

# Gauging Trump/Pence reelection

2016 upset shadows  
the president's  
2020 chances

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The original sin of any credible political operator is to base campaign assumptions on the previous cycle. In the context of the American presidency (particularly from a Hoosier perspective), 2016 was a

historic doozy.

While some point to 1968 as the last year for such political volatility, the

year 2016 that produced the Trump/Pence ticket was utterly unpredictable, prompting the frequent “Anything can happen” forecast from these quarters.

The June 23, 2016, edition of HPI is worth revisiting: “This is the official posting of a tsunami watch



for Indiana. With Donald Trump's presidential campaign at best in transition and in all probability, in a mode of outright implosion, with Gov. Mike Pence locked in a dead

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## Attorney general chaos

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – Traditional media grassroots reporting has shriveled. Without large congregations of people, not to mention the waiting on results that often come days later, predicting results is on even more unstable ground.

The Indiana Democrats, in hindsight, provided one of the most exciting convention contests in Indiana history. Former Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel defeated Portage State Sen. Karen Tallian, 1057 to 1009. When 2,000 delegates vote and the margin is 48, it is a cliff-hanger by any definition. Had 25 voters switched, Tallian would have won. Some 17%



**“This is a hard note to write so I will keep it short. After 30 years at WTHR I have decided to retire. I still intend to write about Indiana, but my days in television are coming to a close. I was born a Husker and will die a Hoosier.”**

- Kevin Rader, WTHR-TV



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**Jack E. Howey**  
 editor emeritus  
 1926-2019



of the delegates didn't vote, which means around 300 of them. I've done many, many whip counts. Nothing is more difficult than not knowing who is voting in a close contest.

**Narrowly nominating**

Weinzapfel over Tallian did spare the Democrats the illogical slate of two of their top three candidates being from the Region. It should raise some concern among Republicans because it means that, albeit by only a switch of 25 voters, the Democrats may not be as focused on making strategic mistakes this year. Weinzapfel, a talented and proven candidate in the competitive southwestern region, still faces the challenge of being a liberal in a state that no observer would consider liberal.

But the two Democratic candidates at least represented some chaos control the Republicans do not have. Attorney General Curtis Hill and former Congressman Todd Rokita have both won many elections and have somewhat defined support. Were this a primary, and barring millions being spent by any challenger (a huge assumption in this era), they would be the clear favorites. But it isn't a primary; it is a chaotic COVID "Kind-of-Convention."

I've tried to analyze Facebook endorsements and chatter for the four candidates. This does not include all of them but was representative through June 24. It does shed light.

In other words, in a close primary or convention, taking sides is viewed as more dangerous than getting COVID by Republican leaders and elected officials. A pre-existing condition would be to have backed others who lost, especially if those who were defeated were backed by the governor and other influential elected officials. If you don't care who you offend, your influence is defined and probably limited inside even your own county delegation.

I personally feel all four candidates are qualified for the job

and conservative. I do not favor any particular candidate.

First, incumbent Attorney General Curtis Hill. His problems are clear and so are his advantages. Social conservatives are his core supporters, including Jim Bopp of Vigo County and Cathie Humbarger of Allen County, the two most influential Right-to-Life leaders in the state. Long-time activists like Monica Boyer (Kosciusko) and Linda Zimmerman (Whitley) are also publicly backing him. Hill has the continued support of prosecutors in key counties like



Tippecanoe. He should not be underestimated, especially since public support for him has more risk.

**Todd Rokita** has historic connections in his former congressional district in central Indiana and Lake, the county that propelled him in his original secretary of state convention win. Rokita's Facebook endorsements include State Sens. Ryan Mishler (Kosciusko) and Rick Niemeyer (Lake), as well as State Reps. Denny Zent of Steuben and Heath VanNatter (Howard). Rokita has picked up diverse endorsements from delegates including Washington County Chair Tara Coats, former state senator Tom Weatherwax (Cass) and former Evansville city councilwoman



Michelle Mercer. He also has the endorsement of 3rd District Vice-Chair Mary Trausch-Martin, possibly the most enthusiastic activist I have ever known. Rokita has the sort of delegate spread indicative of an experienced statewide candidate.

**John Westercamp** and Nate Harter are two younger candidates from central Indiana who, like Hill and Rokita, are conservatives. They emerged as the early challengers to incumbent Hill. Westercamp had some early supporters before Harter and Rokita entered the race that had shown the establishment (i.e. the Holcomb-Pence-Coats base that is currently the most dominant) was tilting his way. He also has the public endorsement of 3rd District Chairman Mitch Harper, stating: "I respect his legal acumen, tenacity, and deep and thoughtful defense of constitutional rights." Westercamp's Facebook page touts the endorsement of Boone County Councilman Kevin Van Horn. Boone is less populated but an increasingly important part of the Indianapolis donut counties. Activists such as Daniel Kinnamon (Hendricks) also have stated support for Westercamp. The donut counties seem to tilt for Westercamp and Harter.

An analysis of Facebook makes something very clear: It is Harter who is the "establishment" choice. The former Decatur County prosecutor was Hill's deputy, up until very recently. He has experience in office and as a prosecutor, even if his electoral experience is only in a county with 25,000 people. But this is not a primary. The voters are primarily Republican activists, donors and/or elected officials.

Harter has the public endorsements of five congressional district chairs: 4th, Mike O'Brien; 5th, Judy Buck; 7th, Lesa Dietrick; 8th, Don Hayes; 9th, Jamey Noel. That is five of nine. Dietrick is also a principal of IceMiller, at which Indiana GOP National Committeeman John Ham-

mond III is the Public Affairs Group co-chair.

Harter has the endorsements of two state reps and three state senators that I could easily count. The most important one is State Sen. Mark Messmer, the majority leader and close ally of U.S. Sen. Mike Braun. He also has the endorsements of the county chairs of Bartholomew, Crawford, Ripley, Rush, and Shelby. In other words, he has strong public support in southern and south central Indiana, including in former congressman Luke Messer's district.

In addition to endorsements, frequent "likes" of political posts that clearly support the candidate are also an indicator of support. Influential Anne Hathaway, now a political consultant and a Republican godmother of sorts, is enthusiastic about Harter as is Brian Gamache, who works for Hathaway Strategies. Others who have not "endorsed" but appear frequently also are interesting including Oliver Henderson, a former field director for Sen. Braun and Theresa Green, a college student and young Republican leader who won a hard-fought nomination for Whitley County commissioner in the primary. They are examples of Harter's younger supporters, which Westercamp also has brought to the Party.

**There obviously** are flaws to Facebook analysis, but it does make this clear: If Harter does not win, no centralized party control exists. The Republicans, like the Democrats, are not the controlled parties of the old days. But if this many district chairs and other leaders cannot lead a candidate to victory in a convention designed to be relatively controlled, Republicans could become as disorganized as the Democrats. ❖

**Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.**

**Trump, from page 1**

heat along with sagging reelect and job approval numbers, and with Pence attaching his dinghy to the political equivalent of the RMS Titanic, the potential for severe down-ballot trauma for Hoosier GOP nominees is heightened."

The 2016 tell-tales for HPI's June 23 "tsunami watch" were these: Hillary Clinton had a \$42 million to \$1.3 million cash-on-hand advantage over Donald Trump; she outraised Trump \$1 million to \$58,000 in Indiana; she had a 700-to-69 campaign staffing advantage; Clinton had 100% dominance in swing state advertising; Trump's approval in a Washington Post/ABC Poll was 29% while just 65% of Republicans viewed Trump favorably (Clinton's 46% approval in a CNN/ORC Poll was historically bad for a Democrat); and Sabato's Crystal Ball

Battle for the White House			
RCP Poll Averages			
Election 2016	Clinton	Trump	RCP Average
RCP Poll Average	45.0	39.2	Clinton +5.8
3-Way (w/Johnson)	40.7	35.1	Clinton +5.6
RCP Electoral Map	211	164	
Battlegrounds	Clinton	Trump	RCP Average
Pennsylvania	43.0	42.5	Clinton +0.5
Florida	45.0	42.0	Clinton +3.0
Ohio	43.0	40.3	Clinton +2.7
Virginia	43.8	39.8	Clinton +4.0
North Carolina	42.8	43.8	Trump +1.0
Georgia	40.8	45.0	Trump +4.2
New Hampshire	43.0	36.5	Clinton +6.5

Battle for the White House			
RCP Poll Averages			
Election 2020	Biden	Trump	Spread
RCP National Average	51.0	40.9	Biden +10.1
Betting Odds	58.8	38.0	
Electoral College	222	125	
Battlegrounds	Biden	Trump	Spread
Florida	49.8	43.6	Biden +6.2
Pennsylvania	49.3	43.0	Biden +6.3
Wisconsin	48.8	40.8	Biden +8.0
North Carolina	46.2	44.8	Biden +1.4
Arizona	46.3	42.3	Biden +4.0

had Indiana in a "likely" Trump category instead of the normal "safe" designation.

