

Rokita sets off remote AG battle

How the four-way GOP convention race could play out in June

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The worst kept secret in Indiana politics finally came out Wednesday: Todd Rokita is running for attorney general.

"I can bring certainty in uncertain times," Rokita said after he filed on the final day to qualify for the virtual convention that will occur in WISH-TV studios on June 18 and

broadcast statewide. That comes the day after Attorney General Curtis Hill returns from his 30-day suspension over sexual harassment allegations.

Rokita said he waited "out of respect" for the incumbent, but the Indiana Supreme Court's



decision to suspend Hill for 30 days brought him into the race. "I'm the only one in this race that has won twice statewide. I'm tested," Rokita said. "The others have to promise what they're going to do in office. I have a record."

Rokita brings the field to four, joining Hill, Decatur County Prosecutor Nathan Harter, and Zionsville attorney John Westercamp. It will play out much differently than Rokita's break-through four-ballot 2002 convention win for secretary of state, or Hill's defeat of former attorney general Steve Carter, State Sen. Randy Head and Abby Kuzma over three ballots in 2016.

Those fights came during a physical convention with the ebb and flow that included

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Pandemic campaigning

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Beth Henderson has been campaigning in the 5th CD with her two Belgian draft horses, driving into neighborhoods to show them off. Kelly Mitchell had a Zoom fundraiser with former Indianapolis mayor Greg Ballard. In three batches last week, the two dozen 5th CD candidates appeared on a TownHall.org virtual meeting.



Up in the 1st CD, Frank Mrvan is using Facebook showing U.S. Rep Pete Visclosky endorsing him, while Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott, Jr., posted video of Lake County Sheriff Oscar Martinez delivering campaign yard signs on his behalf.

This is the stark, blunt reality of COVID pandemic era



"We've earned the ability to continue to move forward. The No. 1 thing you can do is wear a mask when you're around a lot of other people."

- Gov. Eric Holcomb, announcing that Stage 3 of his Back on Track pandemic reopening plan will begin on Friday.



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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



politics. If you were counting on an extensive door-to-door campaign and leaving literature on a doorknob for the past two months, the plans you settled on during that January kitchen table meeting with your consultant have gone askew.

"There's no ground game, which normally helps you gauge perceptions," explained Democratic media consultant Dave Galvin, CEO of Colfax Communications. "Campaigns have to be more creative and it makes it more expensive. There's a lot more that has to happen behind the scenes for a candidate to interact with the public and it's not easy."

With the primary delayed to June 2 and both the Indiana Democratic and Republican conventions opting for a virtual format, it will be at least mid-summer and more likely after the November election before we know if and how the coronavirus pandemic will change American politics in a permanent way.

Not only has door-to-door campaigning screeched to a halt, the mingling campaign fundraising has been suspended, and more Hoosiers will vote by mail since Gov. Eric Holcomb, Secretary of State Connie Lawson and Indiana Republicans and Democrats opted for an expanded mail-by-vote system. The GOP attorney general race will be conducted via a delegate vote-by-mail format.

"A wildcard in this and all other primaries is turnout and the impact of the non-traditional primary voters," said Matt Zapfe, executive director of the Indiana Senate Majority Campaign. "As of May 4, approximately 15% of all GOP ab ballots requested statewide were from folks who had never voted in a GOP primary before."

Last week, Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer was asked what the long-range impact might be. "I think it's too early to tell on politics," he said.

Zapfe added, "If there is to be a more lasting impact, it seems

like it could be more on the voting as opposed to campaign side with the strong push(es) nationally and locally by the Democrats especially to vote by mail. I think Sec. Lawson has done a good job making accommodations this spring in an unprecedented time. But I don't see our campaigns losing that personal touch after this. I think we've seen technology step in to help (i.e. Zoom



A masked Frank Mrvan campaigns in the 1st CD.

meetings) but I don't think, when the dust settles and this passes, that we'll stop our voter-to-voter contact, either door-to-door, town halls, or one-on-one meetings."

Galvin noted that there have been more union endorsements this year than in past Democratic primaries since in-person contact and fundraising have become much more difficult. "There's been a lot more labor money coming in the attorney general's race between Sen. Tallian and Mayor Weinzapfel, as well as Mrvan and McDermott," he said. "Candidates are spending a lot of time on the phone. There have been no events and campaigns have been doing online events, getting used to Zoom and Facebook, but the audiences are small and there's been a ton of glitches."

Campaigns are also turning

to geo fencing and IP targeting. In the GOP attorney general race, Zionsville attorney John Westercamp has been turning up on an array of national publications (Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Washington Post, New Yorker) because this writer has voted in past Republican primaries.

Galvin hasn't seen the Westercamp ads, but has been seeing ads from 5th CD Democrat Christina Hale. "In my ad tech world, there are campaigns which did not think they would be doing IP and geo targeting," Galvin explained. "IP identifies your digital or virtual address and it's way more accurate."

"Such targeting began with Barack Obama's breakthrough 2008 presidential campaign and it's now available to legislative and school referendum campaigns," Galvin said. "Just in IP targeting, my business has increased by over 100%. They'll spend funds on ad deployments. In that sense COVID has changed campaigns forever."

Unlike direct mail, IP and geo targeting gives campaigns feedback on who accesses the ad. "Unless there's a call to action, you can send 10,000 pieces of direct mail and won't know that only 3,000 people looked at it. But on Facebook, you get feedback, constant feedback. It educates you on what message works best."

"The digital side is a big deal," said Galvin, who helped Glenda Ritz upset Supt. Tony Bennett in 2012 with a social media campaign. "We are now able to insert ads into devices, into TV sets. It's a little cheaper than cable buys. We reach the cord cutters. We can insert commercials into programs. Cable is still being used, but that's going to change."

"Every community is different," Galvin continued. "IP targeting has been as high as 82% match. But in rural areas, you might only get to 35%. We used to be able to synchronize with canvassing, but this year that's all gone."

"So, too, will political ads on network television affiliates, unless you're running a statewide campaign or in a large congressional district."

Business Insider reporter Daniel Carnahan observed: "If the pandemic continues through the summer,

aggregate campaign spending will change in two major ways: Shifts in media consumption habits during the quarantine will likely guide campaign spending more toward digital; and President Donald Trump may spend less than expected due to extensive media coverage and challenges with messaging."

On Carnahan's first point, he writes, "The pandemic has shut down traditional canvassing and outreach efforts for both campaigns, and thereby weakened the efficacy of out-of-home advertisements, radio, town halls, and public rallies. Moreover, people are spending significantly more time on social media and with streaming services for news and entertainment. The resulting impact will likely lead campaigns and other politically-affiliated groups like PACs to shift an even greater share of campaign budgets to social media and search advertisements – and possibly even CTV ads."

Cam Carter, a communications strategist and the former president of Tech Point, observed that micro-targeting could have dangerous implications for society. "We've moved away from targeting consumers to a market of one. I can talk to a voter directly," Carter said. "I know what makes you tick. So I can disaggregate you from others. By making my message to you different than from anyone else, we can strengthen bonds between tribe versus tribe."

"The whole point of politics is governance; the exchange of views with people of different viewpoints," Carter continued. "If all the tribes want to do is attack and not work through our differences, if we can't use social platforms to talk to each other, then we're doomed."

Zapfe said that COVID has actually underscored some more traditional methods. "For instance, our telephone connect rates have been higher as folks are home and answering the phone." Hupfer told HPI last week, "We've had a lot of success making phone calls to people. They've been very receptive. A lot of people are just happy to hear from someone and happy to have the conversation. We've encouraged our staff to call voters across the state and have conversations with them." ❖



Attorney general, from page 1

nomination speeches and floor strategies. This one will play out over the next four weeks via phone calls, texts, emails and glitchy Zoom conferences. There will be intense delegate battles that are playing out in places like Hamilton County, where elected officials are endorsing specific delegates, an indicator of heightened interest.

Instead of an organic mix of shifting support between ballots, the 1,700 delegates will have filled out ballots due on July 9 that will designate first-ballot votes along with second and third choices.

In addition to his 2002 convention win, Rokita finished third in the July 2016 Republican Central Commit-

tee caucus for governor. In that race, Eric Holcomb wound up with 11 first-ballot votes, U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks had nine and Rokita had two votes, with informed and reliable sources telling HPI that Dan Domezich and Dan Dernulc backed the congressman. On the second ballot, Domezich switched to Holcomb, securing the nomination in unprecedented fashion.

