

Week of Trump: Chaos, stunts, danger

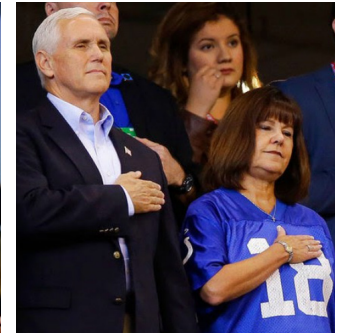
Cascading controversy becomes routine as Chairman Corker sets off World War III alarm

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – President Trump has been in office for a little more than nine months now. It's been fascinating, exhausting, depressing and exhilarating. The incidents and pronouncements cascade in the 24/7 news cycles, punctuated by bizarre tweets and weird optics. An outrage on Sunday is almost forgotten by Friday.

It comes as a Morning Consult Poll shows Trump's approve/disapprove in Indiana has declined from 55.3/33% in January to 49.8/44.9% in late September.

He has called the White House a "dump," castigated U.S. Sen. John McCain as he battles with brain cancer. The Trump/Pence political wing is planning a GOP "purge," while key Trump ally Steve Bannon has expanded his 2018 list of targeted Republican senators to include Wyoming



President Trump 'having fun' throwing paper towels to Puerto Ricans a week ago. Vice President Pence and Karen during the National Anthem at the Colts game, which he would leave early.

Sen. John Barrasso, Nebraska Sen. Deb Fischer and Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch, joining the "revolution" list that includes Arizona Sen. Jeff Flake, Mississippi Sen. Roger Wicker and Nevada Sen. Dean Heller.

On Sunday, The Trump drama reached a new threshold, both in Washington and Indianapolis. U.S. Sen. Bob Corker said the president's "reality show" is "on a path

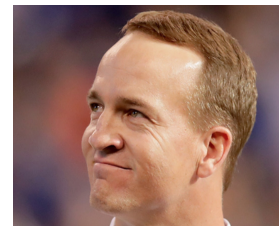
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WSJ Boilers up

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON – The Wall Street Journal recently ranked Purdue University as the fifth-best public school in the nation and the 43rd overall. That's heady recognition but not enough to attract much attention from Hoosier politicians. In the political world, there are plenty of volatile issues for members of Congress to navigate. They step gingerly into the fray, making sure to emphasize the message of the day that will be most helpful to them.

That's what makes something like Purdue's ranking an inviting respite. To use an analogy based on Indiana's favorite sport, it's a layup for a lawmaker who wants to promote good news



"I will always be a Colt."

- Former Indianapolis Colt QB Peyton Manning after his statue was unveiled Saturday at Lucas Oil Stadium. Manning will likely go into the NFL Hall of Fame as a Colt.



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about the state. Why not celebrate Purdue's once again placing highly in the Journal's ratings? But only one member of the Indiana congressional delegation said anything. Rep. Jim Banks, R-3rd CD, tweeted: "Not surprised that Purdue is thriving with @purduemitch at the helm."

Indeed, the WSJ's ranking is another example of how Purdue is advancing since Daniels took over as president nearly five years ago. One thing Daniels hasn't been able to change, however, is the fact that Purdue continues to be overshadowed by Indiana University when it comes to adoration from Indiana politerati, despite the fact that Daniels himself came to Purdue from the top of the Hoosier political mountain following his two terms as governor.

At this point, I have to make a full disclosure: I'm a Purdue partisan. I'm a proud alum and an annual donor. I have been a loyal Boilermaker fan since elementary school, when my sister was earning her pharmacy degree at Purdue. That means that I've now spent decades in the Purdue minority. We're outnumbered by the Indiana partisans – a combination of alums and other IU backers, many of whom joined the ranks when Bobby Knight worship was at its zenith.

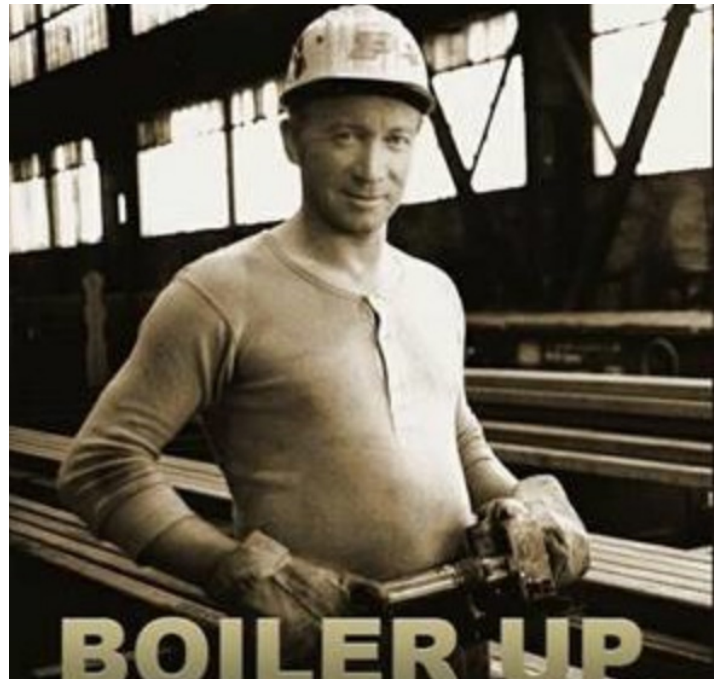
But the Knight situation is instructive. Yes, he won three national championships, but former Purdue Coach Gene Keady had a winning record against him and achieved great success without the controversy that Knight foisted on IU. That's kind of the way it goes with Purdue. The school consistently excels, but often does so under the radar, at least in Indiana.

Now that I've lived more of

my life outside of Indiana – 25 years in Washington, D.C., and almost one year, just after graduating from Purdue, in New York City – than in Indiana, I have a new perspective on the Purdue-IU rivalry. In the state, the Bloomington school dominates. But once you cross the border, Purdue becomes the better known of the two.

This essay is not meant as a criticism of IU. I wish IU well academically. I want IU professors to discover cures for diseases and win Nobel Prizes. I want IU grads to get great jobs and become leaders in their fields. Each of those IU victories is good for the state.

When it comes to sports, I follow the philosophy on the popular t-shirt: My two favorite teams are Purdue and whoever is playing IU. It's fun to mix it up with Hoosier fans



about what occurs on athletic courts and fields. In this arena, though, we again see a political tilt toward IU. For instance, when Purdue made it to the Sweet 16 last year, the achievement was mostly ignored by Hoosier pols. If – okay, when – IU basketball makes it back to that level, we won't hear the end of it from the state's politicians. There will probably be daily tweets during the NCAA tournament wishing IU good luck.

The Wall Street Journal ranking is a more serious matter deserving the attention of Hoosier politicians. It's true that rankings can be disputed, especially by schools at the bottom of the lists. The Journal survey is different from most. Its assessment is based on outcomes (graduates' salaries and debt loads), resources (the amount schools spend on "instruction and academic services"), engagement (students' interactions with faculty and other students) and environment (the diversity of the campus community).

Out of more than 1,000 universities in the survey, Purdue placed 43rd overall and fifth among state schools. It tied for the best student-faculty ratio (12:1) of any

public school in the Top 100. "These institutions proved they could offer a low-cost option, often to a more diverse student body, and provide comparable outcomes to the private schools that dominate the top of the charts," WSJ reporter Melissa Korn wrote in a story about the state schools in the rankings.

Next year, I hope IU can join Purdue near the top of the WSJ state-school list, perhaps Purdue at three and IU at five. Maybe then all Indiana politicians will take note. ❖

Schoeff is HPI's Washington correspondent.

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to World War III" after the two traded insults. It's "like he's doing 'The Apprentice' or something," Corker said. "He concerns me. He would have to concern anyone who cares about our nation."

Corker told the New York Times's Jonathan Martin: "Look, except for a few people, the vast majority of our caucus understands what we're dealing with here. If you write that, I'm sure there will be some that will come to you and say, 'No, no, no. I don't believe that.' But of course they understand the volatility that we're dealing with, and the tremendous amount of work that it takes by people around him to keep him in the middle of the road."

Asked about Corker's quotes, the office of U.S. Sen. Todd Young did not respond to HPI's request for comment. Most other GOP senators were also on mute.

Axios' Mike Allen reported today: "A Republican close to the White House told me: 'These comments now shape the criticism of the President going forward. Corker's comments will be the catalyst for all the doubts about Trump's fitness ... [H]e has sown the strands of doubt about Trump into a vivid tapestry.'"

