



Bucshon, Brown health conclusions

Republican doctors want changes to med schools, eye cig tax hike; seeking ACA, HIP ‘certainty’

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – Last April House Ways and Means Chairman Tim Brown and U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon launched an 11-stop statewide health care tour. Since both are physicians, an ER doctor and heart surgeon, respectively, it was a unique set of circumstances in which so much health care expertise was in high office for the state. At the beginning of that tour they sat down with Howey Politics Indiana for an exclusive interview. We discussed a wide range of subjects but focused mainly on what was driving health care cost inflation and how the state should expand its Medicaid program under the ACA.



U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon (left) and Indiana House Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown review their statewide health care tour for HPI last week in Broad Ripple. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Last Thursday HPI sat down again with both doctors at Moe & Johnny’s in Broad Ripple to recap what were the

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Obama takes on ISIS

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – For the third time in the early years of a century, an American president has had to thrust military force - or the “big stick” - into remnants of the Ottoman Empire to take on rogue armies and navies. Upon taking office in 1801, President Jefferson found himself dealing with the Barbary pirates terrorizing American shipping. In 1904, it was President Theodore Roosevelt who reacted to Sherif Mulai Ahmed ibn-Muhammed er Raisuli, Lord of the Rif, who kidnapped Ion Perdicaris along with his stepson Cromwell Varley.

This brought Roosevelt’s “speak softly and carry a big stick” response.

On Wednesday night, Americans war-weary and frightened after witnessing the beheadings of two American journalists, found a reluctant President Obama vowing to use a “broad coalition” to destroy what he called “a group of killers.” His target will be the “Islamic State”



“I loved being governor. I loved being an executive. I’ll have an announcement fairly soon. I’ve said publicly it’s unlikely for a number of reasons, but”

- Evan Bayh, to the NWI Times on a possible 2016 gubernatorial run



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led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, occupying parts of Syria and Iraq and threatening a region-wide caliphate. Obama becomes yet another American president drawn into a faraway conflict with little confidence that this opponent can be vanquished the way Jefferson and Roosevelt were able to prevail.

"Tonight, I want to speak to you about what the United States will do with our friends and allies to degrade, and ultimately destroy, the terrorist group known as ISIL," Obama said in a national address from the White House that lasted less than 15 minutes. "In a region that has known so much bloodshed, these terrorists are unique in their brutality. They execute captured prisoners. They kill children. They enslave, rape and force women into marriage. They threatened a religious minority with genocide. In acts of barbarism, they took the lives of two American journalists — Jim Foley and Steven Sotloff."

The president said he would enlist support from Congress, to show the U.S. and the world that "we are united." He also said there will be an array of U.S. allies in Europe and the Middle East who will join the fight.

Reaction from the Indiana Congressional delegation was united behind a president most had fought tooth and nail for more than five years. U.S. Rep. Luke Messer, R-Shelbyville, said "I often disagree with the President's foreign policy decisions. But, we must come together as one nation, united in our resolve to defeat ISIS. This terrorist group is determined to bring the war they are raging in the Middle East to our shores in America, and we cannot let that happen."

U.S. Sen. Dan Coats said, "He has finally grasped the true nature of the threat that (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) poses, and his response to begin the process of taking down this so-called caliphate is welcome news." U.S. Sen. Joe Don-

nelly praised the president while describing ISIL as an "extremely violent group that poses an ongoing, serious threat," adding, "I believe that President Obama has existing authority to take the actions he outlined tonight. I do, however, think that that the President's ability to respond forcefully and effectively to protect American interests would be strengthened by seeking authorization from Congress."

Prior to the speech, former senator Richard Lugar told Bloomberg News' "Market Makers" that Obama's "strategy is not likely to be complete," adding, "I have not lost confidence in the president. He has moved ahead in



many ways that have been successful. The president made a good start yesterday with the two leaders in the House and Senate. He had a meal with a distinguished group with foreign policy specialists. The president will have to reach out more extensively to the members of Congress."

But U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., expressed doubts, saying, "The President's plan will likely be insufficient to destroy ISIS, which is the world's largest, richest terrorist army."

Obama laid out a four point plan that included a "systemic campaign of airstrikes"; hunting down ISIL terrorists while saying that he "will not hesitate to take ISIL on in Syria"; draw on counter terrorism forces to cut off the flow of fighters and funding; and providing humanitarian assistance to people caught up in the genocidal terror.

"We will hunt down terrorists who threaten our country, wherever

they are," Obama said. "That means I will not hesitate to take action against ISIL in Syria, as well as Iraq. This is a core principle of my presidency: If you threaten America, you will find no safe haven."

Obama attempted to make a distinction of the coming military action and the two wars that ensued after the Sept. 11 terror attacks 13 years ago today. "I want the American people to understand how this effort will be different from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It will not involve American combat troops fighting on foreign soil," Obama said. "This counterterrorism campaign will be waged through a steady, relentless effort to take out ISIL wherever they exist, using our air power and our support for partner forces on the ground. This strategy of taking out terrorists who threaten us, while supporting partners on the front lines, is one that we have successfully pursued in Yemen and Somalia for years."

The grisly beheadings of American hostage journalists Steven Sotloff and James Foley sparked outrage from Obama and much of the American public, forcing Obama back into a Middle East war theater after pulling out of Iraq and preparing to do the same in Afghanistan. The two wars had cost more 5,000 lives, 40,000 injured and more than \$2 trillion. A Washington Post-ABC News poll released on Tuesday revealed that 71% support airstrikes, up from 54% in August and 45% in June. The poll shows 69% view ISIL as a "very serious threat" and 31% a "somewhat serious threat." And an NBC News/Wall Street Journal Poll released this morning showed 61% back a confrontation with ISIL while fears of a domestic terror attack are soaring, with 47% saying they feel less safe than before Sept. 11, 2001.

The president has "a country and an electorate, regardless of party, who seem to be ready to take the next step," said Fred Yang, a Democratic pollster who conducted the survey with GOP pollster Bill McInturff, told NBC News.

Saying that an additional 475 U.S. military forces will go to Iraq to strategize and advise which brings the number of American boots on the ground to around 1,600, Obama explained, "These American forces will not have a combat mission — we will not get dragged into another ground war in Iraq. It will be different from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; it will not involve American combat troops fighting on foreign soil."

Obama said the U.S. has already carried out 150 airstrikes, has protected Americans and U.S. interests, killed ISIL soldiers, and assisted stranded people "on a distant mountain."

Obama attempted to address the fear Americans have expressed about the future. He said that the U.S. has withstood the Sept. 11 terror attack and the economic

meltdown of 2008, saying, "Despite those shocks, American is better positioned to seize the future than any other nation."

U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Howe, said, "I am pleased that President Obama decided to address the entire nation about the need to confront ISIS. They are well-armed, well-funded, and will only continue to threaten the United States and our allies so long as they exist. This is not a group that can be managed. They need to be destroyed. However, we cannot do this alone. I am hopeful the formation of a new Iraqi government under Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, is the beginning of a political reconciliation that can unite a country so deeply divided along sectarian lines."

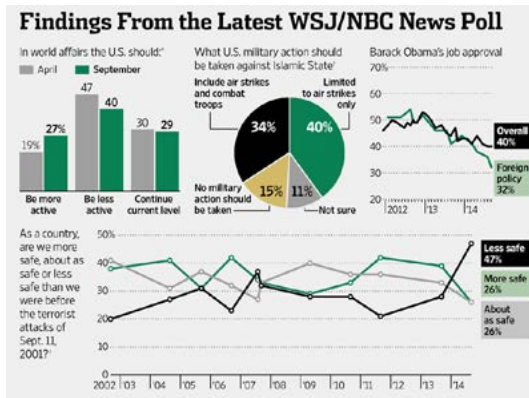
U.S. Rep. Todd Young, R-Bloomington, said that he had consulted with former Democratic Rep. Lee Hamilton earlier in the day. "As the President indicated, consultation with Congress remains paramount and, therefore, I plan to attend classified briefings with administration officials in coming days," Young said. "Additionally, on Wednesday I spoke in-depth about this situation with former Congressman Lee Hamilton, who served as chairman of the House Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Committees, the co-chair of the Iraq Study Group, and as vice

chairman of the 9/11 Commission. The insight and perspective Congressman Hamilton was able to provide has been invaluable."

U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski reacted, saying, "Tonight's message was an about face from the presidents' previous comments about the growing threat of terrorism. In fact, the lack of leadership from the administration has led to a foreign policy vacuum which groups like ISIL have filled. I firmly believe that Congress must have a say in any major decision of war and peace because the American people must have a voice."

