



Ritz eyes ed showdown with Pence

Key question is whether superintendent's movement can derail John Gregg

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – It was noon on Friday, Nov. 6, 2003, as citizen Mitch Daniels stood among diners at Don & Dona's restaurant in downtown Franklin. Over his shoulder on TV was Gov. Joe Kernan, reversing his stunning announcement from the year prior not to run in 2004. Kernan pledged a "vision of every child will be healthy and have a world class education and every Hoosier will have the opportunity to earn a good living" while Hoosiers would be "safe from threats both inside and outside of Indiana."

Daniels welcomed Kernan back to the race. "No one can predict the ultimate political effect, but from a citizen's standpoint, this is absolutely for the best," he said. "It makes the questions before us completely plain. Do we have the kind of economic opportunity we want for our kids and for the least fortunate among us, or should we aim higher? As taxpayers, are we satisfied with the quality and perfor-



Supt. Glenda Ritz announced her gubernatorial candidacy at Ben Davis HS in Indianapolis Thursday morning, saying she is the best Democrat to defeat Gov. Mike Pence. (HPI Photos by Mark Curry)

mance of state government, or should we expect more? After 16 years of one-party rule by career politicians do we want to start fresh, or not?"

This history lesson is worth repeating today. This

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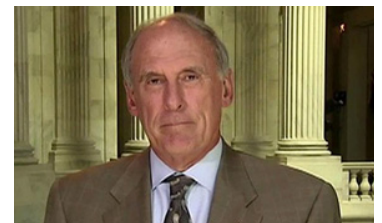
Ritz network reactivates

By **MAUREEN HAYDEN**
 CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – School teacher Sharon Adams was a loyal, straight-ticket-voting Republican until an unknown fellow educator named Glenda Ritz jumped into the race for state schools' chief three years ago. Before she even punched the ballot for the Democrat, Adams launched a social media website, Republicans for Ritz, to galvanize like-minded voters. As Ritz now plans to enter a crowded race to take on incumbent Republican Gov. Mike Pence, Adams is re-activating her online network.



"I will do anything I can to get this woman elected gover-



"There is no evidence to support accusations of abuse or unlawful spying on Americans."

- U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, who was sharply critical of Sen. Rand Paul over blocking the Patriot Act. Coats voted for the USA Freedom Act.



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nor,” she said. “Like the last time, it’s going to be all about the grassroots effort.”

Ritz clearly will need the help if she hopes to succeed. The former school librarian, who’d never held public office until winning the statewide race for superintendent of public instruction in 2012, faces long odds.

With her campaign kickoff this morning, she’ll enter the 2016 governor’s race with a fraction of the millions of dollars that Pence has already raised. Nor will she have the early labor endorsements picked up by John Gregg, her opponent in the Democratic primary, who narrowly lost the 2012 governor’s race to Pence.

But Ritz also enters the race with supporters like Adams, who helped harness discontent among teachers with a stealth social media campaign that brought down Republican Tony Bennett. The heavily favored incumbent outspent Ritz 10 to 1 in an election that gave the GOP a super majority in the General Assembly. In beating Bennett, Ritz also garnered more votes in her race than Pence did in his.

“If people get to the polls, it changes everything,” said Rick Muir, president of the American Federation of Teachers in Indiana, which helped elect Ritz the first time. The ATF has yet to endorse in the governor’s race. But Muir said many teachers remain angry about sweeping changes made by Republicans in the Statehouse, first championed by Bennett and then-Gov. Mitch Daniels, and continued under Pence.

More money is now directed to private school vouchers, while teacher pay is increasingly tied to student performance in a system that teachers say is unfair. In what was seen as a personal assault on Ritz, Pence pushed and later signed a bill to remove her from her key role as chairwoman of the State Board of Education.

“Without a doubt, there’s very strong support for Glenda among teachers,” Muir said.

An April poll found growing

sentiment for her among the electorate, as well. The non-partisan Indiana Howey Politics Poll conducted by Republican pollster Christine Matthews of Bellwether Research found Ritz trailing Pence by just a few points in a hypothetical race. That was when Ritz was just hinting at a run for governor and before she spent any of the meager \$132,000 in her campaign war chest.

Ritz is used to being a spend-thrift, relying more on supporters’ fervor than cash. In 2012, she spent only \$300,000, compared to Bennett’s \$1.6 million and Pence’s \$6 million.

“The misread here could be the same thing that happened when she faced Tony Bennett,” said Matthews. “With almost no money and no ads up on TV, they thought, ‘She’s not a serious threat.’”

The Howey poll came soon after Pence signed the divisive Religious Freedom Restoration Act, stirring up a storm of protest. It showed Pence losing significant ground among women – Democrats and Republicans – between the ages of 30 and 65. It’s a demographic that the Ritz campaign successfully targeted last time around, Matthews said.

Much of Ritz’s money three years ago came in \$25 donations from teachers, as traditional big-money Democratic donors put their money into other races. For that contribution, donors got what was called a “campaign in a box,” a Ritz yard sign, five bumper stickers and 40 postcards they were asked to sign and send to family and friends with a plea to support Ritz. The campaign distributed more than 120,000 teacher-to-voter postcards.

Coupled with that grassroots activism was an aggressive social media campaign built by Democratic political consultant David Galvin, now Ritz’s communications director at the state Department of Education. Using Facebook and Twitter, the campaign targeted messages that tapped voters’ concerns about the changes to public education and dwindling dollars for schools. Social media had a dramatic multiplier effect as teachers, irate with

Bennett, amplified those messages. Ritz's Facebook page had reached over 1.3 million users by Election Day.

"There's no reason to believe they're not going to put that same kind of strategy in place again," Matthews said.

That's still to come. In the meantime, Ritz has scheduled multiple appearances around the state for Thursday and Friday to get the word out about her campaign. Her first stop is a public high school in Indianapolis, where she's expected to lay out reasons why she's running.

Republicans for Ritz founder Sharon Adams hopes

to be at one of this week's events. She expects Ritz to have a tougher time during this campaign than she did three years ago, since she now has a record as an elected official to run against. But she sees Ritz as more than a candidate.

"Glenda Ritz is a movement," Adams said. "And that's hard to stop." ❖

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Ritz, from page 1

morning, Democratic Supt. Glenda Ritz kicked off her gubernatorial campaign at Ben Davis High School in a low-key manner before a large media contingent and several dozen supporters. "As someone who has seen politics drive the creation of an entirely new government agency, just to take away authority from the Department of Education, I am well aware of the need to use tax dollars wisely so that Hoosiers get the government they deserve," said Ritz. "Today in Indiana, out-of-touch Republican leadership at the Statehouse embrace policies that tear Hoosiers apart instead of bringing us together. These realities are why, today, in order to move Indiana forward I am announcing my candidacy for the Democratic nomination for governor of Indiana."

But after 12 years of Republican Statehouse dominance, and after three years of Gov. Mike Pence and legislative Republicans taking aim at Ritz and her portfolio, after the CECI end-around, and sophomoric squabbling at the State Board of Education, from the citizen's standpoint, the compelling showdown would be Ritz vs. Pence.

For half a decade, Republicans have ushered in sprawling education reforms dating back to Daniels' second term, when in 2011 he, Supt. Tony Bennett and legislative Republicans dramatically changed education.

Since then, a tug-of-war has emerged as Ritz upset Bennett a year later, setting the stage for the lone plank of divided government between the Pence administration and Ritz's embattled Department of Education.

If Ritz can prove her mettle as a candidate, raise money, present a consistent message to counter the governor's claims of generational education changes under 12 years of GOP rule, and become a disciplined, on-message candidate, then Hoosiers may well have the rubber match when it comes to education policy. Candidate Ritz in 2012 ran subterranean with a paltry war chest, winning on the ability to exploit social media as female voters fled Pence and Richard Mourdock.



The education wars between Ritz and the Daniels/Pence/Bennett era are not clarion. Graduation rates and test scores have risen, with both Pence and Ritz claiming credit. But results from the move to uncap the number of charter schools and vouchers are mixed, with the new education wave not out-performing traditional public schools. Bennett's strange moves in 2012 to alter charter scores while running part of his campaign out of Statehouse servers and studios provided intrigue as opposed to sterile metrics. The din of controversy, rhetoric and propaganda shrouds the two camps. There are subplots, such as the dramatic decline in teacher candidates entering Purdue and Ball State education schools that has a "vote with your feet" twist from the next generation of potential educators. To them, the onus of results has moved from parents and students to teachers.

