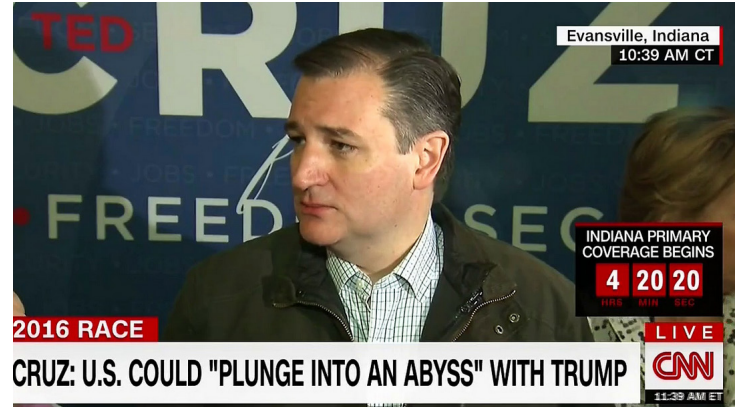
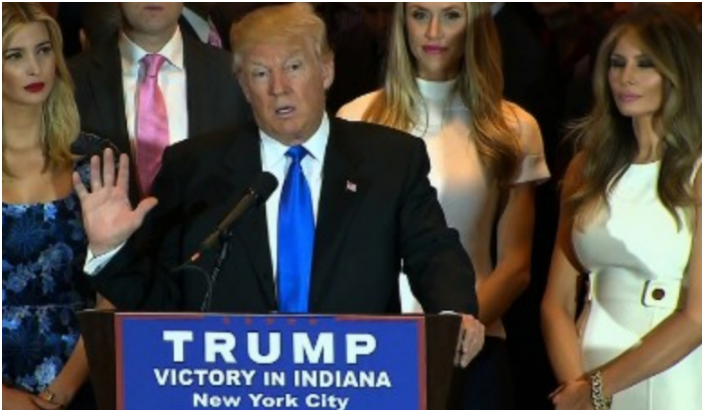




The coming 'impeachment election'



How did we get here? Look no further than May 3, 2016, right here in Indiana

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Singer David Byrne, appropriately a real Talking Head, asks rhetorically in song, “How did we get here?” in an era of scandals engulfing the White House and inertia gripping a polarized Congress.

Look no further than the morning of May 3, 2016, with Donald Trump poised to win the Indiana Republican

presidential primary that night, and thus the party’s nomination. But Trump wasn’t optimistic, upbeat or sanguine. Instead, he went on Fox News and cited a National Enquirer story tying Rafael Cruz, father of U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

“His father was with Lee Harvey Oswald prior to Oswald’s being – you know, shot. I mean, the whole thing is ridiculous,” Trump said on Fox News early election morning. “What is this, right prior to his being shot, and nobody even brings it up. They don’t even talk about that. That was reported, and nobody talks about it. I mean, what

Continued on page 3

Crime and punishment

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – In 1998, our accompanying Navy doctor and I skipped out on our CODEL’s evening dinner and bowling alley excursion in St. Petersburg, Russia, so we could explore the area around our hotel. We had spent several days in Moscow in scheduled meetings with the Russian Duma, as well as other government leaders there.



We ventured out a hotel side entrance and quickly realized that it wasn’t like the reasonably well-lit thoroughfare. There were lots of crowded homes, with men sitting or standing on the stoops underneath an occasional dim streetlight. Furthermore, it was



“Get the hell outta here!”

- Greg Gianforte, a Montana Congressional Republican candidate, after assaulting a Guardian reporter covering the special election that takes place today.



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snowing.

Meeting with the fam-
ily of a local Duma member, Galina
Starovoitova, who had been gunned
down on her doorstep because of
her government criticisms just weeks
before, had enhanced our self-preser-
vation concerns. We agreed to a hasty
retreat. It seemed far too much like a
scene out of "Crime and Punishment"
by Fyodor Dostoyevsky. In fact, look-
ing at a map the next day, we were
but a few steps from Dostoyevsky's
former house. Which explains why it
felt like a scene out of his book.

Over the
years not only did
I return to Russia,
but had sev-
eral delegations
of Russian leaders
visit northeastern
Indiana and had
meetings with
various Russian
groups in Wash-
ington. While
Russian history,
like the novels
produced by its
legendary writers,
is dense and complicated, it never-
theless is fascinating. However, like
other hopeful glimpses of freedom in
nations with totalitarian histories, one
can easily mistake temporary open-
ings for substantive change.

President Ronald Reagan
gave an historic speech that called out
the motives of Russia ("the aggres-
sive impulses of an evil empire"). He
accurately described the threats we
face even today: "The greatest evil is
not done now in those sordid 'dens of
crime' that Dickens loved to paint...It
is conceived and ordered (moved, sec-
onded, carried and minuted) in clear,
carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted
offices, by quiet men with white col-
lars and cut fingernails and smooth-
shaven cheeks who do not need to
raise their voices."

Often forgotten is that even
in this pre-Russian modern revolution
speech, Reagan recognized the need
to work with superpower Russia but
not as a "friend." And even Reagan

near the end of his presidency, in my
opinion and that of many others, over-
emphasized personal diplomacy with
near disastrous consequences.

Within the context of my
own beliefs and experience, here are
some insights on the Russian travails
of our current president:

- All Americans should
aggressively oppose illicit foreign at-
tempts to influence our elections and
government decisions. I find it ironic
that many who refused to accept the
guilt of Alger Hiss and still mock the
"Red Scare" of the 1950s are sud-



Then-U.S. Rep. Mark Souder meets with the family of slain Duma
member Galina Starovoitova.

denly obsessed over a less severe
threat. Russia is again a real threat,
but at this point is a less severe threat
than the extensive penetration inside
our government and elections in the
1930s through the 1950s.

- Russian leaks did not cost
Hillary the election. To the extent
Russian leaks were damaging, it was
because it reminded voters of her
destruction of evidence, general arro-
gance in many things, and poor policy
decisions. Democrat Hillary Clinton's
refusal to accept the fact that she lost
because of their agenda and failed
policies is impeding a fair discussion
of the problems we face right now. If
Trump's actions are judged on the ba-
sis of accepting the false premise that
voters did not choose an alternative
view of government but because of
Russian intervention, voters will per-
ceive investigations as pure politics.

- WikiLeaks and others who
release information from private and
government sources need to be uni-

versally condemned and punished. They are not whistleblowers. I have condemned WikiLeaks from the onset, but the newfound liberal criticism of leaks seems political. Furthermore, the years of undermining intelligence agencies by the Left, especially human intelligence, has weakened our ability to respond now to real and diverse threats. President Trump's constant undermining of intelligence service credibility is not helping at all.



■ Erasing emails and destroying evidence – especially classified material – when sought after by government investigators needs a set punishment, not just reprimands. Hillary Clinton should not get a pass. She erased thousands of emails, including classified information on a server that was vulnerable to Russian penetration. We do not know whether her erased information was more serious than anything Trump or his allies may have shared because she destroyed it. Maybe the Russians do.

■ Impeding investigations by Congress or law enforcement agencies are immoral and stupid, and also needs more than just verbal reprimands or it will never end. This obviously applies to President Trump, and could become the most serious and provable charge against him.

but embarrassing materials would be leaked. She took a calculated risk. Destroy evidence based upon what she (the person being investigated) determined was relevant or potentially lose an election over leaked information that should have remained private. If we don't fix this problem at least to a degree, it is going to get far worse.

■ Firing FBI Director Comey set off red flags for everyone. While President Trump bragged about his lack of knowledge about government, perhaps he should have read at least one book on the Nixon Watergate experience. I don't know yet if there was a crime, or if there will be a punishment. But all this certainly would make for an interesting modern Russian novel. Too bad it's not fiction. ❖

Souder is a former Indiana Republican congressman.

2018 Election, from page 1

was he doing? What was he doing with Lee Harvey Oswald shortly before the death? Before the shooting? It's horrible."

