

Myers near entry; Macer ponders

Democratic gubernatorial race begins to take shape; preference for a consensus candidate begins to emerge

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

SPEEDWAY – State Rep. Karlee Macer has represented a co-called “red district” since 2012, out-performed Hillary Clinton by a substantial margin in 2016 and has now joined the conversation about the future Democratic gubernatorial nominee for 2020, while former Indiana health commissioner appears to be on the brink of entry.



Indiana Democratic Chairman John Zody recently convened a handful of potential candidates, including Macer, Myers, 2012 and 2016 nominee John Gregg, 2016 lieutenant governor nominee Christina Hale, former congressman Baron Hill, and, sources tell HPI, former Evansville mayor



State Rep. Karlee Macer in Speedway Wednesday, and Dr. Woody Myers at the memorial service for the late Sen. Birch Bayh. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howey)

Jonathan Weinzapfel.

At this point, Myers seems to be at the most advanced stage, telling HPI Wednesday morning, “I’m pretty

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Brooks & Equality Act

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – Members of Congress are frequently targeted for ridicule for what the electorate believes is unforgivable inertia. They are chastised for being cowards on a variety of issues. Many in Congress have learned how to avoid politically difficult votes by killing bills in committee or by inserting poisonous amendments into legislation to make passage impossible.



The truth is that votes are the best way for the voting public to reconcile what is said on the stump during an election and what the officeholder truly believes. The very best politicians are so skilled at the Potomac two-step that they can have people with diametri-



“There is no reason in the greatest country in the world ... that anybody, in any circumstance, should remain isolated in the burden of taking care of a loved one who served.”

- Actor Tom Hanks, celebrating Hidden Heros in Indianapolis with former Sen. Elizabeth Dole



**Howey Politics Indiana
WWHowey Media, LLC
405 Massachusetts Ave.,
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www.howeypolitics.com**

Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
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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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cally opposed beliefs think that their elected representative supports their position.

I knew a congressman once who received large contributions from both Jewish and Muslim supportive PACS. Now that is a real skill!

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, a vote will be scheduled that you can't avoid. The day comes when you bow to the crowd or show leadership and legislative bravery. Recently, such a vote was taken in the United States Congress. The legislation in question was the Equality Act.

The Equality Act would amend Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the federal anti-discrimination law for the workplace, to clarify that discrimination based on sex would also include discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The legislation would also ban discrimination based on these protected classes in areas including public accommodations and facilities, education, federal funding, housing, credit, and the jury system.

This legislation is another in a long cultural war that is being waged in nearly every state and in the halls of Congress and the courts on a daily basis. By now, we all know who the opponents are on both sides. Religious conservatives who believe that any protections extended to LG-BTQ persons represents a loss are pitted against social liberals and moderates who believe that the Constitution and protection of basic rights should extend to everyone. It is a bloody war that promises to continue for a long, long time.

When the Freedom Act was voted on by the House of Representatives on Friday, May 17, every Democrat and only eight Republicans voted in favor of the legislation. Fortunately, one Hoosier representative, Susan Brooks, had the courage to vote in

support of the Freedom Act. I'm sure that it was a difficult decision to cast a "yea" vote with the knowledge that a very vocal and hostile group of your constituents would be angry. All truly meaningful legislation, particularly instruments of social change, involve impassioned support and opposition. Congresswoman Brooks' 5th District is no exception. Temperatures run red-hot on both sides of the issue.

In the final analysis, Congresswoman Susan Brooks cast her vote in line with her belief that fundamental rights should be extended to all Americans. I applaud her for her



leadership and bravery. Social media has not treated the congresswoman as kindly as I do. Brooks has been steadily skewered by religious conservatives for her perceived failure to protect religious rights. I learned long ago that religious conservatives view any changes to civil rights laws as a zero-sum game. Every change has a loser and a winner. There is never a win/win situation. Unfortunately, when you are a conservative of any type, change generally feels like a loss.

All of the basic rights and freedoms that we hold dear today were the subject of vicious legislative battles for years before they were passed by Congress. Remember, we

fought the Civil War over whether it was proper to own another person. We battled over whether to extend voting rights to black men. We marched, protested and rioted over women's suffrage. We argued about whether it was just or not to allow children to work. It is only natural that we fight with each other on the subject of LGBTQ rights.

Let's take a closer look at the Freedom Act:

Should a business be allowed to discriminate against someone because they are gay? Should a hotel, motel or apartment dwelling be allowed to deny lodging or housing to someone who is gay or transgender? Should a bank or mortgage company be allowed to deny credit to someone who is gay or transgender? Should a person be denied an education solely on the grounds of sexual orientation? Should a person be kept from serving on a jury because of their LGBTQ status?

People, these are basic human rights we are talking about.

What do the polls tell us about the temperature of the American public on this issue? According to the Public Religion Research Institute, a majority of people in every state believe that these basic rights should be extended to include people of LGBTQ status. PRRI found majority support across all sorts of different groups. About 79% of Democrats, 70% of independents, and 56% of Republicans say they favor these laws. A majority in every age

group, from millennials to the elderly, supports these laws. Even a majority of white evangelical Protestants, who are typically conservative on LGBTQ issues, support these measures, along with every other religious group tracked by PRRI. In Indiana, 65% support extension of basic civil rights to include LGBTQ.

The problem is that 80% of the noise surrounding the issue of LGBTQ rights is being made by 10% of the public. This noise and deep pockets of some of the loudest noise-makers has petrified some lawmakers into avoiding any contact with the toxic issue. Republican legislators on both a state and federal level try to avoid, at all costs, dealing with the issue and when forced to take a stand, generally take the path of least resistance.

This is why the supportive vote on the Freedom Act by 5th District Congresswoman Susan Brooks is so laudable. She demonstrated courage in the face of much vocal opposition, swam against the tide and cast a vote for what is right. The people of Indiana, regardless of whether you agree with her or not, should at least appreciate that she is not just another "vote the party line" representative.

History will show that Susan Brooks was an insightful civil rights leader. ❖

Dunn is the former Howard County Republican

Dem Gov, from page 1

close. I'm very excited about the number of people who have talked me to and have taken the steps to make sure the mechanics are in place," he said. "There are a lot of problems I believe I can solve. I'm very close to making a decision to enter the race."

Macer met with HPI at Charlie Brown's Pancake and Steakhouse here Wednesday morning while in an exploratory mode. "I haven't made a decision," she said. "For me, personally, it's interesting to have an opportunity to be at the table for this discussion. It's something I'm going to continue to seriously evaluate, along with my family as well."

Hale is being recruited by state and national Democrats to challenge U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks in the suburban 5th CD that U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly carried in 2018 despite his loss to Mike Braun. Democratic sources tell HPI that Gregg still has the desire to serve, though he faces the historic obstacle of having lost two previous gubernatorial races. Hill was briefly the 2016 U.S. Senate nominee before he stepped aside



to make way for Evan Bayh, who subsequently lost to U.S. Sen. Todd Young. Weinzapfel is the former two-term mayor of Evansville, briefly considered a frontrunner in the 2012 race that was ultimately won by Republican Mike Pence.

Both Myers and Macer represent a new chapter in Indiana Democratic politics with neither having run statewide races.

Myers ran for Congress following the death of U.S. Rep. Julia Carson in the winter of 2008, losing a Democratic nominating caucus to current U.S. Rep. André Carson.

Myers served as Indiana health commissioner on an appointment from Gov. Robert Orr in 1984 and caught national attention when he defended young AIDS patient Ryan White

of Kokomo. He was appointed New York City health commissioner by Mayor David Dinkins in 1990 at the height of the AIDS pandemic. Myers has also served as executive vice president and chief medical officer at Anthem, and the director of health care management at the Ford Motor Company. An alumnus of Harvard Medical School and Stanford University, he has served as a member of their

respective boards.

Macer won an open seat vacated by State Rep. Phil Hinkle following a sex scandal in 2012 in what had been a reliable Republican district. Macer defeated Republican Tim Motsinger 12,277 to 10,464 that year, then bested Republican Bradford Moulton in 2014 (by 560 votes) and again in 2016 (by 5,020 votes). She ran unopposed in 2018.

