



Holcomb rides Trump/Pence surge

An improbable journey to win the governor's office

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – If you take the October WTHR/Howey Politics Indiana Poll and the Nov. 1-3 final survey and draw a trend line, what you end up with in the Indiana gubernatorial race is a 51-45 upset victory by Eric Holcomb over Democrat

John Gregg.



In our September survey, Gregg had a 40-35% lead over Holcomb. In the October survey Gregg was up just 41-39%. And in the November edition, it was tied at 42%, with the Trump/Pence momentum beginning to build. The presidential ticket went from 43-38% in October to a 48-37% lead over Hillary Clinton in early November.

It was a precursor to a tidal wave, an inverse tsunami, that was agitated by the Oct. 28 letter from FBI Director James Comey, tearing off Clinton's email fiasco

Continued on page 4

Pence's Trump cigar

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – "Do you want to see something really cool?"

Sure. I was with Liz Murphy, an aide to Vice President Dan Quayle and we were in his ornate office at the Old Executive Office Building next to the White House.



We walked into an office similar in size and scope to the Indiana governor's office at the Statehouse. We ended up before an antique colonial revival-style double-pedestal desk Theodore Roosevelt brought to the White House in 1903. It was one of six desks to once occupy the Oval Office. Murphy pulled open the desk drawer, which



"Donald Trump is going to be our president. I hope that he will be a successful president for all Americans. We owe him an open mind and a chance to lead."

- Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton in her concession speech



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was empty, save for the signatures of vice presidents.

There were Nixon's, Truman's, George H.W. Bush, and of course Dan Quayle. I looked for Thomas R. Marshall's, but the signature tradition didn't begin until the 1940s.

Marshall served as Indiana governor a century before Mike Pence took over his old second floor Statehouse office. Whereas Pence was an ideologue, a caretaker governor, who saw the office as a stepping stone to the White House, Marshall was a progressive who attempted to rewrite the Indiana Constitution that would have increased the state's regulatory powers considerably, set minimum wages, and gave constitutional protections to unions, all things Mike Pence opposes to this very day.

Marshall became President Woodrow Wilson's veep and found the job stultifying. They disagreed on an array of issues. He attended early Wilson cabinet meetings but his suggestions were mostly ignored, so Marshall stopped going. After Wilson's stroke late in his presidency, it was his wife Edith and not Marshall who ran the government. In 1913, President Wilson began personally meeting with U.S. senators, usurping a traditional role of vice presidents who acted as a conduit. Marshall would write in his memoir, "I have sometimes thought that great men are the bane of civilization, they are the real cause of all the bitterness and contention which amounts to anything in the world."

The Marshall relationship with Wilson was described as "functioning animosity."

But the Hoosier gave us an enduring quote. During a Senate debate on the needs of the nation, Marshall quipped to Sen. Joseph Bristow, "What this country needs is a really good five-cent cigar."

Today, Gov. Pence is 70 days away from following Marshall's footsteps into the Old Executive Office Building. He is measuring for curtains in the Naval Observatory with a dinner there with Vice President Joe Biden scheduled. At some point near the end of his term in 2021 or, perhaps, 2025, Pence will sign the Roosevelt desk.

It is an incredible political revival. There were so many errors and shoddy staff work during the first three years of the Pence administration that Howey Politics Indiana described it about a year ago as the "exploding cigar governorship."

Pence responded by giving me a box of Punch cigars (one of my favorites, by the way), in an era when he was still doing interviews with Indiana media. The man had a sense of humor he used to beguile those taking exception to policy and practice.

Many believed Pence was on



Vice President Dick Cheney signs the Teddy Roosevelt desk drawer in January 2009.

the path to political extinction in 2016. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act debacle essentially ended a conceived presidential campaign that would have thrust him in the company of Trump. He might have become "RFRA Mike" in Trump insult parlance. He faced a tough rematch with Democrat John Gregg, who was probing the Pence record, particularly on divisive social issues, with sharpened knives. Polls showed Pence vulnerable and polarizing. There was Donald Trump rising as a demagogue, with many in the media fixated on a death wish march into Electoral College oblivion.

When dozens of prominent Republicans turned their backs on Trump, Pence did what Quayle did in the summer of 1988. He conceived, then orchestrated a life-line strategy to get on the ticket. This reached a dramatic crescendo in early July when Pence hosted Trump at a Columbia Club fundraiser, auditioned for him at a Westfield sports complex and dined with him that night. Mysteriously, Trump's gilded jet had "mechanical" issues at the Indianapolis Airport, so Trump spent the night at the Conrad, then had breakfast with the Pences as the Governor's Residence.

We now know via the reporting of the New York Post and New York Times that the jet malfunction was a diabolical strategy in the cunning brain of then-campaign manager Paul Manafort to keep Trump in the company of the Hoosier governor. The Trump children and son-in-law Jared Kushner were pushing Pence for the ticket. Trump wanted New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. We know now that it was Kushner to sent the charter flight to pick up the Pences on that Thursday. We watched him disembark at Teterboro, and then came the news reports that an agitated Trump was fuming about the Trump/Pence ticket. He was angered by the leaks he believed came from the Pence staff in Indiana.



Mike and Karen Pence had to be twisting, twisting, twisting in the Trumpian winds for a night, until that Friday when the ticket was finally forged and the two appeared on a Manhattan stage the following day, though Trump didn't stick around on stage to listen to Pence's maiden veep comments.

I compared our First Couple as Hansel and Gretel, walking into the witch's lair. Trump is shifty and wolf like. His biographers describe him as occasionally playing loyalists off on each other, then devouring them. It might have careened into that zone when Trump dissed Pence during the second debate for freelancing on a potential U.S. military strategy in Syria.

What has evolved is a strange, strange synergy. Pence and Trump apparently have established a working relationship in a campaign culture that was effectively dysfunctional and dysfunctionally effective. He became the apologist, the loyalist, that sunny beam of optimism we in Indiana know so well.

Tim Alberta writes in The National Review that while Pence was one a true believer in social policy, he is now a Trump true believer, willing to morph long-held views into the Boss's world view. "I believe it. I believe it. I really believe it," he tells Alberta. "The American people know we can be stronger. They know we can be more prosperous. They know we can stand by our most cherished constitutional principles. But they know we've got to have new leadership. So I really believe — I really believe — that we're on our way to a victory."

Many chuckled by this assertion. They are not

today.

Alberta observes: What's notable isn't that a politician would profess confidence. It's that Pence, who describes himself as "a Christian, a conservative, and a Republican, in that order," attributes his confidence not to the providence of God, or to the power or principle, or to the fitness of his party, but to the transcendent appeal of his running mate, who he says "has tapped into the frustrations and aspirations of the American people like no one in my lifetime." This is not a façade. People close to Pence say that despite his initial distaste for Trump's style, he was awestruck by the candidate's galvanizing effect on voters in Indiana (he won the primary with 53%). And the more they talked, the more Pence subscribed to Trump's political analysis: Once an avowed free-trader, and supporter of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, he admits that Trump transformed his thinking by arguing that multi-national trade agreements are impractical and ripe for exploitation.

And, Alberta notes, Pence also began to see a different side of Trump's personality. Behind closed doors, he discovered the brash billionaire to be hospitable, inquisitive, even "modest." He visited Trump's businesses and observed his breezy interactions with blue-collar employees. He watched Trump patrol the aisles of his personal jet, asking if the meals were sufficient. He listened to Trump's questions about Evangelicalism, which began at their first breakfast and have not ceased. As they grew closer personally, Pence became certain that outsiders, and he himself, had gotten it wrong. This allowed his faith in Trump to blossom.

Pence could have defeated John Gregg, but it was no sure thing. If he hadn't made it on to the Trump ticket, if it were the Trump/Christie ticket instead, all three might have gone down to defeat. The conviction of two top Christie aides in the "Bridgagate" scandal would have rendered the homestretch Obamacare premium increases and the Comey letter intrigue over the Weiner emails to the media back burner.

