

Pence 'celebrates' COVID victory

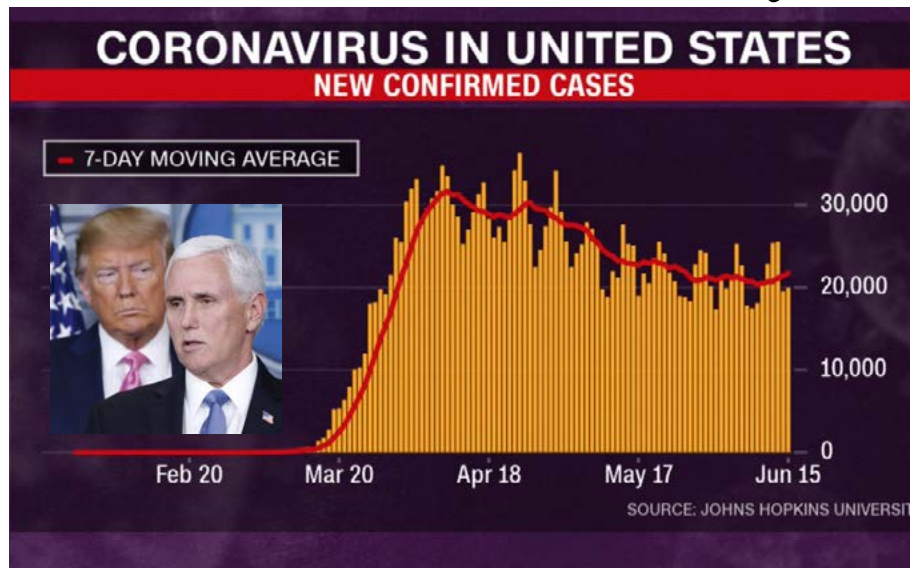
Vice president takes aim at media, will join Trump for MAGA rally in Tulsa

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Last March 29, President Trump said at one of his coronavirus task force shows, "Nothing would be worse than declaring victory before the victory is won."

But that is exactly what Trump and task force chair Mike Pence are saying and doing in their stewarding the United States through the COVID-19 pandemic that has infected more than 1 million people, killing 118,000. Americans are tired of isolation. Trump was told his coronavirus "shows" were harming his torpid reelection chances, so he was champing at the bit to return to his MAGA rallies he uses to fuel his ego and display political momentum. Pence's coronavirus task force has been shuttled off to the mothballs. Trump hasn't spoken with Dr. Anthony Fauci in weeks.

On Tuesday in a Wall Street Journal op-ed, Pence said there is no "second wave" and blamed the media. "In



recent days, the media has taken to sounding the alarm bells over a 'second wave' of coronavirus infections. Such panic is overblown," Pence writes. "Thanks to the leadership of President Trump and the courage and compassion of the American people, our public health system is far stronger than it was four months ago, and we are winning

Continued on page 3

COVID conventions

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – COVID-19 is about to wreak its havoc on the Indiana Republican Convention, as well as the national conventions. For Indiana Republicans, it largely means two things: 1.) Gov. Holcomb needs to continue to upset as few people as possible, or upset many as little as possible, and 2.) the Republicans must nominate a candidate for attorney general. The second is more challenging.



It is clear that an underperforming candidate, as Richard Mourdock became in 2012, can pull down another weak link such as the superintendent of education, who then pulled the gubernatorial candidate, Mike



"The pandemic is still actively attacking Hoosiers. In the midst of this pandemic, this attorney general is actively trying to take health care from Hoosier families by suing to overturn the Affordable Care Act."

- Democratic attorney general nominee Jonathan Weinzapfel



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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



Pence, straight downwards. Pence narrowly escaped what happened to his ticket mates. Fortunately, that crisis happened late in the cycle and the clock ran out. The charges against Attorney General Curtis Hill have been festering in public debate for a long time.

While as a whole Hoosiers don't seethe with rage, we do get kinda upset sometimes and elect leftist radicals like Evan Bayh and Joe Donnelly. So there is some risk of losing an office even in these times.

Just consider how many uncomfortable subjects the attorney general situation touches. Republicans don't have a deep reservoir of state elected African-American officials. The other one is Attorney General Daniel Cameron of Kentucky, who was elected last year. That is if you don't agree with Joe Biden's original comment that they are not really black. Bluntly said, if Hill wasn't a conservative Republican, it is less clear how the media would be reacting.

Furthermore, both parties are nominating candidates for president who have definitely been a little touchy-feely themselves, and with charges a lot worse than that. Legislative standards are also a bit checkered. I don't defend it – my position, personal and as I applied to Bill Clinton – was that public officials should not be impeached but resign for sexual immorality. But sexual harassment and forced sexual activities are illegal, not just immoral. To have an attorney general censured and punished for such behavior, even if the actions were pursued by Democrats and Republicans who opposed Hill, is, to say the least, a serious problem.

Nevertheless, Republicans understand that the governor and the top Republican leaders were not fans of the AG long before the specific charges. They especially didn't want him on the ballot running for governor in 2024. Because of this, extra scrutiny will be on the leadership to see if they are transparent and fair in the

convention process. Trust of government among citizens of both parties is incredibly low. Train whistles sounding through an on-line convention could have long-time repercussions.

This is not the time for elite rule. COVID confinement is being rejected by the masses no matter what governors are saying. There is a boiling bitterness, at the disease and at government. On all sides. Don't poke it.

Which brings us to Todd Rokita, the man Curtis Hill replaced at the top of the political irritants



list of the Republican powers that be. It is tempting to assume that, after running multiple candidates up the flagpole as an alternative to AG, they encouraged Rokita to run out of sheer panic. On the other hand, unless the other candidates pull out before the vote to endorse Rokita, the surface concept of three candidates running against the AG seems like sloppy bossism. Or at least desperation.

Does this bizarre convention process lead to the advantage of bossism or does it weaken it? What if this goes more than one ballot? Do Indiana Republicans really have any "bosses" in the first place? They don't have the patronage they used to have, or bank deposits to give to favorites, fewer contracts that aren't bid, and no license branches to control. Unfriending someone on

Facebook does not have as much sting. There still are a few things for allies but an entire convention is somewhat unwieldy. While political bossism is mostly dead, to the degree it survives, it will be seen in the backrooms of a convention. How does that work over the internet?

Here are some key questions: How many alternates, selected by the county leaders, replace those who were elected in the primaries? How many chairmen actually picked the primary delegates, versus populist grassroots Republicans filing on their own? We already had one dust-up purge in Allen. Can the central leaders of Indianapolis control the donut counties, who bolted for Mourdock over Lugar, or will social conservatives?

Rokita has clearly penetrated northern Indiana strongly, which otherwise might have gone to Hill. I don't have any idea how anyone is doing Indy south. Which raises the question about leaders whose roots are Indy and south: Where does Sen. Braun stand? What about Sen. Young and former Congressman Messer? There is some interesting history related to Rokita on that list.

The assumption is that this convention makes it hard for less organized delegates (i.e. social conservatives) to defeat county chairmen, legislators, the governor and other statewide campaigners. And Todd Rokita is one

of Indiana's hardest campaigners in our history. But then there's this fact: Curtis Hill has been underestimated in every race he's entered. If neither Hill nor Rokita is nominated, it will very apparent that political bosses did an in-your-face rejection of what Republican voters would have done in a primary. Things always change in politics but this could become a billboard for removing the last reason for having state conventions.

The biggest question for the national Democrats is who Biden will pick for vice president, which is particularly important since he's 77 already. Will they officially name President Trump as their campaign manager, since he's the Biden campaign's only asset so far and the only unifying one?

As for Republicans, how does a split convention work? The working part will be in Charlotte and the public part will be an adoring crowd in Jacksonville. Will demonstrators outnumber the convention attendees in Jacksonville? Will Jacksonville still be called Jacksonville by late August? The people wait with no suspense. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.

COVID, from page 1

the fight against the invisible enemy. While talk of an increase in cases dominates cable news coverage, more than half of states are actually seeing cases decline or remain stable.