It promises to be another long slog for an America which has been at war for a more than a dozen years. The New York Times' Peter Baker wrote in today's editions: In ordering a sustained military campaign against Islamic extremists in Syria and Iraq, President Obama on Wednesday night effectively set a new course for the remainder of his presidency and may have ensured that he would pass his successor a volatile and incomplete war, much as his predecessor left one for him. The widening battle with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria will be the next chapter in a grueling, generational struggle.

Lugar said President Obama "will eventually need a Congressional vote of support." He called confronting ISIL "the most important issue facing Congress" and said that it will "require every bit of confidence. This is going to be a reasonably costly endeavor." ❖



Doctor tour, from page 1

key lessons from their statewide tour. "At the state level, things really don't start happening until we get organized officially," Chairman Brown told us, "but in my role I try to manage three issues I have worked on and that we heard (on the tour)."

First, Indiana needs more residency slots in hospitals for medical school graduates. Brown explained, "We're going to need more manpower. The state is going to have to get in-

involved in residency slots or post-medical school training." An additional 100 residency slots statewide would be needed, which begs the question of the state's commitment toward that goal. He referred to Dean Steven G. Becker of the IU School of Medicine's Evansville Campus creating a consortium of hospitals, business leaders, and, hopefully, the state



to fund residency slots. In terms of eventual state support, Brown said, "Long term, I think we'll have that."

"Hopefully people will decide to remain in the state once they finish their training," Bucshon added.

Second, Indiana needs more health care providers. "The physician shortage in Indiana, not just primary care but specialists, is substantial," Bucshon told us in April. Speaking with medical students from IU and Marian University on the topic, their tour found requiring residency commitments during the first year of study was considered onerous. Brown paraphrased how students felt, "We almost feel like we're in a long-term servitude process if you make us commit on day one. Come back in years three and four when we've gone through our electives, when we've finalized our plans for after medical school." He foresees addressing this issue by offering loan forgiveness or some kind of stipend to students in those later years if they choose underserved residency specialties and/or locations.

"People don't want to pick their residence course their first couple of years based on a potential offers and grants to be a family practice doctor in Crawfordsville," Bucshon added.

In addition to physicians, a nursing shortage is predicted as baby boomers in the field, particularly RNs,

begin to retire. Both the Indiana State Nurses Association and LeadingAge Indiana told HPI they would like the state to dedicate more support to nursing education this coming session. Indiana State University recently approved a \$64 million expansion request for its nursing building. Before that makes it to Chairman Brown, the request and any other universities seeking to expand their health care training programs must go through the established channels of the Commission for Higher Education and the State Budget Agency.

"Ivy Tech is one of our largest suppliers of associate degree nursing," said Brown. "To continue to keep Ivy Tech affordable will be a priority for all legislators going forward. One of the things to help make them successful is fulltime faculty members, that may include nursing faculty members. We'll have that debate during the session."

Third, Indiana needs to devise a better form of high-cost case management. Last session, Chairman Brown's HB1335 sent the issue to a summer study committee. A potential pilot program is now being discussed and formulated. "That's the issue we heard at Riley Children's Hospital and Centerstone Mental Health in Bloomington," Brown explained. "Eighty-five percent of the population is 5% of the costs of care. If we could manage and help that 5% in a public-private partnership, we wouldn't have to deal with the other 95%; it would be under a more traditional insurance plan but have much less restrictions."

The ACA and 'certainty'

From a federal perspective, key takeaways Bucshon drew from the health care tour and recent congressional hearings revolved around uncertainty. "We continue to hear a lot about, basically, the uncertainty of what direction the ACA is going take," he said, "as it relates to the business mandate which has been delayed, the individual mandate, and what's going to happen with the 30-hour work week situation. We continue to hear about the uncertainty hospitals have over reimbursement-related issues."

In regard to the business mandate, Bucshon said there was heightened concern. "Are we going to have employer-based health insurance in the future based on the direction this appears to be heading – the inability of small businesses to afford covering their employees?" the Newburgh Republican asked. "From my standpoint, the overall theme is the uncertainty. The providers don't know what's going to happen. The employers don't know what's going to happen."

An exacerbating factor, Bucshon believes are executive delays and revisions to the implementation of the

law. "When you have the law being changed unilaterally by the White House all the time, in my view for political reasons, that doesn't help, it creates uncertainty," Bucshon said.

Asked if Indiana's Republican delegation were more interested in outright repeal or targeted reforms of the ACA, Bucshon said, "At the end of the day most of us feel like the vast majority of the law should be repealed. I don't think that's changed much. If there are some things in the law that we know we can actually change and get that done, most of us are willing to look at those. For example, the 30-hour work week. (U.S. Rep.) Todd Young's bill passed on the House floor. If we could put that on the President's desk, we should do that. If we could get the medical device tax repealed, we need to get that done."

"If there are things that actually are doable on a bipartisan basis, we should do those things," Bucshon was careful to add. "We shouldn't hold out for total repeal in the face of real, substantive bipartisan changes that will help in the meantime."

Whereas Bucshon admitted that full repeal would not occur with this president in office, he believed it could still happen even under a future Democratic White House due to increasing costs. He's hearing estimates of premium increases of 6 to 10% for Indiana's exchange rates next year. "It sounds high because the promise was that health care costs were going to go down," he explained. "That every family was going to save \$2,500 but that promise is not being kept. To me, that does sound better than the increases that have been happening historically, absolutely. That does sound better but remember the promise was health care costs would go down, not up."

As for alternatives, Bucshon returned to points he made earlier in the year on controlling health care cost inflation. "In a nutshell," Bucshon explained, "more transparency in pricing, more quality information to the patients so that consumers can make competitive choices." He was careful to add that these reforms should not be considered in the context of health care today. Empowering patients with choice will transform health care toward more and cheaper options. "Hospitals and providers will be forced to come along by the pressure of consumers," Bucshon argues. "Continuing to price fix health care like we do today there is no reason for you as the consumer to drive costs down."

HIP 2.0 and momentum with feds

A monumental aspect of the ACA and one that might come to define Gov. Mike Pence's first term is

Medicaid expansion via HIP 2.0. The waiver request is still pending. "Most people, I cannot speak for everybody, support the concept," commented Bucshon. Nonetheless, there is uncertainty over whether, when, and in what form HHS will approve the program. Asked by HPI what they tell stakeholders, Bucshon answered, "I tell them I think the federal government is going to approve it because when it comes to Medicaid I feel states should have flexibility in how they insure their citizens. Let states innovate. Make the states a laboratory on how we can cover people that are uninsured in a cost effective, more efficient manner that is sustainable. HIP is one of those ideas I think can be successful. I continue to support it but I haven't heard anything that changes that view. I think the federal government is going to have a difficult time not approving it with the administration's stated goal of getting everybody health coverage. If they want to stick with their political agenda, of forcing federal programs on states and not allow states to innovate then they'll disapprove. But, I believe they're under a tremendous amount of pressure to provide this flexibility."

Chairman Brown hopes approval comes sooner rather than later: "What I hope, timing wise, is that we start to get this in line. If HIP 2.0 goes away, we in state government have to start notifying people in October."

What about what appears to be a shifting HIP 2.0 implementation horizon? HPI broke the story in mid June that FSSA Chairwoman Debra Minott was forced out over the Pence Administration wanting to stick to a January 2015 rollout. Minott felt this timeline overly optimistic and hours before her resignation said April was the target date. According to HPI sources, the key impediments to either target date in early 2015 stem from incomplete rule making on the part of the federal government, incomplete rule making on the part of HIP 2.0, programming and testing the necessary IT systems, and hiring and training sufficient staff between now and the rollout period. Since then, former FSSA chief Michael Gargano was brought on board to expedite the process.

"We will have to deal with the cards as they are laid out on the table. I cannot suppose what will happen if there is a delay," Chairman Brown responded. "I'm sure if there is a bridge period we may have to deal with that in the budget. We did under the old ICHIA (Indiana Comprehensive Health Insurance Association) program when the exchanges went on beyond Jan. 1 and people were on the state risk pool. We had money in the budget so that that program was there to tide people over before they got insurance through the exchanges. That's a conscious decision we'll have to make in the budgeting



process.”

“I think we’ve made a good case,” Bucshon continued. “Other states, like Pennsylvania, have offered ideas similar to HIP. I think there is just a general feeling in Washington, D.C., really on both sides, that the concept of allowing states flexibility on how they cover their Medicaid population is really gaining some steam.”