The key figures behind Holcomb's win were Barnes & Thornburg managing partners Bob Grand and Brian Burdick. Grand has been instrumental in a number of critical decisions for Indiana Republicans for the first two decades of this century. Grand formed the Phoenix Group that wrestled control of the GOP to Jim Kittle, setting the stage for Mitch Daniels to win the governorship in 2004.



He backed and led Rokita's floor fight in 2002. He helped clear Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman out of the 2012 gubernatorial race which set the stage for U.S. Rep. Mike Pence, and a potential Daniels presidential run.

Grand helped engineer Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann's resignation and Ivy Tech landing spot in 2016, and sources say he backed Holcomb, then running third in money and polls in the 2016 U.S. Senate race, for lieutenant governor.

And with Gov. Pence's campaign funds tied up, convinced the future vice president to back Holcomb, who won on the second ballot.

As HPI reported in the July 28, 2016, edition: "Holcomb ended up with the support of the financial tandem of Grand and Dan Dumezich. As Brooks gained momentum late last week – something Grand says didn't happen – sources say that Grand helped orchestrate a series of endorsements that included Pence, Sen. Dan Coats and National Committeewoman Marsha Coats, National Committeeman John Hammond III, former chairman Jim Kittle and others who positioned Holcomb for the nomination. The Holcomb camp consistently claimed enough support for a first-ballot win, but ultimately couldn't get over the top during the first round. On the second ballot, sources believe that Dumezich switched his vote from Rokita to Holcomb, giving him additional mojo in the emerging Holcomb universe. Not forgotten was Brooks' primary victory in 2012 over Dumezich ally David McIntosh, who now heads Club For Growth."

So Grand enters this sequence, once again, as a potential kingmaker. He did not respond to HPI's question as to whom he is supporting in June.

Gov. Holcomb, who was denied on a motion to clarify and intervene on Hill's 30-day suspension by the Supreme Court on Monday, has sought Hill's resignation and was poised to select his replacement. "With the Supreme Court's decision to suspend the attorney general for 30 days, my judicial inquiry was to, one, determine if that suspension created a vacancy and, two, if so, what was my constitutional and statutory responsibility to fill that vacancy," Holcomb said. "With those two questions left

unanswered, there is no further action on my part."

Sources close to the governor have told HPI that he is unlikely to make a specific endorsement.

Harter has the backing of Clark County Sheriff Jamie Noel, who chairs Gov. Holcomb's reelection campaign. Harter is expected to run strong in the urban counties of Marion, Hamilton and Lake.

Social conservatives and Hill

Hill appears to be a rallying point for social conservatives who bristled when Holcomb announced in 2016, "I'm not Mike Pence," and have viewed his pandemic shutdown as going too far. One informed and reliable source put their numbers of delegates in the 20% range. Hill is backed by Curt Smith (whose IBJ column excerpted on page 18 praised Holcomb on the pandemic), Micah Clark, Monica Boyer and Don Bates Jr.

Bates posted on Facebook on May 12: "I was attacked for being a conservative Christian and yet still supporting Attorney General Curtis Hill. The comment was made that I must support people being in bars at 3 a.m. No, I don't. But neither do I support our legislature making booze more readily available and our governor wanting to be first in line to buy the first six-pack sold on Sunday. Nor do I support our legislature making gambling more readily accessible and, again, our governor wanting to be the first to buy a ticket. Nor do I support our government being able to define via executive order what is essential and what is not, and therefore shuttering church buildings around the state when Walmart, Lowes, and Menards are packed to the max."

Some social conservatives told HPI that the June showdown isn't about his personal behavior, noting the way allegations made against former Speaker Brian Bosma have been handled differently than those of Attorney General Hill. Most social conservatives have also been willing to overlook the behavior of President Trump, who has faced more than two dozen allegations of sexual harassment and assault, and Holcomb, Crouch and Sens. Todd Young and Mike Braun readily appear with him despite

vows of “zero tolerance” of such behavior in state government.

There is also an attitude of Hoosiers “not being told what to do” at play. In 1996, gubernatorial nominee Stephen Goldsmith recognized that dynamic and let delegates choose his LG nominee, who turned out to be social conservative newspaper publisher George Witwer Jr.

In 2008, delegates rebuked Gov. Mitch Daniels over his backing of Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas for attorney general, choosing instead Greg Zoeller. That Daniels was a popular governor on his way to a landslide win that November even as Barack Obama carried the state’s 11 Electoral College votes did not matter.

Gov. Holcomb, as a student of history and former GOP chair himself, recognizes these forces at play. Thus, we’d be shocked if he actively waded into this 2020 hornets’ nest.

The 2024 proxy element

The other aspect of this race will be the 2024 gubernatorial race. Both Hill and Rokita are expected to run should they win the AG’s office this year. Also expected to run will be Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, U.S. Rep. Jim Banks and Health & Human Services Secretary Alex Azar.

Thus, 2020 could become a proxy of sorts for 2024 if Holcomb and his allies cannot solidly defeat Hill in June. If Hill were to lose narrowly, it could set the stage for a firestorm. One influential Republican told HPI: “There is a fair amount of feeling that going to this type of convention was designed to defeat (Hill) and maintain control. Even remotely, more interaction could have been allowed. I would watch closely if there is proxy voting (i.e. alternate delegates) controlled by the big counties and if those votes are dominant against Hill, which would potentially ignite another firestorm if the result is close.”

Different scenarios

Multiple GOP sources break down the race like this: Hill and Rokita are expected to run strong on the first ballot, but neither with enough support to secure the nomination. They see Westercamp is the most likely to exit after the first ballot.

Rokita is likely to pick up support on second-choice support on the second ballot. Former Howard County Republican chairman Craig Dunn told HPI, “He’s run statewide before and he’ll know most of the delegates and he offers an acceptable choice to Hill voters who might be inclined to support someone else.”

“The unanimous Supreme Court ruling, by Republican-appointed and conservative justices, after a significant investigation of the facts made this choice clear,” Rokita

told the NWI Times. Rokita’s pitch to social conservatives goes beyond his electability. “No other candidate has a multi-office proven record of standing behind our God-given rights. I am A-rated in defending our Constitution’s 2nd Amendment, and I have a 100% proven voting record of defending the right to life, no exceptions.”

But some social conservatives are defiant and would rather renominate Hill despite his vulnerabilities in a November showdown with either Democrat, State Sen. Karen Tallian or former Evansville mayor Jonathan Weinza-pfel.

As one influential observer explained, “My personal opinion, without much evidence, is that Hill will lose by a decisive margin in a remote convention because it minimizes his strengths and maximizes his weaknesses. That, and there seem to be minimal disputes about the facts of his case at this point. His apology is there but it was not the first image people have of the situation. In other words, in addition to the power of the governor and most top officials in the party, the personal error and initially defiant response of the AG cannot most likely be overcome. Plus, and this is a more subtle point, Hill’s supporters are pub-



licly louder. The quietness is rather deafening from most delegates. That said, Curtis has spent his entire political life being underestimated.”

When Rokita was secretary of state, his reapportionment plan of creating compact legislative districts and nesting House districts into Senate districts was not viewed kindly by Senate GOP leadership and the Daniels administration. It’s one of the reasons the GOP power apparatus chose Holcomb over Rokita and Brooks (her husband, David Brooks, was seen as a potential loose cannon) in 2016.

Rokita can claim vindication that the contours of his reapportionment plan became, indeed, the new reality in 2011 and throughout this decade. That resulted in no congressional seats changing parties in four elections thus far (for the first time in history, unless Democrat Christina Hale can capture the 5th CD in November) as well as super majorities in the Indiana House and Senate.

So it will be fascinating to see if the prevailing GOP establishment will view Rokita as a necessary block to Attorney General Hill’s thirst for power. ❖

Republican Convention Horse Race Status: Tossup.

Pandemic creates a technological thrust

By CHRIS SAUTTER

WASHINGTON — Shelli Yoder, Indiana State Senate candidate and former Monroe County Council member, is a charismatic campaigner who has the ability to both energize a crowd and connect at one-on-one interaction. Her style and personality are perfect for old-fashioned retail politics.

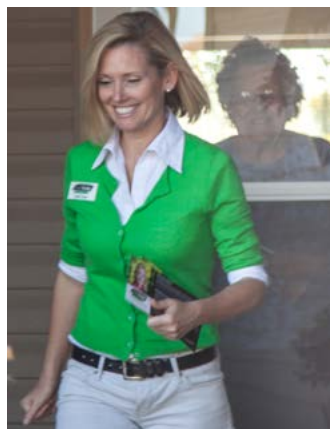
"But this pandemic has forced all of us to re-think what is and is not vital," Yoder said in an e-mail exchange about her current Indiana Senate campaign. "Though we've cancelled all in-person activities, our campaign has continued to work hard to have meaningful interaction in Monroe County. We've shifted to phone banks, Zoom rallies, Facebook Live town halls with local leaders and letter writing."



