



## Messer's pitch to Trump/Pence base

INSen candidate is telling GOP primary voters he will be backing the president

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

ANDERSON – The classic mom-and-pop joint in downtown was called the Toast Cafe, potentially a dangerous place for a U.S. Senate candidate to show up for a meet-and-greet with voters heading into a competitive primary. It's a term Hoosiers often use to



describe the concept of defeat. But it can also be prelude to victory before champagne is uncorked. Two women stood on the corner carrying anti-Trump and pro-Dreamer placards. Bounding in just a few minutes behind schedule was U.S. Rep. Luke Messer, wearing corduroy pants and a dark shirt.

**Continued on page 4**

## Rural broadband advance

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – Last Wednesday afternoon before bedlam overtook the Indiana General Assembly, a hallway friend of mine texted me: "Have you been drinking?" This came after word from the Statehouse that

HB1065, a bill to establish government grants for rural broadband access, was going down.

Nashville Town Manager Scott Rudd, who worked in tandem with Advance Indiana Municipalities and the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, sounded the alarm. It was quickly confirmed by sources in the lieutenant governor's office.

What should I do? Then I thought, so what would President



**“Half the soybeans grown in Indiana are exported to China. Honeywell makes brakes and avionics in South Bend that go to Boeing airplanes. China is threatening retaliation against both.”**

*- U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski  
in House Ways & Means*



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Trump do?

So, I tweeted: "We're hearing AT&T is trying to kill off HB1065, the bill that would help companies and REMCs bring high speed broadband to rural areas. Hell to pay if this is what's happening. Time for rural legislators to step up and fight for their economies and constituents."

A few minutes later, I tweeted some more: "On AT&T snuffing HB1065, the bill allowing REMCs and small companies to extend rural broadband to our rural Hoosier brothers and sister, my weekly column runs in Churubusco, Elkhart, Lawrenceburg, Hendricks County, Logansport, Kokomo ... there will be HELL TO PAY if 1065 dies."

I forgot to add the Trumpian "SAD!"

And a few minutes after that, a source in the LG's office reported my tweets were having an impact.

Shortly thereafter, I got a call from AT&T Indiana President Bill Soards, who insisted he and his company weren't opposed to HB1065. He was only doing what anyone in his position would do, which is to work to protect his company's interests. He explained, "We aren't trying to kill it. We continue to try and make it tech neutral." By that, Soards was seeking to make sure the operational costs would be there for all providers.

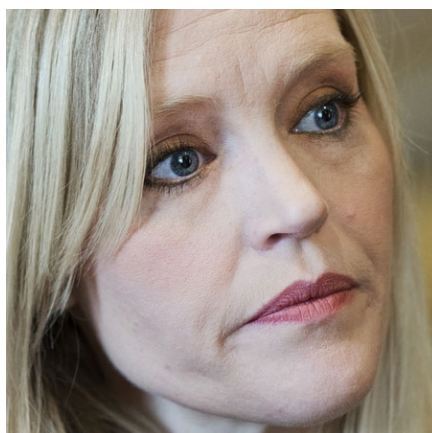
**My interest** in HB1065 stemmed from my service on the Brown County Broadband Task Force, which was founded by Rudd and includes members from the county school corporation, highway department, community foundation, citizen activists and smaller internet companies. The goal has been to expand access to that "last mile."

A Federal Communications Commission report released in Febru-

ary revealed that rural Indiana residents are lagging behind all adjacent states in high-speed internet access: Indiana 58.5%, Kentucky 68.8%, Illinois 63.5%, Michigan 66.4% and Ohio 71.1%.

Rudd observed, "868,013 Hoosiers that lack high-speed internet are one step closer to starting the process of building out" with HB1065.

**In the past** couple of months, REMC's, which came into existence to extend electrical service to the proverbial last mile, were interested in extending such service. HB1065 was the vehicle to begin the process.



**State Sen. Erin Houchin** revived a faltering HEA1065 before chaos overtook the General Assembly. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

State Sen. Erin Houchin authored SB356, which was later combined into HB1065 that would create a state grant program emphasizing the build-out of broadband infrastructure. The legislation had the support of REMCs, Comcast and several broadband innovation groups. "They reached out and said, 'Let us help

craft something we can support,'" Houchin told me on Monday. "That was the first time that had happened."

**AT&T took** a pass, indicating that the "return on investment isn't there." Houchin explained, "AT&T was not at the table. They never came to the table."

What roused AT&T's interest was that at various stages of the bill's evolution, the REMCs were excluded (and then written back in) along with AT&T and other cellular companies. "I did not want to exclude anyone," Houchin said. "I want everyone to participate in the grant." She asked retiring State Rep. David Ober, who chairs the conference committee on the bill, to prevent any exclusions.

AT&T then wanted the legislation written so that the grant program would allow operating expenses to be paid out. Houchin explained, "If you

allow operating expenses, it would drain the fund." She wanted it to be used for capital build-outs. Ober put the operating expense provisions in. When Houchin pressed him on the matter Tuesday night, his response was, "I guess your bill is dead."

Houchin is from Salem and represents rural areas in Washington County and adjacent counties. Ober is from Albion in Noble County, representing lake country. Folks will tell you how fitful it is to get reliable, high-speed broadband in both locales.

**Houchin redoubled her** efforts beginning at 6 a.m. Wednesday, reaching out to State Rep. Sharon Negele, who represents a rural western Indiana district. Rep. Negele subsequently helped get the operating expenses out. A conference committee report was forged by 3 p.m., just prior to the chaos that would break out a few hours later, killing a slew of other bills.

Houchin spent the next five hours seeking the conference report signatures from Sen. Lonnie Randolph of East Chicago and State Rep. Ryan Hatfield of Evansville, both representing very urban districts. It was curious that Democrats seeking to make inroads in this year's elections had urban legislators as conferees, but Houchin successfully made her case, with Hatfield the last to sign. Ober filed the signed report later in the evening. Less than a week later, Gov. Eric Holcomb appointed him to the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission.

Gov. Holcomb signed the bill on Wednesday, though he did not release comments. Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, who oversees OCRA, lauded HEA1065, saying, "I'm especially pleased to see that we are making progress on ensuring equal broadband opportunities across rural Indiana."

As for broadband speed, there are three tiers: Areas with no access; areas with 10/1 megabites per second (Mbps); and those with less than 25/3 Mbps. The speeds outlined in HEA1065, were kept at 10/1 megabites per second instead of the FCC advised standards of 25/3 Mbps. Houchin explained, "If we set it at 25/3, the resources could go to Carmel and other areas with speeds greater than 10/1."

Thus, the legislation is aimed at areas lacking the high speeds.

**Justin Schneider**, director of state government Relations for the Indiana Farm Bureau, calls HEA1065 "a good first step," adding, "That's critical because now (that) we have the program in place, we have a mechanism to be able to fund applicants... the service providers who come in and say, 'Hey, we want to deploy in this area where there currently isn't service' at least 10 megabit download speed and one megabit upload speed."

Houchin said that HEA1065 will allow the state to attract federal funds for rural broadband expansion.

During her 2008 gubernatorial campaign, Democratic gubernatorial nominee Jill Long Thompson's goal was to "save every Indiana community." The economic realities are that not every community is going to make it.

People are gradually moving to urban and suburban areas, a trend that began more than a century ago as manufacturing provided more jobs than the farms.

Some believe it's a waste of money to try and save rural Indiana. For others, like Rudd and Sen. Houchin, they view universal high-speed internet as a key component to keeping many rural areas relevant. Some rural Hoosier communities will fail, but others which innovate will make it.

Others point to Tesla CEO Elon Musk's SpaceX company, which launched two satellites on the Falcon



Tesla's Elon Musk and his SpaceX Starlink concept.

Heavy rocket launch in February to test a program called Starlink. Business Insider reports that Starlink will "bathe Earth in high-speed internet access. The Starlink plan calls for nearly 12,000 interlinked satellites — many more than currently orbit Earth."

"**The common challenges** associated with siting, digging trenches, laying fiber, and dealing with property rights are materially alleviated through a space-based broadband network," Patricia Cooper, SpaceX's vice president of satellite government affairs, said in written testimony to a Senate committee in May 2017.

Musk adds, "We're really talking about something which is, in the long term, like rebuilding the internet in space. The goal will be to have the majority of long-distance internet traffic go over this network and about 10% of local consumer and business traffic. So probably 90% of people's local access will come from fiber, but we'll do about 10% business to consumer direct and more than half of the long-distance traffic."

The topic of what kind of technologies will come to the fore has been discussed extensively on the Brown County Broadband Task Force. There have been deep discussions about the technology available today, and what will develop in five years or 20. There is some temptation to sit and wait. The activists want to keep moving.

Earlier this week, the Brown County Commissioners voted to create the first tax and fee free zone for rural broadband investment countywide. "It's a great step forward," Rudd said. "Now we need to find money for the new rural grant program and go to work."

Last week, Hoosier innovators made a decision not to just stand still. ❖

## Messer, from page 1

He has inherited the happy warrior M.O. of his 6th CD predecessor, Vice President Mike Pence. Messer was affable, approachable, good humored, and doesn't have a bad thing to say about his two opponents, prickly U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, who can't help needling his opponents with smash-mouth verbal broadsides, and Jasper businessman Mike Braun, who castigates any member of Congress as part of the nation's problems.

