

## Holcomb will focus on *his* 2018 agenda

Governor focused on jobs, workforce, opioids; not cold beer, pot or guns

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Fresh off new statistics showing record job creation in the state with 54 days left in the year, Gov. Eric Holcomb vowed to keep his focus during the upcoming General Assembly session on his “five pillars” of jobs, workforce development, revamping education curriculum, tackling the opioid crisis, and providing good service.

While he didn’t bat away controversial issues surrounding cold beer, Sunday alcohol sales, medicinal marijuana and liberalized gun-carry laws, he tamped down any expectations that he might put his big thumb on those scales and shift the prognosis for change. Holcomb



told the press that none of those items “is on my agenda.” As for marijuana, Holcomb said, “The FDA is the organization that approves drugs in this country. We’re not there in this state. At this time, I’m trying to get drugs off the street, not add more. I would say to those folks, to decriminalize or legalize marijuana ... they need to talk to the FDA first.”

As for beer and Sunday sales, Holcomb said, “Obviously I’ll deal with every issue that comes our way. I’ll

Continued on page 4

## A century and Gov. Orr

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – A century ago, momentous events and lives were launched. There was a coup d’etat in Petrograd, often described as the “Russian Revolution,” but in reality was a violent Bolshevik power grab that created a 100 million human death toll over the next eight decades.

In May of that year, John F. Kennedy was born and would go on to launch the New Frontier. And in Ann Arbor on Nov. 17, 1917, Robert Dunkerson Orr took his first breaths. His family was on vacation when he entered the world, and he would be raised in Evansville and find his early and late careers playing out on the world stage,



**“It is with a heavy heart that I offer my condolences on the passing of a dear friend and former colleague, Bill Styring. Bill leaves a legacy that will not soon be forgotten. His public service and contributions to conservative economic thought will live on.”**

*- Vice President Mike Pence*



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buffeted by the two other events and lives.

Gov. Orr, as he would become in 1981, was the first governor I covered as a journalist. His life traversed times of great upheaval, with him and first wife Josie serving in the U.S. Army and Women's Air Force Service Pilots during World War II. His public service career ended in Singapore where he served as the U.S. ambassador for three years.

**Last Saturday night**, nearly 100 former staffers of Gov. Orr gathered to remember his remarkable life. It didn't have quite the movie characteristics of Gov. Edgar Whitcomb, who escaped from the Japanese at Corregidor during the early months of World War II and would later come close to circumnavigating the globe by sea after retiring from public life. But Orr through business, policy and politics helped create the Indiana we know today. He and Lt. Gov. John Mutz overcame nativist Hoosier tendencies to open Indiana markets and consumers to Japanese investment and manufacturing, and subsequently to the Pacific Rim.

In post-war Evansville, Bob Orr watched

arsenal of democracy factories close down. His business prowess found him buying the properties and refurbishing them to manufacture and sell domestic goods. He took that mentality into politics where he was Vanderburgh County Republican chairman, which led him to the Indiana Senate in 1968 and, finally, on to Gov. Doc Bowen's ticket in 1972.

**This is where** Orr became truly consequential. He cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate to pass Doc's historic property tax reform package in 1973. He set the modern template for an LG at commerce, then as governor turned it over to Mutz, who despite the occasional driverless



Gov. Robert Orr with a young student while pushing his A Plus education reforms in 1987 and (top) with former Republican National Committeewoman Betty Rendel.

car (yes, he was about four decades ahead of his time) excelled, landing Subaru and other early economic gems. Lt. Gov. Orr pushed the creation of the Ohio River ports at Mount Vernon and Jeffersonville as well as a comprehensive economic development plan.

Orr was elected governor in 1980 as the United States was beset by "malaise" as President Carter described it, and the 1979 oil shocks followed the Iranian Revolution. The events of the world shaped Orr's governorship with cruel twists. Gary's steel plants teetered, auto cities like Anderson, Kokomo, Muncie and Elkhart saw 20% jobless rates, state revenues went into freefall, and in December 1982, with critics noting this came after the mid-term elections and a GOP drubbing, Gov. Orr was forced to seek a record tax increase during a rare winter special session.

During this period, I covered Orr most intensely as an editor and reporter for the Elkhart Truth. Three stories during this era defined Gov. Orr in my mind, with a couple coming through the prism of State Rep. Dean Mock, who was confronted in Orr's office by Ways and Means Chairman Pat Kiely with the fact that if the 1982 tax hike didn't pass, the public schools would close down. Mock asked, "For how long?" It passed anyway.

**Then there was Elkhart's** two-lane portal to the Indiana Toll Road, Cassopolis Street, that badgered Orr every time he came to town. Its widening became the local hot button election. When Mock lost reelection to Democrat Bruce Carter on the issue, it became a biennial budget priority. Rep. Carter would lose the next election when Speaker Pat Bauer wouldn't free him up to vote for the bill.

But there was good news for Orr on the northern front, when folks in Cass County, Mich., became so angered at high taxes there that they formed a committee vowing to secede to Indiana. It was one of the first big stories I was involved in, and I remember calling Dollyne Pettingill for reaction. This was a gift for a governor com-



Gov. Orr with President Reagan and U.S. Sens. Dan Quayle and Dick Lugar. and with Lt. Gov. John Mutz

ing off a record tax hike and double digit unemployment. Orr would declare that Indiana had become "downright sexy."

**He won his first** term over Democrat John Hillenbrand 48-42%, but was reelected by just a 53-47% margin over State Sen. Wayne Townsend. The first term had been a minefield. A lesser governor might not have survived.

The other memorable policy that Gov. Orr prioritized came out of President Reagan's "Nation at Risk" study on American public education in 1986. Orr took the challenge with utmost seriousness, formulated the A Plus plan, and rammed

it through the 1987 General Assembly session on narrow votes. I remember covering House Education Chairman Phil Warner, who coaxed votes on the House floor with repeated "thumbs up" gestures as the roll call took place. It was a dramatic sequence.

**Through the prism** of today, you can wonder if Gov. Orr could still be a Republican, pushing through two big tax increases, one in crisis, the

other the pave the way to the future. Some of the A Plus funding and the expanded school year are still in place. He and Josie supported Planned Parenthood. Gov. Orr was the embodiment of a moderate Republicanism that was internationalist in scope. He was a great steward of the state and helped shape future leaders. When Gov. Mitch Daniels took office in 2005 and faced the question of which gubernatorial portraits to bring into his office, he quickly said, "Bring ol' Bob Orr in here."

My last contacts with Gov. Orr came in the twilight of his life. He was angered by the 1991-92 "health care for life" deal for legislators that Senate President Robert Garton and Democrat House Speaker John Gregg forged on the final days of the session. Orr would call me up, insisting "this just isn't right" and urged me to "go after them." The other thing I remember, and more poignantly realize now, is the circle of life can be cruel. "Getting old isn't any fun," he would lament.

As a journalist, it's best when you watch and document great leadership, when a governor and a great team know how to pull the levers of power, how to enforce and even intimidate to achieve durable ways and means. Gov. Robert D. Orr will pass this historic test every time. ❖

## Holcomb agenda, from page 1

be interested to see the final reports from those studies. I'll work with legislature. I'm going to be focused on my issues; those issues don't exactly fit in my pillars. I've told folks I'm interested in modernizing our alcohol laws."

Holcomb did take a stand on one new issue: Advocating Say's Firefly as the state insect, endorsing a proposal from Cumberland Elementary School in Lafayette.

Wednesday's speech in the South Atrium of the Statehouse came in a laudatory atmosphere as state, regional and local job creators and site selectors packed the hall, along with legislators and agency chiefs. They heard Commerce Sec. Jim Schellinger proclaim record job creation and investment. With 54 days left in the year, Schellinger announced 28,846 new jobs, coming on 270 deals with \$6.7 billion in investment and an average wage of \$27.83, with more in the pipeline. It eclipsed 2015 when the Indiana Economic Development Corporation announced 323 deals, 26,555 jobs and \$4.8 billion in investment with a \$24.87 average wage. The previous job creation record came in 2012 with 27,260 new jobs.

The gigantic potential plum, the Amazon HQ2, wasn't specifically mentioned, though a \$5 billion investment and the creation of 50,000 high-wage jobs certainly fits into the Holcomb wheelhouse. Indianapolis, Hamilton and Boone counties, the Northwest Region and the state's Louisville suburbs have all submitted proposals. Purdue President Mitch Daniels, who has been dealing with Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos during the Kaplan University purchase, believes that Indiana is in play for the economic prize of the new century.

