

Mayors Henry, Bennett do four more

GOP picks up 70 city halls, Dems make suburban gains

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – It would be trite to say the 2019 municipal elections were status quo, not with 17 defeated incumbents. But there are solid trendlines: Democrats dominated in the big cities, coasting to wins in Indianapolis by Joe Hogsett and Fort Wayne by Tom Henry and



picking up council seats in Evansville without a credible mayoral nominee. **Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry (left) and Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett win historic fourth terms, the former by landslide, the latter by edging out an independent.**



Kokomo, Logansport and Muncie. It helped them forge a historic 70-seat night, which underscores how the Republicans are dominating in the prairies (they hold 80% of county commissioner seats), while Democrats are holding

onto the big cities and college towns.

Republicans did extremely well in the auto belt, picking up

onto the big cities and college towns.

The suburban areas continue to take a purple hue, with Democrats making gains with Emily Styron upsetting Mayor Tim Haak in once-ruby red Zionsville, along with two council seats in Carmel and Fishers. This comes a year after gay Democrat Sen. J.D. Ford won his suburban In-

Continued on page 4

Our civic health dilemma

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Next Monday morning, Hoosiers will be getting a biennial report card on civic engagement, presented by Lee Hamilton, Randall Shepard and Greg Zoeller. The state's social "fabric" will be measured by the "Civic Health Index" and it won't be pretty.



Past reports have come and gone since 2011 without a mechanism to enhance voter participation, voluntary civic and religious assembly. That will change with the establishment

of "The Indiana Citizen" website. Created by Bill and Ann Moreau with the support of board members Bob Grand, Jeanne Kelsay, Michael Goldenberg, Russell Cox and Trevor Foughty, this non-partisan, non-profit platform described as "The Crossroads of Civic Engagement" will seek to



“Now that our local elections are over and Congressman Pete has announced his intentions not to seek reelection, I want everyone to know that I am a candidate for this office in 2020 and that I intend to be NW Indiana’s next congressman.”

- Hammond Mayor McDermott



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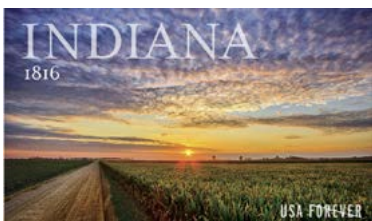
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increase 2020 voter participation by 20%, or 500,000 votes, next year. "That would move Indiana from the bottom 10 to the top 10," Moreau told HPI Tuesday as he previewed his Indiana Citizen message. It was recorded on March 15, a day after his former boss and mentor, U.S. Sen. Birch Bayh, died.

Another goal will be to increase civics education, beginning with elementary schools.

Not only is voter participation down, but there are a range of other factors fueling what is becoming a critical lack of engagement. The press, particularly Hoosier newspapers, is in atrophy with massive layoffs and closures. The state has been crippled by methamphetamine and opioid crises that have killed, maimed and imprisoned thousands.

The 2017 Indiana Civic Health Index revealing "patterns of our civic engagement and the commitment of Hoosiers to building a civically engaged Indiana" found some reason for encouragement. The 2017 report observed:

"Indiana was ranked 32 in volunteering in 2010, 18th in 2012 and 22nd in 2016. Charitable giving activity placed Indiana 45th in 2010, 22nd in 2012 and 27th in 2016. Voting and registration show a similar pattern of improvement. In 2010, Indiana was ranked 48th in voting in the nation. We rose to the rank of 38 in 2012 and fell slightly to 41 in 2016. Despite the overall improvement during this period, Indiana still remains ranked in the bottom 50% of all states in voting."

In 2017, former congressman Hamilton observed, "In a democracy, it is not enough just to let politicians set the rules of engagement. As citizens, we need to know how to cultivate our own skills; to stay informed, volunteer, speak out, ask questions, make discriminating judgments about politicians and policies, and improve our neighborhoods and communities."

The IndianaCitizen.Org will

create a center where people can register to vote, check on their registration, learn who represents them in Congress and the General Assembly, and follow official voting records and campaign finance.

Bill Moreau has incorporated TurboVote and Follow The Money API into the website. The project has raised \$200,000 from an impressive, bipartisan group of "Founding Funders" and he hopes to extend coverage of Congress and the General Assembly into local levels, such as streaming city council meetings.

Moreau, a former reporter, worked on the staff of U.S. Sen. Birch Bayh, then served as chief of staff for Evan Bayh when he was secretary of state and governor. He currently serves of the Board of Advisors for the Center on Congress at Indiana University and the National Advisory Committee of IU's Center for Civic Literacy and was a founding advisory board member of Purdue University's Institute for Civic Communication. He is retiring as a partner with Barnes &



Thornburg LLP in December.

Ahead of the release of the 2019 Civic Health Index, HPI conducted this interview with Moreau at Barnes & Thornburg Tuesday afternoon:

HPI: What was the aha! moment behind this? Was it the 2014 mid-term election where we had the worst turnout in America?

Moreau: It had to do with planning for retirement from the practice of law. My wife and I said we just can't go on vacation for the rest of our lives. What can we do to take everything we've learned to add something, and we decided it's time for us to try and bring some focus on dimly low levels of civic participation we're seeing in Indiana.

HPI: What are you trying to do with the Indiana Citizen website?

Moreau: We've got some big, big goals for this platform. We're

trying to create a single place where Hoosiers can get registered to vote, check out their registration, find out who represents them, and find out every bit of public information we can load there about the candidates and the issues as we head into 2020.

HPI: You became politically involved with Sen. Birch Bayh when?

Moreau: In the fall of 1974 and he was running for reelection against Dick Lugar. I was the editor of the Purdue student newspaper, I was not raised in Indiana so it was the first time I met him and in short order I was following him to Iowa and New Hampshire in his presidential campaign and then went to work for him in Washington.

HPI: Over the arc of your career, you've witnessed the rise and fall of the Indiana Democratic Party. Talk about what things were like at the beginning and where we stand now.

Moreau: I'm not sure I've come to any great insights why Indiana is where it is today, except that Hoosiers themselves have turned the process over to those who understandably want to perpetuate it. I think Indiana needs a healthy dose of new voters and engaged citizens. I came of age in the age of the war in Vietnam and Watergate and in a time of great ferment, and here we are today in 2020 and we seem to be bombarded by all this political information. What I'm afraid of is the way people are responding is to just shut it out, to keep some sanity in their lives. We're going to try and create a platform of information, a library of information that we hope will be viewed as unbiased, reliable, legitimate and a place Hoosier voters can go and find out information that hasn't been provided by anybody but us.

HPI: Currently the voter participation is skewed to an older generation.

Moreau: It is.

HPI: Here we are, with \$23 trillion in national debt, we are running budget deficits counted in the trillions and as Mitch Daniels points out, the entitlement programs, particularly during the Baby Boom demographic bulge goes through, and will be essentially bankrupt in the next 10 to 15 years. And no one in Congress or the presidential class is even talking about it. To me there will be a natural awakening with this younger generation when they realize they are getting screwed, and the challenge for us is to have this happen at the ballot box and not in the street with civil unrest.

Moreau: That's a very sober and sobering assessment. I couldn't agree with you more. We've got to get the younger folks excited about their role in the perpetuation of our democracy. The Millennials and the Gen Zs as they're called, frankly we've got to reach younger ages. We have to teach the basics of citizenship as early as we can reach them, in the elementary schools. We've got to

perpetuate our common values.

HPI: The other sobering thing I keep pointing out is that about every 80 years since 1776, this nation has gone through a political and cultural convulsion, with the American Revolution, the Civil War, the Great Depression and World War II, and now we're 74 years from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. So we're due for a comeuppance and all the ingredients of Washington gridlock – income inequality, artificial intelligence and the fact that we've ceded our

sole super power status – are gathering to create this next cataclysm. Time may be running out for us to have a rational conversation and bring more stakeholders into the process. Any thoughts?

Moreau: I don't know I'm that pessimistic. I realize in the last couple of years that I've become a born-again idealist. I've spend much of my time in law and politics and government and you get pretty cynical. We need a place where idealists can rally and that begins with a source of reliable information. When we came up with the name Indiana Citizen, it was our daughter, Katie, who came up with the slogan, "The Crossroads of Civic

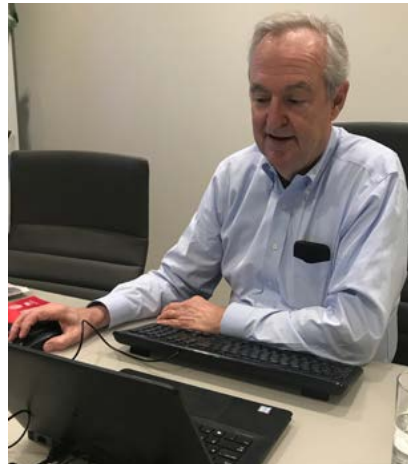
Engagement." My first version was, "The Indiana Citizen: Where Hoosier Idealists Meet." Fortunately that was shot down. We have to figure out how to tap into the innate idealism of young people.

HPI: So on Monday morning, we're going to hear Lee Hamilton, Randy Shepard and Greg Zoeller give a pretty sobering assessment of our civic engagement shortcomings. Give us a sneak preview of what we're going to hear.

Moreau: I don't want to preempt their announcement. What we're going to see is we have declining levels of civic engagement across a host of metrics in Indiana. Most alarming is voter turnout. It will show that while we had a record turnout in the 2018 midterms, so did the rest of the country. We're still going to be in the bottom 10. We're going to see evidence that we just don't know much about basics of citizenship and civic literacy. So we need to do something about that. This is a real wakeup call that will be issued. We're going to take it around the state in the coming weeks and we hope it alarms Hoosiers heading into 2020 to do something really meaningful, with the belief that there is a lot at stake. What is the tritest thing that's said every four years? "This is the most important election of our life." Well, 2020 is the most important election of my lifetime, but we're not going to focus on the national issues. We're going to focus on Indiana to encourage a robust and healthy dialogue.