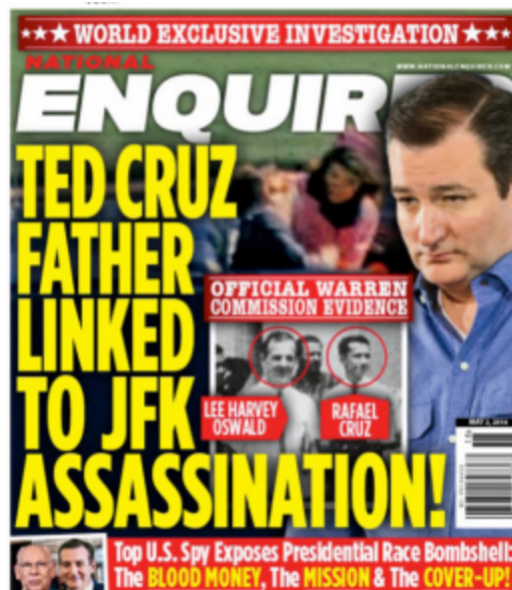
Later that morning in Evansville, Sen. Cruz issued a stunning rebuke. "Donald Trump laughs at the people of this state, laughs, bullies, attacks, insults. This morning, Donald Trump went on national television and attacked my father. Donald Trump alleges that my dad was involved in assassinating JFK," Cruz said in the most surreal political twist in Indiana history. "Now, let's be clear, this is nuts. This is not a reasonable position. This is just kooky. And while I'm at it, I guess I should go ahead and admit, yes, my dad killed JFK, he is secretly Elvis and Jimmy Hoffa is buried in his backyard."

Trump would demolish Cruz

53-37%, with a 184,000 vote plurality, despite an endorsement from Gov. Mike Pence for the Texas senator, with virtually no Republican of stature backing the billionaire populist. The Indiana GOP's convention slate was loaded with Cruz and delegates for Ohio Gov. John Kasich.

He would be in Manhattan that night, declaring victory after Cruz exited the race. The New York Times reported: "Mr. Trump appeared subdued and projected a more sober than usual mien as he absorbed the ramifications of the Indiana victory.

"The people of Indiana have been incredible," he began his victory speech. "I started about six weeks ago and was told I had a 20% deficit. I went there and worked very hard, and I campaigned and met lots of incredible people. The crowds got bigger and bigger. At the end it was like I didn't want to leave. We had a tremendous victory tonight. We won all 57 delegates. I have to thank



Bobby Knight. It has been some unbelievable day and evening and year; never been through anything like this," he said. "It's called tough, smart and they have to know how to win. That's what our country needs. We have to win again. We've been losing all the time."

Think about this swing: Trump entered Indiana 20% down and won with a 20% plurality here. The RNC delegation went from Rex Eady and Bill Springer to all Trump. Trump used wicked rhetoric, pointed to the media as the enemy of the people, and used the endorsement of former IU basketball coach Bobby Knight to capture Hoosier hearts, overcoming what he said were "65,000 negative ads."

Cruz would say that night, "Listen, Donald Trump is a serial philanderer, and he boasts about it. I want everyone to think about your teenage kids. The president of the United States talks about how great it is to commit adultery. How proud he is. Describes his battles with venereal disease as his own personal Vietnam."

HPI observed on the May 5, 2016, edition, "Like Knight, Trump has an imposing, bigger-than-life presence, and moves like a shark. He has proven to find weaknesses of his opponents, tag them with monikers that play to his audiences, and poke his rivals with extreme effectiveness. He feeds off the same middle class angst that is fueling, 180 degrees away, the Bernie Sanders campaign. These are two political movements running in tandem. Trump has created a narrative, finding a voice that reaches the middle class, Reagan Democrats-turned-Republicans, and other folks who are consumed in sets of grievances. His rallies are streams of consciousness that reach the hearts of Hoosiers believing they are being left behind in a society that is more economically polarized and getting browner and more inclusive."

HPI concluded by ending that article saying, "Anything can happen. Anything," while noting, "Trump has hijacked the party, turned social activism into pocketbook issues, and is on the precipice of winning a major party nomination. Conventional wisdom first insisted that Trump would fade before winning a nomination. It now says he cannot win the White House in the fall because of crude comments about women, Latinos, Muslims and the disabled. Trump has eviscerated every shred of conventional wisdom in this cycle."

On primary day 2016, Cruz launched into a broadside against Trump that in light of current events here in 2017, seems prescient, saying, "I'm gonna tell you what I really think of Donald Trump: This man is a pathological

liar. He doesn't know the difference between truth and lies. He lies practically every word that comes out of his mouth, and in a pattern that I think is straight out of a psychology textbook, his response is to accuse everybody else of lying."

A little more than a year later, the unconventional and demagoguery of Trump populist candidacy has evolved into a chaotic, scandal-prone administration that has captured the support of the Indiana Republican establishment, particularly when Gov. Mike Pence ascended to the ticket, and is now hanging on for an unprecedented ride akin to a James Bond chase scene.

Trump resists the Russian collusion probe

In the past month, six stories dominated President Trump's reaction to probes by the FBI, the House and Senate as compiled by

NBC's First Read:

- Trump fired FBI Director James Comey, whose agency is investigating whether the president's 2016 campaign might have had contacts with Russian entities.

- After the White House initially said Comey's ouster

was due to his handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation, Trump told NBC's Lester Holt: "When I decided to [fire Comey], I said to myself, I said you know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a madeup story."

- The New York Times reported that, on Feb. 14, Comey met with Trump, where the president told the FBI director: "I hope you can see your way clear to letting this go, to letting [Michael] Flynn go," Trump said, per a memo Comey wrote about the meeting. "He is a good guy. I hope you can let this go."

- The New York Times also reported that Trump, meeting on May 10 with Russian officials in the Oval Office, gave this account for his firing of Comey, according to a document summarizing the meeting. "I just fired the head of the FBI. He was crazy, a real nut job," Trump said. "I faced great pressure because of Russia. That's taken off."

- The Washington Post reported – later confirmed by NBC News – that Trump asked two top intelligence officials in March to say publicly that they saw no evidence the Trump campaign had colluded with the Russian effort to interfere in the 2016 election.

- On Wednesday former Obama CIA chief John Brennan was asked if there was collusion or coordination between Trump's campaign and the Russians. Brennan responded, "I encountered and am aware of information



and intelligence that revealed contacts and interactions between Russian officials and U.S. persons involved in the Trump campaign that I was concerned about because of known Russian efforts to suborn such individuals, and it raised questions in my mind, again, whether or not the Russians were able to gain the cooperation of those individuals." U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy pressed Brennan on whether Trump himself had ties with Russians. Brennan replied, "I saw information and intelligence that was worthy of investigation by the Bureau to determine whether or not such cooperation or conclusion (sic) was taking place." Pressed further, Brennan added, "I'm not going to respond to particular elements of your question because I think it would be inappropriate for me to do so here," but said he would in a "classified session."

"Any one of these headlines above would be politically problematic for a White House. But if you add them all up, there's a strong case that the president and his White House were interfering with an ongoing federal investigation," note NBC's Chuck Todd, Carrie Dann and Mark Murray. "Now is that obstruction of justice? George Washington University Law Prof. Jonathan Turley argues that it's likely not, because that would involve someone acting with the intent of securing an unlawful benefit for yourself or someone else."

Hoosiers caught up in alternative Trump

Over the past two weeks, two Hoosier GOP stalwarts, Vice President Pence and Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, have found themselves aboard a SPECTRE rocket ride. Pence has been trapped in the Michael Flynn controversy, denying knowledge of his financial ties to Turkey and the Russians despite grasping the helm of the Trump transition team and then propagating untruthful information at least twice. Coats was caught up in yet another sensational story surrounding the Russian collusion investigation into the Trump campaign. The Washington Post reported on Tuesday that Trump "made separate appeals to ... Coats, and to Adm. Michael S. Rogers, the director of the National Security Agency, urging them to publicly deny the existence of any evidence of collusion during the 2016 election. Coats and Rogers refused to comply with the requests, which they both deemed to be inappropriate, according to two current and two former officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private communications with the president.

"The problem wasn't so much asking them to issue statements, it was asking them to issue false statements about an ongoing investigation," a former senior intelligence official told the Post of the request to Coats. It

fits into a growing narrative with a potential "obstruction of justice" endgame.

Pressed by Armed Services Chairman John McCain Tuesday morning if the Post report is accurate, Coats responded, "I need to spend a significant amount of time with the president discussing national security and intelligence. We discuss a number of topics on a regular basis. It's not appropriate for me to comment publicly on any of that. I don't feel it's appropriate to characterize the discussions with the president."

Ranking Democrat U.S. Sen. Jack Reed asked



Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats (left) and Adm. Mike Rogers were both approached by President Trump in an attempt to end the FBI Russia probe.

Coats if he was aware of the investigations and if he supported them. Coats responded, "I think these investigations are in place to get us to the right conclusions so we can move on with a known result." When U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), asked if he would appear before an investigative committee, Coats responded, "I certainly will provide them with what I know and what I don't know." Heinrich noted that Coats earlier in the hearing said that leaks jeopardize lives. "If the president held any other position, what he said [to the Russians] could be considered the mother of all leaks," he said. He then asked Coats: "Was it dangerous for the president to share that information?"