"With nearly 29,000 new jobs announced this year and one million expected over the next decade, we must act now to ensure Hoosiers have the skills they need to secure good jobs and succeed in our growing economy," Holcomb said, while flanked by Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch and Schellinger. "In 2018 I will remain sharply focused on building our workforce and other key issues that affect Hoosiers most – jobs, economic growth, health, infrastructure and government service."

The jovial Holcomb was armed with many clever quips, telling the packed hall that he was "being on the ball and leaning in to it," summing up his first year in office by saying Indiana doubled its pre-kindergarten enrollment, maintained the state's AAA credit rating, had \$1.8 billion in reserves, and added that after trips to Hungary, France, Japan and India, "The world is taking note. It costs you money to fly over the state of Indiana any more. It's our aspiration to do more and take it to the next level. Now we find ourselves in good company in tech growth." Heralding

his "five pillars," Holcomb called the atmosphere "just pitch perfect, and that's what's taking this to the next level is all about. I am flat out excited to get to work with members of General Assembly on each of these measures."

He called for "systemic change" in the state's education culture, where he is building on the Pence era regional work councils to customize curriculums and ramping up STEM study access. He noted that the state is keeping real time tabs on 92,000 unfilled jobs. "This year we're going to be focused on our people. For Indiana to continue to be ranked No.1, to be top five in nation, we're going to have to make sure our workforce is skilled up appropriately. This is going to be a new approach," he continued, adding that he is "taking our culture away from compliance and regulation to one of local capacity." He spoke directly to local economic development officials, saying, that the change

"will be powered from the ground up. Our goal and our vision as we go forward is to make sure every Hoosier student gets an excellent baseline education and critical learning skills to prepare for lifelong learning that is in demand today. They have to be ready to go to college or find meaningful training."

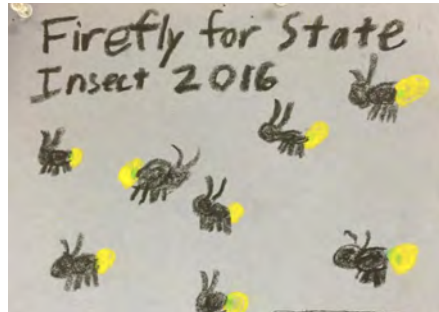
Holcomb said there will be additional focus on the 712,000 Hoosiers who started college and then "didn't quite finish," the 350,000 adults without a high school diploma, and 27,000 inmates in a penal system, where the state is starting to train them into skill sets like computer coding. "Just imagine," Holcomb said, "well over million Hoosiers for jobs of the future, breaking the cycles they are currently in. I can just tell you I get very, very excited."

Such excitement is tempered by the deep shadows of opioid addiction that is sending a steady stream of dead Hoosiers to local morgues, and live, but afflicted, citizens to swamped county jails, hospital emergency rooms, and over-burdened treatment facilities.

### Opioid crisis

On opioids, Holcomb vowed to step up enforcement, mandate stiffer sentences for dealers and traffickers, and "expand recovery options and make it easier for Hoosiers to locate and access treatment." That will include improved opioid death reporting from county coroners, increase in the number of FSSA-approved treatment locations, and a referral program to steer addicts directly into inpatient and residential treatment programs. Holcomb said after his speech, "It's all about access to treatment. We added more locations, but we need to do more. It's gotta be closer to them. We can't get it done fast enough. That will cost money, yes, but we'll look for ways to fund that."

HPI asked Holcomb about the process of finding funding sources as he works with Indiana and Ball State universities, and he explained, "This is an everyday thought, but we're going to seek every resource that is needed and we're going to do it in a thoughtful way. We



don't have an ATM machine. It's also how we're organized, how we're working together, how we're able to get more people into treatment, making sure that treatment is closer. Again, as I mentioned, we're going to try and make sure there are more treatment centers, closer to folks. That will cost money, yes, but we're looking at ways to make sure we're funding that."

Additionally, Holcomb said he will:

- Seek to support the "best aspects" of Regional Cities and Stellar Communities to encourage regional planning;

- Will sign an executive order for state employee parental leave;

- Use the new Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority to help military veterans purchase homes or relocate to the state;

- Establish a multi-agency working group to develop management strategies for water resources;

- Increase the availability and access to "affordable broadband services for underserved Hoosiers and institutions";

- Continue efforts for more direct domestic and international airline flights, adding to recent flights to Paris, Seattle and Oakland;

- Require every Indiana K-12 school to offer at least one computer science course by 2021;

- Create the state Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning;

- Launch a new Department of Corrections workforce training program.



more job training opportunities, and freeing Hoosiers of drug addiction. These concerns are nearly universal, and we look forward to working with the governor to flesh out the details. It is imperative that Indiana strive for a healthy and well-trained workforce. Our workers are in demand of stronger wages, affordable healthcare, and better opportunities on the job. Leaders of both parties should embrace solutions regardless of who proposed them."

But on a cautionary note, Pelath added, "What worries me, however, is what might happen to us rather than because of us. Job training becomes less fruitful when you are sick and broke. And it must be said that our national counterparts have been far from helpful on this front. How will our state respond as our president, vice president, and Congress continue their assault on affordable health insurance for Hoosiers? While the full-frontal attack has flopped thus far, the Trump-Pence administration continues to sneakily dismantle the Affordable Care Act piece by piece. Their schemes to hike insurance premiums, weaken coverage, and drive people away from health care are brazen and deliberate.

And all done in service of a campaign slogan. The basic health care of more than 400,000 Hoosiers stands in the balance, and Hoosiers will not allow us to point fingers at a dysfunctional Washington forever."

Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane said, "I am glad to see that the governor is focusing on improving job readiness for Hoosiers and expanding our economy. Given that Indiana workers make substantially less than the national average, now is the time to ensure Hoosiers are just as successful as other Americans. Also, no full-time working person should be in a position where they can't pay basic bills. I hope the governor will work with us to increase the minimum wage to ensure everyone can pay rent and buy groceries. "

Lanane added, "I was disappointed, that after the shockingly low voter turnout in past elections, the governor didn't have anything on his agenda to make voting more accessible. The right to vote is the foundation of our democracy and when Hoosiers can't vote, fixing that should be a priority for every elected official."

Lt. Gov. Crouch added, "Hoosiers are already seeing the positive results of Gov. Holcomb's collaborative, consensus-building approach this past legislative session. As we continue to focus on strengthening our economy, infrastructure, workforce, attacking the drug epidemic, and delivering great government service, our 2018 Next Level Agenda charts a bold course toward a bright future for our state."

Holcomb's ambitious short session agenda comes on the heels of a record infrastructure improvement program that will steer tens of billions of dollars into state highways, bridges and ports over the next two decades. ❖

## Reaction to agenda

Senate President Pro Tem David Long, reacted, saying, "I applaud the governor for bringing an aggressive and well-thought-out agenda to the table. The Senate continues to believe that workforce development is a critical issue for our state, and the governor's agenda reflects that priority. Senate Republicans will be announcing our own agenda prior to session, and we look forward to working with the governor and our colleagues in the House of Representatives to continue to improve the lives of all Hoosiers."

House Speaker Brian C. Bosma said, "Indiana's strong economy continues to pay dividends through record job creation and low unemployment. To maintain this momentum, and to continue to attract employers in record numbers, it's clear we have to strengthen our workforce pipeline. The governor has put forth a bold agenda, and we look forward to working with him on workforce and other critical issues facing our state and finding the best solutions for all Hoosiers."

Indiana House Democratic Leader Scott Pelath said, "In broad principle, House Democrats share many of the same goals. We all believe in a top-notch workforce,

# Virginia ‘tsunami’ will test Hoosier GOP

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – Even though Hoosier Republicans were late coming to the Donald Trump phenomenon, arriving only after he won the 2016 Indiana presidential primary with 53% of the vote and selected Mike Pence for the ticket, it’s been fascinating to watch most of the rank and file buy into the president’s populism.



It’s been profane, nativist, unorganized, ineffective, unprofessional, undisciplined and harrowing, which is vastly different from the days of Govs.

Bowen, Orr and Daniels, as well as Sens. Lugar and Coats and Mayor Hudnut, who were more of the internationalist mode. All had distinct conservative bonafides, but conducted themselves with moderation. President Trump gets the benefit of the doubt here in Indiana because of the loyalty to Vice President Pence, who remains an extremely powerful figure here.

