



Delph ponders GOP Senate race twist

Carmel Republican weighing family, job, nation, Senate bid

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. — Hoosier Republicans are already facing a riveting U.S. Senate primary with the field of Eric Holcomb and U.S. Reps. Marlin Stutzman and Todd Young. State

Sen. Mike Delph could become the fourth and if he does, would bring some fascinating twists to the first wide open GOP nomination battle for an open seat in modern times.

Whether the Carmel Republican makes this leap is ... well ... complicated. The short answer is he wants to, if not in 2016, pos-



sibly in 2018. In a dynamic similar to 2011 when Gov. Mitch Daniels' family made the final call on a presidential run, the Delph family of wife and five daughters will have the final say. The time line is between now and the end of September.

So will he, or won't he?

After a two-hour interview with Howey Politics Indiana last Thursday at the Rathskeller, the answer is akin to riding a seesaw. In reaching a point of prediction, Delph offers fascinating insights to the existing field. He is friends with them all. But there are blunt assessments.

Delph and Stutzman had adjoining desks when they served together in the Indiana Senate. When Stutzman

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Gov race without Glenda

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

CORYDON — Last Thursday, Supt. Glenda Ritz met with Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. The conversation was about education . . . and only education. "I asked her about some statewide issues, the Cline Avenue Bridge, and she didn't commit," McDermott said. "She didn't really have any input."

McDermott asked her who might run for superintendent and threw out a couple of names and Ritz, he said, "seemed offended."

This odd encounter finally made sense at 5 p.m. last Friday, when in classic bad news dump fashion Ritz dropped out of the governor's race. She of-



“If you’re going to be the Crossroads of America, you better have the roads to back it up. We’re looking now in the short term at some opportunities for us to strengthen infrastructure across the state.”

- Gov. Mike Pence



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ferred no big idea, raised virtually no money, had no campaign staff. "It all made sense the next day," McDermott said.

So the first significant milestone in the 2016 gubernatorial race has been passed with Ritz dropping out. It puts 2012 nominee John Gregg in what McDermott calls a "good spot." He has a commanding money advantage, much labor support, is challenging what is becoming a widespread perspective that Gov. Mike Pence is vulnerable and facing huge policy obstacles that could divide the GOP even more than it is. McDermott said Gregg is trying to consolidate that support, pressing Democratic mayors around the state for endorsements before Indiana Democrats gather in French Lick a week from today.

At this point, Gregg is the clear front runner. In the April Howey Politics Indiana Poll, Ritz was known to 62% of voters, compared to just 47% for Gregg, and 46% for McDermott. Gregg had a 14% to 6% favorable/unfavorable, compared to 35/38% for Gov. Pence.

"Glenda is a huge, huge asset to our governor campaign," Gregg told HPI while making campaign stops in Fort Wayne Wednesday. "We will work closely together on policy, announcements and campaigns. She brings an unbelievable exposure to education and education policy."

Gregg said he did not want to get into the "mechanics" of Ritz ending her campaign. "I'm just glad that Glenda and I are working on the same team."

The only other candidate is State Sen. Karen Tallian, who like Ritz hasn't found traction on any of the key elements of a viable gubernatorial

race. Tallian was out of the country and unavailable for comment on this story. Former Bayh aide Tom Sugar is exploring a run and will make a determination within a month, McDermott is keeping his options open for both the gubernatorial and U.S. Senate races, but won't likely declare until he



Supt. Glenda Ritz joins Democratic gubernatorial candidate John Gregg a Vigo County school event on Monday in Terre Haute, three days after Ritz dropped out of the race.

wins a fourth term in Hammond next November, something he likened to a "three-foot putt."

Sugar told HPI on Wednesday that while he was being urged to run, "I cannot commit" until he figures out how to support his family over the next 15 months. "If I do that, I'm very, very inclined to run," he said. Sugar added that Ritz's decision to drop out will have no bearing on his potential candidacy. Neither does a potential McDermott entry. "I don't spend my time measuring other candidates," Sugar said. "I'm a different animal in all of this. I will present a clear departure from the past and those who want to trap us there. I will present a new vision for the future."

Sugar's "big idea" is the "Lead or Leave" independent redistricting commission idea. He said response to this "has been very gratifying. I've had people stop me on the street saying, 'You are so right.' People want something new. They get it. They are wait-

ing for someone to come along and do something about it. They don't listen to politicians because they aren't worth listening to."

McDermott fears that Sugar is "making it political" when it comes to the redistricting commission, something he has supported and noted that then Secretary of State Todd Rokita began talking about in 2008. McDermott said of Sugar, "I think he's jumping in."

The Hammond mayor also believes that Tallian's shell campaign is really all about a Gregg-Tallian ticket. "It would make sense," McDermott said. "She's from the Region. I know John wants a ticket that excites Northwest Indiana. It's obvious to me they are trying to engage NW Indiana so they can get a bigger vote."

Gregg is obviously feeling like he's on the upswing. "I'm a much better candidate this time, I'm running a much better campaign. Gov. Pence is running on his record and he's vulnerable."

Gregg said that he will focus on jobs, "not just numbers, but living wages." He added that with the I-65 closure at Lafayette and the Cline Avenue Bridge issue in Lake County, infrastructure will also be his focus. "We've had infrastructure issues long before the current situation. It's neglect due to penny pinching," he said of the state's \$2 billion surplus.

Pence finds friendly crowd at fair

Gov. Pence did a question-and-answer at the Indiana State Fair's Pioneer Village at noon Wednesday, and he arrived not only to soak up the friendly vibe, but he came bearing gifts. He announced that the Future Farmers of America were about to sign a nine-year deal to bring their huge convention back to Indianapolis. He hinted that there was some "awful good news for farmers



in 53 counties" hit by flooding rains this spring and summer. He talked about the new Virginia class submarine to be named the USS Indiana, noting that its nuclear power plant is being manufactured

in Mount Vernon. "The heart of the Indiana will be built in Indiana," he said to about 200 people.

Pence used the venue to accentuate his accomplishments. He talked of balanced budgets, tax cuts, cutting red tape and "investment on a historic level." He said that his administration had made high investments in traditional K-12 education, charter schools and 30,000 students are now in the voucher program. It is, he said,



Gov. Mike Pence does a Q & A with a friendly crowd at the Indiana State Fair on Wednesday. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

"an unprecedented level of resources."

"Test scores are up, graduation rates are up," Pence said.

The one tough question Pence fielded was from a Clinton County commissioner, who mildly complained that all new road funding at been steered to the Indiana Department of Transportation. Pence reminded the commissioner that his first budget provided the first local road funding in a decade. "I can assure you that in the next session of the General Assembly is going to be an infrastructure session," Pence vowed. "Roads mean jobs."

Aftwards, Pence elaborated saying that the \$2 billion surplus could be used to address glaring problems such as the I-65 shutdown at Lafayette. "If you're going to be the Crossroads of America, you better have the roads to back it up," Pence said. "We're looking now in the short term at some opportunities for us to strengthen infrastructure across the state."

Pence outlined three priorities: "First you've got to take care of what you've got. Second, you've got to finish what you started. Third, you've got to plan for the future."

When Pence was asked about the state's dairy industry, Pence and Agriculture Commissioner Ted McKinney talked about ramped up cheese production, four million pounds of milk exported from the state each day, and exclaimed, "We're very bullish on dairy."

A Brownsburg farmer seated in the second row observed, "They don't use the bull" on dairy farms. ❖

Delph, from page 1

was elected by caucus in June of 2010 to fill out the term of U.S. Rep. Mark Souder, Delph was there in Columbia City offering his support. "We've tried to be supportive of one another with each other's careers," Delph said. When he met with various Super PACs in Washington in June, Delph said he was told, "Marlin has an outstanding record as a conservative in Congress. He's giving up his congressional seat. He's already out there, you know. It would be better for the conservative cause if you wouldn't muddy the waters for Marlin."

Delph observed, "The Senate out there is changing. We could probably use some new blood in terms of leadership. When Roll Call reported Congressman Stutzman had already pledged his support to Sen. McConnell I was surprised to see that. I've since talked to Congressman Stutzman, and as I understand it, if Sen. McConnell is the only candidate, obviously he'll support Sen. McConnell. But if there's others he may give due consideration as well."

The elephant in the room is the notion that if Delph enters the race, he and Stutzman could carve up the Tea Party/evangelical support. "The school of thought is we'll take votes from each other," Delph acknowledged. "I don't completely agree with that. Just because that's not been where the evidence lies in my Senate district. I have different people support me for different reasons. Some can be for me for redistricting reform or ethics reform. Others can be for my positions on immigration where I have a very black and white position. I have people support me because of my family and how I raised my family and home schooling. They think I'm a guy who would represent them and their values well. It's not necessarily a one-to-one comparison."

And Rep. Young? Delph said he interviewed with Club For Growth in June, and offered this assessment: "I get the sense that Club For Growth will come after Congressman Young pretty hard. I just got the sense they are not on the same page as far as his record in the House. I say that with all due respect because I like Congressman Young. We have developed a professional relationship. He's a very hard worker and a very learned man. He's always trying to do what he believes is the right thing. But of the four names out there, Congressman Young would be at the very bottom of their list."