Instead, it's Vice President-Elect Pence. He will some day find himself bending over a drawer in the Old Executive Office Building with a Sharpie, affixing his name near Nixon's and Quayle's.

There is talk that Trump will operate as an uber executive setting broad policy strokes, and it will be Pence who will do the down-and-dirty work of getting them implemented in a Congress seething with Trump doubters and detractors. Pence, some believe, will become a very powerful vice president. Others believe that Trump will ultimately consume him and that functional animosity is a real potential.

We shall see.

Regardless, Pence is nearing the apex of his power, into the upper reaches of his profound ambition, riding the Trump jet, perhaps into the Oval Office some day.

Have a cigar, governor. ❖

Holcomb rides surge, from page 1

scab.

It decimated Indiana Democrats.

Early Wednesday morning, Lt. Gov. Holcomb spoke to Gov. Mike Pence on the phone and quickly found President-elect Donald Trump on the line. "Certainly I expressed to him last night that he drew people out to vote who had never voted before," Holcomb said Wednesday afternoon when he announced his transition team. "Some were for the other jersey. It shouldn't be lost that Mike Pence was on that ticket as well. I do believe it contributed mightily to the vote totals."

Holcomb described Pence's mood as "right out of a Norman Vincent Peale book. He is extremely optimistic. He had his finger on the pulse, and it arrived last night."

What happened in the final five days between the time Public Opinion Strategies pollster Gene Ulm left the field and on Tuesday? "Republicans had the momentum," Ulm said. "You could draw a line between those two surveys and that's exactly where we ended up. Republicans had all the momentum and it was still moving. And it wasn't just in Indiana, either."

Across the nation, Republicans like Holcomb, Trump and Senate-elect Todd Young feasted off of white males and women without degrees. Democrats were dependent on the minority vote, and while the Latinos turned out for them, African-Americans and Millennials were unmotivated. It showed up in places like Wayne County (Detroit), Charlotte, Milwaukee County and in Indiana, Indianapolis and Lake counties. The black turnout was flat.

A POS polling memo issued on Wednesday observed, "Even with modeling for a presidential turnout that followed the patterns of '08 and '12, yesterday's votes and the exit polling indicate that the enthusiasm gap between Trump and Clinton had traction. Simply put, Clinton did not perform like Obama and was unable to pull Democratic coalitional groups to the polls. It appears that the Democratic campaigns modeled for turnout levels similar to '08 and '12, but when those groups didn't materialize, they were essentially stuck, losing key battleground states due to low Democratic core group turnout."



Lt. Gov. Eric Holcomb and runningmate Suzanne Crouch celebrate their victory at the JW Marriott Tuesday night. (HPI Photo by Thomas Curry)

POS explained, "Americans who were previously supporting third party candidates or refusing to answer pollsters' questions leaned GOP, and ended up voting that way. And, fully 18% of voters said they had negative impressions of both candidates – and they voted Trump by a 49%-29% margin – suggesting strongly that late deciding "noseholders" came to Trump.

The collateral damage was vast for Indiana Democrats, already saddled as a party of Lake and Marion counties and a handful of college towns. Indiana Republicans have super majorities in the General Assembly, hold eight out of 11 congressional seats with Republican Trey Hollingsworth defeating Shelli Yoder in the 9th, and with the defeat of Supt. Glenda Ritz, have lost their one toehold in the Statehouse. The disaster came as the Trump/Pence ticket rolled to a 20% plurality in the state, swamping just about every Democrat in its path.

Holcomb began 2016 as a U.S. Senate candidate, was selected by Gov. Mike Pence to fill a vacant lieutenant governor office, and was then elected in late July to fill Pence's gubernatorial nomination after Pence left for the national ticket.

Holcomb celebrated his victory. "We just captured the checkered flag. We are not competing anymore, we have won. The people who really need to be thanked are people in this room and rooms like this across the state. I want to personally thank each

and every one of you who poured your hearts out."

"You heard what I heard," Holcomb told the celebration. "Holcomb can't raise enough money. Holcomb can't put a credible statewide campaign together in this short amount of time. Holcomb can't do this and Holcomb can't do that. Well, they were partly right. Holcomb couldn't do it, but we did.

"We did it because we have the best volunteers in the nation," Holcomb said. "We did it with a remarkable ground game."

Holcomb thanked Gov. Pence and former Gov. Mitch Daniels. "It's because of my current boss Mike Pence that we proved this state works. It is because of their collective and proven leadership. Mitch Daniels laid the foundation and Mike Pence added a couple of stories. We're going to add story after story."

Holcomb talked of his 100-day campaign, and then said the next 100 days “begin tomorrow.” He said that it begins “the assembly of a team.”

Holcomb said he talked with Gregg, saying he thanked him for a “spirited campaign and civil debates. We do agree on the importance for serving the public.”

The Zionsville Republican, who won his first election, served in the governor’s office as Gov. Daniels’ deputy chief of staff and then ran his reelection campaign in 2008. Now he finds himself preparing for the big desk on the Statehouse second floor.

Gregg, surrounded by crestfallen family members and staff, told a subdued crowd at the Indiana Convention Center, “This has been a whacky ride. This is the start where the healing begins. Tonight we’re all Hoosiers, as the dust settles and the wounds begin to heal, we’ll still be Hoosiers. Even though tonight is disappointing, tomorrow will be a new day.”

Gregg’s defeat capped a disastrous night for Hoosier Democrats, who saw the Evan Bayh dynasty end, while Republicans captured the attorney general, state superintendent and 9th CD races. It came as the Donald Trump/Mike Pence ticket roared to a 20% victory in the presidential race.

On Wednesday, Holcomb announced his transition team to be headed by former DNR Director Kyle Hupfer and former Daniels chief of staff Earl Goode. The team is heavy on ex-Daniels administration officials and includes former Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman, former Secretary of State Ed Simcox, former United Nations Food Organization Director Jim Morris, Clark County Sheriff Jamey Noel, LaPorte Mayor Blair Milo, Anne Hathaway, Jeff Knight, Brian Burdock, Brian Bauer, Allison Barber, Jamal Smith, Susana Suarez and Ruky Yakym III.

Holcomb said he had spoken with House Speaker Brian Bosma and Senate President Pro Tempore David Long this morning. “We are all very excited about getting to work on our legislative agenda,” Holcomb said. “We’ll be very involved on their agenda and ours. And he vowed to work with legislative Democrats. “I will seek their input. I meant it last night when I said no one’s opinion will be pushed aside.”

Finally, Holcomb said, he intended to “mow my lawn later today.” ❖



Democratic gubernatorial nominee John Gregg hugs a supporter following his defeat Tuesday night. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

Trump motivates new Hoosier voters

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The Trump supporters, well, they kept coming out of the woodwork.

During Rex Early and the Trump Indiana campaign’s 50 Indiana county tour over the past six weeks, people kept turning up that had never voted, had never been a part of the process. When the Trump campaign had an event in Edinburgh with Gov. Mike Pence’s brother Greg and wife Denise, campaign vice chairman Tony Samuel met a man named Danny. “He said that in 41 years, he was registered to vote but never voted,” Samuel said. “He said he was waiting for someone like Trump.”

In Marion, Samuel said, “I met a guy named Carl, who had never registered in 62 years. And there were another 12 to 15 guys in the room just like him.”

On Tuesday, the Hoosiers who had for decades been outside the political process came out of the wood-



work like a hornet swarm. "These were all new people," Samuel said. "We knew it would be that way all across the country."

In addition, there were the so-called Reagan Democrats. "The Republicans came home and there was Democratic crossover," Samuel said. "I knew we were going to do well up in Lake, and with the coal miners in Southwest Indiana. When we made those 50 county visits, they said they had always voted Democrat, but you'd see them at every county. They'd say they were Democrats who were voting for Trump and they said their whole family is voting for Trump."