But as we’ve analyzed over the past couple of weeks, Trump’s approval here is beginning to fade, with the Old National/Ball State University Hoosier Poll showing his approval at 41%, and 77% among Republicans. Through this double digit decline in approval (weighed against his 19% plurality last November here), Republican officials have been overtly on board with the president. When pressed about Trump’s lying, for instance, they are quick to point out that President Obama lied about keeping your doctor.

The emerging reckoning came in Virginia Tuesday night with Democrat Ralph Northam winning by 9% over Ed Gillespie, while Republicans saw a 32-member majority in the House of Delegates erased. None of the polls predicted this. That’s a Watergate or Goldwater style rubout. When you align what we did last week with Trump’s mid-30th percentile approval and favorables, the out-of-whack national right/wrong track, the dismal congressional approvals, and the congressional generics that have Democrats with double digit leads, this is a warning that Trump’s ardently loyal base won’t be enough to win elections in 2018.

Wall Street Journal columnist Peggy Noonan has flagged this as “Trump Catch 22,” saying on “Morning Joe” today, “Republicans can’t win with him, they can’t win without him.”

“It was a referendum on the president for many of them,” Rep. Ryan Costello, a Republican who heard that

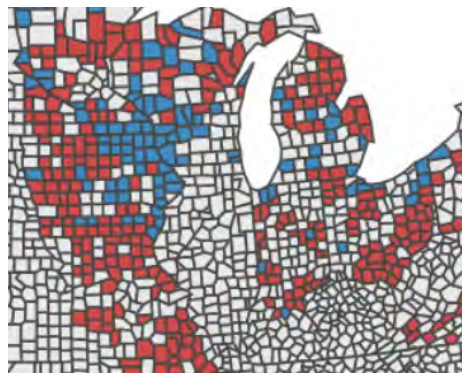
message even in local races in his swing district in suburban Philadelphia, told the Wall Street Journal. “You had a lot more people, a lot more people vote Democrat than they ever had before.”

U.S. Reps. Todd Rokita and Luke Messer, both embracing Trump and Trumpism, may be the first to feel the wet towel sting next May, particularly if Trump can’t forge a tax reform deal, is embarrassed by North Korea, or is dealing with huge hot war casualty counts.

Mike Allen in Axios puts the Virginia carnage for the GOP in perspective: Just 40% approved of the job that the president is doing, according to preliminary exit polls; 34% expressed opposition to Trump as a reason for their vote; white women with college degrees favored Northam by 16%; married women by 10%. “Ed couldn’t escape being a proxy for Trump, which killed him,” said Tom Davis, the former GOP congressman who represented Northern Virginia. “It’s a huge drag on the ticket.”

And then there is President Trump’s penchant for discarding under the bus those he no longer needs, as he did in Alabama when Roy Moore won. Trump tweeted Wednesday: “Ed Gillespie worked hard but did not embrace me or what I stand for. Don’t forget, Republicans won 4 out of 4 House seats, and with the economy doing record numbers, we will continue to win, even bigger than before!”

But Tuesday was in Virginia. This is Indiana, right?



NBC/Wall Street Journal offers a cautionary perspective. Its poll of residents of 438 counties, including about 27 in Indiana, that either flipped in 2016 (from President Obama to Donald Trump), or surged for Trump 20% higher than their vote for Mitt Romney in 2012, should serve as a warning. It found that a third, 32%, believe the country is better off now than it was before Trump became president, which is essentially Trump’s ardent base. But a plurality, 41%, say the country is worse off now, and those include

Demcorats and independents who will be motivated to vote in 2018, just as they did in Virginia on Tuesday, many waiting in long lines and under pouring rain. An additional 26% say the state of the nation has remained about the same. And overall, slightly more than half, 53%, say they do not think Trump has a clear agenda on how to address the major issues facing the country.

The Indiana “surge counties” in the poll include Jasper, Newton, Carroll, Cass, Miami, Tipton, Madison, Randolph, Jay, Clay, Sullivan, Greene, Owen, Jackson, Scott, Ohio, Switzerland, Jefferson, Floyd, Harrison, Washington, Crawford and Orange. Indiana’s “flip” counties include Porter, LaPorte, Delaware and bellwether Vigo. It mirrors the 41% approval that Trump got in the Ball State Hoosier Poll released last week, though Trump’s approval among Republicans is 77%.

**U.S. Senate**

**Braun first up on TV**

Last week the HPI Horse Race speculated that Republican U.S. Senate candidate Mike Braun might have to spend in the \$5 million range to win a primary against U.S. Reps. Todd Rokita and Luke Messer. On Tuesday launched statewide radio and broadcast TV ads detailing his roots (see photo, right). The "Jasper" ads focus on Braun's credentials as a successful businessman and conservative outsider, pledging to use the lessons he gained from a career in business to "get Washington moving again." The radio ad also highlights that Braun attended Harvard Business School, but turned down a career on Wall Street to return to his hometown of Jasper to raise a family and start a business. "We need fewer politicians in Washington, and more outsiders who know what it takes to get the job done," said Braun. "I built a successful, national company here in my hometown of Jasper, and it's time we had some Hoosier know-how in the Senate, rather than more career politicians." Indiana Democratic Chairman John Zody weighed in, saying, "Rep. Braun seems



to believe that his wallet should be the most important factor in Indiana's Senate race, and today's ad is simply more proof that he's intent on buying himself a Senate seat. Rep. Braun may claim that he'll 'get Washington moving again,' but he's not fooling the Hoosiers who can't even get moving in their cars without paying Rep. Braun's new gas tax that has become one of the largest tax increases in Hoosier history."

**Roll Call sees Donnelly as vulnerable**

Senate Democrats are defending 10 seats President Donald Trump won last cycle (Bowman, Roll Call). U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-IN) is rated third in the list. "Donnelly defeated a flawed GOP candidate who made controversial comments about rape to win his first term in 2012," the article stated. "Now he's running for reelection in a state that went for Trump by nearly 20 points. Three credible Republicans, two of whom serve with Donnelly in Washington, are tearing each other apart to take him on. The incumbent will have to stick to the nonpartisan image he tried cultivating in 2012 with his

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“Hoosier common sense” slogan. He’s voted for Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch and has traveled on Air Force One with Trump. But Republicans are already going after him for owning stock, which he’s since sold, in a family company that manufactures some products in Mexico.”

**General Assembly**

**Bartels wins HD74**

Crawford County Councilman Steve Bartels won the HD74 caucus to replace State Rep. Lloyd Arnold, who resigned to take a job with the state. Indiana Republican Party State Chairman Kyle Hupfer said, “I am confident that Rep.-elect Bartels will work alongside his new colleagues in the Statehouse to continue delivering positive results on behalf of every Hoosier taxpayer and family.”

**Sen. Bassler to seek reelection**

Republican Eric Bassler today announced he is seeking another term in the Indiana State Senate. Bassler is currently in his first term representing District 39, which is composed of Daviess, Greene, Martin and Sullivan counties and portions of Clay, Knox, and Owen counties. “Three years ago Hoosiers in Senate District 39 hired me to represent them in the Indiana General Assembly and I am grateful for the trust they placed in me,” Bassler said. “I hope to continue fighting for Southwest Indiana at

Statehouse for another term.” Sen. Bassler serves on the Senate Committee on Appropriations, and was recently appointed by Senate President Pro Tem David Long (R-Fort Wayne) to chair the School Funding Subcommittee. He also serves on the Senate Committees on Education and Environmental Affairs. “As a member of the Senate Committee on Education and now chair of the subcommittee on education funding, I’m focused on making sure we provide Hoosier students with the best education we can afford so they are prepared for the 21st century workforce,” Bassler said. “If we want our great state to continue to thrive, we must make certain our schools are equipping our students with the skills our businesses need to keep the economy growing.”

**President**

**Pence in Plainfield today**

Vice President Pence will bring Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta with him to Plainfield Thursday to promote GOP efforts to overhaul the federal tax code, the White House announced Wednesday (Groppe, USA Today). The pair, along with Gov. Eric Holcomb, will talk taxes with business leaders and Hoosier families at TKO Graphix. Second Lady Karen Pence, meanwhile, will visit the IU Health Neuroscience Center in Indianapolis. ❖

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# Trump, Virginia and danger signs for GOP

By **KYLE KONDICK** and **GEOFFREY SKELLEY**  
**Sabato's Crystal Ball**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Tuesday represented the best non-presidential election night Democrats have had since 2006. They swept the statewide ticket in Virginia for the second election in a row, and they picked up the New Jersey governorship. They also won a crucial, majority-making state Senate election in Washington state, so they won complete control of state government in two states (New Jersey and Washington).