Not a foregone conclusion

A Pence vs. Ritz race – which at this point is far from any foregone conclusion, as John Gregg and Sen. Karen Tallian will insist – has the potential to underscore a huge policy chasm between the two parties in what appears to be an epic election cycle.

Ritz underscored her role in what she sees as an improvement on student performance, a policy area where she intends to battle Gov. Pence on where credit should land. "As a current elected official of Indiana's executive branch of government, I am proud to serve as your superintendent of public instruction," Ritz said. "I oversee the Indiana Department of Education and ensure the effective use of \$8 billion to serve our one million schoolchildren. In just two years, we have seen incredible improvement in our schools. I created the division of outreach, which proactively works with schools throughout the state to provide much needed support. These professionals are spread throughout Indiana and working in communities they know, love and want to see improve. Incredibly, that had never happened before."

Last week, Pence claimed credit for education improvement, saying that his entire legislative agenda as part of this "education session" was approved into law. He cited increased education funding (including pay for teacher performance), k-12 budget increases, a quarter billion dollars invested in career and vocational education, and an expansion of the voucher program as part of his legislative agenda that passed this session. "We wanted to do three things," Pence HPI last week. "We wanted to fund excellence, expand choice and fix what was broken."

Pence will also focus his reelection campaign on the cornerstone of his education platform, the career and vocational education that focuses on regional curriculums that fits into the needs of area business and industry, saying he has ushered in "genuine change."

Ritz's accomplishments

Ritz addressed similar topics at Ben Davis this morning. "To move forward, Indiana needs an education system that includes quality early learning opportunities for all children as well as college and career pathways for all students," Ritz explained. "We need a leader that understands the connection between education and the economy rather than simply having a partisan agenda to create more schools. Education is a catalyst for the advancement and improvement of our economy. We need an education system of equity and high quality throughout the state that will produce a well-educated and well-paid workforce."

Ritz continued, "As governor, I will work with leadership from both parties to invest in our people so that we can create and retain jobs, support essential industries, and encourage technological innovation that will drive economic growth for years to come. We must have the courage to retool for new careers and help our workers develop the high tech skills that the global economy demands. Under my leadership, the state will work with all facets of business and industry, union and nonunion, profit and not-for-profit, to act on this shared vision."

The emerging Ritz campaign points to accomplishments on these topics:

- Implemented the Outreach Division of School Improvement. The Outreach program puts experienced and trained DOE staff (all are former educators) inside our struggling schools. This is the first of its kind program in the US, and has become model for other states. Within the first year of being in the field, Outreach coordinators helped move over 100 schools from F and D status to A,B, and C status. In doing so, they helped move over 60,000 students from failing to successful schools.

- Moved us beyond the political fighting over



Common Core, and oversaw the design and implementation of new Indiana state standards.

- Fixed the broken A-F accountability system by making it about student growth instead of just a punitive pass/fail system.

- Provide a massive morale boost for teachers across the state - who had been used as political scapegoats for far too many years.

- Modernized the state's assessment system.

- Followed through with her campaign pledge to lead a statewide conversation about education in Indiana.

- Saved the state's NCLB waiver while addressing unmet promises made by the Bennett administration.

- Saved a \$3.2 million dollar federal grant that is helping the state develop its first statewide longitudinal data system.

- Formed partnerships with more than 260 community organizations to encourage children and families to read together, "Hoosier Family of Readers."

- Exposed the backroom politics of the prior administration, and conducted public business where it's supposed to be done, in public.

Pence, Ritz on other issues

Another area that Pence will accentuate comes with his Regional Cities Initiative, an \$80 million package the governor believes will be one of his most "consequential" policy endeavors. Ritz broached that area, saying, "Six million Hoosiers need to know their state cares about

their communities and their future. Our cities, counties and taxpayers deserve a state government that will work with local government to revitalize communities from the ground up," she explained. "We will bring programs closer to Hoosiers while saving tax dollars. Working together, we can make big ideas work within a conservative fiscal reality. We will make ethics and openness the highest priority."

As for the elephant on campus, Ritz brought up what many believe will be one of Pence's greatest vulnerabilities, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the fix and the coming showdown over expanding the state's civil rights code to include sexual orientation. "No candidate for this or any other office can ignore the disaster made by the current leadership, who used religious rights as a divisive political issue during the last session of the General Assembly," Ritz said as the crowd erupted into cheers. "We must respect the personal and civil rights of all of Indiana's citizens and bring forward legislation that respects the rights of all Hoosiers."

Ritz ended her speech, saying, "As the 200th anniversary of our great state approaches, I am asking you to help me become your 51st governor so that we can have leadership that listens to all sides and that respects the diversity of our great state. We need leadership that focuses on education, jobs, economic revival, and meeting the needs of our children and families by revitalizing our communities. Today in Indiana, we need to move forward. Today in Indiana, we have a lot of work to do. But we have never shied away from hard work. I am asking you to guarantee that tomorrow in Indiana will be better than today."

Afterwards, Ritz told the press questioning her about a potentially divisive primary, "I'm the best candidate to beat Mike Pence. I'm the best candidate in touch with the people. A primary is good to get out all of the issues, but we'll be united so we can defeat Gov. Pence."

Republican Chairman Jeff Cardwell said in a statement, "In Indiana, leadership matters and Gov. Mike Pence has proven to be a strong conservative voice whose principles and policies have continued to move Indiana forward. Glenda Ritz does not have a successful track record of leading those in her own department, let alone managing contracts or implementing effective policies. Hoosiers have time to decide who will be Indiana's next leader, and I'm confident they will vote to keep our state on the right track of growth, opportunity and fiscal health."

Ritz vs. Gregg, Tallian

The Ritz/Pence policy showdowns create a potentially sensational contrast. But Ritz's first challenge will be how she manages her resume and vision with Gregg, and

to a lesser extent, Sen. Karen Tallian.

Gregg enters the race as the face of the party's socially conservative old guard. While he points to his near upset of Pence in 2012, some Democrats view that as a missed opportunity after Gregg failed to find fundraising traction and was unable to get the Democratic Governors Association to invest in his race. It was an epic missed opportunity by both the nominee and the DGA. Gregg has told HPI he is moving quickly to address fundraising, bringing in a director with a national portfolio to head a three-person team. Political allies describe Gregg as "laser focused" on raising money. "You can't reach him during the day," said Jeff Harris, who is volunteering for Gregg. "He's always on the phone raising money. That's his focus."

"I'm focused on my campaign and building the team and resources needed to defeat Mike Pence in 2016, not on anyone or anything else," Gregg told HPI on Wednesday. "I'm running for governor because Indiana needs a new direction, especially after everything we've been through these last few years. I look forward to using my experience in the public and private sectors, my ability to bring people together to get things done and my vision for a better Indiana to set a new and more prosperous course for our state and its citizens."

Gregg is finding support from labor, announcing an endorsement from the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) on Wednesday, and the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada on Tuesday.

"Throughout his entire career, John Gregg has stood with working people, and we are proud to stand with him now. As a state representative, a university president, and in his work in the private sector, John Gregg has proven his commitment to improving the lives of working Hoosiers time and time again," said David Frye, Indiana District Laborers Council business manager and secretary-treasurer, speaking on behalf of his executive board and 12,000 union members.

On May 6, Gregg also picked up the endorsement from Indiana's Building Trades Unions, which represent 75,000 workers in the state. The Building Trades has the potential to give Gregg some financial momentum, though it is not known as a grassroots organizing union, Democratic sources tell HPI.

Tallian, who said at her campaign kickoff last month that she hoped Ritz would seek reelection, will position herself as the "progressive" in the field, which will find traction with part of the Democratic constituency who believe the party veered too far to the right during



the Bayh/O'Bannon/Gregg era. The classic example is the Defense of Marriage Act that Gov. O'Bannon signed a generation ago. By the 2014 showdown over the constitutional marriage amendment HJR-3, the entire Democratic Party in the General Assembly was now opposed.

Ritz came into the 2012 nomination as an unknown educator from Washington Township Schools in Indianapolis, essentially filling a constitutional office hole on the Democratic ticket. Instead of a coronation of a political prince in waiting, as was the case with the rise of Govs. Evan Bayh and Mitch Daniels, the Ritz story has more of a Harry Truman feel to it: That of an obscure figure who through a series of occurrences, often beyond the individual's control, is thrust into the higher calling and ultimately, history.