HPI: If you're an engaged Indiana citizen, is there a place on the website you can go and engage?

Moreau: Absolutely. Go to IndianaCitizen.org and there will be plenty of opportunities for you to engage and find information. And if you'd like to leave a few bucks behind, there's a place to do that as well. ❖



Mayors, from page 1

dianapolis and Carmel seat. Democrats also picked up two suburban Louisville mayor races in Scottsburg and Charlestown, while Democrat New Albany Mayor Jeff Gahan beat back a credible challenge from Mark Seabrook. And Sue Lynch returned to the mayor's office in Portage, turning back Mayor John Cannon, who was voted by caucus to succeed the convicted Republican James Snyder.

On the gender front, in addition to Portage's Lynch and Zionsville's Styron, Democrat Treva Hodges won an upset in Charlestown, but otherwise, the 2019 mayoral field was dominated by white men.

If you're a proponent of good government, Lynch's victory wasn't the only one where voters decided to switch parties due to the taint of scandal. Michigan City Mayor Ron Meer was upset by Republican

Duane Parry just days after the incumbent was indicted on multiple felony charges after the drug arrest of his stepson and the ensuing turmoil in the police department. Parry won by just 76 votes in a race many believed was Meer's to lose until the arrests and indictment. Muncie Councilman Dan Ridenour easily won in a city where the Democratic administration of Mayor Dennis Tyler endured multiple FBI investigations.

Another change-of-the-guard election took place in Kokomo where three-term Democratic Mayor Greg Goodnight decided not to seek reelection. Howard County Commissioner Tyler Moore won in a resounding landslide as the GOP swept the entire city council.

The historic wins included Fort Wayne Mayor Henry's landslide victory over Republican Tim Smith, giving him an unprecedented fourth term, while Republican Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett fended off a spirited challenge from independent Pat Goodwin. That came in tandem with Vigo County voters approving the casino referendum, allowing one of the Gary gaming sites to move south. Bennett had been a leading proponent of that initiative.

Other legacy mayors include Carmel Republican Mayor Jim Brainard embarking on a seventh term; Hammond's Thomas McDermott Jr., a fifth consecutive term; Lafayette Democrat Mayor Tony Roswarski forging a fifth term; West Lafayette Republican Mayor John Dennis win-

ning a fourth; Plymouth Mayor Mark Senter with a fourth; Crown Point's David Uran winning his fourth. Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke easily won a third term with no credible opposition, as did East Chicago's Democrat Mayor Anthony Copeland, and Frankfort Republican Mayor Chris McBarnes.

Headed for second terms are Bloomington's Democrat Mayor John Hamilton, Columbus Republican Mayor Jim Lienhoop, Lebanon Republican Mayor Matt Gen-



Zionsville Mayor-elect Emily Styron (left) and Portage Mayor elect Sue Lynch and Charlestown Mayor-elect Treva Hodges.

try, Rochester GOP Mayor Ted Denton, Fishers Republican Mayor Scott Fadness, Goshen Republican Mayor Jeremy Stutsman, and Richmond Democrat Mayor Dave Snow. Only Denton had a credible opponent in this group.

In Democratic strongholds that were uncontested on Tuesday, Jerome Prince won a first term after defeating Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson last May, and James Mueller easily won in South Bend to follow presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg. In Republican strongholds, Warsaw Mayor Joe Thallamer and Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard return.

First term Democrats Dave Kitchell and Gabe Greer lost in Logansport and Peru.

"It was a historic night for Republicans throughout Indiana as voters in city after city elected Republican mayors," said Indiana GOP Chairman Kyle Hupfer. "Never in the history of Indiana have Republicans held this many mayoral offices or had this wide a margin over Democrats."

Hupfer said that the party invested time, talent and significant resources in races throughout the state. This coordination and teamwork led to an unprecedented flip of 19 mayoral offices in cities across the state. The trend carried throughout the state. Terre Haute, Lawrence, Jeffersonville, Logansport, Winchester, Bluffton, Hartford City and Greensburg all elected Republican mayors, just to name a few.

Indiana Democratic Chairman John Zody said,

"We elected the first African American mayor in Elkhart. We elected a record number of Hoosier Democratic female mayors. We elected the first female mayor in Zionsville and won seats in Hamilton County for the first time ever. We won a majority on the council in Mike Pence's hometown. We won a commanding council majority and reelected the mayor by a landslide in Indianapolis. We reelected the mayor of Fort Wayne and picked up two at-large city council seats. We elected mothers. We elected Young Dems. We elected union members. We won in the suburbs and in rural cities."

Here is a race-by-race rundown:

Fort Wayne: Henry's biggest victory

Republicans believed they had a shot at Tim Smith upsetting Mayor Henry, with Gov. Eric Holcomb campaigning there last weekend. But Henry forged a 61.2% to 38.7% landslide, which was his biggest percentage win. According to the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, Henry earned 56.8% in 2015; 49.85% in 2011; and 60% in 2007. "I realize that this particular campaign was very aggressive and very strong and at times contentious," Henry said. "But I will not say anything against candidate Smith. He had the courage to step up and run for an office. Not everyone can do that." Henry was joined in victory by four Democrats who were elected or reelected to the Fort Wayne City Council – Geoff Paddock, Sharon Tucker, Michelle Chambers and Glynn Hines.

Michigan City: 1st GOP mayor in 44 years

For the first time in 44 years, Michigan City has elected a Republican mayor. Duane Parry unseated incumbent Mayor Ron Meer in Tuesday's election by just 76 votes (Mayes, Michigan City News-Dispatch). "It's long overdue," Parry said Tuesday while doing a victory lap at American Legion Skwiat Post 451. "Michigan City has been struggling for years. And I hope that someday the public will look back on my time as mayor as the reformation of Michigan City, when we brought the town back." Parry said the major focus going into his term as mayor will be to reprioritize riverboat fund spending, and to focus more on the city's residents than has been done in the past. "I'm going to light Michigan City up," he said. "The

Westside, the Eastside, the neighborhoods that need help are going to get it." Parry said he anticipates he'll have to "walk in cold" without much help transitioning from the current mayor. Meer said as much Tuesday night when he addressed the media from his headquarters at the old Elston Zip convenience store, noting the two have different styles. "I'd say we disagreed on a lot more than we ever agreed on," he said of Parry, who was the 5th Ward representative to the Michigan City Common Council during Meer's first term as mayor from 2012-2015.

Terre Haute: Bennett makes history

Republican Mayor Duke Bennett captured a historic fourth term in Tuesday's Terre Haute municipal election, tying for the second longest-serving mayor in city history (Modesitt, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). With all 14 voting centers accounted for and 50 of 51 precincts counted as of 10 p.m., Bennett led independent candidate Pat Goodwin by 216 votes, or 5,178 votes for Bennett to 4,962 for Goodwin, according to unofficial totals from the Vigo County Clerk's Office. Democrat candidate Karrum Nasser finished third with 2,142 votes. Bennett said he felt good about his standing in the race coming into the day, saying the feedback he was getting was largely positive. "You never really know what's going to happen, even though we've been through this three times before, but I felt good coming into today," Bennett said. "And then spending all day out at the precincts and watching the returns come in, I knew we were where we needed to be to have a chance."

Muncie: Ridenour's anti-corruption wave

Republican Councilman Ridenour received 7,120 votes to Democrat Terry Whitt Bailey's 4,264 and Libertarian Steve Smith's 199. Ridenour won 61% of the vote. "I'm thrilled that the voters of Muncie decided to make this change, changing style, changing opportunities," Ridenour said during a Muncie Star-Press interview. The Muncie City Council will have a GOP majority for the first time in 40 years. His victory came after multiple FBI investigations of the administration of Mayor Dennis Tyler, who did not seek another term.



Michigan City Mayor-elect Duane Parry (left) Muncie Republican Dan Ridenour, and Elkhart's Rod Roberson.

Elkhart: Dems return after one term

Democrat Rod Roberson, who served four terms as an at-large councilman, was voted the city's first black

mayor Tuesday (South Bend Tribune). Roberson defeated Republican and former Elkhart mayor David Miller with 56% of the vote. He garnered 3,599 votes to Miller's 2,773. The two candidates were vying to replace Republican Tim Neese who chose not to run for a second term, coming after Democrat Mayor Dick Moore held the seat for three terms.

Indianapolis: Hogsett coasts

Mayor Joe Hogsett coasted to a second term with close to 70% over Republican State Sen. Jim Merritt. "This night is young, but I am not," Hogsett said in his victory speech at the Athenaeum in the Basil Theater. "Tonight, we celebrate a victory that is sweet because, like this building, like this city, it is something we built ourselves. It is a monument to something that is uniquely ours, and my friends, we're not done building yet." Hogsett's victory comes with a seismic shift on the City-County Council, with Democrats forging the first super majority in history after picking up at least five seats, and possibly six. The LGBTQ Victory Fund notes the Indianapolis City-County Council tripled its LGBTQ representation with the results of Tuesday's election. Newly elected councilors Alison Brown and Keith Potts join Zach Adamson, who was reelected, as the openly LGBTQ representatives on the City-County Council. Brown is the first LGBTQ woman elected to the council.

Kokomo: Moore, GOP landslide

Republican Tyler Moore took 68% of the vote to beat out Democrat Abbie Smith. Republicans also swept the city council. "They're expecting more from the mayor, they're expecting more from the council, they're expecting more from the city government, and we now have the opportunity to do that," Moore said. It returns the GOP to power after three terms of Mayor Greg Goodnight, who declined to seek a fourth term.



The Moores have it: Tyler Moore (left) wins a Kokomo landslide, and Jeffersonville Mayor Mike Moore wins a third term.