Ever since the June primary, we thought Gov.-elect Ralph Northam (D) had a small edge in the Virginia gubernatorial race, which is why we rated it as Leans Democratic for the whole general election period even as Northam hit some seeming rough patches. But the size of his victory – nine points – was notable, and his ticket-mates, Attorney General Mark Herring (D) and Lt. Gov.-elect Justin Fairfax (D), won by smaller but still decisive margins.

But the big shock to us, and to anyone who is honest about their pre-election expectations, was the Democrats winning what could be a 50-50 tie in the Virginia House of Delegates. Democrats went into the election at a 66-34 deficit in the House, and while they were expected to win seats, the low double digits seemed like the absolute max. Instead they are on track to net 15 or more seats, with a chance of getting to a 50-50 split or even taking a slim majority (the canvass is ongoing and recounts loom in a few seats).

Democrats generally performed quite well across the country – it's hard to find any silver linings for Republicans, although we'll endeavor to do so (see the caveats section below).

There's a single factor that links all of this: Donald Trump. This was a rebuke to the president and Trumpism generally.

Virginia polls were once again collectively off in this election – Northam was up by about three points in the RealClearPolitics average, and he won by nine – but this time instead of the Republican candidate outrunning his polling, as Republican Ken Cuccinelli did in 2013's gubernatorial race and 2017 GOP gubernatorial nominee Ed Gillespie did in Virginia's 2014 Senate race, the Democrat, Northam, beat his numbers instead. In fact, the poll average basically nailed Gillespie's 45% share of the vote, but underestimated Northam's share by half a dozen points. Undecideds may still be breaking away from the White House, it's just that now they are breaking toward Democrats, not Republicans. In the exit poll, Northam won voters who said they decided in the last week, about a fifth of

the electorate, by 24 points; he had a more modest lead of seven points among the larger universe of earlier deciders. And this was at a point when many thought he was kicking the race away (more on that below, too).

The political dynamics we got used to during Barack Obama's presidency – polls underestimating Republicans, Democrats getting crushed in off-year elections – showed signs of a reversal on Tuesday. That all makes sense given what we know about off-year elections: The White House party often suffers, particularly when the Oval Office occupant is unpopular, as Trump is. Anger is a great political motivator, and anger animates the Democrats now, just like it agitated Republicans to action in the Obama years. That the Republican-run White House and Congress has largely failed on its

big-picture promises so far surely isn't helping the GOP overcome that intensity gap. And this was an intensity surge for Democrats more than it was a falloff for Republi-

cans: while it's not exactly an apples-to-apples comparison because there was a bigger third party vote in 2013, Gillespie got about 160,000 more votes than Cuccinelli did four years ago. But Northam got 335,000 more votes than outgoing Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D).

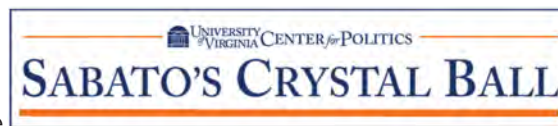
Last week, we asked five questions about what the results would tell us. Answering these questions will help us flesh out the story of what happened last night:

## 1. Will Ed Gillespie buck the typical anti-White House party pattern in Virginia?

No, he couldn't. Republican gubernatorial nominee Ed Gillespie continued a trend in the modern era of two-party competition in Virginia state politics (starting in 1969) of the presidential party's gubernatorial candidate running behind his party's two-party presidential margin. Trump won 47.2% of the two-party vote in Virginia, and Gillespie won only 45.5%. The Old Dominion's gubernatorial race is always one of the first big statewide races held after a presidential election, and it can be a nationalized race that serves as a referendum on the man on the other side of the Potomac. Clearly 2017 was that kind of election.

## 2. Will Phil Murphy outrun Hillary Clinton?

Not quite. Clinton won New Jersey by 14 points, and it appears as though Gov.-elect Phil Murphy (D) will come up just slightly short of that margin (which as of this writing is a little over 13). That's still a solid victory, although it did not represent the kind of surge we saw in Virginia. Part of that may be the fact that the New Jersey race was much sleepier than Virginia's contest: Murphy always led polls over Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno (R) by double digits, and voters responded by turning out in about the same numbers (around 2.1 million votes as of publishing) as the uncompetitive 2013 contest in the Garden State. Whereas the total votes in the 2017 Virginia race fell by



only a third from the 2016 presidential tally, the total votes in New Jersey shrank by almost half.

**3. How will state legislative performance compare to last year's presidential results?**

The Democratic gains in the Virginia House of Delegates were nothing short of extraordinary. Even the most bullish Democrats would have been thrilled with a low double-digit gain. As of this writing, a 51-49 GOP edge or a 50-50 split seem like the likeliest outcomes (if it is 50-50, the two parties will have to come up with a power-sharing agreement. The state Senate, where all 40 seats are up in 2019, features a slim 21-19 GOP majority).

However, this was also a gain that was almost entirely predicated on winning seats Hillary Clinton carried last year. Republicans went into the election holding 17 House seats that Clinton had carried, and it looks like they will lose at least 14 of them (additionally, a Republican incumbent holds a 12-vote lead in Clinton-won HD-94, so expect a recount there). The Virginia situation was unusual because Republicans drew themselves this map at the start of the decade not thinking that some of these seats that lean blue in presidential elections could be competitive with lower off-year turnout. Six years after these maps were first used in state legislative elections, it seems they were mistaken; if the GOP had been a little less selfish in redistricting several years ago and had drawn a few extra safe Democratic seats, they might not have been so over-extended in this election.

**4. How much variation will there be in the Virginia's three statewide races?**

This was, for the most part, a straight-ticket kind of election, Northam did the best, winning by about nine points, but Herring (6.7 points) and Fairfax (5.4) were not that far behind. Calculating based on the two-party vote, the standard deviation of the Democratic ticket was just 0.8 percentage points in performance, the lowest standard deviation for any race going back to 1969, as displayed in Table 1. That is, there was very little variation in the performance of both parties' tickets on Nov. 7, relatively unsurprising given the high rates of straight-ticket voting in our highly polarized political environment. The one marginal surprise was that it was Northam, not the incumbent Herring, who led the ticket. Regardless, all three statewide Democrats turned in strong performances. Presumably, Herring is next in line to run for governor in four years, and he did defer to Northam this time by opting to run for reelection (Virginia, alone among the states, does not

allow governors to seek reelection). However, just because Herring may be next up, another candidate could decide to crash the party, as former Rep. Tom Perriello (D) attempted to do in the Democratic primary against Northam and Cuccinelli successfully pulled off against then-Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling (R) for the 2013 GOP nomination (Bolling had deferred to then-Attorney General Bob McDonnell in 2009 and then got pushed out of the race by Cuccinelli in 2013). Moreover, as the Cuccinelli and Bolling example shows, a potential future intraparty clash between Herring and Fairfax for the top job also can't be written off.

**5. What are some Virginia trends to watch out for on Election Night?**

Northam won most parts of the Urban Crescent by larger margins in the two-party vote than McAuliffe, in some cases -- such as Loudoun County in Northern Virginia (Northam by 20 points, McAuliffe by five) -- far larger ones. In the meantime, parts of Southwest Virginia and Southside shifted more toward the GOP.

**Conclusion**

While the Democratic wave in the Old Dominion and elsewhere was bigger than we and many others expected, there's a key point to remember: The results made sense, historically. As we've been noting throughout the year, a party traditionally pays a price in off-year elections for holding the White House. That's a trend we've seen throughout history, and vividly so in the three most recent midterms: 2006, 2010, and 2014. That effect is exacerbated by an unpopular president, and Donald Trump's approval rating is under 40%. In other words, the old laws of politics seem to still apply -- even, or perhaps especially, in a world with Donald Trump as president. ❖



# A tale of two Hoosier veterans

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – Lance Cpl. Denzil Allen stared out into the endless blue water that was the Pacific Ocean as his troopship rode the waves on the way to Vietnam. It was February, 1968, and Allen's ship was detoured from landing exercises on Okinawa to a prospective hot LZ in Vietnam during the height of the Tet Offensive.



Cpl. Allen had already done one tour in Vietnam and had been enjoying the promised two-year respite that his battalion expected following their first tour. He had recently been promoted to lance corporal and had been given the somewhat cushy job of driving the company commander, Capt.

James Panther, around Honolulu.