Ritz followed a long line of Democratic sacrificial lambs who were nominated, only to be defeated by resounding margins. Except that Ritz became one of those lightning-strikes stories. Raising a meager \$300,000, a fraction of the Republican incumbent Supt. Tony Bennett's, Ritz captured via social media stirring discontent in the sprawling education community, extending beyond teachers and principals into their own families and scores of questioning moms who chafed under the Daniels/Bennett school reforms that began grading their schools, diverting tax money into parochial schools, and overhauling the qualifications of teachers, principals and superintendents. When the dust settled in November 2012, Ritz had upset Bennett by 142,000 votes, out-polling Republican Mike Pence, who won the governor's race.

What Ritz faces now are the mettle and gravitas questions. Her 2012 campaign played out in subterranean fashion. While she had two public forums with Supt. Bennett during that campaign, Ritz did not engage in a formal debate. There were no statewide TV buys, only a revolutionary use of social media based on the Tahir Square/Arab Spring model, but it was enough to upset Bennett. So the 2012 will be a vastly different experience, with much more media exposure and coverage. She will likely attract support from national education groups and Emily's List.

At the advent of this race, neither Ritz, Gregg nor Tallian had much money. Gregg reported about \$130,000 on his last report, though he told HPI it shows wide support among labor unions. Ritz reported \$132,000 cash on hand on her 2014 annual report. Tallian has \$26,697 in her state senate campaign account, and has just filed organizational papers on her gubernatorial account, according to the secretary of state website.

Some view Ritz as a Democratic version of Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard, who upset Mayor Bart Peterson in 2007. However, Ballard's reelection in 2011 was a multi-million campaign. Ritz will be under immediate pressure to become competitive in the coming money wars.

Former Democratic state chairman Robin Winston, who is volunteering for Ritz, said that much of her campaign will be in place by July. But he suggested it won't be a traditional campaign. "There's a lot of grassroots

support," he said of the 60,000 teachers, their families, friends, and education retirees.

Gov. Pence's campaign has about \$3.5 million cash on hand and has been pushing its donor base heading into the second-quarter period.

Pence's IndyPride letter roils base

Gov. Pence's generic letter welcoming the IndyPride to Indianapolis pleased no one, particularly his base.

On Wednesday, Pence wrote in his letter to the LGBT community, "On behalf of the people of Indiana, welcome to Indianapolis. I am confident that those of you who traveled from out of state will come to know our famous Hoosier Hospitality."

IndyPride President Chris Morehead reacted, telling the IndyStar, "Although the letter doesn't specifically welcome LGBT to the city of Indianapolis, we appreciate that Governor Pence issued us this letter."

But Pence's base was enraged. "I wish I understood why the governor is so intent on getting rid of his base," said Monica Boyer on her Facebook page. "There was no political benefit to supporting this kind of event for him. These people wouldn't vote for him if their last breath depended on it. Why not be welcoming? This parade is not just a parade. We have pictures from last years parade that would make someone in a porn shop blush. The ones posted are the family friendly ones. This is not a simple happy family day. (although they do bring their children) It is perversion to its core. And the governor was advised to welcome them."

Boyer continued, "I don't understand. Would he also send a welcome letter to a KKK rally.... what about a Swingers convention? If we send welcome letters to everything, what good is having a moral compass? My heart breaks for my state.

American Family Association of Indiana executive director Micah Clark sent a letter to supporters Wednesday condemning Gov. Pence's decision to welcome Circle City in Pride to Indianapolis – something Pence's predecessor former Gov. Mitch Daniels also did (WRTV). Although Clark concedes Pence's letter is "benign" – it makes no reference to the festival's LGBT participants, instead focusing almost exclusively on "Hoosier Hospitality" – he nevertheless said he "may burn a bridge" with Pence and his staff over it.

Clark cited Bible verses, including Romans 6:13 says, "Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness . . ." Ephesians 5:11 says, "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."

"I don't know how one can describe what goes on at the Indy Pride event and parades as anything but controversial, but why Governor Pence would welcome this at all, when not all events in Indianapolis receive a welcome letter from the Governor just boggles my mind, and it breaks my heart." ❖

Hill files for Senate; Zoeller, Houchin eye 9th CD scramble

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – Former Democratic congressman Baron Hill officially entered the U.S. Senate race Wednesday. “Today I will be filing to run for the United States Senate because working people across Indiana need a fighter,” Hill said. “That’s what I’ve been, and that’s what always I’ll be.”



He is the first Democrat to enter the race for the seat being vacated by U.S. Sen. Dan Coats’ retirement. It is a seat he unsuccessfully sought in 1990, losing a closer-than-expected race to Coats. Hill joins a race

that includes Republican U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman and former Republican chairman Eric Holcomb, while U.S. Rep. Todd Young and State Sens. Mike Delph and Jim Merritt all appear to be preparing to enter. It sets up a potential rematch with Young, who defeated Hill for the 9th CD seat in 2010.

The out-sized shadow in this race is former Democrat senator Evan Bayh, who has not ruled out a potential return to the seat he gave up in 2010, setting up Coats’ return to the Senate. Bayh sits on a hard-to-ignore as well as unprecedented \$10 million war chest. Another Democrat, State Rep. Christina Hale of Indianapolis, is also weighing a potential candidacy.

“There’s a reason Indiana is known as America’s heartland; it’s because we’re America’s heart and soul,” Hill said in a statement this morning. “Growing up in Seymour, I learned the values that make Indiana great. We work hard, care for our neighbors, respect each other, and sacrifice so our children can live a better life. We face a crisis today as a people and as a nation,” Hill said. “For too long, working people across America have been counted out, and left out, of our economic progress. And far too often, the deck is stacked against us in Washington and it is getting harder for average people who work hard and play by the rules

to get ahead. We can either put our heads in the sand, or we can fight to restore the American Dream, the middle class, and what’s great about Indiana. I know we can do better, and I believe we can build an economy where everyone has the chance to succeed. That’s what I’ll fight for as a senator representing Indiana.”

Stutzman lists endorsements

Stutzman released a list of endorsements this morning. “I am honored and humbled to have the support of so many of Indiana’s conservative leaders,” said Stutzman. “Their support reinforces the fact that Hoosiers are ready for a proven, tested conservative leader in the U.S. Senate. I will always have the courage and conviction to do the right thing for Hoosier families.”

The list of endorsements includes Senate President Pro Tempore David Long (D16). “Marlin Stutzman understands the three critical issues of the day for our country: getting our runaway federal spending reined in; saving our economy from the crushing burdens of federal regulation; and protecting our nation from threats abroad,” said Long. “He can make a tough vote and has proven that he will stand up to the status quo in Washington when he believes it’s the right thing to do for his state and country. He is the right choice to be Indiana’s next U.S. Senator, and he has my full support.”

A full list of the endorsements:

Indiana Senate: Jim Banks (D17), Liz Brown (D15), Doug Eckerty (D26), Jon Ford (D38), Susan Glick (13), Randy Head, Assistant Majority Floor Leader – Communications, (D18), Travis Holdman, Assistant Majority Whip, (D19), Dennis Kruse (D14), James Tomes, Assistant Majority Caucus Chair, (D49), Greg Walker (D41), Carlin Yoder (D12), and Joe Zakas, Majority Floor Leader Emeritus, (D11). Indiana House: Lloyd Arnold (D74), Jim Baird (D44), Greg Beumer (D33), Martin Carbaugh (D81), Casey Cox (D85), Wes Culver (D49), Dale DeVon (D5), Tim Harman (D17), Chris Judy (D83), Matthew Lehman, Deputy Speaker Pro Tempore, (D79), Daniel Leonard (D50), Doug Miller (D48), Bob Morris (D84), Curt Nisly (D22), David Ober, Assistant Majority Whip, (D82), Thomas Saunders (D54), Benjamin Smaltz (D52), Jeffery Thompson (D28), Timothy Wesco (D21), David Wolkins (D18) and Dennis Zent (D51)



Then-congressman Baron Hill with volunteers at the Monroe County Democratic HQ in Bloomington in 2010. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

9th CD

The open Indiana U.S. Senate seat had the potential to scramble Hoosier politics in ways unforeseen, and now that extends to the 9th CD. Republican U.S. Rep. Todd Young hasn't made a final decision on whether to enter the U.S. Senate race in lieu of reelection, but if he does, Attorney General Greg Zoeller will consider a return home to run.

