

Trump v. Biden: Homestretch analysis

Trump wants to talk about the economy, but pandemic won't go away

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – And now the hard part: Telling my readers what to expect on Election Night and the mysterious beyond, which might last hours, or months. While 2016 was the “Anything Can Happen” election between two historically loathsome nominees,

2020 has become a referendum on President Trump, and, specifically, his handling of the unprecedented pandemic and simultaneous economic meltdown.

Had the pandemic not happened, President Trump probably would have been zeroing in on reelection, becoming the unprecedented fourth



consecutive two-terms, topping the Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe trifecta.

While Trump tried to perpetuate the aura of his greatest ever economy, he has yet to escape the deadly grip of the pandemic. Last February and early March, he frequently said it would “mysteriously go away.” Even during the nationwide

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Pandemic executives

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Our election that culminates on Nov. 3 is about two things: A referendum on President Trump, and the coronavirus pandemic. Here in Indiana, the other executive seeking reelection is Gov. Eric Holcomb, who is a clear favorite. Trump is on thin, thin ice and poised to join Presidents Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush in the defeat column. Trump would rather be talking about anything else than the pandemic.

Why?

Let's go back to late last winter and spring. On March 10, President Trump told Republican senators, “We're prepared, and we're doing a great job with it. And it will go away. Just stay calm. It will



“Well, they’ll count all of them that qualify to be counted, and the point I’ve made previously is the sooner the better. You can’t sacrifice the quality of the job. It needs to be thorough and it needs to be accurate.”

- Gov. Eric Holcomb, on when Indiana ballots will be counted.





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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



go away." Three days later at a press conference, Trump became the anti-Truman, telling the nation, "I don't take responsibility at all."

President Truman, whose White House desk featured the sign, "The buck stops here," had been an obscure Missouri haberdasher and then senator when President Franklin Roosevelt elevated him to the ticket in 1944. Within a year, he had not only become president with FDR's death, but launched the planet's only atomic attack.

On March 28 and 29, as the nation faced an unprecedented lockdown, Trump, who fashions himself as a "wartime president," tweeted: "WE WILL WIN THIS WAR. When we achieve this victory, we will emerge stronger and more united than ever before!" On the next day, he said, "Nothing would be worse than declaring victory before the victory is won."

By April, when epidemiologists began to understand this mysterious microbe, they determined that the simple act of wearing a face mask when in public could save tens of thousands of lives. On April 3, Trump said, "The CDC is advising the use of non-medical cloth face covering as an additional voluntary public health measure. So it's voluntary. You don't have to do it. They suggested for a period of time, but this is voluntary. I don't think I'm going to be doing it."

In July, Fox News' Chris Wallace asked Trump, "The CDC says if everybody wore a mask for four to six weeks, we could get this under control. Do you regret not wearing a mask in public from the start, and – will you consider a national mandate that people need to wear masks?"

Trump responded, "No. I want people to have a certain freedom, and I don't believe in that, no. And I don't agree with the statement that if everybody would wear a mask, everything disappears."

Had Trump taken that CDC advice, instead of the 70,000 COVID cases a day we're currently seeing in the week leading up to the election, the daily toll could have been

under 10,000, leaving him poised for reelection. If he had been urging the usage of masks, the Trump and Pence staffs probably wouldn't have become COVID hotspots.

Compare that to the consistent messaging of Gov. Holcomb, who said on March 16, "This is the beginning. This is real. To those who think we may be overreacting, I can assure you we are not. We are – make no mistake about it – at war with COVID-19. The state is taking unprecedented actions to slow the spread of COVID-19, and every Hoosier should follow the precautionary measures."

On March 26, Holcomb was thinking long term: "I hope this will remind us that this isn't just a marathon. This is a triathlon. This is something that will require us to not let up. We need to do more, not less. It's all in an effort to get through this so that 100% can go back to work, not just the essential companies."

On July 1, Holcomb tweeted, "Wearing a face mask is one of the simplest, most effective ways to slow the spread of the virus, but we need everyone to do their part to keep our state safe. That's why we are asking all Hoosiers to mask up and speak up about how wearing your mask can save lives." On July 27, he signed an executive order mandating face masks, saying, "This is time sensitive now. This is the next prudent step that we as a state need to take." It's an order that persists today, though compliance is spotty.

Indiana has gone from 400 to 800 COVID infections a day to more than 2,000 a day over the past week because the nation did not take seriously the wearing of masks, testing and contact tracing. In fact, Trump and Pence MAGA rallies have become "super spreader events." A USA Today analysis revealed COVID-19 cases grew at a faster rate after at least five of those MAGA rallies in Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, which is at hospital capacity and setting up COVID units in parking lot tents.

Beyond the pandemic, Presi-

dent Trump is hemorrhaging Republican and military support. His first secretary of defense, Gen. James Mattis, said last June, "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 without mature leadership. We can unite without him, drawing on the strengths inherent in our civil society."

Dan Coats, former Indiana senator and Trump's first director of national intelligence, told author Bob Woodward in the book "Rage," about a conversation he had with Mattis. "The president has no moral compass," Mattis told Coats. "True," Coats responded. "To him, a lie is not a lie. It's what he thinks. He doesn't know the difference between the truth and a lie."

Former Marine Gen. John Kelly, Trump's former chief of staff, told friends, "The depth of his dishonesty is just astounding to me; the dishonesty, the transactional nature of every relationship, though it's more pathetic than anything else. He is the most flawed person I have ever met in my life."



Retired Navy Admiral William H. McRaven, who led the mission to kill Osama bin Laden, said, "Today, as we struggle with social upheaval, soaring debt, record unemployment, a runaway pandemic, and rising threats from China and Russia, President Trump is actively working to undermine every major institution in this country. He has planted the seeds of doubt in the minds of many Americans that our institutions aren't functioning properly. And, if the president doesn't trust the intelligence community, law enforcement, the press, the military, the Supreme Court, the medical professionals, election officials and the postal workers, then why should we?"

"And if Americans stop believing in the system of institutions, then what is left but chaos and who can bring order out of chaos? Only Trump," McRaven continued. "It is the theme of every autocrat who ever seized power or tried to hold onto it."

Former Republican Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder said in a USA Today op-ed, "President Trump lacks a moral compass" and "ignores the truth."

John Bolton, Trump's former national security adviser, said he will not vote for Biden or Trump and hopes that history remembers Trump "as a one-term president." Cindy McCain, widow of the 2000 Republican presidential nominee said, "My husband John lived by a code, country first. We are Republicans, yes, but Americans foremost." She isn't voting for Trump.

Former President George W. Bush and 2012 Republican presidential nominee Sen. Mitt Romney have publicly said they will not vote to reelect Trump. Romney, the only Republican ever to vote to convict a GOP presi-

dent in an impeachment trial, observed last February, "In the end, the evidence was inescapable. The president did in fact pressure a foreign government to corrupt our election process, and really, corrupting an election process in a democratic republic is about as abusive and egregious an act against the Constitution – and one's oath – that I can imagine. It's what autocrats do."

Miles Taylor, the LaPorte native, Indiana University graduate and former chief of staff at the Department of Homeland Security in the Trump administration who was identified as "Anonymous" on Wednesday, said what he had witnessed from President Trump "was terrifying," saying Trump has been "actively doing damage to our security."

After a sensational 2020 thus far, featuring Trump's impeachment trial and acquittal, a pandemic that set off the greatest financial scare since the Great Depression and has killed more than 225,000 Americans, with epidemiology models pointing to a half a million deaths, and President Trump endangering hundreds more with his CDC-violating MAGA rallies, what else could possibly happen with a misogynistic, narcissistic, erratic, and xenophobic president in a second term, unbound by future voter judgement, and employing a compliant C-Team administration?

Could it possibly be worse than what we're witnessing today, with the White House science office declaring "ending the COVID-19 pandemic" as the "top accomplishment of President Trump's first term" even as the pandemic spikes and engulfs our medical systems? Throw in his repeated threats against our "rigged" election process and his unwillingness to commit to accepting the verdict of the American people and the once assumed "peaceful transfer of power" and the dynamic is set for an ongoing disaster.

The Atlantic's Jeffrey Goldberg observed: "In 1973, a United States Air Force officer, Major Harold Hering, asked a question that the Air Force did not want asked. In training to become a Minuteman-missile crewman, Hering asked, "How can I know that an order I receive to launch my missiles came from a sane president?" This was the "forbidden question."

Richard Nixon, who was president when Major Hering asked his question, was reported to have told members of Congress at a White House dinner party, "I could leave this room and in 25 minutes, 70 million people would be dead."

President Trump, who has pronounced himself a "perfect physical specimen," famously said in Sioux City in 2016, "I could stand in the middle of Fifth Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose voters."

A second term of Donald Trump's reality show would be a grave risk for our fragile American experiment in democracy. ❖

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shutdown, he said he expected normalcy by Easter. Vice President Pence said in May it would be in the rearview mirror by Memorial Day. In a mid-June Wall Street Journal op-ed, Pence insisted the "second wave" was a concoction of the news media.

These past two weeks, Trump conveyed that America had "turned the corner" on the pandemic that is now infecting 70,000 people a day, killing upwards of a thousand. Hospitals across the upper Midwest and Rio Grande Valley are being swamped with COVID patients. Indiana hospital executives warn we may be just weeks away from a similar circumstance. In Utah, medical officials suggested they might begin rationing lifesaving care.

In April, when epidemiologists determined that face masks would keep infection rates low, Trump took a pass. He refused to wear them, made fun of people who did. On April 3, he said, "The CDC is advising the use of non-medical cloth face covering as an additional voluntary public health measure. So it's voluntary. You don't have to do it. They suggested for a period of time, but this is voluntary. I don't think I'm going to be doing it."