Bucshon says both parties are taking note that ER visits are not declining in states that traditionally expanded Medicaid under the ACA. He said it has been well known among providers for years that the traditional Medicaid population accounts for the lion’s share of ER visits, especially unnecessary visits, not the uninsured. “They go to the ER for all kinds of things and improperly access the health care system because it’s free,” explained Bucshon. “It’s multigenerational, cultural.” Brown also noted that many Medicaid patients are not accustomed to keeping a regular physician and making appointments.

Bucshon and Brown said incentives under HIP and HIP 2.0 to properly use the ER and see to preventive health care is an important way to reverse this costly habit. Even low ER co-payments, like those in HIP 2.0 for example, can dramatically decrease unnecessary visits.

They remain concerned over the long-term viability of Medicaid as more providers refuse Medicaid over reimbursement levels and whether the federal government will be able to maintain its Medicaid expansion funding commitments to the states in the future.

Indiana’s Health Rankings

Over the past six months HPI has made it a point to draw attention to Indiana’s poor placement in national health rankings. For example, the state’s infant mortality rate is 47th, the state’s long-term care for elderly and disabled ranks 47th, and the overall health and wellbeing of the state is ranked 41st. We asked both doctors if these statistics were registering with their Republican colleagues in the Congressional delegation and Statehouse.

“We addressed that on our health care tour,” answered Bucshon. “As you know, the data is out there where we rank. We know the state of Indiana has a higher obesity level, higher rate of smoking, tend to be less healthy in lifestyle, and those things, in my view, are most of the impact on our health care data. Access issues and insurance issues are a very small piece. Indiana citizens are unhealthier. It’s more of a cultural, longstanding unhealthy lifestyle situation. There has been an ongoing education process against this.”

As for the Statehouse, Brown believes there is an appreciation for the importance of improving Hoosiers’ healthy lifestyles. “A lot of that starts in the workplace,” he added. “Toyota, we have talked about a wonderful program they have with exercise equipment on site. It has to be incorporated into the fabric of your daily life and I think legislators understand that.”

Bucshon drew attention to public employers, like Evansville and Vanderburgh County, providing preventive

health care facilities and programs to their workers. Many of these are offering biometric scans with the incentive of discount premiums. Several hospitals in the Evansville area are requiring such scans. “We see employers going to wellness clinics,” Brown commented. “In Crawfordsville our county government, our city government, and our school corporations came together for a wellness clinic. It goes back to those issues: Know what your blood sugar is, know what your cholesterol is, know your body mass index, and have somebody talk to you about what you can do to change some of those things if they are out of line.” Brown noted that these wellness clinics were able to negotiate lower diagnostic costs paid by employers and employees.

As these programs become wider spread, Bucshon is optimistic. “I think we’re catching up,” he said. “I think Indiana is going to catch up on this.”

Anti-Smoking

Unhealthy lifestyle choices, especially smoking, were issues both doctors called attention to before, during, and after their tour. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 23% of adult Hoosiers smoke and in some localities, like Newton County, the rate can be as high as 43%. Stopping smoking among expecting mothers, especially in rural areas, is seen as critical to lowering Indiana’s high infant mortality rate. Accordingly, the American Cancer Society’s Action Network has announced it will push for a doubling of Indiana’s cigarette tax this upcoming General Assembly. As of June, Indiana had the 32nd highest tobacco tax of \$.995 per pack. The national average is \$1.54 per pack with the highest state, New York, at \$4.35.

HIP currently depends solely on the cigarette tax for funding and enrollment was capped due to that revenue constraint. The HIP 2.0 proposal will use that tax in conjunction with the Hospital Assessment Fee and federal dollars. Since the tobacco tax is part of a dedicated funding mechanism, we asked Chairman Brown on the likelihood of an increase. “There’s a lot of political discussions going on whenever you talk about any tax increase in Indiana,” answered Brown. “I know supporters of an increase are out there. They have come talked to me, yes. We’ll have to see how the coalition comes together. Your point is well taken: When you dedicate a tax to a certain issue or topic your chance of garnering a coalition goes up.”

The state’s support for tobacco cessation programs was slightly increased the last budgetary session, but Chairman Brown notes the absolute spending is still down from the pre-recession levels. According to the Cancer Action Network, Indiana spends only a sixth of what the CDC recommends to states.

“It is a three-legged stool in terms of cessation programs,” Chairman Brown explained. “You have to have cessation programs in place. You have to have a tax to make people think about it. Hopefully young people, the people 18 to 25, are impacted by a tax. The statistics the

last time we raised the tax in Indiana was that for every \$0.25 you got a 5% reduction in new smokers starting. That's what you want to do: Stop new smokers. And the cessation arm is also there. Yes, we've heard our programs weren't enough. I'm sure we can revisit that." Brown noted that more employers are providing smoking cessation programs to their employees knowing it will result in less health care costs and lost productivity.

Health advocates also want to build on the state's July 2012 smoking ban for workplaces and public accommodations that accept minors. Currently bars, casinos, and membership clubs are exempted. Most major cities go beyond that, such as Evansville and Indianapolis. However, this past Monday the Kokomo City Council voted down an expanded smoking ban 5 to 4 and the South Bend Council defeated one earlier this year. Opposition to full bans often cite the spurious argument local business will suffer. Bucshon said smoking bans across the country only inflict a temporary downturn in business for some bars and restaurants but then it returns, if not exceeds, pre-ban levels. He referred to examples in his native Evansville.

"One of the biggest things we saw through LSA was how the smoking ban applies to casinos," Brown said. "They had a lot of experience in Delaware and Illinois and it does affect casino tax revenue. That's one of the things I would have to balance with that. I'm not prepared today to say that I would do a blanket statewide smoking ban. I think we hit kind of a sweet spot with our smoking ban in the workplace. We'll continue to talk about it; I as a physician abhor smoking and would like to see it go away."

Attorney General Greg Zoeller has partnered with the Tobacco Prevention Cessation Commission at the Indiana State Department of Health to reduce smoking among young people. According to 2012 figures, 13.7% of high school youth in Indiana were current smokers, a decline of 57 percent since 2000.

Elderly Care

According to a recent scorecard by the SCAN Foundation, the Commonwealth Fund, and AARP, Indiana ranks 47th in terms of its longterm health care for the elderly and disabled. Within that ranking was a 51st ranking (the worst) for the support provided to family caregivers. Indiana AARP has been pushing for a tax credit for caregivers and will also be advocating passage of a caregivers' bill of rights.

Chairman Brown said he was unfamiliar with the latter proposal. "We have a lot of people wanting tax credits," he elaborated. "The caregiver tax credit fell into a whole laundry list of people who want tax credits." For other ways to provide assistance and tackle the poor ranking, he pointed to grant programs and existing services. "We've tried to expand in the past few years in-home and community service waivers quite a bit, but we always need to do a better job." ❖

ACA's impact on schools, businesses

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

GREENFIELD — Obamacare's impact on schools and small businesses was the topic of a House subcommittee hearing and attended by nearly half of Indiana's Congressional delegation.

U.S. Reps. Luke Messer, Larry Bucshon, Susan Brooks and Todd Rokita attended the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions for a special field hearing in Greenfield on the impact of the ACA on schools and small businesses. No Democrats attended.

Some of the most revealing testimony came from school corporations represented by Superintendents Daniel Tanoos (Vigo Co.) and Michael Shafer (Zionsville). Both



commented on how the 30-hour workweek requirement of the ACA was forcing them to cut back hours and staff for

support roles such as bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and teaching aides. "Our turnover rate has increased dramatically," testified Shafer. As for the law's fees, the school pays \$65,000. "Frankly," said Shafer, "the idea that public school districts should use tax dollars to pay fees to subsidize big insurance companies is just wrong!"

Rep. Brooks (pictured, right, with Rokita) asked Shafer if the Federal Department of Education has provided any advice or guidance on how to grapple with the ACA's mandates, fees, and penalties. The answer: "No." Tom Forkner, president of the Anderson Federation of Teachers, said it was unfortunate his and other school corporations were not extending health benefits to support staff. "Sadly, neither classroom aides nor the food services workers are offered health insurance by the school system," he told the subcommittee. "We viewed this as a shortsighted decision, given that these employees come in contact with students, parents, our members and the community on a daily basis. Failing to give them even the most basic services puts everyone at risk and leads to preventable absences in schools."

Bucshon said the ACA was not delivering on its promises as insurance premiums continued to rise and the legislation does little, in his opinion, to address the cost drivers of health care inflation. In regard to teachers' health insurance plans, he cautiously predicts higher premiums and deductibles. Messer agreed, "The ACA is littered with broken promises." He noted those hurt perhaps most by the law were preexisting health insurance holders.