As we now know, Trump's reversal from a "blue tsunami" to a 19% plurality in Indiana as he cracked the "blue wall" in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania began in the first week of July. That's when FBI Director James Comey announced he wouldn't prosecute Clinton for her email scandal, but in doing so issued what was practi-

cally a "political indictment" of the Democrat (Comey would sound Clinton's death knell two weeks from the November election when he announced another probe of her email scandal, but didn't mention an FBI investigation of Trump's Russia ties). Trump would choose Gov. Pence for his ticket, helping to coalesce the social conservatives and bring Indiana fully into his fold.

In a race pitting two nominees with historically high negatives, Trump bested Clinton as the perceived lesser of two evils. NBC pollster Fred Yang observed, "For Trump, it wasn't ideological, it was style. It didn't matter what he was saying, just that he was loud and strong and emphatic. That is what a chunk of the electorate, certainly Republicans, are looking for even if it seems to go against the party orthodoxy."

With June about to end at the halfway point of the volatile and unprecedented 2020 cycle, President Trump and Vice President Pence face a pandemic that has claimed 120,000 lives in a span four months with a first wave resurgence now underway, an economic meltdown unseen since the Great Depression, and the George Floyd police murder scenario that has put hundreds of cities and towns across the nation on edge.

Annie Lowrey, writing in *The Atlantic*, points to the economy and pandemic as troubling for the incumbent: "The Trump administration has repeatedly argued that there is a trade-off between the country's economic health and its public health. But economists and physicians have repeatedly argued that that is untrue; ending the pandemic would have been the single best thing the federal government could have done to preserve the country's wealth, health, and economic functioning. The Trump administration, in its hubris, obstinacy, and incompetence, failed to do it."

Lowrey continues, "At least four major factors are terrifying economists and weighing on the recovery: The household fiscal cliff, the great business die-off, the state and local budget shortfall, and the lingering health crisis. Three months ago, the pandemic and ensuing shelter-in-place orders caused mass job loss unlike anything in recent American history. A virtual blizzard settled on top of the country and froze everyone in place. Nearly 40% of low-wage workers lost their jobs in March. More than 40 million people lost their jobs in March, April, or May."

**2020 much more ominous**

At this similar point in the 2020 cycle, the analysis

V21, 41  **HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA** Thursday, June 23, 2016

**Tsunami Watch: Indiana GOP braces**

Trump campaign chaos, GOP vote suppression could have down ballot impacts in Indiana

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** INDIANAPOLIS — This is the official posting of a tsunami watch for Indiana. With Donald Trump's presidential campaign at best in transition and in all probability, in a mode of outright implosion, with Gov. Mike Pence locked in a dead heat along



with sagging respect and job approval numbers, and with Pence attaching his dingy to the political equivalent of the RMS Titanic, the potential for severe down-ballot trauma for Hoosier GOP nominees is heightened.

If you are a nominee for the U.S. Senate, the 2nd, 8th and 9th CDs, assorted Statehouse offices, and a dozen or so Indiana House seats on competitive footing, the



age and cause injuries. This is not a test.

potential for base suppression and widespread damage exists between now and Nov. 8. Persons in these watch areas should prepare to seek shelter, stay away from windows and doors, and watch for falling debris. Unsecured folding chairs and tables, punch bowls, derby hats, emery boards and other objects have the potential to become projectiles that can inflict reputational dam-

Continued on page 3

**Bonfires of the inanities**

By **CAMERON CARTER** INDIANAPOLIS — This may seem like incredibly poor form, but I want to thank Omar Mateen for helping to further expose the broken politics of Washington, as a renewed and overdue debate over our civil rights took place this week. If only the deaths of 49 innocents at an Orlando night club had not had to occur for this illuminating discussion to unfold.

If having followed the news this week you do not recognize the above description, it is because a great many citizens and our elected leaders in Washington — in the Obama administration and the U.S. Senate, particularly — have failed to comprehend the true nature of



**"Donald Trump's voice is resonating with Americans who feel their voice and the country has been lost. I look forward to supporting Donald Trump."**

- U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, endorsing Donald Trump for president.

states of Florida, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Arizona by at least 4% in RCP averages. The congressional generic was +8.5% for Democrats.

In a Fox News Poll last weekend showing Biden with a 50-38% lead, Biden's favorable/unfavorables stood at 53/44% compared to 43/56% for Trump. On the question, "Do you think Donald Trump cares about people like you?" some 57% said no, 37% said yes.

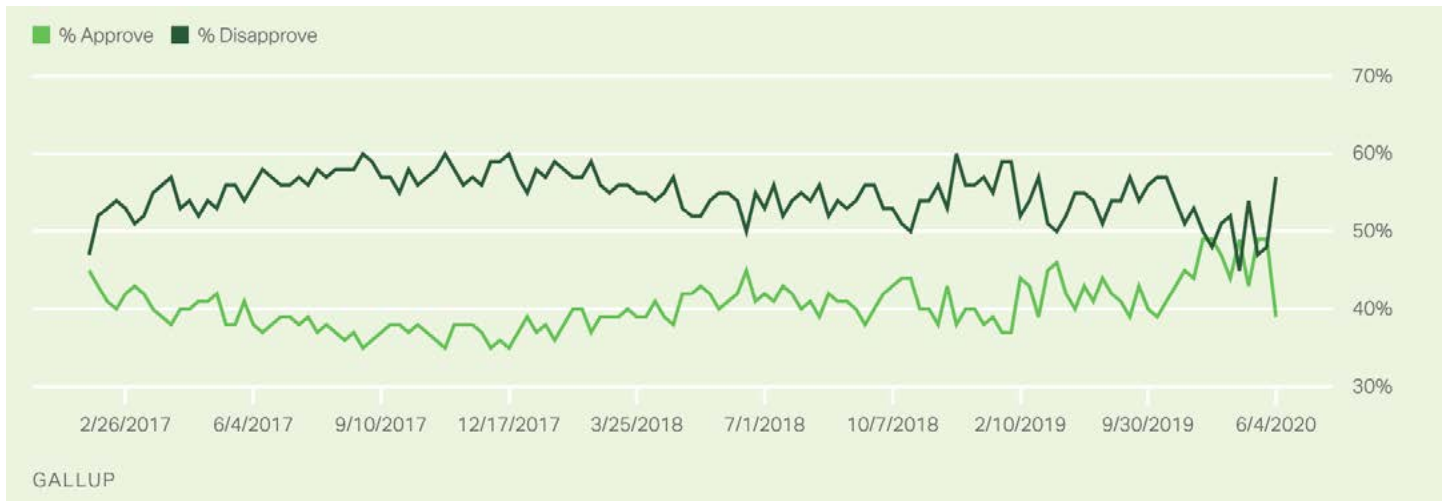
A New York Times/Siena College Poll published Tuesday had Biden leading 50-36% with a 22% lead among women, 39% lead with Latinos, and a 21% lead with independents.

"There is no question Biden is ahead today," Mark Mellman, a Democratic pollster who is also a columnist for *The Hill*, said. "There is no guarantee that being ahead today means you are going to be ahead tomorrow. But in 2016, there were a lot of people saying [Trump] will change, he will grow into the job. No one is saying that today."

Evan Berryhill, writing in *Townhall*, casts the kind of doubt that nags any Democrat with the déjà vu feeling from November 2016, questioning the veracity of polling. "In the CNN and Quinnipiac polls, only 25% of those surveyed claimed to be Republican. Yet, in 2016, 33% of actual voters were self-identified members of the GOP," Berryhill explained. "In fact, in every presidential race going back to and including the year 2000, the percentage of Republican voters never dipped below 32%. So why would anyone believe that the GOP would only count for 25% of the vote 2020? Further, 47% of those sampled for the Fox News poll and 45% of those who participated in the

is much more ominous for President Trump and Vice President Pence. The U.S. is experiencing a second surge in the first wave of COVID-19 cases, with Wednesday's 45,000 daily cases (compared to 5,000 in the European Union) surpassing that of mid-April. This comes after President Trump said last week the pandemic was "fading away" and Vice President Pence suggested in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed that new data was reason for "celebration."