"I've enjoyed the pleasure of serving in many capacities and to have this opportunity is really important," Macer said. "I'm being very serious about it."

Macer's public service has ranged from being the PTO president at Ben Davis HS, to helping develop the Indy Gateway organization, dedicated to the stabilization and rejuvenation of the west side of Indianapolis through community and economic development. She has been active in organizations that work with senior veterans as well as foster parents.

She entered the gubernatorial conversation under the guise of the Karlee for Indiana Committee last week when she lauded Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry after he issued a report on the misuse of \$775,000 by the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs. "Our veterans can't afford to have this happen again," she said. "I am also grateful that his office is able to offer an additional layer of accountability to this issue as the Inspector General's office appears to have stopped short in this investigation."

"It looks like the fox is watching the hen house," Macer continued. "And this is a recurring theme that we see at every level in the Statehouse. It has become an unfortunate norm that our state simply can't sustain."

She points to her work in the General Assembly where she interfaced with a new Wayne Township trustee who has brought in a veterans resource officer.

In her critique of Gov. Eric Holcomb, she criticized him for accepting free flights from Spectacle Gaming, the group seeking to move a casino from Gary to Terre Haute.

"I see a lack of leadership and accountability," Macer said Wednesday. "We have some ongoing and unfortunate situations happening. We've got an administration and a governor's office aware of it. This past legislative session would highlight the lack of leadership and integrity that our leaders have. It's important to make sure that our moral compass is adjusted to what everyone in our communities would hope for. I think we could do a better job."

Macer also finds inconsistencies with Gov. Hol-



Former House Speaker John Gregg chats with U.S. Sen. Todd Young at the Birch Bayh memorial service, and Dr. Myers and former Evansville mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howey)

comb calling for the resignation of Attorney General Curtis Hill following sexual harassment allegations, citing a need for "zero tolerance," though continuing to support President Trump, who has had more than 20 sexual harassment allegations made against him.

Should she enter the gubernatorial race, Macer said she would concentrate on increasing teacher pay and continued development of the state's infrastructure, particularly in rural areas of Indiana. She believes the state can "do better" on children's health, infant mortality and developing a broader foster care network.

Macer said when she first ran for office, HD92 was a 54% Republican district and the town of Speedway did not have any elected Democrats. Now, Democrats now are seeking council seats. Macer has risen into House Democrat leadership, serving as assistant minority leader under Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta.

A contested primary?

Both Macer and Myers believe Democrats would be stronger if a consensus candidate emerges this summer. "We're sorting it out now," Macer said of talks among potential candidates and Chairman Zody. "I definitely think for Democrats, it's important for all of us to come together."

Myers cited the 2008 primary battle which saw Jill Long Thompson win the nomination by less than 1% of the vote over current Commerce Secretary Jim Schellinger, then lose to incumbent Gov. Mitch Daniels in a landslide despite Barack Obama winning the state's 11 Electoral College votes.

Asked about a contested primary, Myers concluded, "I hope there is not. But if there is, I'll have to deal with it. John (Zody) and most party leaders would prefer a consensus." ❖

Pete hits poll plateau as debates loom

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — After nearly three months of Pete Buttigieg breaking into the top tier of Democratic presidential candidate, recent polling shows him at a plateau at the end of the opening sequence for the nomination fight.

Coming up next month will be the first Democrat National Committee debates June 26-27 in Miami. This will be Buttigieg's opportunity to cement himself in the upper tier and potentially directly take on front-runner Joe Biden, and Sen. Bernie Sanders. It could be a free-for-all, as Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris also compete for top tier status.

A national [Quinnipiac Poll](#) showed Buttigieg sliding to 5%, down 5%, while Biden leads with 35%, Sanders at 16%, Warren at 13 (+1), and Harris at 8%. Buttigieg had 23% favorables to 19% unfavorable. President Trump's approve/disapprove stood at 38/57%.

At the state level, Buttigieg remains buoyant. In an Iowa Starting Line/Change Research Poll released Monday, Biden and Sanders were tied at 24%, while Buttigieg was third at 14%, Elizabeth Warren at 12% and Kamala Harris at 10%.

These surveys come on the heels of Buttigieg's Fox News Town Hall Sunday night that drew wide praise, particularly for comments he made on President Trump and Fox News commentators. It drew an audience of 1.1 million viewers. Buttigieg criticized Fox News hosts Tucker Carlson and Laura Ingraham and President Trump, suggesting the incumbent's presidency had become a "grotesque" spectacle.

"Look, it's mesmerizing. It's hard for anybody to look away," Buttigieg said. "Me too. It is the nature of grotesque things that you can't look away. Look, what we're trying to do here is different because the moment that we're in is different."

Buttigieg responded to questions about Alabama's new abortion law, telling host Chris Wallace that "abortion is a national right." He added, "I trust women to draw the line. That decision [to have an abortion] is not going to be made any better, medically or morally, because the government is dictating how that decision should be made."

Trump was upset his favorite network hosted Buttigieg. "Hard to believe that @FoxNews is wasting airtime on Mayor Pete, as Chris Wallace likes to call him," Trump

tweeted. "Fox is moving more and more to the losing (wrong) side in covering the Dems. They got dumped from the Democrats boring debates, and they just want in. They forgot the people ... "Gee, he never speaks well of me — I like Mike Wallace better ... and Alfred E. Newman will never be president!"

Buttigieg acknowledged that he needs to do more to appeal to "black and brown" voters, even as he confidently parried a series of policy questions and, on several occasions, went directly after President Trump. Buttigieg argued that minority voters are "skeptical of people who seem to come out of nowhere," after moderator Chris Wallace noted that he was polling at 1% support among non-white primary voters according to a recent Fox News poll.

On Tuesday, he made a modest gain, picking up the endorsement from Florida Democratic attorney general nominee Sean Shaw of Tampa. It's his first major nod from an African-American politician. Shaw told the Miami Herald: "He's the future of not only the party, but where I'd like to see us go with the country. Every time I hear him speak, I love the way he makes me feel about where this country could go." Buttigieg has not had any African-



American endorsements from Indiana, or from any Hoosier at this point.

Meanwhile, Buttigieg drew scrutiny on the home front. The South Bend Tribune's Jeff Parrott reported that of the 120 days from Feb. 1 through May 31, Buttigieg was away or plans to be away from the South Bend area at least 55 days, or 45% of all calendar days. Looking at only weekdays, he's been gone or plans to be out of town for 39 of 86 days — also about 45%. Lis Smith, his campaign's top communications adviser, has said she's tried to "get him everywhere" in order to boost his name recognition with voters. Under Indiana's Access to Public Records Act, the Tribune requested Buttigieg's daily mayoral calendar for the four-month period. His administration responded by providing a calendar in which 45 of the 120 days were redacted. Other days didn't indicate whether he was in

town, and some were blank.

Fort Wayne town hall

Indiana may get a turn in the Election 2020 spotlight with a presidential town hall (WIBC). Neighborhood leaders say they met Monday with a team of producers from MSNBC scoping out whether it's feasible to do a new kind of town hall. Instead of putting the candidate on a stage, they're scouting clusters of houses where the candidate could take questions in someone's living room, and move down the street to another house at each commercial break. West Rudisill Neighborhood Association president Jim Sack says the cable channel is aiming for a cross-section of voters, including Republicans. He says producers didn't reveal which candidate would appear, but said it was "one of the more prominent" contenders. He says they're targeting early June.

Indiana has not hosted a national town hall or a presidential debate.



Swalwell in Indy, Columbus

In front of a packed house, Democratic presidential hopeful U.S. Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-California, touched on a wide range of issues, from gun violence to student loan debt, during a town hall meeting in Columbus. About 250 people, including 10 members of the advocacy group Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, attended the event Sunday at Factory 12 Event Loft (East, Columbus Republic). Swalwell, 38, who is married to Columbus native Brittany Watts Swalwell, spoke for about 30 minutes, mainly focusing on gun violence, health care and student loan debt, and then took questions from the audience. During the town hall, Swalwell said he would like to institute universal background checks on every firearm purchase in the United States, and "ban and buy back the 15 million assault rifles" that he said should only be in the hands of law enforcement and military professionals. Swalwell also said he is in support of government-funded health care. "My plan ... is Medicare for anyone who wants it," Swalwell said. "If you're sick, you're seen (by a doctor). If you're seen,



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you don't go broke, regardless of your income, regardless of your employer, regardless of your luck. A public option where the government has the responsibility to make sure that we protect people with pre-existing conditions, to put pressure on the private insurers to bring down the costs."