About 40 Republicans have packed a backroom at the Toast, including Madison County Republican Chairman Russ Willis, who has endorsed Rokita, and veteran Anderson Herald-Bulletin reporter, Ken de la Bastide. Messer is upbeat and describes himself as a "family man" who just coached his son's fifth grade basketball team to a title. It's a subtle and on-going retort to Rokita's criticism that he moved his family to D.C.

"The month of March has been a stressful time for the Messer family," the candidate begins. "We got our way through the fifth-grade tournament with three three-point games. That was a battle. Our March Madness bracket has been torn up, but it does look good for Purdue. My 10-year-old son, Hudson, says any of 20 teams can win the title this year. I think the tournament has proven that."

For Messer, who began his political career 18 years prior in a 6th CD primary race against Pence, his career hangs in the balance over the next seven weeks. It comes in a surreal environment with President Trump sucking the oxygen away from just about any other politician. Messer has embraced the controversial president. He, Rokita and Braun believe the Trump voters will be the ones to turn out on May 8.

Messer tells the same bio stories that he did last July when he kicked off his campaign in Shelby County. There's his first football practice with ill-fitting pads, with his single mom admonishing the notion of giving up, saying, "Quitters never win and winners never quit." There's Hudson's query of why a "follower" like Democrat Joe Donnelly would be elected as a "leader."

And then there's the topical controversy of Rokita ducking two April debates because the moderators aren't sufficiently Republican, conservative or Trumpy. That has led to another Messeresque quip: "I'm going to show up to the debate and debate whoever shows up." The room loved it.

At a similar event at the Westfield Diner 90 minutes later, he aligned with Trump. With Frank Sinatra crooning "I did it my way" over the speakers, Messer suggested that Trump's hard line against North Korea had brought the missile-lobbing despot to his knees. "Who would have thought just a couple of months ago that

North Korea would be coming to the negotiating table?" When he posed the question at the Toast, several responded, "Amen."

"The best way to deal with this man is through strength," Messer said of dictator Kim Jong Un. "President Trump should get a Nobel Peace prize." The Westfield room broke into widespread applause. Ditto for the Toast. It's one of Messer's key, winning lines.



Messer gives his pitch to a packed back room at the Toast Cafe in Anderson. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

The candidates embrace Trump, knowing full well that the eventual nominee may have to pivot in the race against Sen. Donnelly if the "blue wave" turns into a classic mid-term tsunami. Polls earlier this year showed Trump's Indiana approval slipping to 47%, with 53% disapproving.

But an Indiana Axios/Survey Monkey poll earlier this month showed how nothing can be taken for granted. Trump's approval stood at 53%, support for the tax reforms stood at 59% with 38% opposing, 54% believing the economy is better and the GOP "generic nominee" led Donnelly 51-45%. "The reality is this: He won't be running against a generic Republican. He'll be running against a Republican we nominate," Messer said. "That's why we're working so hard so we can take this fight to Joe Donnelly this fall. That's where our focus is going to stay. We're going to stay laser-focused on Joe Donnelly."

"I believe everything in the 2016 elections from Bernie Sanders to the rise of Donald Trump is rooted in the worry that the American dream is slipping away," Messer said at the Toast. "In community after community people want to make sure that every little boy and every little girl has a chance to build a life. I believe under the leadership of this president, we've taken some big steps in the right direction."

He also channels President Reagan, posing the familiar 1984 morning in America reelection question in both Westfield and Anderson: "Are you better off than you were two years ago?" It is greeted with affirmation.

HPI hit the road with the candidate in his campaign Chevy Sierra pickup truck as he coursed through the Madison and Hamilton countryside between Anderson and Westfield, and conducted this interview:

**HPI:** Where do you think the Republican Senate race stands right now? The information I'm getting from the campaigns is that there is a tight cluster of all three candidates within the margin of error of each other.

**Messer:** Our polling shows us slightly ahead in a race that is very close. We'll continue to hustle and work at it and run through the finish line. What's the old adage? You run every day like you're a couple of points behind. We may feel like we're a couple of points ahead, but still we're hustling and working hard. I am really enthused by the reception we are getting in every corner of the state.

**HPI:** How do you separate yourself from the pack?

**Messer:** I've said everywhere I go that I am laser-focused on Joe Donnelly. Republicans want a champion to take on Joe Donnelly and defend the Trump/Pence agenda in the fall. When Republicans throw stones at Republicans the happiest guy around is Joe Donnelly because the only way Democrats can win statewide is when they divide Republicans. The second broader issue you've heard me say several times is the essence of the case we have to make against Joe Donnelly is he isn't really who he says he is. He says he's conservative when he's back home and he votes liberal out in Washington and votes with the liberal wing of his party 85% of the time. I think it's very important we have an authentic candidate who is who they say they are. I'm a Hoosier, a conservative and I support the Trump/Pence agenda and that's how we win in the fall.

**HPI:** Your two primary opponents are not beyond criticizing another Republican and it seems to me you're coming from the Mike Pence school where he ran his congressional races and the governor race without criticizing his opponents or going negative to the point that it could have cost him the election in 2012. Is there a danger in following Reagan's 11th Commandment?

**Messer:** Look, I trust the voters of Indiana. The truth has a way of coming out and ultimately, again, I'm real optimistic about how this race turns out in the next seven weeks.

**HPI:** Do you think the rank-and-file Republicans understand the tone you're trying to set as opposed

to Todd Rokita who is playing Chicago Bear/Mike Ditka smash-mouth?

**Messer:** I can tell you that in appearance after appearance after appearance, I get thanked by people for the tone and approach we're taking to this campaign. I'm optimistic that as the race unfolds over the next seven weeks, Hoosiers are going to have enough information to make their decision.

**HPI:** Are voters expressing any concern over Mike Braun being a largely self-funded candidate and is trying to buy an election?

**Messer:** I don't hear a lot about that. I think there's more concern about other issues. You know what the issues are with both guys we're running against. What you hear is the appropriate questions have been raised.

**HPI:** The actual policy issues are morphing during this campaign. We weren't talking about tariffs last fall, but we're talking about tariffs now. We're going to have these

national gun-reform rallies this weekend and you took a couple of questions in Anderson on that. Talk to me about the policy evolution in this race.

**Messer:** The No. 1 consistent principle you hear when talking with Republican primary voters around the state is they want to nominate and elect a U.S. senator to help President Trump finish the job, to help President Trump achieve his campaign promises. They don't necessarily agree with every nuance of what he might tweet or pose, but they believe it's important to shake up the system. They believe that shock therapy

is warranted. And they want to know that the Republican they send is going to work with the president to get things done. The biggest issue difference you've seen in this campaign revolved around the budget and the funding bill that's up this week (Note: Messer voted for the budget, Rokita against). When I was asked by the president and his leadership team to support that spending bill, it was to support our troops and to build up the military. I voted yes. I think that's more important than to run around the state with a cardboard cutout over your shoulder, saying you support President Trump. Republicans want to nominate somebody who actually supports the president. Now, that doesn't mean that on every single issue. Most Republicans support the president on the events in Florida, the shooting at the high school there. They want us to focus on school security and mental health and getting our background check system to work.

**HPI:** I've had trouble figuring out where Presi-



Luke Messer talks to GOP voters at the Westfield Diner. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

dent Trump actually stands on issues like immigration and gun reform. When he and the vice president met with the Douglas and Columbine students and those from Sandy Hook, he called for "comprehensive" reforms. There was the NRA meeting the next night and the tone and what he was saying changed. I'm not sure where he's at. As a member of Congress, is it tough to figure out where he stands on an issue? When you look at Mike Pence, he would take a stand, have laser focus and a very tight set of talking points. You knew you could take that to the bank. With Trump, not so much.

**Messer:** I've learned to hit the pause button for a little while and see what develops over a couple of days without jumping to any snap judgments based on the first tweet. Frankly, the president comes to a conclusion and then stays there. For example, there was some debate over a few days but I think his agenda is pretty clear to make sure that we have safe schools.

**HPI:** Do you have an ongoing dialogue with Vice President Pence and National Intelligence Director Dan Coats? I look at those two guys and they are going to be in history books. They've got the front row seat.

**Messer:** I did not memorize your Howey Top 50 listing, but surely you had those two guys in the top five. If not they had to be pretty high. They are very important and do very important jobs. That keeps changing. You have Alex Azar in there now. And Seema Verma. I get to see Sen. Coats ... and Vice President Pence regularly. I have the opportunity to catch up on times in Indiana. I just feel good for our nation that we have leaders like them in these important jobs. They are people who are bright and smart and tenacious and have integrity. I occasionally get a text or a phone call.

**HPI:** My take is that it's Pence and Coats who are keeping President Trump within the guardrails through all the turmoil. Is that an accurate perception?

**Messer:** I wouldn't know how to describe that. I wouldn't have any comment on that description. They both have very prominent roles and I feel good for our country that they are in those jobs.

**HPI:** We're seven weeks out and you've got three debates with Rokita signaling he's not going to show up for two of them. How important are the debates for you and for the typical Republican voter, some 30 to 40% who may be undecided at this point?

**Messer:** First, I'm going to show up to the debate and debate whoever shows up.

**HPI:** That's a great line. Do I see a TV ad there?

**Messer:** Exactly. Beyond that, these are way more important for the Republican voter than they are for any specific campaign. I think it's important to remember that Joe Donnelly is in the Senate because of a debate performance six years ago. Republicans need a champion

who can stand up for the Trump/Pence agenda and stand up to Joe Donnelly and his record. We're going to be at these debates and allow Hoosiers to judge whether we're prepared for the job.