The Real Clear Politics poll average on Tuesday had Joe Biden with a 10.1% lead, 51.0% to 40.9%. State polls are now catching up with the outlying national polls. Biden was leading key battleground



Economist/YouGov poll identified as Democrats. But, in every race dating back to 2000, Democrats never made up more than 39% of the vote.”

But there have been conspicuous Republicans splitting with Trump, headlined by the Lincoln Project (George Conway, Steve Schmidt, John Weaver), MSNBC host Joe Scarborough, former President George W. Bush, U.S. Sen. Mitt Romney, William Kristol and Cindy McCain. Former speakers John Boehner and Paul Ryan haven’t committed to voting for Trump, nor has former chief of staff John Kelly and former senator and director of National Intelligence Dan Coats. Kelly told the New York Times that he wished “we had some additional choices.” Coats “has been concerned about the negative effect on the intelligence community by the turmoil of turnover at DNI,” said Kevin Kellems, a longtime adviser to Coats, adding that his former boss “ultimately remains a loyal Republican but he believes the American people will decide on Nov. 3.”

Former secretary of state Rex Tillerson and former Defense secretary James Mattis along with Gen. Kelly have issued scathing reviews of the Trump presidency. Mattis wrote in The Atlantic earlier this month, “Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people — does not even pretend to try. Instead he tries to divide us. We are witnessing the consequences of three years of this deliberate effort. We are witnessing the consequences of three years without mature leadership.”

Anecdotal, many Republicans in the Indiana Lugar/Daniels wing of the party are sharply critical of Trump.

### Correlating approval, reelection

CNN analyst Harry Enten did a polling era (since 1940) study on presidential approval in the 13 elections when a sitting president was seeking a second term. “The average president has seen his approval rating shift by just 3 points from now until the election,” Enten writes. “That

Year	Candidate	Approval	Result	Margin
1956	Eisenhower	70	Won	+15.4
1964	Johnson	67	Won	+22.6
1940	Roosevelt	62	Won	+10.0
1972	Nixon	57	Won	+23.2
1984	Reagan	57	Won	+18.2
1996	Clinton	55	Won	+8.5
1948	Truman	50	Won	+4.5
2004	G.W. Bush	49	Won	+2.4
1976	Ford	48	Lost	-2.1
1992	G.H.W. Bush	39	Lost	-5.5
1980	Carter	31	Lost	-9.7

would only get Trump into the mid-40s at best. Trump’s approval rating was similar during the 2018 midterms, when his party lost control of the House.”

“Trump, though, isn’t finished quite yet,” Enten continued. “It is possible for a president’s ratings to shift around. Harry Truman saw about a 20-point increase in his net approval rating in the final five months of the 1948 campaign. On the other end, Lyndon Johnson’s net approval rating declined by around 15 points in the final months of the 1964 election. Still, we’re only talking about two presidents out of 13 whose net approval rating moved by more than 10 points in the final five months of the campaign. Trump needs his net approval rating to climb by more than 10 points to reach a positive net approval rating. Remember, though, that Trump’s approval rating has been steadier than any president before him. The inability for Trump to move his own numbers is probably why he goes after Biden so much. Biden’s less defined than Trump, and dragging Biden down may be the only chance Trump has to win.”

HPI Columnist Mark Souder, former Republican congressman, observes, “The biggest variable may be what happens with COVID. Not testing positive unless it actually



correlates with fatalities, which for week after week it does not and people are figuring that out. But if there is a strong second wave that has fatalities associated beyond nursing homes, and thus hits the economy hard, Trump loses.

"If the economy begins to recover, and fatalities continue to go down, the media will have blown so much credibility that it could lead to Trump pulling it out in spite of tweeting himself in the foot every other day," Souder continued. "That said, every tweet is a potential nuclear bomb on a new subject. We saw Dukakis-Bush twice swing over 15 points in late August-September. This one seems to have more hard red states and hard blue states, but the middle ones are still within the grasp of both. So while things currently look more grim for President Trump, it is way too early. Biden may not be Clinton, but the Dems have moved far to the left which reduces their margin for error. And, as you know, the Democrats are always capable of blowing elections."

Trump's biggest problem may be that he still sees himself pitted against Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, as evidenced by his rambling two-hour speech in Tulsa



Saturday night. He cleaned up on the anti-Hillary vote in 2016, but she won't be on the ballot in November. A case in point is the full-page ad in today's IndyStar which proclaims "Hillary and Obama want Trump defeated" while "Trump has a secret plan."

The campaign had promoted his return to the MAGA circuit as a virtual fall kickoff. COVID may have kept the crowd size to an embarrassing 6,200 in a 19,000-seat arena in a virus hotspot, but 7 million watched cable TV coverage.

He doesn't seem to have much aimed at Joe Biden other than his "Sleepy Joe" moniker (the same he used successfully against Joe Donnelly two years ago) and the Democrat's age and suggestions of senility. Biden is hunkered down in his Delaware basement, seemingly intent on letting Trump self-destruct. But as we saw in 2016, Trump has the Teflon thing down better than The Gipper, he has a Svengali hold on his base, and these are surreal times for the American experience. Stay tuned.

**HPI Horse Race Status:** Likely Biden. ❖



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# Hill ties his fate to that of President Trump

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — To hear Attorney General Curtis Hill tell it to Indiana Republican Party delegates last week, he and President Trump are two peas in a pod.

“Look, I’m not perfect; no one is,” Hill said in his appeal to GOP delegates. “But like President Trump, I have faced accusations and investigations designed to destroy me politically. Like President Trump, I am a threat to Democrats and the radical liberal agenda. Both President Trump and I are wounded, some would say, and yes we are both warriors with battle scars, but I have grown stronger and wiser from every experience. Like the president, I have stood my ground and renewed my faith and continued to do my job.”

Hill was coming off a 30-day Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission suspension the day before his delegate appeal in sanctions for his March 2018 sexual groping of a Democrat legislator and three female General Assembly aides. Trump has faced more than two dozen sexual harassment and assault accusations, including one from E. Jean Carroll, an advice columnist who was Miss Indiana University in 1964. She has alleged that Donald Trump raped her in a Manhattan luxury department store dressing room in the mid-1990s.

Hill’s strategy to lash his political fate President Trump comes as the latter is sagging in the polls, trailing Democrat Joe Biden by 12% in a national Fox News Poll last week. On Saturday, Trump was incensed when his first MAGA rally since the coronavirus pandemic in Tulsa brought out only 6,200 supporters in a 19,000-seat arena. It fueled the notion that Trump is on the political ropes.

The strategy here in Mike Pence’s Indiana is not a slam dunk. His chief rival in the AG nomination fight is former congressman Todd Rokita, who tied his 2018 Republican U.S. Senate nomination fight to the fortunes of President Trump, at one point donning a red MAGA hat before a crowd at the Indiana Republican Congress of Counties in January 2018. Mike Braun, running as an “outsider businessman” vowing to “drain the swamp” which was Trump code for voters, easily dispatched Reps. Rokita and Luke Messer. Braun finished with 41%, compared to 30% for Rokita and 28.8% for Messer.

Trump easily won the 2016 Indiana Republican primary 53% to 36% over U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (Ohio Gov.

John Kasich had 7.4%), and carried Indiana by a 19% plurality over Hillary Clinton in the general election.

Since then, Trump has remained popular with Hoosier Republicans, but not at his November 2016 apex. A BK Strategies Poll of 600 likely general election voters released by the Indiana GOP on May 25 put President Trump’s approve/disapprove at 49/48% and Vice President Mike Pence at 51/44% (Gov. Eric Holcomb stood at 72/15% and Attorney General Hill at 16/29%). Prior to the 2018 Senate primary, Morning Consult put Trump’s approval at just 69% among Republicans. With independent voters, he stood at -14%.

In more recent Indiana tracking, Morning Consult had President Trump’s approve/disapprove at 50/47% in December 2019 as the House impeached him. In February 2020 as the Senate acquitted him, Trump’s approve/disapprove stood at 53/44%. But that was before the coronavirus pandemic killed 2,300 Hoosiers and 120,000 Americans, the subsequent economic collapse that has idled 750,000 Hoosier workers, and the reaction to the George Floyd murder.



Other polls from 2017 through 2019 by Ball State’s Bowen Center, Gravis and NBC/Marist put Trump’s approval at 47% and 48% and disapproval between 46 and 48%.