Axios predicts record turnout

Axios reported Wednesday that 2020 voter turnout could be the highest in a century, based on Democrats' enthusiasm in the midterms and the big, early 2020 field. Michael McDonald, an elections expert at the University of Florida, said turnout in 2020 could be as high as 67% — the highest since at least 1916. Turnout in the 2016 presidential election was 60%. Why it matters: That would mean a tougher reelection path for President Trump. Older white people already vote at high rates, and they're close to their maximum turnout. By contrast, you could see bigger turnout increases among young people, people of color, and low-income people.

Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia said: "The safest prediction in politics is for a giant turnout in 2020. ... Let's hope the polling places can accommodate the crowds."

Hupfer elected to RNC budget committee

Indiana Republican Party Chairman Kyle Hupfer was unanimously elected to serve on the Republican National Committee Budget Committee during a meeting of the RNC's Midwest Caucus. Nominated during the meeting by Indiana Republican National Committeeman John Hammond, Hupfer will be the new Midwest representative on the budget committee. Hupfer will be responsible for helping manage the national Republican Party's budget going into the 2020 election cycle, which will include budget planning for the 2020 Republican National Convention, battleground races and the presidential election. "Indiana is known as a leader in sound budgeting and strong balance sheets. I look forward to applying these Hoosier principles I've built over my career to our national party's budget going into a critical election year," said Hupfer. "In 2020, with record fundraising and smart fiscal management in place, I know that the RNC will help lead the way to another historic election for President Donald J. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence." In addition to his new role on the RNC Budget Committee, Hupfer will continue to serve as chairman of the Indiana Republican Party, as well as the treasurer of Holcomb for Indiana campaign. ❖

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Buttigieg draws fire from Trump, Bernie

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND — For Pete’s sake, what’s happening? Why are Bernie Sanders and President Trump attacking the mayor of South Bend?

Why did right-wing conspiracy activists fake that the mayor assaulted a college student? Why is his signature achievement of fixing up or tearing down 1,000 vacant and deteriorating old houses in 1,000 days portrayed as a failure because it didn’t eliminate crime, wipe out poverty and cure cancer?



Easy answer: Because South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg has come out of nowhere — national political types regard South Bend as nowhere — to become a top-tier contender for the Democratic

nomination for president.

OK, he’s a star in the major leagues in his rookie season. But that doesn’t mean he will win the World Series. It’s a long season in baseball. The presidential selection season is even longer.

So, why did the Sanders campaign attack Mayor Pete for likening Sanders to Trump?

Actually, Buttigieg never said that Sanders, like Trump, is a stubborn promiser of the impossible. Nothing like that. He just said both appealed in 2016 to voters wanting to blow up the establishment, though the two had radically different philosophies. While the Sanders campaign knows that’s true about many ‘16 voters, the remark provided an opening to hit Buttigieg, a rival for some of the younger voters that Bernie wants to keep as his own.

President Trump now confirms that Buttigieg is for real on the national scene by ridiculing him in tweets and speeches. Trump raised the prospect of a President Pete “representing us against President Xi of China” and added: “That’d be great.” Gee, do you suppose he was being sarcastic?

And then the president compared Buttigieg to Alfred E. Neuman, the adolescent, gap-toothed cartoon figure in Mad magazine. Buttigieg quipped in a Jimmy Fallon interview that he at least inspired Trump “to make a literary reference.” Gee, do you suppose he was being sarcastic?

Then there’s the right-wing conspiracy activists putting out a fake story that Buttigieg sexually assaulted a Michigan college student. The student

they sought to recruit went public to expose their effort. He had never even met Buttigieg.

Still, the day the scam was reported, I overheard a loud conversation in a restaurant in which one participant proclaimed the news that the mayor now faced an assault charge. Fake news can work even when exposed as fake.

The revisionist history of the once-saluted fix-up-or-knock-down campaign to deal with the old, deteriorating and vacant housing stock in the city comes about in part because the national news media doesn’t want to portray Buttigieg as “Mr. Perfect Mayor.” They shouldn’t. Not even President Trump is perfect. It’s the job of the news media to probe, to seek a complete and accurate story about any serious presidential contender.

Not everybody liked that a lot of those old homes, a surplus of eyesores from back when housing was needed in a city of 130,000, were cleared out. Some were owners still clinging to horrible places for habitation in hope of future profit. Critics, whether for that reason or others more reasonable, relished national news media attention.

But it is a blessing that houses no longer needed and dangerous — drug houses, gang sanctuaries and eyesores causing neighborhood values to plummet — are fixed up or gone.


Were mistakes made? You think? Over 1,000 decisions. However, was the program a failure because the city still has crime, still has poverty, still has need for affordable housing? Curing all of that never was the promise for the program. Maybe it should have cured cancer.

There is, however, one problem Mayor Pete cannot escape. The age issue. Is he too old to be president? The 37-year-old mayor is 34 years younger than the current president. ❖

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

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

Congress, oversight and election threat

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — It's plain as day in the U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 1: "All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives." Founding Father George Mason of Virginia explained at the Federal (Constitutional?) Convention that Members of Congress "are not only Legislators but they possess inquisitorial powers. They must meet frequently to inspect the Conduct of the public offices."



Apparently President Trump didn't get the memo on the Constitution. On the heels of Robert Mueller's report, with Section II detailing what appear

to be systemic attempts to obstruct justice, Trump has ordered his administration to ignore congressional subpoenas on a wholesale basis. On Tuesday at the behest of his former boss who cites "executive privilege," former White House legal counsel Don McGahn refused to comply with a congressional subpoena to testify. But McGahn has already testified the Mueller grand jury. The House Judiciary Committee responded with an "empty chair" hearing and threatened future action.

President Trump seems to be goading House Democrats into impeachment, figuring the Republican Senate would be his firewall. He calculates that if Democrats impeach, they'll find out what Republicans did in 1998 with President Clinton, which is impeachment doesn't have much political support.

Beyond impeachment

(which I oppose, preferring a verdict on Trump by the voters in November 2020), the deeply troubling aspect of this recalcitrance is the upcoming election. We've heard an array of warnings from people we trust, like National Intelligence Director Dan Coats, CIA Director Gina Haspel and FBI Director Christopher Wray, that the Russians are preparing a sequel to their 2016 assault on the American electoral process.

Earlier this month, Republican Florida Gov. Ron

DeSantis confirmed that the FBI informed him Russian hackers had gained access to voter databases in two Florida counties ahead of the 2016 presidential election. He said the hackers gained access through a spear-phishing email after a worker clicked on a link.

This is chilling information for several reasons. Mueller's report flatly states, "First, the Office determined that Russia's two principle interference operations in the 2016 presidential election – the social media campaign and the hacking-and-dumping operations – violated U.S. criminal law." We know that Russian President Putin is using any method at his disposal to discredit and wound American democracy.

Put these two facts together and the absolute crisis point in November 2020 would be this: By hacking into just a few election databases, by distorting the results in just a handful of places or states, the entire election process would be damaged and discredited. Further complicating things is the void of leadership at the Department of Homeland Security. At a time when the U.S. should be preparing a defense of the 2020 election, no person with ultimate accountability is minding the shop, including President Trump.

Then layer on President Trump's penchant for claiming a "rigged system" along with what he describes as systemic domestic vote fraud that hasn't come remotely close to being proven, and the scene is set for an epic electoral crime. That would be a discredited election. If Trump should lose, perhaps even by a narrow margin,



Founding Father George Mason, former White House counsel Don McGahn, and President Trump with a supporter.

then the 225-year-old "peaceful transition of power" that President Washington set precedence in 1797 is in jeopardy. It's survived razor thin elections in 1960 and 2000, with Richard Nixon and Al Gore opting to accept defeat rather

than place the transition under deep duress. Trump would be far less likely to be so altruistic or patriotic. This is all about HIM.