Rokita called for "repealing this [the ACA] in a holistic manner." ❖

The Evan and Mike Show 'clear as mud'

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Is Mike Pence running for president? Will Evan Bayh seek a return to the Indiana governorship in 2016? Could the two end up in a head-to-head clash?

There were scenarios this week that could have cleared up the picture, with Gov. Pence venturing to Iowa for a U.S.-Japan Conference and Bayh speaking to the One Region conference in Merrillville on Wednesday. Instead, we got, as the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette observed, a picture "clear as mud."



Bayh had hinted in a late August interview on WFYI's "No Limits" radio show that while it was "unlikely" he would run, a decision would probably be forthcoming shortly after Labor Day. But Bayh left the question dangling on Wednesday, telling the NWI Times, "I don't have any announcements today. I have had a lot of people asking me about running for governor in 2016. I loved being governor. I loved being an executive. I just find something noble and good about being able to help people on a daily basis. I'll have an announcement fairly soon. I've said publicly it's unlikely for a number of reasons, but . . . So before long I'll have a decision." The key word there is "publicly."

Conventional wisdom based on the "unlikely" remarks he made in July and August was that Bayh would take a pass. But there were intriguing signs to the contrary, such as the call he made to new Lake County Democratic Chairman John Buncich after his election in August. One Democratic source told HPI, "If he had no political future in Indiana, why would he do that?"

We've heard murmurs from several influential Bayh friends and allies who expressed some optimism that he would run. These included some Phi Psi fraternity brothers who have been donors to past campaigns, and Indiana University Athletic Director Fred Glass, a former chief of staff to Gov. Bayh.

Former Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker, who is on retainer as a political consultant to Bayh, told HPI earlier this month that after dropping his twin sons off at Harvard on Aug. 24, the former governor and first lady were beginning to sort through the empty nest options. The signals from Parker were murky. He didn't sound like a man gearing up a campaign, but he didn't snuff out the flame either. By this week, Parker wasn't returning phone calls.

Speaking to the One Region conference in Merrillville, Bayh talked about the continued polarization and the need to help the middle class. "We're spending way too much time in this country pointing fingers at one another instead of figuring out how to get things done," Bayh told some 650 community leaders attending the annual One Region luncheon at Merrillville's Radisson Hotel at Star Plaza (Carden, NWI Times). "That's not inevitable; it doesn't have to be that way," Bayh said. "It is up to all of us to chart a different path so that those that follow us will inherit a Northwest Indiana, a state of Indiana, a United States of America that allows them to do what every generation of Americans has always been able to do, and that is through hard work, ingenuity and perseverance to have a better life."

The key, Bayh said, is to enact laws and promote policies that enable more Americans to enter and remain in the middle class, which can happen by embracing an "innovation economy."

"That means coming up with new goods, new services, new theories, new ways of doing things that are better, cheaper, faster -- and doing it more rapidly than ever before," Bayh said. "Constantly reinventing ourselves in a competitive and dynamic global marketplace."

Bayh met privately with Northwest Indiana mayors and state lawmakers prior to the One Region luncheon, Carden reported. During that meeting, State Rep. Charlie Brown, D-Gary, said he pressed Bayh to lead Hoosier Democrats in wresting the governor's office from Repub-



Evan Bayh's interview with the NWI Times did not shed any new light on a potential 2016 candidacy.

lican Mike Pence. "He (Bayh) said he wants to get back into public life, but the problem is he doesn't want to be a figurehead, and that's what would happen now because there's so much divisiveness in state government," Brown said.

Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., who also has contemplated a run for governor, told the NWI Times that Bayh believes his returning to the governor's office could be "a curse" because he'd have to contend with Republican House and Senate supermajorities unlikely to embrace his agenda, and the governor's weak veto power wouldn't permit him to stop theirs. "Look at (Democratic State Superintendent of Public Instruction) Glenda Ritz and how much difficulty she's had doing her job," McDermott said. "I mean, the governor could be terrorized by the supermajorities in the Legislature."

Doug Ross, NWI Times editorial page editor, interviewed Bayh for the newspaper's video "Roundtable" feature Wednesday morning. Asked if he thought Bayh was running, Ross told HPI, "Two hours ago I would have said no. Now I'm not so sure."

So the sense is that the Bayhs hadn't made a decision. Some Democrats suggested that Bayh has more time on his side than Pence does with the presidential race.

Another tidbit came from 2012 nominee John Gregg, who said Wednesday that Bayh tipped him off in December 2011 that he wouldn't run several weeks before he made it official. "I haven't heard anything like that now," said Gregg, who reiterated his belief that Bayh will ultimately dedicate himself to getting Hillary Clinton into the White House in 2016. "Evan would be a great addition to her cabinet," Gregg said.

As for Pence, he finds himself in the midst of self-generated speculation. We've been here before, when former Gov. Mitch Daniels would respond to presidential candidacy questions by saying things like "No, no, no, no, nooooo" before he actually did get serious about it, until the family tamped it down in the spring of 2011.

For the record, former chief of staff Bill Smith told the Indiana Republican Central Committee in August to expect a Pence reelection bid. U.S. Rep. Luke Messer told HPI the same thing last week.

But then there is the potential Republican field which University of Virginia Prof. Larry Sabato gauged as without a "first tier" candidate. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush doesn't appear to have the fire in the belly, Texas Gov. Rick Perry has been indicted and a trial could drag well into 2015, and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie has an array of ethical and budgetary dilemmas in front of him. The senators, Rand Paul, Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, have to fight off the Dole/McCain dilemma (Republican senators

don't do well once nominated). Republican governors and vice presidents do much better.

Then in Dallas earlier this month, Gov. Pence took out the can of lighter fluid and doused the coals of speculation, when he said, "There are some people who say that we need a governor as president and I'm sympathetic to that." In both Texas and Iowa, Pence talked a good game of foreign policy.

On Tuesday during a Statehouse press scrum following his return from Iowa, Pence was peppered with POTUS questions, captured by the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette.

First question: There's some question about whether or not you are going to run for the White House in 2016. Can you rule that out?

Pence: "We had a great trip to Iowa. More than 30 Hoosiers, business leaders from around the state, joined us to tell Indiana's story in the presence of some of the top business leaders from Japan and from other states around the country. It was a very good use of time and I was delighted to be there. But my focus is Indiana and jobs in Indiana and that's where we'll stay focused."

Next question: Would you ever want to go back to Iowa?

Pence laughs: "Nice try."

Another try: I could only read your answer as, yes you are considering running for president because it's easy to say no, but instead you brought up going to Iowa. What should Hoosiers read from it if you won't say I'm not running?

Pence: "Really and truly the greatest privilege of my life is to serve as governor of the state of Indiana and I think you could see today the opportunities we have in this state to continue to set the pace.... I want Hoosiers to know that my entire focus is on their future and we'll let my future take care of itself."

Another question: You have said previously that some folks have talked to you about running for president. Are those conversations still happening?

Pence: "I'm always flattered and humbled when people mention me for higher office. But I invariably answer the same way. That my focus is Indiana and to be governor of this state at a time of real economic growth, real educational progress – at a time when Indiana is being talked about – is very humbling to me. I make that very clear to them. I honestly do believe that some of the reason I get mentioned has to do with the progress the people of Indiana have been making. It has more to do with the people of Indiana and their progress than it has to do with me. I accept the compliment, I hear people out, I put my head down and go back to work for the people of Indiana."

Yadda, yadda, yadda, yadda.

Two politicians. Two secrets. ❖



Gov. Pence was interviewed by WTHR-TV's Kevin Rader in Des Moines, and was coy about 2016.

Curry endorses Hogsett; DeLaney runs silently

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry announced he is backing Joe Hogsett for the Democratic mayoral nomination in what appears to be a looming race against State Rep. Ed DeLaney.

Meanwhile, DeLaney scheduled a news conference, cancelled it due to illness, then rescheduled it. DeLaney proposed to increase the number of IMPD officers from 1,527 to 1,797 with \$15 million from a public safety tax, \$3 million from a federal COPS grant, cost saving from a regional training center, and state revenue sharing.



On his preschool plan, DeLaney called for startup from a combination of charitable dona-

tions and \$50 million in unused reserves "held by our township trustees."

Curry said of his support for Hogsett, "I am pleased today to announce my support for a mayoral run by my friend Joe Hogsett. I have had the privilege of collaborating with Joe for nearly four years on important matters surrounding public safety, and I am confident that he has the experience, leadership qualities, and vision to lead Indianapolis into the future."