Allen also wrote this about Chief of Staff John Kelly: "You cringe and sometime rage when you see the nasty tweets, the childish taunts, the wild improvisation. You start watching Fox just to see what he sees, and read Breitbart for a glimpse of the world through the president's eyes. You plot with Tillerson and SecDef Mattis and National Security Adviser McMaster, and find comfort and camaraderie in your pact to save the world from an impulsive president. It's a worthy war – but often one you fear you are losing. No wonder you've been caught on camera with an exasperated face pressed firmly against your hand."

And in Indianapolis, Trump ordered Vice President Pence to leave

the Colts game where Peyton Manning was honored after a number of San Francisco 49ers took a knee during the National Anthem, which was completely predictable. It cost taxpayers about \$250,000.

We entered this particular week after the resignation of Health and Human Services Sec. Tom Price, who sparked Trump's ire on two fronts, his use of military jets and his failure to get the Obamacare repeal/replace passed in the Senate. But that Friday story faded by Sunday with President Trump's tweets about NFL players kneeling during the National Anthem. It is a Trump tactic: When the news gets bad, create a controversy elsewhere.

Here is a glimpse of the Trump phenomena in the past week.

Oct. 2: The 'crazy guy' and a coupla Koreas

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the U.S. is having "direct contact" with North Korea amid the heightening tensions between the two nuclear powers. "We are probing, so stay tuned," he said. "We ask, 'Would you like to talk?' We have lines of communications to Pyongyang. We're not in a dark situation, a blackout." But then President Trump tweeted, "I told Rex Tillerson, our wonderful Secretary of State, that he is wasting his time trying to negotiate with Little Rocket Man. Save your energy Rex, we'll do what has to be done!"

Axios reported on a conversation that included trade negotiator Todd Lighthizer, Mattis, Agriculture Secretary Perdue, and Tillerson. At issue was whether the U.S. would withdraw from the South Korean trade deal. "You've got 30 days, and if you don't get concessions then I'm pulling out," Trump told Lighthizer. "Ok, well, I'll tell the Koreans they've got 30



Secretary of State Rex Tillerson with Vice President Mike Pence. There is friction between the Tillerson and Pence staffs.

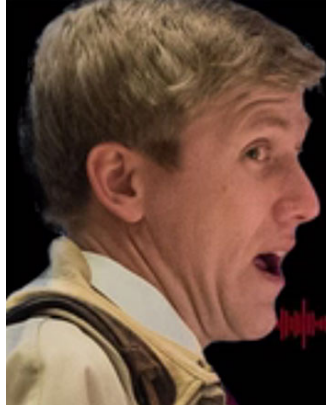
days," Lighthizer replied. "No, no, no," Trump interjected. "That's not how you negotiate. You don't tell them they've got 30 days. You tell them, 'This guy's so crazy he could pull out any minute.' That's what you tell them: Any minute," Trump continued. "And by the way, I might. You guys all need to know I might. You don't tell them 30 days. If they take 30 days they'll stretch this out. You tell them if they don't give the concessions now, this crazy guy will pull out of the deal."

Finally, there was Trump's tweet on the Puerto Rican hurricane disaster and the NFL protests. "Such poor leadership ability by the mayor of San Juan, and others in Puerto Rico, who are not able to get their workers to help," Trump tweeted. "They want everything to be done for them when it should be a community effort." And the NFL National Anthem protests, which brought this tweet: "Very important that NFL players STAND tomorrow, and always, for the playing of our National Anthem. Respect our Flag and our Country!"

Oct. 3: Las Vegas atrocity

President Trump reacted to the Las Vegas atrocity that killed 59 people and wounded more than 500, saying in a somber appearance, "Our unity cannot be shattered by evil, our bonds cannot be broken by violence. We pray for the day when evil is banished, and the innocent are safe from hatred and from fear." He condemned the shooting as an "act of pure evil."

The White House said it was "not the time" to debate gun violence reforms. The following day Trump hinted that he might entertain some gun reforms.



Nick Ayres, Vice President Pence's chief of staff, is urging a "purge" of Republican sena-

Oct. 4: Comfort and purge

President Trump traveled to Puerto Rico in a visit Politico noted that had a "jarring tone." Trump said at one point, "I hate to tell you, Puerto Rico, but you've thrown our budget a little out of whack because we've spent a lot of money on Puerto Rico." Trump ignored the mayor of San Juan who had criticized him and the FEMA response, and praised Gov. Ricard Rosselló, who Trump said had not criticized him. At a press event, he told one storm victim to "have a nice time," and was seen tossing rolls of paper towels in the crowd as if he was shooting basketballs.

Trump, speaking to the Trinity Broadcasting Network's Mike Huckabee, explained, "I mean, one example, they had these beautiful soft towels, very good towels, and I came in and there was a crowd of a lot of people and they were screaming and they were loving everything. I was having fun, they were having fun, they said 'throw them to me, throw them to me, Mr. President,' and so I'm doing some of them, so the next day they said, 'Oh it was so disrespectful to the people.' It was just a made-up thing and also when they had, when I walked in the cheering was incredible." Trump said the cheering from the crowd was "deafening" but called negative reports of his trip "horrible unfair publicity."

Nick Ayres, Vice President Pence's chief of staff, threatened Republicans with a purge, telling a Republican National Committee donor session, "Just imagine the possibilities of what can happen if our entire party unifies behind him? If – and this sounds crass – we can purge the handful of people who continue to work to defeat him. I'm not speaking on behalf of the president or vice president when I say this, but if I were you, I would not only stop donating, I would form a coalition of all the other major donors, and just say two things: We're definitely not giv-

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ing to you, No. 1. And No. 2, if you don't have this done by Dec. 31, we're going out, we're recruiting opponents, we're maxing out to their campaigns, and we're funding super PACs to defeat all of you."

Oct. 5: Vegas comfort, NBC and Tillerson

This day began with an NBC News report that Vice President Pence had to talk Tillerson out of resigning last summer. Tillerson was also quoted as calling Trump a "f---ing moron" during a meeting with national security personnel last weekend. Tillerson called a hasty presser, said, "I have never considered leaving this post." But he would not disclaim the "moron" quote, calling it "petty nonsense." Trump was reportedly incensed that Tillerson did not deny the moron quote.

Trump met with first responders and Las Vegas shooting victims, saying, "We're going to pay our respects and to see the police who have done really a fantastic job in a very short time. And yeah they're learning a lot more. And that'll be announced at the appropriate time. It's a very, very sad day for me, personally."

Sen. Corker, an early Senate backer of Trump's presidential campaign, suggested that Gens. John Kelly and James Mattis, as well as Tillerson, are the "people that help separate our country from chaos." "(Mattis, Kelly and Tillerson) work very well together to make sure the policies we put forth around the world are sound and coherent. There are other people within the administration that don't. I hope they stay because they're valuable to the national security of our nation."

Oct. 6: White House fuming

President Trump appeared at a photo op with military leaders and said, "You guys know what this represents? Maybe it's the calm before the storm. Could be the calm, the calm before the storm." A reporter asked, "What storm, Mr. President?" ISIS? North Korea? Iran? "You'll find out," the president said.

Trump announced he would decertify the Iran deal, reportedly against the wishes of his national security team.

Reports came to light of Trump and Pence "fuming" over the Tillerson/moron story. Chief of Staff Kelly scrapped plans to travel to Vegas with Trump. And Pence was "incensed" upon learning from the NBC report that Tillerson's top spokesman had said he once privately questioned the value of Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Officials said the spokesman, R.C. Hammond, fabricated an anecdote that Pence had asked



Candidate Trump with U.S. Sen. Bob Corker during the 2016 campaign. Corker was an early Senate supporter of Trump and was considered

Tillerson in a meeting whether Haley, who is seen as a possible successor to Tillerson, is helpful or harmful to the administration.

Trump ordered CMS Director Seema Verma to reject Iowa's Obamacare waiver request. The Washington Post reported Iowa's insurance commissioner warned that, without the waiver, premiums could rise as much as 57% and many people might not have insurance plans to choose from. And we learned that Kelly's smartphone was hacked.

Oct. 7: Trump tweets Korea

President Trump was back on Twitter Saturday morning, saying that North Korea only makes "fools" of U.S. negotiators, and "only one thing will work," fueling speculation as to whether the president means military action.

Oct. 8: Corker insults, Pence and NFL

Sunday began with President Trump trading insults with Trump tweeting, "Senator Bob Corker 'begged' me to endorse him for reelection in Tennessee. I said 'NO' and he dropped out (said he could not win without ... my endorsement). He also wanted to be secretary of state, I said 'NO THANKS.' He is also largely responsible for the horrendous Iran Deal!" Corker responded, "It's a shame the White House has become an adult day care center. Someone obviously missed their shift this morning."