**HPI:** Do you think Rokita fears the so-called "Richard Mourdock moment," as you mentioned?

**Messer:** I learned long ago, do not try to read minds. I occasionally get in trouble for that with my wife.

**HPI:** In a policy sense, the commentary was out of Pennsylvania 18 special election, Republicans initially talked about the tax cuts, and then they kind of backed off. They didn't seem to be resonating. When you talk to a room like you did back at the Toast Cafe, are people coming up to you and saying, "Hey, I got a nice \$25 to \$30 bump in my paycheck?"

**Messer:** Yes, people are excited about the tax cut. They are very focused on the Trump/Pence agenda. They feel good about the economy and optimistic that the future will be better than the past. In many ways, they've



Veteran Anderson Herald-Bulletin reporter Ken de la Bastide interviews Messer at the Toast Cafe. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

turned off the TV sets and the day-to-day noise. Part of your job is to follow the day-to-day noise, you have to, but they've stepped away from that and observed the results and act accordingly. I learned a long time ago when I worked with Gov. Daniels, you have to be ready to make the case to the people of Indiana about why they should continue to support your agenda. That will be an important part of this fall. I believe if this race in the fall is about what senator will support the Trump/Pence agenda, the Republican will prevail. About all the sideshow and what the Democrats want to try to do is demonize whoever our nominee is... it's the only way they've had any success in recent years in electing Democrats statewide.

**HPI:** If I've had a criticism of you and Rokita during this cycle it's the impact of tax reform on the federal deficits. I'm sure it will come up in the debates. At the end of the Bush 43 administration, we saw budget deficits in the trillions. We replaced the billions with trillions.

**Messer:** First, I believe the Trump tax cuts are



Luke Messer responds to questions at the Westfield Diner on Monday. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

going to lead to a growing economy and more jobs and we'll see increased dollars in government coffers from having taxpayers with larger paychecks contributing to the broader economy. The only time we've actually balanced budgets and gotten rid of the deficits in modern times was in the 1990s when we had a growing economy. It was growing at a far faster rate than it did during the Obama years. Secondly, the national debt doubled under the Obama presidency. Joe Donnelly voted for all those budgets and spending bills. So, to now say he won't vote for the budgets or tax cuts because it somehow contributes to the deficits, then why did he vote for all those Obama spending bills that had far more dramatic impacts than this tax bill will?

**HPI:** I'm from the Mitch Daniels school of deficits and national debt. I took his book "Keeping the Republic" seriously. What stunned me about the 2016 race was none of that ever came up, including entitlement reform. Trump didn't talk about it, Hillary didn't talk about it.

**Messer:** That's right. Some of what President Trump inherited was similar to what President Reagan inherited in the early 1980s. We have a host of problems to deal with and deficits and the debt are one of them. A stagnant economy without meaningful growth in a very long time – and I think you heard me talk in that room, when I talk to Hoosiers – the No. 1 concern of working families is frozen paychecks and stagnant wages and the fact they feel they have been on a treadmill for a couple of decades. The only way to deal with that is growing the economy. The military readiness is another. The risks are different than the Cold War risks, but nonetheless more difficult to manage. They are more complicated. What I think we have to do is deal with all of those to the best of our ability. Jump-starting the economy is an important priority to balancing the budget over time. I've voted for some very tough budgets that have balanced in four or five short years. I voted with Gov. Daniels to balance budgets in the first year. Hopefully that will come back.

**HPI:** In the proposed Trump-Kim summit, I like the sound of that a lot better than when they were comparing the size of their nuclear buttons. Anytime you can talk is better than all the sabre rattling. Is Trump going to

be prepared since we don't have a South Korean ambassador, we don't have a head of the East Asian section at the State Department? To do a summit like this, he's going to have to have his "S" together.

**Messer:** I would never underestimate President Trump. I had a leadership meeting with President Trump, Vice President Pence, Steve Scalise, Kevin Brady and Patrick McHenry. We were talking about efforts to repeal Obamacare. And three or four times in the meeting the president stopped and said, "Hey, wait until you see my tax plan. You're going to love my tax plan. It's going to be way easier to cut taxes than to get rid of Obamacare." Everybody laughed. As we walked out of that meeting, I said to our team, "This guy conquered the world of business and became a billionaire, he conquered the world of politics and became president. You can underestimate him if you want, I don't think I will. If he says he's going to have a tax plan, I suspect we're going to see a tax plan." And, of course, he did and it was easier to cut taxes than it was to repeal Obamacare. He has a unique approach to twitter diplomacy that is not always obvious. It is hard to argue that North Korea is now hinting they will end their nuclear program. They have a long way to go. Nobody is saying today it's done, but I'm convinced this president knows how to get a deal. Beyond that, you mentioned Dan Coats and Mike Pence. Mike Pompeo is a friend of mine from Congress and Mike is cut from the same cloth. He's a great person, he's smart, he's tenacious, he did a great job at the CIA and I'm told he is highly involved in these efforts to North Korea.

**HPI:** That reminds me of one of my favorite Reagan phrases, which was: "You ain't seen nuthin' yet."

**Messer:** He used to also say "Trust but verify." Right? I think that will be the key here with North Korea. We'll have to verify what they do because in the past North Korea has lied, regularly.

**HPI:** Your first congressional race was 2000, right?

**Messer:** Yes, 2000 against Mike Pence.

**HPI:** That was 18 years ago, almost a generation. How has congressional-level politics changed in that time span? Back then we hadn't been on the internet or using

email for very long. Twitter, Instagram and Facebook didn't exist. Is it more perilous these days? Easier?

**Messer:** That's a fascinating question. One thing I can tell you is that Mike Pence is the same guy he is today that he was 18 years ago. We used to get along on the campaign trail even when we were running against each other. In some ways, voters are more engaged today than they were 18 years ago. With Facebook and the internet, people have access to a lot more information than they used to. We have a tendency to deal with social media. There's a kind of all-caps way of talking with each other. There's a civility that's changed because it's easier to throw stones at people when you're not looking them in the eye.

**HPI:** I have to say I regret calling Rokita a "wussy" after he said he wouldn't debate, but I was trying to frame it in the parlance of what a typical Hoosier would say about ducking a debate.

**Messer:** I think that's right. I've said to folks, because of a race this size, you've got consultants from all over the country here. One thing I say is that Hoosiers do not shout at each other. It's just not who we are. Now, the other point, some other things have not changed in 18 years. This is still a conservative state. Hoosiers believe in conservative principles. For the Republican Party, things have changed over the past 18 years. When I was running for Congress in 2000, Democrats controlled the state for four straight governor elections. We now have a record that's a decade and a half long of standing strong on conservative principles and delivering. Most Hoosiers see Vice President Pence and President Trump as a continuation of that legacy.

**HPI:** I've got this primary race as a tossup. I think it can go any which way. I've said there were some parallels to the 1998 race between Paul Helmke, John Price and Peter Rusthoven. Does anyone pull away?

**Messer:** I think in the end we pull away. One big difference between this race and the '98 race is that was a very quiet race because all three campaigns struggled with their campaigns around the state. This race we're all going to make our argument. I just think my argument will win.

**HPI:** In 1998, there was an inevitability that Evan Bayh was going to win. He was born to be a senator.

**Messer:** Supposedly that was the plan. He was supposed to be secretary of state and then he was going to run against Dan Quayle, but they took a poll and he was ahead of (Lt. Gov. John) Mutz. So, they changed course and decided to run for governor because they saw that as their best opportunity to win.

**HPI:** The other huge difference is this cycle the Republican nominee or Sen. Donnelly can win.

**Messer:** Sen. Donnelly is going to be very tough to beat. He has managed to convince a lot of Hoosiers he's a Main Street guy and that's not what his record shows. We're going to have to be ready to take that case to him. It's a big part of why I'm running because I know I'm the person who can do that. ❖

## Trump's 'Nobel Peace Prize'

By MARK SOUDER

FORT WAYNE – The Trump 2018 nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize were deemed apparently fake. It does give one an idea of the unfolding Indiana Republican senate primary that Congressman Luke Messer's possible nomination of Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize was actually posted on his website. Except that it was sort of fake: It was to give Trump the prize if he accomplished something that is unlikely to be done (North Korea agreeing to give up its nuclear capabilities).



Messer's statement was superficially silly. But like much of politics today, it was a statement with multiple layers. Beyond the headline was a shot at former President Obama's receipt of the

Nobel for "being a charming presidential candidate" according to Messer. Since it was awarded to Obama after he had barely served, it clearly was not based upon achievement. Obama shots still have some potency in primaries.

But Messer's first line was really the only important one: "If North Korea talks lead to concrete action, President Trump should be well on his way to his own Nobel Peace Prize." All people who understand politics know that the lead is just a plain old political maneuver to associate Messer in headlines with the president. The statement was about associative goals, not any substance at all. It was an attempt to associate with President Trump without actually doing so. Just as criticizing the Democrats' approach to the Russian investigation is, as opposed to either stating that it is needed or should be halted. Messer clearly is seeking to add enough pro-Trump people to those who have serious doubts about Trump.

**Mike Braun, on the other hand,** is running an unabashedly Trumpian campaign. There is no doubt that Braun is an Indiana variation of Trump. Braun is a businessman, obviously very wealthy, and also like the president, has been no Republican loyalist. Braun is also making similar Trumpian mistakes. The racial insensitivity in his Indianapolis murder ad was deliberately provocative.