"I wouldn't rule it out if Todd makes that decision," Zoeller told Howey Politics Indiana Monday evening. "Most of my family is from that part of the district." The two-term attorney general hails from New Albany, and told HPI that after spending a good part of his career in Washington working for former senator and Vice President Dan Quayle, and then in Indianapolis, "At some point I'd like to return home, live on the river," Zoeller said, though he added that he dislikes the speculation given that Young hasn't made a decision on his future.

Zoeller said that a number of Republicans in the 9th CD are "anxious" that Young will leave shortly after attaining a seat on the influential Ways & Means Committee and have been reaching out to him in preparation for that scenario. "The economic engine is running full speed," he said of the 9th CD, prompting key business leaders and Republicans to begin preparing for politics if Young moves on.

Young has said for more than a month that he is "prepared" to seek the seat being vacated by the retiring U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, but hasn't made a final decision. However, informed and reliable sources are telling HPI that Young is more likely than not to seek the Senate seat. Over the weekend, former state Republican chairs Al Hubbard and Jim Kittle Jr., wrote a letter urging Young to seek the Senate as well as asking Republicans to hold off in choosing sides until Young makes that decision.

The Bloomington Republican would be a formidable candidate, having defeated former congressman Mike Sodrel in the 2010 Republican primary, then reloading to upset Democrat U.S. Rep. Baron Hill that November. During that cycle, Young raised more than a million dollars in the primary, then almost matched that amount in the general. Young has raised more than \$5.9 million in three election cycles and sits on a war chest of \$1.4 million, by far the most of the emerging Senate field.

Informed and reliable sources tell HPI that State Sen. Brent Waltz of Greenwood, State Sen. Erin Houchin of Salem and State Rep. Peggy Mayfield of Martinsville are pondering potential candidacies if Young doesn't seek reelection. Waltz was in Washington, D.C. last month



Attorney General Greg Zoeller is eying a potential 9th CD run if U.S. Rep. Todd Young runs for the U.S. Senate.

preparing for a candidacy. Houchin was in Washington, D.C., Wednesday, meeting with party officials about a possible run for Congress. Houchin plans to meet with members of the Indiana Congressional delegation and officials at the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Zoeller himself has a history of out-performing expectations. He won the attorney general nomination in 2008, defeating Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas at the Republican convention despite the mayor's backing from Gov. Mitch Daniels. Zoeller polled 1.3 million votes in 2008 (just

shy of Daniels' 1.5 million) and led the Republican ticket in 2012 when he was reelected with 1.45 million votes.

As attorney general, Zoeller has picked up the legal mantle for a number of causes popular with Republicans, including challenging the legality of Obamacare as well as defending traditional marriage.

Superintendent speculation

The musical chairs stemming from the governor's race with Supt. Glenda Ritz opting for that race, as well as a potential open attorney general seat if incumbent Zoeller opts for the 9th CD are in full swing.

Democratic sources tell HPI that State Rep. Terry Goodin and SBOE member Gordon Hendry of Indianapolis are weighing potential bids. Goodin is superintendent of Crothersville schools in Jackson County. Hendry is an SBOE gubernatorial appointee of Gov. Pence.

On the Republican side, outgoing SBOE member Brad Oliver is also pondering a candidacy. Oliver said in a statement, "I am considering how I can best serve the children in our state as an educational leader. My entire professional career has been anchored in making a difference for kids and the teachers who serve them. While I have not made a decision at this time about running for state superintendent of public instruction, I believe Indiana's student achievement gains are being compromised due to poor leadership at the Indiana Department of Education."

Oliver continued, "Our schools rely on the leadership of the Department of Education and many school districts are struggling to receive timely, accurate responses to questions involving state education policy. The only way this will be remedied is by electing a strong bipartisan leader as state superintendent who makes decisions purely on the basis of what is in the best interests of all children

in our state and regardless of whether or not they attend a public, public charter, or private school. I will continue to pray about how and where I can best influence education policy that respects the challenging work of teachers and works to create prosperous opportunities for our state and our children."

Oliver was an unsuccessful candidate for HD34 in 2012. Ironically, he caught national media attention when he left the Delaware County Fair after Republicans had set up a President Obama punching bag. Oliver later issued a statement saying he was "unable to reconcile my own personal and political convictions with an inflatable punching bag depicting an inappropriate and offensive image of the president of the United States." He told the Muncie Star Press he felt a responsibility to "help our children learn the art of political civility and the need to listen and respect the diverse views of others."

Attorney general speculation

With Attorney General Zoeller potentially opting for the 9th CD, that race could be wide open. One scenario a prominent Republican advanced a month ago had the chain-reaction going like this: Rep. Young opts for the Senate race, Zoeller runs in the 9th CD, U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita comes home to seek the open attorney general office, which would give him a potential platform to seek a potentially open gubernatorial seat. An open 4th CD, in this scenario, could bring in State Sen. Brandt Horseman, Frankfort Mayor Chris McBarnes, or, as one Republican source told HPI, with Young playing for Daniels/GOP wing support, current candidate Eric Holcomb might reconsider his options and run in the 4th.

Another GOP option could be Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas, who lost the AG nomination to Zoeller in 2008. Costa is seeking a third term this year.

As for Democrats, names surfacing include Sen. Karen Tallian, should she decide to get out of the gubernatorial race, and Indianapolis attorney Bill Groth.

Presidential

Cruz super PAC claims \$37M raised

Three of the top ten conservative donors in the last presidential election are giving to the super PACs supporting Ted Cruz that now claim to have raised more than \$37 million to support his bid, a shocking haul and donor list for such a populist Republican candidate amid a crowded 2016 field (CNN). Florida businessman John W. Childs and Houston Texans owner Bob McNair have committed to support Cruz, according to a leader of the super PAC. Together, the pair committed about \$7.5 million to conservative outside groups in 2012, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. Major Republican donor Robert Mercer, whose family foundation's accountant serves as the treasurer for one of the the Texas senator's super PACs, is also expected to have donated substantially to the

groups. Together, this trifecta of donors could give lift to a fundraising operation once predicted to lag significantly behind its competitors.

Perry kicks off campaign

Rick Perry announced his presidential campaign on Thursday with the launch of a new campaign website and video (Politico). The website and video are both paid for by Perry for President Inc. The video features footage of Perry interacting with the public and speaking at last month's Southern Republican Leadership Conference, saying that Americans deserve a leader who will tell them the truth. "If we're going to revive this American dream again, we need a president who provides leadership that transcends the petty partisanship that we've seen in the last few years, someone that's been tested," the former governor of Texas says, as images of American landscapes and landmarks like the U.S. Capitol and the Gateway Arch flash across the screen. "We need a president who will tell the American people the truth." "We have the power to make our country new again. We don't have accept the weakness abroad that we're seeing today," Perry said

Hillary's polling problems

Hillary Clinton has a numbers problem (Politico). No question, as her retinue of aides and supporters is quick to point out, she still polls better than any of her putative Republican rivals. And yes, it was inevitable that as she moved squarely into the political arena, Americans would see her as less of an above-the-fray stateswoman and more of a partisan Democrat. And of course it's still June 2015 — six months before any actual voters will be picking sides in an Iowa caucus room, and well over a year before the main event. But still: Her untrustworthy ratings are stubbornly high, and perhaps most alarming of all for Team Hillary, the "so-called scandals," as Clinton campaign operatives like to refer to them, are starting to take their toll on her favorability numbers, sending chills down the spines of Democrats who have put all their eggs in the Hillary basket. It's a huge turnabout from September 2011, when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the widely admired globe-trotting diplomat, logged her highest favorability rating ever in a CNN poll — 69 percent. In a new CNN/ORC poll released Tuesday, she was down to 46 percent. Even worse for her, the poll showed Clinton with her highest unfavorability ratings of the past 14 years — 50 percent, putting her underwater. A separate poll released Tuesday by The Washington Post and ABC News found that Clinton's favorability was just 45 percent, the lowest in that survey since April 2008, when she was in the middle of a tough primary fight against Barack Obama. ❖

Carson doesn't duck conversations on faith

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – U.S. Rep. Andre Carson entered a synagogue in this city bearing a kippah, the traditional Jewish head covering, and a joke. "I look like a Jewish George Foreman," said Carson, who does indeed bear a passing resemblance to the bald, burly, black boxer, though Carson is two and a half decades younger.

