Assembly hopeful who spoke to the delegates. (He introduced Boland.) Ford took the opportunity to remind delegates (and the media) of Sen. Delph's Twitter episodes in which he called out specific reporters and constituents. Delph's stridency on HJR-3 was also used to good effect

with the crowd. Democrats definitely believe there is an opportunity and are investing in Ford's candidacy. ❖

Boland plunges back into Indiana politics

By MARGARET WILSON

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana nominee for state treasurer, Mike Boland, has quite the extensive resume. The two-page list his volunteers handed out at the Indiana Democratic Convention list line after line of achievements, prestigious positions, and awards.

After relocating to Indiana just two years ago after 16 years in the Illinois legislature and a run for lieutenant governor, he became more aware of Indiana issues and knew he had put an end to his new leisurely life and get back into politics.

Boland emphasized the State Board of Finance. In Indiana, only three members sit on that board, the governor, the state auditor, and the treasurer. The board has the



power to transfer money between state funds, and has supervision of all funds entering the state. He alluded to how the current Board of Finance played around with Supt. Glenda Ritz, taking away some of her power and funding, and creating the Center for Innovation and Career Education.

His second part to the question was that he wants to be "a very active state treasurer." He explained the role of link deposits; where the state gives banks money in return for lower interest rates for certain groups. He mentioned students, so that they may no longer be burdened with debt, and veterans, women, and other minorities. With lower interest rates, more would be able and willing to start up businesses, and more jobs could potentially be created.

Boland expressed a strong desire in promoting small rural communities within Indiana, and explained a creative way he had done that in the past in Illinois. A small community had strong ties to Dutch immigrants, and Boland helped earn funds to turn the town into a tourist location by promoting the heritage with a large Dutch windmill and a new hotel.

Will his association with Illinois politics hurt his chance to win over Hoosier voters? "If the powers in Illinois had listened to me when I ran for lieutenant governor, they wouldn't be in the mess they're in." He noted his personal quality of frugality has helped him in his personal life and career choices, "I paid off four houses on a teacher's salary, now you know how to handle money if you can do that." ❖

Dems on fumes feed off GOP social agenda

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – For a major state political party running on fumes, the “Big Dem Weekend” should put the Hoosier political establishment on notice that the super minority Democrats are ready to feed off what they call the “socially divisive Republican agenda.”

More than 1,100 Democrats, including a number of Republican teachers, packed the Indiana Convention Center for the annual Jefferson-Jackson dinner Friday night. So big was the crowd that the party had to move the dinner to bigger quarters on the second floor. Another 500 delegates showed up for the convention on Saturday when Beth White was nominated for secretary of state, Mike Claytor for state auditor and newcomer Mike Boland for state treasurer.

For a party which has been locked out of the governor’s office for three terms, and with only three Members of Congress, 31 in the Indiana House and 13 in the Indiana Senate, the party seemed to be revved up after the dramatic debate on the constitutional marriage amendment last winter in the Indiana General Assembly. Chairman John Zody described Indiana Democrats as “focused but realistic about our goals.”

Those goals would be making inroads in the Indiana House and Senate, Joe Bock’s challenge to U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski in the 2nd CD, and picking up another Statehouse constitutional office, where many party regulars expect Beth White to make a vigorous challenge to appointed Republican incumbent Connie Lawson.

In the midst of the turnout were the two emerging 2016 gubernatorial candidates, 2012 nominee John Gregg and Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott, who circulated in the Jefferson-Jackson dinner Friday night. The most conspicuous no-show was former two-term governor and U.S. senator Evan Bayh. One party operative observed that Bayh’s name tended to surface “at the end of a joke.”

Many Democrats, including McDermott, were bitterly disappointed when Bayh bolted the 2010 ticket with a bombshell announcement just days before the filing deadline, setting off a Chinese fire drill that had candidates jumping into other races and led to the loss of the 8th CD

and a handful of Southwestern Indiana House and Senate seats. It fueled the Republicans’ 60-seat majority after the 2010 elections. The buzz from a number of Democrats about Bayh’s \$9.8 million campaign war chest is that he is keeping it largely under lock until one of his 18-year-old twin sons decides to return to the state to forge a third Bayh generation dynasty, which is at least seven years in the offing.

Democrats like 8th CD Chairman Tony Long believe the party has a chance to win two Evansville area House seats held by State Reps. Holli Sullivan and Lloyd Arnold. Sources tell HPI that in districts where a dozen educators are running in House and Senate races, both Supt. Glenda Ritz and U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly ran strong in 2012. Democrats also believe they have a shot at two Senate seats in southeastern Indiana held by Sens. Jim Smith and Ron Grooms.

“How do you eat an elephant?” Tony Goblen, who is preparing to challenge State Rep. Wendy McNamara, asked the Evansville Courier & Press. “One bite at a time. We’re going to take back the House one seat at a time. It’s going to be tough, but what we’re going to do is work hard. We’re never going to be able to come up with the money the Republicans have; they can outspend us, but they can’t outwork us.”