This tweet was filled with lies. Corker told MSNBC's Morning Joe he turned down the secretary of state job fearing he wouldn't jell with the non-conforming Trump. And there were reports that Trump asked Corker to seek reelection.

Corker then responded with his "World War III" quotes.

Former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon said Monday that Corker should "resign immediately" if the Tennessee Republican has "any honor or decency." "Corker, McConnell and the entire establishment, globalist clique have to go," Bannon told Sean Hannity on Fox News Monday night.

The Wall Street Journal editorialized today: "Mr. Corker was expressing views that are widely held on Capitol Hill and even within the Trump Administration. These men and women support the President's policies, or at least most of them, and they remain in their jobs for the good of the cause and country. What they fear, and want to contain, are the President's lack of discipline, short fuse, narcissism and habit of treating even foreign heads of state as if they are Rosie O'Donnell. In other words, Mr. Corker was trying to be helpful by telling the truth."

And the Washington Post reported today: "After a caustic volley of Twitter insults

between Trump and Corker ... few GOP leaders came to the president's defense Monday — though few sided openly with Corker, either. The most vocal Trump defender was the one under the president's employ, Vice President Pence. Trump in recent days has shown flashes of fury and left his aides, including White House chief of staff John F. Kelly, scrambling to manage his outbursts."

Pence's office blasted out a blanket response under the vice president's name addressing "criticisms of the president," saying, "That's what American leadership on the world stage looks like and no amount of criticism at home can diminish those results."

Pence returned to Indianapolis to watch the Colts retire Peyton Manning's number, then abruptly left when some of the San Francisco 49ers (but no Colts) kneeled during the National Anthem. "I left today's Colts game because President Trump and I will not dignify any event that disrespects our soldiers, our Flag, or our National Anthem. At any time when so many Americans are inspiring our nation with their courage, resolve, and resilience, now, more than ever, we should rally around our Flag and everything that unites us," Pence said. "While everyone is entitled to their own opinions, I don't think it's too much to ask NFL players to respect the Flag and our National Anthem. I stand with President Trump, I stand with our soldiers, and I will always stand for our Flag and our National Anthem."



Trump later tweeted, "I asked @VP Pence to leave stadium if any players kneeled," Trump posted on Twitter. "I am proud of him and @SecondLady Karen." NBC's Vaughn Hilliard reported from Indianapolis that the media pool was kept in vans ahead of the game instead of being led inside with Pence. A staffer told the pool there was a chance Pence might depart early, but did not mention how early.

The move was criticized with the IndyStar's Tim Swarens calling it a "premeditated political stunt" and "conduct unbecoming a true leader." WTHR-TV's Bob Kravitz added, "This was a cynical and appalling exercise in political theater, and re-ignited the Trump Administration's war against free speech and political dissent. The fact that he chose this weekend, a weekend when the Colts were unveiling Manning's statue, retiring his jersey number and adding him to the Ring of Honor, makes it all the more tone deaf and inappropriate." Sports Illustrated's Peter King said the move cast a "gigantic shadow" over the Manning events.

This was one week in the Trump presidency. There is nothing normal about any aspect of what we're watching. And the stakes are high. Trump and North Korea's Kim Jong Un are trading insults as they sit on nuclear weapon stockpiles. ❖

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Team Pence brews a GOP civil war

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

ANN ARBOR, Mich. – Take President Reagan’s “11th Commandment” (Thou shalt not criticize another Republican) and shove it. The Big Tent GOP is following Ringling Brothers into oblivion. There is a civil war brewing in the Republican Party and the revolt is fomenting ... in the warrens of Vice President Mike Pence.



Ever since that early summer day in 2015 when Donald Trump descended on an escalator to declare his bid for the presidency, the Republican Party has been torn. Trump won a hostile takeover nomination in the Indiana presidential primary in May 2016, with only Rex Early and Sullivan County Chairman Bill Springer as his conspicuous Hoosier advocates. When Pence joined the ticket, Hoosiers came around.

What we’ve witnessed since has been an unprecedented Kabuki theater with the GOP presidential nominee bragging about the size of various body parts, the ability of the famous to grope female anatomy, and even a hint of martial law when Trump accepted the GOP nomination in Cleveland by saying, “The crime and violence that today afflicts our nation will soon come to an end. Beginning on January 20, 2017, safety will be restored. I alone can fix it.” While that message rings hollow on the Las Vegas strip this week, the Trump/Pence brain trust has more important tasks at hand, which is to isolate and punish Republicans who don’t get with the program.

When Pence was governor, he got to know Nick Ayres, a 24-year-old wunderkind who became executive director of the Republican Governors’ Association. Along with Marty Obst, a former driver when Jim Kittle was Indiana GOP chairman who then headed up the Pence era foodchain, the two accompanied the veep to Washington.

Ayres and Obst formed the American First Policies PAC which has become the enforcer of Trumpian policy, no matter how misguided it is. Trump’s tax reform plan adds \$10 trillion to the budget deficits in the coming decade? Deficits schmeficits!

Last summer, when vulnerable Nevada Sen. Dean Heller wavered on a deeply flawed Senate health repeal/replace, American First aimed \$1 million of TV ads against the Republican with all the subtlety of Tony Soprano. Allies of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell termed the move “beyond stupid,” the ads were pulled, and that health bill went down in flames. Ditto for Graham/Cassidy. Trump/Pence world seethed in indignation. The fact that

Graham/Cassidy had a 20% approval in a Fox News Poll was beside the point. The manta in the White House starts with the phrase, “How dare they?”

And now the knives are out for Republicans Heller, Arizona’s Jeff Flake, Mississippi’s Roger Wicker, and Tennessee’s Bob Corker, until he decided not to seek reelection. McConnell and Speaker Paul Ryan have become the GOP version of Nancy Pelosi.

A couple of weeks after former Trump senior adviser Steve Bannon headed back to Breitbart and launched a “revolution” aimed at Ryan and McConnell, Ayres ended up addressing a Republican National Committee and queued up a corresponding insurrection. In an audio tape obtained by Politico, the Pence chief of staff said, “Just imagine the possibilities of what can happen if our entire party unifies behind him?” The “him” is, of course, President Trump. “If – and this sounds crass – we can purge the handful of people who continue to work to defeat him.”

An attendee asked how pressure could be applied on Ryan and McConnell. “I’m not speaking on behalf of the president or vice president when I say this,” Ayres responded, “but if I were you, I would not only stop donating, I would form a coalition of all the other major donors, and just say two things: ‘We’re definitely not giving to you, No. 1. And No. 2, if you don’t have this done by Dec. 31, we’re going out, we’re recruiting opponents, we’re maxing out to their campaigns, and we’re funding super PACs to defeat all of you.’”

Then Ayres said this: “Because, look, if we’re going to be in the minority again, we might as well have a minority who are with us as opposed to the minority who helped us become a minority.”

So team Pence is manning the circular firing squad. Kevin D. Williamson, writing in the conservative *National Review*, observes: “Republicans have not rallied behind the Trump agenda because there isn’t anything to rally behind. The Trump movement is a one part personality cult and one part group-therapy session. It isn’t politics – it’s a nervous breakdown inside the Republican party.”

It comes as data brews of a Grand Old Debacle next year. A Quinnipiac Poll puts congressional approval at 15%, with some 61% of Republicans disapproving. Quinnipiac found that 56% of Americans don’t believe Trump is “fit to serve as president.” A CNN poll puts approval of the Republican Party at 29%, down 13 points from March.

This is all reflected in the emerging Indiana Republican U.S. Senate race where Rep. Todd Rokita has targeted Republican “elites” and Rep. Luke Messer’s campaign manager Chasen Bullock acknowledges, “We’re running against the Senate.”

Somewhere amongst the gathering flotsam and jetsam is a smiling Sen. Joe Donnelly, who won that office during the last circular firing that deposed Sen. Richard Lugar.

The Republican Party is a house divided, and you know what ol’ Honest Abe said about that. ❖

Morales posts \$207K in 4th CD GOP race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Diego Morales prefers to do things the “right way.” He’s been criss-crossing the 4th CD over the past several months, positioning himself to win an open seat Republican nomination.



He immigrated to the U.S. from Guatemala when he was a senior in high school, speaking no English. “I believe in the rule of law,” Morales explained. “I want to be very compassionate, which is why I am sharing my own

story. I came to American the right way, the legal way. I am truly living the American dream.”