Congressman Rokita has shown no willingness thus far to put any light between the president and himself. Rokita and Messer have almost identical, nearly perfect conservative voting records in Congress. Their differences are ones largely of style and emphasis, though Trump's policies on trade are beginning to drive some real cracks among conservatives, so could gun control. Not leaving some space between a candidate and this president can be incredibly risky, but Rokita is trying to appeal



to Trump voters as one of them. The core of his message is that he can win because he has experience, but has not been tainted by it. It worked for Ronald Reagan, though this is not 1980 anymore.

**Everything up until** now in this senate race was market (i.e. brand) positioning that sets up paid media campaigns. Statewide campaigns are not won or lost on actual voter contact. It is impossible. Increasingly even at the congressional level, years of grassroots connections can be countered by effective television ads. Candidates even remold their lives. Past issue positions are overwhelmed by what the candidate's ads claim those positions to be.

That said, I have always argued that brand positioning is the single most important factor in sales success. These early stages of pre-positioning shaped who the candidates are in the minds of the opinion-makers, as opposed to voters at large. It will become increasingly hard for the candidates to reshape them even if they desire to. The opinion-makers in this case include the media, but also include county chairmen, grassroots Republicans who attend political events, ideological activists and people who watch and consume news. As traditional media decline in reach and power, the power of opinion-leaders who pay attention (i.e., key influencers) increases. They are also nearly certain to vote in a primary.

Most importantly, each candidate's brand position is pretty strongly now locked in the minds of the largest donors. Other than debates, and coverage of odd statements and mistakes, free publicity is either little or very boring. In other words, dollars will drive this race from here on out. Visits that do not re-confirm the already determined market position to those who have been watching will quickly lead to assumptions of opportunism, wishy-washiness and flip-flopping.

**The early advertising** and media strategies so far have largely reinforced the initial positioning. Braun has had a very consistent ad campaign, which he started early and has been sustaining at significant gross rating points heavily targeted at news viewers (most likely primary voters). His name identification is rising but, probably more significantly, with a consistent association. The pictures – in his business, in a factory – are worth thousands of words. He looks like what Trump claims to be: A gritty fighter, not an insider.

If the election was based on just voter contact, Rokita would win in a walk. Most Hoosier Republicans have already voted for him twice. Rokita knows voters at multiple levels, whereas Messer knows people he considers important and Braun knows almost none and doesn't seem to view it as a priority, treating voters more like employees than people who will determine his fate.

However, Rokita's declining the final debate, with evolving explanations, have hinted at his alleged prickliness which help give credibility to how his opponent's hope to shape his image.

Among Messer's first ads was one that featured his picture-perfect family that screamed upper class establishment. The contrast with Braun's empty factory ad could not have been more jarring. Whether his campaign meant to do so or not, they

positioned Messer just as Braun would like to position both Messer and Rokita: Comfortable Washingtonians.

**With branded candidates** off and running, it now becomes a matter of execution and avoiding mistakes. In this race, because each candidate is so clearly defined, the pivot points will spin around their images, a mistake, or new damaging information.

It has the potential of being a cliff-hanger to primary election day, emblematic of the divided Indiana and national Republicans. However, the trend-line generally becomes apparent with about two or three weeks to go, and then very clear with a week to go (at least to insiders). It will be fascinating to watch a classic race of well-funded candidates with unique styles and positioning. ❖

**Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.**



Todd Rolita (left) and Mike Braun. (HPI Photos by Mark Curry)



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# Indiana Democrats get a special gift

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana Democrats are in their best position since the 2011 reapportioned maps to make inroads into the General Assembly Republican super-majorities. Did GOP legislative leaders hand them a golden opportunity with the coming special session?

Last Wednesday, sine die came amongst chaos, prompting Gov. Eric Holcomb to call on Monday for a special session. "It is what it is, we ran out of time," Holcomb said. "The beauty of our system is we can fix this. Whatever that cost is, it's dwarfed by inaction."

House Minority Leader Terry Goodin, who called the session a "dog's breakfast" last week, reacted, saying, "The only reason we are even talking about a special session now is because of the mismanagement demonstrated by those in charge of the legislature."

Senate President David Long and House Speaker Brian Bosma moved past their finger-pointing at each other for the debacle and quickly got on board with the governor. "The Senate will support his decision and work diligently to complete the tasks he sets out for us," Long said. He said Wednesday that senators will donate their pay to the Military Family Relief Fund. Bosma said he will encourage his members to contribute their per diem to the Indiana Association of Resources and Child Advocacy.

Bosma vowed to wrap up the session in one day and indicated that legislators won't consider anything new (Berman, [WIBC](#)). Holcomb has asked legislators to confine themselves to increased school safety funding, an emergency loan to the Muncie Community Schools, and adjustments to Indiana's tax code to bring it in line with federal tax changes resulting from President Trump's tax-reform bill.

Democrats have 103 General Assembly candidates, compared to 83 in the 2014 mid-term, including 60 first-time candidates, 27 millennials, and 52 women.

Democratic Chairman John Zody senses an opening. "Gov. Eric Holcomb's special session is the \$30,000-day cherry on top of Republicans' ineptly managed, visionless legislative session. Republican leadership incompetently steered session into a wall on the last lap," he said. "Now they're asking taxpayers to foot the bill for another shot at passing their do-nothing agenda. Repub-

licans couldn't see fit to competently manage a process that would have increased school safety, while at the same time telling Hoosier children in the DCS system that they weren't a high enough priority to warrant legislative action during session. It looks out of touch and like Republicans are trying to have it both ways."

In SD18, Democrat Gary Snyder called on State Sen. Andy Zay to donate his pay. "I call on appointed State Sen. Zay to follow the lead of many of his Democratic colleagues in the Indiana State Senate and donate his special session pay to a local charity," said Snyder. "What appointed Sen. Zay may not realize is that when most struggling middle-class families punch the time clock in the morning, they don't leave until the job is done. Andy didn't get his work done. Hard working taxpayers should not have to pay him for not doing his job."

Will any of this stick to Republicans, already facing a dicey mid-term climate with the unpredictable President Trump? It's far too early to tell, but this is a potential gift, particularly if this special session is not well managed.

While special sessions were the norm during the 1980s and 1990s, in an era of 50/50 split Houses and divided government, they have become rare in this era of Republican dominance. The last big one occurred in June 2002 with House Minority Leader Brian Bosma emerging as a true dealmaker. It was Gov. Frank O'Bannon's penultimate session, Speaker John Gregg's swan song, and they forged a tax reform package.

Gov. Mitch Daniels had an aversion to special sessions. In his first budget session of 2005, he created the Indiana Economic Development Corporation and boasted of the first "honestly balanced budget" in years. Daniels avoided a special session in 2007 after Democrats retook the House in 2006, calling that session one that produced "the most important health care legislation of our lifetimes" (the Healthy Indiana Plan), adding, "I want to commend every member of the General Assembly. People who feared gridlock or paralysis instead saw another session of dramatic change and progress

for our state."

Republicans retook the House in 2010 and that began the super-majority era that extended through Gov. Mike Pence's term and with Gov. Holcomb . . . until, now.

## U.S. Senate

### Dems cite Messer money from Carrier

A news item entitled "Congressman Messer accepted money from Carrier parent company right after they laid off Hoosier workers" appeared on the website of the Indiana Democratic Party yesterday (Howey Politics



House Minority Leader Terry Goodin may have gotten a gift from the super majority Republicans.

Indiana). "Congressman Messer accepted campaign donations from Carrier's parent company, United Technologies Corporation (UTC), after it had announced layoffs for thousands of Hoosier workers that sparked a national controversy," the news item began. "The decision to keep their donations was part of a year where Congressman Messer also voted against legislation that would have taken away tax incentives for companies like Carrier that outsource Hoosier jobs."

### Rokita ad features his plane

Voters normally don't like politicians who prefer flights in private planes (Wegmann, Washington Examiner). Few things fuel resentment as quickly as the image of a chartered aircraft waiting to whisk away some hotshot congressman or pretentious politician from the public eye. But it's not that way with Rep. Todd Rokita. A new digital ad, recently released and first obtained by the Washington Examiner, shows the Indiana Republican flying his little twin-engine prop plane, airlifting patients to hospitals across the country. Now a candidate for U.S. Senate, Rokita is an angel flight pilot. His passengers are mostly sick kids traveling for faraway medical care and they fly for free.

### Indiana race tops in advertising

How competitive is Indiana's Senate race?

(Groppe, USA Today) The multi-candidate GOP primary combined with a top Democratic target has resulted in the contest topping the charts for most television ads aired this year among Senate races across the country, according to a report released Thursday by the independent Wesleyan Media Project. And that tally doesn't take into account more than \$2 million in ads that started running Thursday by an outside group critical of Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly's opposition to the GOP tax cut package. The time period included in the analysis also doesn't capture ads run last year by former state Rep. Mike Braun, one of the three Republicans running in the May 8 primary to take on Donnelly. Still, Senate race ads by the candidates themselves or outside groups have aired more than 6,700 times from January through March 12 at an estimated cost of \$1.9 million. The next heaviest amount of Senate race advertising is in Wisconsin where ads have aired nearly 4,900 times for an estimated cost of \$1.1 million. A conservative group is doubling down on its ads attacking Donnelly for opposing the GOP tax cuts. Americans for Prosperity, an advocacy group founded by the billionaire Koch brothers, is spending more than \$2 million on television and digital ads featuring a woman who owns a hearing center in Indiana. The woman, whom the group identified only as "Cathy," says in the ad that the tax cuts will allow her to invest more money back into her business.