Allen had dropped out of Lebanon High School and enlisted in the Marine Corps at age 16. He seemed to be a happy and well-adjusted young Marine who had found the friends and acceptance that was lacking in his high school days. His first tour in Vietnam had been uneventful. He did his duty and filled his letters home to his mother with talk about the beautiful scenery of Vietnam and the nice people, particularly the children.

In early January, 1968, Allen received word that the battalion would participate in amphibious landing exercises on Okinawa. Storming the beaches by day and the bars by night excited his fellow Marines and life was good. That all changed when word came of the hellish outbreak of the Tet Offensive as reports of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces overrunning American-held bases and key South Vietnamese towns and hamlets reached the 1st Battalion, 27th Marines. Marine Corps brass knew they had a fully loaded battalion on its way to Okinawa and it was an easy decision to direct the landing forces to Vietnam.

Allen arrived to a Vietnam that looked and felt much different from his first tour. The

men were on edge. Every Vietnamese, adult and child, was viewed as a potential Viet Cong who might throw a grenade at Americans or blow themselves up in a crowded street. Tales of Viet Cong atrocities made their way to the Marines long before the men began their long trip to the bloody environs of Hue City.

Along the road to Hue the Marines came upon both civilians and soldiers who had become victims of the Viet Cong. The remains weren't pretty. They found soldiers whose heads had been severed and then shoved up into their stomachs after disembowelment. Virtually every dead GI was found with his penis cut off and placed in his mouth. The closer to Hue City the Marines in the 1/27 came, the worst the atrocities became. Their rage grew in equal proportion to the carnage they witnessed.

## Sorting insurgents, innocents

By the beginning of May, the Marines had re-established control of Hue and were vigorously pursuing remnants of the Viet Cong who had slipped back into the guise of innocent peasant farmers. Their modus operandi was to wear the white pajamas of an innocent farmer by day and to switch to the black pajamas of an insurgent at sundown. The task of sorting the innocent from the Viet Cong fell to Marine ambush patrols. Cpl. Allen was detailed to one of these patrols.

On May 5, 1968, Cpl. Allen and five other Marines were moving to an ambush site when they encountered two Vietnamese men. After interrogating the men, Cpl. Allen and Pvt. Martin Alvarez stood the men beside a ditch and shot them to death. Allen advised the other members of the patrol, "You didn't see nothing!" The patrol then re-



Attorney George Martz Sr. (left) with Lance Cpl. Denzil Allen of Lebanon, Ind.

turned to their platoon patrol base (PPB).

During that night, the Viet Cong launched an all-out assault on the forward base. Allen's platoon sergeant bugged out and left Allen in command of an eight-man detachment, isolated and exposed to the Viet Cong attack. The Viet Cong were on the verge of overrunning the PPB when Allen called in an artillery attack on their position. He called for artillery to be dropped directly on himself and his men. He ordered his men to take cover and prayed that the artillery would kill the attacking VC and spare himself and his men. The tactic paid off and the Viet Cong were driven away, carrying off their dead and wounded.

This action in saving the platoon patrol base earned Denzil Allen a letter of nomination from Capt. Panther to receive the Navy Cross, an honor second only to the Medal of Honor.

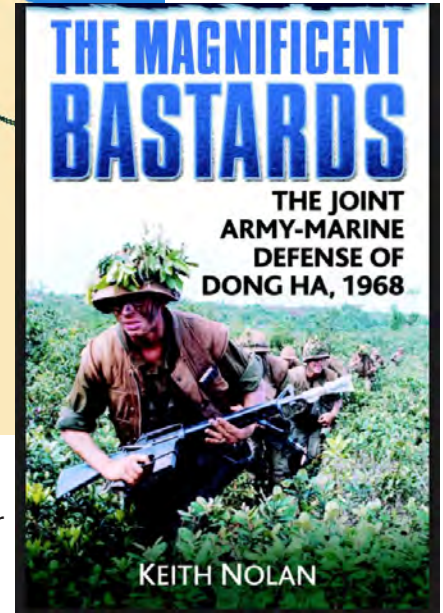
**Looking for bodies, ending in executions**

The next morning a patrol was sent out looking for bodies. In a body-count-obsessed environment, tallying up the enemy dead seemed to be the only way for the military and the politicians to measure success. The patrol brought three Vietnamese males back to the patrol base. Because the men had vaccination scars (a sure sign of being Viet Cong), Allen and several men decided to execute the Vietnamese. Once again, two of the men were forced out on a rickety footbridge and shot by a makeshift firing squad of six Marines. Hand grenades were then dropped on top of the bodies to obliterate evidence of the executions.

The third Vietnamese was forced into a building where an attempt was made to interrogate him. Allen forced the man onto a stool and put a noose over the man's head. He refused to answer questions about the Viet Cong. After one question, the prisoner allowed a grin to come across his face. Infuriated, Allen kicked the



A map of Dong Ha and its violent neighborhood that includes Khe Sanh and Hamburger Hill, and an earlier account.



stool from under the prisoner and hanged him. Unfortunately for the prisoner, the rope broke and his agony took another form when Allen slit his throat. The body was thrown into the stream and, as before, grenades were dropped on top of the dead Vietnamese.

At this stage of the Vietnam War, the Marine Corps had evolved from a small, close-knit fraternity of like-minded warriors to one that was sprinkled with draftees and those who had not worshipped at the altar of Chesty Puller. Several of the men in the platoon, mostly new guys, refused to participate in the killings and when the opportunity presented itself, reported the crime to their superiors.

**An investigator summons**

Shortly after the incident occurred, an investigator summoned the men and

asked that they provide a statement as to what happened to the "gooks." He assured the men that killing these "slants" was not going to be considered a crime and the men should write down everything that had happened. Much to the Marines' chagrin and shock, their statements were used against them and the full weight of Marine Corps justice came crashing down on them.

Six Marines were charged



with murder and each was assigned a different attorney. Denzil Allen was assigned an attorney who was scheduled to be in country for less than a month. This attorney pleaded with Allen to allow him to withdraw from counsel so that another attorney could be assigned to the case. Allen asked if the new attorney would be a good one and he was told that the new attorney would be a good one.

Unfortunately for Cpl. Allen, the new attorney, Sandy Sydney McMath, had never tried a criminal case. According to later appeals, McMath told Allen that he should plead guilty at the Article 28 hearing and then when he returned to the United States, an appeal would be made based on the grounds of temporary insanity. Allen accepted his attorney's advice and admitted exactly what had happened at the bridge at Dong Ha.

Marine justice moved swiftly and within four months, Lance Cpl. Allen pleaded guilty to five counts of unpremeditated murder. He was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Lance Cpl. Maushart pleaded guilty to one count of unpremeditated murder and was sentenced to two years in prison. Lance Cpls. Belknap and Licciardo pleaded to single counts of murder and were given two years in prison. Pvt. Alvarez' attorney made a case for his temporary insanity and he was acquitted. Pvt. Vickers was convicted, but later had his conviction overturned by the reviewing officer, Col. Hanthorn.

The "Incident at Dong Ha," as the atrocities became known, brought attention from around the world. Although the incident had occurred after My Lai, the facts about My Lai had yet to be discovered. The case caught the attention of the media and Hollywood. To help finance an appeal, the movie rights to Denzil Allen's case were sold to Peter Fonda for \$15,000. Look Magazine paid \$10,000 for an exclusive on the story.

Lance Cpl. Allen learned a brutal lesson when he faced his first appeals hearing. According to the Code of Military Justice, unless a possible defense is brought up at the Article 28 hearing, it cannot be used for appeal. In other words, since no mention of mental competency was discussed at the Article 28 hearing, Allen could not make the claim on appeal. Denzil Allen was going to serve 20 years at hard labor in a military prison at Portsmouth, N.H.

## Enter George Martz

Denzil Allen's parents were distraught. They were simple, unsophisticated people of extremely limited means. They went to a local attorney in Lebanon, Ind., seeking his help. He told them that he could not help them but that he knew of an attorney who might be willing to help Denzil. That man was Indianapolis attorney and Air Force veteran George E. Martz, Sr.

For the first time in this sad legal affair, Denzil Allen had caught a break. George Martz was one of those men who live in legend for their words and deeds. A gruff, tough and profane man, Martz had a dedication to justice and a soft spot for military men. Martz had served as a lieutenant during the Korean War as a pilot flying SA 16 Air/Sea rescue planes. He had personally flown hundreds of severely wounded men from Korea to Hawaii for critical medical attention. He had seen the carnage of war up close and knew what the fighting and merciless killing could do to young men. He took on Denzil Allen as a client and told Allen's parents that there would be no charge.