He was graduated from Silver Creek HS, attained his undergraduate degree from Indiana University, got an MBA at Purdue, campaigned and joined the staff of U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel, served in the U.S. Army, and ended up on the staffs of Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman and Gov. Mike Pence. He worked on international issues with Pence, telling HPI he reported directly to the governor and Chief of Staff Jim Atterholt. “I worked with counsel generals, ambassadors and ministers to show them Hoosier hospitality,” he said, noting that the jobless rate under Pence declined from 8.4% to 4% when he left office in January. “It was my job to put Indiana on the map.”

When U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita opted for the U.S. Senate race, Morales was the first to enter and will face former Workforce Development Director Steve Braun in the Republican primary. If there’s a surprise in Indiana politics this year, it’s that there are only two Republicans in the race, though Morales expects one or two others to enter. It is a credible candidacy, with Morales posting \$207,000 on his third quarter FEC report.

“I have raised money with Hoosiers, from Hoosiers,” he said. “Most of my support comes from Indiana. He says he developed a statewide network with Sodrel, Skillman and Pence. He’s augmented it with “hard work,” saying that he visited all 16 county fairs in the 4th CD, along with dozens of parades, festivals and barbecues. “If you looked at this race this summer, you saw only one candidate. I am the only candidate who did 16 county fairs. We will shock some people with our third quarter report. It will exceed expectations.

He is basing his candidacy on three basic issues: National security, the economy and veterans’ affairs.

On the first, he said, “We have to protect our country and every single American. We need to protect

the border from terrorists and the cartels.” Thus, Morales supports President Trump’s southern border wall. On the economy, he will focus on his Pence era job creation. “I speak six languages and I’ve been to 100 countries,” Morales said. “I understand business.” He points to his own business of leasing school buses to school corporations.

He is supportive of President Trump’s tax reform plan, adding, “We must lower our taxes and get the government out of the way of small businesses. I want less government.”

On DACA, Morales explained, “I want to be very compassionate, but I will always believe in the rule of law. I want to begin a dialogue. I will work to fix a broken system.

As for veterans, he wants to broaden health care access beyond the Veterans Administration, giving them a card to gain care across the health system. “We need to be more efficient,” he said. And on the related opioid crisis, Morales emphasized “education” and role models. “I want to join the debate. I will listen to my constituents,” he said.

Morales also emphasized that as a resident of Plainfield, he is the only declared candidate who lives in the 4th CD. Braun lives just outside the district in Zionsville. Fourth CD Republican Chairman Mike O’Brien told WIBC State Rep. Jim Baird is considering the race, but says for a lot of state legislators, normally a prime candidate pool for congressional seats, the timing is wrong.

Sources tell HPI that Braun’s early strategy is to get as many legislators in the district to endorse him.

U.S. Senate

Braun reports \$1 million on first FEC report

State Rep. Mike Braun reported \$1 million on the third quarter FEC report, including \$800,000 he loaned to the campaign. “That was done in a month and a half,” said Braun. “It exceeded my expectations.” U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita reported \$2 million at the second quarter and have yet to release their totals. “One reason people are listening to me is the tone of the race, as exhibited by the two of them – and I think especially Todd Rokita, who I think has been throwing most of the punches,” Braun told the Associated Press. “I think that general disappointment with the way discourse unfurls is out there.”

Messer backs Pence on anthem

Messer released a fundraising appeal on Monday,



saying he backs Vice President Pence's decision to leave the Colts/49ers game early. "The media keeps saying that football players are right to kneel for our National Anthem," he said. "But the media forgets that the American people are right to be outraged by this blatant disrespect for the greatest and freest country in history. The vice president puts it best: "While everyone is entitled to their own opinions, I don't think it's too much to ask NFL players to respect the flag and our National Anthem. I stand with President Trump, I stand with our soldiers, and I will always stand for our Flag and our National Anthem."

Complaint filed against Messer

A campaign contribution to Rep. Messer is the focus of a federal ethics complaint filed this week on Capitol Hill, according to WTHR-TV investigative reporter Bob Segall. The allegation against Messer dates to March, when the chief financial officer of Mutual Bank visited the congressman's Capitol Hill office to seek assistance. Mutual Bank CFO Chris Cook was frustrated with federal regulators. For years, he had worked with the Federal Reserve Bank in an effort to establish a cyber security subsidiary within his bank. Federal Reserve officials in Chicago had originally suggested they approved of the Muncie-based Mutual First Financial unit offering those services to its customers, then the regulators suddenly changed their minds.

"We reviewed the regulations and believed we should be able to do this, and when they said we could, we started down that road," Cook told WTHR. "Later they told us they weren't sure we should be doing this, so we asked what we could do next, and they basically said there's nothing you can do. I didn't take that for an answer, so that's the time I gathered my documentation and I met with [elected officials] to present the facts to see if, on our behalf, they'd talk to someone at the Federal Reserve. That seemed like our only outlet at that point."



Cook said he found a receptive audience in Messer's Washington office on March 8 as he described the hurdles he faced with federal banking regulators. He followed up a few days later with a letter outlining his experience with the Federal Reserve. Then on March 17, Messer took action. He faxed a letter to Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen to advocate for his constituent. It's exactly what Cook had hoped for. "I didn't have a contact at the Federal Reserve in Washington, so I wanted them to forward the information I had by whatever means they determined most effective," said Cook. "I wanted them to get the bank in front of the Federal Reserve to find if we could move forward."

The strategy seemed to work. In June, just a few months after receiving help from Messer, Mutual First received permission from the Federal Reserve to offer security control audit services.

Soon thereafter, a D.C.-based watchdog group flagged Messer's intervention as suspicious. The organization says that right after Messer wrote a letter on behalf of Cook and his bank, the congressman accepted a campaign contribution from the same man who sought his help. "This contribution is very suspicious and merits further inquiry," said American Oversight senior advisor Melanie Sloan, who wrote the complaint.

Koch Bros attack Donnelly

Americans for Prosperity, part of the Koch Brothers conservative political network, is announcing a \$4.5 million ad buy today to pressure three Democratic senators to support the GOP tax cuts plan (Lawler, Axios). The senators: McCaskill (MO), Baldwin (WI) and Donnelly (IN). The tax push won't lack for funding; AFP says this is just the first wave of ads. And with Republicans like Bob Corker and Rand Paul sending warning signs about their positions on the plan, conservatives are hoping to get a couple of Democrats on board. Maureen Groppe of the IndyStar reported this morning that AFP is spending \$1.9 million to convince Donnelly to support an overhaul of the federal tax code.

Messer, Rokita vote similar on abortion

Abortion rights opponents might have to consider other issues when assessing two prominent candidates for the Republican nomination for a U.S. Senate seat from Indiana (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita have identical voting records on federal legislation scored by the National Right to Life Committee, which seeks to have abortions outlawed. Messer, R-6th, and Rokita, R-4th, have sided with the committee's position on all 25 scored votes they have cast since 2013, when Messer took office. Rokita aligned with the committee's position on all 10 scored votes he cast during his first term, in 2011-12.

Congress

6th CD: LaMar drops out, citing Pence

Greg Pence has put off his 6th CD candidacy until U.S. Rep. Luke Messer's third quarter FEC report is finalized this week. But Henry County Council President Nate LaMar isn't waiting, shifting a potential candidacy to the open Indiana State Senate seat of Doug Eckerty. "With the impending entry of Greg Pence into the 6th Congressional District Republican primary, it is prudent that I stand down from my exploratory campaign," LaMar said. "Thankfully, this almost coincides with the very recent retirement announcement of my state senator, Doug Eckerty. Therefore, as encouraged by several of you, I am now seriously

considering the 26th State Senate district, for which I received employer permission yesterday. In addition, my wife, Kris, thinks this could be more in God's timing."

General Assembly

HD4: AFP targets Soliday over HEA1002

A conservative, anti-tax interest group is targeting state Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, for leading the legislative effort to ensure Indiana has sufficient resources to meet its infrastructure needs for years to come (Carden, NWI Times). Americans for Prosperity-Indiana is sending mailers to some Valparaiso-area homes and deploying targeted online advertisements to call attention to Soliday's sponsorship of House Enrolled Act 1002, which raised the state's gasoline tax by 10 cents per gallon and increased vehicle registration fees by \$15 per year. "We are disappointed that after years of fiscally-responsible, low-tax policies that grew our economy, certain lawmakers decided to reverse course by advocating for the gas tax," said AFP Indiana Director Justin Stevens. "If lawmakers vote to make life more expensive for Hoosiers and erode the economic benefits we've reaped through years of tax cuts, our activists will hold them accountable."