Coats deflected, saying he was not in the room for the discussion. "I've been on travel," he said. "I have not discussed this with the president." Heinrich replied: "I find that troubling."

It was disclosed this week that in a call with Philippine President Duterte, Trump revealed that two U.S. submarines were situated off the North Korean coast, yet another inadvertent spill of intelligence the Russians will covet.

Thus, two squeaky clean Hoosier public servants find themselves traipsing along the Trump tripwire, their career-long reputations facing questions they've never had to deal with before.

A Nixonian arc

The scandalous first 120 days now seem to be on

course with the obstruction of justice dynamic that forced an end to President Richard Nixon on Aug. 8, 1974.

Washington Post columnist David Ignatius wrote on Wednesday that following his emphatic 1972 landslide victory, Nixon faced "that pesky FBI investigation into a 'third-rate burglary' at the Watergate office building, about which the media were asking meddlesome questions. Nixon wrote in his diary after a later, revelatory Post scoop about Watergate that this was 'the last burp of the Eastern Establishment.' Then Nixon did something very stupid. On June 23, 1972, he instructed his chief of staff to contact the CIA and have its deputy director, Vernon Walters, tell the FBI to back off on its investigation: 'They should call the FBI in and say that we wish for the country, don't go any further into this case, period.' The tape recording of this conversation became known as 'the smoking gun.'"

Ignatius added, "President Trump, it's said, doesn't read presidential biographies. That's a shame. For he appears to be making the same mistakes that destroyed Nixon's presidency."

Conservative commentary withering

The conservative commentary is growing strident and withering. "Republicans may soon lose a generation of voters through a combination of the sheer incompetence of Trump and a party rank and file with no ability to control its leader," warned conservative radio host Erick

Erickson, formerly of RedState.

"[F]rom the perspective of the Republican leadership's duty to their country, and indeed to the world that our imperium bestrides, leaving a man this witless and unmastered in an office with these powers and responsibilities is an act of gross negligence, which no objective on the near-term political horizon seems remotely significant enough to justify," wrote New York Times columnist Ross Douthat.

Michael Gerson, a former aide to U.S. Sen. Coats, wrote in the Washington Post of the inner circle leak of Trump's James Comey "nut job" quote, "This type of a high-level leak leaves the president and his inner circle unable to trust his team. It leaves foreign officials unable to feel confident in the confidentiality of the highest level diplomatic discussions. And it points to a foreign policy establishment that is making political judgments, which involve serious dangers. The moral tone of the Executive Office of the President is set by the president, and this one is morally stunted. In Trump's house of betrayal, leaks must seem the normal way of doing business. And leaks against the president probably come from officials reaching the limits of their patience with dysfunction. We are at the start of Trump's reckoning, not the end. Public officials should not respond to the fraying of democratic norms by further unraveling them. The proper answer to Trump's assault on institutions is to adhere to them more strongly."

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Ezra Klein of Vox observed, "Trump's relationship with congressional Republicans is best viewed as an uneasy bargain. They support him, despite their doubts, so long as he passes their agenda and controls his behavior enough not to endanger them or the country. Trump is failing on his end of the deal, and he is making it harder and harder for congressional Republicans to hold up their end of the deal. That's where the sudden talk of impeachment comes from, and the rising comfort with special counsels and independent commissions. I spoke on Wednesday to a top staffer in a conservative Senate office. What did he think of Vice President Mike Pence these days? I asked. 'You mean the next president of the United States?' he shot back. He was joking, kind of. But no one was making jokes like that two weeks ago."

Trump's 'campaign budget'

Then there is the Trump budget and TrumpCare poised to end health coverage for 14 million Americans in 2018. The Washington Post reported: "The White House's \$4.094 trillion budget request for fiscal 2018 calls for cuts that hit Medicaid, food assistance and other anti-poverty programs. It would cut funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, which provides benefits to the poor, by roughly 20% next year. All told, the budget would reduce spending on safety-net programs by more than \$1 trillion over 10 years." Politico characterized the budget as "hitting his own voters the hardest."

Budget expert Stan Collender of Quorvis' told CNN's Chris Cillizza, "This is not serious at all; it's just a Trump campaign document pretending to be a president's budget. Submitting a budget that is likely ... or even possibly ... going to be adopted and implemented by Congress apparently wasn't the administration's primary goal. Communicating to the ultra-hard-right wing of the Republican Party – the Trump base – seems to be its only real purpose. Every president's budget to some extent is part political statement. But the just-released Trump budget takes this to a new and previously unprecedented level with ideology completely overwhelming governing. The best way to think of it is as a Trump campaign rally on paper."

Collender, who predicted the budget will be "dead on arrival," added, "Big tax cuts for the wealthy combined with deep spending cuts for the poor and the middle class are the perfect way to describe this budget. It's the Trump equivalent of "Let them eat cake."

Like the American Health Care Act, which the Congressional Budget Office said will end coverage for 14 million in 2018 and 23 million over the next decade, it passed the House with the support of all Hoosier Republicans, this budget is lining up support in the delegation. "Our nation needs leadership and President Trump and Vice President Pence are providing it by submitting a budget that makes tough decisions; in other words, they lay out priorities," said U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita. "This administration is striving to make our nation great, now it's Congress' time to embark on our Article I duties."

U.S. Rep. Jim Banks added, "President Trump's proposed budget for 2018 sends the clearest message yet that he intends to change the status quo in Washington. This proposal takes much-needed steps to rein in out-of-control spending and balance the budget while prioritizing our national security. I appreciate the president's leadership and his efforts to restore the federal government's proper focus. Congress should use this proposal as a starting point, weigh in with appropriate changes and produce a final resolution that maintains the president's commitment to balancing the budget in less than 10 years."



Vice President and Karen Pence hosted the Indiana Congressional delegation Tuesday at the Naval Observatory. U.S. Rep. Luke Messer left early for a family event.

The 2018 'impeachment election'

This week there were reports that Democrats were dusting off their "2006 playbook" in a wave election that saw Joe Donnelly, Baron Hill and Brad Ellsworth unseat U.S. Reps. Chris Chocola, Mike Sodrel and John Hostetler. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who led the 2006 effort, has met with key Democratic operatives this week. That wave election, in reaction to the Iraq War quagmire, came just two years after President George W. Bush had defeated Democrat John Kerry by 20% in Indiana, almost

an identical plurality of Trump's Indiana victory over Hillary Clinton.

The difference is that the Cook Partisan Index had Indiana's 2nd, 8th and 9th CDs in single digit "Plus R" categories in 2006 while the 2017 index has the U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski as a +11, U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon R +15, and U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth R +13. The only single digit districts are the Rep. Pete Visclosky's 1st CD D +9, and U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks at R +9.

HPI asked Democratic Chairman John Zody how his 2018 CD recruitment was going and he did not respond. South Bend Tribune columnist Jack Colwell tells HPI that Democrat Lynn Coleman is preparing for a rematch against Walorski.

The 'impeachment election'

The Post's David Ignatius casts 2018 as the coming "impeachment election," writing, "For all (special counsel Robert S.) Mueller's probity, this investigation has an inescapable political destination. Mueller must refer any evidence of wrongdoing by Trump himself to the House of Representatives as evidence of possible 'high crimes and misdemeanors' that might warrant impeachment. Would this GOP-dominated House begin impeachment proceedings, even on strong evidence of obstruction? Right now, you'd have to guess no. The real collision point ahead is the 2018 midterm election. This will be the 'impeach-

ment election,' and it may be as bitterly contested as any in decades. Trump seems unlikely to take Nixon's course of resigning before the House votes on impeachment. He'll fight all the way – a combative president trying to save his mandate from what he has described as a 'witch hunt.' This appeal would resonate with a populist base that already feels disenfranchised by jurists and journalists."

Such an "impeachment election" is no sure thing. In 1998, the looming House impeachment of President Bill Clinton was supposed to yield a significant number of seats for Republicans. But swing voters never bought into the notion that Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky and the purported "obstruction of justice" reached to such a dramatic response.

A looming impeachment has the potential to stir bases in both parties.

In the 1998 mid-term, the Senate remained unchanged at 55-45 for Republicans and Democrats gained five seats in the U.S. House. It was the first time since 1934 that the out-of-White House party failed to gain congressional seats. In Indiana, House Democrats ran the table on seven contested seats and won the majority.