So Hill is betting that his overtly pro-Trump appeal that includes similar Trump grievance and victimization could possibly play well before the delegates. “Over the past two years I have been the subject of relentless attacks and smears the likes of which few have endured,” Hill said in his video presentation. “Some Republicans who seem too afraid to do what is right are following the Democrat strategy to question my ability to win in November.”

Those “attacks” and “smears” have come from Gov. Eric Holcomb, Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, GOP legislative leaders and Sen. Braun, or what Hill has called the GOP “establishment.” Holcomb has cited a “zero tolerance” stance for state employees. HPI asked if Braun was



backing a candidate for attorney general and didn't get a response.

Rokita's 2018 Senate campaign slogan was "Defeat the Elite," also a swipe at the current Republican hierarchy. In addition to Rokita, Hill is facing nomination challenges from Decatur County Prosecutor Nate Harter and Zionsville attorney John Westercamp. Delegate votes will be mailed in by July 9 and a winner declared on July 10.

Last week, Democrats nominated last week former two-term Evansville mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel, who led Hill 39-32% in that BK Strategies Poll. **HPI Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

## Bopp backing Hill

Former Republican National Committeeman Jim Bopp Jr., posted a Facebook video backing Attorney General Curtis Hill's renomination. "Four years ago I supported Curtis Hill for attorney general," Bopp said.

"What I saw was a principled full-spectrum conservative and one who promised to have the courage to lead, and I have the yellow T shirt that's a bit faded now to prove it."

The Terre Haute attorney continued, "Politicians rarely fulfill their promises, but Curtis Hill has. He has defended the right to life, religious freedom, fought to stop sanctuary cities, defended the 2nd amendment, protected taxpayers, fought government overreach and sought to stop most of the Obama administration's worst policies. Principles really don't matter without the courage to carry them out. Curtis has been undeterred." Bopp then addressed the allegations that led to Hill's 30-day suspension by the Indiana Supreme Court's Disciplinary Commission. "Like all of us, Curtis is not perfect. We all know Curtis made at least one mistake. He has humbly accepted the punishment." Bopp called sexual battery allegations as "grossly exaggerated," noting the Supreme Court and Democrat special prosecutor Dan Sigler, "who interviewed all the witnesses" and "refused to file criminal charges." Bopp added, "Moderates fear Curtis because he is a successful conservative politician. I just don't think Republicans should cower to Democratic threats and do their job for them."



## Krupp says he'll back AG nominee

Former Republican attorney general candidate Adam Krupp said he met with Attorney General Curtis Hill and will back him if renominated. "Since I exited the race, Curtis Hill has checked in multiple times to see how I'm doing and chat about my next career move," Krupp said.

"After a productive conversation about leadership, culture, staff development and outreach, I pledged my support if he secures the nomination. I committed to doing so on the trail when asked by delegates, and I am staying true to my word. I trust he would have done the same for me (unlike Todd Rokita, who has publicly refused to support the party's nominee if he doesn't succeed)."

## Weinzapfel will defend Obamacare

Weinzapfel says he jumped into the race because of the groping contends all four Republicans have been silent on the issues most on the minds of Hoosiers: criminal justice reform and ways the office can respond to the coronavirus pandemic. Weinzapfel argues Republicans' 10-year push to unravel the Affordable Care Act puts them out of touch with Hoosiers, especially with a pandemic going on. And he says he'd push for more transparency in how nursing homes are taking care of their parents.

## Tallian vows to stay involved

State Sen. Karen Tallian, D-Ogden Dunes, saw her dream of becoming Indiana's next attorney general dashed last week after being narrowly defeated for the Democratic nomination by former Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel (Carden, NWI Times). Nevertheless, the four-term Region lawmaker isn't giving up the fight on issues she's championed over 14 years in the Statehouse, including pursuing criminal justice reform, preserving the Healthy Indiana Plan and legalizing medicinal marijuana. "It is always disappointing to lose an election," Tallian said in a video message to her supporters. "But I will be in the state Senate, in January, and will be working on all those things that are so important to all of us."

## Governor

### Myers announces justice reforms

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Woody Myers unveiled a criminal justice reform plan that mandates new training for police, shifts funding to social services and decriminalizes marijuana (Smith, Indiana Public Media). The plan includes reducing the prison population, investing in minority communities, measures to address police brutality and more oversight of law enforcement. He does not agree with the phrase "defund the police" – though parts of his plan align with some who advocate that policy. He wants to reprioritize funding toward "holistic, inter-sectional approaches in public safety" – for instance, helping mental health professionals address what he views as mental health challenges. "I would just prefer that we do more of that so that our police can truly deal with the violent crimes that are out there," Myers said.

### Myers calls Holcomb 'tepid' on pandemic

Gov. Holcomb has been "tepid" in his response to



the coronavirus pandemic, said Dr. Myers. "Tepidly means, he hasn't tried to rile up the traditional Republican base as they have been in many other states," said Myers on The Rob Kendall Show on 93 WIBC. "On the other hand, he hasn't done all we should do to get our arms around this." One of Holcomb's shortfalls, according to Myers, is a lack of getting people tested. "We should have closed our schools earlier. We should have pushed social distancing harder," Myers added. "It's still not where it should be." Myers said not enough people are getting tested for COVID-19 because of a "lack of funding in the public health infrastructure" calling that infrastructure "abysmal" in Indiana. Myers even went as far as accusing Holcomb of taking campaign contributions from an out-of-state contractor in order to conduct testing throughout the state. "I can't say for sure those are related," Myers said. "But I think there's a connection in there somewhere." **HPI Horse Race Status:** Safe Holcomb.

**Presidential 2020**

**Biden up 8% in Wisconsin**

Former Vice President Joe Biden has widened his advantage over President Donald Trump in Wisconsin, according to Wednesday's Marquette University Law School Poll (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel). Biden had 49% support to Trump's 41% support, among registered voters, in what may be the key battleground state in the fall race. Biden



held a 3-point margin in polls conducted in March and May. Biden and the president were tied in February. "This has been a good gain for Biden at this point," poll director Charles Franklin said. "And it's a relatively widespread gain. He's picking up across different regions and different groups."

**DNC will have virtual convention**

Organizers upended the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday, as they told state delegations not to travel to Milwaukee, moved the convention from Fiserv Forum to the nearby Wisconsin Center and added satellite events around the country ([Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#)). Delegates will cast votes

remotely, even for the presidential nomination in what is shaping up to be an increasingly virtual event. Organizers also announced that large-scale events, such as a welcome reception for delegates and media and a party for volunteers, are canceled due to coronavirus concerns as cases surge in the U.S. The decision to overhaul plans for the August 17-20 convention came after consulting with public health officials about the COVID-19 pandemic, organizers said. The moves by the Democrats stand in stark contrast to the Republicans, who shifted their main convention events from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Jacksonville, Florida. President Donald Trump plans to accept the renomination in front of large crowds expected to attend the Aug. 24-27 event. ❖



# Pandemic, economy to wreak havoc on cities

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Upwards of 75% of Hoosiers live in urban areas and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent stratospheric job loss portends to significant revenue loss for municipalities. That could mean tax



and fee increases for those residents.

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 released on June 12 estimates state and local governments are now facing tax revenue losses for all local govern-

ments ranging from \$240 million to \$700 million in 2020. CBER anticipates tax revenues will rebound by the end of 2021 but remain beneath the 2019 levels by as little as \$39 million and as much as \$559 million.

"Our scenarios reflect a state that will not fully recover from this pandemic before 2022, if not much longer," said Michael Hicks, CBER director who conducted the study with Dagny Faulk, CBER research director, and Srikant Devaraj, a CBER research professor. "These estimates are for a deep and lengthy downturn, and each of our scenarios is among the seven worst since the start of the Great Depression."

According to Accelerating Indiana Municipalities President Matt Greller, some of the impacts won't be fully realized until 2022. That's when the big one, revenue from the state income tax, will be fully realized. "It's significant," Greller told Howey Politics Indiana Wednesday on the effects of the pandemic.

That includes the potential dramatic rise in utility rates. When Gov. Eric Holcomb imposed the pandemic shutdown in mid-March, he included a no-disconnect order. With schools and major industrial users closed, many municipal utilities lost a significant revenue source. "That will have to be made up by rate payers," Greller predicted.

**The BSU study concentrated** on revenue impact areas that include utilities, gas tax distributions, property tax collections, and income taxes.

Gas taxes payments were down 60% during the shutdown. "That has been a pretty big hit with cities and towns," Greller said. "I expect that to recover pretty quickly." Part of the gas tax went to Holcomb's Community Crossings program, and that pool of money could be reduced by 30%.