Had he accepted the medical expertise, he would be reaping the rewards of managing a similar deadly event that a century ago had been widely ignored by President Wilson and Indiana Gov. James Goodrich.

Today, we find Trump trailing Democrat Joe Biden by 7.1% in the Real Clear Politics polling composite. Biden is at 49% or above in crucial swing states Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan. He is expanding the map to Arizona, Nevada, Iowa and Georgia, giving his campaign wrap-up in Warm Springs where he urged the "healing" of America on Tuesday.

In Indiana, a Ragnar Research Partners Poll had President Trump leading Biden 48-40%, which is down from his 19% plurality in a three-way race in 2016.

In Senate races, polls show Democrats leading

incumbent Republicans in Maine, North Carolina, Iowa, Arizona, Colorado and one of two seats in Georgia, though they are tightening, with the Real Clear Politics composites within most polling error margins. House Democrats are massively out-raising Republicans and expect to add to their majority.

Dave Wasserman of Cook Political Report said on Twitter on Sunday night: "A few days out, the picture of this race is pretty clear: 1.) Joe Biden's lead (52%-43%) larger & more stable than Clinton's in '16; 2.) Far fewer undecided/third party voters than '16; 3.) District-level polls (which showed big problems for Clinton in '16) back up national/state polls."

There are a host of other reasons beyond the polls to think that voters are going to cancel Donald Trump's reality show. First, Hillary Clinton isn't on the ballot; millions of Republicans and independents just couldn't gag and vote for her in 2016. Recent polling shows Trump erosion of support among critical voting blocs he carried four years ago: Senior citizens, Whites, independents. Trump carried senior citizens with 52% in 2016. A recent CNN poll showed Trump trailing Biden 60-39% within that demographic. An early October NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll showed Trump trailing Biden by 27% (62-35%). Trump's tightly packed, maskless MAGA rallies aren't impressing these voters.

The shock poll came on Tuesday in Wisconsin, where an ABC/Washington Post Poll had Biden leading Trump by 57-40% (a Marquette Law School Poll on Wednesday had Biden up 5%). Wisconsin

has seen a 53% increase in average daily cases in the past two weeks, a record number of hospitalizations and a 112% jump in deaths. Voters aren't buying the "We've turned the corner" rhetoric.

NBC reports that Trump's campaign has \$10.1 million booked on television and radio ads between Wednesday and Election Day, compared to Biden's \$50 million, according to Advertising Analytics. Democrats are set to outspend Republicans \$109.8 million to \$40.7 million on

RealClearPolitics Election 2020			
President	Senate		House
Election 2020	Biden	Trump	Spread
RCP National Average	51.1	43.6	Biden +7.5 ▲
Top Battlegrounds	49.2	45.6	Biden +3.6 ▲
Latest Betting Odds	63.7	35.3	
Electoral College	Biden	Trump	Toss Ups
RCP Electoral Map	232	125	181
No Toss Up States	311	227	
Battlegrounds ● ○	Biden	Trump	Spread
Pennsylvania	49.6	45.8	Biden +3.8
Florida	48.0	48.0	Tie ▲
Georgia	47.2	47.2	Tie ▲
North Carolina	48.4	47.7	Biden +0.7
Arizona	48.4	46.2	Biden +2.2 ▼
Minnesota	48.0	43.3	Biden +4.7 ▼
2020 vs. 2016	2020	2016	Spread
Top Battlegrounds	D +3.6	D +1.6	Biden +2.0
RCP National Average	D +7.5	D +2.0	Biden +5.5
Favorability Ratings	D +19.6	D +4.5	Biden +15.1
Battle for Senate		No Toss Ups	
45 Dems	9 GOP	46	51 Dems
			49 GOP
State	Spread		
North Carolina	Cunningham (D) +1.6 ▲		
Iowa	Greenfield (D) +2.2 ▲		
Montana	Daines (R) +3.3		
Michigan	Peters (D) +7.1 ▲		
Georgia	Perdue (R) +0.6 ▼		
Minnesota	Smith (D) +6.3 ▲		
Arizona	Kelly (D) +4.4		
Texas	Cornyn (R) +8.0		
Georgia	Warnock (D) +11.2 ▲		
Maine	Toss Up		
South Carolina	Toss Up		
Colorado	Leans Dem		

the presidential ad air-waves in the closing days. In the critical swing state of Florida, Trump's campaign has just \$300,000 booked between now and Election Day, with the RNC set to spend \$2.1 million on TV and radio. That's compared with the Biden campaign's \$7.7 million in ad bookings in the state.

In Indiana's 5th CD, while the Christina Hale/Victoria Spartz race remains in most prognosticators' "tossup" zone (including HPI's), what is revealing is what is happening within the district's footprint. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spilling into down-ballot General Assembly races, including Republican House Speaker Todd Huston, State Rep. Jerry Torr, State Rep. Donna Sheibley and the Senate race between incumbent John Ruckelshaus and Democrat Fady Qaddoura.

More General Assembly money is hitting suburban races where Republican incumbent Reps. Dale DeVon, Martin Carbaugh and State Sens. Mike Young and Jack Sandlin are seeking to fend off Democratic challengers.

Multiple sources tell HPI that Trump has become a drag in the 5th CD and legislative races within its footprint. Anecdotally, sources in Hamilton County report people taking time in the polls, suggesting a lot of ticket-splitting, with Gov. Holcomb holding the line for the GOP. The heavy early vote in Hamilton County used to indicate a GOP wave, but there has been an influx of new voters, while the suburban female vote has been a consistent problem for Trump.

These elements portend to a building Democratic wave. In 1980, the late Sen. Richard Lugar used to describe how Ronald Reagan's challenge to President Jimmy Carter turned on the final weekend, with undecideds emphatically breaking for Republicans, bringing 12 Democrat senators (including Indiana's Birch Bayh) down to defeat while the GOP picked up 35 House seats, including that of Majority Leader John Brademas in Indiana's 3rd CD.

Mark Souder, HPI columnist and former Republican congressman, who was elected in the wave election

Final Pre-Election "Scalometer" Favorable Ratings of Major-Party Presidential Nominees, 1956-2020

Ranked by net favorable

GALLUP POLL

	Nominee	Total favorable % (+1 to +5)	Total unfavorable % (-1 to -5)	Net favorable +/-
1956 Oct 18-23	D. Eisenhower	84	12	+72
1964 Oct 8-13	L. Johnson	81	13	+68
1960 Oct 18-23	J. Kennedy	80	14	+66
1976 Sep 24-27	J. Carter	81	16	+65
1960 Oct 18-23	R. Nixon	79	16	+63
1976 Sep 24-27	G. Ford	78	20	+58
1968 Oct 17-22	R. Nixon	79	22	+57
1972 Oct 13-16	R. Nixon	76	21	+55
1968 Oct 17-22	H. Humphrey	72	28	+44
1984 Sep 21-24	R. Reagan	71	30	+41
1980 Oct 10-13	J. Carter	68	32	+36
1984 Sep 21-24	W. Mondale	66	34	+32
1992 Oct 23-25	B. Clinton	64	33	+31
1956 Oct 18-23	A. Stevenson	61	31	+30
2008 Oct 23-26	J. McCain	63	35	+28
1980 Oct 10-13	R. Reagan	64	37	+27
2008 Oct 23-26	B. Obama	62	35	+27
2012 Oct 27-28	B. Obama	62	37	+25
2004 Oct 22-24	G.W. Bush	61	39	+22
1992 Oct 23-25	G.H.W. Bush	59	40	+19
2004 Oct 22-24	J. Kerry	57	40	+17
1972 Oct 13-16	G. McGovern	55	41	+14
2012 Oct 27-28	M. Romney	55	43	+12
2020 Sep 30-Oct 15	J. Biden	54	43	+11
1964 Oct 8-13	B. Goldwater	43	47	-4
2020 Sep 30-Oct 15	D. Trump	47	51	-4
2016 Nov 2-5	H. Clinton	47	52	-5
2016 Nov 2-5	D. Trump	36	61	-25

of 1994, says Friday could be the day a Biden-led tsunami materializes. "Every day is an adventure right now," he told HPI earlier this week. "I expect, if there is going to be a Biden landslide, for it to break Friday. COVID is going to play a potentially larger role if it continues to go up this week. It will likely impact the undecided voters."

On the pandemic front, the news just keeps getting worse. The White House has become a hot zone, not once with the President, First Lady and First Son at the unveiling for Justice Amy Coney Barrett, but twice, with Pence's chief of staff Marc Short (who had persistently panned masks), body man and political operative Marty Obst the new victims. This comes as The Hill reported Wednesday that the White House science office listed "ending the COVID-19 pandemic" as the top accomplishment of President Trump's first term.

For months, Trump has tried to supplant the pandemic with Hunter Biden, socialism, and crime. COVID keeps rearing its ugly head, prompting Biden to warn of a forthcoming "dark winter."