Anything can happen

Anything. ❖

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Pence stays tight with Trump at Notre Dame

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – In the commencement address Sunday at the University of Notre Dame, Vice President Mike Pence showed no inclination to move even a smidgen away from President Trump and the controversies surrounding the president.

Despite speculation nationally that Pence might be seeking to ease away from defending the president, he had high praise for Trump. He commended Trump in particular for steps to protect religious liberty at home, including for Notre Dame, and for speaking out in Saudi Arabia against religious persecution around the world. And he stressed anew that “the greatest honor of my life is to serve as vice president to the 45th president, Donald Trump.”

Selection of Pence as commencement speaker was unpopular with some students and faculty primarily because of his association with Trump policies, especially on deportation of immigrants and rejection of refugees from Syria, and also because Pence, as governor, supported the “religious freedom” law that critics called freedom to discriminate.

But there was no heckling or disruption during the 15-minute speech. About 200 graduates and family members got up and walked out of Notre Dame Stadium as Pence began to speak. They left quietly, and Pence neither paused in his speech nor acknowledged the walkout. The departing graduates were booed by some of the family guests in the stands.

When introduced for an honorary degree, Pence was applauded politely by the graduates seated on the field. He received warmer applause at the conclusion. His remarks on freedom of speech on campus and the right to disagree were well received. He said: “Notre Dame is a campus where deliberation is welcomed, where opposing views are debated and where every speaker no matter how unpopular or unfashionable, is afforded the right to air their views in the open for all to hear.”

Naming Pence as speaker was viewed in general on campus as providing equal time for the 2009 commencement speech by President Barack Obama, whose appearance also drew protests. The university has not said

whether President Trump was invited. Officials were known to be concerned that Trump would bring protests much more volatile than a silent walkout and that Trump would respond in kind, creating a chaotic and divisive commencement.

I assume that Notre Dame’s president, the Rev. John Jenkins, and the trustees weren’t crazy enough to invite Trump. If they were, they should light candles daily at the Grotto in thanks that he declined. No rant of self-pity like his Coast Guard Academy address.

After the election, Jenkins discussed whether to invite Trump in following “tradition” of presidents for commencement. Alas, he feared, “a bit of a political circus” if Trump came, something like when Obama came.

It would have been nothing like protests at the 2009 commencement ceremony. A few protesters in the audience were quickly shouted down by the graduates with a loud, defiant shout oft heard at football games: “We are ND!” Their message was clear: We are Notre Dame. You aren’t. So be quiet.

They weren’t endorsing all of Obama’s policies.

But they respected him as the first African-American president, coming to honor the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, long-time university president and giant in civil rights.

Protests against Trump would not have turned commencement into a circus, silly and funny, but into something not funny at all, with displays of anger and loathing.

Trump as a candidate wasn’t popular on campus. He got only 24% of the vote in a student mock election.

I have taught classes at Notre Dame for 17 years, and I have never seen a class as dispirited and angry

— fearful of what older voters had done to the nation in which they will live — as the class on the day after the presidential election. Some students said they still had not slept — couldn’t — up all night, crying or cursing or cringing over what the outcome would mean for them, for the future.

They weren’t enamored with Hillary Clinton. They feared that Trump would be dangerous, unhinged. Large numbers of students and faculty petitioned that Trump not be invited. ❖

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



AG Hill, others taking look at Senate race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The early rounds of the Republican 2018 U.S. Senate race has centered on a potential showdown between U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita. But there are several new names surfacing.

Informed and reliable GOP sources say that Attorney General Curtis Hill is making phone calls gauging support for a potential run. He is also staffing up his campaign side, with Suzie Jaworowski coming on board. She was a key player in President Trump's Indiana campaign. Another name reportedly making calls is State Rep. Mike Braun, R-Jasper.

Currently Atlanta businessman Terry Henderson, Kokomo attorney Mark Hurt and New Albany educator Andrew Takami have officially entered or have formed exploratory committees.

Sources close to Rokita expect him to declare in early summer. Both he and Messer are expected to show about \$2 million cash on hand when the second quarter ends next month.

State Sen. Mike Delph told HPI on Wednesday that his oldest daughter Abby is getting married on June 25. "I will address 2018 after we get through this very important family event," Delph advised.

6th CD: Another Rep. Pence?

Messer is also gearing up for the U.S. Senate race, and that is igniting a field for replacement. State Sen. Jeff Raatz has decided not to run for personal reasons. State Rep. Randy Frye and State Sens. Jean Leising and Mike Crider are reportedly weighing bids. The new name surfacing here is Greg Pence, brother of Vice President Mike Pence.

4th CD: Awaiting word on Hershman

As for this soon-to-be open seat, all eyes are on State Sen. Brandt Hershman, who apparently is in the running for the Republican seat on the Federal Communications Commission. Axios reported in March that Hershman "has been considered a leading

candidate for some time, though some sources say he may not longer be the frontrunner." But at the Indiana General Assembly sine die speech, Senate President David Long suggested that it might have been Hershman's last day in the Senate.

If Hershman doesn't get the FCC gig, he would be considered an early frontrunner. If he does, the field is expected to grow, with State Sens. Randy Head and John Crane, along with Frankfort Mayor Chris McBarnes as emerging candidates.

Hupfer, Zody spar over TrumpCare

A news release from the Indiana Republican Party claimed Obamacare increased monthly health care premiums for Hoosiers by 74 percent, and included the following: Indiana Republican Party State Chairman Kyle Hupfer said, "Joe Donnelly must be held to account for this massive increase in health insurance premiums on Hoosiers. His declarations of wanting to fix Obamacare ring hollow when he continues to support, defend and champion a law that is so obviously wreaking havoc on our economy and our health care system. This is yet another reminder that when Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid can count on Joe Donnelly, we can't."

Indiana Democratic Party Chairman John Zody called Trumpcare "insane and heartless" on Wednesday. "Now we know why every Republican in Indiana's House delegation, including Congressman Messer and Congressman Rokita, shoved this bill through the House before the final CBO score came out," Zody said. "Tweaks around the edges can't change the fact that tens of millions of

Americans would still be stripped of their health care if this Republican proposal became law, all to finance another tax cut for the wealthiest Americans. The numbers in today's score are so terrifying because the underlying framework of this bill—shoved through by Republicans like Congressman Messer and Congressman Rokita to appease their base—is so terrifying. The Republican proposal would cut roughly \$850 billion from Medicaid over ten years, gutting HIP 2.0 and vital programs that fund seniors' beds in nursing homes, help children with disabilities, and combat the scourge of opioid abuse. It amounts to an age tax that that would cause working-class seniors' healthcare premiums to skyrocket. That's a proposal that was heartless even before we knew its impact. Now that we've seen the score, it looks simply insane."



Attorney General Curtis Hill at the 2016 Indiana Republican Convention where he won the nomination. He is reportedly eyeing the 2018 U.S. Senate race. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

Dems' 2006 playbook

Politico reported this week that

"2018 is already looking like 2006 on overdrive," noting that Democrats are "digging out the blueprint" and recruiting business owners and military veterans.

In 2006, Democrats Joe Donnelly, Baron Hill and Brad Ellsworth took Indiana CD seats away from Republicans, defeating U.S. Reps. Chris Chocola, Mike Sodrel and John Hostettler (Howey Politics Indiana). The state backed the reelection of President George W. Bush 60-39% over Democrat John Kerry in 2004, a similar margin to President Trump's 2016 margin over Hillary Clinton in 2016.

But other than a potential rematch between U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski and Democrat Lynn Coleman, Hoosier Democrats haven't unveiled any credible names.

Nate Silver of FiveThirtyEight bolsters the perception that 2018 could be a wave election favoring Democrats.

Silver writes on Wednesday: A widely held tenet of the current conventional wisdom is that while President Trump might not be popular overall, he has a high floor on his support. Trump's sizable and enthusiastic base — perhaps 35 to 40 percent of the country — won't abandon him any time soon, the theory goes, and they don't necessarily care about some of the controversies that the "mainstream media" treats as game-changing developments. It's an entirely reasonable theory. We live in a highly partisan epoch, and voters are usually loyal to politicians from their party. Trump endured a lot of turbulence in the general election but stuck it out to win the Electoral College. The media doesn't always guess right about which stories will resonate with voters.