Property tax collections are also down, with some localities experiencing 80% to 85% collection rates when they are normally in the 95% range. Greller said the un-

known here is how banks are handling escrow accounts. May distributions were normal, so November will give mayors, city and county council members a better idea of how big the shortfalls will be.

The immediate hit comes with income taxes, "which concerns me the most," Greller said, particularly after Gov. Mitch Daniels' constitutional property tax caps from a decade ago shifted much local funding to that silo. "We won't see that reduction distribution for what's not being collected until 2022."

During the administration of Gov. Joe Kernan (2003-04), the Bank Levy was removed. Prior to its removal, a municipality could store unused tax levy capacity, then use it for major projects. So that flexibility is gone.

**How will municipalities** respond to these cascading shortfalls? "We're talking several strategies," Greller said. "Some are legislative focused, some administratively, some congressional." He said the state received \$300 million in congressionally funded CARES Act money, with funds specifically earmarked for cities of 500,000 population or more, meaning only Indianapolis qualified. As for the rest of the state's municipalities, CARES Act funds cover only COVID-19 related expenses. "Cities and towns have very little direct COVID-related expenses. That legislation mandated no revenue replacement. We need to lobby Congress for revenue replacement," Greller said.

"We've been meeting with the Indiana delegation with a series of Zoom meetings," Greller continued. "They are indicating a second stimulus has a long, long way to go." While a second round of checks to individuals appears more likely, "there is very little interest" in federal funding for operating expenses.

As for the General Assembly during its biennial budget session, legislators could be facing a \$2 billion hit for the current biennium, with Gov. Holcomb and legislative leaders already indicating that there will be no K-12 education cuts during the current budget.

**Greller was unsure** what municipal governments will ask. "The timing isn't right to request more taxing authority," he said. He suggested the state could grant "more flexibility" in transferring funds between accounts, without having to reimburse the original fund. He also suggested a "careful examination of reducing restrictions on gas tax money." He doesn't expect many layoffs in the immediate future. Many cities and towns have suspended summer parks programs and haven't opened pools, so many seasonal employees weren't brought on. He said one big city mayor told him he has 20 to 30 open jobs, with a hiring freeze likely. That could be an emerging trend as municipalities move into their budget sequence late this summer and autumn.

Another pandemic trend is the municipal move to public meetings via Zoom. Greller said that Huntingburg Mayor Denny Spinner told him that the local board of works meetings used to attract just a handful of citizens and often no reporters. In the Zoom format, 50 or 60 citizens and multiple reporters have attended. ❖



# A partisan pandemic conversation

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – With their favorite breakfast place open again, Ralph the Republican and Donald the Democrat meet on weekday mornings once more to sip coffee and argue politics. Each enjoys irritating the other, all in fun, of course – sort of.



Donald, first to arrive, was wearing a mask as he sat at their usual table. Ralph strolled in with a greeting: Hey, Donnie. You look stupid with that mask on. How ya gonna eat your bagel through a mask?

**D.** At least I'm wearin' one. Not like your president. Once you sit down with proper space and Susie brings my coffee and bagel, I'll take it off.

**R.** I figure it's one of your political statements. Strange colored mask. Colors of the Democratic revolution? Still pretendin' it isn't safe to open up our economy?

**D.** Well, Ralphie, doesn't look that safe in some states. Even right around here in Elkhart County. Big rise in that virus.

**R.** As our president explained, there's a lot more testing, so there'll be more cases found. Stories about a big new wave are more fake news, tryin' to hurt our Republican president's reelection chances.

**D.** Not so. Trump should be tellin' people to wear masks.

Susie, their favorite waitress, came with coffee and their usual bagels: You guys still arguin' about President Trump and when to wear masks? Let's just hope the virus gets under control and I can take off my mask and everybody can.

**R.** Yeah, but Donnie here hopes it gets worse so it hurts President Trump.

**D.** You just wanna pretend it's already gone so Trump can win again.

**S.** How about another topic when I get back with refills?

**R.** She's right. Let's talk about that Bolton book. Bet he's suckered you into buyin' it.

**D.** As a matter of fact, Ralphie, I've ordered it. Never thought much of Bolton. But when Trump tried to keep him from publishing, it convinced me get it.

**R.** Can you really trust a guy with a mustache like Bolton's?

**D.** You've got a point, Ralphie. But

can you trust a guy with hair like Trump's?

**R.** There you go again, a hair joke to avoid talkin' about all he's accomplished. Best economy ever. Then China's virus comes along. And now you can't admit jobs are comin' back big, like in that last report. You even bristle when I call him "our president," like he isn't your president.

**D.** He isn't my president. I didn't vote for him.

**R.** OK, I understand how you radicals feel. It's kind of like I never regarded Obama as my president.

Susie, returning with more coffee: Oh, no, you're back to what kind of president Obama was. I've heard all your lines on that. Why not talk about what kind of president Joe Biden would be if he got elected?

**D.** As usual, Susie is right. Let's talk Biden vs. your president. I was scared of Biden bein' our nominee. Now, I think he's just for the decency issue.

**R.** I was scared of Biden, too. Different reason. I wanted somebody like crazy Bernie, who'd be easy to beat.

**D.** Crazy Donald is the one easy to beat.

**R.** You Democrats thought that last time. And look who's livin' in the White House. Biden won't have a chance when the campaign gets tough.

**D.** Know what? We get to see Biden goin' against your president in the first debate right here at Notre Dame.

Susie came by to top off their coffee: Do you guys really think that debate will happen? My guess is that it's maybe 50-50. That's what I hear from some important political types in here. You guys, of course, hear just each other – sort of. ❖

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

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

# In defense of our 1st Amendment rights

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – The most precious sentence in existence is the 1st Amendment to the United States Constitution. There is a reason that it is the first amendment contained in the Bill of Rights. For those of you who need a refresher course:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Our forefathers recognized these holy rights and made sure that they were enshrined for all eternity. Today, there are significant elements in our society who would deny us these rights and

even those who would practice the worst form of abuse, which is self-censorship.

By now it should be painfully evident to nearly everyone that the mass uprising upon the murder of George Floyd has been hijacked by a sinister group of anarchists who are bent on the destruction of every form of sane existence. The move to abolish the police, the creation of no-police zones in some major American cities, the wanton destruction of monuments and memorials, and the attempt to erase much of our American history is clearly not because a bad police officer used excessive force and killed a black man.

Students of history will find ample similarities to the rise of National Socialism, Leninism, Stalinism and the Chinese Cultural Revolution of Mao Zedong with the current social upheaval. This issue is bigger than George Floyd and strikes at the very heart of the American Experience.

**First, let me say** that as a member of one of the largest ethnic minorities in the United States, I feel the pain of many of the oppressed. My Protestant Scottish ancestors were driven from their country by the constant border wars between England and Scotland during the Middle Ages. These immigrants fled to the barren climes of Northern Ireland and tried for a couple of centuries to figure out how to grow crops out of rocks. They labored in this quest until King Charles I of England tried to force them to join the Church of England. My Presbyterian ancestors would have nothing of it and nearly 200,000 of these Scotch Irish made the dangerous trip across the Atlantic to the New World.

Along their historical way, many of these same immigrants to the New World got fed up with the violation of their lives, liberties and pursuit of happiness by King George III and staged that whole American Revolution thing. Many a Fenn, Dunn, Monroe and Jackson shed their blood and risked their livelihoods and necks so that I would have the freedom to write this column today.

Virtually every successful country has an element in it that is the equivalent of square pegs trying to fit into the round holes of society. For a variety of reasons, known and unknown, these malcontents have failed to find the success or recognition that they believe they are entitled to by their mere presence on Earth. The truth is that for many of these people, a life with purple and orange hair, pierced noses chained to their nipples, a mommy and daddy who never said “no” and armed with a liberal arts degree in romantic languages has not prepared them for a life of economic success.

**These anarchists sit** around minding their knitting like a modern day version of Madam DeFarge, just waiting for an opportunity to rush to the barricades and call for the executions and dismemberment of anyone who they believe has been a successful recipient of the fruits of a free society.

To a large degree, I believe that this is what has happened in the aftermath of the tragic George Floyd death. I have several black friends and I have not heard one call for the dismantling of the police or for a systemic destruction of our historical heritage. These calls are coming from the same folks who give you riots and mayhem every time the G7 meets, regardless of which country hosts the meeting. This also explains why the Black Lives Matter violence and destruction spread from the United States to other countries. It was not because of George Floyd, but from crass opportunism using a tragedy to sow the seeds of rebellion.