The line got a laugh from an audience that offered what may seem like an unexpectedly warm welcome.

Carson is Muslim, one of only two in Congress.

In January, the Indianapolis congressman was the first Muslim to be named to the House's super-secret Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, an appointment that raised the ire of arch-conservatives who called him a "Trojan horse" for Islamic extremists.

Hosting last week's event, where Carson spoke, was the Indianapolis Jewish Relations Council, the advocacy arm of the city's organized Jewish community and an unapologetic supporter of Israel.

The council and Carson, elected in 2008, haven't always agreed on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. But council leaders have defended him as a patriotic American, something that he greatly appreciates.

Lindsey Mintz, the council's executive director, thanked Carson for helping build a bridge between the Jewish and Muslim communities and for engaging in hard discussions of faith.

In turn, Carson thanked the council for its invitation. Then he launched into a question-and-answer session that covered, among other things, his three trips to Israel, his meeting last summer with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and persistent rumors that the U.S. president is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood devoted to turning the world into an Islamist empire.

Carson didn't turn away, even when the evening's moderator offered him an out.

"I don't think politicians should run from these kinds of conversations," he said.

Carson's largely pro-Israel voting record helped give him credence with his audience, who later fed him dessert and inquired about his wife, Mariama, a public school principal.

But so, too, does his background. Carson's a Baptist by birth who was educated in Catholic schools. He was a teenage convert to Islam after seeing Muslims chase away drug dealers in his neighborhood.

Before he was elected to Congress in a majority-white district represented by his grandmother, Julia Carson, for nearly two decades, Andre Carson was in law enforcement with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, working to streamline data-sharing among intelligence agencies.

Before his appointment to the committee that oversees intelligence and counter-terrorism efforts, he was on House Armed Service Committee.

Still, his motives get questioned because of his

faith. He shared stories of that with his audience last week, with a dose of humor.

"There are people who think somehow because I'm Muslim, I'm un-American, that I'm part of some kind of sleeper cell," he said. "I think they watch too much 'Home-land.'"

Carson has taken grief for being sympathetic to supporters of Israel and grief for not being Muslim-enough.

He was criticized for speaking at a national conference of Muslim organizations in Chicago

last December. Then he was criticized for chastising some of those organizations for using religion as an excuse for bigotry and the mistreatment of women.

After last week's meeting with Indianapolis Jewish Relations Council, Carson recalled his experience as a teenager of being pulled over by white police officers who were suspicious of him.

It was an early lesson in explaining himself to doubters, he said, and has helped shape the person he is today.

"Having to explain yourself and to defend what you do is good for any politician." ❖

Maureen Hayden covers the Statehouse for CNHI's Indiana newspapers. Reach her at mhayden@cni.com. Follow her on Twitter @MaureenHayden



Significant tax relief for Hoosier farmers

By **LARRY De BOER**

WEST LAFAYETTE – Farmers are worried about property taxes on farmland. So are the governor and members of the General Assembly. They did something about it on April 29 in the closing hours of the 2015 legislative session.

Senate Bill 436 includes significant property tax relief for farmland owners. The bill passed unanimously in both houses and was signed by the governor on May 6 as Public Law 249. You can see the details of the law on the General Assembly's website, <https://iga.in.gov>. Click on "Legislation," then "Bills," then scroll down to "SB436."



Farmland taxes are addressed in Section 7. I recommend the fiscal note for the clearest explanation of the tax changes.

The problem is this: Rising commodity prices and low interest rates made for rapid increases in

the base rate of farmland, which is the starting point for the assessment of farm acreage for property taxes. The base rate is recalculated each year by the Department of Local Government Finance, using a capitalization formula. The base rate was \$880 per acre for taxes in 2007 and is \$2,050 this year. It was to be \$2,420 in 2016 and expected to hit \$3,050 by 2018. As a result, agriculture's property taxes have increased by 47 percent since 2007 while total property taxes have fallen by 6 percent.

SB 436 freezes the base rate at \$2,050 per acre for taxes in 2016. That's 15 percent less than the \$2,420 rate that the DLGF announced last December. The freeze lasts for one year. After that, the calculation will multiply the previous year's base rate by the assessed value growth quotient. And what, do tell, is that?

The AVGQ is the percentage that local governments can increase their maximum property tax levies each year. Some version of the AVGQ has been in use at least since 1979, but the current formula was invented in 2002. It's the six-year average of the percentage increase in Indiana nonfarm personal income, which is estimated by the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis. The calculation ensures that property taxes won't rise faster than people's incomes over any six-year period. The AVGQ calculation excludes farm income because it can be so variable.

The DLGF updates the quotient in June each year to set the limit on levies in the following year. The June 2014 calculation resulted in a 2.7-percent limit for levies in 2015. The calculation for 2016 will be released soon, and it looks like the result will be 2.5 percent.

The quotients have been pretty low in recent years because of the income figure from 2009. That was the worst year of the Great Recession, when Indiana personal income fell 2.9 percent. The negative number first entered the calculation for levies and taxes in 2011. In 2017 it will drop out of the calculation, and the AVGQ will be closer to 3.5 percent.

Under SB 436, the \$2,050 farmland base rate will rise 2.5 percent for taxes in 2017, to \$2,101. That's 24 percent lower than the estimated \$2,770 base rate from the capitalization formula. For taxes in 2018, an AVGQ of 3.5 percent would put the base rate at \$2,175. That's 29 percent less than the estimated \$3,050 under the old formula.

It's significant tax relief for farmland owners. The Legislative Services Agency's fiscal note estimates that farmland property taxes will be about \$52 million lower in 2016, \$87 million lower in 2017 and \$111 million lower in 2018, compared with what would have happened under the capitalization formula.

Farmland property taxes still may go up but by much less than they would have. Of course, this means that other taxpayers will pay more taxes, and local governments will receive less revenue than they would have.

SB 436 also asks a legislative study committee to take up the issue of farmland assessment this summer. The law changes the base rate calculation permanently, but it's probably not intended as permanent solution. The Supreme Court requires assessments to be based on "objective measures of property wealth," and the new formula is not a recognized method for calculating value.

So there's more debate to come. But the law means that, while the Legislature is grappling with the issue, farm property tax increases will be much, much smaller. ❖

DeBoer is a professor of agriculture economics at Purdue University.

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YOUR FRIENDS ALL HANG OUT HERE... DO YOU?

Hoosier tonic for a sour Spring

By **MORTON MARCUS**

GREENFIELD – In this Spring of our discontent with our state government, my columns became unusually negative. Many readers chastised me for that. They believe Indiana is in great shape economically because of the wise diet prescribed by our state's leadership. Whereas I had indigestion from this diet, these readers felt satisfied and fulfilled.

To treat my dyspepsia, I went on a road trip. My first stop was the Greenfield Daily Reporter where I met with Editor Noelle Steele and Advertising Director John Senger. Local editors and advertising directors are often the people most knowledgeable about a place. To do their jobs properly, they must understand and be responsive to the economic and social dynamics of the place.



You probably know Greenfield as the birthplace of James Whitcomb Riley, whose poetry glorified an Indiana passing faster than he could write. Today it is the urbanized hub of slowly suburbanizing Hancock County and home to Elanco, the international animal health and food safety company given birth by Eli Lilly and Company.

The front page of the Daily Reporter for May 23 told contemporary stories of the community, stories familiar throughout Indiana.

"Contractor pleads guilty in fraud case" related how a man bilked homeowners with promises of storm damage repair, but did no such work.

"No place like ... Hancock County?" detailed the increase in the county's housing units. One euphoric local observer believes, "People are looking to get away from the hustle and bustle of Marion County." The article correctly notes the county's growth is decidedly slower than other Indianapolis suburban counties.

"Commissioners lay out plans to fund repairs" outlined the steps toward a bond issue necessary to make even minor fixes to public facilities. The crush on local funds is a statewide crisis bequeathed by the Indiana legislature.

Finally, "Area grants will help fund makeover for Penny Trail leg" expressed hope that \$8,000 can stimulate art projects along a local rail-to-trails route. Such popular projects in Indiana often erupt into delightful disputes over what is and is not art.

My next stop was New Castle in Henry County where the automotive industry and basketball left indelible stories. Lisa Perry, managing editor of the Courier Times whisked me out of her office for an instructive tour of

downtown.