COVID-19 is changing how political campaigns and voting are being conducted, casting aside the traditional methods of

voter contact while making way for newer techniques. The days of knocking on doors and delivering a message directly to voters or physically helping voters get to the polls are on hold in these times of social distancing. Instead, it has forced campaigns to rely almost totally on digital means of communication and organization, some more creative than others. Field directors are working from home conducting on-line outreach rather than organizing coffee meetings and rallies. One New York 1st District congressional candidate, Democrat Bridget Fleming, has been hosting regular coronavirus briefings on Facebook in the manner of Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Some Democrats give credit to their digital operation for the stunning upset victory in the State Supreme Court (SCOWIS) race during last month's Wisconsin presidential primary. Republicans had been so afraid of the usually high presidential primary turnout that they tried to separate it from the SCOWIS election. Democrats, for their part, had been counting on a hotly contested Wisconsin presidential primary to generate high Democratic turnout for their Supreme Court candidate. Instead, the pandemic triggered an all-out legal battle resulting in partisan court decisions that forced many voters to risk their health in order to vote. Nonetheless, Democrats, capitalizing on voter anger over the insensitive court rulings, were able to generate a large turnout.



Shelli Yoder campaigns for the 9th CD in 2016.

The most conspicuous example of a campaign up-ended by the pandemic is that of presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden who has been campaigning the past two-plus months from the basement of his Delaware home. Biden's virtual campaign – harkening back to the days when presidential candidates like Benjamin Harrison and Warren G. Harding never strayed from their front porches – has received criticism from fellow Democrats though mostly prompted by the contrast with President Trump who appears on television daily, visibility that hasn't necessarily helped him. But the greater concern among Democrats is that the Trump campaign is significantly ahead of Biden's in terms of digital organization and strategy.

Campaigning techniques develop over time even as major events accelerate their evolution. Dwight Eisenhower used television effectively during his two presidential campaigns in 1952 and 1956 although the spots themselves were rather primitive. But it wasn't until John F. Kennedy's campaign put JFK's telegenic look into the living rooms of millions of voters in 1960 that campaigns were said to have entered the television era. In 2020 candidates are learning that technology allows them to be in multiple living rooms for town hall meetings rather than having to worry about low attendance and sparse media coverage of such events. Campaigns are likely to continue using virtual town halls and fundraisers even after the coronavirus is under control because they have proven to be effective.

The greatest challenge for Democrats is building a voter turnout operation that generates votes from more casual voters, especially in urban areas. Turnout in the critical cities of Detroit, Milwaukee and Philadelphia was down in 2016 costing Hillary Clinton an Electoral College victory, in the minds of many observers. The pandemic will make the effort more challenging than ever as group activities such as "souls to the polls" and buses to early voting sites will not be available.

The pandemic is also changing the way we vote. Some states that usually reserve absentee voting for the elderly, disabled or for special circumstances have been forced to make it available to everyone for primaries. Yet, President Trump's attacks on vote-by-mail have caused many Republican lawmakers, executives, and party leaders to back off of their previous endorsements of mail voting for the general election.

Indiana, as one of 16 states that still requires an excuse to vote absentee (except for the June 2 primary), is in the bottom third of states whose voters utilize mail voting. The state's election board has allowed concern about the coronavirus to be a valid excuse to request an absentee ballot for the June 2 primary. However, Indiana, like most states that require an excuse, has yet to deter-

mine whether expanded vote-by-mail will be permitted for the general election.

Four states – Washington, Oregon, Colorado, and Hawaii – conduct all of their elections through mail-in votes. Four more states – Wyoming, Utah, Montana, and Alaska – have joined them in conducting their presidential primaries exclusively through vote-by-mail. In New Jersey, all registered Democratic and Republican voters are being sent a postage-paid vote-by-mail ballot for the June 2 primary. All unaffiliated and inactive voters are receiving a vote-by-mail application. Other states that conducted vote-by-mail primaries, like Nebraska and Ohio, allowed people with disabilities or without a permanent home address to vote in person.

Election experts have urged Congress to mandate that every state make it easier to vote by mail and provide funding for it, and have asked state governments to take immediate action to expand access to mail voting if Congress won't. The ideal approach would be to eliminate the requirement that voters have an excuse for not voting in person, especially during a pandemic. The six states that are likely to decide the Electoral College winner – Arizona, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin – all allow voters to obtain and cast a ballot by mail

without an excuse.

Expanding vote-by-mail for November's general election will likely boost its popularity as it is the fairest, safest and easiest way to cast a ballot. In addition, if Democrats win control of the White House and the Senate – admittedly a big "if" – a required vote-by-mail option will almost certainly pass the Congress in 2021 just as Congress passed the "motor voter" bill in 1993 after Bill Clinton's election. That will make mail voting the most lasting legacy of the coronavirus pandemic on U.S. politics. But, on-line voting while continuing to be discussed will not likely be adopted anywhere so long as serious security issues remain.

In the end, campaign fundamentals will remain the same. The four pillars of a campaign – message, money, organization, and a quality candidate – will remain the most important factors determining the outcome of an election. And, when the coronavirus is finally conquered, person-to-person contact will once again be an essential part of every campaign. ❖

Sautter is a Democratic media consultant based in Washington, D.C.

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Poll shows Spartz with lead; high name ID

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

CARMEL – Club For Growth released a 5th CD poll showing its endorsed candidate, State Sen. Victoria Spartz, with a double-digit lead.



The survey, with 409 respondents, had Spartz with 32%, Carl Brizzi at 14%, Beth Henderson at 13%, Micah Beckwith at 8%, Kelly Mitchell at 5% and Chuck Dietzen at 3%. The undecideds were at 21%, and 10% were supporting another candidate.

The poll reveals the three frontrunners are the ones who have mounted TV ads thus far. The poll was conducted May 11-13 and has a margin of error of +/- 4.9%. The pollster was not revealed.

What makes the veracity of this poll doubtful is the name ID showing Spartz with 76% name recognition, Brizzi at 74% and Henderson at 57%. Brizzi at 74% is believable because he served as Marion County prosecutor for eight years. But Spartz, who won her state Senate seat via caucus and has yet to be on a primary ballot, hasn't spent nearly the kind of money to buy enough TV gross rating points to attain 76% name ID, even with a significant social media presence. Henderson at 57% name ID is also a stretch.

The Indiana Family Association published a list the 5th CD field on the ideological spectrum. It rated Rev. Micah Beckwith as "very conservative," the only candidate to achieve that score. It rated Brizzi as a "moderate," Henderson and Treasurer Mitchell as "somewhat conservative," Sen. Spartz as "conservative," and Dr. Dietzen and Kent Abernathy under the "insufficient information" category.

Brizzi described his reaction to President Trump saying on Monday that he's taking hydroxychloroquine as a "glitch in the matrix moment." In a Facebook posting Monday, Brizzi explained, "President Trump just told the press 10 mins ago that he's taking hydroxychloroquine and zinc for preventive reasons only ... meaning he's not taking it because he's symptomatic or tested positive for coronavirus, but as a prophylactic. The second the press conference ends, FOX news shifts to the medical 'experts' who say 'Absolutely DO NOT DO what the president is doing. Instead, wait for the development of this amazing 'vaccine' which we will have very soon.' We live in interesting times."

5th CD Democrat Christina Hale released her first television ad of the 2020 cycle. The positive spot highlights her record of reaching across the aisle to solve problems and get things done for Hoosier families. It begins running today through the June 2 primary. "Christina has a

proven record of delivering results for Hoosier families," said campaign manager Joann Saridakis. "She'll bring that experience to Washington, where she'll fight for access to affordable health care and expanded economic opportunities so no Hoosier is left behind." – **Democratic Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Hale; **Republican Primary Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

1st CD: Visclosky video for Mrvan

Democrat Frank Mrvan touted a video endorsement from retiring U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky. "Frank is certainly positioned to excel as a member of Congress," Visclosky says in a video posted on Facebook. "He is an empathetic listener who wants to leave the world a better place and help every individual and family he encounters."

Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott has been endorsed by Teamsters Local 142. "Thrilled to announce another endorsement from Northwest Indiana's unions – I have been formally endorsed by Teamsters Local 142," McDermott announced on Facebook. "It is an honor to be endorsed by the Teamsters, whose members have been performing essential work during this crisis. I will continue to be a strong advocate for organized labor in Congress and am grateful to have the Teamsters' endorsement."

