

Delph's challenge with suburban women

Internal polls show Ford taking lead as educated women take a key role

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

ZIONSVILLE – The numbers sending shock waves through the Statehouse come from SD29, where Democratic challenger J.D. Ford apparently has nearly a 10% lead over State Sen. Mike Delph.

Matt Zapfe of the Senate Majority Caucus wouldn't confirm numbers published at two other sites, though that caucus was apparently the source

of the numbers. IndyPolitics had Ford leading 45-35%. An internal Democratic poll conducted on Ford's behalf had him leading 53-44%. Among those voters who say they are "almost certain" to turn out, Ford's lead expands to 55-42%.



When HPI talked to Republican Majority Caucus Chairman Jim Merritt, who also heads the Marion County GOP, and referenced the numbers showing Delph trailing, he acknowledged that the Carmel Republican is facing a real challenge. Delph told HPI Wednesday, "Please send me the poll you are referencing with cross-tabs and I will be happy to respond accordingly."

The fascinating part of this is what's going on with the voting bloc of the cycle, the "educated, suburban female voter." On that front, SD29 fits that demographic as well as any

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Enemies and patriots

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – There was a packet leaning up against my condo door in late spring 2016. Left by Deputy Chief of Staff Matt Lloyd, it was a note from Gov. Mike Pence with a copy of SEA80 and the signing pen he used a few months before. The note from Pence read, "Thanks for your work on this."

It would be the last communication between the Indiana governor destined for the vice presidency and this Hoosier journalist. Pence's assessment, though, was observant and relevant. Between 2014 and 2016, Howey Politics Indiana and reporting by myself and Matthew Butler searched



"I had a wide-ranging conversation and productive meeting with Judge Kavanaugh. This was an important opportunity to sit down and talk in-depth with Judge Kavanaugh."

- U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly



Howey Politics Indiana
WVHowey Media, LLC 405
Massachusetts Ave., Suite
300 Indianapolis, IN 46204
www.howeypolitics.com

Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Cameron Carter, Editor
Joel Weyrauch, Editor
Mary Lou Howey, Editor
Mark Curry, Daily Wire, photo
Jack E. Howey, Editor
 Emeritus

Subscriptions

HPI, HPI Daily Wire \$599
 HPI Weekly, \$350
 HPI Mobile, \$5.95 monthly
 Ray Volpe, Account Manager
317.602.3620
 email: HoweyInfo@gmail.com

Contact HPI

bhowey2@gmail.com
 Howey's cell: 317.506.0883
 Washington: 202.256.5822
 Business Office: 317.602.3620

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for answers on how to deal with the clandestine methamphetamine labs that numbered close to 1,400 per year. They were contaminating homes, motel rooms and vehicles. There were hundreds of children in these hovels exposed to toxic chemicals, and public safety and code officials were facing injury.

Through this publication and my weekly newspaper column that runs in more than 30 newspaper and TV station websites across the state, I branded Indiana as the "Methamphetamine State." To be a steward here was to feel embarrassment about such a designation. Working in tandem with State Rep. Ben Smaltz and State Sen. Randy Head, along with the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council, and Accelerating Indiana Municipalities and a number of mayors there, we hammered away on the issue of restricting the sale of pseudoephedrine, the key ingredient in the making of meth. Despite fierce opposition from the home health consumer product industry, the legislation passed, and Gov. Pence signed it into law.

Two years later, there has been a 74% decline in the number of clandestine meth labs, from 1,452 in 2015 to 943 in 2016 and 371 in 2017. Meth is still available, moving from local production to the Mexican drug cartels, but the collateral damage to exposed children and toxic buildings coming off the tax rolls has been distinctly mitigated.

I can make the case that without our press activism, it might have taken many more years, if it happened at all.

We are only a tiny contingent in Hoosier media willing to fulfill a watchdog function. This past year, we watched Indianapolis Star reporters Marisa Kwiatkowski, Mark Alesia and Tim Evans extensively report on

the sexual abuse scandal involving USA Gymnastics, filing public records requests in 10 states and ultimately resulting in the conviction of Dr. Larry Nassar, the Michigan State University team doctor who sexually assaulted dozens of female gymnasts. In our view, that team should have won a Pulitzer Prize for their diligence.

There are frequent investigations by WTHR-TV's Bob Segall and Sandra Chapman, and WRTV's Rafael Sanchez, Kara Kenney and Paris Lewbel. But these ranks are shrinking, as are those that cover the Indiana Statehouse, city halls and county courthouses across the state.

At this writing, we find ourselves with two institutions, the U.S. presidency and the Fourth Estate press, with clenched hands gripping each other's necks.

To watch and hear President Trump over the past two years is to become inured with Soviet phrases that were finally banned following the death of Joseph Stalin. The press is the "enemy of the American people," Trump proclaims at his rallies and on Twitter. It is an "enemy" propagating "fake news." The characterization of any American institution in such terms provokes

a fierce response, with more than 300 American newspapers, newsletters and broadcasters pushing back at the "enemy of the people" notion in today's editions.

This is, however, a two-way street. Over the years, the American press has evolved from straight reporting — this is what you would have seen and heard if you had been to the meeting — to an intermingling of reporting and commentary.

Over the past generation, cable news has enabled a 24/7 news cycle, replete with talking heads, sensational reporting and tribalism that divide news consumers into silos — conservatives reaching for Fox News, Breitbart, and the Wall Street Journal,

The collage features three main articles from the 'Howey Politics Indiana' newspaper, dated Thursday, March 17, 2016. The top article is titled "Meth compromise heads to Gov. Pence" and discusses House Republicans Speaker Bosma and Sen. Head's response to a Hoosier scourge. The middle article is titled "Trump and echoes of '68" and discusses an American publicist's stance in 1968. The bottom article is titled "Based on these unique circumstances and the precedent established by Democratic leadership..." and discusses the next president and the Supreme Court vacancy. Each article includes a small photo and a "QUOTE OF THE WEEK" icon.

moderates and liberals navigating to CNN, MSNBC, The New York Times and Washington Post.

A decade ago, MSNBC's Morning Joe was the go-to begin-your-day political news magazine. But today it has become a feverish responder to everything President Trump does or says. The talking heads who populate that show, Rachel Maddow in the evening and the conservative bookends of Fox & Friends and Sean Hannity, also do battle on the editorial pages of the siloed press. What were once opinion columns have become shrill screeds. The American body politic is under duress, attack, and, in some respects, self-immolation. The population is cleaving into tribes. Friendships have ended over elections. Thanksgiving dinners are marred by hostility, or the topic of politics is simply banned.

At his commencement address last May, Purdue President Mitch Daniels warned of this entrenching tribalism: "This new self-segregation has taken on a much more worrisome dimension. It's no longer just a matter of Americans not knowing and understanding each other. We've seen these clusters deepen, and harden, until separation has led to anger, misunderstanding turned into hostility. At the individual level, it's a formula for bitterness and negativity. For a self-governing people, it's poison."

Daniels continued, "Pollsters have even begun to use the term 'hatred' to describe the degree of estrangement. They tell us that members of both tribes tend to belong mostly because of their animosity to the other side. In almost reciprocal numbers, they describe the other side as 'closed-minded,' 'dishonest,' 'unintelligent,' even 'immoral.' As we trust each other less, trust in the institutions of our society has eroded in parallel. Almost no sector — government, business, the media, higher education — has escaped a steep drop in public confidence. Some constant vigilance and skepticism about centers of authority is a healthy, all-American instinct. But ultimately, to function effectively as a free and self-governing people, we must maintain some degree of faith that our institutions and those leading them have our best interests at heart, and are performing their duties with sincerity and integrity. And today, we plainly lack such faith."

When I resist the notion of "enemy of the people," I remind readers of the traditional watchdog role the free and patriotic press has assumed. At the most local level, I watched my father, Peru Daily Tribune Managing Editor Jack Howey, run the Ku Klux Klan out of town by printing their names on the front page, and helping to build a new high school in the face of fierce, anti-tax opposition. The Peru Daily Tribune of the 1970s and 1980s paid living wages to about 80 people in a town of 12,000. Today, that publication employs just a handful of journalists.

The watchdog snoozes in dozens of Hoosier small towns and cities. Is there little wonder that as this lo-

cal press recedes, the scourges of meth, heroin, opioids, HIV, racism and intolerance has invaded these communities? That our local jails are filled with addicts and the mentally ill, that OBGYN services can no longer be found in a third of our counties? That our schools are at the mercy of home-grown, adolescent killers who are causing mortgage-busting referendums to be foisted on our communities to harden entryways and purchase metal detectors?



Over the past year, the free press, the patriotic press, has been anything but "enemies" of the people. Look no further

than the Pulitzer Prize lists. There you find the Cincinnati Enquirer staff "for a riveting and insightful narrative and video documenting seven days of greater Cincinnati's heroin epidemic, revealing how the deadly addiction has ravaged families and communities." Or the Kansas City Star for its "courageous, revelatory journalism that exposed a state government's decades-long obsession with secrecy." Or the Miami Herald which exposed the corrupted juvenile justice system in Florida. Or C.J. Chivers of The New York Times for showing, "through an artful accumulation of fact and detail, that a Marine's postwar descent into violence reflected neither the actions of a simple criminal nor a stereotypical case of PTSD."