The unknown and unparticipated forged one of the most astounding upsets in American history when Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton. It swamped polls and traditional media and get-out-the-vote strategies.

Prof. Larry Sabato and his team at the University of Virginia said in a column on Wednesday, "We heard for months from many of you, saying that we were underestimating the size of a potential hidden Trump vote and his ability to win. We didn't believe it, and we were wrong. The Crystal Ball is shattered." He offered a mea culpa.

Early and Samuel were seeing the intensity throughout their tour. "The thing I wondered was will they vote a straight ticket?" Early said. "Are they only there for Trump or will they vote a straight ticket, and many voted a



straight ticket.

"Eric would be no place without them," Early said of Governor-elect Holcomb.

Samuel noted that when Holcomb appeared with them in Lebanon on the final Saturday of the campaign, "He said the Trump thing was really helping him."

Holcomb evolved on Trump. When he received the nomination on July 24, Holcomb said he believed that Trump would provide a political benefit. After the Trump/Billy Bush "Access Hollywood" tape, Holcomb wavered, saying he wasn't sure he could vote for Trump. But by the debates with Democrat John Gregg, Holcomb was reaffirming his support for the Trump/Pence ticket.

Holcomb talked with Pence early Wednesday morning, Samuel said, and said the governor put Trump on the phone with the incoming governor. He said that Holcomb told Trump he had helped the entire Indiana ticket. ❖

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Todd Young ends the Bayh dynasty

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Everyone from the candidate to the gathered media at LePeep Wednesday morning was bleary-eyed, and here was Senator-elect Todd Young talking about the race that just ended the Bayh dynasty and positioned himself to be Indiana’s ninth senator in the television age. It was a mud-splattered contest, and Young was ready to move on.

“The atmosphere is polarized,” Young said when asked about building the wall on the Mexican border and deporting millions of illegal immigrants. “I refuse to affix any names, but in too many instances, Americans have been pitted against Americans. That kind of politics needs to end.”

Young, like many Hoosier politicians, took a roller-coaster ride through a tornado in 2016. Young won a 52-42% victory over Bayh in a race that pulled emphatically in his favor over the final month. Last July he had just left a coffee shop south of Indianapolis when campaign aide Cam Savage called him. “He said, ‘How’s your day going? Just to let you know, you have a new opponent.

Evan Bayh just entered the race.”

Young’s response was, “Carry on. Let’s go.”

He immediately went from being a heavy favorite to profound underdog. There was speculation that Trump might be a drag. Young and his campaign didn’t war game a scenario against Bayh, focusing instead on a rematch with Baron Hill, who entered the race as most candidates did, filing for the primary, which he won. His fundraising languished and soon after his mid-year FEC report was filed, he was out and the \$10 Million Man was back.

“I did not have a contingency plan for a change of candidates after the primary,” Young explained. “With that said, something you learn about when you study military philosophy is the fog of war. When something occurs during the battle, you can have a plan, and there will always be external factors. You then adjust, or as we say, adapt,

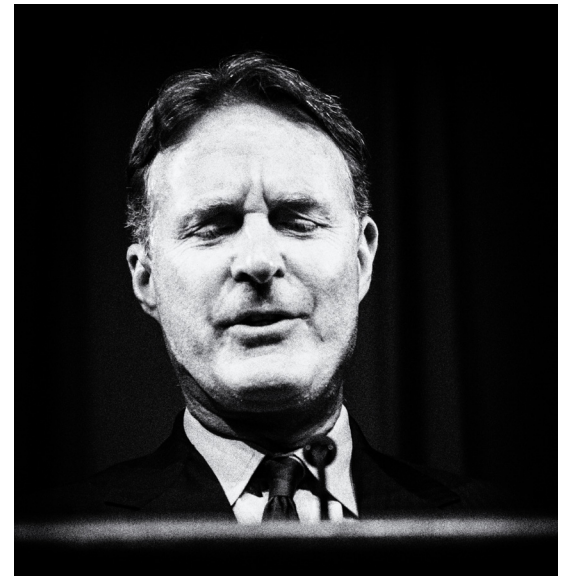
improvise and you overcome. It’s not the time to fret.”

Overnight Young went from a big money advantage over Hill to an almost 10-to-1 in the hole and Bayh’s campaign released internal polling showing he had almost a 20% lead. And then, with the Citizens United Supreme Court decision looming large, tens of millions of dollars began to flow in for Young via the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Rifle Association and Mitch McConnell’s Senate Leadership Fund. It quickly leveled the playing field.

Bayh’s double-digit lead was reduced to a 44-40% advantage in the September WTHR/Howey Politics Indiana Poll, then to a 42-41% edge in our October survey before the lid blew off. In our Nov. 1-3 poll, Young jettied out to 46-41%, evidence of an epic brand destruction for the Bayh clan established more than half a century ago. Bayh’s favorable/unfavorables had declined to 39/45%



Senator-elect Todd Young reacts to his victory over Evan Bayh on Tuesday night while Bayh bades farewell. Young has now defeated three former members of Congress, Mike Sodrel and Baron Hill in 2010 and now Bayh. (HPI Photos by Thomas and Mark Curry)



from 48/28% in our September survey. In essence, Young and his super PAC allies had destroyed Bayh’s squeaky clean image by painting him as enriching himself during and after his Senate term, which he abruptly ended in 2010.

Young and his Super PAC allies savaged Bayh over his residency issue (he owns two homes in Washington and a condo in Florida, along with a \$59,000 condo in Indianapolis he never stayed at), his accumulation of wealth during and after his Senate career abruptly ended in 2011, and stories of job searches conducted on the taxpayer dime, and subsequent votes for his future employer, and his 2010 vote that helped pass Obamacare without a single Republican vote.

Was Obamacare the silver Bayh bullet? “I can tell you anecdotally there was a enough of a pattern,” Young said. “I visited rank-and-file Hoosiers, I’ve heard countless

stories of the adverse implications, whether it was reduction of hours of employees, inability of companies to grow due to increased health care costs, rising premiums, co-pays, deductibles, the lack of access due to lack of consolidation in health care industry."

"I've heard about the parade of horrors about this partisan law and it's time we work together to try and come up with a better model," Young said.

Not only did the new Obamacare premiums enter the final stretch of the campaign, there was the Oct. 28 letter from FBI Director James Comey that reopened the Hillary Clinton email fiasco. "I have no idea," Young said when HPI asked if the Comey letter altered the trajectory of the race.

But Young's campaign manager, Trevor Foughty, told HPI, "Our internal polling saw a big shift in the last 10 days. We were tracking weekly." He noted that the final WTHR/Howey Politics poll came "in that window when everything started to shift. Comey, that was a big part of it. We saw a similar shift pulling away from Republican ID and generic ballot after the Billy Bush tape. Then we saw it swing back right after the Comey letter."

By the eve of the election, some \$45 million had been poured into the race by both sides and their supporters, rivaling the \$50 million U.S. Senate race that saw the upset of U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar, in large part due to a residency issue, and eventually won by Democrat Joe Donnelly.

Asked if Young will return to Indiana after he finishes his Senate career, the Bloomington Republican responded, "I'll still live here. My family loves Indiana. I do dream of living on an island." Told there are islands on Lake Webster and Lake James, Young said, "I don't know. I love Indiana. This will always be home. I always want to keep my main residence here."

Next up for Young is the lame duck session and then working with a President Trump and Vice President Pence.



Evan Bayh comforts Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett, his long time friend, Tuesday night. (HPI Photo by Mark

"That's where my head is, my day job done in most professional way possible," he said of the coming two months of the current Congress. He cited his work on the 21st Century Cures Act as well as the budget. "I'm prepared to work with anyone. It's amazing what you can get done in a lame duck session and it's amazing what you can't get done."

As for working with President Trump, Young said, "Most Americans saw him as an underdog and he seemed to relish that. It's putting people back in charge of their government."