Then there's the former Republican Chairman Holcomb. Delph viewed this candidacy through the prism of his recent contact with Club For Growth. "Eric met with them and I'm told that went about as well as Rich-

ard Mourdock's first meeting with them," he said. That occurred in early 2011, when Mourdock bombed on his first interview. But Club President Chris Chocola was so infatuated with taking out U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar in the Republican primary that Mourdock was invited back in for a do-over. The rest is painful, painful history.

Delph pondered a challenge to Sen. Lugar in 2012. "I have always had an interest in running for the Senate," Delph said, since his days on Capitol Hill as an aide to former U.S. Rep. Dan Burton. "Last time, when Richard Mourdock ran, he and I had talked. I had expressed an interest but it was just not a good time. It was just enough to get my name out. When Sen. Coats made his announcement I hadn't had a lot of time to think about it. I didn't know if it would be a good time for me to do it. I didn't know if it was a good move for me politically, or whether I wanted to do it. Things were moving for me quickly."

The Coats announcement came in March just as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act controversy was stirring. "It's an understatement to say that we were shocked at the announcement of Sen. Coats' retirement," Delph recalled. "It has had a dramatic impact on all kinds of things, from who is going to be running for Congress, for the Senate, for attorney general. When that announcement was made, everybody in the legislature was dealing with this RFRA fallout and it became this national thing."

Delph methodical

So while Holcomb announced just hours after the Coats bombshell, Stutzman last spring and Young in mid-summer, Delph has taken his time to methodically pitch a potential candidacy, listen to a statewide network of followers he developed during his 2002 secretary of state bid, and his cultivation of the Tea Party and evangelical/fundamentalist wings of the party since 2009. The Tea Party Express came and interviewed him in Indianapolis, and then he piggy-backed two business trips in Washington to talk with Club For Growth, FreedomWorks, the Heritage Action PAC, Right to Life, Susan B. Anthony Fund, the Senate Conservative Fund and several immigration advocacy groups. Stutzman has since been endorsed by Club For Growth and the Senate Conservative Fund.

Delph continued on why he is being so deliberate. "I sat down with Jim Bopp, and one of the first things he said to me was don't declare your candidacy until you have your Super PACs situation all squared away, because once you declare, you can't coordinate." It was fascinating advice from the Terre Haute attorney who, through his Stand Now and Citizens United Supreme Court cases has essentially rewritten congressional level campaign finance.

HPI noted how we locked horns with Club For



Growth's Chris Chocola over whether Mourdock had coordinated with the Super PACs that polled for him and pumped millions of dollars into his candidacy in 2012.

Delph observed, "Super PACs are going to change the game. It is a much different process than it was even six years ago." As for the forbidden coordination, Delph shed this light, "The political world is a very inbred world. It's hard to go to the bathroom without someone knowing where you went and for how long. It's just a very small community. I don't know who talked to who or what. I felt good about both my trips to Washington."

While Sen. Delph stoked controversy in 2014 over the constitutional marriage amendment, criticized Indiana Senate leadership for what he believes were actions that kept the referendum off the 2014 ballot, criticized churches in his district via Twitter, and was sanctioned by Senate leadership for violating caucus rules, he has a vibrant statewide network that makes a U.S. Senate bid something beyond a far-fetched notion. After the Coats announcement, Delph said, "At that time I had started to get supporters from throughout the state reaching out to me, saying, 'You really have to do this, you really have to do this. We're ready for you.' I've got one group that's ready to go and a couple have said, 'We're going to get you on the ballot whether you want to run or not. You need to be out there.' I've learned as long as I don't sign it they can't put me on the ballot without my permission. So we have all of that going on."

When you sum all of this up, the expectation would be a 2016 Delph U.S. Senate bid.

Job, district and family considerations

But there are other considerations. One is his day job. "Professionally I'm an attorney for a company and there's work that needs to be done that involves time, energy and focus," Delph said. "I have to be mindful and respectful of my employer and my legal and ethical considerations to my board."

He was just reelected in 2014. "I have always been of the mindset when you ask people to vote for you, you should fill out your term. They've asked you to represent them for a term, and it's a four-year term, not a two-year term. So I have that going through my mind."

And then there is the Delph Female Caucus. Just like the Daniels Female Caucus in May of 2011, the candidacy of who could have been the next president of the United States was sidelined.

"The most important

consideration of all is the impact that public service has over my wife, my five daughters," Delph explained. "My wife does not handle criticism of her husband very well. She takes it very, very personally. She has not developed the multiple layers of skin that I have developed. My daughters have been a little bit better. They are kind of removed from some of the personal attacks."

As for the family political dynamic, the senator describes himself as the "moderate" of the family. Several of his daughters are accomplished competitors in national forensic competitions. They are politically active.

But those considerations quickly gave way to his 2014 race against J.D. Ford, a gay Democrat. "I think it shows something in a competitive district when you have everybody under the sun working against me. You had the top four Democrats in the state, Sen. Joe Donnelly, John Gregg, Baron Hill and Glenda Ritz, all working against me. You have Republicans working against me. Mickey Maurer was coordinating against me. And you had this small, home-schooled family rise up to the occasion and with our grassroots team, winning the day. I think that it tells a lot about our support, our intensity, our work ethic and the acceptance of our political point of view, the things we stand for."

Delph won his first reelection in an old district that President Obama carried. In 2011 reapportionment, his top six precincts in Marion County were taken away. When the dust settled in 2014 in his new district, Delph defeated Ford 15,140 to 12,744.

Delph said that as he ventures out in public, people approach him. "I'll go out on the Monon (Trail) and someone will come up to me and say, 'Can I give you a hug for being my voice?'" When our interview concluded, this happened in the Rathskeller. Delph explained, "There's this silent majority in Indiana that is not where the United States Supreme Court wants us to be on some

of these cultural issues. These last six months are the first time as a citizen that I have felt like I was in a different country. And there are a lot of folks I've talked with around the state who feel the same way. They feel like their country has been taken away from them and given to someone else. It's especially critical when you talk to evangelical Christians and other self-identified conservatives."

Two weekends ago, the senator and the Delph Female Caucus journeyed to Crown Point, where he was honored by the Living Stones Church and Rev. Ron Johnson Jr. In the potential evolution of a



U.S. Senate candidacy, this weekend was critical. "They have not often gotten to see the positive side of their Dad's public service and all of the people who appreciate all we do and the sacrifice we make for our service," Delph explained. "They got to experience that when we were invited to break bread with him on Saturday and be involved with him on Sunday. We went to both services. They honored me for my service. They gave me a framed copy of a portrait of William Wilberforce. Pastor Johnson compared me and my service to William Wilberforce. I am not sure I can take that kind of credit. William Wilberforce was a great man who led the end of slavery in Great Britain. I have not done anything that fantastic."



Rev. Johnson, who publicly parted ways with Gov. Mike Pence following the RFRA fix last April, said of Sen. Delph, "He has been somebody who has been a rock-solid vote for those of us who share Biblical values, and he is somebody that has demonstrated unwavering commitment, even at the censure of his own party at times."

Delph acknowledged, "The sentiment, love and encouragement was uplifting and I was very grateful my wife and daughters could experience that with me. It was a wonderful time. It was probably as important of a meeting as I've had."

Epilogue

Will Sen. Delph enter the Republican U.S. Senate

race, adding a new twist and potentially altering the balance? He is concerned about the well-being of his family, but even more so about his nation. He is friends with his potential opponents, but doesn't believe they fully represent his ideals and isn't convinced he will cleave away support from the other evangelical/Tea Party candidate because of his own constituencies. He is concerned about his commitment to voters in Senate District 29, as well as to his employers.

Delph believes he has a statewide network of supporters. He says he already has a campaign ready to engage. "I have a proven ability to win," he states. "I've proven the ability to build the team, raise the money, have the infrastructure in place to win. That is really the most important question any of us has to prove to the party: Who has the best chance to win in the fall without compromising values?"

"We will have a vote," Delph said of his family. "They have given me their blessing and permission to prepare. They have not given me their blessing and their permission to become a candidate and run for the U.S. Senate. If my family says we don't want you to do this, my responsibility as a husband and father is a higher responsibility. I can't make decisions in a vacuum." ❖

Delph calls for RFRA, fix to be repealed

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – State Sen. Mike Delph believes that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the subsequent "fix," which he said was implemented via "mob rule," should all be repealed in the 2016 Indiana General Assembly session.

The Carmel Republican said that the Indiana Constitution's Article 1, Section 3, which states, "No law shall, in any case whatever, control the free exercise and enjoyment of religious opinions, or interfere with the rights of conscience," is all that is needed.

"When you read our Indiana State Constitution, one of the fundamental themes throughout the document

is this idea that conscience of a man or woman has to be free," Delph told Howe Politics Indiana. "You cannot coerce the conscience of an individual. That's exactly what happened in this case with RFRA and the RFRA fix. There was this doom and gloom and this subtle action, maybe not so subtle action: You do this or we're pulling the trigger. We're going to pull our business out. We're going to pull our convention out. We're going to take our legal work elsewhere. We in legislative bodies, we are a representative form of government to protect a mob from overruling the people's government. The RFRA fix was mob rule. Absolute, total mob rule. Regardless of the issue, we cannot allow that to happen in the people's government."