The free and patriotic American press has exposed the Kremlin's assault on the U.S. election system, the misogyny of Hollywood producers and executives, and the staff of ProPublica laid forth "a sobering examination of why the United States has one of the highest rates of maternal deaths in the developed world, and why at least half are preventable."

The American press has its faults. Cable news stresses me to the point where I have to divorce myself from it a couple of weeks a year. With so many talking heads jabbering from the coasts, there's little wonder that so many in red "flyover" country consign us all into the "liberal" pen, even a reporter like me with distinct Republican origins and affection for its Lugar/Daniels wing.

The press, while not perfect, has played an essential role in the fragile American experiment with democracy. Had the Founding Fathers passed on the creation of the First Amendment and the provisions that made way for the Fourth Estate, the American dream would have been relegated to the dustbin centuries ago.

Our free press is still facing severe challenges. A true, 21st-century financial model remains elusive, prompting a 42% decline in newspaper employment from 2004 to 2017, and readership is in deep decline. This is spreading to local broadcasters, and radio, as well as the networks.

All journalists have much more work to do. Here at HPI, we have expanded our commentators across the spectrum. We are preparing more products to reach the masses. We are not enemies of the people, but passionate stewards of our state and nation. ❖

Delph/Ford, from page 1

legislative district in the state.

Merritt told HPI on Tuesday that Delph has plenty of time to recover. "It all depends on the votes in Hamilton County and Zionsville," said Merritt, who is seeking reelection himself. "If Pike Township turns out and those two don't for the Republican nominee, we have a problem. If Hamilton County and Zionsville Republicans come out and vote for the Republican, Mike's going to be fine. It's going to take an incredible amount of work."

Delph is coming off a fairly easy primary victory over Corrie Meyer, 57.6 to 42.4% in May. But Meyer attracted 4,463 votes and was backed by Zionsville Mayor Tim Haak, Carmel's Jim Brainard, Noblesville's John Ditslear, Fishers' Scott Fadness, and former mayors Greg Ballard of Indianapolis and Jane Reiman of Carmel. Meyer also lined up financial support from people like Mickey Mauer of the IJB, Angela Braly, Azher Khan, Deborah Daniels, Doug Rose and former Lt. Gov. John Mutz.

So, the party appears fractured. Merritt told HPI he is working to unite the party behind Delph. "He's a member of our caucus and I am caucus chairman," Merritt explained. "I am in full support of Sen. Delph. I have not heard the Republicans that worked against Mike in the primary are working in the general yet. I have not heard that. I'm hopeful Republicans will come home. Sen. Delph can be controversial, but he's a Republican and I will certainly help him out."

Delph's dilemma

The dilemma for Delph is that Gov. Eric Holcomb's decision to push for a hate crimes law after a Carmel synagogue was vandalized with Nazi slurs gives the incumbent a new hurdle.

Ford was campaigning alongside U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly in Zionsville earlier this month and he is working on issues such as hate crimes and school safety in the wake of the shooting at Noblesville's West Middle School last spring that wounded a teacher and student. Those issues are motivating the suburban, educated females to participate in this mid-term.

"So, the governor came out and will take a vote on passage of hate crimes legislation next session," Ford told HPI at a Zionsville diner. "I welcome that. I've always been out talking to folks in our district and let's explore it.

It's a good idea. From a human rights standpoint, it shows to the world, to our state and our community that we are a welcoming state. That's really important.

"The second piece of this is economic development," Ford said. "If we're going to attract young professionals to our state, you have to have something on the books that shows we are a warm and welcoming state. Indiana remains one of five states that doesn't have that

on the books. When we're lumped into states like Oklahoma, it's hard to show that we truly are protecting our Hoosier friends. I think we need to take a strong look at the bill, hopefully it will pass, and we can close this chapter and get back to the business of serving the people."

Delph played a role in sidelining hate crimes legislation two sessions ago, sources tell HPI. Asked about whether he would support a hate crimes bill in 2019 advocated by Gov. Holcomb, Delph told HPI, "I haven't seen his proposal." Told the legislation was conceptual at this point but likely would be sponsored by State Rep. Tony Cook, R-Cicero, Delph said, "The law must protect everyone equally.

In this case, anti-Semitism is a historic evil that demands immediate and absolute condemnation."

Delph's challenge from Ford, a gay Democrat, is a rematch. In 2014, Delph defeated Ford by 2,400 votes in one of the closest Senate races of that cycle. SD29 is the only district held by a Republican that Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton carried in 2016.

Ford said that in addition to hate crimes, many voters he's talked with, including Republicans and independents, are concerned about school safety and national issues like the Trump administration's policy of separating immigrant children from their parents, as well as President Trump's temperament and treatment of women.

"School violence, now that school is back in session, is a huge issue," Ford said. "There are a lot of Republican and independent women I've been talking with who don't see our legislature taking any action on the school violence issue."

Last week, Gov. Holcomb received a school safety report that included 18 recommendations that will shape his 2019 legislative agenda. "Ensuring every one of our students has a safe place to learn and grow is of the utmost importance," Holcomb said. "This assessment is an important step toward helping our schools be better prepared for the unknown."



Democrat J.D. Ford chats with Sen. Joe Donnelly during a campaign swing through Zionsville. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



"I think they see Gov. Holcomb taking a good first step," Ford said of the report. "Frankly, my opponent has been quiet. He's been nowhere on this issue and so I'm capitalizing on it. I'm letting my constituents know where I stand on this election. I held my own school safety forum and listened to my neighbors."

National headwinds for GOP

National polls reveal plenty of headwinds for down-ballot Republicans like Sen. Delph, particularly after President Trump insisted earlier this month that the mid-term elections are essentially a referendum on his first two years.

In a recent NBC/Wall Street Journal national poll, 64% of college-educated white women said they disapproved of Trump's performance and 60% said they preferred Democrats for Congress, while just 30% wanted Republicans. In a Monmouth University poll, Democrats led among college-educated white women by 57% to 38%. In March, a Gallup poll had President Trump's job approval standing at 44% among men, but just 31% of women.

A Quinnipiac poll released Wednesday revealed that only 31% of American voters like President Trump as a person, while 59% dislike him. Republicans like Trump 66-24%, the only listed party, gender, education, age or racial group which likes him, according to the independent Quinnipiac survey. Voters disapprove 54-41% of the job Trump is doing as president, including 48% who disapprove strongly. Another 30% approve strongly.

"Not the kind of numbers that gets you a date to the prom, or helps your party as the midterm elections approach. Only one in three Americans 'likes' President Donald Trump," said Tim Malloy, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Poll. "For President Trump, another Groundhog Day. His job approval gets another cool reception in midst of the sweltering summer. What does it mean? Simple: The base is hanging in and the rest aren't buying in."

At the one-year mark in his presidency, a Washington Post-ABC News poll found that 71% of white college-educated women disapproved of Trump's job performance, with 61% of them saying they strongly disapproved. Among white women without college degrees, a group

with which Trump has consistently enjoyed more support, half said they disapproved of his job performance, and 44% said they strongly disapproved.

Since then, the immigrant child separation issue, and President Trump's controversies with porn star Stormy Daniels and a vicious feud with former White House staffer Omarosa Manigault Newman (whom Trump referred to as a "lowlife" and "dog" on Wednesday) are likely to create additional stress points for educated, suburban female voters.

There has also been a surge of female candidates, including four Democratic congressional nominees in Indiana. In the overlapping 5th CD, Democrat Dee Thornton is challenging U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks. There are now at least 199 women who have won their primaries for U.S. House in 2018. Mike Allen of Axios reported on Wednesday, "Midterms are typically a referendum on the president, but 2018 is showing over and over again that Americans want more women in elected office during the Trump era."

SD29 is not the only General Assembly district that fits the profile of educated suburban females assuming a powerful role. There are a cluster of House races in Lake and Porter Counties (HD11, 14, 15, 19 and 4) where incumbent Republican Reps. Hal Slager, Julie Olthoff, Mike Aylesworth and Ed Soliday face credible challenges, along with a cluster in Indianapolis and the Louisville suburbs where two Senate seats, SD45 and 46, could come into play if a Democratic blue/pink wave takes shape.

"Clearly the surge of women candidates is part of something much bigger," says veteran Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg, who is extensively studying female voters this year for the Democratic group Women's Voices Women Vote Action Fund (CNN). "Women in every social class and every generation have been hit by the Trump presidency, and the effect and the political disruption of the women's march and the women candidates. Each of these things is reinforcing the trend."

Greenburg added, "Clearly, there is a building solidarity in their communities about what is happening. And they are talking about their values in ways that they didn't easily talk about them before; they talked about the way Trump treated people, tolerance, about bringing about conflict between different groups. There are so many ways

in which the Trump presidency has led college (educated) white women to understand their shared values and it is producing big electoral numbers.”

Another motivating factor is the U.S. Supreme Court nomination of Brett Kavanaugh, who President Trump nominated with the ardent support of Vice President Mike Pence, whose explicit goal has been to relegate Roe v. Wade to the “dustbin of history.” It is an issue that motivates GOP primary voters.