House Minority Leader Scott Pelath, writing in the NWI Times, explained, “The Tea Party agenda is proving problematic for not only Democrats, but also many of the reasonable, moderate conservative voters in our great



The Democratic 2014 ticket includes (from right) Mike Claytor for auditor, Beth White for secretary of state and Mike Boland for treasurer. (Indiana Democratic Party Photo)

state. Even two Chambers of Commerce and Indiana employers led by Cummins Inc. and Eli Lilly & Co., entities long aligned with Republican policies, campaigned against the Tea Party-led constitutional amendment that would ban same-sex marriage, calling such a policy ‘bad for business.’ The civil war playing out in today’s Republican Party – one that pits traditional right-wing views of mainstream Republicans against those of Tea Party extremists

– presents an opportunity for Indiana’s Democrats to show ourselves as the party that is in touch with working families and values hard work. Capturing victory in November means ending the extremist crusade on social issues, the attacks on public education and the continued assault on organized labor.”

Democrats point to the Republican primary losses of State Reps. Rebecca Kubacki and Kathy Heuer, both moderates representing some of the most evangelical districts in the state, as evidence that while recent polls in Indiana and nationally show voters trending away from the constitutional marriage amendment and marijuana prohibition, the evangelical wing of the GOP is doubling down on those issues. Democrats will be watching with great interest a Republican Party platform fight later this week on whether to take a stance on the marriage amendment.

What Indiana Democrats need is a unifying voice (or two) to stump for its House and Senate candidates this fall and exploit the shift in public opinion away from Republicans who want to continue the fight on issues like marriage. Then-U.S. Rep. Mike Pence campaigned for more than a dozen Republican legislative candidates in 2010 as a prelude to his gubernatorial campaign, to great effect.

That could be a role for Gregg and McDermott. Gregg stumped the 9th CD caucus meetings on Saturday morning and about half of the convention delegates sported buttons with Gregg’s campaign logo mustache under the words “I still want.”

Pelath, D-Michigan City, told the delegates, “Let us not dwell on what’s wrong with Republicans, which would be too tedious. We can be the party that solves real problems today.” He said that the middle class is willing to follow the Democrats, instead of Republicans who have resisted the ACA and a minimum wage increase and focused on cutting corporate taxes at the expense of the middle class. Pelath also said the along with 23 House Republicans, Indiana Democrats prevented the constitutional marriage amendment from appearing on the 2014 ballot. “We did that with 31 in the House and 13 in the Senate,” Pelath said. “Imagine what we could do with more.”

While conventional wisdom suggests that the GOP will win big in President Obama’s second mid-term election and with the unpopularity of the Affordable Care Act here, there are indicators that there will be openings for Hoosier Democrats.

Nationally, Republicans are moving away from calls

of repealing the ACA, while in Indiana, those signing up for the program exceeded virtually all expectations. This was followed by Gov. Mike Pence’s decision to expand Medicaid through the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0, which would extend coverage to up to 600,000 Hoosiers. “To our governor, I say, better late than never,” said Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane.

Secondly, there has been much turmoil with Republican Statehouse officeholders and their campaigns. Republican Supt. Tony Bennett was upset by Glenda Ritz in 2012 in a backlash to the education reforms he forged with Gov. Mitch Daniels. Ritz has been appearing at sold out J-J dinners around the state all year and is very popular, so there is evidence the coalition that helped her upset Bennett is still in place. She has had a conversation with Gregg.

Lawson was appointed to her position by Gov. Daniels after Secretary of State Charlie White was forced to resign following a felony conviction. Gov. Pence’s appointment of Dwayne Sawyer as auditor backfired last year when Sawyer resigned after only a few months in office. Treasurer Richard Mourdock lost the 2012 U.S. Senate race

after his comments on rape and abortion imploded his campaign.

And in recent cycles, Secretary of State Todd Rokita and Attorney General Greg Zoeller had closer-than-expected races. The days when tickets led by a Lugar, Bowen, Orr or Daniels pulling the GOP statewide with 250,000 to 400,000 vote pluralities are waning despite Indiana’s red state reputation. In 2008, while Gov. Daniels’ reelection was on its way to a 481,422 plurality over Democrat Jill Long Thompson, Supt. Tony Bennett barely defeated little-known Democrat Richard Wood by 51,000 votes and Zoeller nipped Democrat Linda Pence by just 38,863 votes. In 2006 during a backlash against President Bush and the Iraq War, Mourdock defeated Michael Griffin by 61,921 votes, Auditor (and now Republican Chairman) Tim Berry defeated Democrat Judy Anderson by just 36,064 votes and Rokita defeated Joe Pearson by 89,455 votes.

Another prevailing thought pattern from Indiana Democrats is the belief by many that Pence will opt for the presidential race rather than seek reelection.