Martz examined the facts of the case and was faced with a narrow set of options in how to set straight the injustice he felt that Allen received in his legal defense. Before the legal battles began in earnest, Martz believed that he needed to elevate public knowledge of Denzil Allen's plight and organize a public effort for Allen's relief. To that end Martz teamed up with a group of citizens from



Franklin, Ind., who launched a loud and boisterous petition effort to secure freedom for Allen. Before Martz was done, over 50,000 petition signatures would be handed to President Richard Nixon by U. S. Rep. Richard Roudebush, seeking justice for Denzil Allen.

With the public attention turned up a notch, Martz began a three-part legal strategy. First, he would start a long and arduous battle up through the avenues of appeal available through the Court of Military Appeals. Second, Martz filed for a writ of habeas corpus with the First Circuit Court of Appeals asking that a civilian court look into the sentencing. Finally, Martz prepared a case for the clemency board of the United States Navy.

The defense case before the Court of Military Appeals presented a sticky wicket of major proportions. As Martz saw it, the only possible course of appeal for Allen was to proceed on a case of incompetent counsel, citing errors committed by the Marine's first attorney, Sandy

Sydney McMath. Martz liked to call his appeal the case of the improvident plea. That might have been well and good except for one terrifying and colossal roadblock; McMath's father was a major general in the Marine Corps, serving as deputy fleet Marine Force commander in 1967.

Maj. Gen. Sydney Sanders McMath served throughout World War II in the Marines. He returned to an illustrious career in law and a stint as governor of Arkansas. A confidant of President Harry Truman, he was politically powerful. His Marine bona fides were beyond question. It would take an extremely brave or foolhardy Court of Military Appeals to reverse a case solely on the allegation that McMath's son had screwed up.

Martz filed the appeal and dove into the process with zeal and energy. He made over 11 trips to visit Allen in prison. His defense was animated, combative and totally lacking any regard for either of the McMaths. Despite every type of legal jiu jitsu that he could dream up, the military courts beat him down at every opportunity. He reconciled himself to the prospect of a long, long court battle.

### A beaten young man

For Allen's part, he was a beaten young man. He fully came to understand that what he had done was wrong. He personally felt he was evil. He put prison time to good use. He studied and passed his GED. Next he started taking college classes. He tutored fellow inmates in learning to read.

Allen lost his bid for a writ of habeas corpus and Martz began preparing for an appeal to the United States Supreme Court. After battling through the many steps in the Military Court of Appeals, Martz finally reached his last opportunity for pleading the case of the improvident plea. His final hearing was a case study in an attorney who wasn't working for a buck but for justice. His case was presented with a forcefulness and ferocity that showed little regard for the reputation or career of Sandy Sydney McMath. Despite his spirited presentation, the Military Court of Appeals ruled against Denzil Allen.

As George Martz battled through the appeals process, he met several Marine and Naval officers who offered private counsel. They were well aware of what they perceived as a miscarriage of justice and were willing to assist Martz providing that they could work in the shadows. Martz was provided with case files and investigation notes for the other five original defendants. He was given advice and support throughout the process. The help was to no avail,

but it sustained Martz in his time of battle.

Despite the publicity surrounding the case, the petition effort and the very public appeals process, Martz had reached the end of the line, but then a shocking development came in the form of a telephone call.

### 'Come get your boy'

George Martz was sitting at his desk working on another legal matter when his phone rang. It was the commandant of the Portsmouth Naval Prison. "Come and get your boy on Tuesday. Don't come to the prison. We'll bring Allen to you at the corner drug store at 2 p.m. Don't ask questions!"

Martz hurriedly booked a flight for New Hampshire and arrived at the drug store at the appointed time. He was in the company of two prison guards and in civilian clothes. Martz took charge of the surprised Allen and the two immediately headed to the airport. After nearly three years of legal battles that exhausted every conceivable avenue of appeal, Allen's ultimate fate was decided in secret, outside of the legal process and far from any prying media attention. Someone decided that it was best for all concerned that Denzil Allen be set free.

On the flight to Indianapolis, the two veterans talked about the surprising events and Allen's future plans. Allen told Martz that the first thing he wanted to do was



U.S. Army artillery firing at Dong Ha during the Tet Offensive in 1968.

get a vasectomy. He told Martz that "The evil has got to stop with me."

The plane landed at Weir Cook Airport and began the taxiing to the terminal. Before the plane arrived at the terminal, the pilot came on the intercom and announced, "Would Mr. George Martz and Mr. Denzil Allen please come

to the front of the plane and exit the plane first!"

Oh no, thought Martz. Some mistake was made and now that it was discovered that Allen was released, someone was waiting to detain him and return the young Hoosier to prison.

The reality of the situation was far different than their fears. There, waiting in the terminal of the airport as they emerged from the plane were nearly 700 supporters and a brass band from the VFW. Screaming, cheering and slapping Denzil Allen on the back, the young former Marine experienced a return home that was quite different from the thousands of young Vietnam veterans who had been cursed and spit upon as they made their return to civilization.



U.S. Army tanks move toward Dong Ha.

unsuccessful candidate for United States Senate.

What became of the veteran George Martz? He continued a distinguished legal career as both chief deputy Marion County prosecutor and civil litigation attorney. He most notably was the prosecutor who successfully negotiated with Tony Kirtsis for the release of the mortgage executive that Kirtsis had taken hostage and wired a shotgun to the back of his head.

In late August, 2001, George Martz called me and asked me for my help in writing a book on the Denzil Allen case. I agreed to work with Martz on the book. I would write it and he would explain to me all of the legal gymnastics. We were scheduled to meet on Sept. 19 to begin laying out the book. George Martz checked into Community North Hospital for a routine MRI scan on Sept. 17. He immediately developed an allergic reaction to the dye that was injected into his veins and went into cardiac arrest. He died shortly thereafter.

### Gov. Whitcomb gives him a BMV job

It was a surreal dichotomy. Denzil Allen not only returned to Indiana amid fanfare and cheers, he also returned to a job. Gov. Edgar Whitcomb, a fellow Marine veteran himself, offered Allen employment with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Allen would work there for a while but found the office environment confining. Ultimately, Denzil Allen moved to Kentucky where he became a truck driver and lost himself in the anonymity of the hills and hollers around Berea. He stayed in contact with George Martz by writing him or sending a card every Christmas.

The inexperienced defense attorney who George Martz blamed for the improvident plea returned to Arkansas after his tour of duty. He became a law partner of Hillary Clinton at the Rose Law Firm and in 1996 was an

Wars make all kinds of veterans and leave different sorts of wounds. From the worst nightmare that the Vietnam War could create sprang forth a veteran representing the best that man may offer. On this upcoming Veterans' Day, we celebrate the service of all of our men and women who have worn the uniform. May God bless them all! ❖

**Dunn is a former Howard County Republican Party chairman, and author of two books on the Civil War.**



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# Notre Dame grad Costa talks of his coverage of Trump

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – “I’ll never speak to you again,” said Donald Trump, then the Republican presidential nominee, in an angry call to Robert Costa following Costa’s story in the Washington Post about Trump’s refusal to give a definitive answer on the birther issue.



Speak, however, he would. Often. During the campaign and after. Even calling from the Oval Office to give Costa an exclusive about the decision to give up on a Republican plan to overhaul Obamacare: “Hello, Bob. So, we just pulled it.”

Costa, who spoke informally Thursday with University of Notre Dame journalism students over lunch and in a question-and-answer session, is regarded as the national political reporter who best knows President Trump. Costa, a 2008 Notre Dame graduate, is a national political reporter for the Post, an analyst for NBC and MSNBC and moderator of “Washington Week” on PBS.

How did he get to know Trump so well, sometimes the only reporter flying on Trump’s campaign plane? It wasn’t with puff pieces.

Costa told of one time when he spent the day with Trump during the campaign, finally getting the promised exclusive interview on the plane. It turned out to be short and not sweet. Trump was cursing at the television as he watched news he didn’t agree with and also refusing to answer Costa’s questions. When the Post ran a transcript of the rambling remarks, including a brush-off curse at the end, Trump again was miffed at Costa.

**But Costa got to know** Trump before the presidential run as he covered the conservative political world for the National Review. He came to know Trump so well from that and continued contact as he moved to the Post at the end of 2013, that he concluded long before the rest of the Washington press corps that Trump would indeed run for president and that his prospects should be taken seriously. “People said, don’t cover Trump. He’s a clown,” Costa recalled.

He convinced the Post editors to report the politi-

cal facts, showing that Trump, no matter the negative image in Washington, was a serious possibility for president. He reported that on the Post’s front page in February of 2015. “The story was widely mocked,” he said.