There are other unscientific telltales. Why did Vice President Mike Pence do a MAGA rally in Fort Wayne (which drew an underwhelming 400 people) in the ruby red 3rd CD last Thursday? GOP operatives told HPI Pence

		DATES	POLLSTER	SAMPLE	RESULT			NET RESULT	
President: general election	Ind.	SEP 30-OCT 27, 2020	D- SurveyMonkey	4,585 LV	Biden	43%	55%	Trump	Trump +12
	Ind.	SEP 30-OCT 27, 2020	D- SurveyMonkey	4,585 RV	Biden	44%	54%	Trump	Trump +10
KEY A = ADULTS RV = REGISTERED VOTERS V = VOTERS LV = LIKELY VOTERS									
Governor	Ind.	OCT 21-23, 2020	A/B Cygnal	600 LV	Myers	29%	More ⊕		Holcomb +18
President: general election	Ind.	OCT 18-21, 2020	Ragnar Research Partners*	629 LV	Biden	40%	More ⊕		Trump +8
Governor	Ind.	OCT 18-21, 2020	Ragnar Research Partners*	629 LV	Myers	26%	More ⊕		Holcomb +26
President: general election	Ind.	OCT 8-13, 2020	A SurveyUSA	685 LV	Biden	42%	49%	Trump	Trump +7
Governor	Ind.	OCT 8-13, 2020	A SurveyUSA	685 LV	Myers	25%	More ⊕		Holcomb +30

"needed grounding" at home, to feel the love, was going to vote in Indianapolis, and the Fort Wayne media market bleeds into battleground Ohio and Michigan. He could have voted absentee and had a more impactful appearance in Toledo, which penetrates much more deeply in Ohio and Michigan. Why did he spend 18 hours back home again?

We've watched Trump's ex-campaign manager Brad Parscale melt down before an involuntary hospitalization. President Trump has mused about "leaving the country" if he loses. He had MAGA rallies in Erie and Allentown in which he suggested he'd rather be just about any place else.

According to Gallup, Trump's favorables/unfavorables stood at 47/51%, compared to Biden's 54/43%. Only two other nominees – Barry Goldwater in 1964 and Hillary Clinton in 2016 – had worse numbers than Trump. But the worst ever was Trump's 36/61% in 2016, which was 20% below Hillary's, and yet he won.

Amy Walter of the Cook Political Report, observed, "In a mid-October NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, 50% of Americans said that things were going better for themselves and their families compared to four years ago. In a recent Gallup poll, a whopping 61% of Americans said that they are better off than they were three years ago. Even so, just 44% of voters in the NBC/Wall Street Journal poll and 43% in Gallup polling give Trump positive marks as president."

Steven Waldman writes in Washington Monthly: "The president is actually more popular now than on the day he was elected. Yes, that's right. His personal favorability rating around election day in 2016 was 37.5%. Now it is 43.2%. There are, in fact, hundreds of thousands of Americans (if not millions) who have grown fonder of Trump."

Many Trump supporters simply don't believe the polls and believe he will win. The National Review's

Rich Lowry points to the Trafalgar Group's Robert Cahaly, whose polling accurately forecast Trump's winning of the Blue Wall states in 2016 and is forecasting a Trump win next week.

Cahaly polls with eight or nine questions, as opposed to 25 or 30 that most pollsters use. "You end up disproportionately representing the people who will like to talk about politics, which is going to skew toward the very, very conservative and the very, very liberal and the very, very bored," Cahaly explains. "And the kind of people that win elections are the people in the middle. So I think they miss people in the middle when they do things that way."

In TrumpWorld, there is speculation that there are scores of "silent Trumpers" who don't want to talk to a live person and admit they are voting for the president. Other pollsters insist the silent Trump voters are accounted for. "The idea of a shy Trump voter is something Trump supporters tell themselves to make themselves feel better. There is no such thing," Republican pollster Whit Ayres told Newsday. "The idea that they're going to be lots of those voters missed is just not likely to occur."

Ayres acknowledged, "The polls in the upper Midwest and some of the state polls were clearly off" in 2016 "because there were too many college-educated whites and an insufficient number of non-college-educated whites. But most pollsters have adjusted for that now."

One GOP operative told HPI that if swing state polling shows Biden leading in the 7% to 9% range, a win or tidal wave for the Democrats may be underway. If such polling were to slip into the 3%-4% range, that could be a precursor to a second Trump upset.

The Los Angeles Times David Lauter took on the strange phenomenon that Trump continually played to his base over the past four years, instead of expanding it. "The success of that closed information ecosystem explains a big part of why Trump's core supporters so steadfastly back him through every turn of his administra-

tion. Inside the bubble, Trump literally can do no wrong. His often-repeated description of himself as now 'immune' from the coronavirus may strike the rest of the country as silly boasting; within the bubble, it's a powerful metaphor for his status as übermensch.

"For Trump, the cost of creating the bubble is living in it," Lauter explains. "The constraints of the bubble help explain Trump's inability to forthrightly condemn conspiracy theories or white supremacist groups. And they powerfully affect his ability to communicate with outsiders."

Thus, when Trump went to Johnstown, Pa., on Oct. 13, he made an appeal to suburban "housewives", saying, "So can I ask you to do me a favor? Suburban women, will you please like me? I saved your damn neighborhood, OK?"

The Economist's models give Biden a 96% chance of winning; FiveThirtyEight put it at 88% (though that site gave former Sen. Joe Donnelly a 75% chance of winning two years ago).

Holcomb appears safe

On the home front, the pandemic has altered the gubernatorial race, with Gov. Eric Holcomb the clear favorite. Where Trump has been widely panned for his handling of the pandemic, Holcomb has benefitted politically with widespread exposure during his weekly COVID Zoom pressers. A Cygnal on behalf of the Ready Education Network released Tuesday found Holcomb at 47%, Woody Myers at 29% and 15% for Libertarian Donald Rainwater.

In a second poll this week from Ragnar Research Partners for the Rainey Center had Holcomb at 52%, Myers at 26% and Rainwater at 14%. Among those who had already voted, 49% said they supported Holcomb, 38% said they supported Myers and 8% said they supported Rainwater, which backs up speculation that Democrats are early voting in higher numbers than Republicans. A recent SurveyUSA poll had him leading Democrat Woody Myers by 30%. That poll revealed 75% support the governor's face mask mandate.

In another strange twist, Libertarian Donald Rainwater is now in the second week of a statewide TV and radio ad campaign. Myers doesn't have the funds to compete on TV, yet another new low for the bottom-scraping Indiana Democratic Party. Rainwater polling in the mid-teens is credible because he's been advertising on TV and radio over the past two weeks, while Myers has been radio silent.

Myers has been one of the most perplexing gubernatorial nominees in modern history. He's a medical doctor during a pandemic, is likable, articulate, a successful businessman and investor, and should have played well to the Democrat base. He just has little money, with his most discernible advertising niche coming on Facebook.

Myers' flagging position cannot be good news for Democrat attorney general nominee Jonathan Weinzapfel. The Democratic Party is 2-17 in statewide races, and the

only constitutional office that didn't follow the governor came in 2012 when Glenda Ritz won the superintendent race while Republican Mike Pence won a narrow gubernatorial victory. A big win for Holcomb will be good news for Republican attorney general nominee Todd Rokita and, possibly, Victoria Spartz in the 5th CD.

The biggest news coming from Myers' statewide bus tour last Saturday was the emergence of Beau Bayh as a possible coming third-generation component of the family dynasty.

According to the U.S. Elections Project, 1,178,033 Hoosiers have voted as of Wednesday morning, including 739,171 in person. There have been 438,862 absentee ballots returned, and 576,481 requested. Some 71 million Americans have voted as of Wednesday morning. ❖



Election countdown thoughts & perspectives

By MARK SOUDER

FORT WAYNE – Here are some thoughts on the final days.

1.) The final debate was Trump's best. It stopped his polling slide, at least temporarily, that had accelerated after his bullying performance in the first debate and the further confusion after he skipped the second. His gains, however, were not large and may have come too late.

2.) The Senate races are interesting, both because of the importance of Senate control but also as indicators of the presidential race. Before the final debate, it seemed as though the Democrats would have seized Senate control had that been election day. Since the debate, the Republicans have gained 2-4 points in key seats, making the Republican maintenance of control riding heavily on two Georgia seats and the North Carolina race. Minnesota has become surprisingly close in some polls and a strong candidate in Michigan is at least competitive. Iowa and Arizona are again basically tied.

3.) Trump has more intensely loyal supporters. So did Goldwater and McGovern. Intense support does not always correlate to representing wider support. Trump, unlike the aforementioned, does have a second group: People who don't particularly respect him but fear the policies of his opponents. Trump also has a larger core (i.e. the Plains states, Indiana and most of the deep South) than Goldwater and McGovern did. And there are a large number of states that are still competitive in the



Great Lakes (including Pennsylvania), Texas and Florida (which are now the second and third largest states), as well as scattered others (e.g. Arizona).

4.) The President has failed to state what he plans to do because of his obsessive focus on what he has done. For example, instead of claiming to have saved the suburbs in the past tense, was distracting. Americans support change but not by a failure to promote law enforcement. Attempts to defund the police in major Democrat-controlled cities is a smoldering issue, as riots in Philadelphia showed Tuesday night. The president's focus on proving things are fixed has taken the emphasis off his strongest point to swing voters: Liberal policies are scary in these times. None of the major problems get "fixed" but rather are continuing challenges.

5.) Trump continues to show how not to appeal to suburban women. "I saved your suburbs" didn't work, and not just because it is patronizing. It makes little sense even if you understand the unstated premises. Good law enforcement protects people in the cities, not the suburbs. An even less effective appeal is to brag that you are going to put women's husbands back to work. In America, both men and women work. These statements are pretty irrelevant at this point but illustrate why the president has a big problem with female voters.

6.) Senate polling may give the best indication of final results. When pooled, far more people are polled overall than in a national poll. Thus, especially in the swing states, the fact that Democrats are making a race of it in states where they were not expected to compete is of particular concern to Republicans. African-American turnout at Obama-type levels as well as more Hispanic voters and some suburban female defections is likely what is impacting surprisingly tight Senate races in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and even potentially Mississippi. This also illustrates a growing problem for Republicans, either improve appeal to minorities or become the Whigs.