So Indiana Democrats have goals and openings. Over the next six months, it will come down to whether the party can find a unifying voice and presence, and the campaign execution and funding of their candidates. ❖



Indiana Democratic Chairman John Zody and Indianapolis Council President Maggie Lewis listen to U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly on Saturday. Zody announced he and his wife are expecting a baby this fall. (HPI Photo by Matthew Butler)

Key late decisions helped Bassler win

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – Eric Bassler quickly shot down any notion that “negative advertising” had much to do with his SD39 Republican primary victory over State Sen. John Waterman.

“If negative campaigning worked, Waterman would have won,” the Washington city councilman said. “Ultimately what won was we hoped to get a good turnout in Daviess County. We needed 4,000 voters to show up and we needed to win 75%. We ended with 4,800 voters. That’s a tough number to overcome in those other counties.”

Bassler defeated Waterman 3,649 to 1,189 in Daviess County, and won SD39 by a little more than 300 votes, 6,817 to 6,458.

And the Bassler campaign, which commenced about a year ago, needed a late gut check after independent polling revealed the campaign’s early direct mail didn’t work.

It was information the candidate and campaign manager Grant Swartzentruber kept from the dozens of volunteers. Additionally, the campaign made a decision at 9 a.m. on Election Day to contact Daviess County Republicans who hadn’t shown up to vote yet.

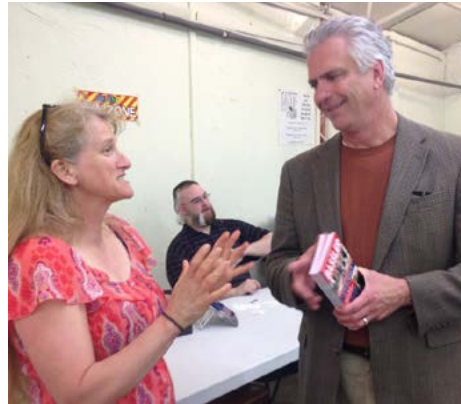
“We had some poll numbers in January that showed our opponent was pretty well known, but his support was thin,” Bassler told Howey Politics Indiana. “Our sense was, if we continued to run a good, strong campaign, we’d have a chance to overcome his name ID.”

But by mid-April, the campaign got independent polling data that made the candidate and campaign reassess everything. “Truth be told, the numbers did not look good,” Bassler said.

Swartzentruber texted Bassler and his wife, Julie, for a clandestine summit. The campaign manager told the candidate that the six to eight campaign mailers produced by Cam Savage and Limestone Strategies had not worked. “They didn’t move the numbers,” Swartzentruber said.

“I tried not to let the news of the poll take wind out of my sails,” Bassler said. “We made a difficult decision not to share those numbers with other members of the campaign. We didn’t want to discourage them. I felt like we had to do something different, so we stopped the mail campaign and we spent a lot of money on TV.”

The Terre Haute media market had 88% coverage in SD39. So Bassler and Savage worked to raise late money. The campaign also ran some radio spots to counter an ISTA ad. Swartzentruber said that campaign bought 1,000 gross rating points in the final week of the campaign.



Eric Bassler talks with a supporter during his upset primary win over State Sen. John Waterman in May. (Bassler Facebook Photo)

That decision as well as up to 10,000 phone calls the campaign made in the final 10 days saved the campaign. Bassler believes what put it over the top was the 9 a.m. Election Day decision to assign 75 volunteers to all of the Daviess County polling sites. By 10 a.m., the campaign had a list of people who had not voted. “That’s when the poll team started calling everyone who had not voted,” Bassler said. “We did the same thing at 2 p.m. By 5 that evening, literally, every registered Republicans in Daviess County got called.”

“In last two weeks, we started two final projects,” Bassler continued. “It might have been what put us over the top.”

In addition to Daviess, Bassler edged Waterman in Knox County 485-459, while Waterman won big in Greene County, 1,840 to 1,208; his home county of Sullivan 939 to 244, Clay County by 630 to 283, and a 972 to 530 margin in Owen County. An intense Democratic sheriff primary in Sullivan County kept some Waterman supporters from crossing over to vote in the GOP primary. The campaign spent close to \$190,000, similar to what the Waterman campaign spent, with \$50,000 coming from the Senate Majority Campaign Committee.

Independent enters HD22

The race for the HD22 seat will likely be a three-way contest come November (StaceyPage.com). Warsaw resident Michael L. Stinfer, 34, a registered Republican, has decided to run as an Independent candidate on the ballot. Stinfer, a self-described “loving and fearing man of God,” is also a single father, a former United States Marine and a qualified Army Airborne Ranger. Stinfer stated, “I’m running because I believe our community



deserves a true conservative; one who has been on the front lines for freedom and our community, to uphold the Constitution. I think we, the people, are ready for positivity and not the usual gridlock that is in Washington, which has now made its way here.” Stinfer needs approximately 340 signatures on a petition. “I have over 200 signatures now,” he said. Stinfer has requested debates between Republican Curt Nisly and Democratic David Kolbe. ❖

The massacre after Newtown and before Santa Barbara . . .