PAC spends \$100k to boost Reardon

State Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon, D-Munster, is getting another big money assist in her 1st CD bid (AP). The Seattle-based Voter Protection Project announced Monday it's spending "six figures," or at least \$100,000, to create and send three different mailers to some 83,000 likely primary voters in Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties ahead of the June 2 election. The nation's largest political action committee focused on voting rights said it's highlighting Candelaria Reardon's efforts to hold President Donald Trump accountable, in contrast to Democratic Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., who initially did not support the 2019 House impeachment inquiry. "Former Republican Tom McDermott opposed Donald Trump's impeachment and has actively worked to make voting inaccessible for Hoosiers," VPP President Matt Liebman said. VPP is the second PAC sending mailers on behalf of Candelaria Reardon. Bold PAC, a super PAC affiliated with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, also has sent postcards backing the six-term state lawmaker to some 64,000 Region households. **Democratic Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely McDermott.

Governor

NW Trades Council endorses Holcomb

The Northwestern Indiana Building and Construction Trades Council has unanimously endorsed Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb for his reelection bid, Randy Palmateer announced. "This is the first time in the history of the council that a Republican governor has been endorsed,"

said Palmateer, business manager. "On behalf of the 30 affiliates and more than 35,000 highly trained, hard-working, union men and women of the Northwest Indiana Building and Construction Trades Council thank you for everything you do for the construction industry."

Meanwhile, presumptive Democratic nominee Woody Myers was endorsed by Indiana House Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta, former congressman Lee Hamilton and the United Steelworkers.

Myers tweeted on Thursday that he supports "sensitivity training" for legislators following State Rep. Jim Lucas's meme. Myers tweeted: "Rep. Jim Lucas, an IN elected official, used a picture of dancing African children to create a racist meme on social media. I support efforts by State Senate Democrats to bring bias and racial sensitivity training to the Indiana General Assembly. Some really need it." Lucas was demoted by House Speaker Todd Huston on summer study committees, telling the IndyStar, "The post is unacceptable and I don't condone it."

General Assembly

SD7: Buchanan reacts to KKK fliers

Pressed by Democrats and WLFI-TV on Ku Klux Klan fliers distributed in Battle Ground, State Sen. Brian Buchanan, (R) District 7, said, "I am aware of the recent activity in Battle Ground. It is extremely disappointing to see this type of behavior. Hatred, bigotry, discrimination, and racism have no place in our society. I firmly believe this is the result of a few bad actors who do not represent the majority of Hoosiers and I stand with our community in denouncing this hateful propaganda."

HD45: Borders faces Gormong

A pair of Christian conservatives are vying for the GOP's nomination in the fall general election for Indiana House District 45. Incumbent Republican Rep. Bruce Borders, of Jasonville, and Jeff Gormong, of Farnesburg, say they're motivated to take their rural sensibilities to the statehouse and represent residents of the district (Terre Haute Tribune-Star). Borders has represented District 45 for 14 of the past 16 years, but says he's more motivated than ever to represent the constituents. "When I run now I think about my grandchildren," Borders said. "And I believe that future of our nation hangs in the balance between those that want to destroy our Constitution and those that want to uphold it. I believe that there are people trying to destroy the freedoms and religious liberties that we know and hold. And so I run with a stronger passion

than I've ever ran before. "There are people that want to control every facet of our lives, and we're seeing it now, but they're destroying the economy."

Gormong said he feels state government is getting done as much as it should for rural Indiana and feels he would be best to represent the needs of District 45. "We've been dealing with school issues and teacher issues for a long time," Gormong said. "We can argue about teacher pay and blame anyone we want for the issues, but the reality is that we're not replacing our retired teachers with anyone new, and there aren't enough people wanting to go into the profession." Republican Primary Horse Race Status: Safe Borders.

Biden leads by 11% in Quinnipiac Poll

Former Vice President Joe Biden leads President Trump 50 - 39% in a head-to-head matchup in the election for president, according to a Quinnipiac University national poll of registered voters. That's up from the 49 - 41% lead Biden held in an April 8th national poll, but the change is within the margin of error. Democrats go to Biden 88 - 5%, Republicans go to Trump 87 - 8%, and independents go to Biden 47 - 36%. "What does the 11 point Biden lead tell us? At best for

Team Trump, it says voter confidence in President Trump is shaky. At worst for them, as coronavirus cases rise, Trump's judgement is questioned - and November looms," said Quinnipiac University Polling Analyst Tim Malloy. More than two months into the coronavirus crisis in the U.S., President Trump's job approval rating ticks lower. 42% of voters approve of the job President Trump is doing, while 53% disapprove. That's compared to a 45 - 51% job approval rating he received in April, his highest ever. On the president's response to the coronavirus, 41% of voters approve and 56% disapprove. That is down from a 46 - 51% approval rating in April. On the president's handling of the economy, 50% approve while 47% disapprove, compared to a 51 - 44% approval in April. ❖

Battle for the White House			
RCP Poll Averages			
Election 2020	Biden	Trump	Spread
RCP National Average	48.7	43.1	Biden +5.6
Betting Odds	42.0	50.8	
Electoral College	183	125	
Battlegrounds	Biden	Trump	Spread
Wisconsin	46.0	43.3	Biden +2.7
Pennsylvania	48.3	41.8	Biden +6.5
North Carolina	45.8	46.8	Trump +1.0
Florida	48.3	45.0	Biden +3.3

Polling Data						
Poll	Date	Sample	MoE	Biden (D)	Trump (R)	Spread
RCP Average	4/26 - 5/19	--	--	48.7	43.1	Biden +5.6
Quinnipiac	5/14 - 5/18	1323 RV	2.7	50	39	Biden +11
CNBC	5/15 - 5/17	1424 LV	2.6	48	45	Biden +3
Economist/YouGov	5/17 - 5/19	1235 RV	3.2	47	42	Biden +5
Rasmussen Reports	5/18 - 5/19	1000 LV	3.0	48	43	Biden +5
Harvard-Harris	5/13 - 5/14	1854 RV	2.0	53	47	Biden +6
CNN	5/7 - 5/10	1001 RV	3.7	51	46	Biden +5
Monmouth	4/30 - 5/4	739 RV	3.6	50	41	Biden +9
IBD/TIPP	4/26 - 4/29	948 RV	3.3	43	43	Tie
Emerson	4/26 - 4/28	1200 RV	2.8	48	42	Biden +6

Hale emphasizes bipartisanship during polarizing times

By MARK SCHOEFF, JR.

WASHINGTON – Christina Hale is emphasizing bipartisanship in her attempt to win the 5th CD seat being vacated by the most bipartisan member of the Hoosier congressional delegation.

Her first television ad, launched earlier this week, extols Hale's ability to work across the aisle. The narrator says she passed 60 bills as a state legislator – all with bipartisan support. The spot said such a virtue is critical as Congress wrestles with the coronavirus outbreak. "Rebuilding will be our next test, and we can't afford partisan bickering," the narrator says. "We need problem solvers."



Hale is hoping that theme will strike a chord in the race to replace retiring Republican Rep. Susan Brooks, who achieved the highest

score among Hoosier members of Congress in the latest Bipartisan Index.

The survey, released last week and sponsored by the Lugar Center and the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy, measures the extent to which lawmakers work with members of the opposite party in writing and co-sponsoring legislation.

The question is whether Hale's bet on bipartisanship will pay off at a time of extreme political polarization. Dan Diller, policy director at the Lugar Center, said the issue can gain traction.

"It's always a winner in November, especially in a district that's proven to support a very bipartisan member, which Brooks is," Diller said.

Hale is favored to win the Democratic primary on June 2. She would face one of 15 Republicans running for Brooks' seat. The 5th CD, which stretches from Marion to the northside of Indianapolis, has a strong Republican orientation.

It will be difficult for Hale to find voters who will split their ticket, but casting herself as someone who can work with Republicans could help her in the Indianapolis suburbs, said Chad Kinsella, assistant professor of political science at Ball State University.

"That might resonate with just enough people to peel off some votes, which would be key to that race," Kinsella said.

Hale brandished bipartisanship in responding to

the latest pandemic recovery legislation, a \$3 trillion bill the House approved, 208-199, with 14 Democrats voting against it. Republicans have dismissed the legislation as a wish list of liberal priorities that has no chance in the Senate.

Hale praised parts of the legislation without revealing her own position on the measure. "We must provide immediate relief to our communities so emergency responders and frontline workers have the resources they need, the hundreds of thousands of unemployed Hoosiers can keep a roof over their heads and food on their tables, and small- and medium-sized businesses are able to keep their doors open beyond this crisis," Hale said in a statement. "These efforts must be bipartisan to be successful. I have a proven record of reaching across the aisle to get things done for my constituents when I was a state legislator, and I'll continue doing just that when I'm elected to Congress."