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## Labor leaders critical of GOP candidates

Chairman Zody, retired labor leader Chuck Jones and Indiana State AFL-CIO President Brett Voorhies took aim at the Republican Senate candidates. At the press conference, Zody, Jones and Voorhies called out all three GOP Senate candidates for routinely supporting unfair trade policies that rig the playing field against Hoosier workers and make it easier for corporations to ship jobs out of the U.S. "With less than two months until the Republican Senate primary, Hoosiers need to know that all three GOP candidates have consistently supported disastrous trade policies that encourage companies to ship Indiana jobs overseas," said Zody.

## Rokita blasts Farrakhan

Rokita accused the news media of working with the Democratic Party to prevent a years-old photo of former President Barack Obama and controversial Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan from surfacing until Obama was out of office (Fox News). "The media elites and the Democrats worked together to stop that picture ... from surfacing for over a decade," Rokita said on "Fox & Friends" on Wednesday. Rokita told the "Fox & Friends" co-hosts he's confident that his Republican colleagues will join him in condemning this "hate-filled man," but it will be a "test" to see how lawmakers on the other side of the aisle respond. "If they're under fire, if they feel any kind of remorse or pressure or want to right the ship at all, they should join this resolution," Rokita said.

## April 23 GOP debate to be televised

The April 23 debate in Fort Wayne for Republican U.S. Senate candidates will be televised around the state, according to the local organizer (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The Allen County Republican Party said the debate among U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita and former state lawmaker Mike Braun will be broadcast by at least six TV stations and at least three radio stations. The broadcasters include TV stations WPTA in Fort Wayne, WNDU and WNIT in South Bend, WYIN in Merrillville, WLFY in Lafayette and WTHR in Indianapolis, and radio stations WOWO in Fort Wayne, WFBM in Muncie and WEOA in Evansville.

## Messer says Russia probe politicized

Messer said Monday that most Indiana residents are tired of hearing about the federal investigation into whether President Donald Trump's campaign colluded with Russian officials during the 2016 election (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Messer, R-6th, described the investigation as "highly politicized." "I think it's important we get the facts out about what truly happened with Russia's meddling in the 2016 election. And yet when you talk to most Hoosiers, they're exhausted by all this palace intrigue," Messer said in an interview. "I haven't spoken to one Hoosier who believes the Russians made them vote

for a presidential candidate. We need to get this investigation wrapped up, get the facts out and move on," he said during an interview at the downtown Starbucks. The Journal Gazette asked Messer whether he is concerned that Trump seems to be threatening or bullying the Justice Department and the FBI over the Russian interference investigation led by special counsel Robert Mueller. "I think that most Hoosiers see this for what it is: A highly politicized investigation," Messer said.

## Messer, Pence to campaign in 6th CD

An email from the Luke Messer for U.S. Senate campaign indicated the candidate will join Greg Pence at three stops on Friday. Pence, a candidate in the GOP primary for the 6th CD, will accompany Messer throughout the morning at Storie's Restaurant in Greensburg (8 a.m.), Linne's Bakery in Shelbyville (9:30 a.m.), and Zaharakos Ice Cream in Columbus (11:15 a.m.)

## Anti-abortion rally targets Donnelly

Chants of "No more Joel!" rang out from a crowd of anti-abortion advocates gathered outside the U.S. Federal Courthouse Monday morning (Kale, NWI Times). Around 40 members with the Susan B. Anthony List, a national anti-abortion nonprofit organization, rallied at a news conference outside the building. The group voiced its disapproval of Sen. Joe Donnelly, saying he is inconsistent on voting for or against federal tax dollars funding abortion providers, specifically Planned Parenthood. "I know firsthand how pro-life Indiana is, how strongly pro-life our governor and our state legislators are," Sue Swayze Liebel, National Pro-Life Women's Caucus coordinator and Indiana chair for Susan B. Anthony List, said. "It's time that we put in a senator who is in touch with the state. Sometimes Sen. Donnelly's pretty good at sounding like he's pro-life, he doesn't really stand for life."

## Messer slams John Oliver book on Pence

Messer slammed comedian John Oliver for releasing a parody book meant to mock the second family's book about their pet rabbit (Justice, Washington Examiner). "Sad to see John Oliver belittle Mike Pence's faith and mock a children's book the Pence family wrote together. More proof of how out of step media elites are with most Americans," Messer wrote in a Facebook post. While the Pences' book has risen to number four on Amazon's best-seller list, Oliver's book has so far outsold the Pences' book and topped the Amazon bestseller list, taking the number one spot. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

## Congress

### Democrats have 10% generic ballot lead

Democrats enjoy a 10-point advantage over Republicans in congressional preference for the 2018 midterm elections, even as President Donald Trump's job-

approval rating has ticked up to 43%, the latest national NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll finds. Fifty percent of registered voters say they prefer a Democratic-controlled Congress, while 40 percent want a GOP-controlled one. That double-digit lead – typically a sign of strong Democratic performance for the upcoming election – is up from the party’s 6-point edge in January’s NBC/WSJ poll, 49 percent to 43 percent, though the change is within the poll’s margin of error. The survey, which was conducted March 10-14, also shows Democrats holding the early enthusiasm advantage: 60 percent of Democratic voters say they have a high degree of interest in the upcoming elections (registering either a “9” or “10” on a 10-point scale), versus 54 percent of Republicans who say the same thing. In addition, 64 percent of 2016 Clinton voters say they have a high level of interest, compared with 57 percent of 2016 Trump voters.

The NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll shows that in Republican-held districts, the congressional generic is tied at 46%. Meet the Press moderator Chuck Todd said this morning it’s the first time that’s ever happened.

**2nd CD: Hackett critical of Trump, Walorski**

Democrat Pat Hackett on Sunday said President Donald Trump’s actions are placing the country in a perilous situation and accused U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski of enabling his behavior (Spalding, Warsaw Times-Union). The South Bend attorney is one of three Democratic candidates running in the primary and hoping to face Walorski in the fall election. Hackett held a meet-and-greet Sunday at the Syracuse Community Center. “This is no ordinary time,” she warned. “I would say it is our greatest challenge since the civil war,” because the nation is facing another attack from “within.” She describes Trump as lacking a moral compass and embracing an autocratic style.

**Steelworkers to endorse Hall**

The United Steelworkers are expected to endorse Democrat Mel Hall this morning. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely Mel Hall.

**4th CD: Morales resume challenged**

A former Mike Pence aide who was fired from one government job and left another after being formally disciplined wants Indiana voters to send him to Congress, where he would take over for the boss who sacked him, according to a review of public records by the Associated Press. State records show Diego Morales, a candidate in the GOP primary for the 4th Congressional District, was fired in 2009 by former Indi-

ana Secretary of State Todd Rokita, who is giving up his reliably Republican House seat to run for Senate. The disciplinary actions against Morales are part of a resume that also includes embellishments, a spotty work history and murky business dealings. “Diego Morales’ service to Indiana and his country are unimpeachable,” campaign manager Michael Sorenson said in an emailed statement, noting the 39-year-old Morales is also a veteran. A spokeswoman for the vice president did not respond to a request for comment. A spokesman for Rokita declined to comment on the work habits of his former employee. Rokita’s office formally disciplined Morales after eight months due to “incomplete” work, “inefficient execution” and a “lack of focus,” according to records obtained under Indiana’s public records act. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

**4th CD: Beck to tour district**

Democrat congressional candidate and combat veteran Tobi Beck announced today that she will lace up her military combat boots for her “March the District” tour next week. In the same boots she served in, Beck will march in every county in the 4th CD from Monday, March 26, through Saturday, March 31, to ‘walk a mile’ in each community’s shoes. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

**8th CD: Moss battery case revived**

A 25-year-old domestic battery charge against Richard Moss roiled the increasingly bitter 8th District congressional race this week, triggering fierce attacks on Rep. Larry Bucshon by Moss (Langhorne, Evansville Courier & Press). Infuriated by Bucshon’s references to the dismissed 1993 charge, the Jasper-based surgeon accused the four-term congressman of embarking on a sustained campaign to spread “filth and lies” about him. Moss called Bucshon “morally bankrupt” and a “liar and smear merchant,” asserting the issue should be off-limits because Moss’s wife, the alleged victim, says he didn’t assault her. “It’s a lie. If he wants to promote a lie that the alleged victim rejects, I would say it should be off-limits because she rejects the story,” said Moss, one of two challengers

to Bucshon in a May 8 Republican primary election. “She’s the victim – the supposed victim, so if she’s saying it’s not true, why would you talk about it?” Bucshon, who declined to respond, has said he isn’t talking about it -- and Moss’s domestic battery charge isn’t mentioned on his campaign’s social media. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Bucshon.



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# ‘Deep state’ poll shows people pay attention

By **TONY SAMUEL**

INDIANAPOLIS – It’s astonishing to me that 74% of Americans – Republicans, Democrats and independents – believe that there is a “Deep State” secretly running our government. This is according to a Monmouth University poll of 803 adults taken March 2-5. Whenever the term “Deep State” is used on CNN or the other mainstream liberal media outlets, it is being scoffed at as something only Fox News viewers, conservative radio listeners or Internet conspiracy theorists would believe to exist.



The high percentage of believers is surprising to me. I would have thought it would be lower but still a thing. It is also very revealing that three quarters

of the public is concerned by what we have seen at the upper levels of the FBI and Department of Justice during the Obama administration, especially leading up to the 2016 election and ever since with Obama holdovers in the Trump administration. I am assuming that the public’s belief comes from what we are seeing at the DOJ and FBI. I don’t think people would be too concerned about the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Labor, or most others being major players in a deep state.