The two-term prosecutor added, "While Joe served as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, I witnessed first-hand his ability to transform his vision for more aggressive prosecution of violent criminals into a successful violent crime initiative. His focused priorities and ability to build consensus allowed him to establish a coalition of local, state and federal partners to combat our city's most pressing public safety concerns. Indianapolis needs more of Joe's vision and his willingness and ability to get things done. At this moment, Indianapolis faces enormous challenges. However, I am excited about the possibility of what we can collectively accomplish with Joe leading our great city, and I look forward to working with him in the years to come."

Last month, Washington Township Trustee Frank Short dropped out of the race, increasing speculation that DeLaney would do the same.

After postponing the news conference, the DeLaney campaign sent out a second notice stating, "In light of the political speculation about the postponement of his press conference, Ed DeLaney, Indianapolis mayoral candidate, will host a press conference" at his home at 3:30 p.m.

The campaign advised that "due to DeLaney's

laryngitis, there will have to be a handout for the press; there will be no oral statement but questions will be taken; answers will be sent via text message or whispered to a staffer who will repeat them."

DeLaney addressed what he called the "funding gap, citing tax cuts by state government" that included inventory, inheritance taxes and property tax caps. As for a solution, DeLaney said, "The state needs to share the tax resources that it is hoarding in order to keep an unnecessarily large surplus."

Freeman-Wilson loses Gary chair

Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson lost a race for chair of the Gary Democratic Party over the weekend to Willie Stewart Jr. who was backed by new Lake County Democratic Chairman John Buncich. Freeman-Wilson is expected to seek a second term next year, but this defeat suggests some vulnerability in the primary as well as her organizational skills. The mayor had missed a filing deadline for the caucus earlier in the week.

The Post-Tribune reported that after the first round of voting, Willie Moore III and David Fossett were removed from the ballot after receiving less than 10 votes each. In the run-off vote, Stewart beat Freeman-Wilson 47-44 to fill the position being vacated by Lake County Councilwoman Elsie Franklin. A little more than half of Gary's approximately 200 precinct committeemen and vice committeemen attended the caucus.

"There is going to be some fallout on this vote," one prominent Lake County Democrat told HPI. Columnist Rich James observed, "It is just another example of nothing be organized in Gary. Dates back decades."

Bayh stumps for Ritz

Former U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh glanced at the tables packed with women at the Patio Restaurant in Merrillville. Then he looked at a smiling Glenda Ritz, calling her a "ray of hope" in the Statehouse (Post-Tribune). On this partisan occasion — an Indiana Federation of Democratic Women gathering — State Superintendent Ritz shared the secrets of her 2012 upset over presumed GOP-shoo-in Tony Bennett, who ascended to national recognition through his Indiana reforms. Ritz, who also visited three schools Wednesday in Merrillville, regaled her audience Tuesday on her winning strategy to snare the lone state office for Democrats in the 2012 Republican blitz that sent Mike Pence to the governor's mansion. Calling it "campaign in a box," Ritz supporters, who included the state's 40,000 teachers, were asked to give \$25. In exchange, they received a yard sign, bumper stickers and postcards. Ritz, an officer in the Indiana State Teachers Association, wanted each contributor to encourage 25 friends or relatives to vote. "I knew if they each got 25 people to the polls, we would win," she said. "The Department of Education has been the state agency for over 150 years and now the governor needs his own agency," said Ritz,

a former school librarian and teacher. She predicted Pence will continue attempts to gnaw away at her department and shift money to the Center for Education and Career Innovation in the coming legislative session that begins in January. "We will have to be vocal," Ritz said.

Statewides

Election officials expect low turnout

Indiana's top elections official and leaders of both political parties are turning to traditional and social media and door-to-door visits in hopes of getting more residents to vote in the November general election (Associated Press). They have good reason to be worried. The May primary saw a paltry 13% of Indiana's 4.57 million registered voters cast a ballot, and an absence of marquee races that occurs once every 12 years in Indiana could lead to the lowest general election voter turnout in state history. Republican Secretary of State Connie Lawson, who is seeking reelection, doesn't want that to happen. She has launched a \$750,000 nonpartisan get-out-the-vote effort this year using radio, television and newspaper ads focusing on the value and potential decisiveness of each vote.

Kelly cites college 'deep debt'

U.S. News and World Report college rankings show that while Indiana colleges and universities received well-deserved praise, one portion of the list has Republican State Treasurer Candidate Kelly Mitchell concerned. No Indiana schools made the "least debt" list, and one school was named the college in the Midwest where students graduated with the most debt. "If anyone forgot that student debt is a crippling problem in Indiana, this report should be a wakeup call," Mitchell said. "Young Hoosiers entering the workforce are starting out in a hole, and that has ripple effects across the Indiana economy. Our College Choice 529 Plan participation has grown 1200%, but there's clearly more to do. As state treasurer, I will expand the 529 Plan, and my SAVE Indiana financial literacy program will help students have a greater understanding of debt." According to projectonstudentdebt.org, 64% of Indiana college graduates leave school with student loan debt. The average amount of debt was \$27,866 for the Class of 2012.

Congress

Gallup: Congressional approval at 14%

Congressional approval is at one of its lowest points in 40 years heading into midterm elections, and that could hurt Democrats, according to a new poll. The Gallup poll found 14 percent of Americans approve of how the legislative branch is handling its job, the lowest approval rating two months before elections that the poll has measured since 1974.

Sabato sees 5 to 8 Senate seats for GOP

For several months, we've held steady on our range of expected gains for Republicans in the Senate: a net of four to eight seats (Sabato's Crystal Ball). With Labor Day in the rearview mirror and with less than 55 days to go until the midterms, we're giving Republicans a slight bump: Our new range is a Republican net of five to eight Senate seats. This means that the best-case scenario we can now envision for Democrats is a 50-50 tie in the Senate, with Vice President Joe Biden's tiebreaking vote narrowly keeping Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) as majority leader. The likeliest outcome remains a Republican gain of six or seven seats, which we noted before Labor Day and stand by now. That would be good for a narrow 51-49 or 52-48 Republican Senate majority. What's changed? Not a whole lot: It's just that the weight of an unpopular president in the White House and a GOP-leaning Senate map is subtly moving things a tick or two in the Republican direction.

Republicans lead Senate races in AR, KY

Republicans now lead key Senate races in Arkansas and Kentucky, while Democratic Sen. Mark Udall has a six-point advantage over his GOP opponent in Colorado, according to three new NBC News/Marist polls of likely voters released Sunday morning on Chuck Todd's inaugural episode of "Meet the Press." In Arkansas, the poll shows GOP Rep. Tom Cotton leading Sen. Mark Pryor, 45% to 40%. Cotton has led in most public polls in recent months – he was up by two points in a CNN/ORC International poll released last week – though Democrats note that Pryor is within the margin of error in many of those surveys. Republicans' advantage in Arkansas extends to the gubernatorial race. Republican Asa Hutchinson leads Democrat Mike Ross by 9 points, 48% to 39%, a wider margin in the race between the two former congressmen than other polls have shown. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has his largest lead in Kentucky over Democrat Alison Lundergan Grimes in some time: 8 points, 47% to 39%.

General Assembly

Culver receives 3 endorsements

State Rep. Wes Culver, R-Goshen, recently picked up a handful of endorsements in his bid for reelection (Duis, Elkhart Truth). Culver, who is seeking a fourth term representing District 49 in the Statehouse, has received endorsements from Indiana Right to Life, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and the Indiana State Police.

Gay HD81 Democrat welcomes court ruling

Thad Gerardot, an openly gay Democrat running for House District 81 in Fort Wayne, welcomed the ruling (Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). "I am overjoyed by today's unanimous decision from the U.S. 7th Circuit Court of Appeals to strike down bans on marriage equality in Indiana and Wisconsin," he said. ❖

Media: When the going gets weird

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

BLOOMINGTON – Earlier this summer on a rainy Friday afternoon, I walked across the Indiana University campus and on a whim, steered my way through the empty halls of Ernie Pyle Hall, home to the School of Journalism, which doesn't really exist anymore. The newsroom was still there, as were the offices of the academics. But the experience was surreal. It seemed familiar, and yet you knew it was fleeting.



It was here that I learned from some great journalism professors like Richard Gray and Wil Counts. On the Indiana Daily Student sports staff my colleagues were Mike Tackett, Mark Monteith, Dave Benner, Curt Smith, Phil Tatman and many others.

I was checking to make sure it was still there. It was, but technically on July 1, the new IU Media School came into

being. This combines journalism, film and communication, to be located at Franklin Hall by mid-2016. Students for the new school began the curriculum this semester.