The Mueller report in its redacted form is "rich in information" about the Kremlin's nefarious activities in 2016, according to New York University Prof. Ryan Goodman, who blogs for Just Security and served as special counsel to the general counsel of the Department of Defense. "Legislators would very likely benefit enormously by knowing more about a number of things from the pages that have been kept from Congress," Goodman explains, including "how Moscow devised its attempts to penetrate the Trump campaign and the tactical benefits it expected to gain from different parts of the operation, what actions Americans took wittingly and unwittingly to support Kremlin front organizations and WikiLeaks, and why members of the Russian delegation at Trump Tower were not charged with violations of the Foreign Agent Registration Act."

Goodman adds, "The Mueller report also hints at specific legislative reforms for the Hill to consider. Congress may need to expand the federal offense of trafficking in stolen property to include hacked emails, define what counts as a 'thing of value' when offered to a campaign by a foreign government agent, and improve how the intel-

ligence community coordinates its response and warns political campaigns of foreign threats."

So for that reason alone, Congress should not only have the full, unredacted Mueller report, Robert Mueller, former counsel McGahn, and other entities in the Trump administration and campaign, should honor subpoenas to testify before Congress.

In light of current events, Mueller's testimony before Congress is explicitly in the national interest.

House Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler said on Tuesday as McGahn's witness chair sat empty, "This conduct is not remotely acceptable. Mr. McGahn did not appear today because the president prevented it. Our subpoenas are not optional. Mr. McGahn has a legal obligation to be here for this scheduled appearance. If he does not immediately correct his mistake, this committee will have no choice but to enforce the subpoena against him."

Even more troubling is congressional Republicans' acquiescence of Trump's stonewalling strategy. Not only has the Indiana delegation been largely mute on the subpoena defiance, many Hoosier Republicans have chosen party over rule of law and national security. In the hours after the redacted Mueller report was made public, most of them were ready to "move on":

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■ U.S. Rep. Jim Banks: "No collusion. No obstruction. Let's get back to work."

■ U.S. Sen. Mike Braun: "Now that the report is public, it is clear there was no collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign and that President Trump did not engage in obstruction of justice. It's time for the country to move forward and focus on real issues like lowering the cost of healthcare and keeping our red hot economy roaring."

■ U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon: "The Mueller report is abundantly clear – there was no collusion between anyone on President Trump's campaign and Russia in the 2016 election and there was no obstruction of justice."

■ U.S. Sen. Todd Young is one Republican who at least acknowledged the need to probe deeper into the Kremlin's activities and intent: "I have always said that Robert Mueller's investigation should run its course. With the investigation now complete, it's time to accept his findings and move on. There has clearly been Russian interference in our democratic process, and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence will continue its work to better understand these threats."

Fellow Republican Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan said over the weekend that Trump committed "impeachable offenses," and also suggested many members didn't read the full Mueller report. The quick statements and lack of curiosity about the obstruction and Russian election assaults suggest that might be the case with the Indiana delegation.

Trump's strategy to stonewall appears to have its limits. On Wednesday a federal judge allowed the House to move ahead with subpoenas seeking years of President Trump's financial records from Deutsche Bank and Capital One. On Monday, U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington ruled that Congress has the power to demand Trump's tax returns, which is not part of a component on the Russian election assault, but strongly suggests Congress has broad check and balance duties. "To be sure, there are limits on Congress's investigative authority. But those limits do not substantially constrain



Congress," Mehta said in a 41-page ruling. "So long as Congress investigates on a subject matter on which 'legislation could be had,' Congress acts as contemplated by Article I of the Constitution."

Speaker Nancy Pelosi seems to recognize this feint by the president, and is trying to fend off her restive caucus who are responding to Trump's recalci-

trance by calling for his impeachment. Politico reported: At a Democratic Steering and Policy Committee meeting, Rep. Steve Cohen of Tennessee stood up and demanded Trump's impeachment. Pelosi countered, "This is not about politics, it's about what's best for the American people."

The most famous line in Robert Mueller's report was that while the finding on President Trump and obstruction "does not conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him." By making this statement, Mueller essentially punted the obstruction question to Congress, as well as authority to safeguard future American elections.

President Trump and members of Congress took an oath "to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic" as well as "bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion."

We know President Trump will use any tactic for personal and political preservation. Members of Congress are on the clock and will be judged by history as to how they choose to defend the republic. ❖



CONTENT BY CARTER
strategic content creation and deployment

Indiana population growth via immigrants

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE — The research center where I work just released a study on immigration in Indiana. Sociologist Emily Wornell was the lead author of a work that most Hoosiers will find interesting. Part of the study reported surprising data, but there was also some analysis that should clarify many misunderstandings about the issue. Let me explain.



So far this century, a full quarter of all the population growth across Indiana has come from immigrants. This is important in a state that is now growing at well beneath the national average. More critically, across the 32 Indiana counties losing population last year,

a full 29 saw net immigration from immigrants. None saw growth in native-born citizens.

Despite what many would think as a flood of immigrants, Indiana is only at about one-third of its peak immigration of the late 19th century. From what this study can tell, immigration may be the single biggest source of population growth for Indiana in the coming decades. Again, that is not a new development. Roughly 150 years ago, when my most recent immigrant ancestor, Michael Joseph Young, arrived from Wales, nearly one of every 11 Hoosiers was foreign born.

It is fair to say that the big decline in immigration to Indiana accompanied our state's long, slow relative economic decline. The absence of immigration did not cause it, but immigrants seek opportunity. Declining opportunity in the late 20th century caused immigrants to move elsewhere. The uptick in immigration to Indiana in this century signals better opportunity. We must hope to sustain it.

New immigrants in Indiana should be especially welcomed. On average, they are better educated than the typical Hoosier adult and, unlike the state as a whole, educational attainment among immigrants is growing briskly. Immigrants to Indiana are, on average, a major benefit

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to the state, and contribute more in tax dollars than they receive in benefits. There is little doubt about that conclusion, despite political rhetoric to the contrary.

However, the benefits and costs of immigration are not equally distributed. The costs are very isolated, while the benefits are spread more uniformly across households. Like other researchers, we found that immigrants affect labor markets. On average, immigrants boost wages by buying more goods and services. However, for workers with a high school degree or less, immigration reduces starting wages by roughly 2%. While that amounts to as much as \$70 a month, which is not a trivial amount, the effect is limited to starting wages. The effect of immigrant competition is erased after three months on the job.

For workers with college experience or degrees, the effect is wholly positive. Working in places with a greater share of immigrants boosts wages. That should not be surprising, since proximity to better-educated workers broadly boosts wages. Moreover, the services produced by better-educated workers appears to be in higher demand across immigrant households.

We also examined the potential negative consequences of immigrants on student learning. This is the one place where the costs for the state would be most impacted. Fortunately, the state keeps close tabs on the number

of English Language Learners (ELL), or students for whom American English is a second language. Over the past four years for which we have uninterrupted data, there is no effect of different shares of ELL students on school performance.

Perhaps the most interesting finding detailed in the study is the more rapid pace of immigrant assimilation that accompanies current waves of immigrants. A century ago, language and cultural institutions were slower to adjust than today. This part of the study was also interesting in pointing out that immigrant assimilation is partially a two-way street. But, that should be obvious in a state where burritos and curry are becoming as common as potato salad, bratwurst and pierogi.

It is unfortunate that such a straightforward issue should be so politicized, but I suppose that is a residual of our times. I hope readers will come to www.bsu.edu/cber to read this analysis. It will erase any misgivings you may have about immigration in Indiana. ❖

Michael J. 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.

Down on the farm

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — Last week, the governor of Missouri was interviewed on NPR and stated that farming was the number one industry in his state. I've heard the same claim from Indiana politicians. In fact, one Hoosier solon claimed farming was "the backbone of Indiana's economy." I responded, "Every corpse has a backbone."



Why do people in Missouri and Indiana believe such exaggeration? Perhaps, at one time (in the 19th century) it was true. Farming does take up a lot of the land we see when traveling from one place to another. Plus, the farm lobby is still disproportionately strong.