A July 23 poll from NBC News and the Wall Street Journal found 71% of American voters believe that Roe v. Wade should not be overturned; just 23% say the ruling should be reversed. Those supporting the ruling include 88% of Democrats, 76% of independents and a majority, 52%, of Republicans for the first time in that poll’s history.

At the Indiana Democrats’ annual convention eve dinner last June, the room erupted with its biggest cheers as a number of leaders vowed to defend Roe v. Wade.

With a majority of Republicans now backing Roe v. Wade, it’s not a stretch that those numbers with suburban females in SD29 are likely to be higher.

So, Sen. Delph is facing the greatest challenge of his political career since he lost a 2002 convention floor fight for the secretary of state nomination. He is well-funded, though GOP sources tell HPI that he’s taken the unusual step of conducting a second big fundraiser this summer – one usually suffices.

Delph is facing headwinds with President Trump’s loss of support in a district that backed Hillary Clinton, a ruptured Republican Party, the emergence of looming hate crimes legislation, and a Democratic challenger that came into the race well-funded with high name recognition. Delph’s political obituary has been written before by opponents and his grassroots network is substantial. But we see few advantages for him this cycle. **HPI Horse Race Status:** Leans Ford. ❖

Donnelly meets with Judge Kavanaugh

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Even before U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly spent an hour with U.S. Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh on Wednesday, pressure mounted for him to make a decision on the confirmation vote.



Donnelly said of the meeting, “I had a wide-ranging conversation and productive meeting

with Judge Kavanaugh. This was an important opportunity to sit down and talk in-depth with Judge Kavanaugh about his record; experience working in the Bush Administration and serving on the federal bench; and views on the role of the Supreme Court as well as on a range of issues including precedent, health care, and judicial independence.”

Donnelly added, “I take my responsibility as senator to consider Supreme Court nominees very seriously and will continue a thorough review of Judge Kavanaugh’s record and plan to follow his Senate Judiciary Committee hearing closely. Hoosiers rightly expect careful and thoughtful consideration of a nomination to our nation’s highest court, and I plan to keep doing my homework and make a decision sometime after Kavanaugh’s committee confirmation hearing.”



Braun told The Daily Caller News Foundation on Tuesday that he was glad Donnelly plans to at least meet Kavanaugh, but feels he will eventually bow to Democrats when it comes to actually voting. “Like most Hoosiers, I fully support the president’s pick, so I think it’s disappointing that he’s been dragging his feet, doing the dance,” Braun said. “I think he’s going to wait until his fellow New York liberal and mentor Chuck Schumer and the rest of the wing of his party give him the OK to support the nominee.”

Last week, Donnelly told HPI, “I’m following the same exact process (with Justice Neil Gorsuch), and at the end of that process I said, “He’s certainly within the parameters of someone who’s qualified, who has worked very hard, is not extreme one way or the other, and the

president gets some deference because he got elected, he won, he gets to make the choice. You just don’t want extreme one way or the other.”

Asked if he needed the National Archives material that won’t be available until October, Donnelly said, “It all depends on when we have the hearings. Mitch McConnell determines that. I want to hear what he says in the hearings because it’s critical. The whole country can get a flavor for who he is. My job isn’t to rush a decision to make this job happy or this group happy.

This is someone who’s going to be there for decades and my job is to make the right decision; that’s what I’m trying to do.”

Braun said that Donnelly is following marching orders from Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. “I think

that [the delay] is an effort to trick the folks back home into thinking he's not a liberal Democrat. I'm not buying it," Braun argued. "He'll delay it until Chuck Schumer says it's OK," he added.

Donnelly told HPI last week, "I haven't the slightest interest what Chuck Schumer has to say about Judge Kavanaugh. My loyalty, devotion and effort are to the people of Indiana. That's what I care about, that's who I listen to and at just about every stop today I had people talking to me about Kavanaugh one way or another."

Prior to the meeting, RNC spokesman Michael Joyce said, "Sen. Donnelly needs to take his meeting with Judge Kavanaugh seriously because the Supreme Court should be about more than political grandstanding in the middle of a midterm election year. Donnelly needs to do the right thing, listen to his constituents, and confirm Judge Kavanaugh."

Donnelly the 'accidental senator'?

Politico's Burgess Everett describes Joe Donnelly as the "accidental senator" because of "his good fortune in drawing a deeply flawed GOP opponent in 2012." So, there's a persistent belief that if Republican nominee Richard Mourdock hadn't blown his late October debate question on abortion, Donnelly would have lost. Not so fast: HPI's forecasting always gave Donnelly an edge. The Sept. 27, 2012, Howey Politics/DePauw Battleground Poll had Donnelly leading Mourdock 40-38%. But there were warning signs for Mourdock with his fav/unfav at 26/32%. Pollster Fred Yang observed, "While Joe Donnelly's current 40%-to-38% lead clearly is within the survey's margin of error, several underlying factors suggest that while the race will come down to the wire, Donnelly likely has the slight edge. Donnelly has a better profile among key swing voters," as well as independents. The fallacy of a "deeply flawed GOP opponent" ignores the fact that then-Rep. Donnelly made a calculated decision to run for the Senate instead of reelection because Democratic polling in 2011 revealed U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar's vulnerability in the GOP primary with a 28% reelect, while 56% wanted a new senator. When Howey/DePauw polled the head-to-head matchups in our final pre-primary poll that showed Mourdock on the way to a landslide upset over Lugar, the incumbent had a 50-29% lead over Donnelly, while the Mourdock/Donnelly head-to-head was tied at 35%. Donnelly executed a virtually flawless strategy, saw his final HPI/DePauw Poll lead at 11% (we correctly forecast some Republicans would return) and Donnelly won by 7%. So, the notion that he is an "accidental senator" is a real stretch.

Trump signs Donnelly bill

Companion legislation to Sen. Donnelly's bipartisan National Suicide

Hotline Improvement Act was signed into law by President Trump. The legislation passed the House in July and the Senate earlier this month. Donnelly introduced the Senate version of this bill with Sen. Orrin Hatch in May 2017. Donnelly said, "At a time when the suicide rate is increasing both in Indiana and across the country, we must ensure that those in crisis have access to mental health resources. This bipartisan legislation will provide needed oversight of our suicide hotline system and determine how we can improve it and provide better service for those in need of assistance." The bipartisan National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act will increase the effectiveness of the current suicide prevention lifeline system and Veterans Crisis Line by requiring the Federal Communications Commission, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Veterans Affairs, to study the current national suicide hotline system and make recommendations to Congress on how to improve it, including whether to use an easy-to-remember three-digit suicide hotline number to better connect those in peril to crucial crisis resources.

Poll shows Donnelly with 12% lead

A new poll by the Trafalgar Group gives U.S. Sen. Donnelly a 50.7% to 38.6% over Republican Mike Braun. But take that with a grain of salt. Or, perhaps, an entire deerlick salt cube. The Donnelly campaign doesn't put much stock in the Trafalgar Group. Neither does FiveThirtyEight, which gives it a "C" grade. Virtually everyone we've talked with sees the INSen race a pure tossup, so seeing Donnelly with a 12% lead doesn't resonate.

Braun parts made in China

The off-road accessory was shipped in a box emblazoned with the logo of an auto parts brand owned by Mike Braun, a multimillionaire businessman who often rails against foreign outsourcing in his bid to become Indiana's next senator (Slodysko, Associated Press). The words "Made in China" were stamped across the packaging. Braun frequently criticizes his opponent, vulnerable red-state Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly, for once owning stock in a family business his brother runs that operates a



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strategic content creation and deployment

factory in Mexico. However, the Republican nominee's own parts brand, Promaxx Automotive, sells products that were similarly manufactured abroad, according to a review by The Associated Press. It has been well documented that Braun's national auto parts distribution company, Meyer Distributing, ships and sells other companies' goods that are made outside of the U.S. Such practice doesn't leave him vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy, he argues, because as a distributor he only resells the parts and has no control over where the companies make them. But the revelation about the Chinese origin of much of his own products line, which Meyer trademarked with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, draws into question some of Braun's statements on the campaign trail, where he seldom, if ever, mentions Promaxx. Braun's campaign would not say what percentage of Promaxx parts are made in America. Spokesman Josh Kelley issued a statement Thursday suggesting it was a distraction from "Donnelly's record of profiting from outsourcing."

Kernan urges veterans to vote Donnelly

Former Indiana Gov. Joe Kernan said in a South Bend Tribune op-ed that Hoosier veterans should vote for U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly. "As a Vietnam War veteran and prisoner of war, a former governor of Indiana and a long-time South Bend resident, I believe that we need to reelect Joe Donnelly to the U.S. Senate," Kernan writes. "Joe has been a tireless advocate for veterans and service members in the Senate. He works in a bipartisan and common-sense way to deliver real results for all Hoosiers. Look no further than the new St. Joseph County VA Health Clinic for proof of Joe's tireless efforts to deliver for Hoosier veterans. Joe worked for nearly 10 years, since he was a congressman for Indiana's 2nd Congressional District, to make the impressive VA clinic in Mishawaka a reality for veterans living in northcentral Indiana. Gone are the days when veterans living in South Bend, Elkhart and LaPorte needed to travel to Fort Wayne, Chicago or Indianapolis for care from the VA. This new clinic has been life-changing for veterans like myself, and I can tell you that it would not have been built without Joe's passion for making life better for veterans in Indiana. He hasn't stopped at the VA health clinic in Mishawaka; he's working hard to help bring more VA clinics to Indiana and meet the needs of every Hoosier veteran."