There was some resistance within the journalism alumni circles, but deep down most of us knew what Bob Dylan was singing in the 1960s. Everything is changing. TV reporters are posting written stories and newspaper reporters are shooting video. Citizens with smart phones are replacing professional news photographers. Earlier this year, the Chicago Sun-Times laid off its entire photo staff.

This academic make-over comes as the professional news ranks are roiling. In a two-day period last week, the Indianapolis Star essentially fired its Statehouse staff where Barb Berggoetz was converted to General Assembly coverage after Mary Beth Schneider retired, and Eric Weddle covered education, including Supt. Glenda Ritz, the State Board of Education and CECI. Secondly, a breach of journalistic ethics came into full view when it

was revealed that StaceyPage.com editor Stacey Staley in Kosciusko County had tipped off bounty hunters, resulting in the death of Gary Helman, according to news reports in the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette and the Goshen News. The Paper Inc. quickly accepted her "resignation" and renamed the website.

Weddle tweeted on Monday morning, "I am no longer reporting on education @indystar – laid off Friday. 110% unexpected. Still bent on journalism/covering ed, so plz RT." Berggoetz retweeted an Indiana Law Blog posting: "And not just @ericweddle! @barbberg now freelance journalist, as of last Friday, was health/govt/education reporter for Indy Star."

Gannett made Star news staffers "reapply" for their jobs. So much for any notion of job security. The layoffs from the Star news staff now number in the hundreds since Gannett came to town more than a decade ago.

It set off an outflow of talent, with sports columnist Bob Kravitz moving to WTHR-TV and Colts beat writer Mike Chappell heading to WRTV-TV. Both journalists will write for TV websites, as well as appear on telecasts.

Chappell told WRTV's Dave Furst that the Star and the newspaper industry had "maxed out the print part of it and are going online and you guys have maxed out what you can do on the air and now you're going digital."

CBS dumped WISH-TV, prompting speculation as to where the current Statehouse dean of reporters, Jim Shella, might end up, with the speculation that he will end up at WTTV Channel 4, the new CBS affiliate.

The largest Statehouse reporting enterprise, Franklin College's earnest Statehouse File, features two degreed journalists and a staff of students. Gone are the days of the Star staffing a basement shack with half a dozen reporters, photographers and editors.

The trend is the replacing of degreed and seasoned professional journalists with students and bloggers. In the Aug. 16 edition of Abdul-Hakim Shabazz's "The Cheat Sheet," the Illinois attorney mounted an emotional defense of Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann, who posted a campaign supplemental report of a \$10,000 donation from a Huntingburg business executive Robert Menke Jr., a few weeks before she named that city as a "Stellar Community" that brings \$10 to \$20 million to the designate. HPI posted the campaign finance document on its Facebook page and let readers draw their own conclusions. The only "news" site to write about it was convicted secretary of state



Eric Weddle ✓

@ericweddle **FOLLOWS YOU**

Education journalist. Formerly Indianapolis Star. Veggie hedonist.

Archivist of Hoosier punk arcana. Curator @familyvineyard | ericweddle@gmail.com

Charlie White on his new "Indy Sentinel" blog.

Abdul would write, "The only way the Ellspermann conspiracy would make sense is if there hadn't been an independent evaluation team that went through several rounds of looking at some very competitive projects, if Menke hadn't been a long-time regular donor to Ellspermann dating back to her first campaign for State Rep in 2010, if he actually did business with the city, and if Sue was that kind of person, which she isn't. What's going on is one of the losing cities has been pushing that narrative, which works if there wasn't for this thing called reality."

And then came this statement from Abdul: "To be honest, TCS is a little annoyed (by) all this, we deal in gossip, rumor and innuendo that happens to be right 90% of the time. We're not used to having to put the facts out up front. (Insert ironic laughter here)."

Is Abdul a journalist? A commentator? An entertainer? A gossip-monger? All of the above?

Is the new threshold for "journalism" a 90% accuracy rate?

Abdul has media access that in the past was reserved for professional journalists to the Indiana General Assembly and the press conferences of the last two governors. In contrast, the Indianapolis Colts and Pacers restrict access to bona fide professional journalists and a select group of credentialed bloggers.

Journalism has veered into the tabloid realm numerous times, from current day Great Britain to the yellow journalism days in the U.S. a century ago.

Harrison Ullmann ventured from the Star to NUVO Newsweekly, as did myself and other alternative journalists like Weddle and Will Higgins who wound up back in mainstream press.

The TMZ website, as sensational as it is, is breaking big stories, such as the Ray Rice domestic abuse scandal that has



Stacey Staley (left) who aligned StaceyPage.com with The Paper Inc., interviewed Gary Helman, who was killed by the bounty hunters she tipped off a short time later. Staley resigned this past week.

rocked the NFL and the Don Sterling racist episode that rocked the NBA and forced the sale of the Los Angeles Clippers.

Staley actually had roots in journalism, working for The Paper, Inc., in Milford and WRSW in Warsaw. She established the StaceyPage blog two years ago on her own, and then formed a business deal with The Paper, which was looking to expand into an online news model. She had success with more than 28,000 Facebook "likes." Howe Politics Indiana had included StaceyPage.com on its media traps.

The legal dimensions of news, blogging, rumor, gossip and innuendo are gradually being defined. By 2011, there had been more than \$50 million in defamation judgments. Fox News reported: "There are a lot of malicious people out there," says Bruce Johnson, a Seattle attorney with Davis Wright Tremaine and author of Washington state's current Shield Law. "You're not going to be able to get rid of them all. They will continue to basically write graffiti on the bathroom wall, and in this case, the Internet provides the bathroom wall."

Earlier this year, rock n roll star Courtney Love of the band "Hole" had a libel suit filed against her for a Tweet. It's being called "twibel."

Where Staley ends up legally for a tipoff to bounty hunters resulting in a death while acting as a journalist is anyone's guess.

Where the news media lands is yet another question. The ranks of professional journalists dwindle, and others fill the void with varying degrees of professionalism. Some parade as journalists; others mock the notion even as they parade, tweet and post.

No doubt, the times they are a-changin'. Today,

perhaps for the first time in history, we can follow a retired journalist, Mary Beth Schneider in this case, on a daily basis via Twitter.

All of this brings to mind a quote from Hunter S. Thompson, the one-time Louisville Courier-Journal reporter who created Gonzo Journalism back in the 1970s during the heyday of Rolling Stone Magazine.

"When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro." ❖



Return sales tax to county of origin

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – There are 17 legislative interim summer study commissions operating in Indiana. From these will come the blueprints for legislation in the next session. These commissions cover a wide area of legislative responsibility affecting most households and businesses, but you cannot be sure what they are studying from their titles alone. The interim committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources is studying recreational trails and shooting preserves. I hope they have no intention of combining them. Commerce and Economic Development seems limited to the medical device industry. The Committee on Fiscal Policy doesn't seem to have met until August 28 to examine the effectiveness of tax credits vs. grants in historic preservation as well as Indiana's stance on health care issues. Their next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 30, but no agenda has been posted. There's no hurry; it's only the public's health that is at stake.



The Commission on Business Personal Property and Business Taxation will hold its first meeting on Sept. 15. Then we'll get an overview of individual and business taxes in Indiana, including the distribution of those tax burdens. It should be a sensational session if the public, beyond the heavyweights of the business community, shows up. Let me guarantee a topic that will not be on the agenda if even mentioned. It is a topic forbidden to be discussed in the halls of the General Assembly. In fact, a prominent legislator once told me it would be mentioned "only over my dead body." Wishing ill to no man, I mention it here: The return of part of the Indiana sales tax to local governments.

We do not know how much money the 7% Indiana sales tax collects in Lake or Marion, Cass or Clark, Vanderburgh or any specific county. But why not return part of the sales tax to the county where it is collected? This would help the central urban counties of our state which provide the retail opportunities for those in suburban and rural counties.

The actual amount collected in each county is a secret guarded by the state legislature and not included in the annual report of the Department of Revenue. There was an annual tabulation by that agency which was, to the best of my knowledge, only a replication of unaudited aggregated company reports.

Given the harsh cutbacks made in support of local

government services, it makes sense to share the state's sales tax receipts with our counties, cities, towns, schools and libraries.

This is not an invitation for the state legislature to pass the buck to the local governments, as they have done with the local income tax. If the sales tax needs to be raised, it should be uniform across the state and done by the General Assembly. We don't want the mess Illinois has where individual communities have separate sales tax authority. It would require another study commission to rid us of that foolishness. ❖

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

Local government needs to be strongest

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Most of our current problems are at the local level: Schools, crime, housing, unemployment, and poverty.