How important is farming? Folks from Purdue love to say,

"If you eat, you're are part of farming." Oh, so true! Plus, if you eat, you're part of trucking, dentistry, and waste disposal.

Let's look at three different measures not provided by the biggest farm lobby of all, the U.S. Department of

Agriculture:

First, value added, the part of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), our basic measure of economic activity, attributed to Agriculture nationally (including farming, forestry, fisheries and hunting) is 0.8%, or 19th of 19 private sector industries. Number one is (drum roll...) real estate, rental and leasing at 13.3%, followed by manufacturing at 11.4% of GDP.

To be blunt, total value added from farming is less than 0.8% of the U.S. economy. What will the farm lobby say? "Well, you've got to remember farmers buy lots of stuff and lots of money passes through their hands that wouldn't be spent if we didn't have farming."

No one is talking about not having farming! That's the argument of a child, not an industry. We measure economic activity as the value of the goods sold less the value of goods purchased. That's what we call value added. And the sum of value added by all economic activity in the marketplace is GDP.

For Missouri, agriculture (Ag) is 1.1% of the state's GDP. For Indiana, Ag is 0.9% of the state's GDP. In each of those two states, Ag is 19th of the 19 major private sector economic activities in GDP. Only in South Dakota does Ag exceed 5% of the state's GDP.

Second, personal income, the sum of earnings, rent, dividends, interest, and transfer payments (Social Security, Medicare, unemployment compensation, etc.) are received by — guess who? — persons. Farm earnings

are net of the expenses of farmers, but include government subsidies. How many carpenters, janitors, teachers, surgeons can say the same?

In the nation, farming accounts for 0.4% of total personal income. In Missouri, the figure is 0.46%, in Indiana 0.33%.

Third, jobs. Farming, fishing and forestry account for a lofty 0.34% of jobs in the U.S., 0.18% in Missouri, and 0.12% in the Hoosier Holyland.

These are data for 2018. Not 1820, which might

have been the source for the governor of Missouri. They are from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, not the fake news agents working in the speech-writing cubicle of every statehouse. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at mortonj-marcus@yahoo.com. Follow his views and those of John Guy on "Who gets what?" wherever podcasts are available or at mortonjohn.libsyn.com.

Motherhood and workplace duress

By **ERIN MACEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — When I first met Aliyah, we commiserated about the transition to being a mother of two children. "I'm up all night with him," she said, indicating the adorable, swaddled newborn lying beside me on the couch before turning to point at the four-year-old zipping around the room, "and then he gets up every morning at six, so I'm up with him in the morning."



Motherhood is miraculous. It's also not for the faint of heart. Neither is pregnancy. From the inappropriately named "morning" sickness that can strike at all hours and make it difficult to hold

down food, to dizzy spells, to swollen ankles, to an alarmingly increasing chance of maternal death, pregnancy carries serious consequences and risks for women who endure it.

As a state and as a nation, we have rightly turned our attention to policies that mitigate those risks. Gov. Holcomb and his team have prioritized reductions in maternal and infant mortality. This means paying more attention to how women, especially women of color, and their babies are treated. While it is great to see conversations about access to and the quality of health care women receive while pregnant, we are neglecting an important driver of poor health outcomes for pregnant women and their babies: Work.

In the 1960's, far fewer women participated in the labor force and among those who did, marriage and pregnancy were frequently accompanied by an exit from paid employment, at least temporarily. Things have changed. In 2017, nearly three in four Hoosier women participated in the labor force, and those rates were similarly high for mothers. In nearly half of families, women are the breadwinners. Because 40% of households lack

savings sufficient to weather even a small emergency, and because an even higher percentage of women lack access to paid family or medical leave, many expectant mothers now work throughout their pregnancy and take very short leaves before returning to the workforce. They can't afford to do otherwise.

Aliyah described the challenges of fitting prenatal appointments into her work life. "They were like, 'Oh, it's OK. Just put in your request form for all the days you'll be gone for doctors' appointments,'" she recalled, but during the busy season she was later hauled in to the boss's office. "He basically told me, 'This job is more important than your doctors' appointments,'" she recounted. In some respects, he was right; she needed the paycheck and the health insurance.

Then there was the day she was asked to do inventory, which required her to lift heavy boxes. In pain after several hours, she texted her boss to request to leave early and then did so. She was rewarded with a write-up for failing to complete the job and leaving early. "I felt like they're not thinking about me or my baby, they're just thinking of a body being here doing a job," Aliyah said.

If we want healthy women and babies, women have to be able to ask for and receive reasonable accommodations on the job. This is especially true in physically demanding occupations, where research has demonstrated a connection between repeated bending, lifting, climbing or carrying and preterm birth. Preterm birth is the leading cause of infant mortality in Indiana; our state is among the ten worst for infant mortality rates in the nation.

Unfortunately, state and federal law does not adequately protect pregnant women on the job. Pregnancy is not considered a disability, so pregnant women don't necessarily have protections under the Americans with Disabilities Act. And while they may be protected under sex discrimination laws, they must prove that an employer accommodated someone else to successfully pursue a claim. About half of states have now updated their laws to protect pregnant women, including, most recently, our neighbors in Kentucky, but Indiana is not yet on that list.

And as we're thinking about making sure more women get prenatal care, which has been associated with lower maternal mortality rates, we should consider this: Indiana has no provision to ensure that workers can earn

paid time off work. Workers in the lowest-wage jobs are, of course, both less likely to be able to earn paid leave and less likely to be able to afford to take time off without pay. Yet toward the end of pregnancy, we expect a woman to visit her care provider multiple times per month even as she faces the post-birth possibility of no maternity leave or less-than-adequate wage replacement from a temporary disability insurance plan.

We cannot solve our maternal and infant mortality crises if we turn a blind eye to our workplace policies. Indiana needs to adopt a law requiring employers to ac-

commodate pregnant women and we need to find a way to ensure that Hoosier employees have access to paid family and medical leave. If we truly value mothers and want to reduce maternal mortality and encourage healthy pregnancies, we need to ensure that women have the supports they need from their health care providers and their employers. ❖

Erin Macey, PhD, is a senior policy analyst for the Indiana Institute for Working Families and Indiana Community Action Association.



To improve, Congress needs to look inward

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON — There are a lot of reasons why Congress finds itself hamstrung in Washington and discounted by the people it serves at home.

These include long-term trends over which it has little control: The political polarization of the country; the oceans of money that get dumped into the political process; the push by successive presidents to amass as much executive power as possible.



But in the end, the demons Congress has to fight are its own. If it is to return to relevance, effectiveness, and higher standing in public opinion, the paths it must follow start on and wind through Capitol Hill.

As I noted a couple of weeks ago, the first step is to act like the co-equal branch of government our Founders intended it to be. But to get there, it needs to rehabilitate how it operates internally.

For starters, Congress has gotten into some terrible legislative habits. The worst is the omnibus bill, which is emblematic of the deeply rooted issues Congress faces. These bills are thousands of pages long and they bypass pretty much the entire legislative process: Committee hearings, input by rank-and-file members, vetting and analysis by outside experts and most staff. Instead, they put power in the hands of a few leaders and shunt openness and transparency to the sidelines.

Leaders prefer this because it makes decision-making simpler. But good process is not about efficiency. It's about bolstering your chances of getting things right. And that means handing authority back to individual members and to the committees so that what comes out of Congress can benefit from the creativity and insights of a

wide range of talented politicians.

This step, however, requires another; Congress has to spend more time legislating. Its members work very hard, but not at legislating. They raise money, they listen to well-heeled donors and interest groups, they go on television to score political points, they attend a never-ending whirl of events, dinners, parties, and receptions. They spend only a few days a week tending to legislative business, and even then get long breaks during the year.

Yet if the political and legislative process is a search for remedies to our nation's problems, then it needs care and attention. Building expertise and finding consensus, even within one's own party, takes patience, skill, perseverance...and a lot of time.

And honestly, if members of Congress can't make the time to re-energize the practice of negotiation and compromise, then what hope is there? The country is divided. So is Congress, to a large extent reflecting the divisions in the country. But the definition of being a responsible lawmaker is to deal with these kinds of splits and to move the country forward anyway. Legislators need to accommodate differences and find common ground.