And Young will become one of three Hoosiers in the U.S. Senate, with a Vice President Pence in an occasional presiding role. "I don't know what kind of role Mike Pence will play in the Trump administration," Young said. "My expectation is it will be exceptional and far-reaching due to his talents. He was perhaps the most skilled communicator when we served in Congress. Communication skills are important when it comes to laying out an agenda and persuading the American people. He's a man of deep convictions. He's prone to build relationships even with people who have differences. As Trump works to get things done, I could see Vice President Pence being very helpful." ❖

Young eyes his policy agenda

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – Republicans in Congress and President-elect Donald Trump have promised swift work to undo laws and orders written during the Obama administration, starting with the Affordable Care Act. Before that happens, one of the newest members of the U.S. Senate has some less flashy business in mind.



U.S. Rep. Todd Young, elected Tuesday to fill the Senate seat vacated by the retiring Dan Coats, said he's focused on what happens in Washington between now and January. The congressman from Bloomington specifically hopes to get a favored bill on

welfare reform onto the agenda of the lame-duck session of Congress that starts next week.

Young said the bill, which he authored, creates "social impact" partnerships to reward states for programs that move people from welfare into jobs. Passed unanimously in the House, it has support from Democrats in the Senate but has failed to move forward.

"Frankly, that's where my head is right now," he told reporters over morning coffee Wednesday, just hours after a stunning election night spent here in Indianapolis.

Congress in the coming weeks also faces a crucial vote to keep the government running for another two years with a \$1 trillion funding bill. It's a piece of difficult business put off in September by lawmakers who reached a stop-gap agreement to keep the government open through Dec. 9.

Young said he's hoping that Congress faced

with dozen of pieces undone legislation, will act on two bills important to him, including the welfare reform and a proposal to speed development of new drugs to cure deadly diseases.

Hours earlier, Young ended Tuesday night by celebrating his role in the Republican Party's dramatic effort to keep control of the Senate. Once in his new office on Capitol Hill, Young pledged to do a constitutional duty to be a check on the White House.

But when he went to bed Tuesday, Young said he wasn't absolutely certain whom the next occupant would be.

The presidential race had not yet been called for Trump. Young's wife, Jenny, who stayed up late, told him the results.

For Young, whose election Tuesday with 52% of the vote ended the 30-year winning streak of former U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh, the final weeks of 2016 are taking precedence over what will happen in the Trump administration. The 114th Congress still has business to do before it adjourns Dec. 16. "It's one of those rare moments that presents an opportunity to actually get some things done," he said.

Still, Young was cautious about promising too much.

When Congress returns to Washington next week, it will be with a keen sense of what he calls the "polarization" of the nation.

Trump, having won the Electoral College vote needed to become president, appears to have narrowly lost the popular vote to his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, although votes were still being counted Wednesday.

"It's also amazing what doesn't get done in a lame-duck session," Young said. "It's a really unpredictable dynamic time." ❖



Senator-elect Todd Young talks with the press Wednesday morning at LePeep downtown to discuss the election and his coming policy agenda. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

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Pence could become Trump's role model

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

WASHINGTON – Vice President-elect Mike Pence was an afterthought to President-elect Donald Trump during his acceptance speech early Wednesday morning.

After showering supporters, campaign staff and family members with lengthy encomiums, Trump turned to walk away from the podium.



Then he returned abruptly, looked to Pence and said, "Thank you, Mike Pence."

The slight was probably unintentional, even though Pence's presence on the stage could not be overlooked. Pence was the person who introduced Trump.

That awkward moment surely does not foreshadow the importance of Pence in

a Trump administration. Pence provided ballast during a stormy campaign when Trump went off course, and will wind up doing the same when Trump has to work with Congress.

There may not be much of a honeymoon, despite the fact that Republicans control both houses of Congress. Trump laid into many Republican lawmakers with alacrity during the campaign, including House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisc.

Ryan and Trump had an icy relationship throughout the campaign, but we have yet to hear a bad word about Pence from any Republican lawmaker.

Trump will need to depend on the good will toward Pence in Washington when he inevitably hits rough patches trying to sell a policy agenda to Congress. Pence, who served in Congress for 12 years and is a former chair of the House Republican conference, is the one with the relationships that will help Trump actually govern.

"You can see Pence having a significant role in interacting with the Hill given he was a long-term and respected member of the House," said Marc Gerson, a former Republican tax counsel on the House Ways and Means Committee.

If you read a column I wrote earlier in the week,

you may at this point be calling me a flip-flopper. Yes, I asserted that Pence was indifferent toward governing and that's why he ran for vice president rather than keep his job as Indiana's chief executive and running a state.

I also made reference to Pence being the most able sailor on the bridge of the Titanic. Like most of the rest of the denizens of the world of political punditry, I was wrong about the election. Mea culpa. Pence knew better than I what was moving the electorate.

Now the governor who stumbled at times working with an overwhelmingly Republican legislature will have a chance to deal with narrow GOP majorities in the House and Senate. Pence's affable demeanor will help him in that effort. The greater Pence's presence in a Trump administration, the better he will serve not just Trump but the country.

Trump may have been an effective presidential candidate by tapping a rich vein of anger and frustration among people who feel ignored by the government. But as of today, he still lacks the skill set and temperament to be president.

We have to hope that Mr. Trump grows into the role. He can make strides by delegating to and observing his vice presidential partner.

Trump's acceptance speech touched the right chords. It featured moments of generosity and grace, elements that are too often lacking in a Trump address but that Pence can demonstrate effortlessly.

Many people passionately disagree with Pence's social conservative positions. But it's rare to find someone who doesn't like him as a person.

Trump is the exact opposite. Many people have embraced his political rhetoric but criticize his personality. That could hurt Trump in Washington, a town that runs on bonhomie, even when it's fake.

Pence can be Trump's Washington Sherpa and chief diplomat to Capitol Hill, humanizing him for lawmakers. If Pence succeeds at this task - perhaps his most important - he'll get more

than a passing reference from Trump when they share a podium in the future. ❖

Schoeff is HPI's Washington correspondent.



Defeating the greatest media conspiracy

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – It’s Wednesday, the day following the greatest upset in presidential election history, and pollsters, pundits and media elites all finally agree, the path to the White House for Donald Trump is wider. That path is called Pennsylvania Avenue!



I must admit that it was with great joy that I stayed awake until 3:30 a.m. watching the election results and the tortuous process of seeing the entire mainstream elitist media, shell-shocked pollsters and humbled pundits take over three hours to come to the realization of what was obvious when the Wisconsin domino fell into the face of Hillary Clinton’s presidential ambition. Despite

healthy leads for Trump in Pennsylvania and Michigan, media experts still went to elaborate electronic walls and pontificated on Clinton’s ability to “draw to the inside straight.”

For the past four months we witnessed the greatest corporate/media/governmental election conspiracy in the history of our country. Each day was filled with carefully orchestrated releases of adverse polls, negative stories about Trump and a treatment of Hillary Clinton that virtually had CNN’s Wolf Blitzer measuring for new pink drapes in the Oval Office.

The message

was clear: Republicans were running from Trump. Trump was a hopeless cad, with a long history of mistreating women. Hispanics disliked Trump. Blacks disliked Trump. Women disliked Trump. Jews disliked Trump. Gays disliked Trump. Europe disliked Trump. Asia disliked Trump. South America disliked Trump. Madonna, Katy Perry, Lena Dunham, Barbara Streisand, Whoopi, Alex Baldwin, Bon Jovi, Springsteen, Stewart and the entire Hollywood entertainment universe disliked (hated) Donald Trump.

Daily polls were trotted out to verify the contempt of the American people for Donald Trump. He was down nationwide. He couldn’t win Florida, North Carolina or Pennsylvania and, did we tell you, that even Texas was “in play.”

Two weeks prior to the election, stories shifted to who would be in Clinton’s new cabinet. She was definitely going to keep Loretta Lynch as attorney general. She wanted Joe Biden to hang around as secretary of state. Visions of sugar plums danced in the heads of big media and big banking as speculation built over the all-star cast of illuminati destined for the cabinet room.