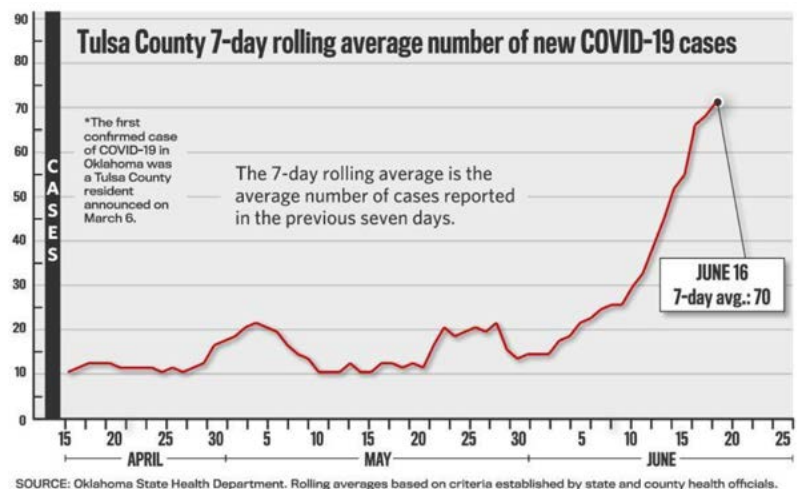
"Every state, territory and major metropolitan area, with the exception of three, have positive test rates under 10%. And in the six states that have reached more than 1,000 new cases a day, increased testing has allowed public health officials to identify most of the outbreaks in particular settings – prisons, nursing homes and meatpacking facilities – and contain them," Pence continued. "Lost in the coverage is the fact that today less than 6% of Americans tested each week are found to have the virus. The media has tried to scare the American people every step of the way, and these grim predictions of a second wave are no different. The truth is, whatever the media says, our whole-of-America approach has been a success. We've slowed the spread, we've cared for the most vulnerable, we've saved lives, and we've created a solid foundation for whatever challenges we may face in the future. That's a cause for celebration, not the media's fear-mongering."

On April 24, Pence had predicted the pandemic would "largely be behind us by Memorial Day." IBJ reporter John Russell tweeted: "Just gonna bookmark this op-ed by Mike Pence and check back in a month or two."

This Saturday night, Trump and Pence will appear

at Tulsa's BOK Center arena before a packed house, with the Trump campaign reporting a million requests for tickets. The Trump campaign will hand out face masks and hand sanitizers. Social distancing? Don't count on it. But attendees had to sign a waiver protecting Trump Inc., and holding the arena harmless should anyone contract COVID-19.

The Tulsa World reported Wednesday: Trump supporters, who were gathering outside of the BOK Center on



Tuesday, said they had no fear of the virus. James Massery said he did not worry about COVID-19, a sentiment shared among others there. "Whether or not I get it, it doesn't bother me in the least," said Massery, who is from Preston, a small community about 30 miles from Tulsa. "If I get it,

I'll deal with it ... if it takes me out, it's just going to make me mad that I can't vote for Trump in this coming election."

Tulsa City-County Health Commissioner Bruce Dart appeared before the city's school board on Monday and was asked if the MAGA rally could impact the reopening of city schools in August. "I'm extremely concerned," Dart said. "I think we have the responsibility to stand up when things are happening that I think are going to be dangerous for our community, which it will be. It hurts my heart to think about the aftermath of what's going to happen."

This is just the ramping up to a full-fledged Republican National Convention in Jacksonville in late August in another emerging hotspot state. There, President Trump expects a packed arena filled with adulating supporters. In contrast, Indiana Republicans and Democrats opted for "virtual" conventions this past week and an expanded ballot by mail for the delayed June 2 primary. The Democratic National Committee is still weighing what it will do for its July convention slated for Milwaukee.

The Trump/Pence MAGA rally comes as "hotspots" emerge in 17 states like Oklahoma (new cases up 68% in the second week of June, two weeks after the Memorial Day holiday), South Carolina (up 86%), and Alabama (97%). In Indiana's Trump country, Elkhart and LaGrange county commissioners mandated face masks in public this past week. "In view of our continuing rise in the number of COVID cases that we're having, we need to pull another tool out of our box," Elkhart County Health Officer Dr. Lydia Mertz told the Elkhart Truth.



Vice President Pence didn't wear a face mask during a visit to Pennsylvania earlier this week.

"Anecdotal hospital capacity information, and this is from a phone call around to the hospitals yesterday: You've got Lutheran and Parkview in Fort Wayne, very full, quite busy," said Goshen General Health President Randy Christofel ([Elkhart Truth](#)). "We still have capacity, but at this rate, we will run out. If this continues, we will be tight on capacity here within the next week or two at the most."

"COVID's not taking a summer vacation," Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease expert and professor at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, told CNN.

In a conference call with governors on Monday, Vice President Pence urged them "to continue to explain to your citizens the magnitude of the increase in testing" in addressing the new outbreaks. And he asked them to "encourage people with the news that we're safely reopening the country."

In fact, according to the New York Times and Washington Post, seven-day averages in several states with outbreaks have increased since May 31, and in at least 14 states, the positive case rate is increasing faster than the increase in the average number of tests. In the

next couple of weeks, we'll learn whether the mass George Floyd protests across the nation increased COVID propagation.

"The president often talks about embers," Pence said, adding that "despite a mass increase in testing, we are still averaging roughly 20,000 cases a day, which is significantly down from six weeks ago."

Politico's Ryan Lizza and Ranuka Rayasam observed, "Pence abruptly reinvented himself as a coronavirus skeptic this week, with comments and an op-ed article that stray into pandemic denialism. Perhaps most telling, Pence made it clear that the effort to eliminate the disease before a vaccine is ready is not really the goal anymore. Instead, Pence argued that the White House now measures success by a lower level of daily deaths."

Tempting fate in Tulsa

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention outlined the highest risk events for transmission of the coronavirus this way: "Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least six feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area." The CDC recommends cloth masks in places where people might shout or chant.

The Wall Street Journal called them "superspreading events." It reported: A study published by the National Academy of Sciences last week found that one minute of loud speech was enough to produce thousands of droplets that remain airborne for about 12 minutes, potentially able to infect anyone in the area. Similar studies have shown that virus-laden aerosols, particles smaller than droplets, can levitate for hours after being released in indoor spaces.

Indiana had one such event on March 6 at Lawrence Central HS for a sectional basketball game, one of 64 tournament games that fateful night. It was the scene where five Hoosiers caught the coronavirus and eventually died, including North Central HS Athletic Director Paul Loggan. Another dozen people tested positive and/or displayed symptoms.

Within two weeks, Indiana was in shutdown mode to keep its medical systems from being swamped. Not only has the pandemic claimed 2,265 Hoosier lives (the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation predicted 2,800 deaths by Aug. 1 and 3,407 by Oct. 1), it has prompted 750,000 Hoosiers to file unemployment claims and put 30% to 40% of the state's half million small businesses on the ropes.

A second phase of a statewide study, a collaboration between the Indiana State Department of Health and IU's Fairbanks School of Public Health revealed that 43% of those testing positive were asymptomatic. The study of 3,600 Hoosiers between June 3 and June 8 determined that the statewide estimate for the active infection rate

was 0.6%, a sharp decrease from the 1.7% observed in Phase 1. The estimate for antibody positivity in Phase 2 was 1.5%, an increase from 1.1% from the Phase 1 results. "While the reasons for this decline could vary, it is likely that the virus has slowed due to our collective efforts to be safer, engage in social distancing, and reduce transmission by wearing masks and adhering to higher hand- and surface-hygiene standards," said Dr. Nir Menachemi, lead scientist on the study and a professor and Fairbanks Endowed Chair. "This was an example of Hoosiers successfully hunkering down during the initial outbreak."

"The reason we were able to move to Stage 4 of our reopening plan was that Hoosiers took steps to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, and these data show that those steps have worked," State Health Commissioner Kris Box said. "But we still have active transmission, and we must continue to take steps to protect our most vulnerable Hoosiers."