Charlestown: Hodges upsets Hall

Democrat newcomer Treva Hodges defeated 16-year incumbent Republican Mayor Bob Hall by a mere 30 votes Tuesday. "I felt like the atmosphere was there all along," Hodges said (Schmelz, News & Tribune). "We had extremely positive engagement, whether on social media, door to door or even at the grocery store where we went." Learning he fell short to Hodges – 1,324 to her 1,354 votes – surprised Hall. "I was shocked," he said. "I thought it was going to be a close race, but I thought we would win by a comparable number." "This election has been so contested and so intense and it has so much at stake," Hodges said. "Some even had their homes at stake."

Logansport: Martin upsets Kitchell

Republican Chris Martin upset first-term Mayor Dave Kitchell, winning by 57 votes. At 28 years old, Martin will become the youngest mayor in Logansport history. Kitchell said he was disappointed in the media coverage of the mayoral race and by the lack of turnout among local Democrats. "I don't think we had a single story about a lot of our accomplishments," he said. "It's hard to run well when we don't have people covering the stories coming out of our meetings." Kitchell said that a 23.8% total turnout wasn't going to carry the day when Democrats don't have the majority of voters registered in Logansport. "I think there was this perception that we had this in the bag; we had it won, we didn't have anything to worry about," he said. "We had Republicans that crossed over to vote for us but we just had a lot of people that stayed home, especially the independent voters that figured it was a foregone conclusion."

New Albany: Mayor Gahan prevails

New Albany Mayor Jeff Gahan held on to his office (WAVE-TV). Gahan, a Democrat, defeated Republican challenger Mark Seabrook, with 55% of the vote. Seabrook claimed 40%, while independent Dan Coffey picked up 5% of the votes.

Jeffersonville: Moore wins third term

Mayor Mike Moore won his third term in convincing fashion, with his 8,331 votes dwarfing the 3,701 picked up by Democratic challenger Tom Galligan. "Jeffersonville



is still 54% Democrat," Moore said. "I take a lot of pride in knowing a large number of Democrats voted for us. I think that's because we've never let party affiliation factor into decisions that are made for the city." When he faced off against Galligan in 2011,

Moore won by a margin of six percentage points. In 2015, that figure jumped to eight points.

Crown Point: Uran wins fourth term

David Uran will continue to serve the city of Crown Point as mayor for the next four years (Freda, NWI Times). Early numbers show Uran held 78% of the vote, while challenger Kristie Dressel had 22%. Uran, who will head into his fourth term, thanked the voters for having confidence in the vision he and his team have for the city. "Tonight we're seeing, especially in the mayor's race, a

final endorsement by the community for how Crown Point's future is going to look," Uran said to a room of family, friends and fellow officials.

Anderson: Broderick returns

Incumbent Mayor Thomas Broderick Jr. won reelection Tuesday to a second term as mayor. Broderick becomes the first Anderson mayor to serve consecutive terms in office since Democrat J. Mark Lawler served four terms from 1988 through 2004, according to Herald-Bulletin reporter Ken de la Bastide. Broderick won with 55% over Republican Rick Gardner at 36%. "I'm appreciative of the hard work put in by the entire team and our supporters," Broderick said. "I felt like we've done a lot of great things over the past four years and there is more work to be done. We will continue to move forward with our economic development and quality-of-life plans."

Peru: Hewitt topples Greer

Miles Hewitt, a 38-year veteran of the Peru Police Department and political newcomer, soundly defeated two other candidates Tuesday to win the Republican bid for Peru mayor (Gerber, Kokomo Tribune). Hewitt took nearly 60% of the vote during Tuesday's primary election, with 750 residents casting ballots in the race. Wayne Bunker, a former Peru Community Schools board member who ran for mayor in 2015 as an independent, took 23% of the vote. David Makin, who ran for mayor eight years ago, won 17%. Hewitt will now face off against incumbent Democratic Mayor Gabe Greer in November's general election. Greer is seeking his second term in office. Hewitt said Tuesday evening he was "elated" by his overwhelming victory against his two competitors.

Evansville: Third term for Winnecke

Voters gave Republican Mayor Lloyd Winnecke a singular victory Tuesday, reelecting him by a runaway margin over two little-known challengers but rejecting his determined effort to bring a GOP city council majority with him (Langhorne, Evansville Courier & Press). Democrats actually expanded their current tenuous majority on the council – four Democrats, three Republicans and two independents – to a more commanding 7-2 margin. The stunning setback came despite a considerable investment of campaign cash and services on behalf of GOP city council candidates by Winnecke and his chief deputy. "But we respect the decisions of the voters," he said. "Had we not done anything on behalf of our slate of candidates, the defeats might have been even worse. We're going to take it philosophically. I'm proud of the campaigns that



everyone ran. It is what it is."

Richmond: Snow gets second term

Democrat Mayor Dave Snow won a second term beating a challenge from Republican Jamie Lopeman and independent Thomas Owens. The incumbent received 49.5% of the vote, with Lopeman getting 44.5% and Owens 6%. The final margin was 192 votes (Truitt, Richmond Palladium-Item). "Once again this is a humbling experience. You know in my first campaign I asked the people of my hometown to have the faith in me to lead this city. We've set out on many projects and done a lot of work, and today is an affirmation of that work that's been done. It's just tremendously humbling," Snow said. "I just want to thank my entire city team. I work with some of the most tremendous people that I could imagine working with. And really, truly thank the voters for coming out today and casting their vote with confidence."

Zionsville: Styron pulls off a shocker

Democrat Emily Styron beat Zionsville's first elected Mayor Tim Haak by 88 votes. "Over the past six months, this campaign has centered around exchanging ideas and opportunities for the town of Zionsville with as many residents and business owners we could reach," Styron said Facebook. "Tonight, those conversations translated into votes. I am humbled and grateful for the confidence voters have placed in me and am excited to step forward and serve as our mayor."

Westfield: Cook reelected

Westfield Mayor Andy Cook (R), the only mayor in Hamilton County to face a general election challenge, defeated Libertarian Donald Rainwater with 61% of the vote.

Boonville: Mayor Wyatt reelected

Incumbent Charlie Wyatt had little trouble retaining the Boonville mayor's office Tuesday night, winning nearly 66% of the vote to beat out Republican challenger Leah Barnett (Evansville Courier & Press). It will be Wyatt's second term as mayor. Wyatt, a Democrat and retired Alcoa steelworker, succeeded longtime mayor Pam Hendrickson in 2016. Hendrickson had held the office for 20 years prior.

Bedford: Craig wins open seat

Republican Sam Craig defeated Democrat Rowena Cross-Najafi 68.8 to 31% to replace retiring three-term independent Mayor Shawn Girgis.

Princeton: Wright wins first term

Republican Princeton Councilman Greg Wright is the new mayor-elect of Princeton, with a 1074-714 win over Democratic candidate Dan Beard. "I feel like it was a bunch of work and it paid off," Wright said told the Princeton Daily Clarion. "I want to thank of course God for the opportunity, my wife Megan for backing me and putting up

with my crazy ideas, and I want to thank Dan Beard for running a really clean and positive campaign.”

Scottsburg: Graham loses bid for 9th term

Indiana’s longest-serving mayor, Republican Bill Graham, lost his bid for a ninth term as mayor of Scottsburg to Democrat Terry Amick. He was one of 17 mayors defeated for reelection, joining three who lost in the primary. Independents peeled off one mayoral seat from each party, with Richard Strick winning in Huntington and Bill Rock in Gas City. They’ll join reelected independent mayors Shane Evans in Delphi and Alan Weiss in Greendale. Independents came close to upsets in two other cities. Independents’ total of four mayor’s seats is a decline of one. Republicans had a net gain of six, while Democrats lost seven. A total of 29 city halls changed parties, including Mitchell, where Mayor J.D. England, elected as an independent in 2015, won reelection as a Republican.

South Bend: Mueller eyes Buttigieg legacy

James Mueller, who returned home from Washington in 2015 to serve as chief of staff for his high school classmate, Mayor Pete Buttigieg (pictured), will now take over from his friend as the city’s next chief executive (Parrott, South Bend Tribune). Mueller, 37, defeated Republican Sean Haas, a government teacher at LaVille High School, in Tuesday’s election. Mueller held a commanding lead, with nearly 65% of the votes, with most of the ballots counted. Mueller will take office as South Bend’s new mayor in January. “The progress over the last eight years in our city is undeniable,” he told supporters celebrating at Corby’s Irish Pub Tuesday night. “Yet we still have a lot more work to do to take our growth to the next level and make sure everyone can share in our progress.” Some residents and observers saw the race as a referendum on Buttigieg. Mueller touted the achievements of the Buttigieg era, campaigning on a slogan to “Keep South Bend Moving Forward.”



Madison: Courtney wins full term

Madison Mayor Bob Courtney will technically be the city’s interim leader through Dec. 31, but Courtney has already gone to work in the office he will now hold for the next four years thanks to a Republican rout in Tuesday’s general election (Madison Courier). Courtney defeated Democratic challenger Julie Berry 2,284 to 1,488 to lead a sweep of all but one elected office in the city. Only incumbent Democratic Councilmember At-Large Daniel C. Dattilo avoided the GOP landslide by out-polling two Republicans and fellow Democratic incumbent David Alcorn to hang

onto one of the seven council seats.

Auburn: Ley replaces Yoder

Republican Mike Ley won election as Auburn’s next mayor Tuesday, capturing 56% of the votes to outpace Democrat Sarah Payne (KPC News). In the other only other contested race for city office, Republican Wayne Madden won reelection to the District 1 seat on the Auburn Common Council. Madden received 58% of the votes to hold off Democratic challenger Nora Schwartz. Ley, 62, will take office Jan. 1, replacing Norm Yoder, who is retiring after 20 years in the mayor’s chair.

Lawrenceburg: Mayor Mollaun reelected

Lawrenceburg Republican Mayor Kelly Mollaun was reelected with 54% of the vote. Democrat Aaron Cook followed with 39% and Independent Dylan Liddle received 7% of the vote (Eagle Country Online). “This goes to show you that the people of Lawrenceburg base their choices on action and not by words,” Mollaun said. “All the negativity that was coming out, the people spoke tonight.”

Sullivan: Lamb returns

Sullivan Democrat Mayor Clint Lamb defeated Republican Josh Smith 79-21%.