Make no mistake about it, the Hillary Clinton path to victory included a conspiracy of elitists who stacked the deck higher than it had ever been stacked before. Just ask Bernie Sanders how it feels to find yourself on the wrong side of the conspiracy.

To be generous, in looking back and examining polling and news coverage, we either witnessed criminal negligence on behalf of the polling and media establishment or the worst bungled cabal in political history. Perhaps it was a hearty helping of both.

What did everyone except for those of us who were down in the trenches with the troops expect? From their remote towers of power on Wall Street, Fifth Avenue, K-Street and Silicon Valley, it was impossible for the elitist string pullers to get a handle on the guy I like to call “Joe Sixpack.” Ultimately, it was Joe and Jolene Sixpack, clinging to their Bibles and guns, who won the day for the Trump machine.

Way back in February I stood shivering at a gas station while filling up my vehicle. When I need gas, I stop and get it regardless of price. I fill it up, regardless of the total amount. As I stood pumping gas, the man at the pump next to mine started speaking with me. In an



amazing five minutes, he told me that he had to commute to Kokomo from Marion every day and that buying gas was eating him up. He had to work in Kokomo to earn over \$10 an hour. He said that he would like to fill his tank but that he could only afford to put \$9 worth of gas in his car. Now he didn’t know me or know of my political work, but he asked a very revealing question. He asked, “If it would lower gas prices and make us independent of the Middle East, why would anyone not want us to

drill our own oil?”

It struck me at the time that there was a huge number of working people in our country who were making a weekly struggle for survival. Their important issues were not global warming, international trade agreements or ownership of the internet. The most important issues to Joe and Jolene Sixpack were putting food on the table, clothing their children and buying a tank of gas. Kanye, Beyonce and Hillary just didn’t get it because they and the liberal elitist community are just too far removed from the world of reality.

Donald Trump, for all of his billions, understood

what made the average American tick. It may not have been pretty. It might not sound good when reduced to words. But Donald Trump knew that a vast number of Americans were either not living the American Dream or were terrified that their children would be denied the ability to reach for the stars. Trump was able, from day one, to tap a vast reservoir of discontent that was either overlooked or intentionally ignored by Hillary Clinton. It was discontent that was raw, powerful and sometimes ugly.

I hopped on the Trump train rather late in the election cycle. Up to the Indiana primary, I was a supporter of Ohio Gov. John Kasich. I gradually grew to be ashamed of Kasich and all of the never-Trump people. I was raised by my parents to put the team first. Donald Trump, love him or not, was the leader of the Republican team after his nomination. It was after accepting Trump as my candidate for president that I opened up and got to know hundreds of great fellow Trump voters. They are good people. They are nice people. They are great Americans. They possessed a dynamic enthusiasm that defied description.

I wrote in my last Howey Politics column that I believed that Donald Trump would have very long coat-tails in Indiana. He did! He helped sweep huge numbers of Indiana Republicans into office or enabled their reelection.

On the day before the election, I stuck my neck out on Facebook and declared that Trump would win the

presidential election with 277 Electoral College votes. My friends thought I was nuts. The secret knowledge that I had and they didn't was that I had spoken with the man at the gas station. It was all I needed to know. ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

Cardwell lauds 'historic night'

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana Republican Party Chairman Jeff Cardwell made the following statement after Tuesday's historic election night for Republicans: "Last night was a historic night for Hoosiers. Months ago, our candidates began their campaigns - they have traveled thousands of miles and visited with thousands of Hoosier, spreading the Republican message of building economic development, creating a safer nation and improving our state's education. We are grateful to all of the volunteers, staff members, and candidates themselves for all of their hard work and dedication. We are one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. As we step out in this new journey for America's future, now is the time, to work together to heal our land. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve, and we look forward to working with all Hoosiers from all walks of life to take Indiana and America to the next level. There is so much more that binds us than that which divides us." ❖

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Gov. Mike Pence urged Indiana Republican Convention delegates to put Indiana “first on the board” last June. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

Pence makes good on ‘first on the board’ vow

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Last June, when the notion of Gov. Mike Pence repurposing his political career on the national ticket was in a nascent stage, he gave a rousing speech before the Indiana Republican Convention and made a prophetic appeal.

He urged delegates to make Indiana “the first state on the board to make Donald Trump the president of the United States.” At 7:01 p.m. Tuesday, NBC made the “first projection” and placed Indiana (just ahead of Kentucky) into the Trump column. Pence tweeted,

“Thank you Indiana for making our state first on the board to vote to Make America Great Again!” Indiana once came in at 6:01, but that changed after the 2000 Florida fiasco when networks waited until all polls closed.

Less than a month after Pence made the GOP convention appeal, he auditioned for the vice presidential nomination at Westfield, raised money for him at the Columbia Club, dined with Trump that night at the Governor’s Residence, then again for breakfast when then campaign manager Paul Manafort created a ruse on behalf of the Trump family to place Pence on the ticket.

We know now that Trump had preferred New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, but was stonewalled by son-in-law Jared Kushner, whose father had been successfully prosecuted by the former district attorney. The following day,

Pence and First Lady Karen would board a charter flight from Indianapolis to Teterboro, essentially boxing Trump in to the veep nomination.

And Pence delivered Indiana as first on the board. The irony is that with two “Bridgegate” convictions of top Christie aides, and testimony in court that the New Jersey governor knew about the scandalous bridge shut-down to punish a local mayor, the Trump ticket might have tanked at the end.

It was Pence, however, who became the so-called “adult in the room,” cleaning up Trump’s messes with Gold Star families, and fat-shamed beauty queens. It was Pence who built a bridge to his former congressional colleagues deeply suspicious of the Manhattan billionaire, and it was Pence who made the clarion call for Republicans to “come home” after some 25% of sitting governors and members of Congress had announced they either wouldn’t support or vote for Trump. Pence delivered the key clarifications, an occasional apology, and the rationale for Trump in the final month, then watched FBI Director James Comey deliver two bombshells that allowed the Republican ticket to come close to Hillary Clinton.

In the October WTHR/Howey Politics Indiana Poll, Trump had a mere 43-38% lead in Indiana, but that expanded to 48-37% last week, and now Pence can truly claim that Indiana was, as he voted to put it in June, the first state on the board. ❖

Pence returns to Indiana today

Gov. Mike Pence will return to Indianapolis Thursday with a big welcome home rally at 5:30 p.m. at Indianapolis International Airport, near the Million Air Terminal, 6921 Pierson Dr. Indianapolis, IN 46241. ❖



Why should GOP listen to Never Trump?

By **JOSHUA CLAYBOURN**

EVANSVILLE – The 2016 election was a resounding success for Indiana Republicans. Outgoing governor Mike Pence is the new vice president, Eric Holcomb will be the next governor, and Republicans won all other statewide races, including state education superintendent. Like the federal government, the Indiana Statehouse is firmly controlled by Republicans.



For the party brass and thousands of Republican political and policy advisors, the incentive will be to celebrate the victories, congratulate themselves on strategy, and rest on the laurels of a fresh victory. Undoubtedly, the Trump/Pence wave carried the day and is driving the Republican Party.

So why should they ever again listen to Never Trump Republicans they might view as losers?

That line of thinking would be a strategic blunder. Trump's victory appears to be based more on a rejection of Clintonism and liberalism than an embrace of Trump's ideology. Mitt Romney got 60.9 million votes and lost, while early returns show Donald Trump has 59.1 million votes and is winning. Trump also received less than McCain's popular vote total in 2008 and came up short of Obama's winning 2012 vote totals in all of the battleground critical swing states of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, and Ohio.

Indiana Republicans didn't ride a wave of Trump support. Instead, they rode a wave of anti-Clintonism thanks to Democrats staying at home. Moreover, beneath the rosy success for the GOP is an ominous future both in Indiana and nationwide as the party comes to grips with the new Trump brand. Voters under 40 overwhelmingly rejected the party's vision for the future under Trump, it continued its long struggle with growing minority groups, and educated suburbanites, particularly women, broke ranks with the party.