Hale's campaign manager, Joann Saridakis, would not say how Hale would have voted on the bill.

Republicans labeled the bill partisan and unworkable. It would focus on aid to state and local governments, the unemployed and health care workers.

Democrats and Republicans are likely to come together on some kind of agreement for the next phase of coronavirus relief, Diller said. "Congress in a crisis is always going to find a way to spend money," Diller said. "This is a temporary blockage."

Hoosier Republican Sen. Todd Young is taking a bipartisan tack by teaming with Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., on a bill, the Reviving the Economy Sustainably Towards a Recovery in 2020 (RESTART) Act. It would provide loans for small- and medium-size businesses and, the lawmakers say, fix problems with the Paycheck Protection Program.

Young ranks as the 36th most bipartisan senator on the Bipartisan Index. The Lugar Center is a policy organization established by the late Sen. Richard Lugar.

But working across the aisle will become much harder for Young and his colleagues once Congress moves past the necessary pandemic crisis spending, which

has already resulted in a federal deficit projected to be \$3.8 trillion in fiscal 2020.

In order to tackle the gaping shortfall, Democrats will have to compromise on entitlement spending and Republicans will have to compromise on tax hikes, Diller said. "The tougher partisan problem comes later, when you need to address a fiscal situation that requires both parties to bend on their most closely held priorities," Diller said. ❖

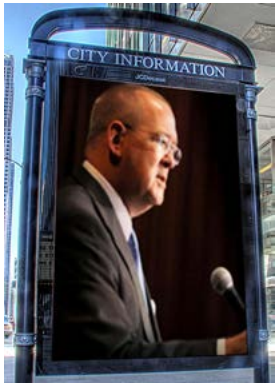
Disclosure: The author is a former Lugar aide who has made monetary contributions to the Lugar Center. He is HPI's Washington correspondent.



Don't expand the trade war

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE — If the media buzz is true, the Trump Administration will use the solemn occasion of Memorial Day weekend to further expand the disastrous trade war with China. This time, he will use the global pandemic as an excuse to restrict imports of medicine and medical devices.



This is a bad policy that will raise health care costs on Americans while doing nothing to boost U.S. jobs. It is nothing more than a cynical ploy to divert attention from an erratic and unfocused response to this pandemic. Before explaining why this is such an imprudent turn of events, I must report some truths

about China's government that the Trump administration is unwilling to say out loud.

The People's Republic of China is a deeply evil enterprise. Right now, they have more people in concentration camps than did Hitler at the height of his powers. Their government scoffs at the value of the individual, and they export a malicious presence across Asia and Africa. If we lived in a moderately just world, tens of thousands of Chinese government officials would face Nuremberg-type trials for crimes against humanity.

None of these should be new revelations to a sentient adult. The Chinese government has been the scourge of freedom since the 1950s. I know it firsthand, having faced and destroyed Chinese tanks in Iraq nearly 30 years ago. Defeating this criminal regime will require decades of robust international cooperation and bipartisan agreement on policy goals. That is how we beat the Soviet Union, an experience upon which the Trump administration displays a curious silence. Trade can be a weapon in conflict between nations, but our policies simply turn that weapon against ourselves. Here's how:

A goal of national economic self-sufficiency is as wise and practical as a goal of family self-sufficiency. For both families and nations, trade allows us to buy things we cannot efficiently produce ourselves. Trade also boosts our productivity by allowing us to specialize in things we can produce efficiently. Trade enables more competition between firms, which reduces prices and increases productivity. This occurs whether the firms we trade with are in Ohio or Beijing.

It is important to acknowledge that competition, productivity growth and trade all displace jobs. Businesses that cannot effectively compete close, and their assets and workers are absorbed by other businesses. This surely

disrupts families and communities, but it is an inevitable part of progress. If it were not, we'd all still be making our own clothes and churning our own butter.

Perhaps the best evidence of the benefit of trade is actually the "China Shock" period after 2001, when China was given permanent normalized trade relations. Since then, American factories lost as many as 1.5 million jobs to Chinese factories. Another 1.5 million jobs were reclassified from manufacturing to business services, as workers went from making things to servicing the machines that made things. Another 2 million or more factory jobs were eliminated due to productivity growth. But, even as factories lost 5 million jobs, the rest of the economy created 23 million jobs to replace them.

Trade among families, states and regions makes all of these places better off. This truth was well understood long before germ theory, but perhaps that is a poor example given the Trump Administration's marathon intellectual struggles with germ theory.

Free trade is such a robust wealth creation machine that few nations will abandon it because of American temper tantrums. Most of the rest of the world has the same concerns over China that the United States had well before the 2016 elections. They steal intellectual property and prop up their own industries, while ignoring 19th century notions of civil rights. In fact, the rest of the world worked hard to help control China by creating something called the Trans-Pacific Partnership. That trade deal would've forced China to end its most obnoxious practices or face trade limits. The TPP did something else important, it acknowledged America's international role as leader of free nations.

America's retreat from global trade weakens us domestically by slowing economic growth. It weakens us internationally by deserting the post of international leadership won through the power of our ideals, the blood of our servicemen and the wisdom of our national leaders over the past century.

The expansion of this trade war damages American prospects in the 21st century. It makes us less able to confront China or secure a safer, more prosperous world. Wrapping a trade war in the flag is noxious and dishonors those whom we remember this Memorial Day. In the end, there's no better way to say it than to simply note that those who argue that the ongoing trade war makes the United States more prosperous or safe are either stupid or think the people listening to them are. ❖

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

Worrisome times for democracy in U.S.

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – We’ve seen plenty of evidence lately of the deep polarization in this country. Even in the midst of this crisis, national politicians, the political parties, and their adherents are finding plenty to fight over; even as, for the most part, ordinary Americans have been remarkably united and many governors and mayors have worked hard to handle the coronavirus pandemic competently and guided by expert advice.



The question as we look ahead is whether the trends we’d been seeing before the pandemic will reassert themselves, or instead there will be some sort of reset. Because those earlier trends are extremely worrisome.

For years now, it’s been common for politicians to label their rivals as unpatriotic and illegitimate. The deep freeze in cross-aisle relations in Congress had made progress there extremely difficult, though the crisis has given congressional leaders and members of the Trump administration no choice but to keep bargaining until they hammer out agreements.

Other trends are equally problematic. The federal civil service, for instance, has always fielded a lot of very good people – dedicated public servants who try not to be partisan, remain independent in their views, and support the work of whichever administration is in power. They want to make government work better. That has gotten much harder to pull off in recent years, and the result is a civil service that is losing workers, institutional knowledge, and competence. There are still capable civil servants, many of whom have been doing their best to keep federal services on an even keel during this crisis, but it’s hard to escape the feeling that their impact has been diminished.

Likewise with the judiciary, which has become more politicized. It’s a worrisome trend in a branch of government that has generally stood for even-handed justice and, over the long term, strengthened Americans’ civil rights and civil liberties. The president, however, likes to say that his biggest achievement in office has been to put very conservative judges into power, a claim that undermines the judicial branch’s standing as the pillar of independence this country long depended upon. Ideology will always play a role in judicial choices, but making judges more nakedly political is a destructive trend.

This extends to the media, as well. For whatever reason, it exercises less rigorous oversight of government,

and what does exist is more partisan. While there’s coverage of national issues and politics, the trends have led to less robust local coverage, and a less healthy democracy.

As polarization has deepened, Congress has gridlocked, presidential power has expanded (not a new thing, by the way), and the government has become less responsive and less effective. It took a national crisis to lay bare some of these issues, but the trends underlying them have been going on for some time, and fixing them will take time, too.


This has to start with ordinary Americans. Voters need to reclaim our democracy and demand that the system that made us a great nation – one that adhered to the checks and balances and separate institutional responsibilities laid out in our Constitution – be restored. At the community, state, and federal levels, our job is to maintain the robustness of our institutions of government, agitate to ensure that they are performing as they should, and recognize that if the trends I’ve laid out strengthen their grip, our representative democracy will suffer. The threats may not be existential yet, but they could become so.

Because here’s the thing: People may distrust government, but just as the pandemic has made clear that at bottom there’s no palatable alternative to an effective and competent government system, so it’s also true that the only way ultimately to solve the problems and worrisome trends of government is principally through government action. Which means that in the end, as citizens we have to forcefully step up to our responsibilities and insist that our public officials do so, too. ❖

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

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

‘Obamagate’ in the 2020 campaign cycle

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI News Bureau

ANDERSON — In the middle of a tweet storm, President Donald J. Trump sent a one-word message: “OBAMAGATE.”