Lake Station: Carroll defeats Robbins

Bill Carroll believes Lake Station has a brighter future ahead, and he will be heavily involved in moving the city in that direction (NWI Times). Unofficial results show Carroll, a Democrat, easily defeated Republican Cynthia Robbins in Tuesday’s mayoral race.

Aurora: Drury wins

In Aurora, Republican Mark Drury defeated Melvin Kramer Jr., to become the new mayor. Drury got 56% of the vote (Eagle Country Online).

Plymouth: Senter wins fourth term

Plymouth Republican Mayor Mark Senter handily won a fourth term, beating Democrat challenger Josh Walker by 85 votes in Tuesday’s general election (Plymouth Pilot-News). “I’m very happy with the way it went,” Senter said. “It was a very clean race overall. I want to congratulate Josh Walker for his race. I think there’s a future in Plymouth for him. He’s a nice young man. It’s hard to beat an incumbent when there is so much positivity in the city. He fought a great race.” The mayor previously said this will likely be his last term, but on Tuesday night said he wouldn’t rule out another run for the city’s highest office. ❖

Mayor Meer's loss amidst a legal mess

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — The mayor is up for reelection within month. His son is arrested on a drug possession charge, making local headline news.

In a rational world, a prudent police chief or sheriff would have immediately sought to have the case handed off to the Indiana State Police. If there were to be charges, a prudent prosecutor probably would have opted for a special prosecutor, to ensure there were no signs of impropriety.



But none of that happened in Michigan City and LaPorte County this past week.

Instead, Democratic Mayor Ron Meer found himself in a showdown with his own police chief, who resigned, along with senior staff following the arrest of his stepson on Oct. 10 by the LaPorte County Drug Task Force.

On Oct. 13, Meer issued a statement saying Republican LaPorte County Prosecutor John Lake had been behind the arrest, targeting his son for political reasons. "... It is a very dangerous time in LaPorte County when the prosecutor, John Lake, can have your family members targeted for political retaliation and gain," he said.

The mayor had threatened to pull his police force out of the county drug task force. Then Prosecutor Lake ended up filing five felony official misconduct and intimidation charges against the mayor, and two misdemeanors for false informing.

The charges were made public last Friday, and at least two judges recused. Lake told the Michigan City News-Dispatch, "Since they both recused, it goes back to the clerk to send to the next judge up in the rotation to accept conflicts. "I don't know which judge is next in the rotation. Once they get the case they will need to review for probable cause, and once that happens, a warrant will be issued if they find probable cause for the charges."

By Tuesday, Meer lost his reelection bid to Republican Duane Parry by 76 votes. On Wednesday, a third judge recused himself from taking on the criminal case against the mayor, this time Judge Michael Bergerson of LaPorte County Superior Court 1 in Michigan City, according to the News-Dispatch.

On Monday, Meer's attorney, former Gary mayor Scott King, was declaring a "politically driven hatchet job" and vowed to file a motion to dismiss.

"My preliminary review of the charges demon-

strates that they are poorly drafted and, I believe, subject to a Motion to Dismiss," King told the News-Dispatch. "I firmly believe that none of the charges can be sustained in court."

King added he was "flabbergasted by what appears to be nothing more (or less) than a political hatchet job by a prosecuting attorney that was not politically supported last year by my client and does not support my client now. I have news for Mr. Lake: Prosecutors have a higher obligation to the law and ethics of the legal profession than they do to elections and politics. That is not, sadly, what has happened here and appears to be the worst breach of ethics and professionalism that I have seen in the 43 years I have been an attorney. In an effort to stop any further improprieties by Mr. Lake and his office, I am filing the accompanying Motion for the Appointment of a Special Prosecutor that I hope will be heard and granted expeditiously by whatever court assumes jurisdiction of this case."

Lake told the News-Dispatch he could not comment on King's statements, but said in an email that a hearing will be held on the motion for a special prosecutor and he "will be given the opportunity to be heard about the allegations made. I am looking forward to that opportunity to demonstrate to the court that ... no actual conflict of interest exists."

So this is a case that will likely stay in the headlines for weeks and months ahead.

Election eve legal hijinks have happened before.

Fort Wayne Mayor Win Moses had homicide charges filed against his brother just days before his 1987 reelection bid. It was payback for his guilty plea on a campaign finance charge which prompted his resignation. But Moses filed for and won a Democratic caucus 10 days later.

Just the filing of the charge changed the entire nature of his race against Republican Paul

Helmke. Moses said his poll numbers collapsed. He lost, and the charges against his brother were later dropped.

Before this is all said and done, don't be surprised if the Indiana Supreme Court's Disciplinary Commission ends up taking a look at this case, including Lake's conduct.

Only once in modern history has the Supreme Court negated a municipal election. That occurred in 2003 on the 1999 election in East Chicago, where Mayor Robert Pastrick had defeated his former police chief Stephen Stiglich during the "sidewalks for votes" scandal. There was rampant fraud and absentee voting, the Supreme Court determined, prompting the high court to intervene.

With the new election ordered up, Pastrick was defeated by another former police chief, George Pabey, ending what was the last political dynasty in The Region. ❖



Michigan City Mayor Ron Meer (left) after he was indicted last week.

Visclosky retirement opens a career door for Mayor McDermott

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — The dust had barely settled on Tuesday's mayoral race when U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky dropped a bombshell: The dean of the Indiana congressional delegation won't seek reelection.

It immediately opened the door for Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. to seek the office he was planning to announce for on Dec. 6. North Township Trustee Frank J. Mrvan also jumped in.



"On Nov. 6, 35 years ago today I was elected to serve as Indiana's 1st District U.S. representative," Visclosky wrote. "Today, I announce that I will not seek reelection. For the past

35 years our office has vigorously advocated on behalf of thousands of constituents for assistance on any number of local, state and federal issues. While we could never guarantee positive results, we could guarantee our hard work and best efforts."

Visclosky invoked The Bard: "Shakespeare wrote, 'If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.' Progress has not always been easy. In closing, I am forever indebted to the exceptional public servants who have served and continue to serve on my staff. Achievements were the result of the application of their talents and their tireless work."

It took just minutes for McDermott to officially declare for the race. "Now that our local elections are over and Congressman Pete has announced his intentions not to seek reelection, I want everyone to know that I am a candidate for this office in 2020 and that I intend to be Northwest Indiana's next congressman," McDermott said in a text to Howey Politics Indiana.

A few minutes later on the phone, we asked McDermott if he saw this coming.

"Sort of," McDermott said. "Over the past year I was hearing he was considering retiring."

But the one big clue came when House Appropriations Chair Nita Lowey announced she would retire. Visclosky quickly responded, saying he would not pursue the chair, preferring to stay on as chair of the Defense Appropriations subcommittee. Another telltale was even with

the ambitious McDermott barely containing his aspirations to challenge the dean of the delegation, Visclosky was sitting on a mere \$514,851 on his third quarter FEC report.

"When he didn't pursue the appropriations chair, when he didn't seek the most powerful spot in Congress, I thought that was odd," McDermott said.

Visclosky appeared to be preparing for a reelection bid. The NWI Times reported in mid-October the mayor's and controller's offices each received extensive requests from the Visclosky campaign for public records covering McDermott's 15-year tenure as mayor. Specifically, the records request to the mayor's office seeks documents pertaining to McDermott's salary as mayor, the mayor's travel reimbursements, health insurance and other city benefits paid to McDermott, the mayor's use of city-owned vehicles and telephones, and McDermott's personal finance disclosures.

At that time, McDermott complained that he had no relationship with Visclosky, despite being mayor of the district's largest city and the fact that he was Lake County Democratic chairman for several years. "I have a great relationship with almost every elected official in Northwest Indiana — Republican and Democrat," McDermott told the Times' Dan Carden. "I've made it a priority of mine to have a good relationship with all of the elected officials, and the only one that I really haven't gotten a chance to know in the 15 years I've been mayor is Pete Visclosky. For some reason he wants nothing to do with me or my city."

McDermott was sending his own signals. "We built up a complex campaign headquarters in Hammond. It was the worst kept secret. We hadn't said that publicly. There

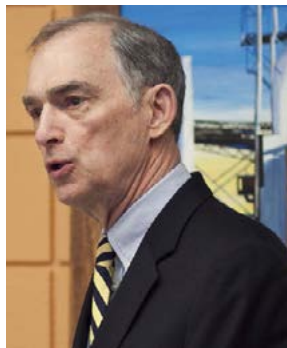
were a lot of people scratching their heads, wondering, 'Why is he spending that much money. So I've got a big headquarters, the McDermott for Congress account open, an EINB number and I've got a lot of support running.

"I am confident that I could take on an incumbent with 34 years experience," McDermott continued. "I didn't look at it like a suicide mission, but it would have been tough."

McDermott quickly declared himself the "frontrunner," something the HPI Horse Race won't quibble with. "Most major elected officials will come out and support me. I think I'll have that kind of support from the Region."

McDermott expects "five or six" other candidates. Drawing immediate attention will be State Sen. Eddie Melton, who just declared for the gubernatorial race. McDermott said he is supporting Melton for governor, but wouldn't be surprised if he reconsidered for the 1st CD.

North Township Trustee Frank J. Mrvan announced his campaign on Hammond's WJOB-AM radio Wednesday morning, proclaiming unions are the "backbone of the Region," and they need a congressman who "has the strength to fight for them with the ability to work across



the aisle to get things done.”“I have been able to bring people together. I have focused on unifying efforts,” Mrvan said.