Yes, it's a challenge to stick to core principles and still make progress through negotiation. But that's the essence of political skill. Otherwise, each side just sits in its corner and maneuvers to beat the other at the next election and we, as a nation, spin in circles. Our Constitution is a fine example of talented politicians who went at each other hammer and tongs, sought the best compromises they could, and then moved forward. Somehow, they managed to forge a country out of this.

Finally, Congress needs to spend far more of its energy looking over the executive branch. The current hearings on the Mueller report highlight what's been lacking; this kind of attention should be paid to every nook and cranny of government. Good oversight can repair unresponsive bureaucracies, expose misconduct, and make agencies and their staffers more accountable. It takes time, effort, and expertise, but robust congressional oversight has helped government avoid a lot of failures in

the past, and it needs to do so again.

The point of all this is that without a functional Congress, we don't have a functional representative democracy. I don't expect all these things I've mentioned to be resolved easily or quickly. But I want to see Congress again become an institution we can be confident is playing a constructive role in our democracy. And until it gets its house in order, I don't see how that will happen. ❖

Claybourn's book 'Our American Story' seeks elusive unity

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

EVANSVILLE – Joshua Claybourn describes himself as a “relatively unknown lawyer from the Midwest.” But on June 1, his book “Our American Story: The Search for a Shared National Narrative” goes on sale, and the lineup of contributors is impressive.

Included are historians, including Pulitzer Prize winners David W. Blight, Alan Taylor along with Gordon Wood; lawyers Cass Sustein, Richard E. Epstein, Ilya Somin and Gerard N. Magliocca of the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law. Political scientists and analysts include Spencer Boyer, Eleanor Clift, Nikolas Gvosdev, Jason Kuznicki, Markos Moulitsas, James V. Wertsch and Ali Wyne. And there are the politicians, including U.S. Rep. Jim Banks and former Sen. John Danforth.

Claybourn, an Evansville attorney and Howey Politics Indiana contributor, explains, “Over the past few decades, the complicated divides of geography, class, religion, and race created deep fractures in the United States, each side fighting to advance its own mythology and political interests. We lack a central story, a common ground we can celebrate and enrich with deeper meaning. Unable to agree on first principles, we cannot agree on what it means to be American. As we dismantle or disregard symbols and themes that previously united us, can we replace them with stories and rites that unite our tribes and maintain meaning in our American identity?”

He explains in the book's foreword: “We've seen

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

these factional clusters deepen, harden, and separate, leading in turn to anger, misunderstanding, and hostility. Meanwhile, trust in institutions — government, business, the media, and higher education — continues to erode. Cultural warfare further splits our society, exposing fundamental differences about our views of justice and human nature. Unable to agree on first principles, we cannot agree on what it means to be American. As a result, we share few of the touchstones that, in the past, contributed to our national mythology.

“The diverse responses expand our possible narratives and remind us that if a unifying story can be

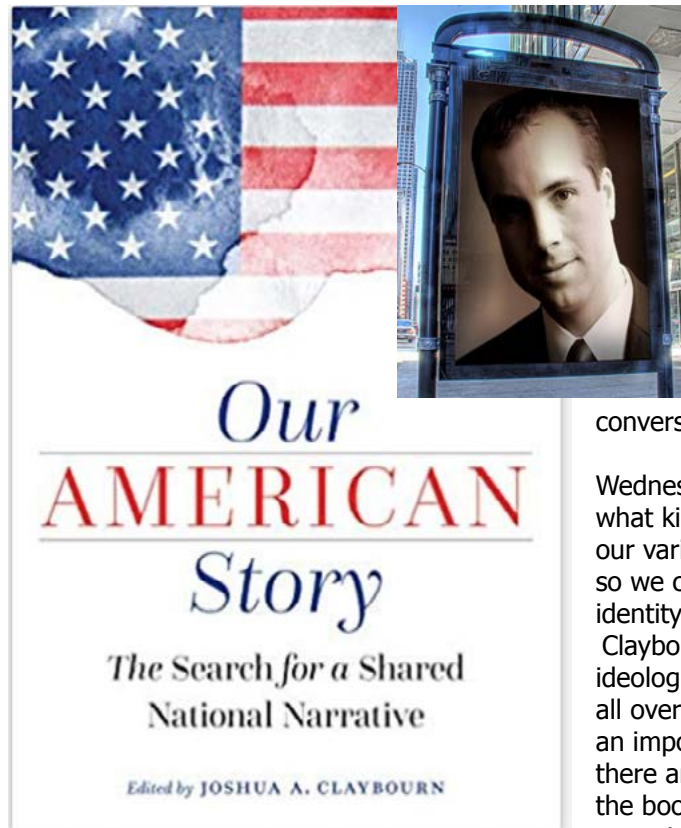
achieved at all, then more than one may be feasible or even necessary,” he continues. “If you insist on common threads or conclusions, then we leave them to you to discover, and we hope you find these contributions important and illuminating. Ultimately, I aim for this project to prompt much-needed conversation and reflection.”

Claybourn told HPI on Wednesday, “I began to wonder what kind of stories could unite our various fractions and tribes so we could restore our American identity. I got a great response.” Claybourn continued, “It's a very ideologically diverse group from all over the country. I felt this was an important conversation. Were there any common stories? Buy the book to find out. This is a conversation we need to have. These

are good people to help prompt that conversation.

“There are a few folks that took a skeptical approach,” Claybourn explained. “Some don't think a shared American story is possible or even necessary.”

Sustein, a former Notre Dame Law professor, brings the reader to Concord: “In 2017 I moved from New York to Massachusetts. My wife and I chose to live in Concord, even though we are not working there. That wasn't



the most practical decision, but still, it made some sense. Concord is breathtakingly beautiful. It is also historic. It's where the Revolutionary War started on 19 April 1775, when about 700 British soldiers were given what they thought were secret orders to destroy colonial military supplies being held in Concord. That's where Paul Revere rode, where the first shots of the American Revolution were fired, where dozens of people died and dozens were badly hurt, and where our nation started to be born.

"Know the phrase" "The shot heard round the world"? If you'd asked me in 2016, I would have said, with complete confidence, that the it referred to Bobby Thomson's game-winning home run in 1951, which won the pennant for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Wrong answer."

Banks, an Indiana University classmate of Claybourn, writes of "Society and Service," beginning: "People often complain of an America run by elites of wealth and power. There is certainly some truth to this viewpoint, but it fails to provide the entire picture. Our nation's virtue is steeped in the foundational principle of governance 'of the people, by the people, and for the people.' This indispensable component of our country's DNA largely remains in-

tact, and its perseverance through generations has helped the United States grow into the greatest nation in world history. Yet today it is unraveling and under attack."

Banks continues: "When I was growing up, our family was not exactly a political family, and politicians usually were not spoken of favorably in our working-class home. So it came as a surprise to many that I ascended through the ranks of local, state, and national politics in a span of about 10 years. The uniqueness of our political system allowed me to do just that with a dream and inspiration to serve."

Near his conclusion, Banks explains, "We must raise the level of decency in the American political system. I recently toured the Ronald Reagan Library with a veteran and imminently respected member of Congress. When I asked him about his favorite memory of working with President Reagan, he paused and remarked, 'I just hope our country can find another leader like him.' We need more Reaganesque kindness and optimism in today's conversation."

You can order "Our American Story" by [clicking here](#). ❖

GOP will have 2020 Senate advantage

By **KYLE KONDIK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA. – Republicans have to defend 22 Senate seats this cycle to the Democrats' 12, yet the GOP remains favored to hold the chamber in large part because so many of the seats they are defending are in states that seem certain to vote Republican for president, and strongly so.

Of the 22 seats that the Republicans are defending, 15 are in states that Donald Trump won by 14 points or more in 2016. The overall Senate balance of power is 53-47, meaning Democrats would need to net, at minimum, three seats to take the majority (the vice president elected in 2020 would break a 50-50 tie).