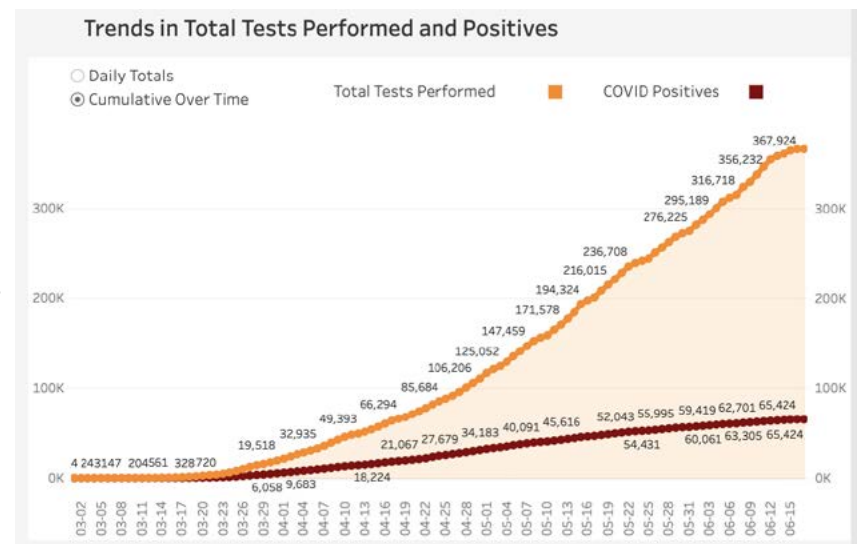
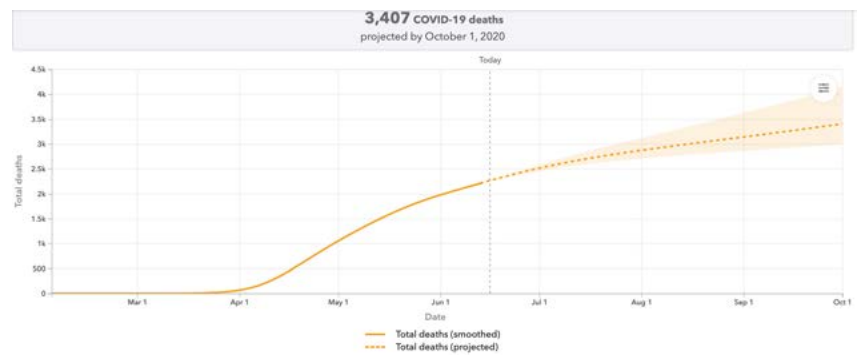
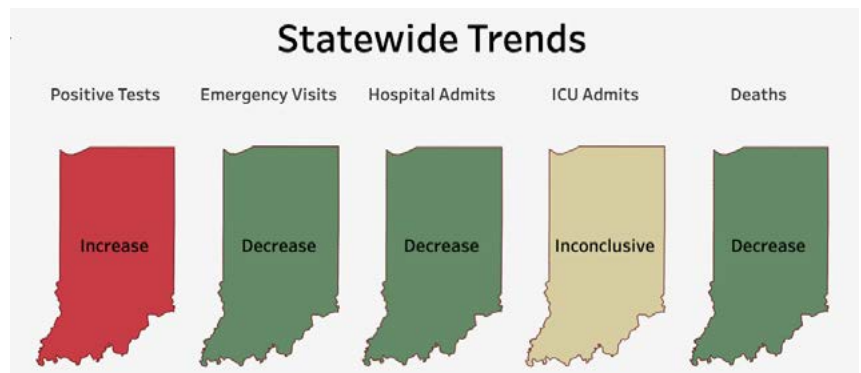
Pressure to reopen

Those 750,000 Hoosiers thrown out of work and a coming \$2 billion biennial budget shortfall have placed pressures on governors to reopen. Gov. Eric Holcomb's five-stage plan was supposed to culminate with the July 4 NASCAR race at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. It will be run without spectators. Dozens of Hoosier county fairs and the 17-day Indiana State Fair have been cancelled, as have an array of community festivals, fireworks and conventions.

Recent polling suggests that nearly a third of Hoosier parents are "very likely" to not have their children return to school, according to a letter four Democratic lawmakers sent to the governor last week. Dr. Box put the number between 25% and 30% on Wednesday, calling it "incredibly discouraging."

"It's a pandemic. There are so many unknowns," State Rep. Tonya Pfaff told the Terre Haute Tribune-Star's Sue Loughlin, noting that a mid-September head count is used to determine federal and state funding for the academic year. "Don't cut the funds this year. Let's wait until we get through this year and then go back to business as usual."

U.S. Rep. Jim Banks took the exact opposite course, introducing the Reopen Our Schools Act that would halt federal funding if in-person learning isn't returned this fall. "We need to change the subject from 'our schools might not reopen in the fall' to 'our schools will reopen in the fall and here's what we need to do it,'" said Banks. "America is the land of opportunity where education is guaranteed to all children. We're not living up that guarantee at the moment."



In May, HPI observed that Holcomb would face, perhaps, the most arduous set of policy decisions in re-opening the state any governor has faced in two centuries. But, ultimately, it will be consumers who will make the final determination. Trump has twisted the face mask issue into a partisan divide and his 30% to 40% of ardent supporters will go to MAGA rallies, eschew face masks and pack into bars. But 60% of Americans will stick to social distancing, wear face masks, not attend theaters, restaurants, arenas and classrooms.

According to an Axios-Ipsos Coronavirus Index, 80% of Americans worry about a second virus wave. Large majorities say they'd resume social distancing, dial back shopping and keep kids out of school. "But getting Americans to swallow a second round of 14-day self-quarantining could be tougher, with one in three of our 1,022 respon-

dents saying they likely won't do it," Axios reported. "The biggest factor is partisan identification: 81% of Democrats, but only 49% of Republicans, say they'd self-quarantine if a second wave hits."



"Because of quarantine fatigue, because of the economic effects of quarantine, another round of shutdowns might have even larger effects on businesses that may be on the edge of not being able to stay solvent," said Dr. Christopher Murray, director of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington.

In an interview with the Wall Street Journal, Dr. Anthony Fauci reiterated that the jump in cases "cannot be explained by increased testing." He warned that relaxed approaches to social distancing, such as congregating close to lots of people in large venues, and an aversion to mask-wearing would cause the disease to spread. But Fauci did agree with Pence on one thing. "People keep talking about

a second wave. We're still in a first wave."

Harsh realities ahead

Hoosiers are just a couple of months away from realizing harsh pandemic realities when it comes to schools as well as Colts and college football. The Wall Street Journal reported: Football is incompatible with social distancing. It also relies on a large share of people, despite their relatively young ages, who could face a disproportionate risk of severe complications from the coronavirus. According to the NFL Players Association's ongoing research, more than 70% of NFL players fall into a serious, at-risk category, such as being African-American or having a high body-mass index. "It will be more difficult for football than a few other sports," said Saad Omer, an epidemiologist and director of the Yale Institute for Global Health.

In a recent Congressional hearing with college presidents, U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) asked Purdue University President Mitch Daniels what would happen if one of the school's teams had an outbreak. "What's your protocol?" Murphy asked. "Do you shut that team down?" Daniels replied: "I think you would shut it down."

Then there are colleges and universities, most of



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which are poised to reopen early in August, and end the semester just prior to Thanksgiving, when chances of the so-called "second wave" are expected to rise. Prof. Lawrence Steinberg, of Temple University and author of "Age of Opportunity: Lessons From the New Science of Adolescence," called university reopening plans "so unrealistically optimistic that they border on delusional and could lead to outbreaks of COVID-19 among students, faculty and staff."

In a New York Times op-ed, Steinberg observed: "My skepticism about the strategies under consideration is not based on videos of college students frolicking on Florida's beaches when they were explicitly told to avoid large gatherings. Rather, it comes from more than 40 years teaching and researching young people. Most types of risky behavior — reckless driving, criminal activity, fighting, unsafe sex and binge drinking, to name just a few — peak during the late teens and early 20s. Moreover, interventions designed to diminish risk-taking in this age group, such as attempts to squelch binge drinking on campus, have an underwhelming track record. There is little reason to think that the approaches proposed to mitigate transmission of the coronavirus among college students will fare any better."

The scene at Harry's Chocolate Bar near the Purdue campus in mid-May revealed that mindset: Students lined up to enter the iconic bar "elbow to elbow," according to Dave Bangert of the Lafayette Journal & Courier. Few wore masks.

Epilogue

It has been a long, long winter and spring. We watched March Madness, The Masters and Major League Baseball be replaced on ESPN by the National Cornhole Championships. We've heard Dr. Deborah Birx warn in early April, "This is the moment to not be going to the grocery store, not going to the pharmacy," which begged the question: How are we supposed to eat? We watched Hoosier restaurants and bars miss out on more than \$1 billion in income. We've watched the notion of wearing face masks become politicized. On a recent Sunday, the North Keystone Lowe's in blue Indianapolis had about 75% of people wearing face masks, while a Lowe's in red Fishers had less than 20%.

In an interview with Sean Hannity on Wednesday, President Trump said the virus was "fading away." He added, "We're very close to a vaccine."