Small government sentiments run strong in Indiana, and we can be pleased with many of the outcomes it fosters: Low taxes, a more thoughtful regulatory environment and more personal freedom. Still, I think much of the small government movement thought in Indiana targets the wrong problems. In so doing its supporters quite perversely weaken their arguments and lessen their influence.



Our founders lived in a world with a very small and limited federal government, stronger states and typically quite robust local governments. In the mid 20th century, power flipped to the federal government as it dealt with World War I and II, the Cold War and domestic problems of depression, poverty and civil rights.

In some areas this arrangement worked well, in some areas we saw only modest improvements and in other areas federal involvement worsened the situation at high cost.

Today many of our national problems have endured all the federal intervention we can stand. Most of our current problems are local: Schools, crime, housing, unemployment, and poverty. But our local government and local institutions are as weak as they have ever been. Yet here in Indiana my friends who argue for small govern-

ment focus almost exclusively on local government. They are missing the point.

Our republican form of government promotes checks and balances in two ways. We learn in school that the legislative, executive and judicial branches protect against the concentration of power in one place, but so too does federalism itself. Strong state and local governments weaken the domestic power of the federal government by forcing tax and spending policies to the appropriate level of government.

By focusing nearly all their efforts on shrinking local government, our small government advocates actually promote a stronger, larger and less responsive federal government. But there's more to the problem than just this focus.

There are lots of Hoosiers who want a smaller federal government that is less costly and less intrusive. But many of these citizens actually want more state and local government and the services they provide. I want, and

am willing to pay for, more sidewalks, better local schools, better playgrounds for my kids and better stocked libraries. I have advocated on this page for the elimination of the federal departments of energy and education, which would collectively save Hoosiers a cool half-billion dollars. To be sure we'd be better off with some major local government reforms, but that is not where the big cost savings lie.

Moving spending from the federal to state and local levels gives us more and better choices and a more responsive (and maybe cheaper government). But Indiana's small government advocates don't seem to care about that. They are content to rail against a local community scraping together \$50,000 to spruce up a park or community pool while largely ignoring the wholly unnecessary U.S. Department of Education.

If I were granted one wish this election season, it would be that my friends who advocate small government would turn most of their attention toward federalism issues. ❖

Unease across the land

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – There is great unease in the land, concern about economic inequality, disgust with scorched-earth politics in Washington. But the long reach of our history teaches that when an aroused public forces political leaders to focus on finding solutions to problems, we can overcome differences and make progress.



Despite these last few months of hot and lazy days, it's been hard not to notice a cold political wind blowing through the country. The magazine *Foreign Affairs* captured it with its latest cover, a mockup of a travel poster featuring a crumbling U.S. Capitol with the tagline, "See America: Land of Decay and Dysfunction."

Americans are clearly uneasy. I know it anecdotally, because at virtually every public gathering I've addressed over the last few months someone has spoken up with his or her worry that our nation is in decline. And the polls bear it out. In June, a *Washington Post* article, "Is the American Dream Dead?" noted a string of polls showing majorities of Americans believe their children will be worse off than they are.

By early August, an NBC-Wall St. Journal poll was reporting that a full three-quarters of those surveyed lacked confidence that the next generation would be better off, the most pessimistic results in the history of the

poll. Regardless of income, ethnicity, religion, or gender, Americans don't think much of our future.

This is a ground-shaking turnabout. Since well before I began my political career in the early 1960s, the keystone of our politics was an unflagging optimism that as Americans we could face headon the task of improving our own and others' lives and deliver on our responsibility to future generations. As Chris Cilizza wrote recently in *The Washington Post*, "So much of every politician's patter, Democrat or Republican, is built on the idea that America has always overcome hard challenges, always made things better for our kids than for us, always had achieving the American dream as a real possibility." Now, he notes, "A large bloc of the electorate no longer believes any of that."

Why not? Partly, it's the economy. Growth has been sluggish, we're not generating enough good jobs, and the benefits of the recovery have flowed more to some than to the many. The growing awareness of a lopsided society, one in which a rising tide fails to lift all boats, has put many people in a surly mood. That problem of income inequality is joined to a host of others, from climate change, to crumbling infrastructure, to a world in which the forces of chaos and turmoil appear to be expanding.

Yet I think *Foreign Affairs* has nailed the biggest factor: The perceived dysfunction of our political system. As political scientist Francis Fukuyama writes in the lead essay, dealing with our problems "requires a healthy, well-functioning political system, which the United States does not currently have."

Simply put, Americans have no confidence that our system can resolve the challenges before us. They don't expect miracles, but they do expect political leaders to make progress, and they haven't been seeing much.

I can understand why so many people would be pessimistic, yet I don't find myself sharing their fatalism. That's because political moments are just that: Moments. Over the long reach of our history, we've learned time and again that when our political leaders do focus on our challenges, speak to one another directly, and are determined to find a solution to our problems, they can overcome their differences and make progress.

There is no shortage of challenges facing the system, from the influence of money on elections to the entrenched rules that hamstringing capable public officials to the scorched-earth political culture that reigns in Washington these days. But I am convinced that they are no match for an aroused and determined public that recognizes we are all in this together, that we can adapt to changing circumstances, and that we should not give up on the system. ❖

Sometimes you feel sorry for a loser

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – One of Indiana's most bombastic politicians left softly, so quietly that many Hoosiers didn't notice he had scurried from the Statehouse four months before his term as state treasurer was to end.



attention.

The timing also enabled Mourdock to avoid a cut in his state retirement benefits, a cut effective for public employees retiring after August.

In his resignation letter to Gov. Mike Pence, Mourdock said he was leaving "to pursue other professional interests." He told his hometown Evansville Courier & Press that his decision to resign came after a counseling session on the retirement benefit changes "caused me to think about it differently."

In a statement as he left, Mourdock talked of his office collecting interest on state funds, something a state treasurer certainly is expected to do. He is remembered more as a state treasurer for spending millions in state funds in a failed attempt all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court to prevent the restructuring that saved Chrysler. If his effort had forced Chrysler into liquidation, tens of thousands of jobs all around Indiana would have been lost, worsening the recession.

Most of all, Mourdock is remembered for his controversial claim in a Senate debate on Oct. 23, 2012, that

Richard Mourdock, with saturation name recognition two years ago as he thought he was headed to the U.S. Senate, was headed nowhere politically now. He was pretty much out of the news. But Mourdock was still state treasurer, elected to serve in his second term in that office until the end of the year. His letter of resignation came on the day it took effect, the Friday of Labor Day weekend, not timing to capture coverage or public attention.

a pregnancy from a rape "is something God intended."

Mourdock, the Republican nominee who had upset Sen. Dick Lugar in the primary with the help of out-of-state financing, was that October in a tossup race with Democrat Joe Donnelly. It was a race for a Senate seat once regarded as "safe" Republican in a Republican-leaning state. Donnelly had momentum and might well have won without the Mourdock's debate debacle, but that remark about God's intent in rape turned the race into a sure victory for Donnelly.

Mourdock's quick and early departure as treasurer brought critical comments in newspaper columns. In a commentary carried in the Indianapolis Star, Lesley Weidenbener, executive editor of TheStatehouseFile.com, contrasted Mourdock's past "fiery rhetoric" about holding political leaders accountable and doing the right thing with his bailing out before the end of the term to which he was elected.

"Rather than doing what's right – finishing a job voters elected him to do – Mourdock made a selfish decision for his own economic future," Weidenbener wrote.

In a column by Dave Bangert in the Lafayette Journal & Courier read: "State treasurer had the option to honor his commitment to a four-year term or bail out four months early to save his retirement benefits. Take a guess which he chose."

Bangert said it could be just as well that Mourdock "took an early exit, opting for cash over commitment." He said voters would be hard-pressed to describe details of state treasurer duties anyway, and candidates for treasurer seek it as a stepping stone for something bigger. That certainly was the case with Mourdock. He ran for treasurer to be a senator. Alas, he slipped off the stepping stone. So treasurer was no use to him anymore.

Criticism in columns never bothered Mourdock. And it won't matter to him now. After his gaffes and bombastic overkill, he always blamed the news media for reporting it, not himself for saying it. Sometimes he denied saying what he said.