Braun digital ad

Braun launched a digital ad buy across Indiana reminding Hoosiers that Donnelly is "spreading false information about Braun's company to distract Hoosiers from his record of profiting from importing goods from China and outsourcing jobs to Mexico, where workers made less than a dollar an hour. Career politician Joe Donnelly and his fellow New Yorker liberal Chuck Schumer are desperate to distract Hoosiers from Sen. Donnelly's record of profiting from outsourcing jobs to Mexico and importing goods from China," said Mike Braun spokesman Josh Kelley. "The

truth is, every job Mike Braun creates is an American job, 95% of Mike's suppliers are American, and career Democrat Donnelly is clearly willing to say and do anything to keep his job." - **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

Congress

3rd CD: Banks, Tritch debate over debates

A debate over debates has generated more debate. Democratic congressional candidate Courtney Tritch said last week that Rep. Jim Bank has not agreed to dates for public debates ahead of the Nov. 6 election. She said she wants him to confirm multiple dates by Aug. 15. Banks told The Journal Gazette that he wants to debate Tritch and will "nail down the dates as soon as we can." His campaign also sent a statement to radio station WBOI. It said, in part, "Unlike Ms. Tritch, Congressman Banks has a family and a job and that job is serving the people of northeast Indiana. As we've said before, there will be plenty of opportunity to debate at the appropriate time." That prompted a lengthy written response from Tritch, a marketing consultant. She wrote that she was "outraged, offended and hurt" by the Banks campaign statement.

Horse Race Status: Safe Banks.

Pence ponders debating

After Senate nominee Braun mentioned that he will participate in two upcoming debates with incumbent Sen. Donnelly, Greg Pence was asked whether he will debate his Democratic opponent, Jeannine Lee Lake. "We'll take a look at that in the fall," Pence said (Columbus Republic). **Horse Race Status:** Safe Pence.

Polls show motivated Democrats

A trio of new polls show that Democrats are cutting into the GOP's longstanding turnout advantage in mid-term elections, another encouraging sign for the minority party's hopes of winning the House in November. According to a POLITICO/Morning Consult poll released Wednesday, roughly two-thirds of voters, 66 percent, said they were "very motivated" to vote in this year's elections — up significantly from 55 percent in May. Three-fourths of GOP voters, 75 percent, said they are "very motivated" to vote, as did 72 percent of Democrats; the difference between the two is within the poll's margin of error. Fewer independents, 53 percent, said they were very motivated to vote. In past midterms, other surveys have showed Republican voters were far more motivated than Democrats were to show up at the polls.

Statewides

Judge rejects Hill motion on Indy satellites

A motion filed by Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill to amend a consent decree establishing multiple early voting sites in Marion County for the upcoming Novem-

ber general election has been denied (Indiana Lawyer). Indiana Southern District Senior Judge Sarah Evans Barker wrote the state's objections have no merit. "The consent decree was tendered jointly by all parties, that is, by all Plaintiffs and all Defendants, who are the Election Board and its three members in their official capacities," she wrote. "If this were not enough (though it is), Defendants have responded in opposition to the State's motion by showing the 'additional steps' Defendants have taken in unanimous support of the consent decree." At Hill's Thursday press conference, Solicitor General Thomas M. Fisher announced the office would appeal the consent decree to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals. Hill hit back at Secretary of State Connie Lawson for calling his actions "reckless" but is remaining quiet on the assertion that his motion to derail Marion County's plan to expand early voting is "premiered on a fundamental factual misrepresentation" (Odenahl, Indiana Lawyer). "Secretary of State Connie Lawson (Wednesday) released an ill-informed statement purveying the misconception that I oppose early-voting satellite sites in Marion County," Hill said in a statement. "That is not true, and our position in court, if successful, would not block early voting sites. Rather, it would leave the decision in the hands of the Marion County Election Board." Hill also bristled at Lawson calling his action "reckless."

Mitchell pushes 911 texting

Indiana State Treasurer Kelly Mitchell visited Monroe County's Central Emergency Dispatch Center Wednesday to learn more about local dispatch operations, including its use of the statewide Text-to-911 program (Bloomington Herald-Times). Mitchell, who as treasurer also serves as chairwoman of the Statewide 911 board, is currently touring the top 25 dispatch centers that use the 911 text program. Monroe County was the fifth county to implement the program, which went statewide in 2016. Mitchell said the state is still trying to educate the public about the program. "Not everyone knows yet that Text-to-911 is available in Indiana," Mitchell said.

Nation

Buttigieg to sub for Biden

Former Vice President Joe Biden won't be campaigning at the Illinois State Fair due to an illness, state Democrats announced late Tuesday. Biden was scheduled to keynote the County Chairs' Association brunch at a Springfield hotel. The brunch kicks off the day's activities. The association on Wednesday morning announced South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg will replace Biden as the headliner. ❖

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Merritt prepares for challenge to Hogsett

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – As for 2019 municipal races, it's getting late and Mayor Joe Hogsett appears to be conflicted on a reelection bid. On the Republican side, State Sen. Jim Merritt is deep in the process and preparing for a challenge.

Merritt is up for reelection, facing Democrat Derek Camp in SD31, where he is a prohibitive favorite to win an eighth term after joining the chamber in 1990. He is majority caucus chair and heads the Senate Utilities Committee. Merritt is a fraternity brother of Hogsett, graduating from Indiana University in 1981, three years after the mayor graduated. Both ran cross country at IU.

We sat down with Merritt, who is also the Marion County Republican Party chairman, to talk about the prospects of a challenge to Hogsett or another Democrat such as Councilman Vop Osili at the HPI offices on Massachusetts Avenue on Tuesday afternoon.

HPI: Are you planning to challenge Mayor Hogsett?

Merritt: I'm focused on a laser effort at reelection through November. Then over the long haul I'm looking at running for mayor.

HPI: When will you make your decision?

Merritt: If I get reelected in November, I'll take the month of November and seek out opinions, seek out money sources and create a vision for the future of Indianapolis. I will be thinking, as a state legislator, how I can help Indianapolis to become a better place to live. The month of November will be a very busy month for me.

HPI: Here we have Mayor Hogsett who has not made a decision. I wrote last month that if you're undecided at this late stage of the game, maybe you ought not run. What do you know about his decision?

Merritt: When Bill Hudnut was running for reelection and I don't recall if this was 1983 or 1987, but unbeknownst to everybody he had applied to be the president of the University of Tennessee. The

university has a rule and everything is transparent and open to the public. Everybody knew he had been applying for a job once he had been running for mayor as well. He was able to pick it up, run for reelection and everything turned out OK. Joe and I have been friends for over 40 years. We're fraternity brothers. I'm sure he and his wife and family are going to make that decision. What I want Indianapolis to be, as a citizen, is for Indianapolis to be a prosperous city with an activist mayor. Joe has to know that this job takes juice. It takes a lot of energy and day-to-day fortitude to get the job done.

HPI: Four years ago Republicans ran a candidate virtually nobody knew in Chuck Brewer and Hogsett was easily elected. Republicans kept telling me that the Democrats have a 20,000 voter advantage and that a Republican couldn't win in Indy. But we have Lloyd Winnecke leading as a Republican in a Democratic city in Evansville, and we have Tom Henry, a Democratic mayor leading Republican Fort Wayne, so I'm not buying this. Indianapolis should be competitive in a mayoral sense for the foreseeable future.

Merritt: Yes, I agree wholeheartedly. We can be competitive and I think we can win next year. I don't believe Indianapolis will have Democratic mayors forever. If you put a vision out to the citizens, a Republican can win. People put the partisanship aside when you're running for mayor, anywhere, from Evansville, to Fort Wayne, to South Bend to Lafayette. They want to feel the mayor is in charge and is pointing us to the correct future.

HPI: We have two issues here, the homicides, where you put a statement out about the 100th one for the year, and the roads, which are falling apart. On the homicide rate, how does a mayor keep gang-bangers from committing what we once called public service homicides, or someone committing a domestic homicide?

Merritt: It's very difficult. Obviously the buck stops with the mayor. Hogsett said from the beginning he didn't want a public safety director and that he would be in charge of public safety. It hasn't gone well. We have a situation out in our neighborhoods which is very difficult. I don't believe we are using our force wholeheartedly with the grassroots. I'm not just talking about the 10 Point Coalition. There are different churches and different orga-



nizations who are willing to step up and play a role in the safety of their own neighborhoods. I think we need to do a lot better job of getting out into the neighborhoods and talking to them and taking that reservoir of support and making it a safer place. There's a neighborhood just north of Crown Hill Cemetery that has had one shooting, and they believe it was domestic, and that neighborhood has turned it around right near Butler University. It can work. There needs to be a lot more interaction with IMPD. This triple shooting the other night after the jazz in the park event, there were a lot of people from outside the area who came in and it was chaos that broke loose. We need more concerted efforts to talk, see what the situations are



and not be overwhelmed after an event.