President Trump and Vice President Pence have essentially declared "victory" over the microbe deemed crucial to their wavering reelection chances and that the financial reawakening is at hand. That may be akin to President George W. Bush's 2003 "Mission Accomplished" declaration in the Iraq War.

The cold hard reality is that unless an effective vaccine emerges, such a win still seems to be a long way off as Americans continue to receive mixed messages from the White House, governors and health officials. ❖

Weinzapfel wins INDem attorney general race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Former Evansville mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel won a 48-vote Democrat attorney general nomination Wednesday night and now has to wait three weeks before he knows

whether he will face embattled Republican incumbent Curtis Hill or one of three challengers. Weinzapfel defeated State Sen.

Karen Tallian, 1,057 to 1,009, with 86% of the delegates participating in this pandemic inspired virtual state convention.

"I am so honored to receive this nomination," said Weinzapfel, the former two-term Evansville mayor and state legislator. "These are unprecedented times and Hoosiers want an attorney general who will focus on families, our health and our rights.

The pandemic is still actively attacking Hoosiers. In the midst of this pandemic, this attorney general is actively trying to take health care from Hoosier families by suing to overturn the Affordable Care Act.

"We have record job losses and a staggering number of Hoosiers are out of work," Weinzapfel said at a press conference via Zoom. "With the death of George Floyd, we are now confronting issues with the criminal justice system. I will be an attorney general that fights to protect all Hoosier families. On day one, I will withdraw Indiana from Curtis Hill's lawsuit to overturn the Affordable Care Act."

He called Hill's move against Obamacare "completely unacceptable."

Tonight, Hill along with challengers Todd Rokita, John Westercamp and Decatur County Prosecutor Nate Harter will address the virtual Indiana Republican Convention. GOP delegates will vote and send in choices for four ballots, they will be counted on July 9 and announced on July 10.



Hill led the GOP ticket in 2016, but drew the three challengers after sexual harassment allegations surfaced after a 2018 sine die party the night the General Assembly finished business. A special prosecutor declined to file charges, but Hill's law license was suspended by the Indiana Supreme Court's Disciplinary Commission for 30 days. That suspension ended Wednesday with Hill's license returned to "active in good standing," as directed by an order of the court.

Weinzapfel had two successful terms as mayor of Evansville after he defeated Republican Mayor Russell Lloyd Jr. 63%-33% in 2003 and was reelected in 2007 with 83% of the vote. After City Hall, he became chancellor at Ivy Tech. In addition to two terms in the Indiana House from 1999 to 2003, he unsuccessfully challenged U.S. Rep. John Hostettler in 1996, losing 50% to 48%.

"As attorney general, I will focus on citizen's rights," Weinzapfel said, "not partisan fights. I will restore honor, integrity and purpose to the office."

Rokita reacts to Weinzapfel nomination

Former twice-elected statewide Secretary of State and Member of Congress Todd Rokita reacted, saying, "Indiana Democrats have nominated a true liberal in Jonathan Weinzapfel, who will promote abortion, support job-killing red tape, and will continue his record of back door tax increases. Having faced off against him as I successfully implemented the nation's first Voter ID law, I know he is a fierce advocate for his liberal causes. As our next Republican nominee for Attorney General I would look forward to a robust debate on these issues."

GOP AG candidates speak tonight

The 2020 Indiana Republican State Convention will be broadcast live from 5:30 to 7 p.m. tonight. The convention will feature speeches from all Republican attorney general candidates including Attorney General Curtis Hill, former congressman Todd Rokita, Decatur County Prosecutor Nate Harter, and Zionsville attorney John Westercamp.

Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, Indiana GOP Chairman Kyle Hupfer and a keynote address from Gov. Eric Holcomb are also on the bill. The convention will be broadcast live on WISH-TV (Indianapolis), WHME-TV (South Bend) and Livestreamed on wishtv.com and Indiana.gop/stateconvention.

In developments this week Tippecanoe County Prosecutor Pat Harrington endorsed Hill, saying he has successfully defended convictions attained by Hoosier prosecutors. "He is an effective and efficient leader for the attorney general's office," Harrington said. Also endorsing Hill was Monica Boyer. "Results are what I seek," said Boyer. "Our freedoms depend on what our attorney general



does. The lives of the unborn depends on how hard our attorney general fights. I watched him fight for us when nobody else would."

Indiana Family Institute's Curt Smith says he is backing Hill, adding, "I am committed to Curtis as the most consistent conservative voice in the Statehouse."

Harter picked up the endorsement of Rush County Chair Phil Caviness, Crawford County Chair Whitney Timberlake, Ripley County Chair Ginger Bradford and Shelby County Chair Rob Nolley, indicating his center of support is in south central Indiana, as well as Marion and Hamilton counties.

This is how the HPI Horse Race is handicapping this unprecedented showdown via the virtual convention.

Hill's window of opportunity will be a first ballot win. We believe that if it comes down to multiple ballots, Westercamp will be out after the first round, and Harter after round two. In a third round showdown against Rokita, we think the former congressman and secretary of state will coalesce enough support to overcome Hill's widespread support among social conservatives. **HPI Horse Race Status:** Leans Hill.

Cook Report rates AG race 'tossup'

This is easily the most unsettled AG race in the country in 2020. The reason: Attorney General Curtis Hill has faced groping allegations by four women — three legislative staffers from different parties and chambers and one Democratic state lawmaker — at a 2018 post-session party (Jacobson, Cook Political Report). While Hill strongly denied the allegations and a special prosecutor believed he could not secure a conviction, Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb, fellow GOP statewide officials, and legislative leaders called on him to resign. Eventually, Hill was slapped with a 30-day suspension of his law license by the Supreme Court, all of whose justices had been appointed by Republican governors, and by extension, a suspension from the office of attorney general. While Hill will automatically be reinstated in mid-June, that's not the end of the story for the Republican nomination. Hill will have to beat out three rivals for the nomination at the state party convention: former U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, who was twice elected statewide as secretary of state; Decatur Co. prosecutor and county party chair Nate Harter; and attorney John Westercamp. Hill's strength in the convention will be among grassroots social conservatives, while the other candidates will

be fighting for the same bloc as well as courting establishment support. If Hill is the nominee, he could see dwindling support from suburban Republicans, especially women, giving Democrats a shot at the AG office even in red Indiana. The Democrats' chance of winning would probably be narrower if Hill is denied the nomination. Because of the uncertainty, we're moving this race from Lean Republican to Toss Up, though it could shift back

depending on how the GOP nomination works out.

Weinzapfel lauds SCOTUS decision

Weinzapfel lauded the U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding workplace protections for gays. “The Supreme Court ruled that gay and trans people cannot be discriminated against in the workplace, citing protections under the Civil Rights Act of 1964,” Weinzapfel said. “The decision is a heartening sign of progress for the LGBTQ community, who for too long have been denied equality under the law. As a long-time supporter of equality for all Hoosiers, I celebrate and commend the Supreme Court’s decision. I stand firm that no one should fear workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. That’s why as mayor of Evansville, I passed one of the state’s first non-discrimination ordinances and as chancellor at Ivy Tech, I installed the first gender-neutral bathrooms on campus.”

Conventions

Buttigieg, Visclosky to address young Ds

The Indiana Young Democrats (IYD) announced that the Democratic U.S. Reps. André Carson and Pete Visclosky will speak at the 2020 Indiana Young Democrats Virtual State Convention on Saturday. Carson and Visclosky will address the attendees beginning at 11:30.

Congress

5th CD: AFP backs Spartz

Americans for Prosperity Action announced its support for State Sen. Victoria Spartz’s election to Indiana’s 5th CD. Spartz earned AFP Action’s support for her work in the Indiana Senate to expand access to quality, affordable health care, putting more money in Hoosier families’ pockets, and backing pro-growth reforms that help small business recover and thrive following the economic crisis caused by COVID-19 and business shutdowns. AFP will

use its signature grassroots and a range of other tactics to support Spartz.”

Presidential 2020

Biden leads Trump by 16% in Michigan

The damage done to President Donald Trump’s standing in Michigan following recent protests outside the White House and in cities across the U.S. may have been even greater than originally believed, a new poll released to the Detroit Free Press said Tuesday. Two weeks ago, EPIC-MRA of Lansing, a polling firm that does work for the Free Press, released a survey showing former Vice President Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, leading Trump 53%-41% in Michigan, a 12-point edge. But a second poll, started on May 31, a day after the first poll began, and concluded a day later than the first poll, on June 4, showed Biden leading Trump 55%-39% in Michigan, a 16-point margin.