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – The massacre after Newtown, and the one before Santa Barbara, perpetrated at the Navy Yard last September, prompted me to write this:

“The Navy Yard shootings that left 13 dead just leaves me . . . uncomfortably numb. It appears that at this point in American history, this is a fact of life and some-



thing we have to live with or die by. The shadowy, sulking loner emerges into the public space, blasting away at the innocents who happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Mayors and chiefs tabulate the victims and the perps, open the triage and call out SWAT. The surgeons do pressers. The families mourn and express dismay. The mugshot reveals that crazed look. Gabrielle renews her outrage. Newtown and Colombine

are invoked. We observe the moment of silence at the stadium. The NRA hunkers down. Congress is paralyzed to provide any response or adjustment. It seems as if we’re transfixed into rote response and in doing so, a slice of the American dream dies.”

The massacre at the University of California at Santa Barbara combined an array of lethal weaponry, from guns, to knives, to an automobile. And it stoked familiar debates.

Chris Cillizza, writing on his Washington Post blog, reacted to the outrage of Richard Martinez, who lost his only son: “It almost certainly won’t be that galvanizing moment. In the same way that the attempted assassination of then-Arizona Rep. Gabrielle Giffords wasn’t. In the same way the deaths of 20 children in Newtown, Connecticut, wasn’t. (In fact, since Newtown, more states have loosened gun laws than have tightened them.) For those who oppose tighter gun laws, it is an absolute passion and oftentimes the single most important issue on which they make decisions about which candidates to support.”

For the sake of stoking an earnest debate, another columnist, Cliff Schecter of the Daily Beast, began poking holes in some of the most oft-repeated assumptions. Here are some of his points:

Cars: Compared to guns, cars are robustly regulated. There’s a strong registration regimen. More and

more safety features have been added, including airbags and seat belts. There’s a long-standing war against drunk driving that’s included checkpoints, long sentences for offenders, and holding bartenders accountable who serve someone who’s clearly wasted. There’s registration, licensing and tests required to prove you know how to drive an automobile. This is why 2015 is projected to be the first year where gun deaths surpass traffic fatalities.

Knives: The clearest comparison between gun violence and knife violence is provided by looking at the attack that occurred at a Chinese school in Henen Province the very same day as the Newtown Massacre. Twenty-three students were attacked in Henen and none died, as opposed to 20 murdered at Sandy Hook Elementary. Or how about the 22 injured in a knife attack at a school in Pittsburgh this past April? Nobody died there, either.

State gun laws: Hawaii, which is separated from every other state by quite a bit of ocean, boasts the lowest gun ownership rate and among the strongest gun laws in our country, has the lowest gun violence rate, according to the Law Center To Prevent Gun Violence. In Arizona, with those ridiculously nonexistent gun laws, you’re five times more likely to die from a gun than in Hawaii. This pattern extends throughout the country, from lax regulation states like Mississippi and Alaska (18.3 and 17.6 gun deaths, per 100,000 people, respectively) to strong regulation states like Rhode Island and Massachusetts (3.5 and 3.6 gun deaths per 100,000, respectively). Indiana ranks 21st with 11.7 per 100,000, ahead of Texas (11), Michigan (10.9), Illinois (9.7) and Ohio (9.3). Kentucky is at 13.1.



Chicago’s gun laws: And for those of you about to point out that cities like Chicago have both strict gun laws and horrifying gun violence, well, you might want to do some reading about how many of those guns came from Indiana, which has much less strict gun laws.

Nation to nation: If lax gun laws and more guns overall made people safer, the United States would be the safest place in the world. Instead, that designation goes to countries like Japan and England. Australia was heading down the same path as the U.S. until 1996 when they had their own Newtown, known as the Port Arthur Massacre.

They passed not weak-tea gun laws, but a comprehensive package (passed by their Conservative Party). The results have been stunning, as not only has there not been a mass shooting since then (there were 11 in the 10 years before they passed this legislation), but their suicides and gun-related deaths have gone way down too.

U.S. Constitution: (It) promises us that our government will protect "the general Welfare" and "domestic tranquility." I'd argue that with weekly mass shootings occurring, Congress is directly disobeying the Constitution to give special consideration to an interest group that funds its members' campaigns.

OK, enough of Cliff Schecter.

As this is being posted, Indianapolis experienced another day of carnage with three people shot to death and an IMPD officer wounded in a gun battle. And State Rep. Jim Lucas, R-Seymour, was complaining on his Facebook page about Martinez, citing "vile exploitation that those of us that believe in our Natural and Constitutional Right to defend ourselves MUST stand up against."