Later, he called on Congress to subpoena his predecessor. “If I were a Senator or Congressman, the first person I would call to testify about the biggest political crime and scandal in the history of the USA, by FAR, is former President Obama,” he tweeted. “He knew EVERYTHING. Do it @LindseyGrahamSC, just do it. No more Mr. Nice Guy. No more talk!”



Phil Rucker, a reporter for the Washington Post, asked for a clarification. “What is the crime exactly that you’re accusing him of?” Rucker asked.

The president declined to say. “You know what the crime is,” he said. “The crime is very obvious to everybody. All you have to do is read the newspapers, except yours.”

Graham isn’t entirely on board. He has rejected the idea of calling Obama to testify, but he has promised an investigation. He hopes to have a report by October. Just in time for the election.

At the heart of this alleged scandal seems to be the investigation into the president’s former national security adviser, Michael Flynn. The Trump administration sent lawmakers a declassified list of Obama-era officials who they claim sought documents that led to Flynn’s identity being “unmasked” in intelligence reports.

The president and his allies claim this proves the Obama administration was “spying” on the Trump campaign as part of the “Russia collusion hoax.”

Steve Schmidt, a former Republican political operative now working to keep the president from winning a second term, disagrees. “Trump is waging an all-out war on truth and reality,” he tweeted. “It is fundamental to his reelection strategy. Obamagate is a lie. Nothing more. Nothing less.” He said news organizations treating the scandal seriously risk becoming “instruments in a cynical manipulation.”

What triggered the president’s latest outburst appeared to be a leaked recording of Obama criticizing the Justice Department’s decision to drop charges against Flynn. In that same recording, the former president called the Trump administration’s coronavirus response an “absolute chaotic disaster,” and he criticized the divisiveness that seems so prevalent today.

“What we’re fighting against is these long-term

trends in which being selfish, being tribal, being divided and seeing others as an enemy – that has become a stronger impulse in American life,” he said.

The remarks drew a response from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. “I think President Obama should have kept his mouth shut,” he said. “You know, we know he doesn’t like much this administration is doing. That’s understandable. But I think it’s a little bit classless frankly to critique an administration that comes after you.”

McConnell suggested Obama should have followed the example of his predecessors, including Presidents George W. and George H.W. Bush. “You had your shot,” he said. “You were there for eight years. I think the tradition that the Bushes set up of not critiquing the president who comes after you is a good tradition.”

Schmidt had a different take. “We have reached a level of terminal cynicism in our politics,” he tweeted. “McConnell is one of this rancid moment’s most prolific authors. The lying and gaslighting have become so easy for Trump’s henchmen and women. Imagine the boundless hypocrisy involved in Trump’s Senate footman calling President Obama classless. Soon his Senate majority will be gone. The bill is coming due. These Republican enablers were not defeated by Trump. They surrendered to him. They surrendered their duty, dignity, decency, honesty and integrity to Trump. They will lose with shame.”

Through it all, Obama hasn’t said much. He responded to the president’s rantings with just one word. “Vote,” he tweeted.

Seems like good advice. ❖

Kelly Hawes is a columnist for CNHI News Indiana. He can be reached at kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com. Find him on Twitter @Kelly_Hawes.



How to monetize time spent

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — We are endowed with 24 hours each day. That, in a sense, makes us all equal. However,



if we have it, money can be substituted for time. Thus, from here to there, the poor man walks for a longer time than the rich man rides. Our use of time is, partly, a measure of the value we place on an activity.

Most economic information about us is expressed as money spent by individuals and households. We are called consumers. In truth, we are both consumers and investors. An automobile and a lamp are

both investments which we will use in varying amounts over many years. Or which we won't use, but will have the option to use, which itself has value.

Economists have been occupied for generations trying to put a dollar figure on time spent. What's the value of outdoor recreation? When I started studying economics, 60 years ago, that was a hot topic. It remains so today.

The easy answer was the value of an hour taken for a walk is equal to the income foregone if that person had been at work. As with all easy answers, it was a grotesque misrepresentation of reality. But decision makers (legislators and foundation grantors) feel the need for metrics no matter how bad.

But what if no one walks in the park? Is the park worthless? No, every citizen has the option to walk in the park and that option has unmeasured value.

Note, I said unmeasured, not unmeasurable. Eager and bright researchers will conduct studies where participants (subjects) will be asked questions designed to determine monetary value. Published, those values will be accepted by other researchers and the decision makers until they become facts to be adjusted for inflation, seasonality, and used forevermore.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) publishes

annual reports on how Americans use their time. Other nations have similar studies and there is a Centre for Time Use Research at the University College London.

The BLS data reports that in 2008 Americans age 15 and older slept 8:37 hours per day on average. In 2018, our sleeping time increased to 8.49 hours. Is that increase of 12 minutes because we are older, younger, more self-indulgent, more depressed, living closer to our places of work, or driving faster?

The time we spend eating and drinking (1:10 per day) has dropped in 2018 from 2008 by two minutes. We simply gobble and go. Those two minutes a day are going to care for older adults in our households, now up to 1:23 per day, for those who engage in such care.

How will our allocation of time change by the experiences we've had, and will have further, with our coronavirus quarantine? Have we learned new and better ways to use our time? ❖

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

Joe Biden has an age problem

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS — Joe Biden has an age problem. No, not that one. In March, Democrats "sound[ed] the alarm on Joe Biden's young voter problem," NBC News reported. By April, shortly after a group of seven progressive youth organizations issued Biden a list of "aggressive demands" in exchange for their support, the Wall Street Journal said "young voters could be Biden's Achilles' heel." And by May it was all but forgotten when the backseat drivers of 2020 put the generational challenge in the rearview mirror as they began to agitate over the pandemic-induced geographical obstacle facing Biden.



As the Washington Post's Karen Tumulty puts it, "The party is in a state of high anxiety over the fact that its nominee-in-waiting appears trapped at home, like so many of the rest of us are during the COVID-19 pandemic." And this, my friends, is where the handwringers and the bedwetters and the hair puller-outers and the teeth gnashers miss the point. Being trapped

in his basement is Joe Biden's youth outreach strategy! Yes, I willingly used an exclamation mark to demonstrably illustrate the seriousness of my declarative sentence. This! Is! His! (Intentional or Not) Strategy! And it's time to lean in (h/t Sheryl Sandberg).

Typically, a candidate would be out kissing hands and shaking babies. But Joe Biden is not a typical candidate in the Populist Era. His unconventional shelter-in-place strategy, full of digital forums and "please be viral" social media posts, is a necessity when his name is not Bernie Sanders, a candidate who roused the passions of America's 18-38 demographic with his "damn the torpedoes" governing philosophy.

By sequestering himself in his basement, Biden – who lacks for now the far-fetched promises of free everything (higher education, health care, candy, trips to the Moon, you name it) – is sending a subliminal message to America's largest voting bloc that he gets us. He may not be drowning in thousands of dollars of student debt or addicted to avocado toast, but he is in the midst of a never-ending job application and interview process that may or may not lead to his dream job. And who among us hasn't been there?

He's the virtual version of grandpa grabbing a pair of drawstring shorts and crocs he only wears when mowing the lawn to join us at the beach in a futile attempt to prove he too can bake in the sun. It's about connection. It's about shared experiences, in person or on the screen. The whole thing is rather brilliant, isn't it?

Before long Biden will be a bearded and tattooed

flannel-wearing mixologist slinging overpriced craft cocktails with the best of 'em at his very own hipster bar. I can see it now. Flamin' Joe's. Eh, sounds too familiar. How about Biden Time? Too kitschy. Third Time's a Charm? We'll see come November.

When it comes to Joe's chances of harnessing the mystical power of the youth vote, he will need all the Millennial brown-nosing he can stomach because his representation of the Democratic establishment does not go far enough for young Sanders supporters who crave a revolution. They aren't looking for a rejuvenation of the way things were. They are looking for someone to carpet bomb the establishment and upend the entire system. To put it in a way that will elicit blood curdling screams from my friends on the left, they want a Democrat Donald Trump. For Trump, his bulldozer-targeted media and government, while the Sanders quest for destruction is squarely aimed at corporate America.



And both frame their efforts as necessary to the livelihood of the working class. In Biden, however, Democrats get an antidote to Trump, but not the mutated dosage of Sanders.

Short of a Steve Rogers-like transformational experimentation, how does Biden compete with that? He communes with the Screen Generation by living in a virtual box, much like the Bubble Boy lived in a bubble. He appears on Snapchat's Good Luck America. He shares stories on Instagram, only to ask the young staffer nearby what Instagram is minutes later. But will three months of self-confinement in the nation's second smallest state inspire the most diverse generation in history to vote?