Presidential 2020

Buttigieg 2nd in Quinnipiac Iowa Poll

With less than 3 months until the Iowa caucuses, the Democratic race for president in Iowa is wide open, as the top four candidates are in a close contest, according to a Quinnipiac University poll released today. Sen. Elizabeth Warren receives 20% support among Iowa likely Democratic caucus-goers, with South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg getting 19%, Sen. Bernie Sanders at 17%, and former Vice President Joe Biden at 15%. Sen. Amy Klobuchar gets 5%. Those who consider themselves “very liberal,” who make up 24% of likely caucus-goers, are divided in their top choice with Sanders getting 32% and Warren at 30%. Those who identify as “somewhat liberal,” who make up 24% of likely caucus-goers, are split in their top choice between Buttigieg and Warren, with Warren at 29% and Buttigieg at 24%. Among “moderates and conservatives,” who constitute 50% of likely caucus-goers, it’s a close race for the top spot between Buttigieg and Biden, with

Buttigieg at 19% and Biden at 18%. “A close race with a crowded field of frontrunners,” said Quinnipiac University Polling Analyst Mary Snow. “While Sen. Elizabeth Warren, former Vice President Joe Biden, and Sen. Bernie Sanders have held top tier status in national polls for months, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg joins their ranks in the 2020 Iowa caucus. And it’s a race that is up for grabs. Half of likely Democratic caucus-goers who support a candidate say they may change their minds before February 3rd.”

Trump approval at 52% in Indiana

The Old National Bank/Ball State University 2019 Hoosier Survey shows 52% of Hoosiers approve of President Trump while 40% disapprove. The results are from a telephone survey of 600 adults taken from Oct. 8 -28; the margin of error is 5.2% points. “These survey results show that, despite the recent impeachment inquiry, the President’s approval among Hoosiers continues to hold steady,” Prof. Chad Kinsella of the Ball State’s Bowen Center for Public Affairs, said. “The survey indicates that Trump’s approval is essentially unchanged from last year’s Hoosier Survey.” Kinsella said Trump’s approval is 86% among Republicans, 46% among independents and 11% among Democrats. ❖

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2020 race one year out: ‘You ain’t seen nuthin’

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – If The Gipper, President Ronald Wilson Reagan, were still alive, you might hear his echoes emanating through the Simi Valley smoke and embers: “You ain’t seen nuthin’ yet.”



That would be an apt description of the looming 2020 presidential race that will take place a year from now. It is shaping up to be a historic stew and brew of impeachment, where decorated military and intelligence personnel are labeled “human scum,” replete with a whirling lazy susan of alternative facts, all documented by enemies of the American people and slung like Seattle market fish on Facebook and Twitter.

Trump is defying congressional subpoenas. What happens if he defies court orders? If President Trump were to lose, will he leave the White House voluntarily (jailed fixer Michael Cohen doesn’t believe he will)? If Trump wins, at this point a viable 50/50 proposition despite his historic low approval, does he lose the popular vote again and return with a second Electoral College degree? Does this “strongman” wannabe set America on an authoritarian course? Will Vice President Mike Pence and wife Karen be along for the ride, which will almost certainly include racist torts and tropes and other crudities?

Will they face the gay mayor of South Bend, Pete Buttigieg, potentially the first Hoosier to win a Democratic presidential nomination? Or will this be the last hurrah for the Baby Boom generation? Will Elizabeth Warren be prepared to explain the middle class her \$20.5 trillion health care plan?

Will the nominees even talk about Mitch Daniels’ all-but-certain “red menace” of bloody ink poised to devour our entitlements, catapulting the nation toward insolvency? In the almost certain next recession, will the current trillion dollar deficits explode like a Weimar political disaster? Will climate change be seriously debated, or is American on the precipice of a second era of coal?

We’re a year away from what looks to be the most volatile and explosive presidential race in history, conducted by a president who spews invective and insult on an hourly basis via social media. Anyone standing here today with a straight face telling you they know what will happen will also sell you a bridge in the Arizona desert.

In the next year, we may not only see “nuthin’,” as Reagan would put it, we may see everything.

One year out, what should we be watching?

1. Keep an eye on the state polls. We saw an array of national polls last weekend, with President Trump

mired in the 42-45% job approval range, while the septuagenarian Democrats (Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders still leading, with Mayor Pete still in the single digits). But operatives and journalists on the ground see a wave building for the mayor in Iowa, and according to today’s Quinnipiac Poll, Buttigieg trails only Warren and Biden is in fourth. NYT/Siena also published an eye-opening poll on Monday, showing key battleground states (PA, MI, WI, NC, FLA, AZ) all highly competitive and within the margin of error in head-to-heads between Trump and the 70-somethings. It burnishes the notion that Trump has a shot at winning a second term without the popular vote; he can afford to tell California to burn in hell.

2. Will polling be accurate? Most of the 2016 polls failed to pick up President Trump’s true support, thus he was able to crack the MI, PA, WI “blue wall.” Taegan Goddard observes in Sunday’s “Political Wire” of the latest Fox Poll, which showed 41% of registered voters are against impeaching President Trump and of those, 57% say no new evidence could cause them to change their minds. “That would put Trump’s true base at around 23% of registered voters,” Goddard explains.

3. How will impeachment play? The two modern impeachment sagas played out during President Nixon and Clinton’s second terms. This will be the first impeachment of a first-term president seeking reelection. So this is utterly new territory, without historic telltales on how it will turn out. We know that Clinton’s job approval was above 70% in Gallup Polling during week of his 1999 acquittal. Will impeachment be a reelection lifeline for Trump? Or will the coming televised testimony that half the nation doesn’t care about fatally damage the president’s reelection hopes? Or will the public see this as an epic Democratic overreach? Will Democrats gain some sense, and instead of impeaching Trump with no hope for a Senate conviction, vote for censure? Don’t expect Senate Republicans to ever abandon the president. If they did and even with “President Pence” on the ticket in 2020, a huge part of Trump’s base wouldn’t show up at the polls.

4. A polarized electorate: NBC/Wall Street Journal had this fascinating nugget, with 46% of registered voters saying they are “certain” to vote against Trump in 2020, versus 34% who are certain to vote for him. According to NBC’s “Meet The Press” team, that leaves “17% – made up disproportionately of independents, soft Republicans and younger voters – who say they might vote either way depending on the nominee.”

5. Will Pence remain on the ticket? Mike and Karen Pence are “all in” on the reelect. Despite Trump’s persistent curiosity about Pence’s loyalty, it’s hard to think Trump would risk his evangelical support by jettisoning the pliant Pences. That Karen Pence is ready to hit the campaign trail for the president she once found offensive is an important telltale. The risk for the Pences is that their epic ambition will forever be defined by whatever Donald Trump believes is necessary to win. Most believe he will be willing to throw in the kitchen sink, the toilet, and hell, the

whole damn septic system if that's what it takes.

6. The economy, stupid: As we've long observed, with historic low unemployment and high stock markets, President Trump's approval should be 20% higher than it is. He has never escaped the lower- to mid-40 percentile because he is so undisciplined, offensive, crude and his White House is utterly chaotic. His base loves it. But there are a array of interesting telltales:

a. Last month, Moody's Analytics revealed that once again Trump could lose the popular vote but easily win the Electoral College vote by focusing on strategically positioned strongholds.

b. The U.S. national debt at roughly \$22 trillion reached 100% of our gross domestic product for the first time in American history. Yahoo News: "Despite the fact that our economy generates an incredible \$20 trillion annually, we borrow at least that amount in addition to our income to finance our current expenditures."

c. Steel tariffs are backfiring: When President Trump slapped 25% tariffs on foreign steel in March 2018, panicky U.S. buyers rushed to place new orders ahead of feared supply interruptions, driving prices up sharply, according to Yahoo News. By the end of this year, benchmark steel prices have fallen well below their level before the tariffs took effect and are now about half their peak in July 2018. The industry has responded with production cutbacks. US Steel has begun laying off scores of workers at two other old blast furnaces, near Detroit and in East Chicago. Will Trump be able to hang on to his Democratic union support?

d. Manufacturing contraction: Three years after Donald Trump campaigned for president pledging a factory renaissance, the opposite appears to be happening. Bloomberg/Quint reported that manufacturing is now at its smallest share of the U.S. economy in 72 years. Manufacturing made up 11% of gross domestic product in the second quarter, the smallest share since 1947.

7. Coal is not making a comeback: In July 2017, Trump announced his intention to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement (Forbes Magazine). He almost single-handedly tried to roll back rules on climate change adopted during the Obama administration to fulfill pledges to voters in coal mining states like West Virginia, Montana, Kentucky, Indiana and Wyoming. Yet for all of that, more coal-fired power plants have shut stateside in Trump's first two years than were decommissioned in the entirety of Obama's first term in office, according to a collation of U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) and Reuters data. Readings point to 23,400 MW of U.S. coal-fired generation being taken out of the grid in 2017-18, versus 14,900 MW in 2009-12.

8. Farmers losing markets due to trade war: John Brinkley of Forbes Magazine reported in July, "Thanks to his trade war, exports of American soybeans to China fell from \$14.2 billion worth in 2016 to \$3.1 billion worth in 2018. That's a 78% drop, according to U.S. Census Bureau data."The Agriculture Department projects that farm

incomes will reach \$88 billion in 2019 but nearly 40% of that, \$33 billion, will come from trade aid, disaster assistance, the farm bill and insurance indemnities, according to a new report by the American Farm Bureau Federation. Farm aid from Trump's trade war has cost more than double the 2009 auto bailout. While Trump and Pence say they oppose "socialism," it is expanding in the bean and cornbelt.

9. Trump losing suburban voters: Recent polls show Trump's numbers have slipped substantially among suburban voters, who Trump carried in 2016 by a 49-45% margin over Hillary Clinton. According to The Hill, just 32% of all suburban voters now say they would definitely vote to reelect the president, according to a new Grinnell College poll conducted by the Iowa-based pollster Ann Selzer. Another 14% said they would consider someone else, and 51% said they would definitely vote for a candidate other than Trump. Among suburban women, only a quarter, 26%, approve of Trump. Suburban women especially appear motivated to make their disapproval felt; 86% of suburban women said they would definitely vote in the 2020 presidential election, 10 points higher than voters overall.

Want an Indiana example? Look at Emily Styron's upset mayoral win in Zionsville and Democrats on the Carmel and Fishers city councils.