Biden leads in six swing states

Former Vice President Joe Biden has expanded his edge over President Donald Trump in six 2020 election swing states, according to a new CNBC/Change Research poll. The survey found the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee leads the incumbent by a 48% to 45% margin across Arizona, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Biden’s edge grew from 1 percentage point in the last swing-state poll released two weeks ago. Trump led in all previous versions of the survey dating back to March. The poll released Wednesday found Biden leading Trump in all six states for the first time (though only narrowly in some):

- ❑ Arizona: Biden 45%, Trump 44%
- ❑ Florida: Biden 50%, Trump 43%
- ❑ Michigan: Biden 47%, Trump 45%
- ❑ North Carolina: Biden 47%, Trump 45%
- ❑ Pennsylvania: Biden 49%, Trump 46%
- ❑ Wisconsin: Biden 48%, Trump 44% ❖



Past election results do not portend future

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS – The favored disclaimer of financial advisors – past performance does not guarantee future results – is applicable to politics, too. It should go without saying that a candidate is best off running their present race rather than a past race. But basking in the glory of past success is an urge hard to resist.



In this year's race for attorney general, for instance, supporters of incumbent Curtis Hill, and Hill himself, when faced with questions that he might incur substantial headwinds in a general election campaign, frequently cite the fact that he received more raw votes than any candidate in Indiana electoral history four years ago as

evidence of his unshakable base of support.

Does that history-making run shed any light on what could happen this year? Not even close. In fact, it's utterly meaningless. If past performance were any guarantee of future results, we would have today a Sen. Richard Mourdock, a Congressman Greg Zoeller and a 5th District Congressional nominee Kelly Mitchell. But we don't. Each of their subsequent runs for public office, which came immediately after leading the statewide ticket in their previous cycle on the ballot, failed to translate into victory.

Murdock, for his part, fell into the past performance trap in his 2012 campaign for U.S. Senate. I actually recall his Twitter profile including a mention that he received more statewide votes in 2010 than Dan Coats, who was returning to the U.S. Senate and ultimately became director of national intelligence, and Tim Berry, who went on to win his fourth statewide election in 12 years before stepping down to take helm of the Indiana Republican Party. While Mourdock did go on to defeat Richard Lugar in the Republican primary, he lost to Joe Donnelly in the general election later that year.

At the same time, Zoeller impressively bested Mike Pence on the statewide ticket, as did Mitt Romney, Glenda Ritz and Joe Donnelly, before finishing third behind Trey Hollingsworth and State Sen. Erin Houchin in his bid for the Republican nomination in the 9th Congressional District four years later. Of that 2012 bunch, today Romney is a senator from Utah, Pence is vice president of the United States and the others are no longer in elected office. And Mitchell, who garnered more votes than Mike Braun, Connie Lawson and Tera Klutz two years ago, came in sixth in her campaign for the 5th Congressional District Republican nomination earlier this month.

What does that say? Beyond the well-known and highly publicized races of president, governor and U.S. Senate, down ballot races are more a function of circumstance and environment than a reflection of broad and sustained electoral support for a candidate. For example, in each of the cases outlined there was no Libertarian candidate to siphon votes away from the eventual victor. And rarely do we see coordinated attack campaigns against candidates for attorney general, treasurer and auditor. Those races don't stir the same type of emotion that the top of the ticket does.

Name identification, the measure of how many registered or likely voters are familiar with a candidate, is a purer indicator of potential support. But there, too, statewide candidates encounter a major disadvantage.

To that end, I once asked an apparently familiar statewide elected official to share with me their highest level of name identification over their years of service. The answer? It crested at 25%. No more than 25% of Hoosier voters could acknowledge recognizing the official's name after years in local and statewide office, yet that official still consistently pulled in the neighborhood of one million votes on Election Day.

Candidates and their supporters – not only Hill's, but all those who enjoy using this talking point – would be wise to take heed. There can be more hype than hope in believing in a candidate's past success. Mourdock fully embodied the Tea Party movement prevalent in one election, but fell short when the pendulum swung in the next. And Zoeller and Mitchell saw their fortunes turn when self-funding candidates were alongside them on the ballot.

What does this mean for today? For Hill, 2020 looks nothing like 2016, just as 2012 looked nothing like 2010 for Mourdock, 2016 looked nothing like 2012 for Zoeller and 2020 looked nothing like 2018 for Mitchell. Hill will, if nominated, face a well-funded Democrat opponent in a race that will be unlike the sleepy affair that was his initial statewide foray four years ago.

Delegates deserve the right to make their voices heard – and they will – but in doing so they need to avoid a false sense of comfort. This election is a monster unlike any other and Hill's 2016 performance is no guarantee of his 2020 results, neither at the convention nor in the general election. That's assuming he gets there.

(Full disclosure: Although one of the candidates for the Republican nomination for attorney general is a colleague, I am not involved in the present nomination battle aside from being an appointed convention delegate.) ❖

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. Sen. 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."

Next president will be an old white guy

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – There is a strong possibility that Joe Biden will be the next president of the United States. That’s NOT a prediction. Just saying it’s a strong possibility.

Virtually all the polls, nationwide and in key battleground states, show Biden ahead and gaining strength. President Trump, though keeping his solid base, is faltering with important segments of voters registering disapproval of his response to the pandemic and protests.



But I’m certainly not ready to predict that President Trump will lose to Biden this November. I steer away from predictions. The last time I wrote a flat-out political prediction was decades ago. I went out on the limb to predict that “Bob” would be elected mayor of Mishawaka. The nominees were Bob Beutter and Bob Nagle.

The election is nearly five months away. It’s impossible even to guess all that could happen before we vote. Who five months ago would have guessed that the nation now would be talking about a coronavirus, George Floyd, a plunge into recession and a presidential pose with a Bible in front of a boarded-up church near the White House?

Still, there’s a trend, a strong trend leading to a strong possibility of a President Biden.

The presidential election is for the Democrats to lose. Never underestimate their ability to do so. Democrats snatched defeat from the jaws of presidential victory in 2016.

Some defected to a Green Party candidate in key states, helping to elect a president who then withdrew from the Paris Climate Accord. Some stayed home, angry that Bernie Sanders wasn’t the Democratic nominee and helping someone else to stay in a house, the White House. Some, disgusted with the way things were in Washington,

decided they wanted somebody to tear the place apart. They perhaps wish now that they didn’t get their wish.

Danger signs are there amidst the favorable polls for Biden. Some progressives say they can’t support Biden if he doesn’t switch to a Sanders type progressive agenda. Some more moderate Democrats and independents say they can’t support him if he does. Some blacks say they will lose enthusiasm for Biden is he doesn’t pick a black for vice president.

Some protesters, although doing so much to focus national attention on the way George Floyd was killed – those horrible, inexcusable eight minutes and 46 seconds of torture and death – played into the hands of the “law and order president” by shouting a demand to defund or disband the police.

Biden, joined by party leaders and protest leaders, including Rev. Al Sharpton and Congressman Jim Clyburn, said no to defunding. Reform police practices, they said. No choke holds. Budget priorities to stress prevention. “We need the police. We want the police,” Clyburn said. “Let’s not get so carried away that we allow sloganeering to hijack this movement.”

Well, we do need police in South Bend, when at least 322 shots were fired last weekend in gun incidents in which five people, including a 13-year-old kid, were wounded. We need them in Chicago, in New York, in any city where anarchy is not the answer. The answer is in legislation for reform that Clyburn is pushing for in Congress.

Danger for Biden also looms if he promises too much. He can’t guarantee, and neither can Clyburn, that a police reform bill with any teeth will pass now in Congress and be signed into law by President Trump. That isn’t going to happen. A step in that direction? Maybe.

Joining in sloganeering that promises too much or calls for things that could be popular in New York but not with voters in a key state like Michigan is a danger. Promises and slogans that will be perfect for tweets from the White House will help the president extend his stay there. ❖



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

We all have to make this work

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – These are uncertain, divided times for our nation. Unemployment is at mind-boggling levels, a virus we still don't fully understand is stifling the course of ordinary life, many businesses are struggling, nationwide protests continue against systemic and deep-seated racism, and local policy makers face rising questions about policing and public safety. It's no surprise that this is one of those rare moments of national reflection about our future course.



It's also a moment of great attention to our political system, because that's how we're going to work these things out. For me, this raises a fundamental question: What are politics and government all about, and how

do we use them to make progress on such fundamental issues?