Short of a Steve Rogers-like transformational experimentation, how does Biden compete with that? He communes with the Screen Generation by living in a virtual box, much like the Bubble Boy lived in a bubble. He appears on Snapchat's Good Luck America. He shares stories on Instagram, only to ask the young staffer nearby what Instagram is minutes later. But will three months of self-confinement in the nation's second smallest state inspire the most diverse generation in history to vote?

As explained by the Inquisitr's Jonathan Vankin, and pointed out by Washington Times columnist Joe Curl, an NBC News exit poll from Super Tuesday whispers, "Probably not." According to Vankin, "Only 13% of Democratic voters in the Super Tuesday primaries are between the ages of 18 and 29. That is 10 percentage points fewer than the second least likely voters – the 30-44 age group, which made up 23% of Tuesday's electorate."

If the young people who supposedly supported Sanders didn't show up with him on the primary ballot, is there any hope they show up in November without him on the ballot?

There is, of course, another obvious flaw in Biden's outreach strategy: He's not living in his parents' basement like the estimated 22% of Americans aged 25-34 did in 2017 (and likely similar percentage does in the COVID-19 suppressed economy). So, then, what's the

moral of this story/column full of rhetorical questions and tongue-in-cheek sarcasm? I can poke fun at my generation, and you can't. And now, back to Joe's Basement. Now that's a good name for a bar! ❖

Pete Seat is a former White House spokesman for President George W. Bush and campaign spokesman for former Director of National Intelligence and U.S. Senator Dan Coats. Currently he is a vice president with Bose Public Affairs Group in Indianapolis. He is also an Atlantic Council Millennium Fellow and author of the 2014 book, "The War on Millennials."





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Why Trump is unlikely to replace Mike Pence

By KYLE KONDIK

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – There’s no real indication that President Donald Trump is considering replacing Vice President Mike Pence on his ticket this year, and there are at least two major reasons for why this seems unlikely.

Those are the president’s own public comments, and history.

Yet there are three other reasons why we would not necessarily rule it out: The possibility that Pence’s specific appeal is now redundant; the high level of turnover in this administration; and the potential for the president to become desperate as the November election gets closer.

Trump has publicly said he will keep Pence on the ticket, and there has been little recent reporting about the possibility of Trump running with someone else recently. Given how often the musings of the president make it into news coverage, that probably suggests Trump replacing Pence is not being seriously discussed in the Trump campaign at this time.

Politicians change their mind about such things all the time, but Trump has fairly aggressively defended Pence’s place on the ticket, saying in early March that replacing his vice president would be “a great act of disloyalty” to Pence.

The vice president, for his part, has been unswervingly loyal to the president in his own public comments throughout the Trump presidency, and he has remained a major campaign surrogate for the president.

There is also the history. We are in the midst of a long era in which presidents have kept their running mates when they seek reelection.

As vice presidential historian Joel Goldstein has documented in detail for the Crystal Ball, a sitting president swapping out his running mate for his reelection bid has not happened in a long time. The last time a sitting vice president did not appear on the presidential ticket of the sitting president was Nelson Rockefeller in 1976, although this example is filled with caveats. The president, Gerard Ford, only ascended to first the vice presidency and then the presidency because of the resignations of, respectively, Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1973 and then President Richard Nixon in 1974. Ford picked Rockefeller to serve as his vice president, but he ran in the 1976 election with Bob Dole, then a Kansas senator.

In reality, the last elected, sitting vice president replaced as an incumbent’s running mate was Henry Wallace, who President Franklin Roosevelt and Democratic leaders replaced during Roosevelt’s bid for a fourth term in 1944. Wallace’s replacement was Harry Truman. This ended up being a highly consequential choice, as Truman would become president just a few months into his term as vice president following Roosevelt’s death in April 1945.

The Wallace replacement represents something of a dividing line between a time when vice presidential running mates changed fairly often to an era when they didn’t change at all. Since FDR, no elected president running for reelection to a second term has dropped a running mate.

Would Trump break the recent precedent? Again, he has not given much if any public indication that he might.

However, there are at least three reasons why Trump could explore picking a different running mate.

1. The benefits that Pence brings to the ticket may no longer be needed

While discerning the actual electoral benefit of vice presidential selection is difficult, there is a logical case to be made that Pence ended up being a good choice for Trump. At this time four years ago, there were real questions about whether Trump, if elected, would reliably pursue the conservative social issue goals that motivate many white evangelical Christians, a bloc of voters that forms one of the pillars of the modern Republican Party. Pence, who is an evangelical Christian himself and is strongly conservative on social issues, perhaps reassured this bloc of voters: According to exit polls, Trump won white evangelical Christians 80%-16%, a performance better than



even George W. Bush in 2004. Pence went from being an embattled governor of Indiana who was not necessarily guaranteed to win reelection in 2016 to an asset on a winning presidential ticket.

Since being elected, Trump has made it a point to fill the courts with as many social conservatives as possible, and he has supported and acknowledged social conservatives in other ways. He has become an even more beloved figure among many evangelical leaders than he was as a candidate, and his evangelical support appears to remain rock-solid.

It's quite possible that Trump would have performed just as strongly with these voters without Pence; after all, white evangelical Christians have been and continue to be a strongly Republican group. However, if in fact Pence provided some needed reassurance to these voters – again, maybe he did, and maybe he didn't – it is probably the case that Trump no longer needs Pence's help with them given the way Trump has governed.

In this sense, Pence may have been an important electoral asset in 2016 but is no longer needed in 2020, and Trump could attempt to use the vice presidential slot as a tool to reach out to a different group of voters.

2. Trump shuffles the personnel deck often

The Brookings Institution has found higher levels of turnover in the Trump administration than in other recent presidential administrations. Trump's original secretaries of defense and state – arguably the top two Cabinet positions – have long since left the scene (Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, who holds what is probably the other most prominent Cabinet position, has been the only person to hold that job under Trump). Trump has also had four different national security advisers and four different chiefs of staff.

Again, none of this predicts anything about Pence's position. But turnover has been common in this administration (and in the Trump 2016 campaign that preceded it). Anyone serving in the administration of the president who popularized the term "you're fired" has to remain at least a little bit on edge.

Those inclined to see ulterior motives in every Trump move have suggested that Pence's significant and prominent role in the administration's coronavirus response gives Trump a useful fall guy if he needs one. Whether that's a fair characterization or not, it does provide a useful segway into the third reason that Trump might pick a different running mate.

3. Trump might be desperate

Despite the public health crisis and the immense disruption of the economy, the presidential race hasn't changed all that much over the past couple of months. Joe

Biden still leads Donald Trump in national polling: Biden was up about a half dozen points on St. Patrick's Day in the RealClearPolitics national polling average, and he was up about the same amount on Wednesday. This may basically be how the race goes all the way until November: Biden leading but not necessarily by enough to look at him as a very significant favorite, particularly if Trump runs ahead of his national polling in the most important swing states (as he did in 2016). Our own sense is that the president was better-positioned to win a few months ago than he is now, but we also don't really see Biden or Trump as a strong favorite in the fall yet.

However, one possible scenario is that Biden's lead expands a bit in the coming months as the president struggles with criticism of his response to coronavirus and the economic fallout. If that happens, the president may find himself in an increasingly desperate position and possessing limited options to change the trajectory of the election.

One of the few cards Trump could play in such a scenario would be to change his running mate. That's not to say that he would do it, or that it would have much electoral impact if he did, but it is an option available to Trump if he feels like he needs to do something to change the electoral calculus.

Conclusion

If Trump did replace Pence, the name that has seemed to come up the most as a potential replacement is Nikki Haley, the former ambassador to the United Nations and South Carolina governor. Trump could consider Haley or many others beyond her. In the event of a Trump-Haley ticket, observers would certainly note that the ticket change was designed to make the GOP ticket more appealing to women and minorities. How much of an effect the change actually would have is an open question; the demonstrable electoral impact of running mates is typically modest, even in their home states, although political scientists sometimes disagree about how modest the impact is.

Overall, there's not much reason to think Trump will run with anyone other than Pence. ❖



Curt Smith, IBJ: Making predictions in a pandemic is foolish. Doing so closer to its onset than its completion is downright foolhardy. But I will make one prediction that I am confident will hold up well in the coming days. Indiana will fare far better than most other states because of our unique character. Let me cite four significant factors and then offer a concluding thought in support of such homegrown optimism.