HD64: Ungethiem enters race

Bruce Ungethiem – leader of the successful 2012 campaign to defeat Evansville-Vanderburgh consolidation and a county commissioner for the past three years – wants to go to Indianapolis (Langhorne, Evansville Courier & Press). Ungethiem said Thursday night he will forgo reelection to county government's three-member executive governing body next year and will try instead to succeed retiring Rep. Tom Washburne in the Indiana Legislature.

HD18: Wolkins to seek reelection

His constituents and their views on some issues have changed over the years, but Indiana District 18 State Rep. Dave Wolkins feels he still has the pulse of the communities he serves (Slone, Warsaw Times-Union). After being diagnosed with adenoid cystic carcinoma – an uncommon cancer, which was found in one of his ears – in late 2015, Wolkins had decided that his reelection in 2016 would be his last. But circumstances changed, and in September he announced he would run again in 2018. "I was worried about my health situation. I don't want to be carried out of that place, and this year I've had very good MRIs. I had one a month ago and everything, I'm still cancer free." Wolkins said.

HD75: Bacon announces reelection

State Rep. Ron Bacon (R-Chandler) will seek a fifth term. "I am taking what I have learned working as a

health professional for the past 50 years here in Southwest Indiana, and putting it to use to help vet legislation that positively impacts all Hoosiers," Bacon said. "Providing health care while maintaining our state's fiscal integrity are among my top priorities while serving the people of House District 75."

President

Trump popularity erodes in rural America

President Trump's popularity is slipping in rural America. Trump, who inspired millions of supporters last year in places like Morgan County, has been losing his grip on rural America. According to the Reuters/Ipsos daily tracking poll, the Republican president's popularity is eroding in small towns and rural communities where 15% of the country's population lives. The poll of more than 15,000 adults in 'non-metro' areas shows that they are now as likely to disapprove of Trump as they are to approve of him.

In September, 47% of people in non-metro areas approved of Trump while 47% disapproved. That is down from Trump's first four weeks in office, when 55% said they approved of the president while 39% disapproved. The poll found that Trump has lost support in rural areas among men, whites and people who never went to college. He lost support with rural Republicans and rural voters who supported him on Election Day

State	Jan. Approval	Jan. Disapproval	Sept. Approval	Sept. Dissapproval	MOE
IN	55.30%	33.10%	49.80%	44.90%	3%

Trump popularity sags in Indiana

Fewer than nine months into President Donald Trump's White House tenure, a Morning Consult survey in all 50 states indicates that voters have grown bearish on his performance in office. Trump has failed to improve his standing among the public anywhere — including the states he won handily as the Republican nominee during the 2016 presidential election, according to the survey, which was based on interviews of 472,032 registered voters across each state and Washington, D.C., from Trump's Jan. 20 inauguration to Sept. 26. The negative swings in net approval ranged from as high as 30 percentage points in solidly blue Illinois and New York to as low as 11 points in red Louisiana. But in many of the states Trump easily carried last year — such as Tennessee (-23 points), Mississippi (-21 percentage points), Kentucky (-20 points), Kansas (-19 points) and Indiana (-17 points) — voters have soured on the president in 2017.❖

Why GOP should oppose a redistricting commission

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – Beware, Indiana legislators!

There's a wolf in sheep's clothing lurking around, looking for the opportunity to circumvent Republican electoral success. The sheep's clothing in this case is the benign sounding Special Interim Study Committee on Redistricting. The wolf or wolves here in Indiana are



the Democrat Party, Common Cause, League of Women Voters, Hoosier Environmental Council, Citizens Action Coalition, ACLU, NAACP, Indiana Farmers Union, Jobs for Justice and Moral Mondays.

Back in the old days, when Democrats held the governor's office and the Indiana House, there was no incessant drumbeat for redistricting reform coming from the

media, the League of Women Voters and Common Cause. The only reason that redistricting reform has become the current cause du jour is that since 2010 Republicans have been giving Democrats a serious thumping all over the country.

Republicans now virtually control 30 state legislatures and the apportionment process in those states. As every good Democrat knows, there is more than one way to skin a cat. If you can't win control of the redistricting process by winning elections, you can always try and circumvent the process by calling for non-partisan redistricting commissions. That's why you see an alphabet soup of liberal groups pushing for redistricting reform.

Republicans and the public in general would be wise to not take the easy bait and allow the removal of the process for establishing legislative districts from the Indiana Legislature and pass the responsibility on to a so called "non-partisan" commission. I'm not sure the good Lord has ever created a "non-partisan" commission.

Wait, Craig, isn't the League of Women Voters a non-partisan organization? Well, let's see. How about I just list their positions on many issues and let you judge their non-partisanship. From their website, these are some of their positions on key issues:

- Promotes legislation to deal with climate change;
- Promotes tougher gun control laws;
- Opposes Citizens United ruling;
- Promotes Obamacare;

- Promotes tougher environmental laws;
- Is against photo IDs for voters;
- Is against proof of citizenship for voters;
- Staunch supporters of abortion rights;
- Against education vouchers and school choice.

Now call me a supreme skeptic but these issues sound more like the Democratic Party platform than they do a non-partisan organization that is supposed to be focused on getting people to vote.

There is plenty of evidence that the Democratic strategy of shifting from legislatively drawn electoral boundaries to commission-drawn boundaries is working. No better example of Democratic perfidy exists than in California. Prior to "non-partisan" commission-drawn election boundaries, Republicans in California held 18 of 54 Congressional seats. Based on Republican voter totals, if seats were allocated on vote percentages, Republicans should have held 20 seats. Then along came the "non-partisan" redistricting commission and the results changed. Instead of holding 20 Congressional seats, the non-partisan boundaries reduced the Republicans to only 14 seats.

This was accomplished by Democratic operatives forming sham organizations that purported themselves to be citizen-based and non-partisan and using the organizations to lobby the non-partisan commission drawing the boundaries.

In Indiana, if Brian Bosma, Brandt Hershman and Mike Karickhoff formed an organization called Citizens for Fair Election Districts and then lobbied for certain district boundaries, I think the media and the public would scream bloody murder. And yet, our good friends in California let their "non-partisan" districting sham proceed and the GOP took another California beating.

Let's face it, there is absolutely no way to make a redistricting process apolitical or non-partisan. It can't be done. You could draw names out of a hat for all positions on a commission, but the members still have prejudices. You might make the process look fairer, but make no mistake about it, if humans are involved, their prejudices will make it into the process. How about letting computers do it? Computers must be programmed by humans. Garbage in gets you garbage out. Who are we going to allow to control the data? Equifax?

Elections have consequences. The party controlling the state legislature has control over the redistricting process. It is as simple as that. If you don't like who is drawing legislative boundaries then vote them out of office and let your guys draw the new maps. Non-partisan redistricting commissions are the political equivalent of a participation trophy; "You got your butt pounded at the polls? I'm sorry. Let's make you feel better by letting your friends draw new boundaries."

I feel confident that after the Special Interim Study Committee on Redistricting has met, gathered critical information and testimony, the members will give thoughtful consideration to all viewpoints and then keep on doing everything the same way. Why would Republi-

cans risk their sizable majorities in both Indiana legislative bodies for the sake of pleasing a litany of liberal leaning organizations, the Democratic Party and a left-of-center media? I don't see any serious Republican willing to be that foolish.

When Republicans carried 54% of the votes in Indiana House elections and still saw a Democrat Pat Bauer presiding as speaker of the House, they didn't complain. No one would have listened. Gov. Mitch Daniels raised the

money and put together the resources and platform to win control of the Indiana Legislature and in 2010, Republicans drew the boundaries. That is the way it has always been done and it is the way it always should be done. Once again, repeat after me, elections have consequences. ❖

Dunn is a former Howard County Republican chairman.

Limited county economic success

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Last week in this space we reported on the poor performance of Indiana in terms of adding jobs (47th in the nation) and advancing incomes (48th). This week we'll go down to the county level and see where there are bright spots and where conditions are dismal.



The rate of change in the number of jobs is a measure of economic success the press and politicians have identified as important. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports, from 2005 to 2015, jobs in the nation grew, by 5.9%. Through that recession and recovery, Indiana jobs increased by just 2.3%. Yet 16 Indiana counties surpassed that national rate.

Of those 16 counties, four (Bartholomew, Decatur, Sullivan and White) stand out because they also saw average compensation for jobs grow faster than the nation's 9%. These four are the super stars of a difficult decade. (When we talk about jobs and wages in a county, we mean jobs located there, not necessarily the jobs and wages of people residing in that county.)