But, Silver notes, the theory isn't supported by the evidence. To the contrary, Trump's base seems to be eroding. There's been a considerable decline in the number of Americans who strongly approve of Trump, from a peak of around 30 percent in February to just 21 or 22 percent of the electorate now. (The decline in Trump's strong approval ratings is larger than the overall decline in his approval ratings, in fact.) Far from having unconditional love from his base, Trump has already lost almost a third of his strong support. And voters who strongly disapprove of Trump outnumber those who strongly approve of him by about a 2-to-1 ratio, which could presage an "enthusiasm gap" that works against Trump at the midterms. The data suggests, in particular, that the GOP's initial attempt (and failure) in March to pass its unpopular health care bill may have cost Trump with his core supporters.

Inside Elections shifts House seats

Inside Elections' Nathan Gonzales has shifted 19 seats as the Trump scandals grow. "We've changed our ratings in 19 races, including adding nine GOP-held seats to the list of competitive races and dropping one Democratic seat (Rep. Brad Schneider of Illinois' 10th District) after the Republicans' best potential candidate declined to run," Gonzalez reported this week, though none of the changes come in Indiana. "That means Republicans are now defending 39 seats on the list of competitive races

compared to just 14 currently held by Democrats. That disparity isn't as large as prior to the 2010 elections when Democrats were defending 100 competitive seats and Republicans just nine, but just as it's possible for the Republicans' electoral prospects to improve, they could also get much worse.

Presidential: Pence visting battlegrounds

With talk of a potential impeachment of President Trump, more and more national news outlets are watching for signals from Vice President Pence. Roll Call reported this week that "Pence has quietly spent his weekends visiting key battleground states, raising eyebrows in political circles about just what the ambitious politician is up to as scandals threaten Donald Trump's presidency."

Pence has made stops in Pennsylvania and Ohio recently and opened a new leadership PAC. Marc Lotter, Pence's press secretary, told Roll Call that any talk that Pence is testing the waters for anything other than a Trump-Pence 2020 ticket is "ludicrous."

"The vice president is entirely focused on promoting and supporting the president's agenda," Lotter said in an email.

Voters back Russia probe special counsel

A new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll shows voters aren't ready to begin the constitutional process of impeaching the president and removing him from office. Nearly two-thirds of voters, 63 percent, either "strongly" or "somewhat" agree with the Justice Department's decision to appoint former FBI Director Robert Mueller to oversee the Russia probe, the poll shows.

Indiana GOP seeks 2018 convention site

The Indiana Republican Party released a request for proposal for the 2018 Indiana Republican State Convention to be held in June 2018. The purpose of this particular convention is to select the Republican Party's nominees for secretary of state, treasurer and auditor. It is estimated that the Convention will draw 2,500 plus attendees including approximately 1,700 delegates as well as guests, vendors and media. Typically, the convention is held in Indianapolis, however in 2014, for the first time in Indiana Republican Party history, it was held outside of Indianapolis when Fort Wayne hosted the biennial event. "We are a statewide party and, as such, we are opening the doors to a competitive process by offering interested cities large and small the opportunity to host our Convention," said Indiana Republican Party State Chairman Kyle Hupfer. Potential host committees are asked to inform State Party of their intent to bid by June 9, 2017, and submit final proposals by June 23, 2017, to secretary@indiana.gop. Questions should be directed to Indiana Republican Party Secretary Holli Sullivan, secretary@indiana.gop, or executive director of political strategy and operations Matt Huckleby, mhuckleby@indiana.gop. ❖

How Trump will play in 2018 mid-term

By **CHRIS SAUTTER**

WASHINGTON – The 2018 midterm elections are still a year and a half away, but Republicans in Washington are beginning to panic about their prospects. With questions about Russian interference and possible collusion connected to the 2016 Trump campaign on the rise, and the president’s approval ratings sinking, some political forecasters predict a big Democratic year.



President Trump’s Russia imbroglio alone might be enough to deliver Democrats big gains. The almost mind-blowing cascade of revelations has some rattled Republicans already distancing

themselves from the new president. The president’s firing of FBI Director James Comey opened a floodgate of administration leaks that threaten to overwhelm his presidency. The naming of special prosecutor Robert Mueller to oversee the Russia probe may portend its eventual unraveling.

Republican congressional leadership is said to be sticking to Trump for fear of jeopardizing their agenda, specifically repealing Obamacare and overhauling the tax code. But it is those very policies that may prove to be their greatest liability in 2018. The Trump budget includes cuts so draconian that even Senate Republicans like Lindsay Graham have blasted it. Those cuts are to be paid for by yet more tax breaks for the wealthy. Meanwhile, the House Republicans’ version of “repeal and replace” will eliminate health care for 23 million Americans according to the Congressional Budget Office, and empower the big insurance companies to make key health care decisions rather than doctors and patients.

Republicans begin this off-year election at a distinct disadvantage. The president’s party typically loses seats in Congress. Success of the party out of power is tied to the popularity of the president. The average mid-term House pick-up by the party out of power is 36 when the president’s approval rating is below 50%. Trump’s approval rating has been hovering around the historically low 40%.

Democrats need to win 23 more House seats to regain the majority, which happens to be the exact number of seats held by Republicans that Hillary Clinton

won.

More importantly for 2018, as pointed out by the blog fivethirty-eight.com, Democrats don’t need to win over Trump voters. Trump won more than 50% of the vote in just 205 of the 435 House districts. If Republican candidates won every one of those 205 districts but lost the others, Democrats would win the House majority with a total of 230 seats. How independents vote in 2018 and whether Democrats turn out will be as important, if not more, than whether Trump’s base votes Republican.

Special elections in Montana and Georgia over the next several weeks for House seats that are traditionally Republican will provide a bellwether of how Trump’s presidency is playing outside of Washington. Losses in one or both of those races could impact what names appear on ballots in key races next year. Incumbents who are considering retirement might call it quits if they sense a political wave.

While political handicappers are revising their forecasts for 2018, no Indiana House seats appear on lists of competitive races. That is partly the consequence of gerrymandered districts. The 2nd, 8th, and 9th congressional districts in Indiana are historically competitive, but not much since Republicans redrew new lines in 2011. In addition, the 8th and 9th districts in southern Indiana have been trending away from their Democratic roots for more than a decade.

To get those races competitive again, Hoosier Democrats should look to the 1980s for models. State Re-



publicans drew Indiana congressional districts in 1981 to protect their party’s candidates, just as they did in 2011. Nonetheless, Democrats used midterm and special elections to overcome the odds, ending up with eight of Indiana’s 10 seats after the 1990 election. One key in making those districts competitive was the quality of candidates. Democrats Frank McCloskey in 1982, Jim Jontz in 1986, Jill Long in 1989, and Tim Roemer in 1990 were all strong candidates who skillfully ran against the incumbent party while generating high base-voter turnout. No Democrats of that caliber have yet emerged in the 2nd, 8th, or 9th

districts. But if top-tier candidates run, those seats could be in play in 2018.

While Democrats appear to have a legitimate shot at retaking control of the U.S. House of Representatives, the odds of recapturing the U.S. Senate are long. That's because Trump carried 10 states where Democratic senators are up for reelection. There are precious few Republican-held states where Democrats have a possibility of a Senate pickup, although Nevada, which Hillary Clinton carried, is a possibility.

One of those 10 states is Indiana, where Senator Joe Donnelly hopes to continue a streak of good fortune. Donnelly lost his first couple of attempts at public office. But after losing to incumbent Chris Chocola in 2004, Donnelly has ridden both Democratic waves and withstood Republican routs. His 2012 win over the hapless Richard Mourdock for the Senate seat held by Dick Lugar was the first time a Hoosier Democrat won a Republican held congressional seat, House or Senate, in a presidential year since Lee Hamilton and Andy Jacobs were swept into office by the Lyndon Johnson landslide of 1964. Donnelly comes across as genuine, is likable, and has demonstrated independence from Democratic leadership. He is visibly a hardworking senator in a state that believes in hard work.

Donnelly's apparent vulnerability has attracted interest from several Republicans. Two Republican House

members considering challenging Donnelly, Luke Messer and Todd Rokita, are raising money for a possible Senate race, but might have second thoughts about giving up relatively safe seats if a Democratic wave seems to be developing. They have until January 2018 to decide. Donnelly would be a tough out even in a more Republican friendly environment.

Republicans are in a particularly peculiar place this cycle. They have been defending the indefensible, most particularly Trump's attempts at covering up the Russia scandal. But they are also pushing unpopular policies, such a health care "fix" that takes away health care from millions and allows for the denial of care for pre-existing conditions.

The nation's political dynamics are too fluid for either side to feel confident about the public mood in November 2018. For that reason, Democrats need to keep the heat on Trump. They also need to articulate a compelling positive message, something Hillary Clinton's campaign failed to do in 2016.

But for now, the wind is completely at the back of the Democrats. ❖

Sautter is a Democratic consultant based in Washington.