Asked if he would support an expansion of the state's civil rights code to include sexual orientation, Delph said, "My preference would be that we not do that, necessarily, but try to go back in time, we're getting rid of RFRA, we're getting rid of the RFA fix. We're going to fall back

on Article 1, Section 3. That would be the course of action for the General Assembly to follow, and, quite frankly, the governor to follow. But I'm sure they will all get together and talk about this."

Delph said that a civil rights code expansion has the potential to create different classes of people, citing the facade of the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, which reads, "Equal justice under the law."

Delph explained, "You cannot have equal justice under the law when you start picking and choosing which class of individuals should have more justice. So that's the concern I have in the context of any of these types of discussions whether you're talking about a racial preference, a gender preference, a veterans preference, a sexual orientation preference. I always have a red flag in the back of my mind of this equal justice under the law."

Delph then wanted to talk about the "elephant in the room." He explained, "Let's talk about a Christian church and a Christian pastor. Let's say I have a son who goes to college, comes back and says 'I'm gay. I want to get married in the church I grew up in.' And the pastor says no, because we have a very fundamentalist view of the interpretation of scripture. Should the law force that church to recognize a relationship that their faith and their

tradition views as hostile to their Bible beliefs? I don't view that as discrimination. I think that's where the problem is. There's a group of people which are completely unreasonable who believe a church should be forced to do that. Or the baker should be forced to bake a cake. That is the level of unreasonableness that has invaded the judicial system. And that is what has fired up the pastors in the state, because, they say, that's crazy."

"The idea that any citizen would feel oppressed, would feel anything less than free, bothers me," Delph said, before talking about his gay brother. "Go interview my brother's people. Ask him, what does your brother Mike think about freedom and your right to happiness? You would find out I defended him all my life. Anybody that picked on him, they had to deal with me, and they had to deal with a couple of my other brothers. I don't know of anybody in the legislature from either party that believes in discrimination. Or supports discrimination."

Delph added of the RFRA battle last spring, "I think this whole charge from some of these out-of-state companies was offensive, ridiculous. I believe that what happened in Indiana was nothing short of economic terrorism." ❖

Bluegrass, blue skies, barbecue & a bunch of Senate candidates

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

MORRISTOWN – The only thing better than the fried chicken and pulled pork last Saturday afternoon was the beautiful weather and soft background accompaniment of a bluegrass band. Such was the setting for some 450 Republicans, guests at U.S. Rep. Luke Messer's fourth annual barbecue just south of Morristown at the home of Dana and Audra Caldwell. The draw was heightened by billing that three declared Republican U.S. Senate hopefuls would attend and speak. It's an impressive field: Eric Holcomb and U.S. Reps. Marlin Stutzman and Todd Young.

How they will differentiate themselves (and, perhaps, ascribe labels to each other) in the coming months will make for fascinating politics. How they spoke to the 9th Congressional District constituents, an area outside, perhaps, the traditional power base of all three, gives a good indication of where things are heading.

Holcomb, the former state party chair and Mitch

Daniels advisor, stressed his assiduous statewide ground game and organizational efforts with the eye always on November, 2016. Young emphasized his campaign theme of "responsible conservatism" which translates into being electable in a general election and a record of authoring successful legislation. Stutzman touted his high-profile efforts among the conservative wing of the House Republican Caucus to enact major reforms, particularly budgetary.

As John Deere Gators shuttled picnic goers from



Republican Senate candidate Eric Holcomb chats with state Treasurer Kelly Mitchell at Rep. Luke Messer's annual barbecue in Morristown. (HPI Photo by Matthew Butler)



the parking field across the county road to the tents, HPI was able to intercept Young as he arrived. Joined by three of his four children, replete with campaign teeshirts, he told HPI, "We're going to spread our message of effective conservative leadership today, but mostly make friends and get to know people in a different part of the state I represent. I've run in tough elections before. I've been able to advance conservative principles since I have been in Congress."

Upon arrival, HPI found Holcomb chatting among the crowd at the front of the massive big top tent. "Full steam ahead and perpetual motion," was how Holcomb described the past weeks as a full-time candidate. He left Sen. Dan Coats' office as chief of staff earlier this year to be the first to announce a Senate candidacy. His opponents, however, have both the disadvantage and advantage of splitting time between here and Washington.

"Kind of by design," Holcomb said, "we announced on March 26 in the capital city that we would tour and visit all 92 counties. We're at 82 as you and I speak. We will visit the 92nd, Harrison County, on Aug. 27. That's a Lincoln Day dinner down there. We started and announced in the capital city and we'll finish the tour in the first state capital, Corydon. Then we'll start again."

A distinctly Hoosier element of Holcomb's tour is shooting a free throw in every county he visits. "We've been in barns, gyms, YMCAs, community centers, and backyards. The backdrops have been pretty cool to compile," he said. "I'm not just wandering Indiana and shooting baskets – and making them by the way – but we are reaching out, listening, and learning from folks in every corner of the state and every place in between what's on their minds. That goes a long way to build the team and build the plan."

Hurrying from a town hall event in Kendallville, Stutzman was the last to arrive at the barbecue, just in time for the speaking program. He worked the crowd afterward. HPI caught up with him over the phone Tuesday to ask how the campaign was going.

"It's going really well," he said. At the event, Stutzman was able to reconnect with many in the party. "We had a lot of friends we had worked with in the past and lot of folks excited to support our campaign. As we travel around the state to other events, we've had a great outpouring of support at all levels. I like where we are at. I believe we're doing the right things at the right time to make sure our campaign is successful and building a strong foundation to put ourselves in a great spot to win."

Now on August recess, the day-to-day for

Stutzman, as he explained, involves "a lot of different events that relate to building our organization. We have a great team already in place. We've got a booth at fairs around the state signing up volunteers and getting signatures for the ballot. There is always a fundraising component that we're working at and a lot of phone calls reaching folks across the state. A lot of travel; Indiana is a much larger state than people anticipate."

As for the current hot issues being heard and



U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman chats with a supporter on Saturday. (HPI Photo by Matthew Butler)

talked about on the campaign trail, Stutzman told HPI, "The biggest thing right now is the Iranian deal."

Candidates make their pitch

Messer, of Shelbyville, and his wife, Jennifer, hold no claim to originating the barbecue tradition in the district. It's a carryover from the seat's previous occupant, Gov. Mike Pence. In speaking to his guests, Messer compared the event to hosting a wedding in which you see so many old friends but cannot spend as much time as you like sitting down with each one and visiting. He wanted to stress two things with his constituents: He opposes the Obama administration's Iran nuclear deal and will vote against it. And, he's encouraged that Americans will see a clear difference between the two political parties between now and the 2016 general election.

Among the hundreds were key Republican leaders, including Indiana State Treasurer Kelly Mitchell and Attorney General Greg Zoeller. Both of whom made short remarks to the crowd. Also present were State Reps. Sean Eberhart of Shelbyville, Jim Baird of Greencastle, Randy Frye of Greensburg, and State Sens. Jeff Raatz of

Centerville, Jean Leising of Oldenburg, and Mike Crider of Greenfield. They were joined by a good number of city and county officials as well the party chairs for Fayette, Hancock, Henry, Marion, Ripley, Shelby, and Wayne counties.

"We have three very strong folks who are running," Messer told the crowd before introducing the Senate hopefuls. "I want to see candidates that inspire me, not scare me." Asked what type of candidate Hoosier Republicans should tap for their U.S. Senate nomination, Messer told HPI, "We have to be able to articulate how Republican principles are going to make Hoosiers' lives better. This is a great forum for these candidates to do that."

Senate candidates speak

Speaking first, Holcomb touted his methodical ground game since he announced in March. He also touched on three key elements regarding foreign policy, economic policy, and limited government. "People are concerned, if not downright worried, about a few things," Holcomb told the gathering. "One, our national security. Obviously over the last decade or so, especially the last seven, our military has been hollowed out. That has really affected our standing in this country and it's having an adverse impact. We're going to have to do something about that. Second, our economic security, or lack thereof. Policies this president is pushing out are crushing small businesses. It's changing our country. And, third, it comes down to what kind of country are we. This federal government continues to get bigger and bloated and more inefficient at the very time they're taking away the freedoms that made this country great. If we continue down this course, as important as it is to be strong militarily and economically, if we continue to sacrifice and give up our freedoms and our liberties, we will not be the country that our founders envisioned. That is not worth just cherishing but fighting for and that's what I believe this election in 2016 is going to be about."

Holcomb stressed Republican success that November "will require teamwork and a plan. You can't beat something with nothing." He said he had that plan and team in place. "In 530 days Barack Obama leaves the White House once and for all," he concluded.

Stutzman followed, touching on his farming background and experience in the

state legislature before heading to Washington. "We have the greatest country in the world and I believe that it's up to us as Americans to change its direction. We have a huge opportunity to do that in 2016. We've seen the damage that has been done by the Obama administration policies. We've seen what it's done to manufacturing, what the regulations have done to farmers through the EPA, Obamacare, all of these policies that have set our country back. And, in spite of all that, there are still things we can look at, especially here in Indiana where we are one of only 13 states with a Triple-A bond rating. That's because of conservative leadership where people are ready to make tough choices at the right time." Stutzman pledged to increase military spending while cutting other federal outlays.