At heart, I'd argue, our political and economic systems try to provide an environment that enhances each person's quest for happiness and a good life. We lay the framework for this in part through government, and through the politics that determine who runs our government and what they do once in office.

We do this through a representative democracy, a system by which citizens elect men and women to represent them in a national or state legislature in order to make the laws of the country. It's an elaborate, complex effort, especially in a country as diverse as ours. Disparate interests are rampant at every level, and in order for government to work you have to try to build a consensus among those groups – while seeking collective security, economic growth, and protection for individual rights and liberties. That's because our democracy promotes the idea that individuals are equal before the law, and that the rights we've enshrined in the Bill of Rights need to be protected.

Representative democracy does not demand that its citizens participate, but it fails if enough of them don't. It encourages civic engagement, community service, citizens living up to their obligations to their neighbors, and, of course, voting. It also makes room for all manner of communications, from letter-writing to participating in boycotts and protests. And it works best when people are well informed and educated on the political issues. In this era especially, that places a

burden on us all to find high-quality information and use it effectively and prudently.

The thing to remember about the system is that it encourages competition for political power among a wide range of groups and interests, and nothing is ever settled. If you lose, you're given a chance to win in future elections. If finally, you win, you've got the temporary power to achieve your legislative goals. But winning is never total. Congress and our legislatures represent the diversity of the population, and pretty much require cooperation and consensus-building to accomplish anything. This is both a weakness – it can be cumbersome – and a strength, since it allows for reasonable stability as all kinds of groups, including minorities of all sorts, strive to exert influence.

All of this creates a dynamic, energetic political sphere that challenges us. It's remarkable, if you think about it: The system was crafted for a country of about 4 million. Here we are over 200 years later, with 330 million, with the same system helping to organize a country of enormous power, reach, and complexity.

It's evolved over that time, thanks to constant tinkering, reform, and improvement, and those needs will never go away. That's what our system does: It calls on citizens to make it work and to make it better. There's no doubt that we face great stresses, and while we may make progress in enhancing individuals' pursuit of happiness, it's rarely straight ahead; we take steps forward and then retreat, we celebrate victories and suffer setbacks. But overall, when citizens speak up and become involved, we progress. ❖

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

Saying goodbye to the symbols of hate

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI News Indiana

ANDERSON – Those folks still celebrating Southern heritage surely feel the ground shifting beneath their feet. After the mayor of Richmond, Virginia, announced plans to remove all of that city’s Confederate monuments, Republican State Sen. Amanda Chase took to Facebook. “Let’s be honest here,” she said. “There’s an overt effort to erase all white history.”



Then came the bipartisan legislation aimed at removing the names of Confederate generals from the nation’s military installations. The bill was sponsored by two members of the House Armed Services Committee, Democrat Anthony Brown of Maryland and Republican Don Bacon of Nebraska.

“It matters to the black soldier serving at an installation honoring the name of a leader who fought to preserve slavery and oppression,” said Brown, a retired Army Reserve colonel. “It matters to the culture of inclusivity and unity needed for our military to get the job done.”

Bacon, a retired Air Force brigadier general, agreed. “As the most diverse and integrated part of American society, it is only right that our installations bear the names of military heroes who represent the best ideals of our Republic,” he said. “We owe this to ourselves, to our military, our veterans and to every American who will answer the call.”

And then came NASCAR. “The presence of the Confederate flag at NASCAR events runs contrary to our commitment to providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for all fans, our competitors and our industry,” the organization said in its announcement. “Bringing people together around a love for racing and the community that it creates is what makes our fans and sport special. The display of the Confederate flag will be prohibited from all NASCAR events and properties.”

That Facebook post drew roughly 75,000 comments in 24 hours. “And JUST LIKE THAT... I’m NOW DONE WITH NASCAR!” one guy wrote.

Not everyone agreed. “I can’t believe NASCAR is taking this stance, but I’m deeply heartened by it,” read another post. “I haven’t watched a NASCAR event since I was a kid spending time with my dad, but I might just have to spend some time at one now.”

Some of the reactions were humorous. Several noted that the Civil War ended more than 150 years ago.

“Another devastating loss for the confederacy,” one wrote. Others suggested that the flag’s defenders should still feel right at home at NASCAR races because the flag of surrender would still be waving with one lap to go. “Heritage not hate,” the flag’s defenders shout, but the slogan rings hollow when you examine the history. The Encyclopedia Britannica calls the Confederate battle flag “the most-recognizable symbol of the Confederate States of America,” but it was also a symbol adopted many years after the war by the Ku Klux Klan.

And let’s be clear what the Civil War was about. It was not, in fact, the War of Northern Aggression. It was a rebellion based on the institution of slavery. Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens made that clear in a speech delivered a few weeks before the first shots were fired at Fort Sumter. The new government, he declared, had been founded “upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and normal condition.”

That’s the heritage you’re celebrating when you fly that flag. That’s the heritage folks were touting when they named those forts and erected those statues. They were delivering a message of white supremacy and racism. They were celebrating hate. It’s long past time that we laid that message to rest. ❖

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.

Taxation of the willing

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — One of the strangely brilliant slogans of the Bush II administration’s wars in the Middle East was “the Alliance of the Willing.” This came to mind when I read the recently released Indiana Chamber of Commerce report, “INVision-2025, 2020 Snapshot.”

The report is a wonderful agglomeration of statistics concerning Indiana and its workforce regions. It is a task well-conceived and skillfully executed. The Chamber’s report is very informative about where Indiana stands among its neighbors and its peers. I urge you to examine it online. It spells out many of the inadequacies of our state and a few of our better metrics. It’s not the standard fluff you might expect from the Chamber.



But something was missing. There is nothing I recall seeing about the level of taxation. There are specific suggestions to remove nettles in the corporate corpus. Yet, with the level of taxation not

addressed, the level of expenditures is ignored. Thus, raising the question of how willing are Hoosiers to support the Chamber's goals?

I might not have noticed this without the sharp eyes of Chester Chuck, of Alert in Decatur County. "You know, sonny," he says to me, "the reason Indiana is so sleepy is we have low taxes, which means we have low expectations of quality public services."

"Are you telling me the people of the Hoosier Holyland are being deceived?" I ask.

"No way, young fella," he says. "We willing accept poor roads, inferior schools, horrific mistreatment of children, limited health care, and over-crowded jails/prisons, which cannot be called 'correctional' institutions."

"I know," I say. "We've got the capacity, but our state and local taxes combined are 14th lowest in the U.S. when measured against our personal income."

"Right," Chester says. "Folks here are no way heavily taxed on their income compared to other states."

"Then too," I continue, "we have the seventh lowest in taxes compared to GDP of all 50 states."

"GDP?" he asks. "What's that? Never had that in

Alert."

"It's the value of all the goods and services we produce in our state," I answer.

"Yes," he says with a sigh. "We do have real low taxes for business. It's why businesses wanting only low taxes knock at our door. They don't give a you-know-what about schools, air, water and land qualities, jails, or our druggies, as long as they get whatever concessions they want,"

"You're upset about this," I say.

"You're darn-tootin' right," he says. "Folks like me grew up in Alert real concerned about what we didn't have. Other folks, they don't get excited about nothing beyond basketball, football and the price of beer. You ask me, folks not from Alert are oversold on contentment and Hoosier Harmony." ❖

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.

Changing dynamics of modern fatherhood

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE — It's Father's Day weekend, and with two teenage sons, I think often about what fatherhood will be like for them and other men of their generation. This is not an idle worry. Our nation, along with most other developed nations, experienced more turbulence in family structure over the past 50 years, than in the previous

1,000. Such dynamic change cannot help but challenge the role of young men as fathers.

One obvious example is the shocking and precipitous rise in non-marital births. As of the 1950s, fewer than one in 20 children were born to an unmarried mother. Today it is 40%. Of course, unmarried doesn't mean there is not a father present. Formal marriage is less common as young people postpone marriage and cohabit more

freely than a half century ago. My reading of research on the matter suggests that having two loving parents is a lot more important than legal distinctions or the gender of parents. Common sense would suggest this as well.

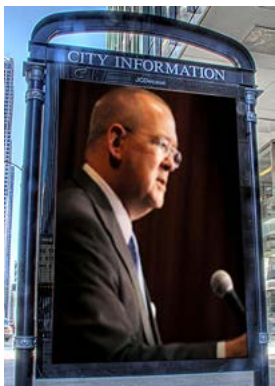
Non-marital births occur at different rates across race and ethnic groups. However, changes in the way we

attribute race has changed, making some long-term comparisons more difficult. The most recent study I could find of fathers reports that 44% of black men, just over a third of Hispanic men and 18% of white men were unmarried when their first child was born. These numbers are consistent with the racial gap of mothers, but lower than overall births. In the same year, just over 72% of black children, 52% of Hispanic children and almost 27% of non-Hispanic white children were born to unmarried parents.