What follows is a status report on the race for the Senate, divided into five storylines we're following so far:

1. Retirements are not having a dramatic effect on the partisan odds in any race so far. Retirements often play a crucial role in the Senate calculus because even though the power of incumbency is waning, one still would expect a normal incumbent to perform better than a non-incumbent. As an example, while Democrats lost four states held by incumbents last year, they almost assuredly would have lost dark red Montana and West Virginia, too, had Sens. Jon Tester and Joe Manchin not run for reelection in their respective states.

Retirements also can be important mile markers on the road to the general election: For instance, the Crystal Ball deemed the surprising retirement of Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME) in late February 2012 as a "Snowepocalypse" for the GOP that greatly harmed their chances of flipping the chamber. Independent Angus King ended up winning the seat under the assumption that he would caucus with Democrats (he did, and has ever since), and Republicans' initial bullishness about winning the Senate waned (Democrats netted two seats that year, somewhat surprisingly). The following cycle, Sens. Tom Harkin (D-IA), Carl Levin (D-MI), Max Baucus (D-MT), Tim Johnson (D-SD), and Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) all announced their retirements by the end of April 2013, an early signal that the Democratic majority was in deep trouble (Republicans would end up winning all but Michigan as part of a net nine-seat gain that gave them a 54-46 majority).

At least four of the 34 Senate races this year will feature open-seat races next year. But unlike the retirements in 2012 and 2014, this group of retirees doesn't tell us much about what to expect next year.

The retirees are Sens. Tom Udall (D-NM), Pat Roberts (R-KS), Lamar Alexander (R-TN), and Mike Enzi (R-WY). The three Republicans are all from very Republican states, so we kept all three races as Safe Republican. We saw last year, in another open-seat Tennessee race, that the Democratic cause there seems hopeless, given that a strong Democratic candidate in a good Democratic election year, former Gov. Phil Bredesen, couldn't even get within single digits of now-Sen. Marsha Blackburn in the



race to replace now-former Sen. Bob Corker (R-TN). Wyoming hasn't elected a Democratic senator since 1970 and is arguably the most Republican state in the nation. Kansas hasn't elected a Democratic senator since 1932; Senate Republicans apparently are ready to campaign against Kris Kobach (R), the party's weak 2018 gubernatorial nominee, if he jumps in the race. If Kobach does enter the race we may need to change Kansas' rating, but at this point we do not see it as a realistic Democratic target given its long and enduring GOP leanings.

New Mexico, while the most competitive of these four states, is still trending Democratic. We moved that race from Safe Democratic to Likely Democratic, but only out of an abundance of caution.

In other words, at this point it appears that the most vulnerable incumbents on both sides are still running, at least for now. Just as in 2012, when Snowe's retirement gave the Democrats a seat they otherwise would've had little chance to win, Maine features the most important candidate decision, as Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) is a significantly stronger candidate than any replacement Republican would be. Collins said earlier this year that she intends to run for reelection, though.

2. Chuck Schumer has struck out on some of his recruiting targets. An early story of the race for the Senate involves those Democrats who have decided not to run for the Senate. Former Gov. John Hickenlooper of Colorado, Gov. Steve Bullock of Montana, and former Rep. Beto O'Rourke of Texas all opted for the presidential race instead of Senate contests in their respective states. Stacey Abrams of Georgia, who lost a close gubernatorial race in 2018, also took a pass and may still be mulling a presidential bid. Former Gov. Tom Vilsack and first-term Rep. Cindy Axne, both of Iowa, also decided against Senate bids.

It does seem fair to say that if it was just up to Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), many or all of these candidates would be running. Obviously, it's ultimately not up to him, and the number of major Democrats who have said no to running for the Senate has led to questions about the ability of Democrats to win the chamber.

It's natural for the leadership of both parties to gravitate toward candidates who have higher levels of name ID and more proven ability to raise money and run a credible race. That said, we agree with Nathan Gonzales of Inside Elections, who recently wrote that it's far too early to judge the eventual Democratic Senate slate. Republi-

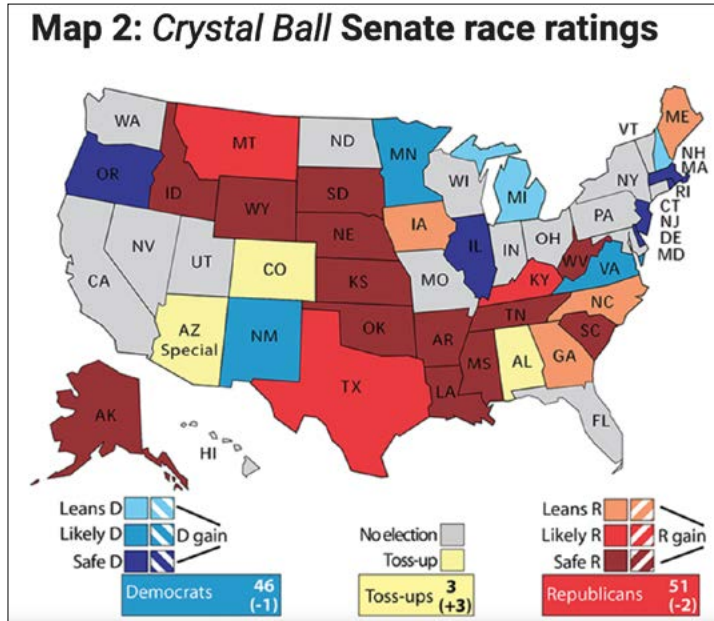
cans faced some questions about their candidates this time a half-dozen years ago, and they ended up doing quite well. It's also unclear as to whether the aforementioned names actually are the best candidates in their respective states. Maybe a candidate such as Teresa Tomlinson (D), the former mayor of Columbus, GA who is seeking the Georgia Democratic nomination, would actually be a better fit than Abrams, who never seemed very interested in a Senate bid anyway.

Republicans also don't have a perfect record of candidate recruitment as they try to put some Democratic seats in play. Gov. Chris Sununu (R-NH) recently announced that he's going to run for a third, two-year term as opposed to challenging Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), meaning that Republicans will have to find a different and almost certainly less proven challenger. Additionally, there is an odd recruitment story unfolding in Michigan, which along with Alabama is the only Trump-won state Democrats are defending in

this cycle's Senate elections. With Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) seeking a second term, many Senate Republicans hope that Iraq veteran John James (R) runs again after his credible albeit unsuccessful challenge to Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) last cycle. But the Trump reelection campaign may be actively dissuading James from running, based on the thinking that "a statewide campaign by James could force Democrats to spend more money in the state, driving turnout on the other side and potentially hurting the president," as Politico's Alex Isenstadt reported. Perhaps the Trump camp hopes that Democrats will take Michigan for granted, as Hillary Clinton's campaign seemed to do for much of the 2016 cycle.

3. Alabama and Colorado remain the likeliest states to flip. Speaking of candidate recruitment, the eventual challengers to Sens. Doug Jones (D-AL) and Cory Gardner (R-CO) remain unknown, and we characterize both of their races as Toss-ups. After all, there's always the possibility that the challenging party will nominate a dud opponent against either, as Republicans did in the 2017 special election won by Jones, who beat the disastrously flawed Roy Moore (R).