"That's what I would be honored to do if I were elected to the U.S. Senate," he said.

Young concluded the speaking program and did not hesitate to mention he was a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and a Marine veteran. His remarks continued his campaign mantra of "effective conservative leadership."

"I am a Bloomington conservative," Young told the crowd. "Yes, an exotic beast, but my wife and I consider it missionary work. We've had a lot of converts." To prove his point at being persuasive and appealing, he recounted defeating "career politician" Baron Hill, a previous holder of the seat, in 2010. "Baron Hill happens to be the 2016 presumptive nominee that the Democrats will put for the U.S. Senate. I won that election by being an effective conservative. That was my brand: 'Effective conservative leadership.' What does that mean? It means I can win the election."

Besides electability in the general election, Young said "effective conservatism" also means proposing and advancing legislation in Washington. "Once you get to office it means you actually get things done," Young stressed. "You don't just give speeches, you don't just pass votes. You author bills and you pass them out of the House of Representatives. If I earn your support, we'll pass them out of the U.S. Senate. We'll get those things on a Republican president's desk for his signature."

He mentioned his recently passed REINS Act and a bill reforming the 30-hour work week requirement under the Affordable Care Act. "I could go through the litany of legisla-



U.S. Rep. Todd Young with his kids at the Messer barbecue. (HPI Photo by Matthew Butler)

tion I've passed," he concluded. "We will get things done."

Endorsements and fundraising

As all three candidates log miles and phone minutes, this organizational phase of the campaign places a premium on endorsements and, most especially, fundraising. Holcomb has lined up least 15 legislators, 12 mayors, 18 other elected officials, former Gov. Ed Whitcomb, and 17 county chairpersons. All told, it's a list of supporters exceeding 75 Republican leaders running the gamut of local to state responsibilities.

Stutzman, who was the second to enter the race back in May, has amassed the endorsement of 34 current legislators, many concentrated in the Republican stronghold of northeast Indiana, including Senate President Pro Tem David Long. Young joined the fray in mid-July. Since then, he is vying with Holcomb to be the most "establishment" candidate of the field, having secured the backing of four former state chairs and political heavyweights, Al Hubbard, Rex Early, Jim Kittle, and Murray Clark. His steering committee includes former Lt. Gov. John Mutz and eight sitting legislators. Young's campaign is being advised by Cam Savage's Limestone Strategies while Hathaway Strategies is consulting for Holcomb.

Young, a proven fundraising machine, posted the most impressive haul of the lot with \$1 million by the end of the second quarter. Stutzman and Holcomb raised over \$600,000 and \$200,000, respectively. "You have to have the financial resources to get your message up and out to the masses when the time is appropriate," Holcomb said on the subject. "We're operating this campaign in a very professional manner. Our focus is to build a strong foundation on which I think everything rests, including raising money." On the Democratic side, Hill has raised \$151,000.

More money will certainly come Stutzman's way in some fashion thanks to major national groups. The Club For Growth, Citizens United Political Victory Fund, and the Senate Conservatives Fund have all endorsed his candidacy. He is getting the extra national attention within the field because, Stutzman told HPI, "They watch our votes. I have a strong, proven conservative record." That voting record and the corresponding scorecards, grades, and rankings by conservative groups was heavily emphasized during Stutzman's official campaign kickoff in early May. "We're focusing on our message and what we believe is our greatest strength, which is a strong conservative record in Washington. I don't believe that everybody else in the campaign can say that. When people look for the next senator from Indiana, they know what they're going to get from me," Stutzman said. His campaign believes this voting record will create a stark contrast for primary voters to assess who is the most conservative.

The Club For Growth, when it was led by former Indiana congressman Chris Chocola, invested heavily in Richard Mourdock's successful 2012 primary challenge

against then-Sen. Richard Lugar. That the six-term senator was not conservative enough was the recurrent refrain; it resonated with Hoosier primary voters as the Tea Party movement was cresting. Lugar's record of voting for compromises or bipartisan legislation was held up as an example of compromising on conservative principles. It all came for naught in the general election, however. The day immediately after the May primary, an almost giddy Mourdock told cable news that "compromise" was either defeating or completely persuading those with whom he disagreed: "To me the highlight of politics, frankly, is to inflict my opinion on someone else." And, during a tele-



U.S. Rep. Luke Messer and wife Jennifer have carried on the 6th CD barbecue tradition started by Gov. Mike Pence. (HPI Photo by Matthew Butler)

vised debate in late October, when asked about abortion in cases of rape, Mourdock said, "I think even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something that God intended to happen." Already trying to depict him as a "my-way-or-the-highway" partisan, Democrats were able to ride the "rape" statement, which Mourdock never repudiated, to victory several weeks later with the moderate-to-conservative Donnelly. An almost universal consensus believes Lugar would have easily secured reelection in the general and kept Indiana's two Senate seats in the Republican column.

The Club For Growth, quite correctly, argues Stutzman is no Mourdock. Now led by another former Hoosier congressman, David McIntosh, the group trusts Stutzman's record, media skills, and campaign advisers. "The club's PAC has absolute confidence in making this endorsement. Rep. Stutzman is a totally different candidate with much more experience in the spotlight on national issues. In addition, Rep. Stutzman has surrounded himself with a great team," McIntosh told the Washington Examiner last month.

Stutzman is naturally pleased to have their support. "Club For Growth is obviously a great organization

that is very focused on the economy and the federal budget," Stutzman told HPI. "They've been a difference-maker in campaigns; I'm glad to have them."

Whereas Stutzman can point to many high-profile efforts that will impress both Hoosier and national conservatives, such as trying to reform food stamps, the farm bill, and crafting the Republican Study Committee's budget, none of them has come to full fruition. In fairness, he can say he has played a major role reframing issues in ways that will please many hardline conservatives. Moreover, he can argue his dedication cannot be in doubt as he has run afoul multiple times with Speaker John Boehner on these very issues. Willingness to make the so-called "tough votes" and sacrificing favor with the currently unpopular House leadership will play well with primary voters.

The candidate backed by the Club For Growth now faces an opponent who used to work for Lugar as a legislative assistant. Young, unlike Holcomb or Stutzman, can point to multiple pieces of legislation he has authored that has passed out of the House, passed the Senate, or even been signed into law. During this Congress alone, Young can point to his Natural Gas Parity Act and Notice of Observation Treatment and Implication of Care Eligibility (NOTICE) Act clearing the president's desk. His REINS Act, for example, has passed over to the Senate. As Young told HPI, "It's one thing to talk a big game, it's another to win that game in Washington, D.C., even with a sitting, liberal president. That's something I'm proud to have done in Congress and the thing Hoosiers want from a U.S. senator."

Asked why he did not garner those prominent groups' endorsement, Young told HPI, "The only opinions that matter are those of Hoosier voters."

Delph wildcard?

There is a possibility that the Republican field is not entirely set. State Sen. Mike Delph, of Carmel, sat down with HPI last week. He is seriously considering a run and already canvassing support across the state. Many believe the noted social and constitutional conservative would pull votes away from Stutzman, as both would tack the furthest right of the four-man field. Delph disagrees but Stutzman admits his entry would change things.

"I respect Mike Delph a lot," Stutzman told HPI. "He was an office mate of mine when he and I were in the state Senate together. I know that he is a hard worker and he's campaigned around the state before. He obviously has a great record of his own when it comes to campaigns. We're focusing on our race. If Sen. Delph decides to get in, obviously it changes the dynamics for us. He's got a strong base in Central

Indiana and in other parts of the state. He's a very strong conservative in the state senate and if he decides to get in the race, we're just going to continue to run the campaign we believe is going to help us be successful."

For awhile this spring another state senator was preparing to enter the U.S. Senate field, Jim Merritt. The Indiana Senate Majority Caucus chair from Indianapolis was expected to have a similar impact as a potential Delph candidacy but instead compete for similar slices of the primary electorate likely to support Holcomb and Young. Merritt never threw his hat in the ring and since early August has endorsed Young, now serving on his steering committee.

Presidential arce influence

Any race for an open U.S. Senate will be influenced by national politics. As Republicans negotiate a contentious and crowded presidential primary, it will undoubtedly drive the news cycle and many of the issues Hoosier primary voters are weighing as they consider among Holcomb, Stutzman, and Young. Holcomb, in fact, attended the first Republican debate in Cleveland last Thursday for the top-10 polling candidates. "Worked the eastern border of Indiana on the way up and then went to the debate," he told HPI. "I was listening to hear who was tapping into my message and what I'm hearing on the ground in Indiana. I'm listening to the whole field on how we're going to make a safer country, a stronger country, and a freer country." He said he was impressed by the overall number of qualified candidates in both the undercard and main debate. "I was thrilled to learn that so many people watched," Holcomb added. "Something is going on where more people are engaged."

"I was impressed a lot by the governors," Young told HPI. "To me they exhibited effective conservative leadership that is not just talking about our principles but alluding to the specific ways they've advanced conservative principles in their own state and how they hope to advance them at the federal level."