First, Indiana moved early. Credit our leaders, most significantly Gov. Eric Holcomb. But maybe some of that credit is due to the Indiana leaders in Washington, D.C., heading this battle for the nation. That begins with Vice President Mike Pence, obviously, but includes Alex Azar, secretary of Health and Human Services; Seema Verma, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and Jerome Adams, the nation's top doctor as surgeon general. Perhaps having former colleagues in the fight at the national level prompted quicker Indiana actions. The governor issued an executive order March 6 declaring a public health emergency. This date coincides with our first announced case of COVID-19. On March 9, the first school system closed. But it was the cancellation of the Big Ten tourney on March 12 that really got the attention of our basketball-crazy state. Second, Hoosiers heeded the message. Sure, some people celebrated St. Patrick's Day downtown and continued to gather in public, but quickly we dispersed to our homes, apartments and condos. Hoosiers, I joked, have been perfecting social distancing since 1816, and we shut down activity and large parts of our economy despite significant economic harm. The next Hoosier distinctive to shine is our excellent health care system. Hospitals shifted patients between and among different buildings to create special zones for COVID-19 cases. Workers changed schedules. When called upon, more than 11,000 retired or prior-career health care workers volunteered under relaxed regulatory requirements. Finally, fourth, we have suffered no significant social unrest. What we are experiencing is a profound, massive affirmation of the pro-life ethic of Hoosiers. We value life over commerce, we readily invest wealth and will suffer sharp economic harm in lost wages, closed businesses, stock market declines and potentially declining home values to save lives. ❖

Ross Douthat, New York Times: The appearance of Covid-19 afforded roughly the same opportunity to President Trump that it did to Hungary's Prime Minister Orban: Here was a foreign threat, an invisible enemy that required a robust government response, a danger that arguably vindicated certain nationalist and populist ideas, a situation in which the normal rules of politics could be suspended for public safety's sake. For good or ill, in the past such crises have generally led to surges of presidential popularity and consolidations of presidential power, under Democrats and Republicans alike. And the idea that such an emergency would come along during Trump's administration was exactly the scenario that people alarmed

by his ascent most feared — a case of history granting a president temperamentally inclined to authoritarianism a genuine state of exception in which to enact his fantasies of one-man rule. But Trump didn't want the gift. It's not just that our president was too ineffective to consolidate power, that any potential authoritarianism was undermined by his administration's incompetence. Once you leave the sphere of petty corruption for the sphere of policymaking, Trump clearly lacks both the facility and the interest level required to find opportunity in crisis. In this case, confronted with the same basic facts as Orban, he showed no sense of the pandemic as anything save an inconvenience to be ignored, a problem to be wished away, an impediment to his lifestyle of golf and tweets and occasional stream-of-consciousness stemwinders. And when reality made ignoring it impossible, his only genuinely political impulse — the only impulse that related to real power and its uses — was to push the crucial forms of responsibility down a level, to the nation's governors, and wash his presidential hands. His most important virus-related power grab to date has been the airtime grab of his daily news conferences. In the fourth year of this presidency the black comedy has finally given way to tragedy. But not because Trump suddenly discovered how to use his authority for dictatorial or democracy-defying purpose. Rather, because in this dark spring America needed a president capable of exercising power and found that it had only a television star, a shirker and a clown. ❖

John Krull, Statehouse File: Indiana House Speaker Todd Huston did the right thing when he punished Indiana Rep. Jim Lucas, R-Seymour, for posting a racist meme on social media. Huston removed Lucas from two legislative committees and stripped him of a leadership position on another. Huston also told Lucas he didn't approve of the Seymour Republican's Facebook post. That post featured a meme of black children dancing with wording that read: "We gon' get free money!" It was merely the latest in a series of disturbing posts by Lucas. Some critics have dismissed Huston's punishment of Lucas as a slap on the wrist. Those critics wanted nothing less than Lucas's ouster from the Indiana House of Representatives. It's hard to see how Huston could have done that, for at least two reasons. The first is that the mechanisms for removing a legislator from office are cumbersome and require proof that the lawmaker either committed specific legal offenses or has been incapacitated to the point that she or he cannot meet the responsibilities of the position. Lucas hadn't committed any of the offenses that might merit removal. It's also difficult to argue that he's not healthy enough to perform the duties of his office. The second reason is the more important one. Noxious as Lucas's views and statements are, they are protected by the First Amendment. To remove someone from office and overturn the results of an election for saying things that are unpopular or even offensive would set a dangerous precedent. ❖



Holcomb invokes early Stage 3

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb on Wednesday said he would activate Stage 3 of his pandemic reopening plan on Friday—two days earlier than previously scheduled ([IBJ](#)). The change applies to the entire state, except for Marion, Lake and Cass counties, which will be allowed to start Stage 3 on June 1 if local authorities approve of that move. Holcomb originally said Stage 3 would be activated on May 24. Stage 3 of the governor's reopening plan allows:

- Social gatherings of up to 100 people;
- Gyms, YMCAs and fitness facilities to open, with restrictions;
- Community pools and campgrounds to open;
- Recreational sports practices to begin under guidelines, except for contact sports; Basketball and tennis courts and soccer and baseball fields to open;
- Restaurant dining rooms to remain at 50% capacity;
- Retail stores and shopping malls to open at 75% capacity;

Remote work is still encouraged whenever possible in Stage 3. Bars, nightclubs and entertainment and sports venues are to remain closed. Casinos also must stay closed. Youth summer day camps will be allowed to start June 1. Individuals are strongly encouraged—but not required—to wear a face mask when in public or around other people. "The No. 1 thing you can do is wear a mask when you're around a lot of other people," Holcomb said.

NCAA lifts grid, hoops moratorium

INDIANAPOLIS — The NCAA Division I Council voted Wednesday to lift a moratorium on voluntary workouts by football and basketball players



effective June 1 as a growing number of college leaders expressed confidence that fall sports will be possible in some form despite concerns about the coronavirus pandemic. The decision clears the way for individual workouts by athletes, mostly on their own, subject to safety and health protocols decided by their schools or local health officials. NCAA officials noted that the workouts could go on as long as all local, state and federal regulations are followed. The status of voluntary workouts for other sports will be determined later. "We encourage each school to use its discretion to make the best decisions possible for football and basketball student-athletes within the appropriate resocialization framework," University of Pennsylvania athletic director and council chair M. Grace Calhoun said in a statement.

Braun slams state shutdowns

FORT WAYNE — U.S. Sen. Mike Braun predicted Wednesday that history will be unkind to governors who ordered statewide shutdowns of commercial activities during the coronavirus pandemic (Francisco, [Fort Wayne Journal Gazette](#)). "When we debrief this, one size fits all was a bad way to do it. That happens often when you've got bureaucrats and folks who don't think more out of the box. I'm just glad we're getting at the point where it looks like we're transitioning to where the economies are reopening," Braun, R-Ind., said during a conference call with Indiana news media. He said sweeping restrictions on public activities and gatherings in March and April were "a flawed approach from the get-go." Every county "probably should have had an approach tailored to what the experts said needed to be done, and that was to make sure you respect the disease, don't give it any leeway, and we could have done two things at once," Braun said about allowing businesses to remain open while taking measures to guard against the spread of COVID.

Rep. Lucas op-ed: 'I did it; I own it'

SEYMOUR — State Rep. Jim Lucas posted an op-ed article in the [Columbus Republic](#) on the Facebook meme that earned him a rebuke from House Speaker Todd Huston: "I did it. I own it. I accept 100% responsibility. Not my family. Not my friends. Not the Indiana Republican Party or anyone else. Me. I did it. What I did was make a meme on social media. I have been vocally against our government response to the COVID-19 issue and I recently made several mocking its running up, crushing debt on our grandchildren's yet-to-be-earned wealth to deal with the consequences of its own actions in response to a virus that is showing to have over a 99% survival rate."

3 Floyds remains closed indefinitely

MUNSTER — The coronavirus pandemic has prompted the founder of one of the most iconic — and crowded — brewpubs in the Midwest to close indefinitely ([Indiana Public Media](#)). Nick Floyd said that despite the fact that Indiana is allowing businesses to reopen, he believes reopening Three Floyds Brewing's pub in Munster was too risky to employees and customers alike. "I can't put people in danger; no one should die over a beer," Floyd told the Chicago Tribune after Indiana allowed restaurants to reopen at half capacity May 11.

South Bend to open homeless center

SOUTH BEND — The city of South Bend plans to open and run a new homeless shelter, possibly in the former Salvation Army building it owns at Main and Monroe streets, Mayor James Mueller said Wednesday. "We can't encourage large encampments, including on city-owned property," Mueller said.