Sometimes you feel sorry for a loser, a sports team that played the right way but ended on the wrong side of the score or a political figure that served with distinction but lost as voters were swayed by other considerations. Sometimes you feel sorry for a loser. Sometimes you don't. ❖

Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier:

What can an alligator hunt last weekend in a southern Louisiana swamp tell us about the race for Indiana's 4th District seat in Congress? More than you might think when it comes to the gulf between incumbent Republican Todd Rokita and his Democratic challenger, John Dale. Rokita showed up over the weekend in an Associated Press account of former U.S. Rep. Jeff Landry's fourth annual alligator hunt fundraiser at his camp on the Atchafalaya Basin, an hour from Baton Rouge. The story had Rokita, cigar in hand, getting ready for a guided hunt in the swamp. At \$5,000 a pop, the weekend included a stocked bar, crawfish etouffee, ribeye steaks and fried frog legs. "Our little crew brought \$30,000 for Jeff Landry from Indiana, because we believe he's good for the country," Rokita told Associated Press reporter Melinda Deslatte. In other words, our congressman can afford the time and campaign contributions to help a former colleague eight weeks away from his own reelection day. And Landry, a Tea Party favorite who was a Capitol Hill freshman with Rokita in 2010, isn't even running to win back a seat he lost in Congress in 2012. Landry's gearing up for a state attorney general race slated in Louisiana — a year from now. Meanwhile, back on a farm in southern Tippecanoe County ... So, John Dale, getcha a 'gator, lately? "No," said the West Point Democrat taking on Rokita in the Nov. 4 election. "That's a bit out of my league, a bit out of my price range. ... I did get out on the Bush Hog (mower) today. It is nice to see that stuff knocked down." ❖



But its heyday is ending. We're not putting forth any projections for 2016 yet—too many X factors remain at this point—but the spectacular cycle-over-cycle growth we're so used to seeing is going to slow. Local broadcast ad spend surely will spike again for the presidential race, but we don't see it shooting upward by another \$900 million, as we saw between 2010 and 2012. A whole, largely new class of people and platforms also are out there working to convince political advertisers to spend less on local TV, either by spreading the wealth among more targetable media like cable TV, satellite TV, and digital, or by making cheaper ad buys that reach the same sought-after viewers, or both. Advertisers simply have too many options now, even within the realm of TV, for broadcasters to keep charging the steeply escalating rates they've charged in past even-numbered falls. ❖

Gary Welsh, Advance Indiana: Joe Hogsett wants to be Indianapolis' next mayor. Yet Hogsett remained completely silent about the largest debate in Indianapolis city government over the issue of raising our income taxes another 10% supposedly in order to hire more police officers. Our Republican mayor, Greg Ballard, got elected largely seven years ago by bashing Hogsett's good friend, former Mayor Bart Peterson (D), and the Democratic-controlled council for raising our local income taxes 65% for that same purpose. Hogsett's silence is not what I call leadership; it's called being a coward. ❖

Elizabeth Wilner, Cook Political Report: The start of fall brings prediction time—the kind of predictions you get held to, as opposed to the predictions you lob earlier in the year that might be forgotten. Having assembled a few predictions for a Sept. 9 talk at the Television Bureau of Advertising's Forward conference, I might as well double down by providing them here. About \$2.3 billion was spent on local broadcast TV in the last midterm election cycle of 2010. Despite a vertical spike of nearly \$1 billion in local broadcast ad spend between 2010 and 2012, CMAG expects 2014's tally to settle, really settle, down to somewhere around \$2.4 billion, representing only a very modest midterm-over-midterm increase from 2010. Some of our colleagues in cable, on the other hand, have been predicting \$600 million to \$800 million in local cable ad spend for 2014, which would represent a significant increase over 2010's \$450 million and, if we all wind up being right, anywhere from 19% to 27% of 2014 TV ad spend. Rumors of local TV's aging and eventual demise as the leading medium for political advertising have abounded this year, but are greatly exaggerated. It simply has comprised too large a share of campaign ad budgets for too long to dissipate significantly within a few cycles. And if TV's audience is aging, well, seniors are a pretty key voting demographic.

Charles Blow, New York Times: Here we go again. Wednesday night, during a prime-time speech, the president laid out his plan for dealing with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, known as ISIS. He made clear that "while we have not yet detected specific plotting against our homeland," he still "will not hesitate to take action against ISIL in Syria, as well as Iraq." He called it "a comprehensive and sustained counter-terrorism strategy" and not a war. Yet, for all practical purposes, a war seems to be what it will be. And most Americans, before the speech, seemed to be on board if not leading the way. But I implore the president and the nation to proceed with caution. We can kill anti-American fighters and even their leaders, but we can't kill anti-American sentiment. To some degree, every time we commit our forces in the Middle East we run the risk of further inflaming that sentiment. For every action, there is a reaction. And there are also consequences, some of them unintended. The president said that his plan "will not involve American combat troops fighting on foreign soil." But this seems a hard thing to completely guarantee. It seems reasonable to worry that it could lead to at least some American boots on the ground and some American blood soaked into it. ❖

Donnelly flags more suicides

WASHINGTON - U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly said Wednesday that the latest data on military suicides show why it's important that Congress approve his legislation requiring yearly mental health assessments for all service members (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette).

The Department of Defense reported this week that 120 members of the military had taken their lives in the first quarter of calendar year 2014. "They are on the same pace as last year, which just further reinforces the need for the legislation that we authored," Donnelly said in a conference call with reporters on National Suicide Prevention Day. The Pentagon reported 475 suicides in 2013 and 522 the previous year. The number of first-quarter 2014 military suicides included 74 active-duty personnel, 24 Reservists and 22 members of the National Guard. Lt. Col. Cathy Van Bree, public affairs officer for the Indiana National Guard, said in an email that one of the suicides was a member of the Indiana Guard.



and Wisconsin cases just decided last week by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit. The 10th and 4th Circuits previously ruled in the other cases. The court could agree to hear one or more cases this winter; deny them all, or delay its decision for a while.

In all five states, federal district and appellate judges have agreed that state bans on same-sex marriage should be struck down as unconstitutional. But those decisions are on hold pending the Supreme Court's review.

Both sides seek SCOTUS ruling

INDIANAPOLIS — Opponents and supporters of same-sex marriages alike are trying to persuade the U.S. Supreme Court to take up Indiana's case to decide once and for all whether gay marriage should be legal in all 50 states (Associated Press). In documents filed late Tuesday, lawyers for Indiana gay couples who have won their case so far in federal courts asked the high court to weigh in on the issue, just hours after the state attorney general's office did the same thing. Both the state and gay marriage supporters believe the Constitution is on their side. National gay rights group Lambda Legal, the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana and others involved in the case said in a brief filed jointly that a federal appeals court got it right when it struck down Indiana's gay marriage ban. The move came just hours after Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller asked the Supreme Court to reverse that ruling. Zoeller took that issue even further Wednesday, asking the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals to allow the status quo to remain in place until the Supreme Court can decide the issue, and saying the Indiana case presents the best opportunity to resolve the debate.

SCOTUS marriage case on Sept. 29

WASHINGTON -- The Supreme Court has scheduled same-sex marriage cases from five states for consideration at its Sept. 29 private conference, indicating no hesitation to dive right into the national debate (USA Today). The justices placed cases from Utah, Oklahoma, Virginia, Indiana and Wisconsin on the list for their first conference of the 2014 term. They could have delved into some or none, preferring to wait until later in the fall. By scheduling all for consideration simultaneously, the justices gave equal footing to the Indiana

State posts assets on website

INDIANAPOLIS — State Auditor Suzanne Crouch is touting a new search engine that allows residents to examine Indiana's \$13 billion in assets. The new online tool includes everything from state buildings to vehicles valued at \$500 or more (Associated Press). Crouch, who is seeking re-election in November, touted the new search tool Wednesday. According to the database, the state owns more than 4,200 buildings, close to 11,000 vehicles and more than 67,000 computers and other technology. It also includes quirkier entries, like the number of stump cutters owned by the Department of Natural Resources.

AP says NFL had Rice video in April

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — A law enforcement official says he sent a video of Ray Rice punching his then-fiancee to an NFL executive five months ago, while league executives have insisted they didn't see the violent images until this week. The person played The Associated Press a 12-second voicemail from an NFL office number on April 9 confirming the video arrived. A female voice expresses thanks and says: "You're right. It's terrible." The law enforcement official, speaking to the AP on condition of anonymity because of the ongoing investigation, says he had no further communication with any NFL employee and can't confirm anyone watched the video. The person said they were unauthorized to release the video but shared it unsolicited, because they wanted the NFL to have it before deciding on Rice's punishment. The NFL has repeatedly said it asked for but could not obtain the video of Rice hitting Janay Palmer — who is now his wife — at an Atlantic City casino in February.