Does anything change? Only when enough citizens rise up and counter the NRA and start picking off elected officials who are content with the status quo. ❖

Targeted economic development

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Where, oh where, should we put our economic development resources? This question often goes unasked by economic development agencies. There are those who are philosophically opposed to answering that question. Others believe the answers are so obvious, it is not necessary to give voice to the issue.



We have free-market advocates who believe firms should locate wherever they wish and economic development is best when not guided by government or private local interests. Alternatively, there are planners who believe that development should be guided to meet a community's needs.

States and localities give tax breaks to specific businesses to encourage investments. This is basic real estate promotion similar to an apartment complex offering "free" rent for two months. Building a highway or installing sewers is less direct because many can benefit from those advances, but it remains property development.

Most jurisdictions are hesitant to be too directive. Many attempts at guiding where firms should locate have been unsuccessful; think urban enterprise zones. Nonetheless, federal and state funds still pour out of Washington and Indianapolis designated for urban or rural purposes.

Where should the subsidies go? The U.S. Bureau of the Census reports only 18 Indiana counties in 2012 had median household incomes higher than the national average. Five of the top six are adjacent to Marion County

(Indianapolis). Two others (Warrick and Posey) are next door to Vanderburgh County (Evansville). Porter County is part of the Chicago metroplex. Dearborn County cuddles up to Cincinnati.

Note: Other than Bartholomew County (Columbus), none of the top 18 counties is the center of a metropolitan area. This pattern is a result of reinforcing suburbanization with state and federal subsidies. Indiana widens I-69 to help Marion County workers live in Hamilton County. In Northwest Indiana, I-94 is widened to let wealthy workers living in Porter County have better access to high paying jobs further west in Lake County and the rest of Chicagoland.

Why don't homeowners in suburban counties pay for the transportation they use? Why don't central county businesses pay for the infrastructure costs generated by their commuting workers? The answers are simple. It would not be popular; it would be branded as contrary to the popular will, the "natural" desire for big houses on big lawns, the agrarian DNA of our farming ancestors.

Yet, would it make sense to underwrite economic development in poor counties? Apparently, left alone, high-paying businesses do not choose to locate in the five counties with the lowest median household income: Wayne, Delaware, Orange, Blackford and Grant counties. Nor are those counties close enough to high-paying jobs for them to achieve the elite status of suburbs.

Of course, Wayne (Richmond), Delaware (Muncie) and Grant (Marion) were once strong centers of manufacturing. Today they have long-term problems with underemployment of people and properties. Are there state programs to revitalize these once prosperous counties? Or will we continue to endorse "rural" programs and the relentless suburbanization of our state? ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.

There is still hope for Congress

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – From the perspective of decades, there is good reason to believe that Congress can and will do better.

It's depressing to read poll after poll highlighting Americans' utter disdain for Congress. But it's my encounters with ordinary citizens at public meetings or in casual conversation that really bring me up short. In angry diatribes or in resigned comments, people make clear their dwindling confidence in both politicians and the institution itself.



With all Congress's imperfections – its partisanship, brinksmanship, and exasperating inability to legislate – it's not hard to understand this loss of faith. Yet as people vent their frustration, I hear something else as well. It is a search for hope. They ask, almost desperately sometimes, about grounds for renewed hope

in our system. Here's why I'm confident that we can do better.

Let's start with a point that should be obvious, but that people rarely notice: Our expectations are too high. In part, this is our elected officials' fault; they over-promise and under-perform. They set the bar high, promising strong leadership, a firm hand on the legislative tiller, and great policy accomplishments, then usually fail to clear it.

Which should come as no surprise. Congress is not built for efficiency or speediness. On almost every issue, progress comes in increments. The future of the American health care system may appear to hang on the debate raging these days about the Affordable Care Act, but this is just the latest installment of a long-running fight that began even before the creation of Medicare and Medicaid almost five decades ago.

Congress deals with complex issues over many years and, sometimes, dozens of pieces of legislation. Focusing on any one moment in our legislative history is to miss the slow but undeniable advance of progress on Capitol Hill.

I also tend to be more patient with congressional leaders than many people who share their frustrations with me. Our political leaders confront a terribly difficult political environment. The country is both deeply and evenly divided along partisan and ideological lines. Getting 218 votes in the House and 60 votes in the Senate can be a punishing task. It takes skill, competence, and a great deal of passion to make progress in this kind of environment, especially when those in Congress who are dedicated to

finding a way forward have to face colleagues who do not appear to want the system to work.

This brings me to a third point. If 50 years of watching Congress closely have taught me anything, it's to wait until the end of a congressional session to see what members actually accomplish. Despite all the bickering, roadblocks, delays, and grandstanding, Congress can often pass significant legislation by the end of a session, even if it can't do everything we expect of it.

And members of Congress are good politicians. Most try hard to understand what the people want, and try to bring about meaningful change, at least within their ideological framework. It may take a while, but Congress in the end responds to public sentiment. That is why it will pass the government's basic funding bills this year, having learned from the public outrage over last year's government shutdown.