"This to me is striking not so much in that they are aligning against President Trump, but the degree to which they are aligning against President Trump," Selzer told The Hill. "That is sort of the pin in the hand grenade. GOP pollster Chris Wilson is more cautionary: "The problem with doing these kinds of polls now is that they offer voters a choice between Trump, who is incredibly well-defined, and some imaginary Democratic nominee who they can imbue with whatever characteristics and proposals they would like best. That's just not reality."

10. Trump very viable in swing states: In contrast to recent national surveys, the New York Times/Siena College polls find that the president's lead among white, working-class voters nearly matches his decisive advantage from 2016. This group represents nearly half of registered voters in these states, and a majority in the Northern battlegrounds that decided the last election. Most of the electorate is for any Democrat or for Trump, but about one in six voters say that they don't know or that their vote depends on whether Biden or Warren is the nominee. An analysis of the 205 respondents from the six core battleground states who support Biden but not Warren suggests that she might struggle to win many of them over. Over all, 26% of these voters say they have a favorable view of Warren, compared with 47% who have an unfavorable view.

Epilogue

My brain tells me that an incumbent president mired in the lower 40th percentile of job approval and who has done little to expand his base, is doomed. But

in 2012, with the U.S. still only partially recovered from the Great Recession of 2008-09, President Obama won a second term that was a true historic anomaly. So beating the economic odds has already happened once in the last decade. Trump should have a hurricane-force tailwind.

Much will depend on who the Democrats nominate. The septuagenarian class for Democrats all have significant disadvantages. Joe Biden looks and acts old. Bernie Sanders just had a heart attack and is a socialist, which Trump and Pence will exploit to no end if he's nominated. If either is nominated and has a major health episode next fall, that could cost them the election.

Warren's "Medicare For All" plan is a policy debacle that will never sell to moderate and independent voters, let alone Republicans who just can't vote for Trump. Her monstrosity hasn't been reflected in the polls.

I'm not trying to be a homey, but the two Democrats who match up best with Trump/Pence would be Mayor Pete and Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who is just now getting some traction in her neighboring state

of Iowa. For Buttigieg, the fact that he's gay will be seen by some as a barrier, just as many saw Barack Obama's race as a problem in 2007, and yet Obama carried Indiana. What Hoosier in 2007 was predicting Barack Hussein Obama would get Indiana's 11 Electoral College votes?

Buttigieg's other problem is that he doesn't bring a state in with him. I doubt he could carry Indiana, particularly with Pence on the ticket. He plays well in the blue coastal states, but the key question is whether he can restore the "blue wall" of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. He might. And many of Buttigieg's fellow Hoosier mayors believe he would have a distinct debate advantage over the president; in fact they relish that showdown.

A best case scenario for Democrats would be a ticket combination of Buttigieg and Klobuchar.

Having said that, there is so much we don't know at this point to even begin to fathom an accurate forecast of what's to come. It could be anything and everything. Fasten up, hold on to your seat and as they say on the ferry in high seas, take the damn Dramamine. ❖

Gambling with lives

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — Watch out!" Sorethroat said. "They're coming back and, if the past is prologue to the future, we're in danger."

He and I were in the parking garage opposite the Statehouse. As usual, this long-time state employee was smoking. In addition, he was fuming. "The Indiana General Assembly," he continued, "will gather for Organization Day on Nov. 19. Ha, it's more like disembowelment day."



"Why do you say that?" I asked.

"It's when they remove whatever guts a senator or representative may have," he answered. "You know, most of them are really good people who want to do what's best for Hoosiers.

But the leadership wants them to be gutless followers of the party line.

"Surplus over Service,' that's the mantra they have to chant," he declared.

"They raise taxes by allowing Hoosiers to engage in activities previously banned. Cell-phone gambling on college sports! Recreational marijuana use is only months away. All in the name of personal freedom to be irresponsible, thereby generating more tax revenues."

"Yes," I agreed. "Bettors, with reduced inhibitions, losing their hard-won dollars for the transitory thrill of hope. Now, people too embarrassed to visit a casino will squander money in private to satisfy the greed of legalized

thievery and political mischief-making."

Sorethroat gave me a quizzical look. "I didn't think you'd be against gambling and marijuana use," he said.

"Like many things in life, one may support them in principle and oppose them in practice," I replied. "Gambling matches the opinions of one group against those of another group, just like the stock market. It may be based on hunches, partisanship, or on seemingly reliable information. It's OK as long as the cost of matching 'buyers and sellers,' persons or organizations of opposing opinions, is low (as in the stock market) and no one has special advantage."

"And that's the danger," Sorethroat said. "Government that stands to gain from gambling isn't going to regulate it very much. And the more people gambling, the higher the costs of regulation, government has less incentive to check for honesty."

"As for marijuana," I said, "I have no experience with it. But any product or process that loosens inhibitions offers increased opportunities for recklessness and potential danger to third parties."

"It's like alcohol and tobacco," my friend said. "The government that taxes them at high rates to discourage their use simultaneously takes advantage of their addictive powers. They don't tax the use of sugar in the same way and that too can be addictive."

"And you're still smoking, still coughing every few minutes, still sneaking time for a smoke break," I said.

"Sure," he said. "I know better, but that's how I support my government." ❖

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

What if it's Trump vs. Sen. Warren?

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Many Republicans, and some independents and moderate Democrats, could face a real dilemma in the 2020 presidential election. Conservative columnist and commentator David Brooks recently put it this way: "If the general election campaign turns out to be



Trump vs. Warren, what the heck are we supposed to do?"

Brooks is indeed a conservative but no supporter of President Trump, which makes sense. Trump is no conservative. He is a big-spending, big-government, big deficit (now at \$1 trillion) president constantly seeking to expand, not limit, presidential powers. But many conservatives overlook that and his character flaws because of his judicial appointments and stands on

social issues.

It's far from certain that it will be President Trump vs. Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

Well, Trump now appears certain to be again the Republican nominee after he is impeached by the Democratic-controlled House and acquitted of the impeachment charges by the Republican-controlled Senate. We don't know whether the president will emerge weaker or stronger after all the impeachment warfare. But even if weakened, his base will be solid and he could win reelection if he can again successfully paint his opponent as darn near unthinkable.

Warren has been rising in the polls, in second place among Democratic nomination contenders. She could falter. One of the candidates less frightening to voters outside of what Brooks calls the leftward-sprinting "Bernie-Squad-Warren" wing of the party could prevail. Still, she now has momentum. And many Democratic primary voters will want to believe she really could do all that she promises, including winning congressional passage of and paying for her \$34 trillion health care plan.

Could Warren, if nominated, stop swerving left and capture more of the voters in the center, those who could be decisive in the key states needed for victory in the Electoral College? Maybe. Or would Warren leave those potentially decisive voters with a dilemma in which just enough might once more decide that Trump was the lesser of two evils? Maybe.

Let's be clear. Warren isn't the only Democratic candidate who could wind up leaving potentially deci-

sive voters with a dilemma and perhaps leaving President Trump in the White House. Strengths and weaknesses of all the contenders will be evaluated in the long-running series of debates and actual voting that begins on Feb. 3 in the Iowa caucuses. Warren gets the most scrutiny now as she advances so quickly in the polls.

What would Brooks, the true fiscal conservative, do if faced with a Trump vs. Warren dilemma? A race between two candidates who most certainly are not fiscally conservative. A choice between two candidates, each with what critics say is a "my-way-or-the-highway" approach to their promises for governing.

Brooks fears a Warren presidency would be "deeply polarizing and probably unsuccessful," struggling like Trump with only a 40% partisan base. But he concludes, especially now with betrayal of the Kurds and reminders "that we have a president whose professional competence is at kindergarten level," that "the only plausible choice is to support Warren."

Reluctantly.

Brooks cites Democratic contenders he could more enthusiastically support: "Biden, Buttigieg, Booker, Bennet, Bullock or Klobuchar." Some of those now appear to have no chance for the nomination. That's the way one person would decide if faced with a Trump vs. Warren dilemma. Yes, Brooks is a noted columnist and commentator. But he has only one vote.

How about the millions of voters in crucial battleground states who could see a Trump vs. Warren race as a dilemma; many Republicans, and some independents and moderate Democrats, too? Would a potentially decisive percentage stick with Trump, deciding they just couldn't vote for Warren? Would a potentially decisive percentage go with Warren, deciding they just couldn't vote for Trump?

We don't know. Maybe we'll find out. ❖

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?

We live in ‘margin of error’ America

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS — It’s that time of year again. With as many as four toss-up contests set to determine which party controls the U.S. Senate come January 2021, another 23 toss-ups poised to crown the next speaker



of the House, and the possible impeachment of the president of the United States on the line, it might as well be Christmas for the no-accountability caucus of coastal political pundits and prognosticators who commentate with speculative certainty about too-close-to-call races and issues.

But while the Beltway intelligentsia attempts to draw black and white conclusions about what will happen, the data is hardly black and white. In fact, in what I call Margin of Error America, our political future is at best itself a toss-up, giving the pundit class license to write a new chapter of conventional wisdom about what’s to come by the hour and leaving our politics without a clear mandate for moving forward.

In the world of election polling, Margin of Error America goes something like this: One day someone is up, the next day someone is down, and on the third day one of them releases an internal poll, all within the tiny sliver of percentage points known by pollsters as the “margin of error.” There is no actual certainty. Of course, none of this really matters because when the votes are cast and the results announced, and a candidate wins by a razor-thin margin, they will invariably declare a mandate, a term that has been diluted over the years to mean simply winning. That’s exactly how Republicans messaged their 2016 wins and how Democrats declared themselves once again relevant in 2018. And by the time the next Congress is sworn in there will be no question as to mandate status; there won’t be one. The stand-off on Capitol Hill will likely continue and progress will slip through our fingers again.

But it goes beyond election polling. Even on a topic as seemingly cut and dry as the economy, the top-of-mind issue for most voters, margin of error comes into play and leaves us scratching our heads. Republicans, including President Donald J. Trump, are continually trying to convince voters economic conditions are much, much better than they once were. Democrats, on the

other hand, contend that the situation remains bleak and that’s why voters should pick them. And on which side do Americans land? It’s clear as mud.