"My favorite candidate is the one who wins at the end of this primary," Messer said. He has the same idea for Senate nomination contest. "My focus is on how to bring people together after this primary is over," Messer told HPI. Could it get bitter? "I'm worried some. My life experience is that primaries can get awfully personal because the issue differences are very small. I know that as a veteran of two closely contested primaries." It's his expectation, however, that things will remain civil; no repeat of 2012 in other words. ❖

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

Stutzman, Young giving up safe seats

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Two Republican congressmen from Indiana are giving up their “safe” House seats, seeking instead election to the Senate, with its greater prestige and longer terms.

Neither is known throughout the state. But Rep. Todd Young of Bloomington, representing Indiana’s 9th District, and Marlin Stutzman of Howe, representing the 3rd District, won big in 2014. Each would have been a “sure bet” for reelection in 2016.



Instead they take a political risk, with a potential big reward. They seek the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Dan Coats. One for sure will wind up with no seat at all in Washington. Both could lose. It’s a potential four-candidate race for the nomination. The GOP nominee then will face a Democratic challenger.

Young campaigned in South Bend and Mishawaka last week, trying to get better known in an area where he starts with zilch name recognition.

But Young is well known in the central and southern parts of the state in a 9th District extending from the south edge of Indianapolis to the Ohio River. He also raised over a million dollars in the second quarter of the year, before he even officially announced for the Senate. That’s an impressive start for funding TV to get known statewide.

Young says his political philosophy is “responsible conservatism,” working for conservative principles but avoiding “strident speeches” and “political games” of threatened government shutdown. He followed that philosophy with success since election to the House in 2010, he says, citing measures he has sponsored such as the REINS Act for congressional review of federal regulations.

No strident calls for hardball political tactics? Will that work in a Republican primary in which the most partisan of party members have so much clout?

“Hoosiers are common sense, practical people,” Young says. “They aren’t looking for talkers. They are looking for doers.”

He seeks to convince Republicans that he can win a Senate race against the presumed Democratic nominee, former Congressman Baron Hill. Young defeated Hill, then incumbent 9th District congressman, in 2010. “I can win,” Young says. “I can beat Baron Hill. I beat him before. I

can beat him again.”

Stutzman, the Tea Party favorite, is well known in northeast Indiana, where Young isn’t known. The 3rd District stretches from the eastern edge of Elkhart County to the Ohio line and includes Fort Wayne. Although Stutzman ran statewide in a losing effort for the Senate nomination 2010, he isn’t known much at all in the parts of the state where Young is strong.

Young says he has Tea Party as well as business and GOP organization support in his district. He offers a big tent. But that may not appeal to those Republicans who are furious with Washington.

Stutzman is endorsed by the Club For Growth, the conservative organization instrumental in Richard Mourdock’s capture of the 2012 Republican senatorial nomination. The endorsement is a mixed blessing. The club provides big funding. Its endorsement will help Stutzman with many of the conservative voters who provided a primary majority for Mourdock. The endorsement will be viewed negatively, however, by Republicans who believe the nomination of Mourdock, who self-destructed in the fall campaign, cost Republicans a Senate seat. Democrat Joe Donnelly won the seat.

Young’s background includes Marine captain, Naval Academy, Indiana University Law School, study abroad, conservative Heritage Foundation think-tank, adjunct professor, legislative assistant on energy policy for Sen. Dick Lugar. He’s endorsed by three former state Republican chairmen. Impressive? Yes, for many, but maybe not to other primary voters who would see this as too “establishment.”

Also in the picture for the Republican senatorial nomination are former Indiana Republican Chairman Eric Holcomb, who was chief of staff for Coats, and state Sen. Mike Delph of Carmel, with backing in Tea Party and evangelical Christian ranks.

Holcomb, who has announced, could attract some of the same business and organization types that Young needs to win. Delph, still contemplating candidacy, could attract some of the same Tea Party types that Stutzman needs to win. In abandoning their “safe” House seats, the two congressmen are taking a big risk in quest of a bigger political role in the U.S. Senate. ❖

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

Zoeller believes Congress needs a constitutional lawyer

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

MORRISTOWN – Though outside the district to which he aspires, Attorney General Greg Zoeller attended U.S. Rep. Luke Messer’s 4th annual barbecue in Morristown last Saturday. The event drew around 450 Republican party faithful, several state legislators, Indiana State Treasurer Kelly Mitchell, and all three Republican U.S. Senate hopefuls. “I’m here to visit with my good friend

Luke Messer. I told him it was too late to for him to try to talk me out of running,” Zoeller quipped to HPI. He is in the running for the now open seat of recently declared Senate hopeful, U.S. Rep. Todd Young. “I’ve been traveling around the 9th District a lot. I still have a

lot of work to do as attorney general. Between the two, I think I’m balancing it well,” he said.

Zoeller isn’t shying away from using his statewide contacts to generate support and is getting encouragement from his attorneys general colleagues across the country. The two-term statewide officeholder from New Albany garnered 1.45 million votes in 2012, more than anyone else in Indiana that cycle. “It is true, I think, the ‘Zoeller’ name may resonate more down round New Albany and home areas,” Zoeller told HPI. “Fortunately or unfortunately, I’m in the news in Indianapolis a lot. I get plenty of attention for the work the office does and the Indianapolis media market. We had a poll last January, the Realtors’, and statewide name recognition was 58%. That’s an advantage.” However, he does recognize a ground game is necessary, admitting, “I’ve got to go into the smaller counties and get outside of those media market areas.”

High-profile cases are nothing new for Zoeller and will likely ingratiate GOP primary voters. Explaining his duties during his portion of the speaking program in Morristown, Zoeller reminded his fellow Republicans, “Lately, and I think you’ve probably seen it in the paper more than once, I’ve had to sue the federal government, particularly President Obama. I have had to sue more than once; I think it’s up in the forties — I’ve lost count.” The line got applause and laughs. His office has also argued cases and filed myriad amicus briefs regarding same-sex marriage issues, something that could help with social conservatives especially.

Zoeller’s name will likely remain in the news as Indiana leads a multi-state legal challenge to the proposed EPA carbon emission rules. The Republican congressional



U.S. Rep. Luke Messer stands behind Attorney General Greg Zoeller, who is running for the 9th CD Republican nomination. (HPI Photo by Matthew Butler)

delegation, including Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly, have all spoken against the scheme. Zoeller says Democrats’ twice-failed efforts to pass legislation allowing for the proposed emission rules further demonstrates the executive does not have the regulatory authority to this extent. “The President, I think echoes the public’s frustration with Congress sometimes, (when he says) ‘If Congress won’t act, I

will,’” Zoeller explained to HPI. “The question is whether President Obama can write his own law. As the lawyer for the state, it’s a legitimate constitutional challenge whether they’ve exceeded the limited enumerated powers of the executive branch to not wait for Congress to empower but instead to just exercise authority without any additional grant of statutory authority.”

“Part of my message to primary voters is that I’m a practicing constitutional lawyer,” Zoeller told HPI. “I know the limited role of the federal government. I think I would serve well to go out there and say, ‘We need to focus on just the few things that only the federal government can do.’” In rolling back federal regulatory “overreach,” Zoeller says it will take a careful “planned withdrawal” and “refocusing.” “You just can’t do it tomorrow,” he noted. “We’ll see if that message works in the primary.”

Superintendent: ISTA backs Ritz reelect

Teresa Meredith, president of the Indiana State Teachers Association, said she still supports Supt. Glenda Ritz and was not disillusioned by her decision. The union was the largest contributor to her 2012 campaign (Chalkbeat). “I would like to know a little bit more about the decision, but I think I know her well enough to know that she’s probably considered what the outcome could be in both the governor’s race and the superintendent’s race,” Meredith said. “I’m wondering what’s going on with (the superintendent’s) race in particular, if that’s had anything to do with her deciding to withdraw or if she’s just wanting to stay focused on what she’s doing.” Perhaps it’s a case of unfinished business, Meredith said. “If this is what she thinks she needs to do to make sure they are served well, then they will support that.”

The Republican party has yet to present any challengers to Ritz for the superintendent’s seat (Indiana Pub-



lic Media). Names some experts have put out as potential Republican candidates include state Rep. Wendy McNamara, R-Mount Vernon, as well as one of Ritz's fellow State Board of Education members, Avon elementary school teacher Sarah O'Brien. Another name Howey Politics Indiana has heard is former legislative candidate and SBOE member Brad Oliver.

Attorney General: Hill eyes GOP candidacy

Sources are telling Howey Politics Indiana that Elkhart County Prosecutor Curtis Hill is preparing to run for the Republican attorney general nomination. Former attorney general Steve Carter and State Sen. Randy Head are other candidates preparing to run.

3rd CD: Banks signs spending pledge

State Sen. Jim Banks, candidate for Indiana's 3rd CD, has officially signed the Coalition to Reduce Spending's pledge to reduce spending. The pledge stipulates that Banks will not vote for any spending without offsets elsewhere in the budget and will vote only for budgets with a path to balance. "With a national debt that is crippling our economy and weakening our global status, it has never been more important for our leaders to be committed to reducing spending and cutting our debt," Banks said.