Trump perhaps thought he found a reporter who would promote him. Promote him? No. Take him seriously? Yes.

**Trump no doubt was** displeased again by a Post story, with Costa the lead byline writer, that described how Trump responded to the indictments and a guilty plea in the special counsel probe: “Separated from most of his West Wing staff – who fretted over why he was late getting to the Oval Office – Trump clicked on the television and spent the morning playing fuming media critic, legal analyst and crisis communications strategist, according to several people close to him.” The story also told of many White House staffers “freaking out.”

Costa said the first information about concern that Trump was absent from his office that morning came from the White House. The story said that details were based on interviews with 20 senior administration officials, Trump friends and key outside allies. Costa said the story is “100 per cent accurate,” with no demands for retractions that would come if it had been wrong.

Trump did go to the New York Times, which also reported on that hectic day at the White House, to say he was not “angry at anybody.” Costa said he only wished that Trump had come instead to the Post with his anger over being portrayed as angry.

Trump no doubt will be talking with Costa about some issue or incident or to launch another incendiary



charge. Despite Trump’s skillful use of the news media as a tackling dummy, he craves media attention. “He knows how to make news,” Costa said. And Costa said he will, as he did in the past, take Trump’s potential seriously, including for a second term, because Trump “is the best politician I’ve ever seen with a crowd.” ❖

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



# School referendums pass in Lake County

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – School referendums to increase property taxes in Hobart and Hammond were approved Tuesday. But I have to wonder what the outcome would have been if more than 14% of the registered voters had turned out. There was nothing else on the ballot to lure voters to the polls.

You have to think that those who voted were either adamantly for or against the extra money for the school systems. The state law requiring the referendums for extra school funding is full of holes.



As Hammond Supt. Walter Watkins pointed out, schools have suffered from a loss of funding from the state-mandated tax caps, increased costs for health care and ongoing increases in energy and fuel costs. Also, communities that most need the additional money for

schools generally are the poorest. As a result, most residents can't afford to pay additional property taxes and will oppose the referendums.

One can see some of that in the results from Tuesday. Hobart, which is more affluent than Hammond, approved two referendums with 68% of the vote in favor. In Hammond, just 54% of the voters backed the extra spending.

**The money was needed** in each community for a variety of school functions, including the construction of new school buildings. In Hammond, the historic Hammond High School, across the street from City Hall, will be replaced by a new building behind the existing facility. In Hobart, a new elementary school will be built to replace the 62-year-old Ridge View Elementary School, as well as build a swimming pool at the high school.

Had Tuesday been a general election, which would have drawn more voters, one has to wonder if both referendums would have passed. The referendum requirement is in part a way to keep a runaway school board in check. Isn't that the job of the voters who pick school trustees?



**Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is retired from the Post-Tribune.**

# Bringing change in democracy

By LEE HAMILTON

BLOOMINGTON – It's built into the idea of representative democracy that making change is difficult, which is why many people get discouraged. But few things can exceed the satisfaction of helping shape the direction and success of your community or nation.



One of the gifts of living in a representative democracy is that voting is only one of the rights it confers. For ordinary people who want to make change, who in some way want to alter their neighborhood or town or state or even the nation, the promise exists that by their own efforts they can do so. This is a precious gift.

But it is not an easy one to enjoy. Even in a democracy, bringing about significant change requires hard work, a level of intensity and commitment beyond the ordinary responsibilities of citizenship. You need a workable, achievable remedy that will correct the problem you're

worried about. You need patience and perseverance, and a specific set of skills and capabilities.

To begin with, you can't make change alone. You'll require the help of others. So you have to be able to listen carefully to people and then identify the interest groups and individuals who can help you achieve what you want.

This means you also need to be able to look around you and understand the political lay of the land. How intensely will this or that individual or group support you? Will they actually help, or just pay lip service? What are they willing to do; and, just as important, not willing to do?

**What about the lobbyists**, the mayor's or governor's office, or the White House? What kind of reception can you expect from the media? And what will it take to get your allies to work in a coherent, coordinated way?

You also have to take responsibility for being the expert on your proposal. You'll need to understand its weaknesses and strengths, its potential impact, and the arguments both for and against it. There's nothing quite so challenging as appearing before a city council or congressional committee and answering questions from politicians who have their own agendas as they grill you.

You have to know what you're talking about, and be willing constantly to update yourself on the facts. Facts drive the public dialogue, and you want always to be on the lookout for the most persuasive facts or developments that can support your proposal. This is because you'll also

need to communicate constantly, whether you're trying to build support one on one or before a gathering of hundreds. On radio, television, in print, online; it's impossible to over-communicate.

**And though amplifying** the reach of your voice has value, so does retail persuading –plain one-on-one conversations that teach you which arguments carry weight and which don't. Because although you might be starting with like-minded allies, inevitably you'll need to broaden your coalition to include people who were initially skeptical or saw the issue differently from you.

Which is why you also should always be open to the idea that you could be wrong, that your proposal could be improved and strengthened, that others might have better ideas both on substance and on strategy. Part of the art of building coalitions is being open to proposals that alter or change your proposal. You may have put a lot of work into designing and drafting it, but one of the first things you'll encounter is someone who's got an amendment.

No one possesses all the skills needed to per-

suade, cajole, negotiate, and strategize his or her way to success. Especially when it comes to pushing a cause at the state or national level, it will take money to communicate, to advertise, to travel. It takes resources to accomplish changes of consequence, which means raising money and dealing with donors who want a role to play, with all the challenges that brings.

**Fortunately, there is** no single center of power in this country. It takes a complex effort within a complex system to make change, which is why it's such a challenge and why many people get discouraged. It's built into the idea of representative democracy that making change is difficult. But most of us wouldn't have it any other way. Few things can exceed the satisfaction of helping shape the direction and success of your community or nation. ❖

**Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.**

## Keeping the kids home

By MORTON MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS – Maurice Mitchell is a bore and a boor. We never meet without him saying, "You know, not only do we got the same initials, but we also got two names what can be either first or last names. To which I reply, "True, but so what? What, in fact, do you want this time?"



"You know," he begins, "I was thinking it's a shame kids move away from the people and community what raised them and paid for their schooling. It hurts Indiana probably more than other states. It's sort of like stealing, immoral, if you know what I mean."

"Maury," I say, "it's not immoral, it's natural, perhaps even healthy.

And do you think I can do something about it."

"Well," he stammers, "you could, you know, suggest something about incentives for these kids to stay home or at least come back after they graduate from college, if they do that."

**"You mean," I say in my best** imitation of Fred Allen, a deceased radio comedian, "you'd offer Hoosier natives monetary rewards to get them to return to the state as we do to lure companies to Indiana? Next you'd want to give bonuses to families who have children in Indiana just as we try to encourage existing firms to expand in the state."

"I knew you could do it," he exalts. "Yes, we need

to treat families just like we do companies. After all, companies and families are just people and deserve to be treated, you know, alike."

"That's a very judicial twist on a twisted judicial doctrine," I sneer. Maury nods fervently, the clearest indication he has no idea what I am talking about. "When kids leave," he says, "they take our tax dollars with them because we paid to educate them. Why should Illinois, California, and other foreign places benefit from our tax dollars?"

**"Who pays these taxes?" I ask.** "The parents and neighbors of the kids," Maury answers. "Right," I reply. "And why do they do that?"

"Because," he digs for an answer, "they want the kids to do well and hold good jobs and be good citizens, and, you know, all that future stuff."

"Precisely," I pounce. "They pay for education because they want those children to have good lives in the future, no matter where they live. The benefits accrue to the people who supported the education of those children."

"That, you know, is silly," Maury responds. "It's the people living where the kids live in the future who, along with the kids, benefit from the education provided here."

"I'm sad to hear," I say, "that your mother is not proud of you, does not get joy from knowing about your success here in Indiana."

"Well," he says, "that is a different way of looking at it."