7.) Trump needed to pound home, and now finish with, the fact that Biden has been part of the establishment that has failed to fix the problems. Biden just can't blame Trump for everything. Here is the continuity of Democrat leadership at the presidential level for the last two decades: B. Clinton, B. Clinton, Obama-Biden, Obama-Biden, H. Clinton, and now Biden. Not to mention Speaker Nancy Pelosi has been in charge of House Democrats since 2003. Trump, rather than saying he's fixed things, would be better off stating that in just four years, he's made more progress than the Biden establishment did in two decades.

8.) With COVID cases

and deaths rising, as we head into colder weather, it is not believable that problems are fixed. Over-the-top bragging in politics seldom works. It is different than saying that you worked hard, touting successes, and then asserting that you are better able to tackle the threats that face us ahead. COVID is just an example of that point.

9.) The Hunter Biden scandal only appealed to hardcore Trump voters. Ukraine only matters to voters if it is show why we should care. Perhaps if it could be clearly shown why it is important to Russia and how that relates to our national interest, people would then care, but even that is questionable. Instead, the Democrats tried to impeach Trump over it (backfired) without, apparently, even considering that Biden would get drawn in as well. Most understand that Hunter's business dealings were questionable at best and, that unlike his brother, Hunter has struggled in his life. They are not blaming his dad nor are they going to believe that Trump's charges against Hunter's dad are non-political. And Russia's continued meddling just confuses an already messy issue. It served as a distraction for Trump when focus was needed.


10.) Trump may look like a bully but Biden looks increasingly like a shell of his former self. In the last debate and since, other than when Biden occasionally gets his ire up, he looks very old and frail. With Reagan, the media obsessively focused on his age. If you want a sign of liberal media bias, analyze the pass they are giving Biden. It should be of great concern.

11.) Will Only Trumpers vote for other Republicans? Only Trumpers are of concern to Republicans because the loyalty of many to the Republican Party is suspect. The president's continuing sweeping swamp attacks on all of Congress, even including individual Republicans and the Republican-controlled Senate, means that the drop-off below the presidential line could be more severe than usual. The Republican senators have the disadvantage of being tied to Trump, which hurts them among swing voters. If they and other Republicans also lose many Trump supporters (including Gov. Holcomb and attorney general candidate Todd Rokita), the general loyalty and implied tweet acquiescence would be a doubly cruel blow. This variable could become decisive in close races.

12.) A primary risk to Democrats is that they seem to think the presidential races end a week earlier than they do. The only chance the Republicans have is if enough voters fear liberal Democrat policies more than a second term of Donald Trump. If in these final days voters focus on the president instead, it could be a landslide for Joe Biden. But, because of Biden's campaign approach, he will have no policy mandate at all. ❖

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

Trump & Latinos

By **JOSHUA CLAYBOURN**

EVANSVILLE – Polling in Texas consistently shows a tightening race in the Lone Star State. The president still leads in Texas, but not for reasons Republicans usually lead in Texas. Compared to generations of prior Republicans, Trump lags in the suburbs and among whites. So



where is the corresponding increase in support for the president that buoys him despite those declines?

It is among Mexican-Americans.

This is not as counter-intuitive as it may seem; Hispanics show increasing alignment with the emerging right-populism.

Look to the Florida 2018 outcomes, driven in large part by Hispanic voter behavior, especially among

Puerto Ricans, the left did not expect. Look to the (in) famous Telemundo snap poll that showed its Spanish-language viewers as the only group of Americans to think the President did great in his first 2020 debate performance. And in Texas, the all-Democrat, all-Mexican-American Laredo is a vast reservoir of prospective Trump voters.

For several months Democratic messaging branded Donald Trump with caudillismo: the theme that the incumbent president is a strongman who gets things done. That may turn off suburban voters, but it is attracting more Hispanics.

These changes point to a larger political realignment and evidence that class drives events more than race or ethnicity. The Republican coalition continues evolving into a revival of its original contours of the 1850s, with national-greatness and free-labor concerns at the fore. The president is a consequence, rather than a cause, of this change.

Smart political strategists will soon realize that replacing college-educated whites with working-class Mexicans is not a one-to-one proposition — in part because the latter group tends to become the former within three generations.

Nevertheless, the trend will continue. Hillary Clinton lost Pennsylvania in 2016 in large part because Barack Obama’s 2012 total of 96% of Philadelphia’s Black vote dropped to a mere 89%. Trump may over-perform with Black men in 2020 — though not with Black women — and the appeal again appears to be on class grounds.

If the contest between right and left in 2020s America is a contest between a class-based reckoning advanced by the former, and a race-based reckoning advanced by the latter, then we are in for tumultuous times.

❖

Claybourn is a Republican attorney from Evansville.

Trump will win big

By **TONY SAMUEL**

INDIANAPOLIS – Earlier this week on WIBC radio, I predicted a 22-point win for President Trump in Indiana and that he would be reelected. I predicted the 20-point win in 2016 on the same station. I got some ridicule, but why should I play it safe?



Trump won Indiana easily last time, so it only makes sense that he will win by an even larger margin, right? Kamala Harris and her running mate have no clear strategy except fear of COVID, while President Trump touts his accomplishments and vision for the future.

Why change from a president that has rebuilt the military to the tune of \$2.5 trillion to make us stronger and safer while keeping us out of new wars and doing more to neutralize North Korea

than any previous president? He has taken out terrorists like al-Baghdadi and Soleimani, destroyed the ISIS caliphate and is the only one to take on China over unfair trade practices and sending us the virus.

He has brought significant peace to the Middle East by brokering agreements between Israel and the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan, and brought a lasting peace to Kosovo and Serbia, all earning him two Nobel Peace Prize nominations. He also fixed the VA to provide the great care that our veterans deserve.

Why would we switch from a president that rebuilt our economy with the largest middle-class tax cut in history and cuts to regulations to increase plant expansions, create jobs and raise wages, bringing the lowest unemployment rates ever for women, African Americans and the Hispanic community? Opportunity zones are bringing billions of dollars of investment to our neighborhoods most in need and he increased funding to \$255 million per year for historically black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions.

Criminal justice reform? Yeah, he got that done too. Alice Johnson and Charles Duke Tanner, former professional boxer from Gary, Indiana, can attest to that. This president has always supported law enforcement before

the chaos in our cities started. He defends the police while the Left try to defund. That is why law enforcement across the country has his back now, including the state police union in Joe Biden's home state of Delaware.

Space Force is reason enough to reelect him, on top of a list that goes on and on.

However, if you are easily manipulated by media coverage, then you might see things differently. Broadcast coverage of President Trump is 92% negative. These folks don't share much about his successes, but they'll tell you all day long about a tweet.

The Left has now finally settled on a closing case, COVID, after the battle over Supreme Court nominees didn't work, which came after the impeachment scam failed. That was after the assault on Justice Kavanaugh backfired, and who can forget the \$50 million and three years wasted on the Russia hoax?

What the Left does not realize is that voters are smarter than they give them credit. Americans pay attention and are aware of results. This is why they come out by the thousands to rally in the cold, or stand on bridges to wave Trump banners, or get on a boat with a Trump flag to join a Trumptilla. These are the hidden Trump voters that don't show up in polls already skewed Biden's way.

Meanwhile, Joe Biden's 47-year career of no accomplishments, known mostly for plagiarism, lies, and now family corruption, earns him about 20 people that sit in circles to hear about more shutdowns to ruin more lives, and of course the hate speech.

Hate spreads. Marxism takes root by dividing people by race. It happened in Kosovo and Serbia and throughout the world over the last several decades and we're seeing it here from the Radical Left with Antifa, anarchy, intimidation, and violence.

When you listen to the closing arguments, you

hear 80% hate speech from Biden, Obama, and Harris and 20% platitudes, rhetoric, phrases about the soul of the nation, etc. The real battle is for the soul of the Democrat Party and that is why so many will cross over to President Trump.

We support President Trump because we get him, and we know that he loves this country. We didn't elect



him to be the Ice Cream Man or a school counselor or our pastor. We elected him and will reelect him because we know he will fight every day to make this country safer and greater and because he kept his promises. We need a bold leader that is up to the challenges of a tough world. President Trump has proven time and again that he is up for any challenge.

I will stick with my prediction: A bigger win for President Trump in Indiana, and another four years, based on his results, Trumping their hate. ❖

Samuel was Indiana vice chairman for the Trump campaign in 2016.



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Indy Senate seats, 5th CD House seats in late money crosshairs

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Late last spring after the pandemic-delayed primary, Howey Politics Indiana isolated five Indiana Senate races and 16 House races (including open seats), likely to be in play on Nov. 3.

That bit of prognostication appears to be mostly on target as we monitor the late money flooding into a dozen House seats and those five in the Senate.



The true tossup Senate seats are clearly SD30 where Democrat Fady Qaddoura is challenging State Sen. John Ruckelshaus, and SD30 where Republican State Sen. Jack Sandlin is trying to fend off Democrat Ashley Eason.

SD30 has attracted \$441,396 in late money, with \$325,134 going to Ruckelshaus. While the incumbent has gone negative against Qaddoura, he is finishing with a posthumous endorsement from the late U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar (via taped remarks used in a TV ad).

In SD36, \$220,658 has come to Sen. Sandlin, while Eason has received \$41,408. She received the endorsement of the Indy Chamber earlier this fall.

Another Senate race that hasn't attracted as much money is State Sen. Mike Bohacek, R-Michiana Shores, who has received \$33,042 in late money, compared to \$25,520 for Democrat Gary Davis.