General Assembly

HD20: Dermody to face challenge

It appears that GOP Assistant Majority Whip Tom Dermody in HD20 may face his first substantial challenge in years as a longtime LaPorte-area social services advocate has filed an exploratory committee with the State Election Division. Karen Biernacki, the executive director of LaPorte County Harmony House/CASA who is reported to have a high profile in the LaPorte community, filed an exploratory committee on July 27 listing former State Rep. Nancy Dembowski (D-Knox) as chair of her committee. Biernacki has served on various state child protection boards and commissions and is the current LaPorte County representative to the Shared Ethics Advisory Commission of Northwest Indiana. Dermody was unopposed in 2014 and was first elected in 2006. Informed sources say that HD20, which consists of the city of LaPorte and much of central and southern LaPorte County as well as portions of Starke County, leans slightly Democratic. Some believe his pro-RFRA vote as well as inability to

steer the Sunday sales bill to passage or to bring home any significant highway or public school dollars to his county have invited a challenge.

SD36: Sandlin, Shreve line up for SD36

Indianapolis Councilman Jack Sandlin is weighing a bid for SD36 which is being vacated by State Sen. Brent Waltz who is seeking the 9th CD Republican nomination. Indianapolis Councilman Jefferson Shreve is also preparing a candidacy.

Presidential

Trump leads in CNN Iowa Poll

Donald Trump has a significant lead in the race to win over likely Iowa caucus-goers, according to the first CNN/ORC poll in the state this cycle. Trump tops the field with 22% and is the candidate seen as best able to handle top issues including the economy, illegal immigration and terrorism. He's most cited as the one with the best chance of winning the general election, and, by a wide margin, as the candidate most likely to change the way things work in Washington. Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson follows Trump in overall preference with 14%, bumping Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, who had held the top spot in most recent public polling in Iowa, down to third place with 9%. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz follows the top three at 8%, with businesswoman Carly Fiorina and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee both at 7%. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush is tied at 5% with senators Rand Paul and Marco Rubio.

Grand, Dumezich for Bush

Republican uber financiers Bob Grand and Dan Dumezich are backing Jeb Bush for president and Eric Holcomb for the U.S. Senate. "What people see in him is that he has a record," Grand told Howey Politics Indiana on Monday about Bush. "He's a compassionate guy. He's a former governor and I think we need to nominate a governor. He's reaching out to groups of people we need to reach out to. That's the most important thing we need to do. He's tackling the tough issues." Grand and Dumezich are also backing Eric Holcomb for the U.S. Senate. ❖

2016 Republican Presidential Nomination

National: GOP, Dem | Iowa: GOP, Dem | New Hampshire: GOP, Dem | South Carolina: GOP, Dem | General Election Match-Ups

Polling Data																	
Poll	Date	Trump	Bush	Walker	Rubio	Carson	Huckabee	Cruz	Paul	Christie	Kasich	Fiorina	Perry	Santorum	Jindal	Graham	Spread
RCP Average	7/29 - 8/10	22.8	12.0	9.4	6.2	6.2	6.0	5.8	4.4	3.6	3.0	2.8	1.6	1.4	1.2	0.6	Trump +10.8
Rasmussen	8/9 - 8/10	17	10	9	10	8	3	7	4	4	4	9	1	1	1	1	Trump +7
FOX News	7/30 - 8/2	26	15	9	5	7	6	6	5	3	3	2	1	2	1	0	Trump +11
Bloomberg	7/30 - 8/2	21	10	8	6	5	7	4	5	4	4	1	2	2	1	1	Trump +11
Monmouth	7/30 - 8/2	26	12	11	4	5	6	6	4	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	Trump +14
CBS News	7/29 - 8/2	24	13	10	6	6	8	6	4	3	1	0	2	1	2	0	Trump +11

All 2016 Republican Presidential Nomination Polling Data

Honoring a tax pledge as bridges buckle

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – Back in 1998, then-candidate Bob Cherry made a promise never to raise taxes on Indiana residents for the life of his political career.

Now, years later as Indiana needs billions of new tax dollars to fix its crumbling roads and bridges, he wonders if he made a mistake. "How can we make good public policy for the future if we're tied to the past?" said Cherry, one of 27 Indiana lawmakers who've signed the Americans for Tax Reform's so-called taxpayer protection pledge.



The pledge, created in 1986 by anti-tax activist Grover Norquist, locks its signatories into a promise never to create new taxes or to raise existing ones as long the pledge-maker holds public office. Cherry and other Republican office-holders happily signed on, he said, to demonstrate their commitment to fiscal conservatism.

But now the promise feels like a chokehold, especially in light of the indefinite shutdown of a portion of the heavily traveled Interstate 65 near Lafayette, due to a deteriorating bridge sinking into the ground.

The shut-down bridge, which typically carries 20,000 motorists a day, is one of more than 350 state-maintained bridges deemed structurally deficient, a number that state transportation officials say will double in less than a decade without a huge injection of new money into the state's highway fund.

Cherry, who serves as a vice chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, fears that no-tax pledge will keep the General Assembly from acting on a long-delayed but much-needed long-term solution for transportation funding.

"We made this pledge to people who are from outside our state, who know nothing about us now," said Cherry. "They don't understand: Things change."

Indiana hasn't raised the gas tax since 2002, when it was increased to 18 cents a gallon. A combination of factors, including inflation and more efficient cars, has triggered a drop in revenues. Indiana's gas tax brought in \$582 million in 2004. Last year, the tax brought in \$527 million.

Some long-term options to make up for the lost revenue have been floated in the legislature: They include raising the gas tax by tying it to inflation; increasing the portion of the sales tax on gasoline that can be diverted into road and bridge repair; and creating a new license registration fee for drivers of electric- or natural gas-powered vehicles that don't currently pay the gas tax.

They were all shot down by the Americans for Tax Reform. In a statement. John Karsch, an ATR spokesman, said any increase in the state's gas taxes or registration fees "not offset by an equivalent tax cut would be considered a violation of their (legislators') promise to their constituents to oppose any and all efforts to increase taxes."

And Karsch's statement added: "If lawmakers wanted to ensure adequate transportation funding, it would have been prioritized in the state budget." Some lawmakers worry the no-tax pledge will keep lawmakers from getting there.

Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, House Roads and Transportation Committee chairman, has pushed lawmakers for the past three years to act boldly on road funding. The legislature freed up about \$400 million in the 2013-2014 budget cycle for infrastructure, much of it going to repair local roads and bridges, without raising taxes.

But it only put a dent in the bigger problem, said Soliday, who calls himself a "common-sense conservative" and who declined to sign the tax pledge.

Last year, Karl Browning, then head of the Indiana Department of Transportation, told lawmakers it will take \$3 billion over the next decade just to curb the existing damage to state-maintained roads and bridges. Browning also said it will take \$4 billion just to bring existing roads and bridges up to what's considered current safety standards.

"Conservatives like to talk about how terrible it would be to burden our children with debt," Soliday said. "But by not fixing this now, we're going to be handing our children and very, very big and costly problem."

Miles and miles of Indiana's roads are in poor shape. But its bridges may be more worrisome. In his detailed presentation to state budget-makers last year, Karl Browning said delaying action only makes the situation much worse.

Browning told lawmakers that half of Indiana's 5,400 bridges are more than 50 years old and nearing their life span of 75 years. He said about almost 7 percent of Indiana's bridges are rated in "poor condition" – considered structurally deficient by federal standards – and he projected that number will nearly double over the next 10 years if the current level of spending on bridge repair, about \$274 million, doesn't dramatically go up.



State Rep. Bob Cherry faces a tax pledge dilemma.

Soliday hoped his fellow legislators were listening. His repeated message to them has been: "It's a matter of, 'You can pay me now, or you can pay me a whole lot more later.' "

Some did listen.

House Ways and Means Chairman Tim Brown, R-Crawfordsville, signed the no-tax pledge. But he's aligned with Soliday in trying to find a way to significantly increase dollars to the state's highway fund. He sees the gasoline tax as "user fee" that's long been paid by motorists to maintain the roads and bridges they use. Raising that "user fee" is one option that legislators could consider, without violating the tax pledge, he said.

"But I know not everybody will see it that way," Brown said.

Earlier this year, Brown and Soliday convinced INDOT to pay for a publicly accessible tool that documents road and bridge funding needs, explains the different revenue-raising options, and shows what can be bought

for the extra bucks. The tool should be online by October. They're both hoping that kind of information helps push the road-funding conversation forward. That, along with the visions of the closed Interstate 65 bridge collapsing if not fixed and the hours-long delays for motorists forced to travel a 17-mile detour on back roads to get back on the interstate.

Senate Appropriations Chairman Luke Kenley thinks any tax increase for road funding will likely come in the 2017 session. That's a budget-making year, and also comes after the critical 2016 state elections. Kenley, known for his tight-fisted control over the budget, says it's a good thing for Republicans to be seen as resistant to tax increases. But he's glad he never signed the no-tax pledge.

"It's going to be inevitable that we'll have raise (road funding) revenues in some way, shape or form," Kenley said, adding: "But I know for some lawmakers, this will create some anxiety." ❖

U.S. 35's unmarked route through history

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – For over 210 miles, from Michigan City to the Ohio line at Richmond, highway U.S. 35 offers a route through Indiana's history. No historical markers line the road; no special designation is found on any map.