Finally, Congress has proven over its long history that even in the most difficult circumstances it can be astoundingly productive. The very first Congress, meeting at a time of enormous political uncertainty and financial trouble, was able to firm up the new government's structure and set the course for the nation's future.

At one of the darkest times in our recent history, during the height of the Watergate scandal, when tensions between Congress and the White House and between Democrats and Republicans were no less pointed than they are now, Congress and President Nixon were still able to collaborate on the Federal Aid Highway Act, the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Authorization, the Endangered Species Act, the Legal Services Corporation Act, an overhaul of the farm subsidy program, and an increase in the minimum wage. Congress often has risen above periods of great contention. It possesses a resilience that is obvious from the perspective of decades. Building on that search for hope in our system, and on the long historical record, Americans have good reason to believe that Congress can and will do better. ❖

Lee Hamilton is director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University.

Obama defends Bergdahl deal

WASHINGTON – President Obama dismissed concerns over the controversial prisoner swap to return U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl after nearly five years in Taliban captivity, amid a new report suggesting the lone prisoner of war from the Afghan conflict deserted his post (The Hill). "Regardless of the circumstances, we still get an American soldier back if he's held in captivity," Obama said. "Period. Full stop." But, the president said, the U.S. doesn't "condition" its "sacred" obligation to not "leave our men or women in uniform behind." ❖

Nunn-Lugar and Ukraine nukes

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Imagine the heightened fear of global disaster if Ukraine, torn by disorder and violence, had nuclear weapons. Well, once it did. In fact, two decades ago, Ukraine had the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world, right behind the United States and Russia.



One of the greatest successes of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program was the negotiated dismantling of Ukraine's nuclear weaponry, all of it. That program, created back when bipartisanship wasn't yet looked upon in Washington as a dirty word, was named after the senators who authored it, Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat, and Richard G. Lugar, an Indiana

Republican.

Nunn-Lugar efforts began as collapse of the Soviet Union, with hard times for Russia and its former satellites, brought the threat of unsecured nuclear weapons, loose nukes that could be stolen or sold. Successful Nunn-Lugar initiatives also got rid of nuclear arsenals in Belarus and Kazakhstan, the fourth and eighth ranking nuclear weapons powers at the end of the Cold War.

Think about that: Ridding the world of those horrible weapons in Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan, the third, fourth and eighth nuclear weapons powers, respectively.

Nunn-Lugar provided funding to eliminate the nuclear might in those countries and to help Russia, the nuclear giant then near economic collapse, to dismantle larger stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and missiles that had been nuclear armed and aimed at us.

Think about that: Convincing Russia to destroy or dismantle thousands of nuclear warheads and missiles and hundreds of bombers and nuclear submarines before an inevitable strongman like Putin would arise to seek restoration of military might and ability to bully.

Nunn-Lugar, through agreement of the United States, Russia and Ukraine, eliminated all 1,240 of

Ukraine's deployed strategic nuclear warheads.

Think about that: Eliminating concern of where nuclear weapons could wind up now amid civil chaos and whether some side would use weapons of mass destruction or sell a few to terrorists to help finance its cause.

As Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman in 2005, Lugar promoted bipartisanship again, inviting a freshman senator named Barack Obama along on a trip to Ukraine to promote also reduction of an uncontrolled stockpile of conventional weapons, including shoulder missile-launchers so often sought by terrorists. With armories looted in present strife, that was significant.

Thinking now of the value of Nunn-Lugar, it seems ridiculous that some conservatives in the Senate didn't value it at all and repeatedly opposed funding. After Nunn retired from the Senate, it was up to Lugar to lead the fight to preserve the appropriations.

Some of the opposition was to the spending, although it was a minuscule percentage of the budget and an investment bringing huge dividends. Huge dividends? How else would you describe securing those nuclear, chemical and biological weapons in a Soviet Union that was broken and unstable, and then destroying or dismantling them?

Some of the opposition was to providing any funds to Russia, still looked upon as an Evil Empire even after it was an empire no more. Russian officials were very concerned about loose nukes and unsecured poisons at a time when they couldn't even pay their military. So they were willing to cooperate, to let Nunn-Lugar dismantle some of those horrible things the old empire had flaunted.