Ignoring those factions opposed to the Trump brand and the growing demographic changes risks forfeiting an important component of the Republican Party, both now and in the future.

Even those who openly profess to back Trump, or ultimately settled on him as the lesser of two evils, have long harbored substantial

misgivings in private about whether he is even equipped to serve as president. When I resigned this spring as a delegate to the Republican National Convention over disgust with Trump's inevitable nomination, I was inundated with messages of support and agreement from top members of Mike Pence's staff. Within months their boss was Trump's running mate and these very same people were decked out in "Make American Great Again" hats and professing their love of all things Trump.

These Republican leaders failed a fundamental test of courage and political leadership by not speaking the truth about what they saw as obvious. And when all else seemed to fail, they resorted to the catchphrases of 1990s-era talk radio.

A small but important and demographically growing divide exists among Republican factions. The future health and vitality of the Indiana GOP depends on mending these divisions. Democrats will not always stay home as they did with Clinton.

Fortunately, there are a number of things which can help heal the GOP in Indiana. Hoosier Republicans would do well to remember the legacy of Mitch Daniels and embrace his optimism and focus on ideas, not ideology. Hoosier Republicans should also begin planning for the future and outlining ideas for the millennial era. Millennials, for example, do not want propaganda and social issue warfare. They want a vibrant and innovative government willing to embrace new challenges.

The Indiana Republican Party is embarking on a new chapter of political dominance, but there is danger in failing to keep the future in mind. It needs to send a clear message that it is forward-looking and working on behalf of all citizens. Hoosiers are counting on them to do the right thing. ❖

Claybourn is an Evansville attorney.

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

Hollingsworth easily defeats Yoder in 9thCD

By **THOMAS CURRY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The full force of the Donald Trump wave reverberated all throughout Indiana, reaching inland towards the 2nd CD and 9th CD congressional races. The Democratic National Campaign Committee and political pundits had pegged these races as potential upsets for the Democrats but each candidate managed to only win one county in their district. The losses prove that Indiana Democrats have a long way to go in making inroads towards flipping seats from Red to Blue. For Republicans Rep. Jackie Walorski and political newcomer Trey Hollingsworth, it was an easy coast to victory despite the close polling and feel of the campaigns heading into election day.



In the 9th CD, Hollingsworth culminated his first journey into politics with a 54.1% to 40.5% victory over Democrat Shelli Yoder. Hollingsworth was a late entry into the Republican primary and survived a crowded field despite being given low odds and being labeled “Tennessee Trey.”

The last week of the campaign was volatile, however, making the result even more surprising. Hollingsworth appeared with key members of the Republican leadership, including Mike Pence and Speaker Paul Ryan in the last days of the campaign. Yoder and observers thought it signaled potential panic on the Republican’s side but that wasn’t the case. Meanwhile, an AP report found that Hollingsworth holds legal residency in five states for his business in addition to Indiana. The article once again brought up questions of Hollingsworth residency just days from the election. However, it didn’t end up having an effect on the results, with Hollingsworth receiving more votes than Todd Young did in any of his elections in the district.

The results surely came as a shock to Yoder who has now lost the race for the 9th CD twice. In 2012, Yoder was defeated by Young 55.4% to 44.6% and received more total votes and percentage points that year than she

did in the 2016 election. In her concession speech, Yoder tried to make sense of it all in front of a room of supporters in Bloomington. “We set forth on something that so many said was completely impossible. It was because of all your belief in this race that we were able to make it a race.” Promising to “keep up the good fight” Yoder said “we can together make the 13 counties in the 9th district a better place to live.”

Up in the 2nd CD, Rep. Walorski waltzed to a resounding reelection victory vs Lynn Coleman in a 59.3% to 36.9% wallop. The 2nd CD is a closely drawn district, with demographics making it Indiana’s battleground seat. Walorski’s victory on Tuesday night matched her 2014 win, showing the district may not be winnable for Democrats moving forward.

In her victory address to a room full of supporters Walorski said she is “one happy warrior” after a long election cycle. “We are leaving this stage tonight with all sorts of momentum to bring Hoosier common sense solutions to Washington.” The now three term Congresswoman vowed to “fix this messed up health care and messed up tax code” in her renewed term.



Republican Trey Hollingsworth used the Trump/Pence surge to win the 9th CD over Democrat Shelli Yoder. (HPI Photo by Thomas Curry)

General Assembly

Chairman Soliday reelected

State Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, will be around to shape Indiana’s long-term infrastructure spending plan, as chairman of the House Roads and Transportation Committee, after prevailing in a close-fought race against Democratic former Porter County Clerk Pam Fish (NWI Times).

Reardon upsets Rep. Fine

Voters in Munster, Highland, Hammond and Griffith decided to send former state Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon, D-Munster, back to the Statehouse in place of state Rep. Bill Fine, R-Munster, who ended her initial eight-year tenure in 2014 (NWI Times).

Siegrist wins open HD26

Sally Siegrist will be the next state representative in HD26 (Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier). How she got there might be just as telling as the fact that she won Tuesday. One thing Siegrist and Vicky Woeste could always agree on in their race to replace Republican state Rep. Randy Truitt in the Indiana House was where they were for the defining moment of their campaigns. It was May 3, in the Tippecanoe County Office Building in downtown Lafayette.

Hatfield wins open HD77

Ryan Hatfield sailed to victory in Indiana’s HD77 Tuesday night, defeating Republican challenger Johnny Kincaid (Osowski, Evansville Courier & Press). Hatfield, who will keep HD77 seat in Democratic hands, won with

59% of the vote to Kincaid's 40%. Hatfield, currently a deputy prosecutor in Vanderburgh County, won after a very cordial race between both candidates. Hatfield said from the beginning his campaign was focused on the people of HD77, not running negative campaigns or focusing on divisive issues.

Bohacek wins open SD8

Republican LaPorte County Commissioner Mike Bohacek, of Michiana Shores, will succeed retiring state Sen. Jim Arnold, D-LaPorte (NWI Times). Bohacek outpolled Democrat Maxine Spenner, of LaPorte, in part by persuading voters that a Democratic senator cannot effectively represent the district in a Republican-dominated chamber.

Rep. Slager fends off O'Donnell

State Rep. Hal Slager, R-Schererville, a member of the budget-writing House Ways and Means Committee, will be going back to Indianapolis for a third term (NWI Times). He defeated Dyer Democrat Tom O'Donnell in a rematch of their close 2012 race.

Rep. Olthoff holds off Vandenburg

State Rep. Julie Olthoff, R-Crown Point, appears to have narrowly prevailed over former state Rep. Shelli VanDenburgh, D-Crown Point, after the House Republican Campaign Committee pumped in nearly \$600,000 in the final month of the race to push Olthoff toward a second-term win representing Crown Point, Merrillville, Winfield and Lakes of the Four Seasons (NWI Times).

Pressel wins open HD20

Republican Jim Pressel, of Rolling Prairie, defeated Democrat Karen Biernacki, of LaPorte, and Libertarian Aurea Torres, of LaPorte, in this rare open seat contest to succeed state Rep. Tom Dermody, R-LaPorte.

Rep. Morrison defeats Skinner

Incumbents appeared to win both contested races for state representatives involving Vigo County in the general election, although Tuesday's results won't be official for a while. The closest race showed 39-year-old Alan Morrison, a Republican, leading Democrat Tim Skinner by more than 3,000 votes to likely earn the right to represent the 42nd District.

May wins open HD65, Koch to Senate

Republican Chris May defeated Democrat Chris Woods for the District 65 seat, which was open after Eric Koch decided to successfully run for state Senate (Bloomington Herald-Times).

Hamilton wins HD87 after Hale vacates

Democrat Carey Hamilton defeated Republican Connie Eckert in HD87, 17,008 to 15,674 in the seat State Rep. Christina Hale gave up to run on the Democratic

gubernatorial ticket.