More puzzling are the seven counties (including Jackson and Newton) where compensation per job increased faster than the nation, but the number of jobs declined. In contrast, a different set of 16 counties (including Blackford, Dubois, Jay, Lake, and Vanderburgh) also saw declining numbers of jobs, with wages advancing faster than the state as a whole (2.3%).

The economic experiences of our counties are quite diverse. We have counties adding jobs very rapidly with very different results. Boone, Gibson, Hamilton and Hendricks counties were the leaders in the rate of job growth, each exceeding 25% in the 2005-15 decade. In Hamilton,

the growth in average wages was barely greater than the state's; Boone's average compensation was a weak 1.6%, while in both Gibson and Hendricks average compensation fell.

In all, 80 of our 92 Hoosier counties saw real (adjusted for inflation) wages per job rise. By contrast, 56 counties lost jobs. On balance, only 33 counties had positive results in both measures of economic success.

In only a dozen counties did average wages fall. Of these, nine (including Henry, Howard and Fayette) saw both compensation per job and the number of jobs decline. Do these nine counties deserve greater attention from state government? Is the past a rationale for compensatory action? This presumes the state has or should have a policy about where companies locate and which companies to assist in their expansions.

For decades no policy about the location of firms has seemed evident in Indiana. Let the firms decide where to locate. We'll do as other states do: Invest in whatever infrastructure is necessary for a particular company, train whatever workers are needed, reduce taxes, and remove other barriers to get whatever jobs are available. We even believed changing time zones would be a job creator. We grow hardwood in Indiana. We make steel in Indiana. Where do we grow or make backbones?

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

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

GOP hides behind 2nd Amendment

By Rich James

MERRILLVILLE – Every time adults and children are gunned down in a school or theater or music venue, Republicans run and hide behind the 2nd Amendment. It was no different a week ago when 59 were killed and hundreds wounded at a concert in Las Vegas.



Is it time for new gun laws? Well, maybe, perhaps in the future, but not now is the response from Republicans. We certainly don't want to upset the National Rifle Association, Republicans say. Americans have a right to bear arms because, well, the British might be coming. And, the standard Republican argument is that tougher gun laws won't stop the kind of thing that happened in Las Vegas or Sandy Hook.

Something has to be done because 96 people die in America each day because of gun violence. That

doesn't say much about the most powerful country in the world.

This is how President Donald Trump put it when dodging the issue of gun reform. "We'll be talking about gun laws as time goes by," Trump said. And Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell had this to say when the issue of gun law reform came up. "It's entirely premature to be talking about gun laws," McConnell said.

Two of the most powerful men in American essentially said we'll talk about the issue sometime down the road. It all makes me wonder what Vice President Mike Pence had to say back home in Indiana. Indiana, of course, has some of the most lax gun laws in the nation.

Officials in Chicago for years have blamed their homicide problem on the gun laws in Indiana. They say it is just too easy for gang bangers to go to the Lake County Fairgrounds and buy guns without background checks. But Indiana legislators or recent governors never have shown an interest in eliminating the gun show loophole.

As I watched Pence and his wife, Karen, bow their heads during a vigil for those who died in Las Vegas, I wondered what he was thinking. I suspect it wasn't Indiana gun laws. ❖

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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Looking at Senate maps in 2018, 2020

By **KYLE KONDIK**
Sabato's Crystal Ball

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. - The U.S. Senate is a curious, unique legislative body for a lot of reasons. It has arcane rules, such as the filibuster, which limits the passage of most legislative items unless 60 members vote yes. Representation in the Senate is not based on population; instead, each state gets two and only two senators, meaning that California (the most populous state) and Wyoming (the least populous) have equal say in the Senate. Each get 2% of the Senate's membership -- two out of 100 senators -- even though California has 12% of the nation's people while Wyoming only has 0.2%. And unlike the House, where the entire membership is on the ballot every two years, only a third of the Senate's membership is on the ballot each federal election cycle.

A telling sign of the Democratic Party's challenge in the next Senate election is that slightly more than half of the party's current caucus, 25 of the 48 members, are on the ballot next year. So even though only a third of the nation's 100 Senate seats are regularly scheduled for election every two years, a majority of the entire Democratic caucus has to run next year.

Meanwhile, just eight of the 52 Senate Republicans will be on the ballot next year, or 15% of the GOP caucus. So the current party control of 2018's Senate Class I is 25-8 Democratic.

Democrats have managed to net seats on this map in each of the last three elections, adding four in 2000, an additional six to flip control of the upper chamber in 2006, and then two more in 2012 when most expected them to lose net seats because of the sheer volume of ground they were defending. The last good Republican performance in Class I's elections was 1994, when the GOP netted eight seats and flipped the Senate. When a party does as well on a Senate map as the Democrats have on this one over several cycles, they eventually crash, although the rhythms of midterm elections and the president's poor approval rating could put off that crash for at least another six years. Or not.

We've written extensively about next year's Senate elections already, and we don't want to cover the same ground here. Whatever does happen next year, though, Republicans have much more ground to defend over the next two Senate elections, but they are not as

vulnerable as they may seem at first blush.

Given the imbalance of Senate Class I, it's not a shock that Senate Classes II and III, which will next be on the ballot, are imbalanced as well, but instead in favor of the Republicans. Let's look at them in order.

Senate Class II, last on the ballot in 2014 and up again in 2020's presidential election, features 22 Republicans and 11 Democrats.

This map has flipped twice in the last two elections, first cementing and then dismantling a Democratic Senate majority. Republicans netted two seats apiece in 1996 and 2002 to build a 21-12 edge in Class II, a precarious advantage that flipped to 20-13 Democratic as they picked up eight seats amidst Barack Obama's first presidential victory in 2008. That turned a slim 51-49 Democratic Senate majority into a 59-41 advantage that grew to 60-40 with Pennsylvania Sen. Arlen Specter's party switch, although the contested election of Sen. Al Franken (D-MN), who wasn't seated until July 2009, followed by the death of Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Scott Brown's (R) subsequent upset victory in the special election to replace Kennedy in early 2010 limited the Democrats' filibuster-proof majority to just several months.

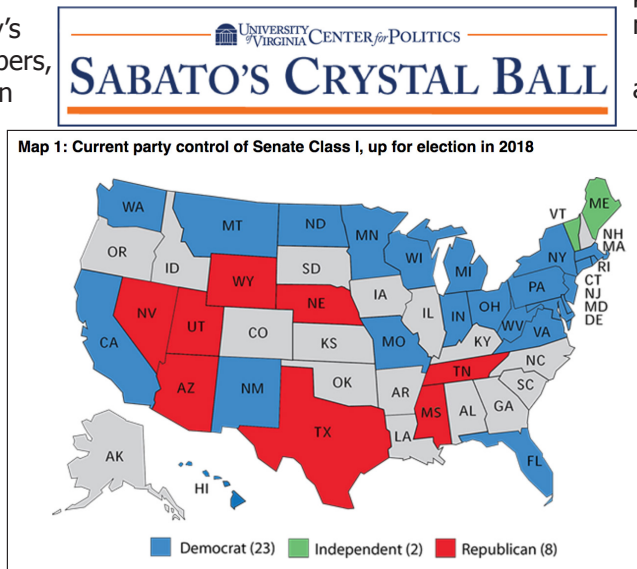
Democrats held the Senate in the 2010 and 2012 elections, but their nine-seat net loss on 2014's Class II map led to the GOP taking a 54-46 majority starting in 2015, a majority they continue to hold (albeit two seats weaker after 2016) now.

One would expect that Democrats would have more targets than Republicans in 2020, and that is correct, although the size of the Republican gain in 2014 perhaps makes their 2020 defenses seem harder than they might

actually be.

In flipping the Senate in 2014, Republicans beat Democrats in several states that are very Republican at the presidential level. So while first-term Republicans dot the map, they represent some deep red territory that even a weakened President Trump running for reelection, or another Republican candidate, should be able to carry comfortably in the presidential election: Alaska, Arkansas, Louisiana, Montana, South Dakota, and West Virginia. Whoever wins the December special election in Alabama -- probably lightning rod Republican Roy Moore -- will also be back on the ballot in this election. With a different occupant in the White House than Barack Obama, perhaps Democrats can field credible challengers in these states, but none of these states are trending Democratic.

Still, Republicans may have a harder time defend-



ing states like Iowa and North Carolina, and two of the three Republicans in states carried by Hillary Clinton are up for reelection as well: Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Cory Gardner of Colorado. Collins is typically untouchable, but she may run for governor next year or retire in 2020, and while Gardner is a strong incumbent who arguably ran the best GOP campaign in 2014, Colorado is a very competitive state that has moved slightly left of the national average.