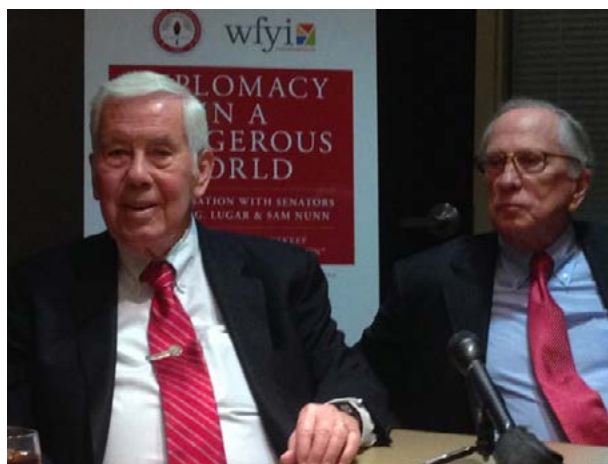
Lugar urged moving quickly while Russia and its

former satellite nations were welcoming U.S. expertise and financing to get rid of those weapons. After all, he warned, there might not always be Russian leaders so agreeable. Much was done, bringing those huge dividends. Even more could have been done back when it was possible.

With Putin, a strongman in a stronger, energy-producing Russia, the window of cooperation was slammed shut.

Some Nunn-Lugar critics now actually argue that Putin wouldn't have successfully seized Crimea if Ukraine still

had all of its nuclear weapons. Ukraine could respond with some nukes? And Putin could respond in kind? Imagine the heightened fear of global disaster. ❖



Former Sens. Dick Lugar and Sam Nunn at the University of Indianapolis last February. (HPI Photo by Brian A.

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

Doug Ross, NWI Times: When Indiana Gov. Mike Pence announced he didn't plan to spend the money to meet federal standards for prisons, I was surprised. Lake County is spending millions to get out from under the federal consent decree requiring improvements at the Lake County Jail. But what Pence and the federal government are talking about isn't the same as what got Lake County into trouble with the U.S. Justice Department. It's worse. Pence is balking at spending money on additional prison guards and other measures to protect prisoners from rape and sexual assault. Including juveniles. State Rep. Christina Hale, D-Indianapolis, is appalled. Hale, a Northwest Indiana native, has been focused on trying to reduce the incidence of rape and sexual assaults for Hoosiers in general, and she got funding approved for a study this year. The cost of providing the extra security at adult prison facilities to comply with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act standards is high. But to not spend the necessary money to protect juveniles is inexcusable. "Providing for the safety of our children is certainly warranted in this case," Hale told me Tuesday. "That's the last thing our young people in trouble need is to be exposed to these kind of dangers," she said. Let's put that in perspective. A Bureau of Justice Statistics report last June said 10.4 percent of juveniles in Indiana's detention facilities were the victim of sexual assault just within the previous year. Those are only the reported assaults, mind you. Believe it or not, that's an improvement. A similar report in 2010 said 36.2 percent of youths at the Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facility reported being the victims of sexual assault — the highest rate in the nation..

Matt Tully, Indianapolis Star: A man in California, still raw from losing his son to a madman's bullets, stood up and railed in recent days against the "idiots in government" who have ignored the nation's plague of gun violence while bowing to the gun industry and the special-interest organizations they help fund. The man, Richard Martinez, broke down as he looked into a TV camera, his anger deep and directed at the apathy that has followed years of shootings on college campuses, in so many neighborhoods, and even at an elementary school. The video of his interviews and speeches is powerful and, as a parent, hard to watch. Recorded just days after six college students died in a spree of violence near Santa Barbara, Martinez pleaded for action so that the death of his only son might at least "mean something." "People need to understand that real people died here," he told CNN. In Mr. Martinez, some of us see a hero. State Rep. Jim Lucas, R-Seymour, one of the state's most vocal defenders of gun rights and of the National Rifle Association, sees something else. Above a picture of Martinez and a link to a story about his words, Rep. Lucas complained on his Facebook page that it was an example of the "vile exploitation that

those of us that believe in our Natural and Constitutional Right to defend ourselves MUST stand up against." Lucas insisted later that he wasn't calling Martinez vile and that his complaint was with the media types who he believes are exploiting the father. He seems to have missed the fact that Martinez is a grown man who was clearly eager to say what needed to be said. He seems unaware that like many grieving parents before him, Martinez willingly spoke out against the gun culture that has ended so many young lives. I called Lucas and asked why he thought it was wrong for a father to speak out against the type of violence that had killed his son. Lucas said he felt nothing but sympathy for Martinez and other parents like him, even though his Facebook page was filled with criticism of gun control advocates and few words of sympathy for victims. He said he is just frustrated with gun-control advocates and the debate that follows every mass shooting. "The media bears as much as responsibility as anybody," Lucas said. Why, I asked? "Because they are talking about 'The Gunman,'" Lucas said. "He murdered people with a knife. He used his car to kill people, so why aren't they



calling him 'The Car-man'? They always go to the gun." Lucas and I have talked at length about our deep disagreements when it comes to gun policy. I believe stronger background checks would help, as would an all-out crack-down on the illegal possession of guns and dealers who sell a disproportionate number of the guns used in criminal acts. I believe we should look at the horrific violence that grips many cities, such as Indianapolis, and consider it a crisis. I don't believe that longer waiting periods, restrictions on assault weapons or limits on the number of weapons a person can buy in a month or year infringe on constitutional rights. Rep. Lucas disagrees. "People are asking, 'Oh my God, what can we do?'" he said, arguing that no matter what laws are passed there will be large numbers of deaths caused by everything from medical errors to car accidents to gunshots. "Putting everything in perspective and knowing that, one, we are all going to die, it seems like we are setting zero to be the perfect goal, and that will just never be reached."