Doriot wins open SD12

Republican Blake Doriot bested Democrat Carl Rust on Tuesday, securing SD12 (Quiggle, Elkhart Truth). Doriot received 26,656 votes to Rust's 11,646. He will replace current Senator Carlin Yoder, who announced that he was retiring at the end of the year.

Ruckleshaus, Freeman, Sandlin win

The most competitive was thought to be District 30, which includes parts of the Broad Ripple area and Fishers. Scott Schneider won a close race two years ago and is retiring. But former Republican Rep. John Ruckleshaus was leading former Democratic City-Council Councilwoman Pam Hickman (Sikich, IndyStar). Pat Miller also is retiring in District 32, which includes an area that tends to lean Republican in southeast Marion County. Republican City-County Councilman Aaron Freeman was leading Beech Grove Middle School teacher Sara Wiley. Republican City-County Councilman Jack Sandlin was leading health care industry compliance professional Sean Gorman, who defeated the Democrats' slated candidate in May.

New House members

The House Republican Caucus also welcomed seven newly elected state representatives, including: Karen Engleman (R-Georgetown), HD 70; Dave Heine (R-Fort Wayne), HD 85; Jack Jordan (R-Bremen), HD 17; Chris May (R-Bedford), HD 65; Jim Pressel (R-LaPorte), HD 20; Sally Siegrist (R-West Lafayette), HD 26; and John Young (R-Franklin), HD 47. State Rep. Earl Harris, Jr. (D-East Chicago) was elected to the Indiana House District 2 seat that his father, Earl Sr., held from 1982 to 2015, and his mother, Donna, held in 2015 and 2016; State Rep. Joe Taylor III (D-South Bend) was elected to the 7th District House seat that was held by State Rep. David Niezgodski (D-South Bend) from 2006 to 2016; State Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon (D-Munster) returns to the 12th Indiana House district seat she held from 2006 to 2014; State Rep. Ryan Hatfield (D-Evansville) will serve as 77th District representative, a seat that has been held by State Rep. Gail Riecken (D-Evansville) from 2008 to 2016. Rep. Hatfield is an attorney and a Vanderburgh County deputy prosecutor; State Rep. Carey Hamilton (D-Indianapolis) will serve as 87th District representative, replacing State Rep. Christina Hale (D-Indianapolis), who served from 2012 to 2016.

7 new senators

There are seven new Republican senators: SD 8: Mike Bohacek, Michiana Shores; SD 12: Blake Doriot, Syracuse; SD 24: John Crane, Avon; SD 30: John Ruckleshaus, Indianapolis; SD 32: Aaron Freeman, Indianapolis; SD 36: Jack Sandlin, Indianapolis; SD 44: Eric Koch, Bedford. ❖

Region Indiana takes a hit with Democrats

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – Democrats across the country took a hit during Tuesday’s election, but nowhere was it felt more than in Northwest Indiana. NWI had the most riding on the Indiana governor’s race. Democrats in that corner of the state were high on John Gregg, the party’s candidate for governor. Just as he couldn’t overcome the plurality of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney in 2012, Gregg couldn’t make up for Donald Trump’s huge plurality this year.



According to NWI Democrats, Gregg was to be the area’s link to Indianapolis and the massive amounts of money resting in state coffers. Gregg made a considerable number of stops in the area, hoping to raise money and energize the region’s Democrats.

Lake County Democratic

Chairman John Buncich, who also is county sheriff, led the push for Gregg, working hard to bring out the area’s huge union vote. While the region’s vote for Gregg was substantial, the pluralities of the past were diminished by the unexpected turnout for Trump and the residual effect for Republican gubernatorial candidate Eric Holcomb.

Also falling to the Trump onslaught was Lorenzo Arredondo, the former Lake Circuit Court judge who was seeking the attorney general’s post.

But, the region’s future relationship with the Republican-controlled Legislature clearly rested on Gregg. Gregg two weeks ago promised that Lake County would be his first stop the day after being sworn in as governor. In fact, he said he hoped to be able to get to Lake County in the event of a heavy snow since state plows “stop at the Lake County line.” Poor snow removal on state highways in NWI has long been a point of contention.

A Gregg victory likely would have meant some NWI folks landing jobs on the state level. One of the names most prominently mentioned was that of Buncich himself, who is serving his final term as sheriff.

With the next governor’s race four years away, the region has some time to help plan and cultivate their next candidate for governor. House Minority Leader Scott Pelath of Michigan City could well be the guy that Democrats turn to. In the interim, NWI’s fate will rest on local Republican legislators who are in the majority in both houses of the General Assembly.

It will be incumbent on Reps. Ed Soliday, of Valparaiso, Michael Aylesworth of Hebron and Hal Slager of Schererville and Sens. Ed Charbonneau of Valparaiso and Rick Niemeyer of Lowell to see to it that the region isn’t forgotten as it feels it was under Gov. Mike Pence. ❖

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

Bosma elected speaker 5th time

INDIANAPOLIS – Members of the Indiana House Republican Caucus convened yesterday to organize and elect its leadership team. The caucus has a 70-30 advantage. House Speaker was elected to a record fifth term as speaker. “We are ready to move past this unprecedented election season and work on our legislative agenda to help lead Indiana forward,” Bosma said. “We have a strong leadership team in place and I look forward to working with our new members, and the new governor and his team. This session, we will keep our focus on continued fiscal integrity, a long-term infrastructure funding plan, and teacher and student focused education opportunities.” State Rep. Kathy Kreag Richardson (R-Noblesville) was elected Majority Caucus Chair, her fifth term in the position. State Rep. Matt Lehman (R-Berne) was elected to serve as Majority Floor Leader, his second term.

State Rep. Scott Pelath (D-Michigan City) again will serve as the leader for Indiana House Democrats during the 2017 and 2018 sessions of the Indiana General Assembly. During an organizational meeting today

in Indianapolis, the House Democratic Caucus chose Pelath as leader, State Rep. Linda Lawson (D-Hammond) as House Democratic floor leader and State Rep. John Bartlett (D-Indianapolis) as caucus chairman. This will be Pelath’s third consecutive term as leader for the House Democrats, Lawson’s third term in her post, and Bartlett’s second term as caucus chair. “We have just seen an election that was very difficult for Democrats at the state and national levels,” Pelath said after his selection. “We face a significant challenge that transcends the usual work that we do.”

Merritt to lead Senate GOP

The Indiana Senate Majority Caucus met today in Indianapolis to elect its leadership team for the 120th General Assembly. Seven senators-elect joined with incumbent caucus members to reelect State Sen. David Long (R-Fort Wayne) as their choice for Senate president pro tempore and State Sen. Jim Merritt (R-Indianapolis).

Long has served as president pro tempore since 2006, and Merritt has held his leadership post since 2004. ❖

Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star: Vigo County spoke for itself Tuesday, just as it always has. But, could it be that, for the first time since 1952, the nation disagreed? Not so fast. The county's charmed political life as "America's presidential bellwether" seemed poised to end with the 2016 election. As the votes were tabulated early Tuesday evening, it became clear that Vigo Countians heavily favored ex-reality TV star and real estate billionaire Donald Trump, the Republican nominee. When news of Trump's victory in the county reached the rest of the country, the initial presumption was that Vigo would lose its bellwether status after favoring the winning presidential candidate in 30 of the previous 32 elections. As results began to flow in from elsewhere around the country, with Trump winning numerous states, it became apparent that Vigo County had once again mirrored the nation. Unlike 2008, when Vigo Countians helped make history by overwhelmingly electing Barack Obama as the United States' first African-American president, Clinton's quest to become the country's first female president got far less support from Vigo County in 2016. Obama won the county by 16 percent in '08, nearly double his national margin of victory. This year, Clinton lost Vigo to Trump by 17 percent. She appears to have won the national popular vote by less than a percentage point, as of Wednesday morning, while Trump won the presidency through an edge in the decisive Electoral College. Going into the 2016 election, every winning presidential candidate since 1888 had carried Vigo County, except two – William Howard Taft (who lost locally to William Jennings Bryan) in 1908, and Dwight D. Eisenhower (who lost locally to Adlai Stevenson II) in 1952. None of the other 3,142 counties have reflected the nation's political will more accurately, according to Dave Leip, the Massachusetts researcher and compiler of the "Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections."