In building our target list, HPI always includes "outlier" districts that could come into play should a wave election appear. In the case of the Senate, these included

Late Money To Indiana Senate Candidates

District	Candidates	DEM	GOP	TOTAL
8	Gary Davis	\$25,520		\$58,562
	Mike Bohacek		\$33,042	
30	Fady Qaddoura	\$116,262		\$441,396
	John Ruckelshaus		\$325,134	
32	Belinda Drake	\$9,249		\$35,190
	Aaron Freeman		\$25,941	
35	Pete Cowden	\$14,083		\$15,083
	Mike Young		\$20,260	
36	Ashley Eason	\$41,408		\$262,066
	Jack Sandlin		\$220,658	
		\$206,522	\$625,035	\$812,297

SD32 where State Sen. Aaron Freeman is being challenged by Democrat Belinda Drake, and SD35 where veteran Pete Cowden is challenging State Sen. Mike Young.

Of these two outlier seats, Young appears to be more vulnerable than Freeman. Young has launched attack ads at Cowden, who has raised \$100,000 and is using a very targeted digital campaign similar to what Glenda Ritz used in 2012 to upset Republican Supt. Tony Bennett. Young has responded with attack direct mail that has Cowden pictured with socialist Sen. Bernie Sanders and U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

The HPI Horse Race rates SD32 with Sen. Freeman as "Likely" Republican, and SD35 with Sen. Young as "Leans" Republican.

Indiana House

The true tossup races in the Indiana House include HD5 where Republican State Rep. Dale Devon is in a rematch race with Dr. Donald Westerhausen, HD81 in another rematch between State Rep. Martin Carbaugh and Democrat Kyle Miller, HD89 where State Rep. Cindy Kirchofer is seeking to fend off Democrat Mitch Gore, and HD35 where Republican Yorktown School Trustee Elizabeth Rowray is challenging Democrat State Rep. Melanie Wright.

In HD5, DeVon has received \$94,261 in late money compared to \$78,000 for Westerhausen.

In HD81, Carbaugh has received \$139,558 com-

Late Money to Indiana House Candidates

District	Candidates	DEM	GOP	TOTAL
5	Donald Westerhausen	\$78,000		\$172,261
	Dale DeVon		\$94,261	
7	Ross Deal	\$24,000		\$148,416
	Jake Teshka		\$124,416	
12	Mike Andrade	\$17,744		\$16,744
	Tom Wichlinski		\$1,000	
15	Chris Chyung	\$67,000		\$145,540
	Hal Slager		\$78,540	
19	Lisa Beck	\$17,000		\$109,894
	Julie Olthoff		\$92,894	
24	Naomi Bechtold	\$47,215		\$193,991
	Donna Schaibley		\$146,776	
35	Melanie Wright	\$141,500		\$320,434
	Elizabeth Rowray		\$178,934	
37	Aimee Rivera Cole	\$113,793		\$544,168
	Todd Huston		\$430,375	
39	Ashley Klein	\$176,776		\$412,462
	Jerry Torr		\$235,686	
81	Kyle Miller	\$72,045		\$211,603
	Martin Carbaugh		\$139,558	
88	Pam Dechert	\$10,229		\$149,735
	Chris Jeter		\$139,506	
89	Mitch Gore	\$28,000		\$293,019
	Cindy Kirchoffer		\$265,019	
		\$793,302	\$1,926,965	\$2,718,267

pared to \$72,045 by Kyler Miller in an attempt to regain the seat formerly held by former Fort Wayne mayor Winfield Moses.

In HD89, Kirchofer has received \$265,019 in late money and is running TV ads.

But the big House money is flowing into districts within the footprint of the 5th CD, where Democrat Christina Hale is attempting to pick up an open House seat vacated by U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks. Hale and Republican Victoria Spartz have raised close to \$5 million and are engaged in an epic mud-slinging battle.

Within the 5th CD, House Speaker Todd Huston has received \$430,375 in late money to fend off Democrat Aimee Cole Rivera. She has been targeted with TV ads



showing her with AOC, Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Rep. Ilhan Omar. Huston doesn't appear to be in serious trouble; he just doesn't want to become the second HD37 speaker to be upset. In 1986, House Speaker J. Roberts Dailey was upset by Democrat Marc Carmichael.

Falling within the 5th CD may be the most vulnerable House Republican, State Rep. Jerry Torr in HD39. Torr has received \$235,686 in late money while Democrat Ashley Klein has picked up \$176,776.

In HD35, Elizabeth Rowray, a Yorktown Community School Board member, has raised more than \$400,000 in her campaign to unseat Daleville Community Schools teacher and State Rep. Melanie Wright, D-Yorktown, who has raised more than \$250,000 in her pursuit of a fourth term. "We are a super-minority but only need one more Democrat to be in the minority,"



HOWEY
POLITICS INDIANA



President (U.S. & Indiana)



President Donald Trump (R), Joseph Biden (D), Jo Jorgensen (L)

HPI Horse Race:

National: Likely D; Last week: Likely D
Indiana: Safe R; Last week: Safe R

Indiana Governor



Gov. Eric Holcomb (R), Woody Myers (D), Donald Rainwater (L)

HPI Horse Race:

This week: Safe R
Last week: Safe R

Indiana Attorney General



Todd Rokita (R) Jonathan Weinzapfel (D)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Leans R
Last week: Leans R

Congressional 2nd



U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorki (R) Pat Hackett (D)

HPI Horse Race

This week: SAFE R
Last week: Likely R

Congressional 5th



Victoria Spartz (R), Christina Hale (D), Kenneth Tucker (L)

HPI Horse Race

This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Congressional 9th



U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R) Andy Ruff (D)

HPI Horse Race

This week: SAFE R
Last week: Likely R

Wright said in a telephone interview with the Muncie Star Press on Monday. Rowray has received \$178,934 in late money, compared to \$141,500 for Wright, who has been running TV ads for the past month.

We're also keeping a close eye on HD15's rematch between Republican Hal Slager and State Rep. Chris Chyung, which remains a tossup race.

There were two seats we didn't include in our original House target list last June, the rematch between State Rep. Donna Shaibley and Democrat Naomi Bechtold,



and HD36 where State Rep. Terri Austin is facing Republican Kyle Pierce.

HRCC always seeks to expand the map, and this year's target is Austin in

HD36. Austin has been targeted with broadcast and cable TV ads. Pierce, who works at the Ball State University Foundation, told the Anderson Herald Bulletin, "There are a lot of great opportunities for Anderson. The problem is the local economy and schools. I asked other leaders if they were going to step up and they weren't going to run. I was looking for other people to run."

Austin told the Herald Bulletin, "We must address continued high unemployment, massive health care costs because of the COVID-19 pandemic and a depleted state 'rainy day' fund. Next session lawmakers must adopt a state budget for the next two years and money will be tight. This is a time for experienced, bipartisan leadership that can lead this state out of this crisis." HPI rates HD36 as "Leans" Austin.

HPI's Horse Race rates HD39, HD81, HD5, HD89, HD15 and HD35 as "tossups."

HPI rates HD7 in a race between State Rep. Ross Deal and Republican South Bend Councilman Jake Teshka as "Leans" Deal. Ditto for HD88 in the seat vacated by former House Speaker Brian Bosma, with Republican State Rep. Chris Jeter facing Democrat Pam Dechert.

Another Democrat leaner has State Rep. Lisa Beck in a rematch with former Republican rep Julie Olthoff, who has received \$92,894 in late money.

Congress

5th CD a true tossup

The race between Democrat Christina Hale and Republican Victoria Spartz is the only Indiana seat in play. HPI's Horse Race originally included the 2nd and 9th CDs as potential "outlier" seats in case a Democrat wave materialized.

Several recent polls in Indiana show President Trump with a 7% to 9% lead over Joe Biden. Neither presidential campaign has invested in Indiana.



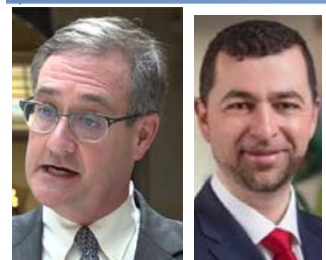
Indiana General Assembly SD8



**Sen. Mike Bohacek (R)
Gary Davis (D)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly SD30



**Sen. John Ruckelshaus (R)
Fady Qaddoura (D)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD5



**Rep. Dale Devon (D)
John Westerhausen (R)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

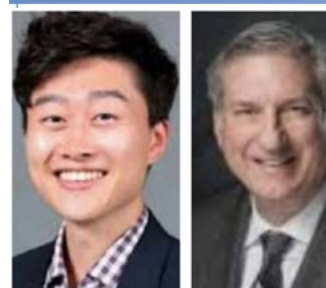
Indiana General Assembly HD7



**Rep. Ross Deal (D)
Jake Teshka (R)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: LEANS D
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD15



**Rep. Chris Chyung (D)
Hal Slager (R)**

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

If there is a blue wave that develops over the weekend and is evident on Election Night, like 2018, it will likely miss most of Indiana. HPI is now rating the 2nd CD's U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski and 9th CD's Trey Hollingsworth as "Safe" GOP seats.

The 5th CD is a different story. Since 2018, we've seen internal polling showing that President Trump is a potential drag on the Republican ticket. That's why Hale decided to get off the gubernatorial track for 2024 and seek the open seat vacated by U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks.

It has been targeted by the DCCC and the NRCC, with more close to \$9 million in outside money coming into the race. According to Open Secrets, Hale has been targeted by \$4,896,627, while Spartz has been targeted by \$3,546,793. Open Secrets says Spartz has been supported by \$485,656.