HPI: The pothole situation. The mayor said he's going to bond against that one-cent rise in the gas tax rate for this year. Is that a good idea?

Merritt: I think it was for \$120 million. I'm not certain that's the way to go. I think of a bond as a credit card. That's not exactly capital improvement. It's an improvement that will wear down relatively quickly. That won't be with us for a long time. I'd like to study his proposal. It strikes me that it is kind of a short term, maybe not a Band-Aid, but short term. We need a long-term approach to this. We need to talk about paving companies guaranteeing their work. There are a lot of ways to pave our streets and highways that we're not using right now. The company that lays that pavement ought to guarantee it for five years. But I'm not convinced that bonding is the correct way.

HPI: All of us in Indy are paying an extra 11 cents per gallon on gas since 2016. Here in Indy we have close to a sixth of the population in Indiana or when you factor in the folks for the suburbs who come here and work, and it doesn't seem to me that Indianapolis is being treated fairly on the distribution. Then I look at the roads at my home in Brown County and they're fabulous with SR46 being repaved and the county is going to repave another 14 miles yet this year. I actually brought my F-150 up from

the cabin to drive here in Indianapolis and protect my Subaru last winter. I was comparing Keystone Avenue to the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Is Indy getting a fair shake on the Next Level funding?

Merritt: We need to have an honest discussion at the Statehouse regarding lane funding. It is punitive to the way the percentages work out, to an urban community like ours. I'll have legislation next year that addresses a regional approach, a regional development authority. Right now we have that in the Northwest Region. We need to have all nine counties in this here. I've seen the Northwest RDA and it's been a very good success. Central Indiana could very well be improved with an RDA, to stretch costs on infrastructure, law enforcement, purchasing over those nine counties. I'm in the process of talking with Mayor Faddness and Mayor Cook and the others are on the docket. I really believe the Regional Cities has been a success, the Stellar Communities where Indiana gives communities a little push financially and that regional approach is something we need to take a very serious look at that.

HPI: You can live in Carmel or Plainfield and still bust an axle or a rim in Indianapolis. You can be from Greenwood or Zionsville and still get mugged downtown by the stadium. The criminals and potholes don't discern the Hamilton County line.

Merritt: I'm not for a commuter tax. I think that's very divisive because people lay their heads down in Hamilton County and then come to work here. I know they're taxed in their own community but the bottom line is we have to all be in this together. Indianapolis is lurching toward San Francisco. It has crime, it has homelessness and incredible drug use and it also just has trash. Two conventions have backed away from San Francisco because of conditions there over the last four months. We cannot get in that situation. Having a strong capital city, a strong core is very, very important. I know Mayor Cook and Mayor Faddness understand that and are willing to work with us.

HPI: Are we still in the running for Amazon HQ2?

Merritt: No one has said we aren't. I expect some sort of final 10 or final five by this fall. I think our central location, our way of life, our culture, our hospitality and our business climate are all great benefits that will help us get to a final four.

HPI: If Amazon were to announce they're coming, that might change Mayor Hogsett's thinking on a second term. He'd be pretty exultant about that. Would that change your calculations?

Merritt: No. Look at Todd Young, running for the U.S. Senate and he doesn't really have an opponent. All of a sudden, Evan Bayh announces and Todd is just undeterred. I saw him the day after that and now he's Sen. Todd Young. That would not change my mind. That would not work into my calculations at all. It's my city. I've been here since 1959. I do not want us to become another San Francisco or Detroit. ❖

Donnelly is grinding out his campaign

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Sen. Joe Donnelly believes in campaigning. The old style of campaigning. What he calls a “grind it out” style. Meeting voters here, there, everywhere, all over the state.



That’s why, during the Senate recess, the politically endangered Democrat traveled to every corner of the state and in the middle, too, on a seven-day tour that ended Thursday.

Donnelly said in an interview that he found health care the No. 1 issue with Hoosiers, with strong support for the Affordable

Care Act provision for insurance for people with pre-existing conditions, especially for children.

And of course he reminded voters everywhere, as he did at an event in LaPorte Wednesday night, that he cast a crucial vote to keep Senate Republicans from repealing that provision along with other parts of the health care law.

He also praised a Republican, Sen. John McCain, described as “one of my personal heroes,” for giving the decisive thumbs down vote on repeal.

Donnelly said he also found concern over trade and tariffs in his meetings with groups of farmers and with business owners at manufacturing facilities he visited.

What he didn’t find, Donnelly said, was any backlash for his vote against the Republican tax plan, what he calls “Mitch McConnell’s tax plan.”

He said it was not the tax bill with middle-class benefits and avoidance of huge deficits that President Trump expressed support for in meeting with Donnelly and other moderate Democratic senators at a White House dinner.

Donnelly doesn’t bash Trump.

Democratic progressives may not understand that. But if Donnelly is to be reelected, he must win support of a lot of the Hoosiers who voted for Trump. The president carried Indiana by 19%.

Donnelly does criticize Trump administration policies, on deficits, tariffs and especially on what he calls “sabotage” of the Affordable Care Act that is forcing Hoosiers to pay more for less coverage.

The “grind it out” style isn’t viewed by all cam-

aign consultants these days as an efficient strategy in a statewide race. Why waste time traveling for hours to waste more hours talking to small groups? Why not concentrate on raising funds for vital TV and on big events sure to capture news coverage?

But Donnelly on his tour did it the old-fashioned way, going to factory gates at dawn, visting folks at small diners at lunch, stopping to meet with groups of farmers or teachers or business people and then continuing into the night to give pep talks to campaign workers.

The “grind it out” style isn’t new for Donnelly. Riding from the LaPorte event, he pointed out a park where he often would “pull over and knock out for about half an hour” in order to make sure he didn’t fall asleep after a long campaign day as he drove back late at night to his Granger home.

Problems occur. Donnelly planned to travel throughout the tour on his 2002 Indiana-made RV. But it broke down in in Noble County. His campaign staff had praise for “Farmer John,” who saw the vehicle at the side of the road and provided a lift to the next event.

Donnelly obviously seeks funding for TV ads. And he has done well, with enough to stay on television with



major buys for the rest of the campaign.

But he avoids the national television that appeals to many other candidates who seek enhanced prestige in making national news.

“I’m invited constantly to be on those shows,” Donnelly said. He declines. Partisan fireworks on such programs, especially on cable networks, don’t appeal to a senator who prides himself on long having high ratings of bipartisanship.

Grinding it out worked before for Donnelly. So, he campaigns again the old- fashioned way. Whether it still works will be shown in Indiana totals on Nov. 6. ❖

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

The book on Pence: A man of predictability and paradox

By **ANDREA NEAL**

INDIANAPOLIS – Making sense of Mike Pence. That was the task I faced over the past year in writing “Pence – The Path to Power,” the first comprehensive biography of the Hoosier vice president.



He is a man of both predictability and paradox.

Since first running for Congress in 1988, he has never wavered in his public policy views favoring limited government, free markets and social conservatism.

He is predictably loyal to family and friends and pleasant to new acquaintances. (When a former student of mine came across him at the Maxinkuckee Golf Club,

he cheerily volunteered to pose for pictures.)

He is a predictable yes-man for President Donald Trump, often because he agrees with the policies at stake (tax cuts, deregulation), sometimes because he sees his role as devoted subordinate to the commander-in-chief (tariffs, trade policy).

And yet, to most of us observing him at arm’s length, Pence appears steeped in self-contradiction. He is a self-described “Christian, conservative, Republican, in that order” who has allied himself with a president known for narcissism, incivility and vulgarity.

My first step in making sense of Pence was to learn all I could about his childhood in Columbus, Indiana, and his earliest years in politics in the meandering 6th District. I read hundreds of newspaper clippings from the Columbus Republic, the Muncie Star Press, the Franklin Daily Journal, and the Indianapolis Star, among other newspapers.

I contacted Pence’s friends and political advisers, who in almost every case were happy to meet with me to describe their relationships with the vice president. These included high school buddy Jeff Brown, college classmates Jay Steger and Dan Murphy, political allies Bill Stephan and Jeff Cardwell, and former top aides Bill Smith and Jim Atterholt. To a person, they described Pence as a funny and congenial man who had never met a stranger and was open to other people and differing political views.

In order to develop a well-rounded picture, I reached out to his political adversaries, too, folks like Melina Fox, who lost to Pence in the 2002 and 2004 congressional elections; John Gregg, the Democratic candidate for governor in 2012 and 2016; and Kevin Warren, a civil rights activist who spearheaded a campaign called “Pence Must Go.”

Gregg, never reluctant to attack Pence on the issues, initially was loath to grant an interview because he considers Pence a friend. “I don’t want to be part of a hatchet job or a puff piece,” he told me. “Neither do I,” I assured him.

All 50 of my interviews were on the record. I wanted to write a book that would be fact-based and historically reliable, so I committed to using named sources only. This was standard operating procedure during my 20-plus years with United Press International and the Indianapolis Star, a practice too readily abandoned by media looking for a scoop in today’s cutthroat reporting environment.