Donnelly, Brooks and Bucshon on CBO score

Howey Politics Indiana

WASHINGTON — The Republican bill to repeal and replace Obamacare passed by the House earlier this month would lead to 23 million fewer people having health insurance by 2026, according to an analysis from the Congressional Budget Office released late Wednesday afternoon (Collins, USA Today). That number is 1 million fewer than an analysis of a March draft version of the bill. The previous CBO analysis had predicted the draft bill would leave 24 million more people without health insurance than Obamacare would cover.

The legislation is also expected to increase insurance premiums by 20% in 2018 and 5% in 2019.

But by 2020, premiums are expected to decrease. The expected decrease varies by state depending on how the states choose to implement the law. The bill as approved will still decrease the deficit by \$119 billion, about \$32 billion less than the prior version of the bill. Those who are 64 and earn \$26,500 – 175% of the federal poverty limit - will pay about \$12,000 to \$14,000 a year more a year in premiums under the AHCA than under current law. People in that income bracket who are 21 will pay less or about the same under the ACA as the AHCA.

U.S. Senator Joe Donnelly (D-IN) released the following statement after the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office released its analysis of the American Health Care Act (Howey Politics Indiana): Donnelly said, "The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office analysis confirms that this bill would make health care more expensive and harder to access, particularly for those with pre-existing conditions, children, older Hoosiers and seniors. As I have long said, I believe we need to join together to improve our health care system. I am calling on the Administration to stop undermining and destabilizing the insurance marketplace and work together with us to make health care more affordable."

U.S. Rep. Susan W. Brooks (R-IN) released the following statement after the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) released a new score of H.R. 1628, the American Health Care Act of

2017 (AHCA): "The score from the CBO today confirms that the AHCA as passed by the house will lower premium costs for Americans and reduce our deficit. This is an ongoing process, and it's important to realize that this score does not reflect any changes the Senate may make to the legislation in the coming weeks or any future, additional actions the Administration or Congress will take to fix our healthcare system, lower costs and increase healthcare choices. I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress, the Administration and state officials to make our healthcare system work better for Hoosiers and Americans."

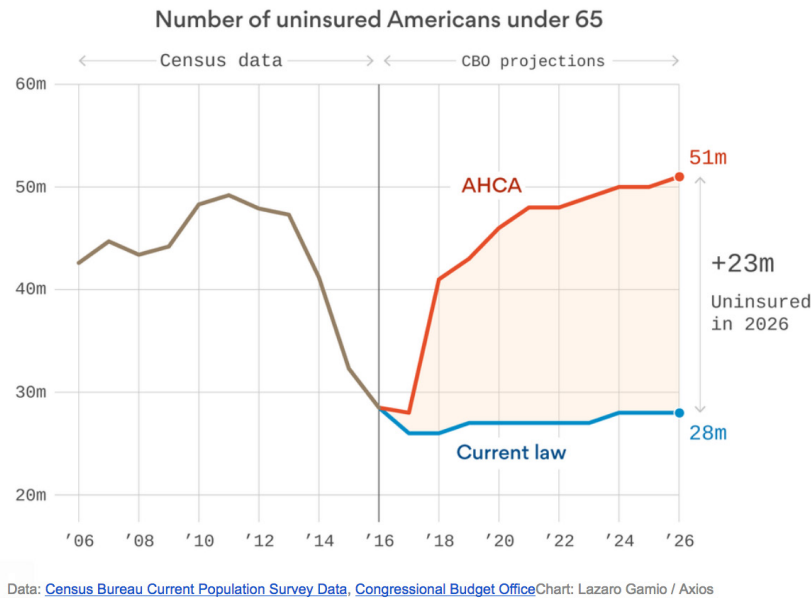
U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon (R-IN), M.D. released the following statement regarding the Trump Administration's proposed Fiscal Year 2018 budget released this

week: "President Trump put forth a fiscally responsible budget blueprint that prioritizes our national defense and military, expanding job opportunities, and growing wages for hardworking families over growth of government and bureaucracy in Washington, D.C.," said Bucshon. "While these priorities are a good starting point for Congress, there are specific portions of the budget blueprint, like the President's proposed reduction in funding

for medical research at institutions like the NIH, that I do have concerns with. Ultimately, the Constitution grants Congress the power of the purse and responsibility for establishing the federal budget. I look forward to working hand-in-hand with the Trump Administration as Congress works to pass a responsible, balanced budget that respects hard-working taxpayers while also providing funding for the priorities of the American people."

Walorski VA bill passes House

U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-Ind.) applauded House passage of the VA Scheduling Accountability Act, her legislation requiring Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities to follow all scheduling rules and withholding bonuses from facility directors who fail to certify compliance annually, her office announced (Howey Politics Indiana). The bipartisan passage of H.R. 467 follows a recent VA investigation that confirmed allegations of improper schedule manipulation at the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Peru, Ind. ❖



Totally unprepared for Auschwitz

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – My parents did an amazing job of instilling in me a love of history. Each evening, dinner was a session of information, debate and discussion of events, past and present. All of the seven Dunn children were expected to join in and give our two cents on a wide range of historical subjects, with each child limited to what had been learned in the classroom or read in the many history books that my mother continually shoved into our hands. With 14 years of age difference between my oldest sibling and myself, the youngest, the knowledge, viewpoints and conclusions derived from these discussions were always interesting and family dinner was a time to cherish instead of disdain.

I would have loved to have majored in history in college, but as my father always reminded me, "Name me one historian that can make a living at it in this town." Practicality ruled and I pursued a business degree, but I made a commitment that history would become my one true passion. Fortunately, my business career has provided the resources necessary to pursue my historical passion and I have done it with an almost maniacal drive at times.

One of the great joys during my life has been the opportunity to visit locations of immense historical importance. Most family vacations have generally included historical detours, or as my daughter once said, "Oh no, not another battlefield!" I have enjoyed standing in the exact location of some momentous historical event, closing my eyes and trying to imagine what it would have been like to have lived the moment.

I've stood on the windswept knoll of the Little Big Horn battlefield and heard the whoops, yells and screams of the victors and the vanquished. I've walked the battle lines of Gettysburg at dawn and smelled the camp fires,



gun powder and death. I've waded out into the Atlantic Ocean into chest deep water, turned and trudged back through the tide toward Omaha Beach and the menacing German bunkers dotted along the Normandy coast. I've made my way in Paris to Les Invalides and Napoleon's Tomb, making sure to stand exactly where Adolf Hitler stood during his triumphant visit.

Before each visit to a historical location, I've made it my practice to buy two or three good books on the subject and thoroughly research the battle or event. I have come to accept that I am a little eccentric when it comes to my passion for the historical.

Although I have always tried to prepare for my visits to historical locations, I was totally unprepared for my recent visit to the Auschwitz and Birkenau death camps in Oswiecim, Poland. I had read more than my fair share of books on the Holocaust and the death camps, but nothing, absolutely nothing, could have prepared me for the emotional horrors of Auschwitz and Auschwitz II (Birkenau).

Along with my wife and two adult children, I departed Krakow, Poland, early in the morning for the hour-long drive through the rolling Polish countryside. Our guide and driver, Dr. Chris Skutela, did an excellent job of laying the historical groundwork for our visit to Auschwitz. Quite noticeable when talking to Dr. Skutela and other Polish people was the unanimity of their message that Poles suffered at Auschwitz (more than 150,000 Poles died there); Polish people helped Jewish people (over 7,000 Poles have been named by Yad Vashem as righteous among nations);

and that the death camps were German camps in Poland and not Polish death camps, as President Obama mistakenly referred to them during a visit. There was also an emphasis on present day companies who profited from the Holocaust and on the failure of President Franklin Roosevelt to destroy the camps or their railroad network.

Auschwitz is a heavily visited location; nearly two million people each

year. Busloads of schoolchildren of nearly every nationality arrive at the gates of the camp. Auschwitz is actually multiple camps, as many as 10. Most were smaller camps housing inmates who worked in specific labor projects such as stone quarries, sawmills or the I.G. Farben chemical factory.

The two principal Auschwitz camps are Auschwitz



I and Auschwitz II, known as Birkenau. The tour began at the front gate of Auschwitz where every prisoner passed. The words above the gate offered hope, but there was no hope for the victims who marched under the sign, "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work Will Set You Free).

Auschwitz I is a group of neatly organized brick buildings that almost could be confused for a small college campus. The horrors of the camp were all neatly hidden within the walls of the buildings that once served as a Polish Army camp. Auschwitz I was a terrible place of cruel medical experiments, torture, terrible deprivations, summary executions, staged hangings and, worst of all, a place to perfect the plans for the industrialized extermination of the European Jews.