In their third quarter FEC postings, Spartz reported \$2,374,370 raised, \$1,731,032 spent, \$643,338 cash on hand; while Hale \$3,181,208 raised, \$2,575,989 spent, \$605,220 cash on hand. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

Statewides

Weinzapfel sees traction

"I think it's going down to the wire," Democrat attorney general nominee Jonathan Weinzapfel told HPI Wednesday afternoon, a day after he called for marijuana reforms. He said the reaction has been "very positive," with "most of the feedback saying it's about time."



The former Evansville mayor said not only would legalization bring \$177 million in tax revenue, "it will reduce pressure on our jails and prisons."

Weinzapfel has also made Attorney General Curtis Hill's participation in a lawsuit to be heard

by the U.S. Supreme Court a week after the election that could end the Affordable Care Act an issue. "Ending the ACA could end HIP2.0," Weinzapfel said. "Some 580,000 Hoosiers would lose their insurance the day the Supreme Court finds it unconstitutional. Removing the ACA would be devastating."

HPI analysis earlier this year reported that of 19 statewide races in Indiana over the past decade, Democrats have only won two of them: Joe Donnelly in the U.S. Senate race and Glenda Ritz in the superintendent of public instruction, both in 2012.

HPI asked Weinzapfel if the impotent Woody My-



Indiana General Assembly HD19



Rep. Lisa Beck (D)
Julie Olthoff (R)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Leans Beck
Last week: Leans Beck

Indiana General Assembly HD35



Rep. Melanie Wright (D)
Elizabeth Rowray (R)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Tossup
Last week: Tossup

Indiana General Assembly HD37



Rep. Todd Huston (R)
Aimee Cole Rivera (D)

HPI Horse Race
This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

Indiana General Assembly HD88



Chris Jeter (R)
Pam Dechert (D)
Open: Brian Bosma

HPI Horse Race
This week: Likely R
Last week: Likely R

Indiana General Assembly HD89



Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer (R)
Mitch Gore (D)

HPI Horse Race
This week: TOSSUP
Last week: Likely R

ers gubernatorial campaign is a problem. Normally the attorney general race follows the gubernatorial race. In one of the more peculiar aspects of the 2020 cycle, Libertarian gubernatorial nominee Donald Rainwater is running a statewide TV ad campaign; Woody Myers is not. "We've run an independent campaign," Weinzapfel said. "We've raised enough money to get our message out statewide. I think this race is closer than a lot of people think it will be. This goes down to the wire. We feel good about the position we're going."

Brent Littlefield, campaign consultant for Republican Todd Rokita, told HPI that the Democrat Attorney General Association has reduced a \$1.4 million TV ad to just \$47,000.

As for Weinzapfel's call for marijuana legalization, Littlefield said, "We're focused on jobs and the economy. Jonathan Weinzapfel is high if he thinks marijuana legalization is the No. 1 issue voters care about."

Littlefield said that Rokita "is for medical marijuana with a properly regulated Rx program."

Littlefield also predicted "a very robust, turnout of moderate to conservative voters on Election Day."

WTHR fact checks Rokita TV ad

The Indiana attorney general has the power to influence health care and how those laws are enforced statewide. So it's no surprise former Republican Congressman Todd Rokita and Evansville's former Democratic Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel are targeting ads toward voters concerned about pre-existing health conditions (Chapman, [WTHR-TV](#)). But Rokita's promise to protect Hoosiers with pre-existing conditions is raising more than a few questions. "We can trust Todd Rokita," his campaign ad claims. "Rokita will get tough on waste and corruption, cut job-killing red tape and protect Hoosiers with pre-existing conditions." One viewer expressed confusion and asked 13News to fact check the ad's claims. "Hasn't he voted in Congress over and over to end Obamacare?" the viewer asked. The Weinzapfel campaign also shot back with their own counter claims. "The pandemic hit Hoosiers hard, but what's Todd Rokita's plan: Take away health care. That's what he voted to do in Congress. 2.7 million Hoosiers with pre-existing conditions like cancer and heart disease could lose coverage," the ad claims. So what's true? During Rokita's eight years in Congress from 2011 through 2018, he voted to repeal coverage for patient protection and funding for the Affordable Care Act every time it came up, according to both government and industry tracking. The Democratic Attorneys General Association listed the dates of at least 50 such votes. But Brent Littlefield, Rokita's strategic advisor, said there's no flip-flop and that Rokita has always believed "health care policies are best implemented on the local level...Rokita has supported programs like the Healthy Indiana Plan from its inception."

The Rokita camp also pointed to a new Indiana law passed last year guaranteeing pre-existing coverage for Hoosiers, even if the Supreme Court upholds an appeals court ruling

calling the ACA unconstitutional. "What Rokita neglects to tell Hoosiers is the law only protects state employees, legislators (and those on state health care plans)," Jeff Harris with the Weinzapfel camp told 13News. "Hoosiers accessing private or employee-sponsored health care are not protected." That does appear to be the case.

Presidential 2020

Biden focused on pandemic

Focused firmly on COVID-19, Joe Biden vowed Wednesday not to campaign in the election homestretch



"on the false promises of being able to end this pandemic by flipping a switch." President Donald Trump, under attack for his handling of the worst health crisis in more than a century, breezily pledged on his final-week swing to "vanquish the virus"

(AP). He called Trump's handling of the coronavirus an "insult" to its victims, especially as cases spike dramatically around the country. "Even if I win, it's going to take a lot of hard work to end this pandemic," Biden said.

Trump predicts a Biden apocalypse

President Trump is painting an apocalyptic portrait of American life if Biden gets elected. Trump claims that if the Democrat takes over, the suburbs wouldn't be the suburbs anymore, the economy would slump into its worst depression ever and police departments would cease to exist. Trump declared during a rally in Bullhead City, Arizona, "This election is a choice between a Trump super-recovery and a Biden depression."

Latest polling: Mixed Wisconsin polling

What is going on in Wisconsin? If anything had poll junkies talking, it was the two big and conflicting results in Wisconsin (Cohn, [New York Times](#)). ABC News/Washington Post, a high-quality pollster, found Joe Biden leading by ... an eyebrow-raising 17 points. (Not a typo — or not a joke, as Mr. Biden might say.) Later in the day, Marquette University Law School, perhaps the most trusted pollster in the state, found him leading by five points."

After the Wisconsin polls, the most important result came out of Georgia, where Monmouth had Mr. Biden up by two to five points, depending on the turnout scenario. This is a big shift toward him from its last poll, which showed Mr. Trump ahead by between one and five points.

In Michigan, New York Times/Siena had Biden leading Trump 48-43%. ❖

Economics of losing party will matter

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – Many economists have analyzed the policy differences Mr. Biden or Mr. Trump will bring to the U.S. economy. Equally important will be the consequences to the economic policies of the losing party. Our two-party system depends upon the competition of ideas. The ability of both parties to eventually appeal to a majority



of citizens tempers passions and promotes compromise.

If Mr. Trump wins, the Democratic party will surely resume its debate over far-left versus center-left policies that animated their primary. This has thus far been a healthy debate, building on decades of democratic policy. I have strong disagreements with the Democratic platform, but no one can honestly argue they are not mostly serious and target the

concerns of most voters. If defeated, the Democrats are unlikely to make substantive adjustments, viewing defeat as a problem with the messenger, not the message. To his credit, Mr. Biden said so himself.

In contrast, if Mr. Biden wins, the Republicans have two truly extraordinary challenges in re-forming a coherent economic policy. The first lies in conjuring any set of policies from what is today a collection of often contradictory, sometimes transient whims. The second lies in attracting a majority of future voters given the broad electoral challenges that weigh mightily on the party.

For nearly a half century, GOP economic policies coalesced around a broad set of priorities. The party claimed their platform was fiscally prudent, pro-growth, pro-immigration, supportive of free trade, and possessed with a penchant for limited government. The GOP embedded its economics in a broader policy environment that sought to promote American interests abroad. With good reason, the GOP claimed its elected leaders possessed character and competence.

Like the Democrats, the GOP often fell short of their ideals, but they were clear with the framework of who they were and what they wanted to do. Over a half century the GOP held together a coalition with economic policies providing the core domestic policy success. Today that alliance is in shambles, and rebuilding will prove a daunting task.

Mr. Trump's economic policies are neither effective, nor those of the successful GOP coalitions of the past. Only his most forgiving and myopic of supporters would claim he supports the core elements of economic conservatism. The 2019 budget bill was a fiscal calamity, creating

deficits that would've made the most profligate Democrat blush. Mr. Trump is not only anti-immigration across myriad policies, he inexplicably curtailed the in-migration of the best-educated foreigners. His immigration policies aren't about economic ascendancy, but something else altogether.

The GOP can claim only transient success on regulatory reform. Lacking the competence to pass legislation, the entirety of the Trump reforms can be erased by a new president. His trade war proved a disaster. China emerges stronger in its wake while the U.S. slipped away from important international institutions that formed a fire-wall against China's trade practices. By late 2019, the Midwest was effectively in recession because of the Trump trade war. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which I praised in this column, achieved few of its policy goals, undone trade war follies. This has been an inchoate four years.

The COVID-19 pandemic is now the most consequential executive branch failure in the 244 years of the Republic. It amplified Mr. Trump's substantial flaws in character and competence. He failed to confront the pandemic and support basic, uncontroversial public health measures. Instead, he lost his nerve over the stock market and lied repeatedly about the risks of the disease.

Along the way, Mr. Trump ruptured the moral judgment of large numbers of his supporters. The indecent obeisance shown by those who proudly shun masks and social distancing ranks alongside the worst impulses of the human experience. For these Americans, the coming months should be a time of repentance and reflection.