Matt Tully, Indystar: In about two months Eric Holcomb will take over a state that has been through a lot in recent years, both good and bad. He will offer a new voice, a new perspective and a new leadership style after far too much division. Most important, he will take control of the governor's office at a time of challenges and opportunities as vast as the tens of thousands of square miles between the Ohio River and Lake Michigan. He can be one of the greats, one of the bold-thinking leaders who have truly left a mark, or he can be a caretaker. Let's hope he goes boldly and not gently into these next four years. Congratulations, Governor-elect Holcomb. You now have the chance to move Indiana forward on a number of critical issues and to make very loud and very clear that we simply don't have time for the type of silly distractions and petty debates that have marred too much of the past four years. As a Hoosier who has long said that you would be a solid governor, all I can now do is ask and hope that you wake up every morning not with politics or partisanship on your

mind but rather an urgent desire for positive and lasting change in this state. ❖

Jon Webb, Evansville Courier & Press: The first alert flashed across my phone just before 1:30 a.m. Wednesday. "Associated Press: Donald Trump elected president." I looked out the window. I always assumed that news would come alongside a Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man with a bad wig and leather vest who would stomp through the city and pull buildings out of the ground like wild onions. Instead: calm street. A neighbor leading a mixed-breed dog up the sidewalk. Flattened Budweiser cans in the road. I'd spent the previous 12 hours in the newsroom, watching returns roll in that I always expected, deep down, but dismissed as paranoia. But, in the words of the great songwriter Warren Nicholson, "there's a word for people who are paranoid. And that's correct." Trump used the anger of everyone from construction workers to college graduates. According to exit polls collected by Vice, 63 percent of white men voted for Trump. Fifty-four percent of college-educated white men cast for Donny, as did 45 percent of Caucasian women with university degrees. Among white women in general, Trump snagged 53 percent – 10 percentage points better than Hillary Clinton. All from a guy accused of assaulting numerous women over numerous years. ❖

Will Rahn, CBS News: According to the The New York Times' Robert Draper, Trump pretty much told John Kasich he could run the country if he'd be his running mate. Donald Jr. was reportedly the one to make the offer, and said that his father's vice presidential candidate "would be in charge of domestic and foreign policy." Who knows if a similar deal was made with Mike Pence. But it would make a degree of sense, given what we know about Trump his enthusiasms. You could see him easily gliding into the role of the boss – the decider, if you will – who is still comfortable with outsourcing a lot of what he does. This arrangement also would make sense for Trump because he's not really one for ideology, and he certainly isn't a policy wonk. Pence is by all means an ideologue, and one known and liked by the Republican ideologues set to run Congress. Together, they would do what normal parties try to do while in power: force through an agenda, one that probably won't be too distinct from the once the GOP has pushed for decades. The GOP could still easily break apart. Part of why it might be smart for Trump to let Pence manage things behind the scenes then, is that if it's understood that the vice president calls a lot of the shots, and that that vice president is trusted by the GOP, it promises some degree of predictability and continuity. Mystery can be alluring, but chaos makes people nervous. But Pence taking on a tremendously powerful role in the new administration just might be unavoidable. ❖

Trump carried Indiana women

INDIANAPOLIS — Although many predicted Donald Trump's controversial comments about women would turn them off at the polls, that largely proved not to be the case (Kenney, WRTV). According to exit polls, 53 percent of Indiana females voted for Trump; 60 percent of white women in Indiana voted for Trump. RTV6 spoke with several female Hoosier voters today to find out what issues resonated with them that made them want to vote for Trump. Lyn Wuethrich, of Lawrence Township, said she voted for Ted Cruz in the primary and straight Republican ticket on Election Day. "I just feel the Republican policies are what is best for me and my family," said Wuethrich. "Even though I didn't like some of his words and actions, I felt like we all have issues with that." Wuethrich said as a mother and grandmother, she worries about homeland security and the economy.



Working class propelled Trump

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana exit polls are shining a light on how Donald Trump was able to quickly win the Hoosier state in his path to victory (Fox59). Like many expected, a majority of voters ages 30 and up sided with Trump on Election Day. But if only the millennial generation voted, the state's outcome might have turned out differently. Exit polls show 49% of voters 18-29 voted for Clinton while 40% voted Trump. The polls also show education was a determining factor. 64% of voters with a high school diploma or less voted for Trump with 33% voting Clinton. On the opposite end of the education spectrum, 54% of people with a postgraduate degree voted for Clinton and 39% voted for Trump. As one might think,

voters who consider themselves liberal sided with Clinton 80% of the time and those who consider themselves conservative went with Trump 84% of the time. As for the moderates, the candidates seem to have split the vote, with more siding with Trump at 49% and 44% siding with Clinton. When it comes to marital status, more married people voted for Trump at 58% and Clinton at 35%. More single people sided with Clinton, but margins were close. Clinton got 47% of that vote and Trump stepped away with 46%. When voters were asked to choose the most

important issue facing the country, Trump supporters chose terrorism and Clinton voters chose foreign policy. Voters were also asked what quality mattered most in their presidential candidate. Trump voters overwhelmingly chose the ability to bring needed change and Clinton supporters were adamant that they wanted a candidate with experience. When asked how they thought the government was working, most Clinton voters said they were satisfied, but not enthusiastic. Trump voters said they were angry.

Banks resigns from Indiana Senate

WASHINGTON — State Sen. Jim Banks (R-Columbia City) submitted an official letter of resignation from his position as Indiana State Senator for District 17 to Senate President Pro Tem David Long (R-Fort Wayne), Banks announced in a new release yesterday (Howey Politics Indiana). Banks' resignation will take effect Nov. 9, 2016 at 6 p.m., allowing his replacement to be chosen before the start of the 2017 legislative session. Banks, who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, will represent Hoosiers in Indiana's 3rd Congressional District. As required by Indiana law, a caucus of Republican precinct committeemen in Senate District 17 will meet to select Banks' permanent replacement who will serve in the Indiana State Senate.

Trump, Pence mull appointments

WASHINGTON — Now, as the president-elect prepares to fly to the capital to meet with President Barack Obama, Donald Trump is closing in on several crucial appointments. Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus, who embraced Trump far earlier than most establishment Republicans, is now the leading candidate to serve as White House chief of staff, the position Trump intends to fill first. But he has competition. Transition chairman Chris Christie is making the case for a top job too, based on experience and loyalty, and he could wind up in the chief position, according to two sources and Vice President-elect Mike Pence. Both Priebus and Christie are among most experienced politicians advising Trump, and together, with campaign manager Kellyanne Conway, they led a staff meeting at Trump Tower on Wednesday to lay out plans for the next 72 hours. Meanwhile, Conway, who became a near constant television presence in the campaign's final two months after being named campaign manager in the summer and whose sunny, indefatigable presence likely led many women voters to warm to Trump, could be White House press secretary, according to a source. "I think that job is hers if she wants it," the source said. "No one was more effective at carrying our message than her. On the campaign, very few staffers were accurately titled. She was officially the campaign manager but, really, she was the top spokeswoman." Also attending Wednesday's Trump Tower meetings were Breitbart editor-turned-campaign CEO Steve Bannon, Pence, Steven Mnuchin, a former Goldman Sachs executive rumored to be a likely Treasury Secretary, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, who quietly managed the day-to-day campaign operations, Donald Trump Jr., Eric Trump, Rick Dearborn, and Sen. Jeff Sessions, the first senator to back Trump and a possible pick to be secretary of defense.