However, assuming decent challengers, both Jones and Gardner are quite vulnerable (Jones in particular given how red Alabama is in a presidential year). Gardner could run ahead of Donald Trump in Colorado, something he probably will have to do to win unless Trump does significantly better in Colorado than he did in 2016. ❖



Alan Blanchard, Marion Chronicle-Tribune:

“Live your life to serve others.” That was one of the final parting words to Class of 2019 seniors by U.S. Vice President Mike Pence at Saturday’s Taylor University commencement in Upland. And it captured the spirit and summed up the gist of his message to graduating seniors. Earlier in his speech, Pence said, “You know, I believe public service is a noble calling. But wherever life takes you, take a servant’s attitude. Consider others more important than yourselves. Live your lives as He did: not to be served, but to serve.” Commencement-goers may or may not have seen about three dozen students and faculty walk out before and return after Pence’s speech. But that walking out and back in was not an impromptu or unexpected action. What was unknown to most outside the university community Saturday was the countless hours administrators, faculty and students spent in meetings to come up with a way to allow peaceable protest for those opposed to Pence’s being invited and/or actually being the commencement speaker. And a way forward was found. The plan called for a song to be played right before Pence came to speak. That was the cue for faculty and students wishing to leave to do so. After Pence’s speech, a second song played, signaling those same departed faculty and students to return for the rest of the ceremony. Unable to see this exit and re-entering from where I was sitting, others, who could see, reported the exiting and re-entering went off without a hitch. In the weeks leading up to commencement, one faculty member wrote a letter to the student newspaper at Taylor, encouraging Pence to refrain from speaking of things of a political nature at commencement. While I’m sure that was a request not all would have agreed with given the speaker is the vice president of the United States, as far as Pence’s speech went, he did keep politics to a minimum. ❖



Mickey Mauer, IBJ: Last month, Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb signed a law criminalizing the standard method of second trimester abortion, dilation and evacuation, despite the fact it is a safe medical procedure and Indiana already boasts one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the nation. The ACLU of Indiana immediately filed a lawsuit challenging its constitutionality. This legislation, the latest iteration of the con game perpetrated by right-wing anti-choice activists who will stop at nothing to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, is an inexcusable waste of time and taxpayer money. Lawmakers employ this expensive strategy perhaps in the hope that newly seated Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh will tip the scales in their favor, despite his testimony that he would let that ruling stand. We should sweep the zealots out of office, but we cannot because many of these wild-eyed fanatics operate from “safe seats” in gerrymandered districts. That’s another issue. *Roe v. Wade* has been hailed as a landmark decision. As with other landmark decisions, refinements have

been made over the years. But what is occurring in Indiana can’t be described as refined. In the years before he left for Washington, this ridiculous strategy was wholeheartedly supported by Gov. Mike Pence. For a brief moment, many thought that his successor would lend some sanity to this parade of obviously unconstitutional and expensive acts. His signature on this recent affront to women’s rights, as well as the equally pernicious law he signed last year, delivered a crushing disappointment to all who expected a voice of reason in the governor’s mansion. Maybe our governor doesn’t read these bills. Our prosecutors do. Last year, the prosecutors of Marion, Monroe and Lake counties declared they would not contest the latest lawsuit filed in opposition to Indiana’s abortion requirement, saying that the new law would not survive a court challenge. Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry said he is tired of being drawn into legislators’ futile act each year of passing abortion-related bills that inevitably result in lawsuits at taxpayer expense. Don’t get confused. I am not taking a stand on pro-choice vs. pro-life. Choose your position without advice from me on this issue. I am pro-sanity and pro-fiscal responsibility. According to the Times Media Co., in the half dozen years between 2011 and 2017, Indiana spent millions of our taxpayer dollars to defend this idiocy. ❖

Thomas Friedman, New York Times: A U.S. businessman friend of mine who works in China remarked to me recently that Donald Trump is not the American president America deserves, but he sure is the American president China deserves. Trump’s instinct that America needs to rebalance its trade relationship with Beijing — before China gets too big to compromise — is correct. And it took a human wrecking ball like Trump to get China’s attention. But now that we have it, both countries need to recognize just how pivotal this moment is. The original U.S.-China opening back in the 1970s defined our restored trade ties, which were limited. When we let China join the World Trade Organization in 2001, it propelled China into a trading powerhouse under rules that still gave China lots of concessions as a developing economy. This new negotiation will define how the U.S. and China relate as economic peers, competing for the same 21st-century industries, at a time when our markets are totally intertwined. So this is no ordinary trade dispute. This is the big one. For it to end well, Trump will have to stop with his juvenile taunting of China on Twitter (and talking about how trade wars are “easy” to win) and quietly forge the best rebalancing deal we can get — we probably can’t fix everything at once — and move on, without stumbling unthinkingly into a forever tariff war. And China’s president, Xi Jinping, will have to recognize that China can no longer enjoy the trading privileges it has had over the last 40 years, so he’d be wise to curb his nationalistic “no-one-tells-China-what-to-do” bluster and look for the best win-win deal. ❖

Holcomb expects record jobs year

RICHMOND — Gov. Eric Holcomb shared sunny economic news with Wayne County Republicans on Wednesday during the party's Lincoln Day Dinner. Indicators, he said, continue moving in a positive direction ([Richmond Palladium-Item](#)). "We will close our fiscal books way ahead of projections, and our reserves are way ahead of our projections," the governor said during a question-and-answer session with Rep. Brad Barrett at Richmond's Holiday Inn. "Our employment is at an all-time record high, wages are going up. We are growing in terms of population, and so like I said, those indicators are all moving in the same direction." In fact, Holcomb said, he expects the record for job commitments to fall for a third consecutive year. "We broke that (2012) record in 2017, and then we broke it again in 2018, and we're on track to break that record again," he said.



Hill misconduct ruling months away

INDIANAPOLIS — A decision is at least five months away on whether Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill could face sanctions up to disbarment as an attorney by the state Supreme Court on allegations he groped four women during a party ([AP](#)). Lawyers for Hill and the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission met Wednesday with former state Supreme Court Justice Myra Selby, who is hearing the case. They agreed to schedule a possible five-day hearing in late October, during which potentially 25 people could testify. The disciplinary commission alleges Hill committed professional misconduct by touching the backs or buttocks of Democratic Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon and three legislative staffers in March 2018 at an Indianapolis bar. A special pros-

ecutor declined in October to pursue criminal charges against Hill, who has denied wrongdoing. James Voyles, a lawyer for Hill, declined to discuss what defense might be presented or the possible impact of the drawn-out case on Hill's effectiveness as the state's top attorney.

Councilwoman leaves Democrats

EVANSVILLE — City Councilwoman Connie Robinson, who has represented the 4th Ward for 24 years, said she is leaving the Democratic Party and will complete her council term as an independent. Robinson is not seeking reelection this year, and her term expires Dec. 31 ([Evansville Courier & Press](#)). In a letter to local Democratic Chairman Scott Danks posted on Facebook, Robinson cited the party's recent 2nd Ward City Council primary, won by incumbent Missy Mosby over challenger D'Angelo Taylor. Supporters of Taylor claimed a Mosby supporter used racially charged statements at least once while campaigning in Mosby's behalf.

Disaster relief bill falters in Senate

WASHINGTON — Any hope of a long-awaited deal on disaster funding began to slip away Wednesday evening as talks stalled just before both chambers plan to leave for the Memorial Day recess ([Politico](#)). Congressional negotiators remain stuck on a slew of immigration-related provisions in the package, lowering expectations of a bipartisan agreement to deliver the massive emergency package to Trump's desk by Friday, according to multiple sources. "We gotta do it tonight, if we're going to do anything tomorrow or Friday," Senate Appropriations chief Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) told reporters earlier Wednesday, adding that he would push top appropriators to keep talking into the evening. But there was still

no plan to meet late Wednesday, and Republicans say they're still awaiting a response from Democrats.

New York approves Trump tax bill

ALBANY, N.Y. — New York State lawmakers on Wednesday gave their final approval to a bill that would clear a path for Congress to obtain President Trump's state tax returns, injecting another element into a tortuous battle over the president's refusal to release his taxes ([New York Times](#)). The bill, which is expected to be signed by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, a third-term Democrat and regular critic of Mr. Trump's policies and behavior, will authorize state tax officials to release the president's state returns to any one of three congressional committees. The returns — filed in New York, the president's home state and business headquarters — would likely contain much of the same information as the contested federal returns.

Club eyes taking out Sen. Tillis

WASHINGTON — A prominent conservative group is trying to lure a staunch ally of President Donald Trump into a primary race against Republican Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina, threatening to inflame intra-party tensions in a state crucial to the party's 2020 strategy ([Politico](#)). The Club for Growth is attempting to nudge Rep. Mark Walker, a third-term evangelical pastor, into the 2020 Senate race. This week, it completed a poll suggesting that Tillis would be vulnerable to a challenge from the right — particularly against Walker. "With such slim majorities in recent years, the Club for Growth has not challenged Republican senators," said David McIntosh, the Club for Growth's president. "But when there is a strong conservative alternative who will likely perform better against a Democratic challenge, we reserve the right to challenge incumbents."