Chris Cillizza, Washington Post: Yes, Mitch McConnell is in a tough race this fall against Alison Lundergan Grimes. But he is going to win. That's the conventional wisdom in Washington. However, there's plenty of reason to think that it's wrong — or, at the very least, that it overstates the level of confidence that people should have in McConnell's chances of coming back to Washington in 2015. "I think the odds are slightly better than 50/50, but not much better," acknowledged one Republican operative closely connected with the McConnell world, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the race candidly. "The election is about us, and with 30 years of record and the last [10] in leadership, that is tough." ❖

Indiana has 3 years for EPA plan

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana's start on converting coal plants to natural gas and taking other aging facilities off line could help the overwhelmingly coal-dependent state meet a new federal goal of reducing its carbon emissions by 2030. But state officials are keeping a wary eye on how the new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency targets will affect manufacturing in the highly industrial state (Associated Press). The EPA on Monday gave Indiana three years to come up with a plan to cut carbon emissions by 20 percent over the next 16 years as part of a sweeping national initiative to curb pollutants blamed for global warming. Indiana's target presents a challenge in a state, sitting atop a major vein of coal, where more than 80 percent of power is produced by coal. But the EPA gave Indiana credit for already taking steps to reduce carbon emissions, such as encouraging utilities to set renewable energy standards, and environmental activists say they believe the goal can be accomplished.

"I think that meeting EPA's goals is doable for Indiana, and it's a challenge we really have to take on," said Jodi Perras, Indiana's representative for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign. Doug Gotham of the State Utility Forecasting Group, a state-funded, Purdue University research group, said moves that utilities are already making, like replacing aging coal-fired plants with ones that burn cleaner natural gas, will help Indiana move in the right direction to meet the 2030 goals. Perras, however, said the changes have the potential to generate "green" jobs like manufacturing energy-efficient insulation, producing and installing wind turbines and solar panels, and other industries. Tim Rushenberg, vice president for governmental affairs and tax policy for



the Indiana Manufacturers Association, agreed that utilities already are making the switch away from coal in places like Indianapolis.

Pence calls regs 'devastating'

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Mike Pence said a proposed EPA clean energy rule will be "devastating" to Indiana's economies, Hoosier families and jobs (Associated Press). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plan calls for states to reduce carbon emissions from existing power plants by 30 percent from 2005 levels by 2030. Pence called the plan an "anti-coal agenda" and pledged to fight it. "They will cost us in higher electricity rates, in lost jobs, and in

lost business growth due to a lack of affordable, reliable electricity," he said. "Indiana will oppose these regulations using every means available." EPA officials say the rule will "protect public health, move the United States toward a cleaner environment and fight climate change while supplying Americans with reliable and affordable power." "By leveraging cleaner energy sources and cutting energy waste, this plan will clean the air we breathe while helping slow climate change so we can leave a safe and healthy future for our kids," EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said in a statement.

Donnelly reviewing EPA regulations

SOUTH BEND - The three Republicans who represent the Michiana area in Congress issued statements similar to the one Pence wrote (South Bend Tribune). U.S. Sen. Dan Coats and U.S. Reps. Fred Upton, R-St. Joseph, and Jackie Walorski, R-Jimtown, all predicted the carbon limits would raise energy prices, squeeze middle-class family budgets and lead manu-

facturers to shift production overseas. U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly, a Democrat from Granger, said he's still reviewing the proposal.

Bock opposes EPA regulations

SOUTH BEND - 2nd CD Democrat nominee Joe Bock is opposing the new EPA regulations. "I agree that we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," Bock said this morning. "I am concerned, however, that the recent actions taken by the EPA will result in increased utility bills for Hoosiers, some of whom do not have the extra money to pay for them. This is another example of Washington's insensitivity to the challenges facing the middle class. We need to approach climate change as a business opportunity for the United States. We are the world leaders in research and development. We should be the epicenter of developing and manufacturing energy-saving technologies, and should export energy-saving products to the rest of the world. We do not want other countries to pass us by in this job-creating opportunity because climate change deniers like Congresswoman Jackie Walorski create doubt in the minds of the American people by putting political games ahead of solid science."

Only 13% turnout in May primary

INDIANAPOLIS - Only 13 percent of registered Indiana voters went to the polls for May's primary election, which is the lowest number in more than two decades. About 617,000 registered voters cast a ballot this year. That is significantly lower than the 861,000 Hoosiers that voted in 2002. It is also more than 100,000 fewer voters than the lowest turnout in the last 20 years and 35 percent less than the average turnout over the last two decades.