I also don’t think you can believe in a deep state without being concerned about it. So, I am concluding that most Americans believe that there is a deep state based on the corruption we have seen from the likes of James Comey, Peter Strzok, Lisa Page, Bruce and Nellie Ohr, Loretta Lynch, Sally Yates, Andrew McCabe and others that began in their positions at the DOJ and FBI pre-Trump. Remember that it is a very small percentage of DOJ and FBI employees, but it is these people in key positions that politicized their work and weaponized their authority.

**It’s obvious now** that for some time there has been a concerted effort to first help Hillary Clinton win the election and then take down Trump after he was victorious. Much of this will become clearer because it will get more attention when, in a few weeks, Inspector General Michael Horowitz’s report of his DOJ investigation will be made public.

Another significant turning point will come if Attorney General Sessions appoints a second special counsel to move the inspector general’s investigation to a new front where the IG currently lacks authority. More and more members of Congress are rightly calling for this second special counsel because of the lack of transparency from DOJ officials. I think it will happen.

All of this is adding up to a different truth than what we are hearing from the mainstream media. With each leak or every time there is “breaking news” from unnamed sources, the media spins it closer to the Mueller investigation indicting the president. We’ve been waiting for more than a year now. I don’t think it will happen.

**The latest smokescreen** was thrown up when Trump congratulated Putin on his “election” win. You’d think that Trump just lost World War III for us. Never mind that Obama did the same thing six years ago or that the Mexican president and other world leaders did the same thing this time around. Obama and Hillary also hit the corny “reset” button with Russia. That didn’t work. And Obama even whispered to Medvedev that he would have more “flexibility” to work with Putin after the 2012 election while chastising his opponent, Mitt Romney for wanting to take a tough stance on Russia. What was the media paying attention to when all of this was happening with Putin?

President Trump, meanwhile, has shown that he knows how to deal with world leaders, both friendly and adversarial. Regarding Russia, Trump has shown strength in dealing with Russia’s strategic allies in the Middle East – destroying Syria’s Russian built fighter jets after Syria’s use of chemical weapons and building a coalition against Iran while moving us closer to abandoning the bad Iran nuclear deal. And just a week ago, the U.S. Treasury Department announced new sanctions against Russians that meddled in the 2016 elections and have engaged in cyber-attacks.

President Trump knows how to deal with Putin just as he knows how to deal with Kim Jung Un.

In Obama’s second term, after Putin made him look foolish by attacking and annexing Crimea, Obama started this thing I noticed where his body language and his glares at Putin were very tough and mean-looking. It always looked very playgroundish. Putin would smile slightly and brush it off because he knew it didn’t amount to anything. He was still having his way with Obama.

**Trump knows better.** He will play things the way he knows best from his experience in dealing with business leaders around the world – with an instinct to win. For Trump, a win with Russia is to get their help on trouble spots around the world while keeping them from being bad actors. President Trump knows that you must have a relationship to achieve these goals.

The media doesn’t get it and will still look for every way possible to embarrass and bring down our own President. However, that 74% number should be concerning to those on the left. It means that people are really paying attention to what’s really going on. We’re at a pivotal point in the investigations and politically as the 2018 elections are in full play. A turn to the right could be just around the corner. ❖

**Samuel is CEO of Samuel Solutions based in Indianapolis and was vice chair of the Trump Indiana campaign in 2016.**

# Can Indiana Dems ride the ‘blue wave’?

By **CHRIS SAUTTER**

WASHINGTON – Conor Lamb’s stunning upset in last week’s special election in a deep red western Pennsylvania congressional district is triggering a frenzy of speculation and activity in Washington. Democrats are convinced the victory signals the coming of a “blue wave” that will carry their party to a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives and possibly even in the U.S. Senate. Republicans, meanwhile, are characterizing their Pennsylvania embarrassment as a wake-up call. GOP lawmakers are scrambling to deliver legislative results in hopes of stemming a blue tide.



Most independent political prognosticators, however, believe current objective factors already point to big Democratic gains in 2018. Stuart Rothenberg writes this week in Roll Call that Republican and Democratic strategists agree a blue wave has already formed and that most expect the GOP losses in the House to be in 30-45 seat range, well above the two dozen seats needed for majority control.

For Hoosier Democrats, a wave would present an opportunity similar to the 1980s and in 2006 when they were able to win several congressional seats in districts drawn to protect Republican incumbents. Since 1964, Indiana Democrats have only been able to post gains in midterm and special elections during a Republican presidency. After Tim Roemer defeated John Hiler in the old South Bend-based 3rd CD in 1990, for example, Democrats held eight of Indiana’s 10 U.S. House seats after having picked up four Republican held districts during the Reagan-Bush 41 era. In the 2006 wave election, Democrats knocked off three Republican incumbents in the 2nd, 8th, and 9th districts during Bush 43’s second midterm election.

**With the stars seemingly** lined up in their favor, the only thing left, perhaps, for Democrats to worry about is the quality of their candidates. Democrats nationally have fielded strong candidates with impressive resumes in each of the races they have won over the almost past year. The likelihood of a Democratic wave is attracting a wave of Democratic candidates, some better equipped to win a tough general election than others. But multi-candidate primaries are notoriously unpredictable, meaning Democrats may not always wind up with the best or most electable candidate in every targeted race.

In Indiana, the quality of Democratic candidates challenging incumbents varies but none appear quite up

to the level of the candidates who took Republican seats in 2006 (Joe Donnelly, Brad Ellsworth, and Baron Hill) or who won tough races in Republican-leaning districts in the 1980s (Frank McCloskey, Jim Jontz, Jill Long, and Tim Roemer). Certainly, they are not as experienced.

The three districts that have been historically competitive — the 2nd, the 8th, and the 9th — have been rendered almost out of reach for Democrats by the Republican controlled extreme gerrymandering that occurred before the 2012 election. None of those districts is currently on the list of competitive races compiled by either the Cook Report or Inside Elections, the most reliable handicappers of congressional elections, though the 2nd district was moved last month by Cook from “solid Republican” to “likely Republican.”

■ **In the 2nd CD**, three major candidates are vying for the chance to take on three-term incumbent Jackie Walorski: Mel Hall, Yatish Joshi, and Pat Hackett. Former governor and South Bend mayor Joe Kernan has endorsed Joshi, calling the wealthy businessman “an extraordinary person.”

But Hall, a minister turned corporate CEO, is the acknowledged frontrunner and appears to be running the most professional campaign, having hired the former campaign manager for both South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Sen. Joe Donnelly. Hackett, who trails the other two in fundraising, has the strongest ties to the area’s progressive base and could surprise.

Rep. Walorski has not been seriously challenged since she narrowly defeated Brendan Mullen in 2012. The GOP advantage according to the Cook Report is now plus 11 and Trump carried the district by 20 points. However, Walorski is still not terribly popular in heavily Democratic St. Joseph County and would need some breaks to survive a big blue wave.

■ **In the 9th CD**, the two major Democratic candidates are lawyers Liz Watson and Dan Canon. Watson recently released internal polling showing her leading Canon by 13 points, 40% to 27%. Canon disputes the poll but didn’t release his own numbers to contradict it.

Both candidates are solid and articulating well-thought-out Democratic messages focused mostly on economic fairness. Watson has done an impressive job winning union endorsements. Canon has a compelling personal story and ties his story very nicely into his message. But Watson’s endorsements, Washington experience, and sheer determination seem to be working for her with district Democrats.

Incumbent Trey Hollingsworth, who moved to the district to run in 2012 and virtually bought the seat, is almost a stranger in this district. He would be highly vulnerable in many districts. But the Republican advantage here is plus 13 and neither Democratic candidate seems interested in moderating their progressive politics to fit a more conservative electorate.

■ **The race in Indiana’s 8th CD** is on nobody’s radar. The Cook Political Report gives Republicans

a plus 15-point advantage in this district that was at one time so volatile it was known as “the Bloody 8th.” Donald Trump walloped Hillary Clinton here by 33%. Nonetheless, Larry Bucshon in many ways could be considered vulnerable. His record of accomplishments is thin and he is looking increasingly out of touch. He has struggled to handle angry constituents and tough questioning in town hall meetings (though some acknowledge that unlike many of his colleagues at least he holds them!). And, recently Bucshon moved his family out of Indiana and into a large house in the Washington, D.C., suburbs. His small Evansville condo usually appears vacant.

**Bucshon has also been** a reliable vote for corporate special interests, especially Big Coal, and he has been generously rewarded for his loyalty with campaign contributions, though he represents one of the worst areas in the nation for air quality. He backed a short-lived move by House Republicans to gut an independent ethics committee of its power to hold members accountable for misconduct. The Evansville Courier & Press reluctantly endorsed Bucshon in 2016, observing that if no progress is made on tackling key issues facing the country by the new Congress and president, Bucshon “should be removed” from office. There was a rumor going around after the 2016 election that Bucshon was angling for a top post in the new administration. The plan apparently was to recruit

Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke to run this year in order to keep the district in Republican hands. But for whatever reason, the job never materialized.

**The Democrats have** only one candidate, Terre Haute attorney William Tanoos, running for the 8th CD nomination. Former Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weizapfel walked up to the line but decided not to take the jump, reportedly because Tanoos refused to drop out. Tanoos not only has Hollywood looks, but actually starred in a 2014 film about the fictional grandson of socialist Eugene V. Debs running for office. Tanoos might sneak up on Bucshon if voters are looking for a fresh face and new energy in 2018.