When I drove into town, I made the mistake of looking at the empty or under-utilized store fronts. Lisa reminded me of my own injunction: You have to look up at the upper stories to get the full story.

There is new money flowing into New Castle to refurbish and restore buildings with retail activity along Broad Street. There is new energy, in the person of Corey Murphy, at the Economic Development Corporation. And no one talked about what is gone, what old dreams were not realized, or what insurmountable obstacles remain.

Nothing boosts my spirits like meeting Hoosiers who are effectively serving their communities with valid hope for our future. ❖

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



Chamber forecasts growth

INDIANAPOLIS — An annual Indiana Chamber of Commerce statewide workforce survey reinforces a common theme: Indiana companies are prepared to grow, but nearly three-quarters of the 526 respondents report that filling their workforce is challenging.

Economic prospects are bright. Fifty-eight percent of respondents expect the size of their workforce to increase in the next 12 to 24 months and another 38% anticipate stable employee counts. These mirror 2014 numbers (57% and 39%, respectively) and reinforce a shift from 2013 when just 36% foresaw growth and 59% looked at no changes in employee numbers.

As far as finding those employees, 74% note the challenge – with 24% reporting that "filling our workforce is our biggest challenge." These results are a slight increase from 2014 findings of 72% indicating a challenge and 19% labeling it their biggest issue. Forty-three percent report they have left jobs unfilled in Indiana due to under-qualified candidates (a 4% increase over 2014).

"**The continued positive** outlook from Indiana employers is encouraging," contends Indiana Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Kevin Brinegar. "But despite various programs and local examples of strong education-business connections, it's clear that much more work remains to provide workers with the skills they need for today's and tomorrow's jobs."

"It's important to hear the voice of Indiana employers – and for educators and workforce development professionals to partner with businesses to help meet their needs," confirms Dr. Allison Barber, chancellor of WGU Indiana. "Addressing the skills gap and preparing both students and current members of the workforce for the next phase of their careers is an essential role for all involved in this profession." ❖

Public backing for war from Congress

By LEE HAMILTON

BLOOMINGTON – If we are going to send U.S. forces into dangerous places, they need to go in with the public backing that comes from a formal authorization hammered out in Congress.

A few weeks ago, Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia made a small splash in the press when he took Congress to task for failing to authorize our nation's ongoing war against Islamic militants. "The silence of Congress in the midst of this war is cowardly and shameful," he said. "This Congress, the very body that is so quick to argue against President Obama's use of executive power... allows an executive war to go on undeclared, unapproved, undefined and unchecked."



Those were strong words, meant to spur Congress to action. Yet after a day or two, they sank without a trace. No one in the media picked up the call. No one in a position to influence the

Senate or the House made a move to advance a congressional war authorization.

Indeed, it has been three months since President Obama sent his proposal for an "Authorization for the Use of Military Force" focused on ISIS to Capitol Hill. It, too, met with a brief flurry of attention and then went nowhere.

This is mind-boggling. If you had any question that we're at war, the bombing runs over Ramadi and the recent Delta Force raid that killed an ISIS official should have settled it. On the most important question government faces, military intervention overseas, Congress seems unable to stir itself to hammer out an agreement with the President. You can blame the President for this or you can blame Congress – each side comes in for its fair share – but inaction only expands the power of the President, leaving him to make hugely consequential decisions by himself. It's a shocking dereliction of duty on Capitol Hill.

Why do I say this? The Constitution vests in Congress the power to declare war, but should that mean that Congress also has the responsibility to do so?

Let's start with this: Former acting CIA director Michael Morell recently said that the "great war" against Islamic terrorists is likely to last "for as long as I can see." This is going to be a long and difficult conflict. It raises tough questions about the scope of the President's powers, the duration of those powers, the definition and identity of the enemy, the extent of the field of battle, the kinds of force that should be used, America's vital interests, and its fundamental role in the world.

The decision to apply American lives and resources to such a war is momentous, and as a country we need to know how far we're willing to commit ourselves. The President needs backing for a military campaign, and the discussion about what it ought to entail needs to be open and rigorous.

I understand that this is a lot for Congress to undertake. A resolution authorizing the use of force is tough to draft; Congress needs to make the parameters and goals of military action clear without hindering our ability to respond to a fluid situation or micromanaging the executive branch. And, of course, it's just as tough politically. Some members will want to give more powers to the President, others less. No one wants to be on the wrong side of a war vote.

But the difficulty of a task is no reason to avoid it. If we are going to send U.S. forces into dangerous places, they need to go in with the public backing that comes from a formal authorization hammered out in Congress. This does not mean enacting a resolution after we've intervened, because then it's an argument about supporting our troops in the field, and only a few members will vote against that.

Both the President and Congress are dragging their feet on this, but that only helps the President, not the country. It leaves him, and most likely his successor, with dangerously broad authority to use military force without restriction, in perpetuity. This is not how a democracy like ours should operate.

The American people are beginning to understand all this. They overwhelmingly believe that Congress needs to weigh in on the government's war-making powers. Yet that seems to mean nothing to Washington. "Cowardly and shameful," Sen. Kaine said. That pretty much sums it up.



Lee Hamilton is director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.



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South Bend growing on its 150th birthday

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – With focus on South Bend’s big 150th anniversary celebration, honoring glories past, some news with a lot of significance for future years slipped by with little attention. The big news was, of course, the success of the ambitious three-day event, drawing tens of thousands of people each day to a safe and vibrant downtown South Bend. Predictions of the naysayers were wrong.

The little-noticed news came from the Census Bureau in estimates of 2014 population changes. South Bend is growing. Not by a lot, but growing again for the third time in the four annual estimates since the official 2010 Census. Estimated 2014 population: 101,190. Official total in 2010 Census: 100,990.



Such slight growth might not seem significant. But it is after the way census after census, decade after decade,

showed South Bend population dropping from a high of 132,445 in 1960. The plummeting started with the 1963 demise of Studebaker automotive production in the city and continued with loss of other manufacturing jobs. Amid gloom and joblessness from Studebaker’s departure, there developed a “can’t do” attitude.

Naysayers opposed doing much of anything. If they had prevailed in opposition to a baseball stadium, there would be no South Bend Cubs bringing record crowds from all around the area.

That entrepreneurial spirit of the city’s founders, dreamers with big plans, was replaced by pessimism, not everywhere but voiced too often, fostering a negative image. A “can’t do” and “woe is us” attitude dashes big dreams and is a nightmare for economic development.

Naysayers looked at the 2010 Census and said South Bend soon would drop way below 100,000 population. We’ve even heard the prediction that “South Bend will be another Gary.” Predictions of the naysayers are wrong. All the economic development and new housing that we see indicates that the growth found in the census

estimate will continue. Slow growth. Not boom times. But growth rather than decline.

Another Gary?

Gary unfortunately continues to decline, from a 1960 population of 178,320 down to just 77,909 in the 2014 estimate. No, South Bend isn’t another Gary. Nor has the past decline in population been as severe as in some other cities hit by loss of manufacturing. We have Notre Dame.

Now, also, there is a return of a “can do” spirit. New use is found for old, seemingly doomed hotel buildings and abandoned Studebaker structures. A thousand vacant houses, deteriorating eyesores that can become sites for crime, are being fixed up or torn down.

Success of the 150th birthday bash was important not just for South Bend. The whole area often is defined by the image of the major city. Fights, shootings, stabbings or intimidation by rowdy groups would have tarnished the area image. Naysayers recalled how the once popular Ethnic Festival and its later version known as Summer in the City were abandoned when city officials said police couldn’t control gangs at the events.

Police certainly didn’t surrender to any punks this time. There was no trouble. No arrests. Amazing for such huge crowds. Or maybe not. Downtown already had become more safe. Statistics show that only 3 percent of city crime occurs in the downtown area.

Police use innovative methods these days to fight crime, not just to prevent it downtown but to cope with it in troubled neighborhoods. They work with the U.S. attorney’s office and other law enforcement agencies in the Group Violence Intervention program. ShotSpotter sensors detect shooting in an area with gang activity and pinpoint the location. This doesn’t mean there won’t be a

triple murder somewhere in the city today. With the proliferation of guns, additional shootings are inevitable.