On that drive, you pass through parts of nine counties and into or near the cities of LaPorte, Knox, Winamac, Logansport, Kokomo, Marion, Muncie, New Castle and Winchester. Much of our story for the past 35 years is to be discovered on that trip.

In 1980, 9 percent of Hoosiers lived in those nine U.S. 35 counties; in 2014 that figure had contracted to 7 percent. While the entire state added 20 percent to its population in those years, the U.S. 35 corridor lost 6 percent (32,500) of its people. Worst hit were Grant and Randolph counties with 15 percent losses, while both Starke (up 5 percent) and La Porte (up 3 percent) had modest gains.

Politicians love to look at per-capita personal income (PCPI) as a major indicator of economic well-being. Between 1980 and 2013 (the latest year for which we have data), PCPI in Indiana, adjusted for inflation, grew by 47 percent while advancing by only 35 percent in the nine counties of U.S. 35.

A better economic indicator, I believe, are wages per job, which in 1980, along the U.S. 35 corridor were just 1 percent below the state average. By 2013, they were 11 percent below that average. Statewide, wages per job had advanced, after adjustment for inflation, by 7 percent while they fell along U.S. 35 by 4 percent. During the same period, this corridor had a measly 1-percent increase in the number of jobs while Indiana as a whole saw the number of jobs rise by 40 percent.

As you guessed, the major problem was manufacturing. Yes, Indiana lost nearly one-quarter of its manufacturing jobs in the past three decades, but the loss was 47 percent along the U.S. 35 corridor. Although these nine counties had but 11 percent of the state's manufacturing jobs in 1980, they lost 22 percent of such jobs in the ensuing years. Thus, in the U.S. 35 corridor, manufacturing went from producing 32 percent of total earnings in 1980 to just 17 percent in 2013. Meanwhile, at the state level, manufacturing's share of total earnings fell from 25 percent to 14 percent.

We don't think in terms of highway corridors. Certainly, legislators don't think in those terms. They think of political districts they can manipulate as they wish every 10 years. But might some highway corridors have more significance for economic development than the arbitrary regions the state tries to impose on its citizens?

Since the 1960s, Indiana has played with the concept of regions. The rationale for those regions is not clearly defined and possibly no more significant than the red lines on a state highway map. ❖

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What drives a Fed rate hike?

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNICE – What is the nature of their agreement and disagreements and how does it play into the public debate over economic policy?

Every few days we see the release of new economic data that fuels endless speculation about the timing of the Federal Reserve's decision to raise interest rates. Instead of offering an over-educated guess as to the date

the rate increase will happen, I'd instead like to provide a bit of explanation about how economists view the decision. What is the nature of their agreement and disagreements and how does it play into the public debate over economic policy?

The economists who influence these decisions come mostly from the Fed's stable of several hundred researchers, numerous research universities and a few think tanks. These folks publish

research in peer-reviewed scientific journals, write policy papers and work to reconcile and explain different results of that research. Unlike many academic disciplines, and especially unlike what you hear on TV news, the economists don't belong to vastly different schools of thought. There aren't 'supply siders' or 'Keynesians.' Those monikers work great for a short news segment or political speech, but few economists label themselves. For the record, my doctoral dissertation was called a "New Keynesian" research question.

All the relevant published research follows a pretty basic agreement of how the economy works, the elements which are critical and what the ultimate direction most policies will take. This is true for Fed interest rate hikes, as well as most economic policy choices. The sharp disagreement among economists regarding Fed policy is mostly confined to the size and timing of these policy choices.

The common view of how the economy works is that the aggregate economy has lots of smaller markets operating within it. These markets dictate such things as large capital flows between regions all the way down to the choice of how households share work and child-rearing duties. However, most of these markets suffer some degree of imperfection.

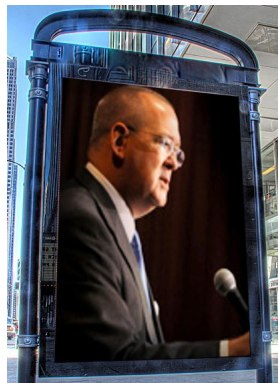
Smoothly working markets allocate scarce resources as efficiently as possible. Poorly working markets do not, leaving in their wake shortage or surplus, monopoly prices and an overall loss of well-being. Economic research

that bears on the Fed's decision tries to better understand how a rate change will impact the economy in a world where some markets work smoothly and others do not.

The disagreement over the timing and size of a rate change then devolves to a technical understanding about efficiently markets are working in different sectors. The more effectively operating markets we have, the less the Fed should intervene. The more markets do not work, the longer the period of monetary stimulus. In the end it all boils down to how quickly business and households adjust to price changes.

If the Fed waits too long low, markets that otherwise respond well to price changes will develop bubbles. If the Fed moves too soon, the imperfect markets, especially labor, will not have yet recovered from a recession. The technical research on how markets respond offers critical guidance to timing a rate hike. In the end, it is primarily calculus, not ideology that drives these decisions. ❖

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Buncich answers Gary's dire call

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – In the wake of a rash of homicides, Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson again has asked outsiders to help patrol the streets of her city. Only this time she didn't turn to Gov. Mike Pence for help.



Two years ago she asked Pence to send in an unspecified number of state troopers for 90 days to help her city police force. Pence politely said no. Instead, Pence sent outsiders to analyze the city's police force and recommend a better deployment of personnel. It all seemed kind of silly given that Gary police best knew their city, the nature of the crime and how it

should be attacked.

When Pence turned down the mayor in July 2013, there had been 29 homicides for the year. When Freeman-Wilson asked for additional police this week, the city had recorded 38 homicides for the year.

Lake County Sheriff John Buncich pledged a mini-

mum of 10 county officers to focus on hotspots at peak times through the end of the year. The county council approved \$200,000 to pay overtime for the additional officers.

Councilman Jamal Washington said the Gary situation was dire. "In the past two weeks, the past week, we have had, pretty much a catastrophe, a catastrophe in the city of Gary in terms of murder," Washington said. "It has just been a war."

Buncich said the problem stems from gang wars over the control of illegal drugs. County Commissioner Roosevelt Allen called the spike in homicides an emergency situation that required a short-term surge until Gary can hire more police officers and increase their salaries to limit turnover.

Things were even worse 20 years ago when then-

Gary Mayor Thomas Barnes asked Gov. Evan Bayh to send state police into the city. It was October 1995 and the city had recorded 96 homicides for the year. Bayh led a delegation of 50 state troopers down Gary's main drag of Broadway to the cheers of residents. The presence of the extra police officers helped stem the tide and brought a certain amount of peace to the city.

The increase in homicides this year comes after the most recent census showed Gary's population had dropped to about 80,000 from a high of almost 175,000 some 50 years ago. ❖

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

The 'un-nominatable' Donald Trump

By **LARRY SABATO, KYLE KONDIK**
and **GEOFFREY SKELLEY**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Whatever you think of him, Donald Trump is a stick of dynamite thrown into the presidential pond. All the boats have been rocked, and given Trump's potential for more explosiveness, the political waters show little sign of settling down anytime soon.

Donald Trump is so special that we've created a category (and perhaps a word) just for him in our Republican presidential rankings: "The Un-Nominatable Frontrunner." Trump's tier has partial precedents. Remember when then-Rep. Michele Bachmann (MN), businessman Herman Cain, and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich led national and/or early state polls at various times in the 2012 cycle? There was no way that any of the trio was going to end up as the Republican nominee for president. You could say the same about former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani in the early stages of the 2008 election. Friends, this is also true today for The Donald. Or perhaps we should say: If Trump is nominated, then everything we think we know about presidential nominations is wrong.

History has shown that presidential nominations tend to follow a certain set of "rules."

First, the nominee has to have widespread backing from party elites -- those in public office (many of whom will have to run on the same election ticket), the people in party leadership positions, large donors, and the heads of factional, well-funded organizations outside the party structure but still under the broader partisan umbrella.

No question Trump has plenty of his own money -- if he chooses to spend it -- so he may not need sizable

donors. But in every other respect, Trump comes up short or altogether empty with party elites. Not only does the Washington, DC crowd want nothing to do with him, but some segments of the party that typically fight the Republican establishment are staying far away. For instance, the Club for Growth, which often supports primary challengers to sitting GOP members of Congress, dislikes Trump. RedState's Erick Erickson disinvited Trump to an event he held in Atlanta last weekend.

Second, a likely nominee needs a layered, professional organization that has been carefully constructed at the national level and in each of the early critical states. Trump has some of this, but all reports suggest he is throwing together most of his organization, only now hiring seasoned second and third-level aides that are essential to victory.

Trump's campaign has had a seat-of-the-pants feel to it, with the candidate relying on his easy access to TV anchors and reporters who are always eager to air Trump's latest stream of consciousness. But Iowa and New Hampshire, in particular, are not won by sound bites and celebrity coverage.

Third, a party winner is a disciplined politician who knows the language of politics and the dangerous curves that exist all along the campaign trail. As the first debate proved beyond doubt, Trump has little knowledge of any of this, and contempt for what he calls "politically correct" conventions. Short cuts in politics catch up with a candidate sooner or later. Moreover, as experienced pols know, you don't win the votes of those you insult.