There is ample proof that the terrorist group Antifa is behind much of the murder and destruction. These people thrive on the chaos that arises when incidents such as the Floyd death occur. They are financed by a diverse group of supporters who have their own motives, most completely unrelated to social justice. Please remember that every war, rebellion and disaster has winners and losers. The supporters of Antifa have their goals, whatever they may be, that can only be achieved by the destruction of our American way of life.

**My wife recently spoke** with a friend of hers who had lost a key member of her management team, at a social service agency, to another employer. This is generally not news. Happens every day. Except in this case, the new employer is Antifa and the employee’s new job is traveling around to every hotspot and organizing the protestors. That’s the problem with malcontents, they have trouble organizing spontaneous riots on their own. Time to call the professionals.

The professional anarchist knows that the best way to advance their cause is to quiet those who might





stand in their way until it is too late. Strike at basic rights and shut intelligent people up! This strategy drives seemingly intelligent people to do really ignorant things. Instead of looking for the root causes of the terrible murder rates in inner cities and stopping looting and rioting in its tracks, some mealy-mouthed and weak-kneed politicians resort to platitudes and dismantling monuments to dead soldiers in an effort to appease the vocal crowd.

**The co-conspirators** in the media, Hollywood, corporate America, the sporting world and high society all pitch in to do their best to stifle any expression of free political thought when that freedom of speech differs from what they believe or feel they need to act like they believe. This censorship of free thought and free speech has escaped the friendly confines of academia and now oozes like primordial slime down the corridors of American life. Good and decent people, large and small, have been destroyed by the public calling for their heads by the Robespierres of the Cancel movement. In a more quaint time, a man like Drew Brees or the recently disgraced opinions editor of the New York Times might be loaded up on an ox cart and taken to their just reward at the guillotine. All to the delight of the masses.

Many Americans, driven by fear of being pilloried by an army of vocal malcontents have resorted to the most heinous violation of the 1st Amendment that they could, self-censorship. When a person has an opinion to share but withholds that opinion out of a fear of reprisal such as loss of their job or personal assault, then that is the cruellest damage to our Constitution. We became a great nation because of freedom of expression.

Without people freely speaking their minds in a variety of ways, through standing on a stump and speaking their minds, to publishing a pamphlet seeking redress, to preaching from the pulpit, there would be no United States, there would be no Emancipation of the Slaves, no Civil Rights Act, no Voting Rights Act, no Women's Suffrage and no rights for the LGBT community. Free and unbridled speech, whether it is ugly or not, shows itself as a rainbow bumper sticker or yes, even as a Confederate flag, is absolutely vital to the future of our republic.

**Most people forget** that the architects of the French Revolution eventually all went to their deaths by the guillotine. The discontented and anarchist masses must be fed their daily dose of gore and destruction no matter where it must be found. Today, it may be the princes and potentates who face execution or canceling, but eventually it comes around to the Robespierres. Use your freedom and speak out before it is too late! ❖

**Dunn is the former chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.**

## A century of reports on American race

By **KELLY HAWES**

ANDERSON — The report grew out of what happened on a scorching hot day on the shores of Lake Michigan in July of 1919.

There was no official marking, but everyone knew blacks stuck to their part of the beach, and whites stuck to theirs. On that day, though, 17-year-old Eugene Williams drifted beyond the invisible boundary.



Some said a group of young whites threw rocks at Williams. Others said the rocks were aimed at other blacks. Maybe Williams was hit in the head by one of those rocks, or maybe he was just frightened by the violence and drifted too far from shore.

In any event, the young man drowned, and police at the scene refused to take action against the whites who had been throwing rocks.

The confrontation set off nearly two weeks of rioting. Thirty-eight people were killed, and more than 500 were injured.

In response to the violence, Frank Orren Lowden, the governor of Illinois, appointed a commission "to get the facts and interpret them and to find a way out." The commission spoke to nearly 200 witnesses and produced a 700-page report, "The Negro in Chicago: A Study of Race Relations and a Race Riot."

Eve Ewing, a sociologist who teaches at the University of Chicago, wrote about the report in a book titled "1919." She talked about her book and the report's recommendations this week in an interview with Terry Gross on National Public Radio's "Fresh Air." "It's funny," Ewing said. "They're recommendations that would look really familiar to you in a report that somebody might put out now."

**The commission urged steps** to ensure that blacks in Chicago had access to affordable and high-quality housing, that they had access to excellent schools and great teachers. "We need to make sure that people have a fair shot at getting the same jobs as their white neighbors," she said of the commission's recommendations. "We need to make sure that black people can safely use parks and pools and public facilities."

The report also included findings on criminal justice. "The testimony of court officials before the commission and its investigations indicate that Negroes are more commonly arrested, subjected to police identification and convicted than white offenders," the report said, "that on similar evidence they are generally held and convicted

on more serious charges, and that they are given longer sentences.”

The report is one of many detailed in an article for The New Yorker by Jill Lepore, a professor of history at Harvard University. The article quotes Kenneth B. Clark, a psychologist at the City College of New York, speaking to the Kerner Commission in 1965.

“I read that report ... of the 1919 riot in Chicago, and it is as if I were reading the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '35, the report of the investigating committee on the Harlem riot of '43, the report of the McCone Commission on the Watts riot,” he said. “I must again in candor say to you members of this commission, it is kind of ‘Alice in Wonderland,’ with the same moving picture shown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations and the same

inaction.”

Clark uttered those words more than five decades ago. This month, as Americans again protest racial injustice, Republican U.S. Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio called for the appointment of yet another commission. “It would not be a commission to restate the problem,” he said, “but to focus on solutions and send a strong moral message that America must live up to the ideal that God created all of us as equal.”

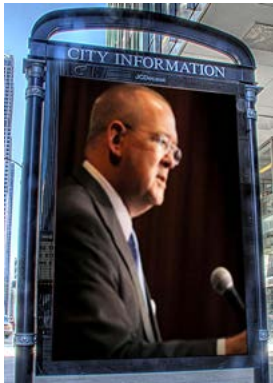
It seems like maybe we should already have gotten that message. ❖

**Kelly Hawes is a columnist for CNHI News Indiana. He can be reached at [kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com](mailto:kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com). Find him on Twitter @Kelly\_Hawes.**

## Trump visa restrictions damage the economy

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE — Last week the Trump Administration announced the suspension of visas for seven different categories of specialized workers and their family members. Many might be tempted to shrug this off, thinking that such a restriction will help American workers find better jobs. That conclusion is mistaken.



This action will shrink the US economy by almost \$100 billion this year alone. It risks permanent damage to our research universities, which are the lifeblood of technical research and development. And it will push American firms overseas in search of talent, reducing the long-term demand for high-skilled workers.

The communities that will suffer most are small college towns and rural places already facing ongoing population decline.

Last year these visa programs admitted almost 600,000 workers and roughly 250,000 family members to the U.S. About half of these are for foreigners working as camp counsellors, tutors or nannies. The majority of them also attend college in the U.S. The other half of jobs go to very high-skilled workers, typically with masters or doctorate degrees in science, technology or mathematics. Most of these workers just finished college degrees in the United States.

The visa restrictions will redirect hundreds of thousands of foreign students to universities in Canada, Great Britain and Europe. This action will cause deep

financial damage to hundreds of American universities. For example, almost a quarter of students who attend Purdue are foreigners, most of whom study here with the intent of obtaining one of these visas.

The damage to America’s universities cannot be overstated. In the 120 years since the Nobel prize was first awarded, roughly 40% have gone to Americans. Of those awards to Americans, more than one in three went to immigrants. Closing this door would be more damaging to American science and innovation than any single event in our history. This visa plan should be called “Make Foreign Universities Great Again.”

The inability to attract the best minds around the world will cause U.S. companies to move operations overseas. Ironically, the likely shift of U.S. research and development operations this visa restriction would cause will be sufficient enough to reduce employment in the U.S. The place that will suffer most will be college towns and places trying to lure high-technology jobs to their regions. Immigrants comprise almost all the population growth outside of large metropolitan places.

The Trump Administration’s stated reason for this action is transparently fictitious. For almost four years they’ve claimed they oppose low-skilled and illegal immigration. This is high-skilled and legal immigration. Have they been lying to the American people for four years? The Administration claims it wants to boost U.S. jobs, but this action will reduce U.S. GDP and employment. The Administration even claimed this is designed to stop the coronavirus pandemic. That claim is just as serious as suggesting we inject disinfectant or take hydroxychloroquine.