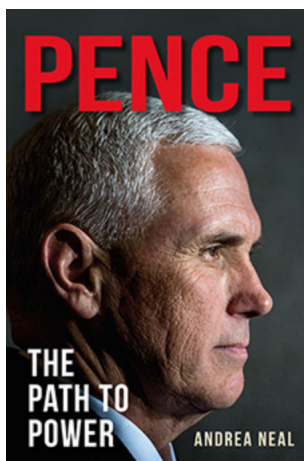
What emerged from my research was a more complicated portrait than the caricatured extremist depicted by pundits and late-night talk show hosts. Pence’s life story does not support simplistic conclusions that he is mere ambition in a suit or a thinly disguised theocrat seeking to impose a religious world order on the country.

His years heading the Indiana Policy Review Foundation are instructive. In the early 1990s, Pence helped build the think tank into a formidable player in Indiana policy discussions and took pains to call out what he considered crony capitalism on both sides of the aisle. During his tenure there, the foundation advocated for congressional term limits and an end to collective bargaining, prevailing wage laws and corporate welfare.

A defining moment came in 1993 when Pence on behalf of the think tank sued the Indiana General Assembly and all 150 members challenging the practice of logrolling, merging of multiple pieces of legislation into one in order to get more votes. Although he alienated fellow Republicans, Pence did not waver on the principle at stake.

While scripture does indeed influence Pence’s perspective on social issues such as abortion, his political philosophy has evolved over decades. Notably, Pence was a Kennedy Democrat when he enrolled at Hanover College in Madison, Indiana, in 1977. Four years later he was just beginning his conversion to free-market Republican ideals, thanks in part to the mentorship of history professor G. M. Curtis whose course on American Constitutional and Legal History forced Pence to grapple for the first time with separation of powers, federalism and states’ rights.

When it comes to the role of government, Pence is a strict constructionist, like the judicial nominees he has recommended to the president. Pence believes the Consti-



tution should be understood based on literal and narrow reading of its language without regard to changing times or evolving social mores.

This can lead to the paradoxes that make him such a puzzling figure in American politics. As just one example, while he opposes the Supreme Court's 1973 decision legalizing abortion, he would not pursue federal legislation to outlaw abortion outright. He would advocate that the matter be decided at the state legislative level because of his understanding (and arguably the Framers' understanding) of federalism, the distribution of power

between the nation and the states.

My job as a biographer was not to contest Pence's politics but to present the facts and allow readers to reach their own conclusions about his character and policy preferences. As for his success as vice president, I'll leave that analysis to future historians who will have, as Paul Harvey used to say, "the rest of the story." ❖

Andrea Neal is an adjunct scholar with the Indiana Policy Review Foundation.

Defend the ACA instead of expanding Medicare for all

By **SHAW FRIEDMAN**

LaPORTE – Rather than being diverted with esoteric debates about how many trillions of tax dollars a "Medicare for All" plan would entail, doesn't it make more sense to see what can be done about protecting the Affordable Care Act from attacks and getting to universal coverage in other ways?



While advocates of Medicare for All are certainly well-intentioned, undue attention is being paid to plans such as that which have little to no chance of passage by this Congress or any other in the near future. When one considers that the Affordable

Care Act passed with just one vote to spare and is now under unceasing attack on multiple fronts including by our own Indiana attorney general, it would seem a more productive use of time and political capital to protect what has already been gained.

With 400,000 additional Hoosiers are now covered under HIP 2.0 that was made possible by the Medicaid expansion of ACA, why jeopardize that by allowing critics to assail Medicare for All? Why not fight to protect the ACA with its pre-existing conditions protections and better coverage for those with serious and chronic conditions?

The ACA has now gained popular support that would be immensely difficult to build for Medicare for All. Between expanded Medicaid, the individual market exchanges and employer-based insurance, we're at least a step closer to universal coverage which is what advocates of Medicare for All say they're trying to achieve.

As a political strategy, it seems foolish to advocate throwing out the ACA that took decades to achieve. If

anything, it needs to be protected and strengthened along with Medicaid and Medicare rather than throwing out the baby with the bath water and starting over. Look at the GOP's unsuccessful effort to repeal or replace the ACA – it's because of the broad public approval the Act now enjoys.

As Ron Pollack of Families USA wrote back in September, there are several paths to universal coverage. While single payer, Medicare for All, is one of them, it's not the only one. Plus, as New York Magazine put quite well in an article on September 13, 2017, "a single payer plan would be nice, in a world that looks nothing like the one we inhabit."

The Washington Post put it well when it backed the goal of universal coverage in an editorial on April 8 of this year when it wrote that "we should focus on increasing the number of Americans with comprehensive health insurance and lowering costs. We need to be pragmatic on tactics and focused most of all on making a positive difference in as many people's lives as possible."

This is one of those issues where some of my liberal friends may push moderate voters away by stressing purity to a Medicare for All model. If we can get to universal coverage by expanding Medicaid, shoring up the private exchanges and keeping in place employer-based insurance, why not do that?

Let's not give Republicans the opportunity to campaign against Democrats by touting the massive expense of Medicare for All plans when it's far more important right now to protect those parts of the ACA that are under attack and deserve protection like coverage for those with pre-existing conditions.

Republicans have lost the debate on the ACA and they are looking for some new ways to attack Democrats by claiming massive tax hikes and bureaucratic nightmares under a Medicare for All plan.

Let's not give them what they want. Instead, let's take the fight to them. ❖

Shaw Friedman is a LaPorte attorney who has represented various local governmental entities during his 34 years of law practice in Northwest Indiana.

My Omarosa story

By **TONY SAMUEL**

INDIANAPOLIS – It's Omarosa week! And guess what? That's right. I've got an Omarosa story. It's not a great story. Sort of interesting but could be more interesting if I exaggerate. It might have a point to it, but I'm not yet sure if it will.



It all started during the Trump 2016 campaign. It ended on Inauguration Day. As you may remember, Rex Early was our Indiana chairman and I was the vice chair. We were volunteers in those roles.

Too bad Rex doesn't really have anything to do with this story, because it would probably be an awesome tale if Rex and Omarosa had met. What a slugfest that would have been.

What most people don't know is that after the national convention in early August, I was also brought onto the paid staff as the communications director for Indiana. The national campaign had 18 states with paid comms directors, and because I had been the point person with the media up until then, they decided to pay me for it.

Back to my Omarosa story. As the communications director, I got to be on calls with the national communications team at 7 a.m., then on another call with the other state comms folks and our director at 8 a.m. and then could listen in on a surrogate call at noon. This was all fascinating as I was listening to folks like Steve Bannon, Kellyanne Conway and Katrina Pierson. Even Bobby Knight was once on a call. And yes, Omarosa. That was crazy to me because it was Omarosa. She was nuts. I used to watch "The Apprentice," so I knew she was crazy. What was she doing on these calls?

That's it for the first part of the story. Nothing too exciting. I heard her speak up once or twice, but she didn't say anything outlandish that I can remember.

The next part gets more exciting. Fast forward to December of 2016, a month after the election. I was in D.C. for meetings and having lunch at the Trump International Hotel in Washington with a friend who had first

introduced me to someone on the Trump campaign back in September of 2015. My friend and I were seated at the perfect table at the BLT Prime restaurant overlooking the Trump hotel lobby.

Halfway through our lunch, Omarosa walked in with Katrina Pierson and a gentleman. They all sat right behind me. I didn't want to interrupt but I didn't want to miss the opportunity to say something to both Omarosa and Katrina. So finally, I turned around and congratulated them and thanked them for what they had done and ended up telling a little of my small role in Indiana. I then offered to buy them a glass of champagne. They gladly accepted, and we toasted the president. My friend and I thought this was pretty cool.

When they got up to leave they thanked us again for the champagne; someone mentioned a picture, and both Omarosa and Katrina took separate selfies with me. I've shown a few people but will never again show off the Omarosa picture. All three of them offered to exchange business cards, so we did. That's the second part of the story. I only said it was more exciting than the first part.

But now is when the story gets vicious and downright ugly. A few days later, I emailed all three of them separately to say great to meet you and something along the lines of staying in touch. I thought it would be good to increase my contact with anyone in Trump world.

Katrina was the only one to email me back. Omarosa did not! She probably laughed at me for buying her a glass of champagne at lunch and giving me her card, knowing she would never email back. OK, I did exaggerate about the vicious and downright ugly part.

The crazy thing is that there I was with Katrina and Omarosa and now they are going at it on the airwaves like mortal enemies. Omarosa is like Hela in Thor: Ragnarok. Why was she ever on the campaign or in the White House? How could she have taped people inside the White House? Had she taped me at that lunch?

The last part of my Omarosa story is where it gets brutal. It was the early morning of Jan. 20, Inauguration Day. Anita and I were at a breakfast with a hundred or so others before boarding buses to take us to the Capitol for the ceremony. After getting coffee and some light breakfast, I noticed Omarosa about 10-15 feet away. She was on crutches and had one of those boots on one of her feet — the kind a bunch of people at the Statehouse all got at the same time a few years back.

I said to Anita that I should go say hello. She might remember me.