A recent survey conducted by Gallup found that “48% of Americans currently think the economy is getting worse while 46% think it is getting better.” And on the topic of whether they sense a recession is on the horizon, 50% said they were “not too” worried or “not at all” worried, while 49% claimed to be “very” or “fairly” worried. The margin of error for this particular poll? Three percent.

As if a hotly contested battle for congressional supremacy and the state of the American economy wasn’t enough, we also have an impeachment inquiry of Trump underway that is fueling rampant, and oftentimes unchecked, speculation in the Acela Corridor about the future of his presidency. But again, the populace is torn.

A CNN/SSRS poll conducted shortly after a whistleblower report became public showed 47% favoring impeachment and removal from office with 45% disagreeing. The margin of error on this poll was 3.5%. In another poll, Huffington Post/YouGov found that 39% of respondents believe the now public call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is grounds for impeachment while 38% disagree. The margin of error on this poll was 3.2%. And in a poll released late last week by ABC and the Washington Post, 49% said Trump should be impeached and removed from office while a nearly even 47% disagreed. The margin of error was 3.7%. There is no mandate for action, and yet the House of Representatives is proceeding as if there were.

The handful of battleground races, economic confusion and potential presidential impeachment aside, there is one question where Americans wholeheartedly agree: Their disapproval of Congress. A poll by Economist/YouGov put congressional approval rating at 16% in early

Economic Confidence -- Current Conditions					GALLUP
How would you rate economic conditions in this country today -- as excellent, good, only fair or poor?					
	Excellent	Good	Only fair	Poor	No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
2019					
2019 Oct 1-13	15	37	34	13	1
2019 Sep 3-15	15	35	36	14	*
2019 Aug 1-14	14	40	33	13	*

October, with an equally abysmal disapproval of 62%, again reducing their base of support to “paid staffers and blood relatives,” as the late Sen. John McCain liked to say. On that one, there’s no need to speculate. There’s a mandate. Of that, the pundits can be certain. ❖

Pete Seat is a former White House spokesman for President George W. Bush and campaign spokesman for former Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb. Currently he is a vice president with Bose Public Affairs Group in Indianapolis.

Family military legacies

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE — I attended my first college reunion last weekend. It was a charming event, attended by well over half of the living graduates of my class at a small military college in Virginia. The weekend was even more special because my oldest son is undergoing the rigors of freshman year at the same school. The occasion allowed me to share a couple of meals with him and other young men and women in his class. That led me to think about these young people, this reunion and Veterans Day.



Most of my 212 classmates spent several years in military service. Two of us advanced to general officer ranks and the four of us who roomed together my senior year all retired from the Army, Navy, or Air Force. What struck me about the weekend was how many of my classmates have sons or daughters following us into

uniform. Among this group, the fact that both my college-aged children, a daughter and a son, are pursuing military careers was hardly exceptional. More than half the classmates with whom I spoke had kids in uniform.

It is no secret that military service in the U.S. has long been a family business. While this is true of many occupations, military service isn't just any occupation. Recent research from the Pew Research Center illustrates the point. Between 77 and 86% of all new recruits are closely related to a veteran. That is two and a half times the rate among 18-to-29-year-olds who have not been in the military. The divide is even more pronounced among career soldiers. Today it is common for parents and children to serve in the same war zone together, and I know a number of families where every brother served in combat, as did mine.

I am proud my family's military service. It is easier to animate your children's love of history when places like Valley Forge, Chickamauga, the Meuse Argonne, Normandy, Pusan, Ahn Khe, Panama, Rumalia Oilfields, Kabul and dozens more carry a family experience. But, it is hard to see how a professional military class of families is in the long-term best interests of our republic. The founders held similar worries.

James Madison in Federalist 46 seemed to think the existence of a regular military would be balanced by even larger state militias that could place a check on the power of a standing army. He wrote "Extravagant as the supposition is, let it however be made. Let a regular army, fully equal to the resources of the country, be formed; and let it be entirely at the devotion of the federal government." Other concerns of our founders reflected the belief that the soldiers themselves represented a poor assembly

of men, whose morality would be a problem for local citizens. Indeed, the proliferation of southern military colleges in the early 18th century was born of a local desire to see military college students replace the local army garrison.

Madison made clear in Federalist 41 that military forces should be an "object of laudable circumspection and precaution." Today, this is true, but for other reasons. The U.S. military is so wholly a beast of the Constitution that it is difficult to envision it as a risk to the republic. George Washington squelched the last inkling of a mutiny in 1784 and at the outset of the Civil War, fewer than 250 American soldiers, out of more than 16,000, took arms against the nation.

The risk today is not to our Constitution, but to our ability to wisely consider foreign policy. I am not alone in worrying that growing isolation of military experience will lessen our ability to appreciate the human risks of policy mistakes. It will simply note as contrast to recent experience that two of Teddy Roosevelt's sons died in battle.

There are no easy remedies to a growing military-civil divide. The end of the draft occasioned some of this separation, but it also made service far more palatable for more Americans. Certainly, service members are thought better of today than they were in the summer of 1980, when I first put on a uniform. We will get too much applause for our service this Veterans Day, rather than too little. I wonder if maybe it is time to think beyond the praise towards the purpose of service, and talk more about the reasons military members give for serving. In that I suspect we will uncover a more universal attractiveness to military service.

I've asked my kids what they liked most about their brief time in uniform, and it comes down to three things. The intensity and meaning of the experience, the people with whom they served and the chance to lead. The armed forces is an imperfect institution, but it remains among the few places where anyone, from any walk of life, can craft a future made primarily of their own merit. And, for all its imperfections, it is among the few places that welcomes everyone. With the exception of the slow movement of women into combat arms, the military looks more like America than any worksite, university or church.

Maybe on this Veterans Day, ask a veteran what they liked best about their time in service. If they say it's the food, smile and ask them to tell the truth. I hope that answer won't cause anyone to rush to the nearest recruiter, but it just might open some eyes about the true nature of military service. And it might explain why that service draws so many successive generations into uniform, and why it is worth so many others giving it a try. ❖

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Gov. Bevin's KY flop obscures GOP trend

By **KYLE KONDIK**
and **J. MILES COLEMAN**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — “He’s such a pain in the a--, but that’s what you want.” - Donald Trump at a Monday night rally in Lexington for Gov. Matt Bevin (R-KY).

Well, actually, they didn’t. In the upset of the evening, Bevin apparently lost to state Attorney General Andy Beshear (D), 49.2%-48.8%. Beshear was powered to victory by an anti-Bevin vote in ancestrally Democratic counties in eastern Kentucky combined with big margins in Louisville and Lexington and a good showing in Northern Kentucky (which features suburbs of Cincinnati, Ohio).

In our preview last week, we flagged Campbell County in Northern Kentucky as a must-win for Beshear; he won it by five points, and he carried its neighbor, Kenton, as well. So Beshear cobbled together enough of a coalition of old Democratic areas of Kentucky and newer ones to beat Bevin, who arguably is the most unpopular governor in the United States. Bevin has not yet conceded and may try to contest the result.

Breaking the state down into congressional districts, Bevin lost ground in five of the state’s six districts (Map 1). The Louisville-based 3rd District — where both candidates hail from — saw the largest swing to Beshear. In the 2015 gubernatorial race, then-state Attorney General Jack Conway (D) carried it by a handsome 21.5%; this week, Beshear took that up to an outright punishing 37.4% margin.

Districts 2, 4 and 6 are all anchored in metro areas (Bowling Green/Owensboro, Cincinnati, and Lexington, respectively), but also take in broad rural swaths. They all swung at least 5% to Beshear. Of these, Bevin’s showing in KY-6 may be his most embarrassing. President Trump campaigned there the night before the election -- only for the district to move 11% more Democratic, greater than the overall statewide shift.

Outside of the major Bluegrass State metros, its two most rural districts saw a divergence. In western Kentucky, the governor slightly improved in the 1st Congressional District. Interestingly, this seat is held by Rep.

James Comer (R), who nearly beat Bevin in the 2015 gubernatorial primary because of his strength in this region. Earlier this cycle, Comer considered running for a rematch — in hindsight, had he followed through and won the primary, he would have been a much clearer favorite to keep the governorship red.

KY-1 is 63% rural by composition, so it’s exactly the type of area that has drifted rightward in the Trump era. In a vacuum, the Appalachian KY-5 would have been susceptible to the same trends. However, state Rep. Rocky Adkins (D), who hails from the region, likely proved to be an effective surrogate for Beshear in the rural east, and the region also has some clearer ancestral pockets of Democratic strength. Bevin also performed weakly in this area in his primary, a warning sign that manifested itself in the general election.

The race appeared very close but most expected Kentucky’s Repu-

blicanism to carry Bevin over the finish line. But he couldn’t dig his way out of the hole he dug for himself through his abrasive personality and battles with key constituencies, namely teachers.

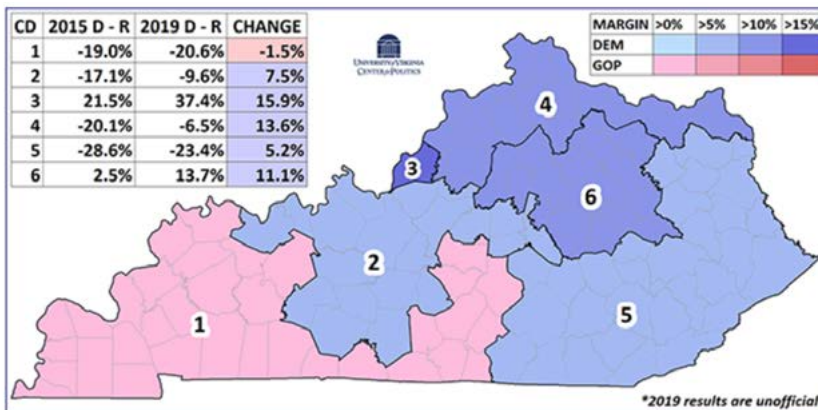
The statewide turn to the GOP outside of the gubernatorial race was evident down the ballot: Beshear was the only statewide Democratic candidate who won, and Republicans won open-seat races for secretary of state and attorney general in addition to holding the rest of the other statewide offices.