Hoosier Democrats will probably fall short in picking up any of the Republican held congressional seats in 2018 unless the predicted “blue wave” nets closer to a pickup of 45 seats rather than 30. Those districts have become too Republican through redistricting and general conservative trending. And, it is difficult to predict whether any of the Democrats, all first time candidates, have what it takes to survive a tough campaign. But in a big wave year, it sometimes doesn’t matter. It remains to be seen whether 2018 will be that kind of blue wave year. ❖

**Sautter is a Democratic media consultant based in Washington.**

## Imports, exports and Indiana’s economy

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Because no one asked for them, this week we’ll take a look at some foreign trade statistics, with specific attention to Indiana. At the national level, some pundits pontificate about the danger to our economy because the value of imported goods exceeded the value of goods we export.



“This can’t go on,” we are told. Yet it does.

“American jobs are being sent abroad by our failure to buy products made in America.” Yet no one ostracizes those who transport and sell foreign-made goods. Who

refuses to buy underwear made in foreign lands?

In 2017, the U.S. exported \$1.1 trillion of manufactured goods. At the same time, we imported \$2.0 trillion worth of manufactured goods. We sold passenger and military airplanes to customers all over the world, while carrying home cell phones and TV sets in cars, SUVs,

and pickup trucks assembled in this country from foreign-made parts.

For every dollar of manufactured goods we exported as a nation, we imported \$1.85 of goods from elsewhere. Little Rhode Island led all states with \$5.61 of imports for each dollar of goods exported. By contrast, Wyoming, where coal is more plentiful than consumers, imported just 38 cents of goods for each dollar of exports. Indiana, 20th of the 41 net importer of goods, sent \$1.54 abroad for each dollar received in goods exported.

**Washington State**, home to Boeing, led the nine states where exports exceeded imports. Behind the \$21.2 billion surplus of Washington was Louisiana’s \$15 billion trade surplus in manufactured goods (largely refined petroleum products). Indiana contributed \$17.9 billion to the trade deficit, about as much as North Carolina, yet far from the \$289 billion deficit of California.

As you might expect, Indiana’s foreign trade, in both directions, was dominated by two major sectors, health related products and vehicle parts. For example, engine gear boxes were near the top of both our exports (\$2.3 billion) and imports (\$1.7 billion). Likewise, Indiana shipped medications worth \$3.5 billion and received \$1.5 billion worth from abroad.

One-third of Hoosier exports, by value, went to Canada with an additional 13% headed to Mexico. Four countries – China, Ireland, Canada and Japan – sent 56%



of Hoosier imports.

**With Canada, Indiana enjoyed** a \$5.2 billion trade surplus. We also had positive trade balances with Italy, the Netherlands, Australia, Mexico, the United Kingdom and Spain. In contrast, our trade deficit with Ireland was \$7.3 billion, China \$6.8 billion, Japan \$3.8 billion, Germany \$1.7 billion, and Switzerland \$1.2 billion. In some cases these trade imbalances result because Ameri-

can firms have manufacturing operations abroad that are, nonetheless, targeted on sales to U.S. consumers. But does anyone talk about tariffs on goods produced in Ireland?

Now you know there is more to Indiana's trade than steel and aluminum. Hoosier businesses and jobs are not as narrowly focused as the minds of our foremost political leaders. ❖

## Congress has given too much power away

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – Members of Congress over the years have delegated much of their power to other branches, especially the executive, so that they can escape accountability for tough choices.

We're at a watershed moment in American political history. Our Congress — I'm talking about the people's body, the institution created by our founders, and not just the men and women who currently inhabit it — is in deep trouble. And no one seems to be offering hope.

Its public standing is abysmal, occasionally dropping into the single digits in polling. Very few people seem to respect it, even on Capitol Hill. Small surprise, as the Pew Research Center reported the other day, that "More members of the U.S. House of Representatives are choosing not to seek reelection to that body than at any time in the past quarter-century." Since filing deadlines haven't passed in most states that number is almost certain to grow.

Just as worrisome, power is shifting decisively to the president. The "balance of power" you read about in seventh-grade civics? It's a myth today. Co-equal branches? Not anymore. Members of Congress over the years have delegated much of their power to other branches, especially the executive, so that they can escape accountability for tough choices. It allows them to focus more on getting reelected, and on the local and constituent interests that are their electoral bread and butter.

**Here's what may be** the most discouraging thing of all: There was a time when congressional leaders would forcefully defend the Congress. They don't even bother to do that anymore. In fact, it's not unusual to find them defending their own leadership but criticizing the institution they lead.

To ponder what we can do about it is to confront a long list of daunting challenges. For starters, congressio-

nal leaders have abandoned two centuries of precedent, a traditional set of norms, customs and procedures that allowed a body representing the complexities of the entire country to arrive at policy solutions that by and large spoke to the public good.

**Today, bills are often** drafted outside the committee system, without careful deliberation, consideration, or even participation by most members. The leadership has accumulated more and more power, leaving ordinary members out of the loop, especially in the all-important budget process.

We're saddled with a Congress that affords special interest groups far too much power. Their representatives and lobbyists swarm over Capitol Hill to influence and cajole, write speeches, supply talking points, and funnel money and favors of all descriptions to members. And because reelection is so expensive, Congress not only accepts all this, but seeks it out. Ordinary citizens have lost influence in the process.

The body itself has become extremely polarized, which means that the decisions it makes are more extreme. House districts are gerrymandered, which has increased the tendency for them to elect the most extreme candidates in both parties, which only accentuates polarized views when these legislators arrive in Washington.

**And Congress has** largely rejected its oversight responsibilities, which ought to carry a weight equal to legislating and which put it on a par with the executive branch. It uses the subpoena power rarely, grills administration and other witnesses only occasionally, and even more rarely holds the executive branch accountable. Want an example? We've got a half-dozen conflicts going on around the world, armed forces in some 70 countries, we're incurring casualties and putting our men and women in extreme danger — and Congress holds no hearings of any consequence to ask what's going on or what we're gaining from the commitments we've made around the world.

You can take the agenda for reform from this depressing litany. Congressional leaders need to stop manipulating the process and let members vote on the tough issues of the day. Finding ways to stem the tidal wave of money and favors is crucial. So are ending gerrymandering and tamping down the politics of polarization. Congress needs to reassert the authority given it by



the Constitution to serve as a check on executive overreach and misguided policy-making.

**Americans have a right** to be disappointed in the performance of the legislative branch. But they also have an obligation to speak up about it and demand action

not just on a favored bill, but on improving the effectiveness of the Congress itself. ❖

**Lee Hamilton is a senior advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government.**

## Revisionist history at the NCAA

By **JACK COLWELL**

**SOUTH BEND** – So, you think you know who won those games so far in the NCAA basketball tournament.



Some of you, thinking you're better than Digger Phelps ever was as an analyst, proudly display wins on your tournament brackets. (Not all of us of course have "W" marked all over our pool entries.)

At least you know which teams won, right? In many cases you saw the outcome on TV, maybe even in person. Newspaper headlines and stories proclaim the winners.

You think you know who won. You could be wrong. Remember, we're talking about the NCAA.

History revisionists in the NCAA could declare that what you saw doesn't count. That being ahead by double-digits in the final score doesn't matter. That final box scores are irrelevant.

NCAA revisionists do this all the time in football and basketball, taking away wins after belatedly deciding that winning teams did something wrong.

With the FBI investigating corruption in college basketball – charges already filed against some assistant coaches, agents and apparel company representatives – and with major programs under a cloud, it seems likely that some of the listed tournament "wins" will become unlisted.

This history revision does no good. It's just plain silly. If it did any good, wouldn't the myriad forfeits over all the seasons have done something to prevent the widespread scandal now brewing?

And it's silly because the NCAA, lax and late in its own investigations and inconsistent in its penalties, can only pretend that what happened on the court or on the field didn't really happen.

**If a team winning a national championship is found to have won by cheating, paying and playing ineligible athletes, clearly eliminating "student" from any "student-athlete" pretense, then void the championship.**

Sock the university with millions in fines. Big money matters more to universities than changing past records. Ban the coach from college athletics – for a decade or forever. Lowering a coach's officially recorded win percentage doesn't prevent going on to a fortune at another school. It happens all the time.

I thought it was both silly and unfair for the NCAA to "vacate" all the Notre Dame football wins from 2012. Unfair? Because improper academic help provided to some players by a student who was a part-time trainer paled in comparison with blatant buying of players and sanctioned academic fraud at other schools. It was ludicrous to declare that Notre Dame really didn't defeat Navy 50-10 that season. We saw it. It was televised from Ireland. Not fake news from Russia.

I'm not arguing that there should be no penalties. Nor do I find the vacating of Notre Dame wins anywhere close to the worst NCAA vacating nonsense.

**The 123 basketball wins** taken away from the University of Louisville is worse. I'm neither defending Louisville in the sex scandal nor objecting to vacating Louisville's 2013 national title. Other penalties were fine. Their coach is gone. Good. But don't pretend that Louisville didn't defeat Indiana University by 20 points in 2014. They did. Saying otherwise doesn't make Hoosier fans now shout for joy.

Also, it was a travesty when the NCAA declared that Penn State really didn't win 112 football games that they won. They deserved the other harsh penalties for the child molestation scandal. But what a travesty to say that Penn State didn't win in 2008 against Coastal Carolina. The scoreboard said they won 66-10, and the Penn State players had nothing to do with the scandal. Finally, after court action, Penn State got back the wins that it won.