The challenge to future GOP leaders is that Mr. Trump soiled nearly every high ideal that held together the conservative movement for a half century. He replaced them with a yawning emptiness. In the midst of a global pandemic and worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, the GOP could not even summon the basic competence to offer a party platform. Instead of appealing to the boundless character and courage of the American people, Mr. Trump and his sycophants ridiculed them for wearing masks. This is a party wholly bereft of ideas.

The future of the GOP coalition is decidedly bleak. A recent Pew poll shows Mr Trump winning only among voters older than 65 and white voters who have not attended college. Ronald Reagan twice won election with a majority of the 18-24 year-old voters, while Mr. Trump is losing them by 3 to 1. I was one of those 18-year-olds who voted for Mr. Reagan in 1980. In this election, Mr. Trump is poised to lose badly among those now 55- to 64- year-olds who helped sweep Ronald Reagan into office.

In short, Mr. Trump gutted the conservative coalition, retaining popularity only with the most rapidly shrinking segment of future voters. Perhaps worst of all, his repeated winks and nods to the previously torpid morons of the white nationalist movement have poisoned the party. This behavior is so repulsive that many Americans will never again consider the GOP palatable, no matter

the strength of their economic platform. In short, if you wish to eradicate a successful political coalition, Mr. Trump provides a comprehensive example. This has serious post-election consequences.

If Mr. Trump wins, his administration faces a Congress with clear and popular policy alternatives with whom he must compromise to pass any legislation. A victorious Mr. Biden faces no such constraint. There are no broadly held, coherent, affirmative ideas in the GOP

opposition. If Mr. Biden seeks compromise, it will be on his terms, with an eye toward expanding the Democratic coalition for a generation. ❖

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.

America ready for a boring president

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI News Indiana

ANDERSON – Speaking at a rally in Erie, Pennsylvania, President Donald J. Trump suggested we'd all be bored if Joe Biden won the election. "If you want depression, doom and despair, vote for Sleepy Joe," he said. "And boredom."



I don't know about the depression, doom and despair, but I'd suggest this country could use a little bit of boredom right about now. Imagine not having to worry what crazy conspiracy theory would turn up next on the president's Twitter feed. Wouldn't that be a nice change? I'm guessing it wouldn't trouble us at all if

our president never again sent out a message suggesting that his predecessors in the White House might have had Seal Team 6 killed to cover up the fact that Osama bin Laden was still alive.

If Joe Biden were elected, we might never again have to witness our president coying up to wingnuts and conspiracy theorists. We could stop trying to understand his affinity for white nationalists and racists. So when the president promises boredom if his opponent wins the election, well, that sounds pretty good.

The president also suggested that if he lost his reelection bid, Americans would lose interest in politics. I think a lot of us are willing to take that risk. "This is an election between a Trump super recovery and a Biden depression," the president said at that Pennsylvania rally. "You will have a depression the likes of which you have never seen." There's no evidence of that, of course. As his predecessor, Barack Obama, pointed out in a speech in Philadelphia the very next day, our current president inherited a healthy economy. "Just like everything else he inherited, he messed it up," Obama said.

There is so much about our current president that

we've just never seen before. Take the revelation that he has a Chinese bank account. "Listen, can you imagine if I had a secret Chinese bank account when I was running for reelection?" the former president asked. "You think Fox News might have been a little concerned about that? They would have called me Beijing Barry."

I can't count the number of times I've engaged in similar musings about the current occupant of the White House. How would Sean Hannity have reacted if Barack Obama had called military veterans suckers and losers? What would Rush Limbaugh have said if Obama had been the president who paid off a porn star?

Obama also lashed out at the president's insistence that there was "not much" he would change about his administration's handling of the pandemic. "Really? Not much?" the former president demanded during that speech in Philadelphia. "Nothing you can think of that could have helped some people keep their loved ones alive?"

Obama didn't try to sugarcoat the truth. "This pandemic would have been challenging for any president," he said, "but this idea that somehow this White House has done anything but completely screw this up, it's just not true."

Imagine having a president who would actually level with us when times got tough. Wouldn't that be great? Obama insisted that Biden, his former vice president, would bring the right approach to the fight against COVID-19. "Joe's not going to screw up testing," he said. "He's not going to call scientists idiots. He's not going to host a super spreader event at the White House. Joe will get the pandemic under control."

Above all, he said, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris will restore calm and order to the White House. "It just won't be so exhausting," he said. "You might be able to have a Thanksgiving dinner without having an argument."

Couldn't we all use a little more of that? ❖

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Hoosier income and COVID-19

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — Last week in this space we learned the number of jobs in Indiana declined by 91,100 between March and August 2020. This decline was attributed to the pandemic. Now let's look at the output and income effects experienced by Hoosiers.



The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis has released estimates for the second quarter of 2020, when Covid-19 had its greatest impact. Before that we were hardly in a period of robust growth. There was slow growth nationally and in Indiana from the

first quarter of 2019 to the same three months (January through March) in 2020.

Without adjustment for very moderate inflation, the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose by a modest 2.1%, with Indiana just behind at 2.0% (24th among the 50 states). When the pandemic struck in the second quarter of 2020 (April through June), the U.S. suffered a GDP decline of 32.8% at an annual rate, with Indiana again not far off at -34.1% (29th among the states).

How did these catastrophic output measures translate into income? In 2020: Q2, U.S. personal income rose by 34.2% at an annual rate while advancing in Indiana by 28.7% (35th in rank). With GDP dropping like a boulder in a landslide, how could personal income grow so much?

The fall in GDP meant layoffs for workers and reduced incomes for business proprietors. Thus, earnings fell by 26.5% nationally and 28.6% in Indiana. In dollars, the U.S. saw earnings decline by \$992 billion and \$19 billion in Indiana.

Enter the federal government with necessary stimulus programs that more than offset these declines, stabilizing the economy although not relieving the emptiness of every pocketbook. Transfers, as we call Social Security, Unemployment Compensation, and other income maintenance efforts, rose by \$2.4 trillion nationally (\$41 billion in Indiana).

Conventional economic reasoning, circa 1930 but still popular in many political and academic backwaters, proclaimed disaster from the increase in the federal deficit and the expected, inevitable inflation. However, policy makers at the Treasury and the Federal Reserve learned in 2008-09 that rapid, stimulating responses to economic shocks are effective in avoiding a nationwide meltdown.

Contrast how consensus and action prevailed in 2020 compared with the years that passed before significant relief was begun in the Great Depression. We learned from the financial sector earthquake of 2008 to be more bold in meeting the challenges of a major crisis.

COVID-19 is unlike any prior economic challenge modern societies have faced. Its economic effects on millions of households and businesses will be with us well into 2021; continued federal aid is imperative.

The many lives lost, and the greater number of lives disrupted, are markers for humility. There remains much for us to learn about preparing for crises of all varieties. Congratulations and celebrations for mere survival are not in order. ❖

Mr. Marcus is temporarily a one-armed economist. Reach him at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.

This is still Biden's election to lose

By **KYLE KONDIK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Our Electoral College ratings remain 290 electoral votes at least leaning to Joe Biden, 163 at least leaning to Donald Trump, and 85 Toss-ups. The good news for Trump is that it's not hard to imagine him winning all the Toss-ups. All of those states (plus the single electoral vote in Maine's 2nd Congressional District) are very close in polling.

Florida, which many will be relying on as a Rosetta Stone for the national results given what should be a quick

vote count on Tuesday night, seems immune to national trends, turning in close elections seemingly every cycle despite wildly different national political conditions. For five straight cycles, from 2010-2018, the state has featured either a gubernatorial race (2010, 2014, and 2018) or presidential race (2012 and 2016) decided by margins no larger than 1.2 percentage points. (Crystal Ball Guest Columnist Lakshya Jain had a great piece in yesterday's issue about how Florida is so "inelastic" in its voting).

About the only thing we can interpret from the state's huge early and mail-in vote tallies is that it should be close again. The same is true for those other Toss-ups.

But the difficulty for Trump, and the advantage for Biden, is that the former vice president's leads in Arizona, Michigan, Nebraska's 2nd Congressional District, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin still seem solid, if not always sizeable



(as is particularly the case in Arizona). Even if Trump wins all the Toss-ups, he still would need another 22 electoral votes from this group to get to 270 electoral votes. We'll be looking for late trends in all of these places. One can find surveys showing Trump tied or even a little ahead in these states, but the bulk of the data points to Biden.

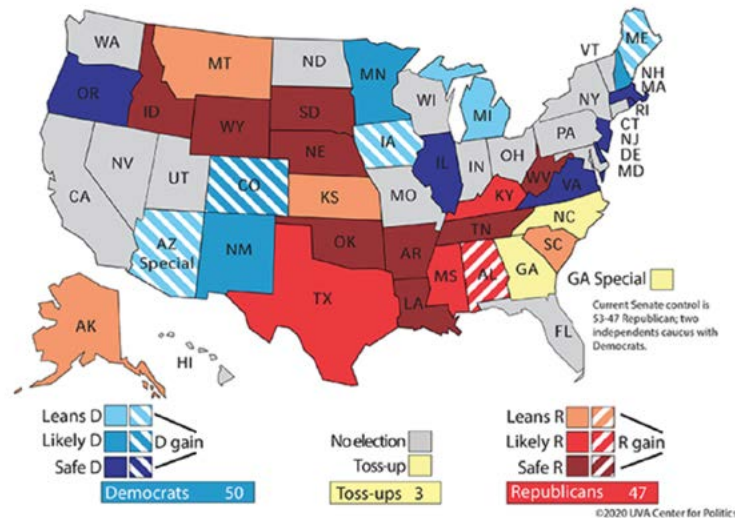
A Trump victory next Tuesday would confound analysts once again, and it likely would entail a polling error even more significant than 2016, unless late surveys released over the weekend and early next week pick up on a late Trump trend (as some did in 2016). We also expect to see reports on Election Day of huge Trump support at polling places, which may be 1. A bad omen for Biden or 2. Simply a reflection of more Republicans opting to vote on the day of the election than in advance compared to Democrats. If you're nervous about the election, on either side, we'd advise you to find something else to do on Tuesday during the day besides following the news. There will be a lot of smoke, but it won't necessarily be evidence of real fires.