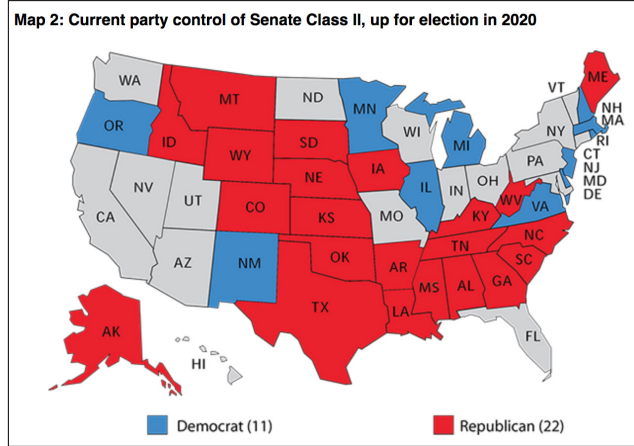
Meanwhile, most of the 11 Democrats up for reelection seem very safe, although Republicans could credibly target incumbents in presidential swing states Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Virginia.

Add it all up, and Democrats might be favored to make a modest net gain on this Senate map to start the 2020 cycle, but the Republicans do not start with a glaring handicap even though they already control two-thirds of the seats being contested. One other thing about Class II: Just by chance, its 33 senators represent only about half of the nation's population, while the other two feature senators who represent around three-quarters apiece. The reason is that Class II does not include five of the seven most populous states: California (1st in population), Florida (3rd), New York (4th), Pennsylvania (6th), and Ohio (7th).

Moving to 2022, the Republicans again will be playing more defense than offense in all likelihood because they already hold a 22-12 edge in Senate Class III. Map 3: Current control of Senate Class III, up for election in 2022

Since Democrats used Class III to net eight seats and recapture the Senate in 1986, Republicans gradually built a big lead on this map. After zero net change in both 1992 and 1998, Republicans gained four seats in Class III in 2004 and then six as part of the 2010 wave, a gain that arguably should have been bigger if not for the nomination of weak GOP candidates in Colorado, Delaware, and Nevada that year.

Democrats hoped to ride anti-Trump coattails to a Senate majority on this map last year, but their gains were confined to just Illinois and New Hampshire, where Democratic Senate candidates (and Hillary Clinton) chalked up wins. And, because 2016 was the first election ever where each state with a Senate election supported the same party for president and for Senate, at this point neither party has to defend a Senate seat in 2022 won by the other party at the presidential level. However, that could easily change after the 2020 presidential election: No two consecutive presidential elections have ever featured the exact same Electoral College map, though many have been quite similar (a recent example: Barack Obama only lost



two states, Indiana and North Carolina, from his 2008 map in 2012). Still, one would expect at least one or more states to switch their presidential allegiance one way or the other in 2020.

The next election of Senate Class III might as well be a political generation away -- we have another presidential election before then, and as we've noted many times before, whichever party holds the White House has to fight

through a typical midterm penalty -- but it stands to reason that some of the states that were very competitive in 2016 would be again in 2022's midterm election. Democrats likely would have to put resources into defending Colorado, Nevada, and New Hampshire, while Republicans would have a longer list of potentially vulnerable states: Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (Sen. Ron Johnson has already indicated he will not run for a third term) are all possibilities, and other seats may become competitive if some long-serving senators do not run for new terms, like Arizona's John McCain (who currently is fighting a very serious form of brain cancer) as well as other senior members like Georgia's Johnny Isakson and Iowa's Chuck Grassley. Again, one could probably say the same thing about 2022 as one could say about 2020: Republicans would be overextended but Democrats wouldn't be guaranteed anything.

Much has been made of the fact that next year Senate Democrats are defending 10 seats in states Trump won in the presidential race, while Senate Republicans are defending only one seat in a Clinton-won state, held by Sen. Dean Heller (R-NV). These represent the vast majority of the 14 total "crossover" seats in the Senate, those held by a party different than the one that captured the state in the 2016 presidential race. The other three crossover-state senators are Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI), a Democrat in a Trump state up for reelection in 2020, and the aforementioned Gardner of Colorado and Collins of Maine, also up for reelection in 2020. So Republicans hold a 52-48 advantage right now despite holding only three seats in Clinton-won states, while Democrats have 11 Trump-state seats and are still in the minority.

That speaks to the GOP advantage in the Senate right now. Even though Trump lost the popular vote by two percentage points, he won 30 states in the Electoral College, while Clinton won only 20. Because all states are created equal in the Senate, the median state in the Electoral College gives us a sense of the GOP tilt of the states overall. In ranking all the states by presidential margin from most to least Republican, the median falls between Arizona and North Carolina, which Trump won by an average of about 3.6 points, so presidential performance in

the median Senate seat is roughly 5.5 points to the right of the nation. That's about the same Republican lean of the median House seat by presidential performance, the Hampton Roads-based seat held by Rep. Scott Taylor (R, VA-2). As is clear, Democrats hold several seats in states where one might think, based on the presidential results, they have no business holding Senate seats in a polarized

era. All of those dark-red state Democratic senators are up for reelection next year.

If a significant number of them lose to Republicans, it's hard to see how Democrats could make up that ground in 2020 or 2022 based on the seats being contested. Such is the GOP advantage, and the Democratic handicap, in the three Senate classes. ❖

'President Clinton' takes a poll dive

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – President Hillary Clinton continues to drop in the polls amid concern over her inability to win congressional support for her agenda. Taunts of "fake president" still are fired at Clinton in tweet barrages by Donald Trump, who still has not conceded the presidential race.



In its latest poll, Gallup finds Clinton's approval rating has dipped to just 42%. The president still retains strong approval among Democrats. But she has plummeted to even lower ratings with Republicans. Independents, expressing frustration over stalemate in Washington and the long, nasty recount battles, are now

rating her in more negative terms.

While the polling was completed before her address to the nation on the Las Vegas shootings, with her call for more regulation of the type of weapons used by the shooter and for universal background checks for gun purchases, that call already has been rejected by Republican congressional leaders. Thus, she faces another failure to go along with rejection of her proposals for tax changes to hit harder at the very wealthy and immigration reform that would prevent deportation of "dreamers."

The only major victory for her more than eight months into the presidency is finally winning confirmation of Merrick Garland for the Supreme Court.

Although Clinton won by 5 million votes in nationwide balloting, she just barely won where it counts, in the Electoral College, and only after a key decision to concentrate all-out in the final campaign days in states such as Wisconsin and Michigan, mistakenly taken for granted earlier by her strategists. She won just enough electoral votes in that late surge, confirmed by recount after recount, with the verdict finally affirmed by the Supreme Court in a 5-3 decision.

When Republicans retained control of both the

Senate and the House, it was clear that Clinton would have difficulty winning approval for her legislative agenda. In addition to Republicans being solidly against her, some progressive Democrats led by Sen. Bernie Sanders have criticized her proposals as not going far enough.

She also is being hammered in the resumed Benghazi hearings and the probe by congressional committees of the resignation of James Comey as FBI director. Clinton, although furious with Comey over his handling of the investigation of her emails, insists that she did not "fire" Comey, that he resigned voluntarily after deciding that their strained governmental relationship wouldn't work.

Trump, in tweeting, has called Comey "a great American, the greatest" and has demanded that a special counsel be appointed to investigate what happened.

On health care, Clinton has failed to win congressional support for her plan to strengthen and expand the Affordable Care Act, Obamacare. The House voted again last week to repeal Obamacare. Repeal will not happen with Clinton having veto power. House Speaker Paul Ryan has said that repeal would have been "a sure thing" if Trump had won. Still, although President Clinton can prevent repeal, she has only limited power through executive action to try to stabilize the program.

On the environment, Clinton won applause internationally for her strong support for the Paris Climate Agreement, but her calls for additional action in this country to address climate change have run into more stalemate in Congress. On North Korea, Clinton has failed to convince Kim Jong Un to halt nuclear and missile tests. Her critics say she has relied too much on seeking negotiations and that threats of military action would have brought compliance.

Her visit to Puerto Rico to view hurricane devastation has brought mixed reviews. She insisted on going to the hardest-hit areas and meeting with the people there. That was praised. However, it also brought scenes of angry people still without water and electricity denouncing FEMA.