Those interpreting Beshear’s victory as a major warning sign for unpopular Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) need to reckon with what happened in these other races, as well as the fact that McConnell will be running as a federal incumbent, not a state-level one, and that he will be sharing

the ballot with Donald Trump, who still should win statewide in a landslide. We continue to rate the Senate race as Likely Republican.

In the end, Bevin’s nationalization message in the closing days of the campaign couldn’t quite get him a second term. Our sense is that the problem was less the message than the messenger. A Republican running statewide in Kentucky these days has to try to lose. Bevin tried for four years, and succeeded.

That said, the president chose to stake his personal capital on Bevin through his Election Eve appearance. From that standpoint, the result is a loss for the president, even though we don’t think it has broader significance beyond Kentucky. ❖



Steve Rattner, New York Times: Senator Elizabeth Warren has unveiled her vision for how to pay for “Medicare for all” — a daunting mountain of new taxes and fees. Thanks for providing us, Ms. Warren, with yet more evidence that a Warren presidency is a terrifying prospect, one brought closer by your surge in the polls. Left to her own devices, she would extend the reach and weight of the federal government far further into the economy than anything even President Franklin Roosevelt imagined, effectively abandoning the limited-government model that has mostly served us well. Ms. Warren may call herself a capitalist, but her panoply of minutely detailed plans suggests otherwise. She would turn America’s uniquely successful public-private relationship into a dirigiste, European-style system. If you want to live in France (economically), Elizabeth Warren should be your candidate. As a lifelong Democrat, I freely acknowledge that substantial reforms are much needed, both to achieve a more equitable distribution of income and wealth and to make good on Donald Trump’s failed pledge to raise the economy’s growth rate. But the Warren way would be, quite simply, the wrong way. Her armada of changes would be highly disruptive (for example, to the 156 million Americans who have private health insurance) and expensive (at least \$23 trillion over the next decade). To her credit, she proposes to pay for all that spending — but with a mountain of new taxes that would increase federal revenues by more than 50 percent. Talk about expansionary government. Less discussed is her intention to impose vast new regulatory burdens and to revamp the way business functions, which could have an even more negative effect on our economy. Many of America’s global champions, like banks and tech giants, would be dismembered. Private equity, which plays a useful role in driving business efficiency, would be effectively eliminated. Shale fracking would be banned, which would send oil and natural gas prices soaring and cost millions of Americans their jobs. And on and on. ❖

Adriana Cohen, Boston Herald: Put a fork in Elizabeth Warren’s presidential campaign — it’s over. Now that she’s finally released details on her Medicare-for-All plan and its eye-wincing \$52 trillion projected price tag, there’s no way that 160 million Americans who like their healthcare plans — including labor unions — will want to see them made illegal. Nor will any rational citizen want to have critical health-care decisions being made by faceless government bureaucrats who will decide what doctor you can see, and what medical treatment or surgery you’re permitted to get — or not. If Medicare-for-All is implemented, wave goodbye to consumer choice and say hello to rationed care and longer wait times to get medical treatment and prescription drugs. But don’t take my word for it, take a glimpse at how socialized medicine is working in neighboring Canada.



Last year the Fraser Institute, an independent Canadian think tank, reported the median wait time to see a general practitioner is 8.7 weeks. To see a specialist is an additional 11 weeks. That’s nearly 20 weeks before a Canadian citizen can get the care they need. Now consider if you or a loved one has a life-threatening illness like cancer where the disease will likely advance while waiting months before the bureaucracy hopefully signs off on treatment. Gaffes notwithstanding, Joe Biden is poised to benefit politically from Warren’s socialized medicine plan. He now appears like the adult in the room by opposing the elimination of private insurance. ❖

Rep. Vernon Smith, NWI Times: Unfortunately, it’s not news when I say teachers and students in Indiana are overwhelmed. They are under immense pressure to perform due to the high-stakes testing that has taken root in our education system over the past decade. Students are consumed by the influence these tests have on their futures, and teachers are frustrated because they are forced to teach to a test that carries so much weight, it crushes innovation in the classroom. I have seen many changes in education and policies in my 53-year teaching career. However, the negative effects of tests like ILEARN are unprecedented. Nine years ago, school culture began shifting when student test scores were tied to evaluations. These new accountability standards do not accurately reflect what is occurring in schools and is only adding to the frustration for teachers and students. The environment ILEARN and its predecessors created is only part of the problem. The other part is the content itself. This year alone, we have seen headline after headline delineating the flaws in ILEARN: “System failure: New student test produces familiar headaches.” “ILEARN fails as effective student measuring stick.” “Fewer than half of Indiana students meet ILEARN standards...” How many more do we have to see before we agree that something needs to change? ILEARN scores have been poor throughout the state, especially in English and mathematics. In August, it was predicted that only 40% of students would have passing test scores. It is evident that this test and the environment it creates do not accurately reflect the abilities of our teachers and students. Accountability and monitoring are very important, but when it gets in the way of a quality education, we need to reevaluate how we’re doing it. Though standardized testing is federally mandated, we do have the capacity to improve the testing culture and ensure higher credibility moving forward. The Republican proposal to “hold harmless” ILEARN results from this year solves the problem for now. But what about next year and the year after that? While I think this is the best move for us in the short term, we as legislators need to take a hard look at improving this high-stakes testing environment by listening to and empowering teachers and students. ❖

Pences to travel to support Trump

WASHINGTON — Vice President Pence flies to New Hampshire today as part of an amped-up travel schedule as the White House tries to show it isn't buckling under the strain of impeachment ([Axios](#)). Pence files for President Trump in the New Hampshire primary today in the secretary of state's office. Flipping New Hampshire has been on President Trump's wish list since he lost there in 2016 by a margin of less than a half a percent. Pence chief of staff Marc Short told Axios, "When Trump does things, it's a much larger footprint. He likes the large rallies and big fundraising events, but the V.P. will be deployed in markets large and small." Trump campaign officials tell Axios that Pence will focus on: The Midwest: One official said polling shows that Pence, as a former Indiana governor, greatly appeals to farmers and families in the Midwest. Evangelical Christians: Pence will again woo evangelicals and the Christian community, Trump campaign communications director Tim Murtaugh told Axios. Suburban women: Second Lady Karen Pence will help.



Gov. Bevin claims vote irregularities

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Matt Bevin isn't going quietly. Kentucky's Republican governor is broadly casting doubt on the results of Tuesday's election, with the unofficial tally showing him trailing Democrat Andy Beshear by just over 5,000 votes, or about four-tenths of a percentage point (Politico) Speaking before reporters Wednesday night in Frankfort, Bevin said his campaign would be seeking an official canvass of the results — but it is also compiling evidence of "irregularities" in the voting process to be investigated. "What we know is that there really are a number of

irregularities," he said, adding that "there's more than a little bit of history of vote fraud in our state."

Braun adds to climate caucus

FORT WAYNE — U.S. senators Mike Braun of Indiana and Chris Coons of Delaware announced Wednesday that six colleagues have joined their new Senate Climate Solutions Caucus (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The caucus, formed in late

October by Republican Braun and Democrat Coons, will "craft and advance bipartisan solutions to address climate change," the senators' offices said. Joining the group are Republican Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Mitt Romney of Utah and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina; Democratic Sens. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Michael Bennet of Colorado; and independent Maine Sen. Angus King.

Evansville GOP felt no urgency

EVANSVILLE — If you look closely at the numbs, you can actually see the lack of urgency among Republican voters that sunk Mayor Lloyd Winnecke's hopes for a GOP City Council majority (Langhorne, [Evansville Courier & Press](#)). Winnecke himself steamrolled two little-known challengers with nearly 81 percent of the vote, but the Republican mayor couldn't stop Democrats from winning seven of the nine City Council seats. Leaders of both major local parties suggested the absence of a Democratic mayoral nominee left Republicans without any sense that Winnecke was threatened — and thus no compelling reason to vote. Tuesday provided the answer to a strategic calculation that bedeviled Democrats earlier this year — challenge Winnecke and risk motivating Republican voters, or leave him alone and hope Republicans stay home? "I think that was the problem, that people thought (Winnecke) was

going to win," said Wayne Parke, chairman of the Vanderburgh County Republican Party. "They didn't bother to come. They failed to recognize how important it is to have your party to fill those City Council seats."

Braun not seeing impeach evidence

WASHINGTON — Indiana Sen. Mike Braun says he's not seeing enough evidence to remove President Trump from office (Darling, [WIBC](#)). "The quid pro quo seems to be an interpretation and not to where there actually was one," Braun said. "I think that makes a difference." Like many other Republicans, Braun says he's suspicious of the integrity of the impeachment probe. He says Democrats have been talking about impeachment since the 2016 election, without any probable cause. Braun expects the impeachment inquiry will come under intense scrutiny going forward. "How did it get started? What was the motivation? Was the process good," Braun rhetorically asked. "It runs into a lot of discussion here going forward, regardless of what they do in the house." If impeachment indictments make it to the Senate, Braun says Republicans are unlikely to vote for removing Trump. The Senator says based on the transcript of the Ukraine call and the depositions Democrats have released, there isn't clear proof of abuse of office.

Columbus Council goes Dem by 1 vote

COLUMBUS — Democrats will hold a City Council majority in Vice President Mike Pence's hometown for the first time since 1983 if a candidate's one-vote victory margin holds up. Unofficial results from Tuesday's local election show Democrats winning a 4-3 Columbus City Council majority as they defeated two Republican incumbents. The Columbus Republic reports that Republican Councilman Dascal Bunch might seek a recount of the 260-259 tally favoring Democrat Jerone Wood.