This visa restriction is just a desperate campaign talking point aimed at the most gullible voters in the nation. But, is that good politics? I think not. Immigrants to the United States represent the very essence of what Republicans said they stood for when I came of age to vote in 1980. President Reagan chose his farewell address to reinforce that point saying, “It is bold men and women,



yearning for freedom and opportunity, who leave their homelands and come to a new country to start their lives over. They believe in the American dream.” Today, a modestly competent political party, yearning for future electoral success, would make an explicit appeal to immigrants.

**Still the political folly** of a policy does not constitute an economic argument against it. For that I make the appeal to reason. The unemployment rate for STEM workers perennially hovers close to zero. We live in a world of nearly inexhaustible demand for technical innovation. Adding more high-skilled workers makes the U.S. economy better, with more, better-paying jobs. Foreign students and professors are indispensable to America’s innovation-based economy. Slowing the immigration of skilled and educated foreigners is not simply bad public policy, it is transcendently stupid.

To put it simply, a political party that would restrict this type of immigration does not believe in America. They reject the words of Ronald Reagan, who told us “While other countries cling to the stale past, here in America we breathe life into dreams. We create the future, and the world follows us into tomorrow.” Any political party aching to restrict the best and brightest from teeming to our shores has no interest in leading us into tomorrow. Voters must not let them try. ❖

**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.**

# Florida, Pennsylvania shift toward Biden

By **KYLE KONDICK,**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — When we first debuted our 2020 Electoral College ratings way back in February 2019, we had a couple of ratings that we thought might raise eyebrows: We rated Michigan, Donald Trump’s closest victory in 2016, as Leans Democratic, and Florida, a state he won by just 1.2 points, as Leans Republican.

Our reasoning, in a nutshell, was that we thought Trump’s victory in Michigan was flukier than his wins anywhere else, and a better Democratic campaign effort in Michigan could be enough to flip the state. Meanwhile, we had just seen Democrats lose two statewide races, Senate and governor, in Florida in the midst of a 2018 midterm election where they had dominated many other purple states and districts. Trump had also generally polled a bit better in Florida than he had nationally throughout his presidency to that point.

At the time (Feb. 28, 2019), we wrote the following: “Those who think we are being unfair to Trump by making Michigan Leans Democratic should consider whether we are perhaps being unfair to the Democratic nominee by making Florida Leans Republican. Ultimately, we’re just trying

to reduce the number of Toss-ups where we feel that’s warranted. Just as we think Florida going blue would probably mean a Democratic presidential victory, so too do we believe that a Republican win in Michigan probably would mean that the GOP is retaining control of the White House. So if we move either to Toss-up, it may mean that a favorite is emerging in the presidential race overall.” Because we’re moving Florida to Toss-up, and not really considering doing the same to Michigan, it’s fair to say that presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden is emerging as a favorite in the presidential race. Not necessarily an overwhelming favorite, but a favorite nonetheless.

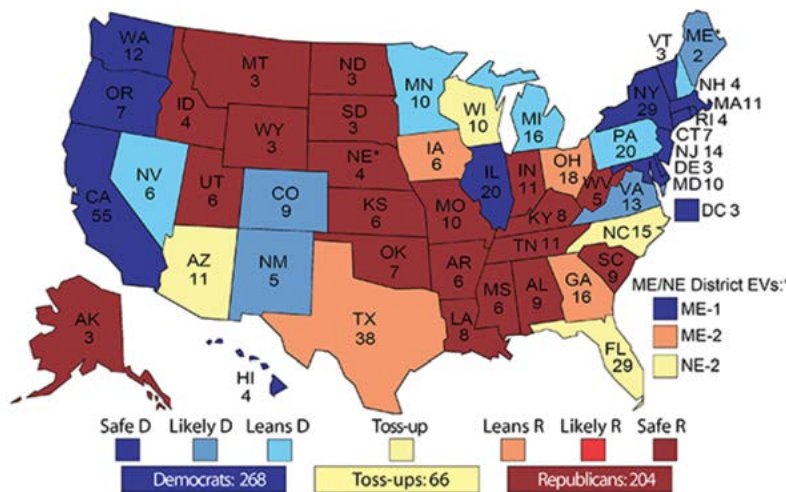
Looking at the state of play in the two crucial states of Michigan and

Florida help illustrate why.

Biden has led recent Michigan polling — not always by a lot, although sometimes by double digits. Rep. Justin Amash (I, MI-3) decided not to run for president as a Libertarian, preventing him from playing spoiler as an anti-Trump candidate in his competitive home state. And while primary results cannot be used as a proxy for the fall, Biden beat Bernie Sanders in Michigan by a healthy margin in the March 10 primary (when Sanders was still an active candidate), carrying every county after Hillary Clinton had struggled against Sanders in outstate areas four years prior, indicating



Map 1: Crystal Ball Electoral College ratings



that, perhaps, Biden was a better candidate for non-metro Michigan -- and other similar kinds of places across the competitive industrial north -- than Clinton had been.

Meanwhile, in Florida, Biden actually has not trailed a poll since mid-March. Biden has shown some surprising strength with senior citizens in many national polls, leading in some surveys with these voters after the 2016 exit polls showed Trump winning the oldest age cohort by seven. If true, this trend naturally would help Biden disproportionately in Florida, a magnet for retirees. Trump may have also jeopardized a small asset in recent days by suggesting in an interview with Axios that he is open to meeting with dictatorial Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro and has soured on Juan Guaidó, an opposition leader that the United States has recognized as the true leader of the country. Democrats have sometimes struggled in South Florida with a perception that they are soft on despotic Latin American leaders, like the Castros and Maduro. To the extent that these developments matter to voters in South Florida, Trump may have opened himself up to criticism: There are more than 400,000 Hispanics of Venezuelan origin in South Florida, according to a recent Politico report on Trump's shifting stances on Venezuela's leadership (Trump reaffirmed opposition to Maduro in a tweet on Monday).

**To be clear, we remain** skeptical of the Democrats' ability to win Florida. Republicans run circles around Democrats in organizing. Even the executive director of the Florida Democratic Party recently told the Washington Post, "In Florida we have a history of fumbling at the two-yard line." No kidding. To be fair, he then said, "I don't think we're going to do that this year," citing improvements to the Democrats' organizational efforts and a growing Democratic edge in voters registering to vote by mail. We shall see.

We have one other change this week: We're moving Pennsylvania from Toss-up to Leans Democratic.

The dynamic in the Keystone State is somewhat similar to that of the Wolverine State: Trump was able

to squeak by in each state in large part because of great performances in outstate areas.

Clinton did perfectly well enough in metro Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to win, but she got clobbered so badly outside the big urban areas that she narrowly lost the state to Trump.

**The recent changes** in Pennsylvania illustrate the larger trends that animate the industrial north — places like Michigan and elsewhere. Trump is hemorrhaging votes among white voters who have a four-year college degree, and who are heavily represented in suburban counties around big cities. That's why Clinton ran ahead of Obama in much of suburban Philadelphia. However, Trump added votes among white voters who do not hold a four-year degree, who are disproportionately represented in more rural/small city areas.

Based on a 2017 analysis of the 2016 presidential voting by Rob Griffin, John Halpin, and Ruy Teixeira for the liberal Center for American Progress -- an analysis we consider superior to the more commonly-cited national exit poll -- Trump won white voters without a four-year degree by 31 points, while Clinton won white voters with a four-year degree by seven.

Something that should be concerning to the president is that recent national polling has shown him falling further behind with college whites, not matching his 2016 share with non-college whites, or both.