Clinton continues harsh criticism of Vladimir Putin over Ukraine intervention and other Russian actions. Trump's response is that "her obsession with the Russia thing" is to cover up secret Russian help in "stealing the election" for her in Michigan and Wisconsin. ❖

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

Paul McLeary and Adam Rawsley,

Foreign Policy: In Washington, the contradictory messages being sent by the president and his cabinet over North Korea policy are dizzying. FP's Robbie Gramer and Paul McLeary write that it can be best summed up as: "The United States can't rule out military options for North Korea. There's no military solution to North Korea. Diplomacy is our best bet with North Korea. Don't waste time with diplomacy." Latest from Pentagon brass. U.S. military leaders, in particular, continue to insist that any engagement with the North Koreans must be led by the country's diplomats. The American effort is "diplomatically led," Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told an annual U.S. Army conference in Washington on Monday. "What does the future hold? Neither you nor I can say, so there's one thing the U.S. Army can do, and that is you've got to be ready...if needed," he added. U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley told reporters Monday that "a full-blown war on the Korean Peninsula will be horrific by any stretch of the imagination,". But equally horrific, he said, would be an attack on the United States. "It would be horrible, there's no question about it, but so would an intercontinental ballistic missile striking Los Angeles or New York City. That would be equally horrible." ❖



Bob Kravitz, WTHR-TV: I cannot and will not ignore the elephant in the room, or better yet, the elephant who left the room, Vice President and former Indiana governor Mike Pence, who bolted Lucas Oil Stadium after roughly 25 Niners kneeled during the national anthem. This was a cynical and appalling exercise in political theater, and re-ignited the Trump Administration's war against free speech and political dissent. The fact that he chose this weekend, a weekend when the Colts were unveiling Manning's statue, retiring his jersey number and adding him to the Ring of Honor, makes it all the more tone deaf and inappropriate. ❖

Tim Swarens, IndyStar: Vice President Mike Pence's walkout in response to players kneeling in protest during the national anthem at Sunday's Indianapolis Colts game was a premeditated political stunt. Throw a flag on Team Trump's No. 2 for conduct unbecoming a true leader. This really is no longer about the players' protest. I've written that the players — and all Americans, for that matter — should stand during the anthem. It's what we do as citizens to show respect for America's ideals, if not it's flawed reality. But the fact that players are continuing to kneel or stay in the locker room — or like the Colts, lock arms — during the anthem isn't a secret. A week ago, several San Francisco 49ers took a knee during the anthem before their game against the Arizona Cardinals. Just as they did Sunday afternoon at Lucas Oil Stadium. So Pence knew what to expect long before he boarded Air Force Two to fly to Indy. In fact, after Pence left the

game, President Trump took to Twitter — of course — to say that he had directed the vice president to walk out if any players failed to stand during the anthem. So, like a Terrell Owens touchdown celebration, Pence's walkout was choreographed and rehearsed. It also was a distraction from what should be this administration's true priorities. The nation is still grieving the horrible massacre in Las Vegas. The agonizing cleanup in Puerto Rico continues. The nuclear standoff with North Korea still simmers. Yet, Mike Pence took time to travel at taxpayer expense to Indy solely to score political points for President Trump. Come on, Mr. Vice President, get your priorities straight. ❖

Jennifer Rubin, Washington Post: With the exception of House Speaker Paul D. Ryan, there is no GOP politician who has debased himself more for the sake of accommodation with President Trump than Vice President Pence, who once enjoyed respect as a decent, consistent conservative. His ploy on Sunday shows he has permitted himself to be reduced to the status of the Washington Generals, the hapless stiff the Harlem Globetrotters humiliate again and again. For a self-styled fiscal hawk, Pence grotesquely wasted taxpayer money for a political stunt. The Center for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington tweeted a rebuke: "This twitter stunt cost American taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars." Likewise, former director of the Office of Government Ethics Walter Shaub denounced the charade. He wisecracked on Twitter: "Price of flight: \$30,000 per hour. Security: \$1 bazillion. Ticket: \$93. Hotdog: \$17. Choreographed denigration of 1st Amendment: Priceless!" The Post tried to pin down an estimate: "It costs the federal government about \$43,000 an hour to fly Air Force Two, according to a 2012 estimate by the Air Force. Assuming a total flight time of six hours for the journey east [from Las Vegas to Indianapolis] and then west again [to California], the tab for the flight alone would have topped \$250,000." He or the Republican National Committee should pay back every dime to the U.S. treasury. To recap: Pence wasted taxpayer money, participated in a Trumpian divisive gambit to stoke racial animosity and made himself look like a spineless errand boy. Those who cheer him — including his legion of evangelical conservative supporters — should reflect upon the extent to which Trump has corrupted (morally, politically, intellectually) Pence — and them. ❖

Nancy Armour, USA Today: A mockery was made of the national anthem all right. But it wasn't by the San Francisco 49ers. Vice President Mike Pence turned the anthem into a prop Sunday, co-opting it for a stunt that served no other purpose than to sow division, further engage the administration's conservative base and try to cow NFL owners. This was a carefully orchestrated PR move — one staged at no small expense to taxpayers. ❖

EPA set to rescind clean power rules

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration is formally withdrawing federal limits on carbon emissions at power plants, triggering the next stage of what is likely to be a yearslong fight over the government's centerpiece regulation for slowing climate change (Wall Street Journal). The move pushes forward on a central pledge of President Donald Trump: a rollback of Obama-era environmental rules he has criticized for harming businesses and coal miners in particular. And it pushes the federal government further away from any effort to combat global warming, following Mr. Trump's June announcement that he intends to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris climate accord. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt announced in Kentucky that he would sign a proposal Tuesday to reverse the rules. The announcement, made at an event organized by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R., Ky.) in the coal-mining town of Hazard, Ky., confirmed what many had expected for weeks. "Repealing this Obama-era rule would close a chapter of regulatory overreach that set standards without regard to the steep costs or availability of technology necessary to meet them," Hal Quinn, chief executive of the National Mining Association, said in a statement applauding the decision.

Trump upends immigration debate

WASHINGTON — The White House's hardline enforcement demands have altered the immigration debate on Capitol Hill, raising real questions about the prospects of a bipartisan deal to protect hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants brought to the country as children (Bernal & Lillis, The Hill). The

new demands from President Trump, crafted by hardliners in the White House, have Democrats questioning the administration's commitment to securing a bipartisan deal to help the young immigrants, commonly known as "Dreamers." "We're looking for a serious proposal to come from President Trump," Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-Texas) said Monday. "This was not serious." Democrats responded with shock to the new set of immigration principles, released Sunday night, which includes proposals Democrats had previously labeled as non-starters, but also new ideas

that are anathema to progressive views on immigration.

More info coming on criminal code

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana lawmakers will continue to learn more about the effect criminal code reform has had on the state's criminal justice system when the Interim Study Committee on Corrections and Criminal Code meets for its third meeting this week (Indiana Lawyer). The 18-person committee will reconvene Wednesday for further discussions about how House Enrolled Act 1006, a statewide criminal code reform bill passed four years ago, has impacted the state's prisons and jails. During earlier discussions, committee members were told that despite revamped criminal sentencing laws that were meant to send fewer people convicted of nonviolent crimes to prison, the state has not incurred significant savings.

Indiana Air Guard going to Puerto Rico

TERRE HAUTE — Airmen assigned to the Indiana Air National Guard, 181st Intelligence Wing will deploy to Puerto Rico in support of hurricane relief efforts (Terre Haute Tribune-Star). Airmen of the 181st Security Forces Squadron are to assist in overall airfield security and protec-

tion of personnel and resources in Puerto Rico. "All members volunteered without hesitation to an austere location in an effort to aid fellow citizens in a time of distress," said Major John Mutnansky, commander, 181st Security Forces Squadron.

GOP raises money off Pence/Colts

WASHINGTON — Republicans wasted no time fundraising off of Vice President Pence's walkout of the Indianapolis Colts game Sunday, while Democrats are making political hay out of the cost of Pence's trip (Groppe, USA Today). A fundraising solicitation sent Monday in President Trump's name to raise money for his re-election and for the national Republican Party criticized members of the San Francisco 49ers who knelt during the national anthem to raise awareness of racial inequalities in the nation. "Your Vice President REFUSED to dignify their disrespect for our anthem, our flag, and the many brave soldiers who have died for their freedoms," the solicitation said of Pence's decision to leave the game. "Please make a contribution of at least \$5 to show your support."

Indy Council passes \$1.1B budget

INDIANAPOLIS - The Indianapolis City-County Council on Monday night voted overwhelmingly to approve Mayor Joe Hogsett's \$1.1 billion spending plan for 2018 (Colombo, IBJ). The budget, which passed the Democrat-controlled council 21-2, has revenue that matches expenditures and projects a roughly \$200,000 surplus. Hogsett has called the plan the city's "first balanced budget in a decade," although that label has drawn disagreement from opponents.