Problems remain. Some big. Growth is small. Studebaker won’t return. Department stores won’t be back downtown. Population won’t return soon to the 1960 level. Crime won’t vanish. Now, however, South Bend is back – back from the “can’t do” fostered by naysayers

whose predictions of doom were wrong. ❖



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

The need for a clean Democratic primary

By **SHAW FRIEDMAN**

LaPORTE – It’s becoming more and more evident by the day that we’re looking at a contested Democratic primary for governor. For a party looking to get back into power after being gone from the governor’s office for over a decade, a contested primary isn’t optimal, but it’s certainly not the end of the world either.

Frankly, as I’ve reassured some of my brethren, it’s a sign that we’ve got a deeper bench than many gave us credit for. To be honest, any of the three Democrats who are either declared or close to declaring, John Gregg, Karen Tallian or Glenda Ritz, would make a better governor than Mike Pence. Who knows, there may be another Democrat or two who throws his or her hat into the ring before filing ends.



Knowing that we’re now looking at a contested primary, isn’t it important that any candidate looking to reclaim the governor’s office understands that we’ve got our best shot if we stay away from negative attacks on each other in the primary and focus our energies on a strategy and a vision for Indiana that is far different than Mike Pence and this generation of Statehouse Republicans? Absolutely.

I respectfully suggest our Democratic candidates, and any others who may jump in, take a lesson or two from Bernie Sanders, the U.S. senator from Vermont who may well be a long-shot challenger to Hillary Clinton, but who has absolutely sworn off negative attacks on Hillary. As Sanders put it in an interview on May 17 on CNN, he will run a positive campaign by praising rather than trashing his Democratic opponent. Sanders gave a refreshing take on things when he said, “I’ve never run a negative political ad in my life. I believe in serious debates on serious issues. I’ve known Hillary Clinton for 25 years. Maybe I shouldn’t say this. I like Hillary Clinton. I respect Hillary Clinton.”

What a breath of fresh air. Bernie’s not running as a “spoiler” as Ralph Nader did in 2000. For those of us who had long respected Nader for his extraordinary advocacy of consumer issues, how disappointing it was to see him run a negative campaign against Al Gore that simply cost the Democratic ticket critical votes on the left. That spoiler campaign arguably cost Al Gore the states of Florida and New Hampshire, thereby handing the presidency to George W. Bush.

Hoosier Democrats cannot afford divisiveness or a bitter primary. I’m among many urging an 11th commandment be observed by our Democratic candidates for governor that says, “I will not speak ill of my Democratic opponents in press or in public and will make sure my supporters and consultants stay positive as well.”

Millions of Hoosiers are looking for a new direction in state government. They deserve a vision that says we can improve wages, working conditions, educational opportunity, infrastructure and quality of life throughout the Hoosier state and spread the benefits of the Hoosier economy evenly, rather than just focus all the resources on a tiny, upscale slice of suburbs ringing Indianapolis.

As Democrats, we’ve got too big a hill to climb to turn on one another over the next year. I say we take a lesson from the likes of Bernie Sanders; we can acknowledge policy differences and test various proposals without slinging one bit of mud at each other. Hoosiers who desire a new, forward-thinking vision for our state deserve nothing less than a Democratic nominee who comes out of this primary with high name ID and who is rallied around by our party and ready to engage the governor in a fall race, rather than being bloodied, bruised and barely standing. I’m pushing for tight adherence to an 11th commandment and I suspect many other Democrats will as well. ❖

Shaw Friedman is former legal counsel for the Indiana Democratic Party and a longtime HPI columnist.

Labor ready to take on Pence

By **RICH JAMES**



Labor ready to take on Pence

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – If Gov. Mike Pence fails to win reelection, you’ve got to figure Northwest Indiana voters played a large role. The region is the most heavily Democratic area in the state, in large part because of the influence of trade unions. And during his first term in office, Pence’s stances have energized the unions.



The governor drew the anger of Republicans and Democrats in Northwest Indiana when he signed into law the legislation doing away with the construction wage councils. Contractors and union members rallied in Indianapolis in an effort to defeat the proposal. While the demonstrations led some Republican legislators to oppose the bill, the measure narrowly passed.

Unions complained that the bill will result in union contractors losing jobs to less skilled companies.

While Pence acknowledged that workers would be paid less, he said it was worth it because taxpayers would save money. The wage measure came on the heels of Indiana becoming a right-to-work state, another attack on unions. Union leaders contend that workers eventually will be paid less if they lack union representation. And they said nonunion workers are less skilled.

It was in large part because of Pence that signs popped up in yards across Northwest Indiana proclaiming the homeowner was a union member. And in many cases, the sign specified the individual union.

With talk about the 2016 governor's race heating up, and Pence expected to announce for reelection in a week or so, the sign attacks in Northwest Indiana also have moved to a new level. Appearing in the yards of union members and others are signs that read, "Fire Mike Pence."

One of the oust-Pence signs was planted in the yard that boasted a union ironworker sign. That hits close to home for U.S. Rep. Peter Visclosky, a Democrat representing Northwest Indiana. Visclosky is known as one of the strongest union backers in Congress and for years has been fighting for fair trade laws to protect the region's beleaguered steel industry. Visclosky's father, John Visclosky, is approaching the age of 100. John Visclosky was Gary mayor for a brief stint in the early 1960s when Mayor George Chacharis went to prison. John Visclosky also was an ironworker.

Many say that without his father's direction, Peter Visclosky never would have been elected to Congress in 1984. ❖

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

Hoosiers should fret about Greece

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – Negotiations over a structure debt repayment plan for Greece have entered what foreign policy analysts call a tense phase. For Midwesterners who are enjoying the first enduring hints of the magnificent summer awaiting us, this may seem a distant worry. We should not be so sanguine. There are two major concerns about Greece that should capture our attention. One is big enough to rightly trouble us, the other is worse.



Greece is a small country with an economy that in 2010 was about the size of Michigan. Today its economy is about that of Oregon's. This is due to a drop of about one-third or more of its total GDP. It is hard to determine

exactly the size of the economy, because so much of it is unreported that even physicians and hospitals engage in barter to dodge taxes. However, the collapse of the Greek economy is outside of the historical record for a modern nation at peace.

This has delivered to the Greek people nearly a decade of hard times. The nation is broke, and because it belongs to the European Monetary Union it cannot print drachmas to pay the debt. This means that the nation will either get a large debt restructuring, which will look a lot like bankruptcy, or it will default. A good debt deal should help lift the European economy, while a default will almost

certainly mean a deeper European recession accompanying the utter collapse of the Greek economy and government. Even a mild European recession will have repercussions here. About 2.5 percent of Indiana's GDP is exported to the rich nations in Europe. That means perhaps 75,000 direct jobs linked to the manufacture and transport of these goods and another 45,000 indirectly across the state. A meaningful downturn impacting northern Europe will cost tens of thousands of Hoosiers their jobs. What happens in Greece will impact us, and so we ought to care about the economics of a debt restructuring. Still, that is not what keeps me up at night.

The Greek governing party, Syriza, is in a coalition government with some very extreme groups, including Marxists. This reflects the anguish felt by a population with no tangible prospects of an improved economy in the next generation. Domestic violence has already boiled over, and the entire Balkans remains potentially volatile. Dramatic economic collapse can spread easily to southern Europe. War is more than a remote possibility. Three successive generations of my family have already fought wars in Europe, most recently in the 1990s. As the father of teenagers, that scares me a lot more than a recession.