In fact, just a little over 100,000 victims died at Auschwitz I. However, the last site a visitor sees is the first gas chamber and crematorium where Zyklon B was honed to its perfect dose of death and the staggering task of learning how to dispose of thousands of dead bodies in a proficient and orderly German manner.

Yes, there were rooms filled floor to ceiling with the shaved hair of victims that was sold to German clothing manufacturers. There were 80,000 pairs of shoes in one large room taken from the feet of victims. Countless eyeglasses, suitcases, combs, pipes and personal possessions taken from the dead and those soon die filled glass-lined rooms that revealed the true nature of Auschwitz.

I sat on the steps of one barracks and closed my eyes. I could hear the moans and the screams of the dying mingled in with the stench of urine, blood and defecation. Make no mistake, Auschwitz was a true place of horror. After a two-hour tour of Auschwitz I, we made the short two kilometer drive to Birkenau. Here your breath was taken away by the immensity of the complex. Once the process of industrialized extermination had been tried and perfected, it was expanded to an immense killing complex.

The best way I can describe the size of Auschwitz II (Birkenau) is to say that it is just about the area of the infield of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. As far as the eye can clearly see in any direction, there is a wall of concrete posts and barbed wire fences. Most of the wooden barracks erected by the Nazis were burned down by Soviet soldiers after the war looking for firewood. However the brick barracks remain, as do the neatly lined brick

foundations of the wooden barracks with brick chimneys that resemble monuments throughout the camp.

Here was the scene of the jammed railcars rolling into the center of the camp. Where men went in one direction, healthy single women went in another, and the old, infirm and children were sent directly to the gas chambers and crematoriums, 4,000 souls a day, whose only offense in life was to be a Jew, a Gypsy, a homosexual or some other person deemed unhuman by Nazi standards.

At Birkenau the full and complete scale of the Holocaust came rushing at us. I sat down on a small stone wall and took in the view and tried to see in my mind's eye the train with the cramped railcars, the wailing mothers, the crying children being ripped from their parents' arms and the cruel guards beating prisoners with truncheons and whips. One could almost smell the sickening odor coming from the chimneys of the killing factories, where hundreds of victims at a time would be ordered into a room where they thought they were to receive a shower,

only to receive a fatal suffocating dose of Zyklon B, their bodies then to have gold and silver teeth removed and then be shoved with a heavy metal ramrod on a cart into the fires of the crematorium.

From my seat in the middle of Birkenau, I counted three steeples of nearby churches. The people who attended the churches could not have escaped the sickening stench, the floating ashes and the countless train cars that passed through their town.

Auschwitz left me with far more questions than answers. Most of my questions started

with why or how. If we are not to learn the essential lessons of Auschwitz, we are most assuredly condemned to allowing the repetition of the crimes. As one female inmate from Auschwitz said, "If it could happen once, it could happen again."

The sad truth is that genocide, albeit on a smaller scale, has occurred since Auschwitz and it is occurring to this day. We sleep comfortably in our nice warm and safe beds and few worry about the thousands who die every day because of their ethnicity, religion, tribal affiliation or sexual orientation.

The signs at Auschwitz say "Never Again," but the mournful reality is that the deaths of innocents has never stopped. That is the lesson that we have yet to learn. ❖

Dunn is the former Howard County Republican chairman.



Talking to the other side

By LEE HAMILTON

BLOOMINGTON – Politics can be messy, but not because it's tainted or morally bankrupt. It's messy because it often reflects deep-seated disagreements that are hard to resolve, with merit on both sides.

I've had a number of conversations recently that convince me our country is divided into two political camps separated by a deep and uncomfortably wide gap. No, I'm not talking about liberals and conservatives, or pro- and anti-Trump voters. I'm talking about people who believe in politics and our political system, and people who don't.



I've found this latter view expressed most frequently among young people. In lecture halls and in informal conversations, I've spent some uncomfortable hours serving as a human pincushion for their pointed barbs about the system they've grown up in.

Many are uninterested in politics. They do not see politics as a worthy pursuit or even as an honorable vocation. They doubt our political institutions can be made to work, are suspicious of elected officials in general, and don't believe that our democratic institutions are capable either of solving the problems faced by the country or of helping them as individuals.

They find reason to be discouraged every time they tap into a political story. They're disheartened by political polarization, by the dominant and excessive role of money in the process, and by the seemingly impregnable influence of special interests on the course of policy. They struggle with their own problems, especially the debt they'll confront when they get out of school, and believe that they'll get no help from government.

Indeed, they're convinced that people in power place their own interests ahead of the country's, which is why so many of them express real contempt for politicians. They certainly don't see politics as an uplifting pursuit; I hear the word "messy" a lot, not as an objectively descriptive term, but as an expression of ethical disapproval.

They have a point. There are many reasons for disappointment in our groaning system, and the descriptions they give have much merit.

Yet I still consider politics a worthy profession. It can be pursued in a manner that deserves respect, even admiration. I've known a lot of good people in politics, men and women who are in it for all the right reasons, take pride in pursuing a political career, and embrace it as the best route available for solving our common problems.

In fact, I think people who reject the political system often underestimate its accomplishments. We are a strong, prosperous, and free nation because of — not in spite of — our system and the politicians who have come before us.

Politics is rarely a struggle between good and evil; it's how we Americans try to make the country work better. It's our opportunity to help our neighbors, to give us better schools and hospitals and highways, to make our communities safer and more orderly. It's a means of resolving our differences through dialogue and compromise, rather than through ideological battle or pitched warfare. If you pay attention, you'll see a lot of politicians who go about their business intelligently, quietly, and competently — and who get good things done.

So I find myself wondering how those of my persuasion might win these young people over. Discourse matters, obviously. Tolerance of others' views does, too. And I consider the 240 years of our history, despite all the obvious blemishes, to make a pretty good case for the political system's accomplishments.

Above all, though, we have to encourage young people's engagement with the problems we confront. If they want to improve things, they really have no alternative. Getting involved is the only way to see how tough these issues are and how much work goes into even incremental progress. We live in a complicated country and there are a lot of disappointments inherent in trying to make change. But it's the only way we've got.

Those of us who believe in the system must shoulder the burden of persuasion, and I'm worried about what happens if we don't meet it. If we lose the argument and the next generation turns away, we face dangers and risks — chaos, authoritarianism — that are far worse than what we face now. ❖

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar, IU School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice, IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

The Valpo tax

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – The Mike Pence tax and the Eric Holcomb tax are colliding on the streets of Valparaiso.

And the same is likely to happen in some other Northwest Indiana communities.

A year ago, then-Gov. Mike Pence approved a wheel tax package that promised state matching funds for local road repairs if towns and cities raised their share of the money. And, in Valparaiso, the local source of the money is a \$25-per-car wheel tax. The maximum the state will kick in is \$2.7 million annually.

That was then and this is now. Valparaiso Councilwoman Debra Porter, D-at large, has suggested that the city eliminate the tax, given what the Legislature approved this year. Initially, the Valparaiso council approved the wheel tax with the caveat that it would be eliminated if the county imposed its own wheel tax. Although the county did nothing, Porter said the state road funding plan approved this year has changed the situation.

Ironically, the new state plan was sponsored by Rep. Ed Soliday, a Valparaiso Republican. The new plan, which was approved by Gov. Eric Holcomb, imposes

a number of new taxes, including 10 cents on a gallon of gasoline and a \$15 wheel tax. Those new taxes are prompting Porter to look at eliminating the city's wheel tax. That has caused a bit of a firestorm in that Mayor Jon Costas, a Republican, is opposed to eliminating the city's wheel tax out of a fear there won't be enough money for local roads.

Matt Evans, the director of public works, said the city will have difficulty raising the needed match money if the wheel tax is eliminated. It also was suggested that using the local option income tax and other local sources of revenue would raise enough money to match the state grant.

Councilman Robert Cotton, D-2nd, proposed a compromise, saying the city should lower its wheel tax to \$10 so the combined city and state wheel tax would come to \$25. "The guy at the bottom is really getting smothered out of Valparaiso," Cotton said.

Costas, who is rarely immersed in controversy deferred to the council, but added that improved streets bring value to the city. The council said it will consider further action after receiving more input.

Other Northwest Indiana municipalities with the tax are Gary, Portage, Crown Point, Dyer, LaPorte, Munster and Merrillville. ❖

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.