Anita warned me not to – that it would only be bad. But of course, I didn't listen. I approached Omarosa, trying to muster the courage to start another conversation. Should I remind her about the champagne or would that sound like I was trying to bribe her into talking to me again when the champagne already got me the picture? I wasn't sure what I'd say so I started with, "What'd you do to your foot?" It was brilliant. Until she replied. "What do you think fool? I stuck it up someone's ass like I'm going to stick it up yours if you don't leave me alone!"

I quickly hurried away trying not to cry.

Yes, that part was made up, but she did have on a boot and was on crutches. She had sat down by the time I got to her to introduce myself. She paid attention for two seconds, maybe less, and then called out to a lady close by and started talking to her instead. I didn't know what the hell to do. I hadn't even finished my introduction. Was I supposed to just leave, or did she expect me to wait

until she finished her more important conversation? I just stuck around. I wasn't going to let her do me like that. She finally finished with the lady and I started back up again. This time she heard me out but acted like she didn't care and started looking around for someone else, anyone else. She didn't remember me.

I left, humiliated by Omarosa.

And that's my Omarosa story. I told you it wasn't great, but now is the time to tell it. She was nice to me when I bought her champagne and mean to me when I didn't. I knew it before the campaign and was reminded on Inauguration Day and I'll never forget it now; she is mean and scary and just plain bad news! And that's the point. Like Hela, she will try to cause destruction wherever she goes, whether it's my ego, or the White House. If you know her, please don't show this to her. ❖

Samuel is president of Samuel Solutions.

The Smith Field Airmail Museum

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – This is the way it starts. A few optimists get together. One says, "Wouldn't it be great to commemorate [insert idea] right here in [our town]?" "That's a great idea," says a second. "It could be educational, informative and patriotic."



Then a third offers, "It could bring tourist money." The glow of gold suddenly fills the room. But the fourth, a skeptic, says, "All we need is an infusion of founders' funds." And here a dark cloud settles over the scene.

No matter how virtuous, every project needs money to get off, and to stay off, the ground. So, it is with the National Airmail Museum at Smith Field, Fort Wayne.

It was 100 years ago that the first regularly scheduled airmail service was begun by the U.S. Postal Service. In time, Fort Wayne became a key stop and repair facility for the fledgling transcontinental network. Therefore, a group of aviation and hometown enthusiasts reasoned Fort Wayne should use Smith Field, the city's old airport, as the site for a National Airmail Museum. They had the location, the history and favorable congressional recognition. All they needed was money.

"That's not going to be a problem," says the first. "Agreed," says the second. "Wikipedia lists 345 museums in Indiana, but there are only six listed in Allen County

while Vanderburgh County has 11.

There's a museum gap!"

The skeptical fourth counters, "The Census Bureau reports, in the 2016 County Business Patterns, only 152 museums and historical sites doing business in Indiana. And don't forget the museums closed for lack of support like the Fairmont/James Dean Museum and the South Bend/College Football Hall of Fame."

"Let's not reject a worthy idea," says the third advocate. "What supporters in Fort Wayne will demand and deserve, is an objective feasibility study. Is there an audience, a market for an airmail museum in Fort Wayne? We have a good story to tell, but we must tell it in such a way that a 21st century nation will want to see and hear it. Our competition won't be local. Other attractions in Northeast Indiana will complement the National Airmail Museum. Our competition will be other museums and historical sites that have good stories well-presented. Again, County Business Patterns counts over 7,600 such establishments nationally, employing more than 150,000 people full-time with annual payroll of five billion dollars."

The skeptic then blurts, "You mean to raise money just to demonstrate such a venture can be successful? Then we go around raising more money to get the place open, staffed and stuffed with stuff that people will want to see? How in blazes do we do that?"

"The starting point," the first proponent says, "is getting people to our website, nationalairmailmuseum.org."

And so begins another civic, economic and cultural adventure. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. His views can be followed on "Who gets what?" wherever podcasts are available. Or reach him at atmortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.

Ragen Hatcher seeks to end marijuana prosecutions in Gary

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – It has been 51 years since Richard G. Hatcher was elected mayor of Gary. He, along with Carl Stokes of Cleveland, will always be remembered as the first two black mayors of a major U.S. city. Since his election, the city has fallen on hard times.



The population has plummeted and the crime rate has soared. Unemployment is high and young black men have a difficult time finding their way.

Ragen Hatcher, the former mayor's daughter, may be about to establish her own legacy. At the Gary City Council meeting a week ago, Ragen Hatcher announced that she will seek to decriminalize

marijuana within the city limits.

As a former prosecutor in Gary City Court, Ragen Hatcher has seen what marijuana has done to young black men. She said that many of the cases she handled involved possession of marijuana. "That gave 18-, 19-, 21-year-olds their first criminal conviction, very young. And that follows you throughout your life," Ragen Hatcher said. "We know it's not legal in Indiana. But we're saying if somebody is caught with marijuana, then instead of going through the one- to two-hour process of arresting that person, going through evidence and testing, that person would get a ticket, a city ordinance violation," she said.

Among the benefits, she said, are fewer people tied to the criminal justice system for minor infractions and reductions in the case load of the police department.

According to a draft ordinance, the fine would be \$100 if the person is in possession of 30 grams or less.

Councilman at-large Herb Smith has said he will co-sponsor Hatcher's proposal.

It would be difficult to imagine the City Council rejecting such a proposal. There are too many crime problems for Gary police to worry about dealing with marijuana posses-

sion.

Fewer young black men would have criminal records and thus be eligible for hiring by the city's police and fire departments. Many young black people who apply for such jobs are rejected because of criminal records.

With the resources saved not having to deal with minor marijuana possession cases, police officers would have more time to deal with serious crime. It also is difficult to imagine the council rejecting the proposal since marijuana has been legalized in several states.

Hatcher said she would like to make a lasting impact on the city before leaving the council at the end of the year.

She will be sworn in as 3rd District state representative at the end of the year, replacing Rep. Charlie Brown. ❖



Rich James has been writing about politics and government for 40 years. He is retired from the Post-Tribune, a newspaper born in Gary.

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It's time to end the war on drugs

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – The United States is close to 40 years into the “War on Drugs.” What began as a campaign of good intentions has become among the most costly policy failures of the last 150 years. We seem unwilling or unable to grapple with the immense consequences, or indeed even fully appreciate the depth, of the problem. Before I explain the issue and discuss some reasonable alternatives, I wish to make clear my personal feelings about illegal drug use.



I am about as anti-drug as a Baby Boomer can possibly be, and personally view much addiction and even casual use as at least partially a moral failing.

Coming of age in the 1970s, even casual marijuana use could disqualify someone from military service, so I steered clear of drugs. Later, as a young officer in an army hospital, I witnessed the seductiveness of intravenous opioids, and saw plenty of soldiers ruin their lives with drug convictions.

Finally, I came to see the havoc American demand for drugs played on the economies and societies in the Middle East and South America. Illegal drug use is a scourge, and it imposes great harm on the most vulnerable citizens of the world, here and abroad. I am not an apologist for illicit drug use, but see that we need another approach.

The war on drugs has cost us between \$1 trillion and \$2 trillion over 40 years. It has led to a near quadrupling of U.S. incarceration rates. Nationwide, half of local jail inmates are held for drug-related offenses for which they have not yet been convicted.

The war on drugs has significantly damaged U.S. policing, leading to a level of militarization of weapons and tactics that stuns the senses. Most police departments in American possess weapons systems that an infantry battalion would not deploy in an enemy city with civilians present. The American approach to policing is in crisis because of this.

This has the perverse effect of increasing violence and the culture of violence in many communities. I don't need to cite statistics in this case, but would simply urge readers to watch “West Side Story” this weekend. You'll be treated to a fine musical, and what is today an implausibly naive depiction of urban youth violence. No one would take a knife to a gun fight these days.

Through all of this, we've barely made a dent in

drug use. While there are ebbs and flows of casual drug use, and occasional reductions among teens, that success is in full retreat. We are today pouring resources into an anti-opioid campaign, fighting against a drug that mostly displaced other drug use. Remember this: When opioids are defeated, something else will take their place. Forty years, \$1 trillion, and no real success.

Finally, and most despicably, the war on drugs fuels organized crime. Like prohibition before it, the enforcement against drug production and movement creates the perfect environment for organized violence at home and abroad. In a very real way, the purchase of seemingly harmless joint or something harder actually promotes human trafficking, weakens democracy in the poorest nations and lessens the rule of law in our most vulnerable communities.

We know how to fix this problem, but it is a hard sell. If we could only treat drug use and addiction like a public health crisis rather than crime, we'd be much better off. Many folks just cannot see it that way, but we've had breathtaking success fighting tobacco use but failed miserably on curbing illegal drugs.

The best estimates I see suggest we could save \$65 billion a year by altering enforcement and shuffling users into treatment rather than jail. We need those sorts of savings nationwide. In practice, that means ginning up the political courage to end incarceration for low-level drug use, and mandatory treatment for more serious offenses that occur with heavy use or addiction. It also means de-militarizing police departments. The goal here is to make policing both less dangerous and more effective. It will probably make policing harder, at least in the short run. This is why we continue to need the best among us to serve.