From 1980 until the present, the racial gap between non-marital births shrank. Much of this is due to a leveling off of unmarried births among black women that began in the early 1990s. Today, the rate of unmarried births and teen births for all groups are lower than before the Great Recession. One interesting paper reports that the popular MTV show "16 and Pregnant" caused about a third of the decline in births, with worsening economic conditions of the Great Recession explaining most of the rest.

Explanations for the racial gap in non-marital births remain incomplete. One hypothesis is that discrimination in arrests and convictions fell unequally on men of different races. This is surely true, but a man of any race is still 10 times more likely to be the father of an unmarried child than to be a convicted felon. Poor marriage prospects due to incarceration aren't large enough to explain non-marital birth differences.

Another theory is that economic disadvantage reduces marriageability of men. Again, this is surely true, as Jane Austen made clear, but the differences in economic conditions between racial groups is only a fraction of the difference between non-marital births. The only really strong conclusion about race and non-marital births is that



this is very different from the experience of their fathers and grandfathers. ❖

Michael J. Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the

Comparing 2016 polls to those of 2020 so far

By ALAN I. ABRAMOWITZ, KYLE KONDICK, J. MILES COLEMAN and LARRY J. SABATO

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — With less than five months left in the 2020 election campaign, former Vice President Joseph Biden continues to lead President Donald Trump in both national and swing state polling. In the past few weeks, Biden has widened his lead in the RealClearPolitics national poll average from less than six points to about eight points.

Of course, astute poll watchers will recall that four years ago, Hillary Clinton also led Donald Trump in most national and swing state polls. In the end, though, Trump won the election by narrowly defeating Clinton in several key swing states. So how does Biden's current situation compare with Clinton's in 2016?

A close analysis of national polling in 2016 and 2020 based on data compiled by RealClearPolitics indicates that Biden's lead over Trump has been only slightly larger than Clinton's lead over Trump between January and early June. However, Biden's lead has been much more consistent.

Joe Biden has held an average lead of 5.9 points over Donald Trump in 72 national polls between January and early June. Hillary Clinton held an average lead of only 4.7 points in 221 national polls between January and early November, but her average lead was 5.7 points in 44 polls between January and early June. However, Biden's lead has varied very little from month to month, ranging from 5.0 points in January to 7.7 points thus far in June. In contrast, Clinton's lead varied from only 2.4 points in July to 10 points in March.

Month	Average D lead	
	2016	2020
January	3.5	5.0
February	4.0	5.2
March	10.0	6.4
April	6.6	5.5
May	2.5	5.6
June	5.4	7.7
July	2.4	N/A
August	6.0	N/A
September	2.6	N/A
October	5.6	N/A
November	3.5	N/A
Standard deviation of monthly average	2.3	1.0

George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University.

The much greater volatility of Clinton's lead is reflected by the standard deviation statistic, which measures variability. The month-to-month standard deviation of Clinton's lead was 2.3 percentage points for the entire year and 2.8 percentage points between January and early June. Both are far larger than the standard deviation of 1.0 percentage points for Biden's lead between January and early June 2020.

The greater consistency of Biden's lead compared with Clinton's can also be seen by comparing the percentage of polls in which each finished ahead of Trump. During 2016, Hillary Clinton led Donald Trump in 84% of national polls while Trump led in 12%. Between January and early June, Clinton led in 84% of national polls while Trump led in 14%. In contrast, thus far in 2020, Joe Biden has led Trump in 94% of national polls while Trump has led in only 1%, just one poll out of 72.

Conclusions

Hillary Clinton led Donald Trump in the large majority of national polls in 2016. However, the magnitude of that lead varied considerably over time. This variability may reflect that fact that in an open seat contest like 2016, the choices of voters can be influenced more by the candidates' campaigns and the changing news background. In contrast, Joseph Biden's lead over Donald Trump has been far more consistent in 2020. This consistency may reflect the fact that Donald Trump is now running as an incumbent with a proven track record. When an incumbent like Trump is running for reelection, the election is mainly a referendum on the incumbent's performance. The candidates' campaigns and the developments in the news are probably less important.

Voters' opinions of Donald Trump's performance have been extraordinarily stable throughout his presidency with negative evaluations generally outweighing positive evaluations. That is the main reason why Trump has consistently trailed his Democratic challenger in the polls. The fact that the ratio of negative to positive evaluations of Trump's performance has increased in the past few weeks probably also explains why Biden has been enjoying his largest margins in national polls at any time in 2020.

Bottoms, Rice on Biden veepstakes list

Joe Biden's list of contenders still seems to be fairly long: We have 11 names on this update, after we had 10 a couple of weeks ago. As we noted last week in a brief



note, we wanted to revise our own list to include two contenders we didn't include the first time: Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms (D) and former Obama administration National Security Adviser Susan Rice (D). They make their debuts around the middle of our list. We dropped one name from the list: Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH), whose selection would jeopardize her Senate seat -- Gov. Chris Sununu (R-NH), a favorite for reelection, would appoint her successor -- and doesn't seem to fit the moment or address Biden's electoral weaknesses. Alex Burns and

Jonathan Martin of the New York Times reported a few days ago that Hassan is "not seen as a major candidate."

We left the order of the first three candidates the same, and slotted in Bottoms and Rice at fifth and seventh, respectively. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM) is up to fourth place; she is the only Hispanic candidate on our list, and one of Biden's weaknesses in polling so far appears to be with Hispanics. Lujan Grisham also has both federal and state-level experience, although to the bulk of the country, she's an unknown. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) is down a bit, to six.

Bottoms, an early and aggressive endorser of Biden during the primary, has become a major national figure in the midst of protests over police brutality. National Journal's Josh Kraushaar made a good case for Bottoms recently, arguing that she might be the right fit for the mo-

Battle for the White House			
RCP Poll Averages			
Election 2020	Biden	Trump	Spread
RCP National Average	50.2	41.7	Biden +8.5 ▲
Betting Odds	51.8	41.9	
Electoral College	197	125	
Battlegrounds	Biden	Trump	Spread
Florida	50.3	45.7	Biden +4.6 ▲
Pennsylvania	49.3	43.7	Biden +5.6 ▲
Wisconsin	47.7	42.3	Biden +5.4 ▲
North Carolina	45.8	45.8	Tie ▲
Arizona	47.0	43.0	Biden +4.0 ▲
Congress	Dems	GOP	Spread
Battle for Senate	46	48	
U.S. House	214	190	
Generic Ballot	49.0	40.5	Dem +8.5

ment and that her performances on big stages might mitigate her lack of state and federal-level experience. The recent shooting of Rayshard Brooks by an Atlanta police officer, which led to the resignation of Atlanta's police chief and prompted Bottoms to order changes to the department's use-of-force policies, does suggest a possible downside to picking Bottoms: rightly or wrongly, anything that happens in Atlanta will be under the national microscope if Biden picks Bottoms as his running mate.

Susan Rice, the other addition to our list, would be another non-traditional choice in that she has no elected office-holding experience. However, she does have high-level experience, serving stints as both ambassador

to the United Nations and national security adviser during Barack Obama's presidential administration. While Rice likely isn't vetted in the traditional sense, she is used to being in the national spotlight, and Biden certainly knows her and may very well be comfortable with her. That said, there are downsides with Rice, too. She may not be prepared for the meatgrinder of a national campaign, and choosing Rice would force Biden's campaign to have to re-litigate Obama's foreign policy record, which could animate conservatives. Additionally, Rice would be a foreign policy-focused choice in an election that almost certainly will be more focused on domestic politics. One other note: Rice's son is an outspoken Trump backer, which could be a source of annoyance to a Biden-Rice ticket. and delight to conservative media producers. Tthe top five names on our list are all nonwhite. ❖