Finally, veterans of politics understand that many voters become more cautious and thoughtful as the real Election Day -- primary or general -- approaches. One's vote for president is special, with enormous consequences; after all, this is the most powerful office in the world, still possessing the ability to end civilization as we know it. ❖

Jon Webb, Evansville Courier & Press: Glenda Ritz has dropped out of the 2016 governor's race. In a related story, I've abandoned my plans to travel to the moon. Ritz stood no chance from the beginning. She struggled to raise money for her campaign, had trouble reporting contributions within the parameters of state election law and, if her stint as superintendent of public instruction is any indication, possessed none of the political savvy necessary for a Democrat hoping to navigate the Republican waters of Indiana politics. Wow. That was harsh, eh? Let's allow Ritz's public relations folks to take over. "Now is not the right time for me to run for governor," Ritz is quoted as saying in a statement issued on Friday. "Under my leadership, I have brought the discussion of public education into the public discourse and have started to fundamentally change how we support schools. My work is not finished, and my passion is stronger than ever." That's much nicer. It's also the ramblings of a masochist. After defeating former schools chief Tony Bennett in the 2012 election, Ritz was plucked from her job at Crooked Creek Elementary School and hurled into a dystopia. Gov. Mike Pence tried everything to strip the schools chief post of its power, even going as far as trying to change it from an electable position to an appointed position. Meanwhile, Ritz has stormed out of meetings, botched an attempted ISTEP overhaul and failed to implement any meaningful educational reform. Why on Earth would she want four more years of that nonsense? Politics is a nasty business. It rewards idiocy and ditches thought in favor of posturing and pandering. Ritz was a one-issue candidate when she needed to be a zero-issue candidate. I've made harsh comments about Glenda Ritz. Allow me to make amends by paying her a compliment. Ms. Ritz, I may not think you've done a good job in your position as schools chief, but you're a passionate person who strives to improve education in this state. ❖



Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier: As if it couldn't get worse on Interstate 65, where a bridge over the Wildcat Creek has been closed since Friday and state transportation officials couldn't say when tortuous detours would end, someone dared to utter these two chilling words: "Lindberg Road." Of course, Lindberg Road, which crosses the Celery Bog, was a West Lafayette nightmare, with a cycle of sink-close-repair-repeat for more than a decade before it was replaced four years ago by the bridge that stands there now. Shudder to think, but is that what the driving public is in for this time, too, with I-65? Maybe sensing the fear and dread accompanied by the question in the wake of a Monday afternoon press conference, Anne Rearick, Indiana Department of Transportation's director of bridges, quickly reeled in that scenario. "This is a very different situation," Rearick said, slightly shaking her head toward another INDOT official, as if to say: Let's not use Lindberg Road as a reference

point, again. Still, we're days away from even knowing how long the northbound lanes of I-65 will be closed just north of Indiana 26 in Lafayette. "I think foreseeable future is a good estimate," Brandye Hendrickson, INDOT commissioner, said during an update at Purdue University's Bowen Laboratory. A Hendrickson said Gov. Mike Pence encouraged INDOT "to consider creative solutions" to get I-65 open again to the 24,000-plus vehicles that drive that section of northbound lanes each day. But in reality, it could get worse. So it's up to Indiana to, as Pence put it, get creative. ❖

George Will, Washington Post: In every town large enough to have two traffic lights there is a bar at the back of which sits the local Donald Trump, nursing his fifth beer and innumerable delusions. Because the actual Donald Trump is wealthy, he can turn himself into an unprecedentedly and incorrigibly vulgar presidential candidate. It is his right to use his riches as he pleases. His squalid performance and its coarsening of civic life are costs of freedom that an open society must be prepared to pay. When, however, Trump decided that his next acquisition would be not another casino but the Republican presidential nomination, he tactically and quickly underwent many conversions of convenience (concerning abortion, health care, funding Democrats, etc.). His makeover demonstrates that he is a counterfeit Republican and no conservative. He is an affront to anyone devoted to the project William F. Buckley began six decades ago with the founding in 1955 of the National Review — making conservatism intellectually respectable and politically palatable. ❖

Doug Ross, NWI Times: A lion, a bear and a robot have captured attention this summer, each of them touching the hearts of people in Northwest Indiana and beyond. The lion, of course, is Cecil. You've read about him, you've watched TV reports about him or seen it on the Internet. Either that, or you've gone Rip Van Winkle on us. Zimbabwe even wants to extradite the American dentist who killed the lion to bring the killer to justice. Then there's the bear who has become Northwest Indiana's No. 1 tourist this summer. Maybe you picture him as Yogi Bear, helping himself to some picnic baskets. Or maybe you see him as a honey junkie, like Winnie the Pooh. The Department of Natural Resources sees him as a menace. Should he be trapped and extradited to Michigan, or should the DNR just shoot him? That's the subject of serious debate locally. Then there's the hitchBOT, the hitchhiking robot that made his way across Canada and parts of Europe as a social test. In the United States, the robot was destroyed even before it left the East Coast. How brutal. I'm wondering what people in other countries think of Americans. Collectively, we're a violent people. ❖

Lawmaker emails private

INDIANAPOLIS - An Indiana state representative's emails and other correspondence with utility company officials about proposed legislation can remain private, a Marion County judge has ruled (Associated Press). The decision came Tuesday after a court hearing on a lawsuit filed against Republican Rep. Eric Koch, of Bedford, and the House GOP caucus.

Koch, who is chairman of the House utilities committee, sponsored an unsuccessful bill this year backed by Indiana's utilities that would have cut the amount power companies must pay when they buy excess electricity generated by home solar power systems. The Citizens Action Coalition, Common Cause Indiana and the Washington-based Energy and Policy Institute had argued that, under the state's public records law, Koch's correspondence with the utility companies about that bill should be public. But Judge James Osborn dismissed the lawsuit with a seven-line ruling, in which he cited a 1993 Indiana Supreme Court decision that it couldn't interfere with the operation of the legislative branch.

88 counties get federal disaster aid

INDIANAPOLIS - The U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved emergency aid for Hoosier farmers who have suffered production losses from heavy rain and flooding this spring and summer (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The USDA announced Wednesday that 53 Indiana counties have been declared disaster areas. Low-interest federal loans are available to farmers in the designated counties. Farmers in 35 counties contiguous to disaster areas also qualify for the loans. The designations mean

that farmers in all but four of Indiana's counties, including Steuben in northeast Indiana, qualify for assistance. Gov. Mike Pence, Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann and Indiana Farm Service Agency Executive Director Julia Wickard asked the USDA for a disaster declaration for Indiana counties in late July. Record-high rainfall in parts of the state during June and July prevented farmers from planting crops in drenched areas and damaged crops already in the ground. The National Weather Service said Tuesday that Fort Wayne has recorded 18.6 inches of rain since June

1, the city's wettest meteorological summer on record. In national crop projections released Wednesday, the USDA predicted Indiana's corn yield will fall from 188 bushels an acre last year to 158 this year, and its soybean yield will drop from 56 bushels an acre last year to 49 this year.

President Carter has cancer

ATLANTA - Former President Jimmy Carter announced he has been diagnosed with cancer in a brief statement issued Wednesday (Associated Press). "Recent liver surgery revealed that I have cancer that now is in other parts of my body," Carter said in the statement released by the Carter Center. "I will be rearranging my schedule as necessary so I can undergo treatment by physicians at Emory Healthcare."

Rep. Wesco to head Elkhart church

ELKHART - State Rep. Timothy Wesco will be ordained and installed as senior pastor at Calvary Baptist Church of Elkhart on Sunday, the church announced Wednesday (South Bend Tribune). The 29-year-old Osceola Republican, who co-sponsored the controversial Religious Freedom Restoration Act earlier this year in the Indiana General Assembly, has served as assistant pastor of the

church since Jan. 1, 2014, overseeing much of its teaching and music ministry, the church said in a press release.

ISTEP delay puts off teacher raises

LAFAYETTE - Teachers across the state may have to wait months for raises because ISTEP scores are delayed (Lafayette Journal & Courier). School districts are required to use test scores as a measure of teacher effectiveness under state law, according to Tippecanoe School Corp. assistant superintendent Susan DeLong. Without ISTEP results, TSC is paying teachers at the same rate they were paid during the last school year under status quo contracts, said Superintendent Scott Hanback. When ISTEP scores and school letter grades are released, teachers will receive retroactive contracts and pay raises based on their performance, Hanback said. But state test scores are not expected to be available until December, and school grades may not be available until 2016. "Educators for a year have been saying, this is a train wreck waiting to happen, and we're unfortunately reaping the benefits of that," Hanback said.

New bicentennial Indiana map

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana's new official state roadway map is a special edition that pays homage to Indiana's upcoming bicentennial. Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann says the free map is "a terrific companion" for planning road trips. She says the map's bicentennial edition will encourage Hoosiers to travel some of the state's scenic roads and explore the state's regions during the 2016 bicentennial year. The free map is currently available at Indiana Farm Bureau building through the remainder of Indiana State Fair. The map can also be requested by visiting VisitIndiana.com..