"If we didn't value the future of our children and our neighbors' children," I ask, "what kind of people would we be?" ❖

**Mike Allen, Axios:** Let's pause to soak in how profoundly President Trump has split America, one year after winning office. Much is said/written about the America that dislikes/disapproves of Trump. Not enough is said/written about how Trump molded his party and nearly 40% of the country in his image. A Washington Post-ABC News Poll out this morning provides the bleakest of report cards: 65% of Americans say Trump has accomplished "not much" or "little or nothing." This is up from 56% last spring. 43% give him the lowest possible rating, saying he has accomplished "little or nothing." Trump receives even lower ratings on race: Fewer than 3 in 10 say he has done a good job dealing with race relations, which is 12 points below the 40% who said in January they thought he would handle race issues effectively. Half of all Americans say they believe Trump is biased against black people and slightly more (55%) say he is biased against women. One-third say he is honest and trustworthy. So one year after getting elected: half of Americans think he's a racist and nearly two-thirds think he has accomplished little to nothing. This helps explain how, based on this poll, he wins — in a landslide — the race for least popular president one year in since polling began with Truman. WashPost: "He is the only president dating back to Harry S. Truman whose approval rating at this point in his presidency is net negative — by 22 points. The next worst recorded in that time was Bill Clinton, who had a net positive of 11 points by this time in his presidency." And yet ... Trump has transformed the core beliefs of the GOP, making it his Republican Party in a way that the establishment didn't expect, even post-inauguration: Republicans out of politics, or leaving politics, are the only ones publicly criticizing him: the Bushes, lots of Bush 43 staff, Corker, Flake, etc. But Republicans staying in politics are succumbing, even if reluctantly. With little effort, Trump has turned Republicans and the Wall Street Journal editorial page into Trumpers on special counsel Bob Mueller in ways unimaginable in the Clinton days. He has magically silenced a law-and-order party as he hectors Justice and the FBI. Sound smart: The trend lines aren't promising, folks. Trump won't change and elected Rs — and those who want to be elected Rs — are morphing into him. On the other side, Democrats see full resistance as the only plausible response. Hard to believe, but we think polarization only intensifies. ❖



**Paul Waldman, Washington Post:** Let's make an analogy: Automobiles kill around the same number of people as guns, but since we collectively believe that modern life as we know it would be impossible without cars, we do everything we can think of to make them safer. We build them with technology intended to minimize the carnage: seat belts, air bags, anti-lock brakes, new features that alert you when you stray from your lane or your eyelids get heavy. We construct laws and physical

systems — speed limits, pedestrian crosswalks, bike lanes — to make them safer. When a new facet of the problem emerges, like texting while driving, we pass laws and undertake public education campaigns to attempt to address it. We require everyone who has a car to register it with the government and prove they can operate it safely. And within a few years we will completely transform the way we use them because a safer option — self-driving cars — is rapidly being developed. But the gun industry, the NRA, and their allies in Congress have succeeded in ensuring that there will be no new measures of any kind at the federal level to increase gun safety. They even managed to keep the Centers for Disease Control from researching gun violence, which is what you do when you are determined that no one be allowed to treat it as a problem that might have solutions. ❖

**Michael Warren, Weekly Standard:** Republican Ed Gillespie didn't just lose his race for governor in Virginia on Tuesday. The former George W. Bush aide and Washington lobbyist led the GOP ticket in what ended up being a huge rout for the party. From gubernatorial nominee Ralph Northam to the lieutenant governor and attorney general races, all the way down to what most thought would be sleepy house of delegates contests, Democrats won big in the Old Dominion. After tweeting his endorsement for Gillespie on Tuesday morning, President Donald Trump, in South Korea, had this to say about the Virginia results: "Ed Gillespie worked hard but did not embrace me or what I stand for. Don't forget, Republicans won 4 out of 4 House seats, and with the economy doing record numbers, we will continue to win, even bigger than before!" One senior Republican figure close to Trump suggested the party's infrastructure took a break throughout much of 2017—and that a return to the sort of grassroots organizing and ground game of the kind that delivered big GOP wins in 2016 will be much needed in 2018. But there's another interpretation of their big defeat in Virginia that national Republicans are processing: Unless there's a big win for Trump in Washington soon, Republican voters will continue to be demoralized going into the midterm elections next year. When there's nothing for your party's voters to be excited about, how can a better ground game deliver the votes? And the elephant in the room—which Republicans in Washington don't seem to have entirely realized—is that Trump and the GOP may not just be unpopular in well-educated suburbs like Northern Virginia. The president might even be a big motivating factor for Democrats and Democrat leaners. Combine that with a lack of enthusiasm among GOP leaners and how this dynamic would play out in House and Senate races next year isn't clear. But Republicans will need to figure out how they can close an enthusiasm gap over the next 12 months. ❖

## DNR emergency rule on rifles, deer

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana deer hunters have been cleared to once again use rifles on public land (Ryckaert, IndyStar). The Indiana Department of Natural Resources issued an emergency rule that reversed a legislative mistake barring rifle-hunting on all public land. The change comes just in time for the Nov. 18 opening of deer-hunting season. "Rifle cartridges that were allowed in previous years on public land for deer hunting are allowed on public land again this year during the deer firearms season," the DNR announced in a Nov. 3 news release. The new rule allows the use of .357 diameter or larger rounds with a case length of 1.16 to 1.8 inches. Full metal jacketed bullets are illegal, the DNR said. In October, State Rep. Sean Eberhart, R-Shelbyville, said a mistake in his recently passed legislation prohibited hunters from using rifles to hunt deer on state and federal land.



## Trump talks tough, cajoles in China

BEIJING — On his second day in China, U.S. President Donald Trump blended chumminess with his host with tough talk on North Korea and trade, saying he blamed his predecessors rather than Beijing for a "very unfair and one-sided" economic relationship (Wall Street Journal). In joint appearances with President Xi Jinping on Thursday, Mr. Trump spoke in conciliatory tones, praising Mr. Xi as "a very special man" while also calling for forceful action from Beijing. Mr. Trump said past administrations had allowed China to gain unfair trade advantages over the U.S., adding: "But we'll make it fair and it'll be tremendous to both of us." He underlined the need for urgent action to avoid deepening the North Korea crisis, calling on Mr. Xi to increase pressure on Pyongyang over

its nuclear program. "China can fix this problem easily and quickly," he said. "You know one thing about your president: If he works on it hard, it will happen. There's no doubt about it."

## Senators back U.S. Indianapolis medal

WASHINGTON — If you've met one of the survivors of the U.S.S. Indianapolis lately, you're lucky (Davis, WIBC). Just a few of them are left. And, they could all be getting a medal. Your senators, Joe Donnelly (D) and Todd Young (R), have introduced a bill in the Senate called the USS Indianapolis Congressional Gold Medal Act, which would "recognize and honor the crew of the USS Indianapolis for their perseverance, bravery, and service to the United States in World War II," said a prepared statement from both senators. The medal would be displayed at the Indiana War Memorial Museum in Indianapolis. "On behalf of a grateful nation, we are pleased to introduce this bipartisan legislation which would honor the crew of the USS Indianapolis with a Congressional Gold Medal for their service and sacrifice during World War II."

## American Legion backs med pot

INDIANAPOLIS — Leaders at the American Legion Department of Indiana are starting an effort to get state lawmakers to re-consider their position on medical marijuana during the 2018 Indiana General Assembly (Spieth, Fox59). In 2016, the National American Legion announced its supported the usage of medical cannabis for veterans as a treatment option. Earlier this year, the Indiana office also supported the measure. "A lot of veterans are prescribed opioids for their pain," said Williams Henry, the American Legion Department of Indiana's adjutant. The American Legion believes veterans and their families

see a growing number in suicides and death because of a lack of safe medical alternative treatment options, such as medical marijuana. The American Legion plans to announce more Thursday at a press conference, including findings of a recent independent survey commissioned by the National American Legion organization.

## Prosecutors oppose medical marijuana

INDIANAPOLIS — A county prosecutor's group is strongly opposing efforts to allow medical marijuana, saying it's "wrong for Indiana" and could worsen the state's drug abuse crisis (Associated Press). The Association of Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys also debunked cannabis' medicinal properties. It said the Institute of Medicine concluded this year that there was "insufficient evidence" to use it to treat glaucoma, epilepsy, dementia and a host of other ailments. The group wrote a letter to the state's drug czar last week, asking him to "formally oppose the legalization of marijuana in any form, for any purpose." "We strongly believe both medicinal and recreational marijuana legalization are wrong for Indiana," said the Nov. 3 letter to the Indiana Commission to Combat Drug Abuse, chaired by drug czar Jim McClelland. "We urge you to take a stand against these policies that would cause further harm to communities already suffering from the devastating effects of drug abuse."

## Donnelly suicide bill passes Senate

INDIANAPOLIS — Tuesday evening, the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act, sponsored by Senators Joe Donnelly and Orrin Hatch, passed unanimously in the Senate (WBIW). This critical suicide prevention legislation would require the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to study the national suicide prevention hotline system and to make recommendations.