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

Paul Waldman, Washington Post: From the Michael Flynn scandal to James Comey's firing, Vice President Pence has repeatedly had his official statements defending the Trump administration contradicted - sometimes by the president himself. Mike Pence would like you to know that Mike Pence is not involved in any of this. At least that appears to be the message coming from Pence's allies, and perhaps the vice president himself, as the Trump White House reels from a series of interlocking scandals that threaten all manner of political peril, even potentially an impeachment or resignation that could make Pence the president of the United States. All of a sudden we're seeing a wave of articles in which anonymous sources close to Pence tell reporters that he's completely out of the loop, to use the phrase that then-Vice President George H.W. Bush uttered so memorably when claiming his innocence in the Iran-Contra scandal. But can we believe it? And even if it's true, isn't that nearly as much of an indictment of Pence? ❖



Thomas Friedman, New York Times: In his dystopian Inaugural Address, President Trump painted a picture of America as a nation gripped by vast "carnage" — a landscape of "rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones" that cried out for a strongman to put "America first" and stop the world from stealing our jobs. It was a shocking speech in many ways and reportedly prompted former President George W. Bush to say to those around him on the dais, "That was some really weird [stuff]." It was weird, but was it all wrong? I just took a four-day car trip through the heart of that landscape — driving from Austin, Ind., down through Louisville, Ky., winding through Appalachia and ending up at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee to try to answer that question. Trump is half right in his diagnosis, but his prescription is 100 percent wrong. We do have an epidemic of failing communities. But we also have a bounty of thriving ones — not because of a strongman in Washington but because of strong leaders at the local level. Indeed, this notion that America is a nation divided between two coasts that are supposedly thriving, pluralizing and globalizing and a vast flyover interior, where jobs have disappeared, drug addiction is rife and everyone is hoping Trump can bring back the 1950s, is highly inaccurate. The big divide in America is not between the coasts and the interior. It's between strong communities and weak communities.

I started in one of the bottomless places: Austin, Ind., a tiny town of 4,000 off Interstate 65, which was described in a brilliant series in The Louisville Courier-Journal "as the epicenter of a medical disaster," where citizens of all ages are getting hooked on liquefied painkillers and shooting up with dirty needles. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed that Austin "contains the largest drug-fueled HIV outbreak to hit rural America in recent history." Its 5 percent infec-

tion rate "is comparable to some African nations." I chose to go there to meet the town's only doctor, Will Cooke, whose heroic work I learned of from the Courier-Journal series. The American Can plant next to Morgan Foods shut its doors in 1986 after more than 50 years in business. A local supermarket closed. Workers left along with the jobs and poverty crept up among those who stayed. Austin, Cooke explained to me, got caught in the vortex of declining blue-collar jobs, leading to a loss of dignity for breadwinners, depression and family breakdown, coinciding with doctors' and drug companies' pushing painkillers, and with too many people in the community failing to realize that to be in the middle class now required lifelong learning — not just to get a job but to hold one. "Thirty percent of students were not even graduating from high school," said Cooke. "Then you take high unemployment, generational poverty, homelessness, childhood abuse and neglect, and cloak that within a closed-off culture inherited from Appalachia, and you begin to have the ingredients that contributed to the HIV outbreak." Lately, though, Cooke told me, the town's prospects have started to improve, precisely because the community has come together, not to shoot up but to start up and learn up and give a hand up. "The local high school has introduced college-credit classes and trade programs so people are graduating with a head start," said Cooke. Faith-based and civic groups have mobilized, celebrating social and economic recovery, providing community dinners called "Food 4R Soul" and even installing community showers for people without running water. ❖

Matthew Tully, IndyStar: Vice President Pence used his Notre Dame commencement speech to deliver a condemnation of political correctness. He praised Notre Dame's "atmosphere of civility and open debate." He condemned the "suppression of free speech" that he and many others believe is too common on many college campuses. I agree that far too many people have become intolerant of views different than their own. I also think Pence should read his speech to everyone in the Trump administration. After all, President Trump and others in his administration have talked about taking steps that would harm the country's great tradition of a free press. And while Pence focused on efforts by the left to stifle speech, a good number of his fans on the right could benefit from a similar lecture about tolerating diverse opinions and speech. I am not ruling out the possibility that Pence at some point will be called upon to finish Trump's term. So it's worth shining a light on his time as governor. Good for the students who did that this weekend. Finally, while there are surely differing opinions about Pence's speech, his calm reaction to the protest was commendable. It would have been interesting, no doubt, to see how President Trump would have reacted if he had been the one on stage. We can only imagine the insulting words he would have later tweeted. ❖

Montana candidate assaults reporter

BOZEMAN, Mt. — Greg Gianforte, the GOP House candidate in Montana who was neck-and-neck with his Democratic opponent before Thursday's special election, was cited for misdemeanor assault after an incident with a newspaper reporter, just hours before polls open (Fox News). The Gallatin County Sheriff's Office said in a statement that there was probable cause to issue a citation, but the nature of the injuries "did not meet the statutory elements of a felony assault." The incident occurred Wednesday evening when a Fox News team was scheduled to interview Gianforte at his campaign headquarters. The team said Ben Jacobs, the reporter from The Guardian, pressed Gianforte about the newly released Congressional Budget Office report on the American Health Care Act. Gianforte told Jacobs to talk to his press officer. At some point, Gianforte grabbed Jacobs by the neck with both hands and slammed him into the ground, according to witnesses. The crew watched Gianforte punch the reporter. As Gianforte moved on top of Jacobs, he began yelling something to the effect of, "I'm sick and tired of this!" A statement from Gianforte's campaign said, "after asking Jacobs to lower the recorder, Jacobs declined. Greg then attempted to grab the phone that was pushed in his face. Jacobs grabbed Greg's wrist, and spun away from Greg, pushing them both to the ground. It's unfortunate that this aggressive behavior from a liberal journalist created this scene at our campaign volunteer BBQ."



Holcomb seeks Medicaid waiver

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric Holcomb is seeking permission from the federal government to require some Medicaid recipients to work or

do work-related activities (Groppe, IndyStar). Indiana's governor announced Wednesday he's amending the state's January application for its alternative Medicaid program to ask for that — and other changes — as the federal government decides whether to keep the Healthy Indiana Plan going past this year. Holcomb said his request is in response to encouragement from Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma — a former Indiana health care consultant who helped create HIP, Indiana's Medicaid program.

Bloomington sues Holcomb on budget

INDIANAPOLIS — The City of Bloomington filed a lawsuit Wednesday that claims legislation passed by the Indiana General Assembly prohibiting annexation activities until 2022 is unconstitutional (Indiana Daily Student). The lawsuit names Gov. Eric Holcomb as a defendant. Holcomb signed the legislation on April 27 after the General Assembly passed it April 22. The General Assembly added the legislation as a last minute provision to the state's budget bill. It terminates any annexations introduced after Dec. 31, 2016, and prohibits any new proposals until June 30, 2022. Bloomington is the only city verified to be affected by the provision, which is what prompted the lawsuit against the state. According to a press release from the City of Bloomington, the lawsuit targets Bloomington and only Bloomington. It cites Article IV, Section 23 of Indiana's Constitution, which states there can be no "special legislation" that singles out individual communities.

Councilman guilty of sign theft

NOBLESVILLE — Hamilton County Councilman Jeff Hern accepted

a plea agreement Wednesday at a Marion County court hearing on charges of taking a political rival's campaign signs before the 2016 primary. Hern admitted to criminal mischief and agreed to pay County Councilman Rick McKinney \$891 for the cost of the campaign signs. He also has to send McKinney a letter of apology.

Sessions failed to disclose Russ meet

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Jeff Sessions did not disclose meetings he had last year with Russian officials when he applied for his security clearance, the Justice Department told CNN Wednesday. Sessions, who met with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak at least two times last year, didn't note those interactions on the form, which requires him to list "any contact" he or his family had with a "foreign government" or its "representatives" over the past seven years, officials said.

Sanford calls Trump budget 'a lie'

INDIANAPOLIS - President Trump's 2018 spending plan landed in front of the House Budget Committee on Wednesday, where Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney heard plenty of criticism of the blueprint — mainly from Democrats, with one outspoken exception. Republican Mark Sanford used his five minutes of questioning at the hearing to sharply challenge the bedrock of the Trump budget: an economic growth assumption of 3 percent, one that is sharply more optimistic than those projected in recent Obama administration budgets and by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. The difference between the 1.9 percent growth contemplated by those sources and the 3 percent growth contemplated by Trump and Mulvaney generates enough new revenue to allow the new presidential budget to balance within 10 years. But Sanford called it "a lie."