If the FBI proves corruption involving teams in the tournament, the NCAA shouldn't seek again to revise history, pretending that wins we all see are not wins. In addition to being silly, revisionist decrees mean nothing to cheating players, coaches, agents and shoe peddlers. Drastic cuts in scholarships and the number of games scheduled, banning of coaches and huge fines would constitute taking it seriously. ❖

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

**Rich James, HPI:** The city of Hammond ought to be David Dowling country, but Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. apparently didn't get the memo. Dowling, who is a leading candidate for the Democratic nomination for Lake County sheriff, was born and raised in Hammond. Dowling moved to Schererville where he served as chief of police before stepping down a few weeks ago to be a full-time candidate for sheriff. The Dowling name lives on in Hammond where his grandfather was mayor and his father was chief of police. Hammond, which is the largest city in the county, is important to the sheriff's primary even though Gary turns out a greater Democratic vote. But rather than backing a native son, McDermott is doing whatever he can to see that Sheriff Oscar Martinez wins the primary. Martinez was selected last fall by the Democratic precinct organization to replace Sheriff John Buncich. Martinez, by the way, has been forced to take the word "re-elect" out of his campaign literature because he was never elected. He now uses "retain" in the ads. Why McDermott is backing Martinez – who lives in Dyer – is difficult to say. Some say it's a matter of the mayor being able to control Martinez, but knows he couldn't control Dowling. McDermott makes his feelings known every Friday morning when he buys time on WJOB radio. And, without fail, McDermott attacks Dowling each Friday morning. The Martinez victory in the precinct caucus resulted from a strange political coalition. County Commissioner Mike Repay - a Hammond resident - is close to Martinez. While Repay and McDermott never have gotten along, Repay convinced McDermott to get in line behind Martinez. It all makes McDermott look like the kingmaker. While McDermott delivered his city's committeemen for Martinez in the precinct caucus, Dowling knows it will be different in the primary. The Dowling name ought to be a pretty good draw when longtime Hammond residents - not just committeemen - have a say in the outcome. ❖



**Doug Ross, NWI Times:** Economic development professionals across the Region could take a lesson from what Clarence Hulse and Ron Meer are doing in Michigan City. Hulse, executive director of Michigan City Economic Development Corp., and Mayor Ron Meer connect the dots between public investment and private development, putting them on a map of the city to make the relationship easier to see. Put them together, and you're talking big money being pumped into Michigan City. "The city is spending money, and it's attracting private investment," Hulse said. "Outside investors see confidence in the city's future through all these public and private sector investments," Meer said. Between the two, nearly \$1 billion in tangible development has been seen in Michigan City in recent years. That's not promised projects, which might or might not materialize. These are projects either in progress or complete. "You lose track, over six or seven years, because you finish one project and then you're on

to the next," Meer said. It's an exciting time for economic development in Michigan City, a municipality hammered by factories closing in the past few decades. "The floodgates have been opened," Hulse said. Within the next few months, Northwest Indiana should hear whether federal money will be pouring into the South Shore Line double-tracking project that promises to reduce travel time between Michigan City and Chicago. The project will be a game-changer for Michigan City, solidifying its place within commuting distance of the Loop. Over the past year, Hulse has heard from developers looking for options within five to 10 blocks of the train station. They know the city is poised to grow. As that happens, Michigan City will need to make sure development happens in a way that preserves the views of Lake Michigan attracting so many tourists to the city. What Michigan City needs as much as tourism is new residents. Chicagoans already are moving to Michigan City, Meer said. The reason behind the push for additional residents is simple. Michigan City has attracted restaurants like Starbucks and Panera Bread that wouldn't normally locate in a municipality with Michigan City's demographics, but tourism data lured them anyway. ❖

**Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star:** Motivation requires some emotion. Fear, anger, sadness, joy, envy and love often serve as fuel for human actions. Right now, millions of young Americans appear motivated to be heard by their elected representatives. Frustrated and fearful about the safety of their schools, many participated in Wednesday's National School Walkout, conducted one month after a gunman using an assault rifle killed 17 students and staff members inside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School at Parkland, Fla. A teenager is accused of that horrifying act. Next Saturday, young people intend to take to the streets and public squares in Washington, D.C., and other U.S. cities, including Terre Haute, for the March for Our Lives. The initiative grew from protests by surviving Parkland students and families, calling for comprehensive action by Congress and state legislatures on the availability of assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines used in recent mass shootings, and on closing loopholes on background checks. Parkland teens who survived the Feb. 14 atrocity are motivated. Their peers around the country seem to share their drive. It remains questionable, though, whether that motivation will carry young people of voting age into the polling booth in spring primaries and the November midterm election. The March for Our Lives website insists the young people intend to vote, aiming to get public officials attention. "We will keep up the pressure," the site states. "Then we will take more action. This fall we will go and vote like no generation has in history. It is only when we show the collective strength of our voices, in the streets and at the voting booth, will they start to listen. We are talking about voting — we are talking about saving lives." ❖

## Holcomb signs workforce, DACA bills

INDIANAPOLIS – Governor Eric Holcomb has ceremonially signed into law two bills designed to boost workforce development efforts statewide (McGowan, [Inside Indiana Business](#)). Senate Enrolled Act 50

involves establishing a governor’s workforce cabinet and House Enrolled Act 1002 in-

cludes provisions for the new Next Level Jobs employer training grant program, workforce-related reporting and tweaks to apprenticeship requirements regarding high school graduation pathways. The signing took place Wednesday at the Cummins Inc. Global Distribution Headquarters in Indianapolis. Holcomb said on Twitter “the legislation I am signing today will go a long way to realigning our workforce programs to meet the needs of employers & employees throughout our entire state. We’re also increasing our investment in Hoosier workers to the tune of \$50 million. This is all about giving Hoosiers a better way to find a career they’re passionate about & getting the skills they need to be successful in a fulfilling career.” Holcomb also has signed legislation to lift a prohibition on immigrants who were brought to the country illegally as children from obtaining state professional licenses.



## Holcomb signs CBD oil bill

INDIANAPOLIS – Governor Eric Holcomb has signed a bill legalizing the sale and use of cannabidiol (CBD) oil in Indiana ([WTTV](#)). Under Senate Bill 52, Hoosiers are now able to purchase CBD oil that contains .3% or less of THC, the component of the cannabis plant which causes intoxication. Gov. Holcomb issued the following statement regarding the passing of the bill: “Indiana lawmakers delivered a bill that ensures Hoosiers who benefit from CBD oil can access it. The bill provides much needed clar-

ity, with labeling requirements and a 0.3% THC limit on CBD products. I’m grateful for the General Assembly’s hard work to bring me a bill to address the needs expressed by our citizens.” The bill says “testing, packaging, and labeling requirements for the distribution and retail sale of low THC hemp extract” will take effect on July 1, 2018.

## Lopez to head workforce council

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Eric Holcomb has made some leadership changes within his administration (Brown, [Inside Indiana Business](#)). The governor has selected Danny Lopez, who currently serves as his deputy chief of staff, as chairman of the new Governor’s Workforce Council. The council was created with the passage of Senate Enrolled Act 50, which Holcomb signed into law Wednesday. In his new role, Lopez will “lead the cabinet’s efforts to realign and better coordinate the efforts of multiple state agencies that play a role in developing Indiana’s workforce,” the governor’s office says. Holcomb has also chosen Cris Johnston to succeed Lopez as deputy chief of staff. Johnston, currently serves as a director for Indianapolis-based KSM Consulting.

## China takes aim at farmbelt states

WASHINGTON - As the Trump administration pursues talks with allies on exemptions from U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum, China risks escalating trade tensions with the U.S. by targeting U.S. agricultural exports from Farm Belt states ([Wall Street Journal](#)). Chinese officials, facing punitive U.S. trade policies that are set to be announced Thursday, are preparing to respond with their own tariffs focused on U.S. exports of soybeans, sorghum and live hogs, according to the people with knowledge of the matter. The U.S. is among the top suppliers of these products to China.

## Walorski warns of trade war

WASHINGTON– President Donald Trump’s “America First” trade policies took a bashing Wednesday from free-trade House Republicans, angry and fearful about the prospect of global retaliation and how the policies are playing back home (Palmer, [Politico](#)). Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-Ind.) told U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer at a House Ways and Means Committee hearing on Trump’s trade agenda she was concerned not only about the impact of the steel and aluminum tariffs, but also how China might retaliate against farmers and businesses in her district if Trump imposes tariffs to punish Beijing over its poor protection of U.S. intellectual property rights. “There’s a whole host of ag that I’m concerned about — corn, soybeans, dairy, pork, beef, poultry, tomatoes and the list goes on,” Walorski said. “Half the soybeans grown in Indiana are exported to China. Honeywell makes brakes and avionics in South Bend that go into Boeing airplanes. China is threatening retaliation against both.”

## Cummins warns of China tariffs

COLUMBUS — Cummins CEO Tom Linebarger warned of tariff impacts (Syse, [Columbus Republic](#)). “The biggest market for Cummins outside the U.S. is China. It’s the largest truck market in the world, it’s growing the fastest, so by being present in China, that’s had a lot to do with why we’re able to add jobs in the U.S.,” says Linebarger. “More than 5,000 of our jobs in the U.S. relate strictly to our overseas operations. Our trade relationship with China is critical to our company.”