In the end, the biggest burden falls to communities. Drugs aren't going away, but we need to find ways to make sure that illegal drugs ruin fewer lives. That work will come in families, churches, schools and in neighborhoods of all types, where anti-drug efforts are already at work. But, with \$65 billion of annual savings, we might expect extra resources to help us along.

I don't hold out much hope that we are on the threshold of change, but maybe the silver lining on the opioid crises of today, is that it will make us talk more frankly about ending the war on drugs. We need to turn drug use into an unwelcome health scourge battled with education and compassion, not punished by incarceration.

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Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University.

John O. Brennan, [New York Times](#): In my many conversations with James Comey, the F.B.I. director, in the summer of 2016, we talked about the potential for American citizens, involved in partisan politics or not, to be pawns in Russian hands. We knew that Russian intelligence services would do all they could to achieve their objectives, which the United States intelligence community publicly assessed a few short months later were to undermine public faith in the American democratic process, harm the electability of the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, and show preference for Mr. Trump. We also publicly assessed that Mr. Putin's intelligence services were following his orders. Director Comey and I, along with the director of the National Security Agency, Adm. Michael Rogers, pledged that our agencies would share, as appropriate, whatever information was collected, especially considering the proven ability of Russian intelligence services to suborn United States citizens. The already challenging work of the American intelligence and law enforcement communities was made more difficult in late July 2016, however, when Mr. Trump, then a presidential candidate, publicly called upon Russia to find the missing emails of Mrs. Clinton. By issuing such a statement, Mr. Trump was not only encouraging a foreign nation to collect intelligence against a United States citizen, but also openly authorizing his followers to work with our primary global adversary against his political opponent. He called on Russia to find Hillary Clinton's emails. Such a public clarion call certainly makes one wonder what Mr. Trump privately encouraged his advisers to do — and what they actually did — to win the election. While I had deep insight into Russian activities during the 2016 election, I now am aware — thanks to the reporting of an open and free press — of many more of the highly suspicious dalliances of some American citizens with people affiliated with the Russian intelligence services. Mr. Trump's claims of no collusion are, in a word, hogwash. ❖



Mitch Daniels, [Washington Post](#): Dave Eggers's 2013 novel "The Circle" depicts a world where demands for "openness" annihilate privacy and personal autonomy, creating a dystopian nightmare. Public officials in the tale try to outdo each other in going "clear" by wearing body cameras and microphones every waking moment. For most readers, the book is farfetched science fiction, but for those active in public life, Eggers's conception doesn't seem all that implausible. It's hard to determine when too much of a good thing becomes truly too much. And the more laudable the goal, the harder it generally is to reel in the excess, because any suggested retrenchment is viewed as an abandonment of the goal itself. At the risk of being misconstrued, I venture the heretical thought that we have overshot in the pursuit of governmental "openness" and "transparency." There's no question that American government at all levels is better off for the open-door and open-record reforms of the past half-century. Know-

ing that the public is watching, public officials generally behave more responsibly in the conduct of their duties. I'm a true believer. As the director of the Office of Management and Budget in the early 2000s, I worked in perhaps surprising collaboration with Ralph Nader to open the federal government's contracting process to broader public inspection. During my service in Indiana as governor from 2005 to 2013, we made similar changes as a part of wider ethics reforms. But even water has a fatal dosage level. Too much exercise can be unhealthy. Attempts to eliminate almost all forms of confidential interaction in government come with downsides. We've seen the unintended consequences of overzealous reform before. Badly needed civil service and procurement reforms initially worked, but they expanded over time until they paralyzed the federal government to a comical degree. Federal employees are in greater danger from a lightning strike than termination for lousy performance, and the procedures for buying, say, a new computer are so byzantine that the machines are outdated by the time they arrive. The current obsession with transparency is starting to take a similar toll. In a host of ways, government has been rendered less nimble, less talented and less effective. Honest people are now compelled to become scofflaws in the good-faith pursuit of their duties. Under "open meeting" requirements forbidding members of governing bodies to confer privately, the result is furtive hallway conversations or "executive committee" meetings where the discussion might not technically fall into the category of exemptions that permit such meetings. Open-records laws have had the same effect. Government took a serious wrong turn at the dawn of the email era when somebody decided that these online exchanges are "documents." ❖

Alex Azar II, [Washington Post](#): One group of Americans — about 8 million enrollees in 2017 — now pay, on average, less than a quarter of the cost of their health insurance, receiving ever-growing taxpayer subsidies to insulate them from Obamacare's high premiums. But there is a second group of Americans who have faced the full premium increases driven by the law's broken regulations. Roughly 5 million Americans, as of 2017, have chosen to pay those premiums without any subsidies, while 28 million other Americans remain uninsured, many priced out of coverage entirely. The law's skyrocketing subsidies have kept subsidized insurance enrollment fairly steady — although more than 50 percent below what was once expected. But Americans who make too much to receive subsidies have begun to opt out of the insurance market en masse. The entire unsubsidized individual insurance market shrank by more than 40 percent from the first quarter of 2016 to the first quarter of 2018. In other words, Obamacare has forced unsubsidized Americans to choose between unaffordable insurance and no insurance at all. ❖

WOWO's Charly Butcher dies at 61

FORT WAYNE - A popular Indiana radio host passed away Wednesday. WOWO radio announced the passing of 61-year-old Charly Butcher, who had graced the Fort Wayne airwaves for more than 30 years. "It's been a tremendous loss to the Butcher family as well as to the community and his Federated Media family," WOWO News Director Kayla Blakeslee told WPTA-TV Wednesday. "He will be missed by many." Rep. Jim Banks (R-Indiana), a frequent guest on Butcher's show, offered his condolences in a statement Wednesday. "Charly Butcher was a broadcasting icon and a beloved north-east Indiana legend. I am heartbroken about his passing," Banks said.



Councilman Miller guilty plea; resigns

INDIANAPOLIS - City-County Councilor Jeff Miller has admitted touching two children "in a rude manner" as part of a plea deal that triggers his resignation from elected office ([IndyStar](#)). Miller, 51, pleaded guilty Wednesday to four felony counts of battery on a person less than 14 years old, ending a case that began in November when Marion County prosecutors charged him with three counts of child molestation. Hamilton County Prosecutor D. Lee Buckingham II, who took over the case in January, reached a deal with Miller's attorneys that downgraded the charges while still resulting in felony convictions. Miller was sentenced to four years of probation, with some additional conditions. He will not serve jail time and does not have to register as a sex offender. The convictions could be reduced to misdemeanors once Miller completes probation.

Trump pulls Brennan clearance

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump abruptly revoked the security clearance of ex-CIA Director

John Brennan, an unprecedented act of retribution against a vocally critical former top U.S. official. Later, in an interview with The Wall Street Journal, Trump drew a direct connection between the Russia investigation and his decision, citing Brennan as among those he held responsible for the investigation. "I call it the rigged witch hunt, (it) is a sham," Mr. Trump told the Journal, which posted its story on its website Wednesday night. "And these people led it!" He added: "So I think it's something that had to be done."

Trump opposes Lakeshore NP

INDIANAPOLIS — The Trump administration is opposing a bipartisan plan pending in the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate to re-designate the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as a national park (Carden, [NWI Times](#)). P. Daniel Smith, acting director of the National Park Service, told a Senate subcommittee Wednesday that the U.S. Department of the Interior, which oversees national parks, "does not support" turning the National Lakeshore into a national park. He simply listed Senate Bill 599, the companion measure co-sponsored by U.S. Sens. Joe Donnelly, D-Ind., and Todd Young, R-Ind., among nine proposals the park service would prefer not advance out of the Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks. In written testimony, Smith later said the department prefers the term "national park" be reserved for units that contain a variety of resources and encompass large land or water areas. "Indiana Dunes has more in common with the other Great Lakes national lakeshores — Apostle Islands, Pictured Rocks and Sleeping Bear Dunes — and with the National Park System's many other national seashores and national recreation areas, than with most national parks," he said. "The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is a cherished natural resource in our state, and I believe

it deserves the recognition of national park status," Donnelly said.

Parker resigns from Roncalli

INDIANAPOLIS — Roncalli High School board of directors member Dan Parker has resigned in response to the administration's actions against a guidance counselor who says she's been asked to either resign or "dissolve" her same-sex marriage (WRTV). Shelly Fitzgerald is on paid administrative from Roncalli High School after she says someone sought out her marriage certificate, which shows she's married to another woman, and gave it to school leaders. Parker says he submitted his resignation letter to Roncalli President Joseph Hollowell on Tuesday. "As a Roncalli parent, Board Member, and benefactor I have so many mixed emotions since I heard the unfortunate news on Friday night. Because those emotions have ranged from sadness to anger, I have waited to send this note for hope that this unexpected and unnecessary issue would change for the better. Based upon the Roncalli Administration's response yesterday, it appears that it will not."

Hobart attorney killed by client

HOBART — The alleged gunman in custody in connection with a prominent attorney's homicide at his home late Wednesday morning was a longtime friend and client who had been welcomed onto the attorney's property that morning, Hobart police has confirmed. Attorney Tracy Edward Page was shot and killed by an 83-year-old man from Cedar Lake outside of his home, authorities said ([NWI Times](#)).