The Greek people bear a hefty share of blame for their plight, to be sure. They are citizens of a democracy. Turning a blind eye to ubiquitous tax fraud, clearly unsustainable budget deficits and unfunded pensions is malfeasance citizenship and serves as a good lesson for us. While the Greeks richly deserve the worst that may befall their nation, let us hope that the rest of Europe does not let that happen. ❖

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John Krull, Statehouse File: The folks who opposed same-sex marriage in Ireland worked hard in the campaign. They cared a lot about the issue and had the conviction that right was on their side. They could have been bitter in defeat. They could have gone on a prolonged social media tirade — as Indiana Sen. Mike Delph, R-Carmel, did when Indiana’s proposed constitutional ban on same-sex marriage went up in flames — and called everyone who doesn’t think exactly the way they do moral cowards. For good measure, like Delph did, they could have threatened to kick the, uh, posteriors of folks who had the temerity to question them. Or they could have gone the Eric Miller and Micah Clark route. Miller and Clark are perhaps the two most prominent leaders of the religious right in Indiana — Miller as the head of Advance America and Clark as the executive director of the American Family Association of Indiana. They also were the architects of the ill-named and ill-considered Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which was designed to “punish” gay and lesbian activists for winning the same-sex marriage fight in Indiana. In the aftermath of a RFRA debacle that made Indiana a national and international joke, we Hoosiers still are tallying the costs of the damage done by that little exercise in legislative score-settling. The leaders of the Irish opposition went a different direction. They didn’t throw a temper tantrum — ala Mike Delph — or opt for vindictiveness as Eric Miller and Micah Clark. No, once it was clear his side had lost, the leader of the no campaign sent a message to the members of the yes campaign. He congratulated his opponents on their victory and said: Well done. In other words, he acted like an adult and accepted disappointment with all the grace he could muster. ❖



Frank Bruni, New York Times: A contest for the least popular arm of the federal government would have many strong contenders. There’s the soft, cuddly Internal Revenue Service. Also the National Security Agency, America’s Peeping Tom. And let’s not forget the Environmental Protection Agency, seen by many manufacturers as one big, mossy, bossy paean to regulation run amok. But for politicians, in particular Republicans, another challenger comes into play: The Department of Education. In a Republican presidential debate during the 2012 campaign, it wasn’t just on the list of “three agencies of government” that Rick Perry famously promised to eliminate. It was one of the two that he succeeded in naming before he stopped short, forgetting the third. And it finds itself once again in Republican presidential candidates’ cross hairs, all the more so because of Common Core standards, supported by the education secretary, Arne Duncan, and cited by many excessively alarmed conservatives as a federal takeover of curriculum. Sen. Patty Murray, a Washington Democrat and a former preschool teacher, has joined forces with Sen. Lamar Alexander, a Tennessee

Republican, to sponsor legislation that would leave the department and its secretary with much less influence over states. There’d be no federal say, for example, in how (or if) public schoolteachers are evaluated. If the bill passes — and it has significant bipartisan support — the department would be a shadow of its former self. Alexander supports that humbling even though he once ran the department, as the first President Bush’s secretary of education. “I believe there’s a federal role in education,” he told me recently, saying that the federal government affords an important bully pulpit for higher standards and more spending on students from poor families, to name two priorities. “But you don’t need a department. You need a president who cares about education and a Treasury Department that cuts the checks.” Much of the rest is needless red tape. Mitch Daniels, the former governor of Indiana, didn’t wholly disagree. I approached him because he worked in George W. Bush’s administration, when the department’s power grew with No Child Left Behind, and he’s seen as a moderate Republican. He’s now the president of Purdue University. “It’s not a ludicrous idea, honestly,” he said, referring to the abolition of the department. He noted that until 1979, when it was established as a cabinet-level agency, the country got along without it. And now? “Let’s be gentle,” he said, “and say that we haven’t seen dramatic education improvement since the federal government set up shop.” Daniels applauded the current secretary, Duncan, as “a helpful voice” and “good conscience” over the last six and a half years for necessary reforms and standards. He wondered aloud if such a voice and conscience would have existed without an education department. ❖

David Rutter, Post-Tribune: If you have ever known a modest person, you will remember what most defines them. They are embarrassed by praise. Uncomfortable with positive attention. They worry that you think they are great when they are undistinguished and indistinguishable. Modesty is a quiet soul shining. That’s one reason almost no one in national politics is really modest. The most skilled can pretend modesty for brief bursts because that helps herd the electoral sheep. Their life is spin and marketing. This brings us almost inevitably to John Dennis Hastert — “just call me Denny.” He is the Illinois small-town speaker of the U.S. House who wore false modesty like a pair of reflective aviator sunglasses. He’s 73 now. The aw-shucks legacy he spent 40 years constructing hit the ground with a thud last week. The 17,000 townsfolk in his Yorkville hometown in Kendall County are aghast, flabbergasted and creeped out. But there are exceptions. One of them is the town’s new millionaire this year. He was the one paid off by Hastert not to reveal sexual abuse when Hastert was a revered coach, according to federal law enforcement sources. So there’s at least one Yorkvillian who’s not so shocked by Denny’s past. He got \$1.7 million of Denny’s loot before the FBI stepped in. ❖

U.S. claims 10K ISIS deaths

PARIS - The U.S.-led coalition against ISIS has recorded more than 10,000 ISIS deaths since the campaign against the extremist group began nine months ago, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Tony Blinken told France Inter radio (CNN). Blinken's remarks came in an interview given Tuesday after coalition members joined Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi for a conference in Paris that assessed progress in the campaign. Asked whether Iraqi forces backed by the coalition were capable of standing up to ISIS, Blinken said they could. "Indeed, when you act against a force like Daesh, which is a terrorist force with a totalitarian ideology, and that does not fear death, we recorded an enormous loss for Daesh. More than 10,000 since this campaign started. And this will eventually have an effect." Daesh is another name for ISIS that is widely used by European and Arab allies and is despised by the terrorist group.

SBA kept Sharp quiet on audit

CARMEL - Eight days before the Republican primary on May 5, Carmel City Council President Rick Sharp was briefed on an unflattering audit of city finances he believed could have boosted his ultimately unsuccessful bid for mayor (IndyStar). Sharp, though, was given a 10-day gag order that prevented him from speaking about the report before it was released. The gag order was standard for the annual report from the State Board of Accounts, but the timing meant Sharp was sworn to silence until after the primary. "You can imagine it was beyond frustrating," Sharp said. He lost by about 26 percentage points to incumbent mayor Jim Brainard.



Does he really think the audit would have made an impact in retrospect? "Who can say? It would have had to have been an 1,900-vote difference," Sharp said. "I tend to think not." The audit dinged the mayor-controlled Carmel Redevelopment Commission for several transactions and decisions made in 2013. • The commission forgave \$29,464 in unpaid parking surcharge fees still owed from 2012 it was due from tickets sold at The Center for the Performing Arts. • The commission forgave \$18,000 in unpaid rent from BJS LLC — the former Shapiro's Delicatessen. • The commission failed to apply for tax exempt status in a timely manner for a warehouse it bought at 457 3rd Ave. SW and had to pay \$12,878 in taxes. • The commission did not collect \$1.3 million in fees the past two years from the city for use of the energy center, which provides heating and cooling to The Center for the Performing Arts, City Hall, police headquarters and fire headquarters.

House GOP eyes ACA subsidies

WASHINGTON - House conservatives are hinting at support for a temporary extension of Obama-Care subsidies if the Supreme Court cripples the law, even as they set up a working group to develop their own plan (The Hill). The high court is set to rule later this month in the case of King v. Burwell, which could invalidate subsidies for millions of people in at least 34 states using the federally run marketplace. Republicans say they need to be ready to address people losing their coverage, but have yet to coalesce around a plan. Now another proposal is in the works. Members of the conservative House Freedom Caucus told The Hill they are setting up a group of four or five lawmakers, led by Rep. John Fleming (R-La.). The lawmakers will develop a plan meant to influence the main House working group led by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.)

and two other panel chairmen, which Fleming complained is meeting in "secret." While working on their own ideas, Freedom Caucus members are also open to something like Sen. Ron Johnson's (R-Wis.) idea to temporarily extend subsidies. Johnson's plan would extend ObamaCare subsidies through August 2017, when he hopes there will be a Republican president, while also repealing the law's individual and employer mandates. His bill has 31 Republican co-sponsors in the Senate, including Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.). It has not received the same welcome in the House, though; Ryan's working group is still publicly undecided on the question, and House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price (R-Ga.) came out in opposition to the idea last month.

Riecken fundraiser for reelection

EVANSVILLE - With the legislative session over, state Rep. Gail Riecken has been able to focus less on Statehouse matters and more on her fall race to unseat Republican Mayor Lloyd Winnecke (Evansville Courier & Press). On Tuesday, though, Riecken will return to Indianapolis for a political fundraiser — not for her mayoral bid, but for her legislative campaign fund. Riecken's legislative seat in District 77, like all 100 in the House of Representatives, comes up for election in 2016. The event caught the attention of Vanderburgh County Republican Party chairman Wayne Parke, who questioned the Democrat's ongoing involvement with campaign funds for two offices on two election cycles. Parke said he wondered if Riecken planned to combine the two funds to assist her mayoral bid, "or has she given up on the mayor's race and is planning for next year? I've never seen anyone raise funds for two races at the same time." Riecken's mayoral campaign had \$85,572 on hand on April 10, which was the most recent reporting deadline.