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Peter Wehner, The Atlantic: Robert Kennedy spoke about racial injustice more often and with more intensity than any other white politician of his era. Although his campaign speeches to black audiences were short, the journalist Theodore White wrote, “the fury and indignation [Kennedy] felt at the condition of blacks in America he spent rather at university campuses or excoriating white audiences for their indifference.” But Kennedy was also determined to achieve racial understanding. Six days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., Kennedy traveled to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he spoke about a nation “beset by apprehension and fear, anger and even hatred. It is easy to understand the springs of such passion, even as we know the highest traditions of this country forbid them.” He went on to say, “It is not written in the stars or ordained by history that we must be a nation torn by strife and teeming with troops and bayonets. It is not inevitable that each day — as I experienced last weekend in Washington — we must hear the constant shriek of sirens or see smoke rising from burning buildings. Americans have always believed that if we faced our problems and worked at them they could be resolved. And for the most part, they have been right. Those who now believe we have the power to do justice and to make our streets fit places where men can live and children play in tranquility, are also right. The enemies of such an achievement are not the black man or the white man,” he concluded. “The enemies are fear and indifference. They are hatred and, above all, letting momentary passion blind us to a clear and reasoned understanding of the realities of our land.” ❖



whole story. They don't show what this wholesale disregard of voters' worth and intentions does to the process of self-government. It isn't a coincidence that the years when Indiana has emerged as one of the most voter-hostile states were also Hoosier state government also became among the most dysfunctional in the nation. ❖

Seth Masket, Los Angeles Times: On June 10, the Republican National Committee spelled out the details for its August nominating convention, which, at President Donald Trump's insistence, will be held in-person. Most of the convention, including the president's acceptance speech, will now be held in Jacksonville, Fla., because Trump found the coronavirus regulations in Charlotte, N.C., the original venue, too restrictive. One of the most important reported changes to the convention is the GOP's decision to dispense with the platform committee and simply reuse the 2016 platform for 2020. Platforms are also a chance for parties to signal a shift in ideological direction, particularly if they're worried about winning the next election. The GOP lost the popular vote in 2016 and only won the White House by a hair, and Trump is in real trouble in the polls right now. If there's a time to rethink some platform planks to avoid the appearance of extremism, it might be now. All of this makes it astounding that the GOP is giving up on writing a new platform that could speak to this moment or even elaborate on Trump's goals for a second term. Now, given a chance to state their political beliefs, they're saying that Trump is the one thing they believe in and that he is the party. ❖

John Krull, Statehouse File: The documentary “Uncivil War” doesn't tell a pretty story. It focuses on all the ways politicians and other unscrupulous political players work to repress and distort the will of the people. It explores the ugly worlds of gerrymandering, voter suppression and other bits of electoral skullduggery. The documentary pays particular attention to three states — Maryland, Mississippi and ... Indiana. That our state is part of this dubious discussion should not be a surprise. Indiana is one of the most gerrymandered states in the nation. It also has one of the most restrictive voter I.D. laws in America. This determined campaign to discourage people from voting — or from thinking that voting even matters — has had an effect. As the documentary points out, in one recent election year when all 100 seats in the Indiana House of Representatives were up, only 56 of the races were contested. The other 44 had only one major-party candidate listed on the ballot — which meant that the voters didn't have a choice. The voters' apathy revealed as much. Most years, Indiana voter turnout is among the worst in the nation. Some years, it is the worst in the nation. One year, the documentary reveals, Hoosier voter turnout was below that of Puerto Rico, putting us 51st in America. Those numbers are bad, but they don't tell the

Ross Douthat, New York Times: In situations of crisis or grave difficulty, President Trump displays three qualities, three spirits, that all redound against the movement that he leads. His spirit of authoritarianism creates a sense of perpetual crisis among his opponents, uniting left-wingers and liberals despite their differences. His spirit of chaos, the sense that nothing is planned or under control, turns moderates and normies against him. And finally his spirit of incompetence means that conservatives get far less out of his administration than they would from a genuine imperial president, a man of iron rather than of pasteboard. You can see the convergence of these spirits in the disaster at Lafayette Park, where an authoritarian instinct led to a chaotic and violent police intervention, a massive media freakout, blowback from the military — and left the president with an impious photo op and control of six blocks around the White House to show for it. That last image, the president as a dictator of an island and impotent beyond it, seems like a foretaste of what would await conservatives if Trump somehow slipped through to a second term. Maybe he would get to replace another Supreme Court justice — maybe. (In a Democratic Senate, not.) But everything else the right needs would slip further out of reach. ❖

Holcomb says no K-12 funding cuts

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric Holcomb announced Wednesday that K-12 schools will not face cuts in state funding next school year despite significant revenue shortfalls after the coronavirus pandemic closed businesses and caused unemployment rates to soar.



(Fittes, [Chalkbeat](#)). "This just illustrates, or underscores, the priority," Holcomb said. "Our K-12 schools have been spared the knife, or a cut in their budgets, even while a global pandemic has truly washed upon our shores." Holcomb and state lawmakers have agreed to move forward with the current budget, he said during a scheduled video conference. That includes maintaining the planned \$183 million increase in school funding. Funding for K-12 education accounts for about half of the state's spending—more than \$7 billion a year. Budgets for other state agencies have already been reduced and plans were released last week for public universities to take a 7% cut, worth \$103 million. According to Zac Jackson, Holcomb's budget director, Indiana tax collections are running \$1.2 billion behind the revenue forecast through 11 months of the 2020 budget year, and the state is likely to miss its June revenue target by an additional \$500 million to \$600 million (Carden, NWI Times). Jackson expects Indiana's 2021 budget year revenue will be at least \$2 billion below expectations.

State expects up to \$4B shortfall

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana fiscal officials expect the state to fall between \$3 to 4 billion short of its current two-year state budget (Smith, Indiana Public Media). A new revenue forecast will come out later this year. But officials at the State Budget Committee meeting Wednesday say they

expect a \$1.7 billion shortfall this fiscal year (which ends in two weeks) and another roughly \$2 billion loss next fiscal year. Budget Director Zac Jackson says there are multiple steps the state must take to make its budget work. "We will need to spend down those reserves," Jackson says. "We will need to cut spending and we will also need to use federal assistance as creatively as we legally can." Indiana state government has received \$2.4 billion in federal assistance for COVID-19. But that money can't be used to directly replace lost revenue. Office of Management and Budget Director Cris Johnston says there's hope that will change.

Bolton says Trump sought help from Xi

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump "pleaded" with China's Xi Jinping during a 2019 summit to help his reelection prospects, according to a scathing new book by former Trump adviser John Bolton that accuses the president of being driven by political calculations when making national security decisions ([AP](#)). The White House worked furiously to block the book, asking a federal court for an emergency temporary restraining order Wednesday against its release. Bolton's allegations that Trump solicited Chinese help for his reelection effort carried echoes of Trump's attempt to get political help from Ukraine, which led to his impeachment. "I am hard-pressed to identify any significant Trump decision during my tenure that wasn't driven by re-election calculations," Bolton wrote. As for the meeting with the Chinese president in Osaka, Japan, Bolton wrote that Trump told Xi that Democrats were hostile to China. "He then, stunningly, turned the conversation to the coming U.S. presidential election, alluding to China's economic capability to affect the ongoing campaigns, pleading with Xi to ensure he'd win," Bolton said. "He stressed the importance of farmers, and increased Chinese purchases

of soybeans and wheat in the electoral outcome."

Bolton on Trump dumping Pence

WASHINGTON — En route to al-Asad Air Base in Iraq on a secretive flight in late 2018, John Bolton writes, President Trump "raised the widespread political rumor he would dump [Vice President Mike] Pence from the ticket in 2020 and run instead with [then-U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki] Haley, asking what I thought" ([Fox News](#)). Conventional wisdom at the gossip-prone White House, Bolton asserts in the book, was that "Ivanka and Kushner favored this approach, which tied in with Haley's leaving her position as UN Ambassador in December 2018, thus allowing her to do some politicking around the country before being named to the ticket in 2020." "I explained it was a bad idea to jettison someone loyal," Bolton writes.

BSU study sees wide economic damage

INDIANAPOLIS — There is no realistic scenario in which government units in Indiana come out of the COVID-19 pandemic fiscally unscathed, a Wednesday report from Ball State University said ([Fort Wayne Journal Gazette](#)). "COVID-19 Effects on Indiana's State and Local Taxes," an analysis by Ball State's Center for Business and Economic Research, finds that the economic shutdown caused by COVID-19 has deeply damaged the state's economy. The study estimates that state and local governments face tax revenue losses that range from \$240 million to \$700 million in 2020. "Our scenarios reflect a state that will not fully recover from this pandemic before 2022, if not much longer," said CBER Director Michael Hicks. "These estimates are for a deep and lengthy downturn, and each of our scenarios are among the seven worst since the start of the Great Depression."