Quinnipiac University, in a poll released last week showing Biden up eight nationally, had Biden up 22 points with college whites, while Trump was up 26 with non-college whites; Fox News, also released last week, showed Biden up five with college whites, but Trump only up 16 with non-college whites; NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist College, released a few weeks ago, had Biden up 20 with college whites and Trump up 25 with non-college whites; and New York Times/Siena College, released Wednesday, had Biden up 28 with college whites and Trump up 19 with non-college whites. ❖



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**R. Emmett Tyrrell, American Spectator:** Now the mob is planning to tear down the statue of Theodore Roosevelt, and, may I add, that TR was one of the original Progressives. Take a look in an American history book, if you can find one. Teddy was an original Progressive. The mayor of the fated city of New York, Bill de Blasio has already approved Teddy's removal. Au revoir, Teddy; you will soon rest in the dustbin of history along with George Washington and so many other old white men of American history. Possibly, in time Mayor de Blasio himself will repose there. After all, he is an aging white male, and he has not achieved even as much as Roosevelt, to say nothing of Washington. Obviously with all the statues coming down, and the property being destroyed and the history being trampled, something is afoot in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. America is welcoming in a new regime. It is a Fascist regime, which comes somewhat as a surprise to me. This Fascist regime is being raised up from the left end of the political spectrum. If you are like me — educated by left-wingers all your life — you were taught to expect Fascism to come from the right. Today on the right there is only silence, irenic silence. All the flag burners, statue smashers, and, dare I say it, book burners, are on the left. In fact, Mayor de Blasio is one of them. Though he is careful to wear a suit and tie, when he appears on television he always approves of the mob, and it is only a matter of time before he begins appearing in public wearing a uniform with epaulets and perhaps a sword. ❖

**Curt Smith, IBJ:** The preliminary primary election data in this raucous, rash pandemic year shows the early signs of discontent among some Republican faithful. Whether these signs unfurl into full frustration depends on many factors, including how the candidates campaign this fall. Many will dismiss such analysis, saying we cannot draw any conclusions from this atypical election in a tumultuous year. But the pain, difficulty, alarm, anxiety and angst produced by the pandemic, social unrest and economic distress expresses itself politically and could more fully express itself in this fall's general election. Consider the following: In the state's most watched congressional primary, the open seat in Indiana's 5th District, GOP establishment names were rejected for complete newcomers. The three top vote-getters had zero to little government experience. None had been elected to prior office, and they bested by wide margins state Treasurer Kelly Mitchell and former Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi. One newcomer, Micah Beckwith, whom this columnist supported, spent about \$20 per vote (for roughly 10,000 votes) compared to nearly \$100 per vote for Treasurer Mitchell and more than \$110 per vote for Dr. Chuck Dietzen, a physician. These numbers are likely to drop by as much as 10% as final vote tallies are released, but the pastor/musician Beckwith found his voters with far fewer dollars than any of the top seven contenders in the crowded 15-way primary. Or maybe they were looking for



him. Initial returns also indicate a moderate GOP House incumbent was defeated. Yet the more conservative members of the House, such as Bruce Borders and Curt Nisly, easily defeated opponents. Other consistently conservative legislators such as Christy Stutzman and Matt Hostettler had no challengers, while more moderate, longtime members Matt Lehman and Dan Leonard are barely leading in tight races. Moreover, two established, experienced, respected policy advocates came up short in open legislative races. Leah McGrath, the former deputy mayor of Fishers, lost to a military veteran and attorney who is a newcomer to politics for the seat vacated by former House Speaker Brian Bosma. JR Gaylor, a seasoned Statehouse hand who helped fashion labor and pro-business policies for decades, also lost to a newcomer in a Hamilton County state Senate race. Again, established names rejected for newcomers. ❖

**Gary Truitt, Hoosier Ag Today:** The last thing we need right now in agriculture is more uncertainty. Between trade, government aid, the weather, and the pandemic, farmers have had enough uncertainty for one season. However, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit decided to add a little more. At first, they banned the use of Dicamba weed control products at the request of several environmental group, saying the Environmental Protection Agency had not properly evaluated the risk of the product. This decision came in the middle of the growing season when farmers were using the product. Then they decided to allow farmers to use the supplies on hand. The EPA responded by telling farmers they could go ahead and use any products they had on hand. The environmentalists went back to the Court and asked it to ban use of the products immediately. While the legal battles continued, farmers and agribusinesses were caught in the middle, not knowing what to do, what they could do, and what the future of Dicamba is. The Court then decided to allow farmers to use the supplies on hand. What is at stake here is tremendous. An estimated 64 million acres of dicamba-tolerant seed is already in the ground—with no viable weed control alternative that can realistically be deployed. Expected yield loss for soy and cotton is as high as 50%, with losses estimated at as much as \$10 billion. This also sets a dangerous precedent when it comes to regulating our food and agricultural system. Until now, government regulatory agencies have been given the authority to regulate the safety of our food and the safety of the tools used to produce it. The FDA, USDA, and EPA all play key roles in this process. Comprehensive, long-standing legislation, like FIFRA, have set standards for products, review, and licensing. There is even a framework within this system for appeal and review. Yet, now, the legal system wants to short circuit this system. Policy makers in Washington need to decide who is in charge when it comes to regulating food and agriculture. Will it be scientists and researchers or judges in robes? Without this certainty, agriculture will be left in confusion. ❖



## Pandemic disaster unfolding in U.S.

HOUSTON — A coronavirus resurgence is wiping out two months of progress in the U.S. and sending infections to dire new levels across the South and West, with hospital administrators and health experts warning Wednesday that politicians and a tired-of-being-cooped-up public are letting a disaster unfold (AP). The U.S. recorded a one-day total of 34,700 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, the highest level since late April, when the number peaked at 36,400, according to a count kept by Johns Hopkins University. While newly confirmed infections have been declining steadily in early hot spots such as New York and New Jersey, several other states set single-day records this week, including Arizona, California, Mississippi, Nevada, Texas and Oklahoma. Some of them also broke hospitalization records, as did North Carolina and South Carolina. "People got complacent," said Dr. Marc Boom, CEO of the Houston Methodist hospital system. "And it's coming back and biting us, quite frankly." Stocks slid on Wall Street as the news dampened hopes for a quick economic turnaround. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost over 700 points for a drop of 2.7%. The virus has been blamed for over 120,000 U.S. deaths. On Wednesday, the widely cited University of Washington computer model of the outbreak projected nearly 180,000 deaths by Oct. 1.



## Holcomb announces \$25M in rent help

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb's administration on Wednesday announced a new rental assistance program to help individuals struggling to make rental payments during the pandemic, but landlords must agree to participate in the program before renters can qualify for the funding (IBJ). The \$25 mil-

lion program, funded through federal aid the state received through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, will provide assistance of \$500 per month for up to four months. The state expects the program to help about 12,000 households. It is available to residents in every county except Marion County, which is offering its own \$15 million rental assistance program with its share of CARES Act dollars. "Housing stability has never been more important," Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch said during a press conference Wednesday. Holcomb also announced on Wednesday that he will be extending the rental eviction moratorium through July. Democrat Dr. Woody Myers, who is running for governor against Holcomb, criticized the decision to require landlord permission for the relief. "Hoosier renters are facing an unprecedented eviction cliff, and rent is due in seven days," Myers said in a statement. "With his announcement today in requiring landlord permission for renters' participation in the program, Gov. Holcomb may as well have signed their eviction orders himself. With so many Hoosiers out of work due to the economic devastation due to COVID-19, this is the wrong prescription for Indiana families."

## ISDH seeks to head off resurgence

INDIANAPOLIS — As Indiana's coronavirus numbers improve, the state is banking on rapid-response teams to cut off a potential resurgence (Berman, WIBC). The Indiana State Department of Health already has what Gov. Eric Holcomb dubs "health care SEAL teams," traveling to meat-packing plants, nursing homes, or other locations which have had outbreaks, to do testing and contact tracing. Health Commissioner Kristina Box says the state now has access to data it didn't have before, on hospitalizations and ambulance runs for COVID-like symptoms. She says those act as an early-warning

system for new hotspots, allowing the department to confer early with local hospitals, county commissioners, and county health departments on steps they can take to contain the virus. Holcomb says the rate of infection among people under 30 has tripled. Box says contact tracing has documented instances of "superspreaders" — people who had no symptoms who infected large numbers of people.

## Pacer's Brogdon tests positive

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Pacers guard Malcolm Brogdon said Tuesday he has been quarantined after testing positive for the COVID-19 coronavirus (AP). Team officials made the announcement by posting Brogdon's statement on Twitter. "I recently tested positive for the COVID virus and am currently in quarantine," the statement read. "I'm doing well, feeling well and progressing well. I plan to join my teammates in Orlando for the resumption of the NBA season and playoffs."

## Schmuhl joins Heartland Ventures

SOUTH BEND — Mike Schmuhl, Pete Buttigieg's former national campaign manager, has joined Heartland Ventures, a seed and Series-A fund with an investor base made exclusively of strategic middle-America business owners and CEOs, as director. "I'm both thrilled and excited to join Heartland Ventures, a growing firm founded right here in South Bend," said Schmuhl. "Talent, innovation, and purpose are found throughout the Midwest, and I'm eager to do my part to introduce and promote our region's businesses and workers to groundbreaking technologies being developed across the country." "Mike built the fastest growing startup in South Bend history with the Pete for America campaign," said Max Brickman, founder and managing director of Heartland Ventures, referring