As we assess the election, we keep coming back to this: After the election is over, what outcome would be easier to explain: a Biden victory, or a Trump victory? This is a riff on Occam's Razor, the concept that in many instances, the simplest explanation for something is the best explanation.

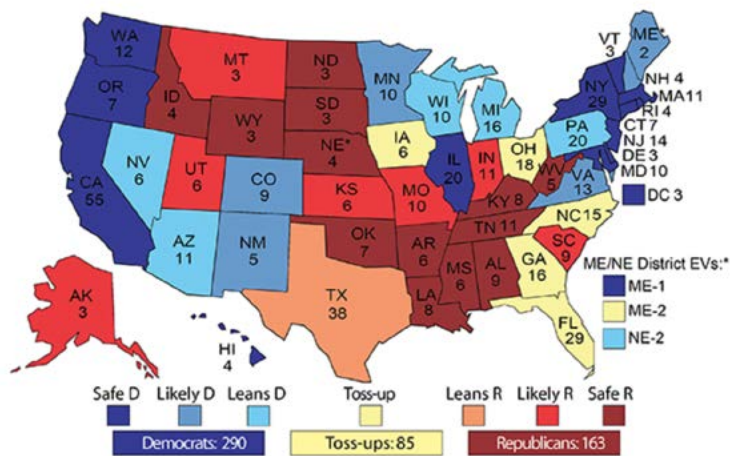
If Trump were to lose, there would be a relatively simple explanation for why that happened.

Trump was elected despite getting fewer votes than his opponent in 2016, and he has rarely if ever demonstrated an ability to expand his support. Trump was reliant in 2016 on late deciders and voters who held an unfavorable view of both candidates, meaning that he had at least some soft support. His opponent this time, Joe Biden, is less polarizing and more popular than his 2016 opponent, Hillary Clinton, and there has been a generally pro-Democratic political environment ever since Trump got elected, as measured by surveys such as the House generic ballot (a good catch-all for the political state of the

Map 1: Crystal Ball Senate ratings



Map 2: Crystal Ball Electoral College ratings



country) and the November election results in 2017, 2018, and 2019, which generally reflected the reality of a pro-Democratic environment. Trump probably was no better than 50-50 to win reelection prior to the onset of a deadly pandemic that caused damage to the economy, a situation one would not expect to help an incumbent president, particularly one who was already weak.

Trump losing, given these factors, would not be surprising, and would be easy to explain.

Senate forecast

Today we're shifting both of Georgia's Senate elections from Leans Republican to Toss-up. One of these races, the special election, is virtually guaranteed to go to a runoff because it is an all-party jungle primary with multiple candidates from both parties, so there will in all likelihood be no winner next week. It's become very clear that Democratic frontrunner Raphael

Warnock will finish with the most votes, and there is still a competitive race for what would be the Republican slot in the runoff between Sen. Kelly Loeffler (R-GA) and Rep. Doug Collins (R, GA-9). Warnock has been inching up in polls and consolidating the Democratic vote, but he seems very unlikely to reach 50% given the number of candidates.

Our Senate ratings now show 50 Senate seats at least leaning to the Democrats, at least 47 leaning to the Republicans, and three Toss-ups: the North Carolina race between Sen. Thom Tillis (R) and former state Sen. Cal Cunningham (D), as well as the two Georgia contests. A lot of uncertainty remains: Our decision last week to make Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA) a small underdog in her race raised eyebrows on both sides, and Sens. Martha McSally (R-AZ) and Susan Collins (R-ME) are down but not necessarily out. Meanwhile, Democrats are still fighting to spring an upset in right-of-center states Alaska, Kansas, Montana, South Carolina, and Texas. Overall, Democrats are favored to win the Senate, but their odds of winning the White House are better. ❖

James Briggs, IndyStar: If you want to know what the next four years are going to be like in Indiana, well, we'll all just have to wait and find out. The three candidates for Indiana governor participated in their second and final debate Tuesday, an hour-long affair that offered remarkably little information about what each person would do if elected. Well, that's not entirely true. Libertarian Donald Rainwater, the candidate who has raised his profile by making a case that the government has no role in reducing COVID-19 transmission, continued to insist he would solve every problem, including infant mortality, by "reducing the regulations." The two major-party candidates, Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb and Dr. Woody Myers, a Democrat, made it clear that they see the state's problems differently, but did not articulate many solutions. Holcomb, who has been well ahead in polls, kicked off the debate by saying he'd keep doing what he's already been doing. "I've spent the last four years primarily focused on three key areas: one, putting people first; two making sure that we're building and maintaining our infrastructure every which way that we connect with each other and markets; and also focused on making sure that we're cultivating this pro-growth economy that we have in Indiana," Holcomb said. "I'll do the same over the next four years and also address any issues that may come our way. Think COVID-19, etc." Myers spent the evening presenting bleak fact patterns on a wide range of issues, including the coronavirus pandemic ("We now have about 1,700 people in the hospital ..."); the economy ("Since February, Indiana has lost 34,000 manufacturing jobs, only 60% of which have come back."); infant mortality (Indiana has gone from "seventh-worst state in the United States to the 15th-worst" under Holcomb); and racial injustice ("African Americans and Caucasians use substances at about the same rate, but we don't get arrested at the same rate. We get arrested three or four times as much."). As for Myers' plan, well, he said, "we've got to do a lot more in economic development," and "we can do a lot more to help families that are struggling in our state," and "there's a lot more to do" on COVID-19 and Indiana should "let communities have more options of getting their internet, not fewer." ❖



James Madison, IBJ: Every day brings laments about the nasty conflicts swirling around us, the anger, and the failure to get along. We want more civility and less violence, of course, but I'm convinced we just have to accept disagreement. It's the burden of our past. American history is full of anger, division and violence. Perhaps a third of American colonialists sided with the British Empire in 1776. Then there's the Civil War, with more than 600,000 dead Americans and a legacy of emancipation scarred by the rise of Jim Crow segregation. We've often embraced a consensus history, one devoid of conflict. A bloody civil war becomes a noble cause. The white supremacy that began in 1619 to build the largest system of forced labor in world

history becomes a sidebar with modest significance. Such myths are prerequisites for so-called patriotic history. They comfort us, at least until we understand them as simple propaganda ill-suited to democracy. The best example for Hoosiers is our own Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s, a tragedy long ignored because it was so discomfiting. Mixed with polite silence were the myths Hoosiers told of a Klan composed of ignorant fools, the "great Unteachables," as one journalist wrote. Hoosiers in white robes and hoods really didn't mean to hurt anyone. They were a marginal group or dupes not to be taken seriously. Forget it, move on. I've just spent three years writing a book about Indiana's Klan. I read thousands of primary sources (newspapers, letters, court documents and many others). They tell a very different story, one of conflict and small comfort. We now know that Klan members were respected Methodists, lawyers, Masons, police officers, churchwomen, teachers, mayors and businessmen. Indiana's governor, a majority of the General Assembly, and the Indianapolis mayor had Klan allegiances. Middle-class, native-born and exclusively white, they saw themselves as 100% Americans, superior to immigrants, Catholics, Jews and African Americans, people they labeled aliens. The Klan skillfully folded its messaging into Christianity and patriotism to make division and bigotry respectable. Klan leaders were not rubes. They built a sophisticated organization, with "Klaverns" in all 92 counties. Paid staff and volunteers recruited members who paid dues that brought in huge sums of money. On Election Day in 1924, this political machine swept into office. ❖

Jack Colwell, South Bend Tribune: While most voters understandably focus on the Nov. 3 decision about President Trump – dump him or reward him with reelection – many other choices also are on the ballots, including two congressional races in Michiana. These races have some similarities. In both races, Republican incumbents with impressive vote-getting records and better campaign funding face Democratic challengers campaigning on health care issues, in particular on the Affordable Care Act and its provision ensuring insurance for people with preexisting conditions. In Indiana's 2nd District, it's Democrat Pat Hackett vs. Republican U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski, who seeks a fifth term. Walorski repeatedly voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Hackett, a South Bend attorney, accuses her of seeking to slash health care in a pandemic and voting to eliminate that popular guarantee on preexisting conditions. Walorski accuses Hackett of supporting health care expansion that would eliminate private insurance and lead to socialized medicine. Walorski portrays Hackett and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi as "two of a kind." Across the state line, the political flavor is different. Polls show that Indiana is virtually certain to vote again for Trump, not by the landslide of nearly 20% by which he carried the state last time, but handily. A recent CBS poll had Trump up 8 points in Indiana. A Survey USA poll had it at 7 points. ❖

Dr. Box says vaccine coming soon

INDIANAPOLIS — No vaccine for COVID-19 has yet been approved by federal regulators, but Indiana health officials said Wednesday they expect to get an initial shipment of the first available vaccine by mid-November, and perhaps a second vaccine by December (Russell, IBJ). The state's health commissioner, Dr. Kristina Box, said that federal vaccine coordinators have told her to expect the shipments, but did not say how many or give a more specific timetable. The situation remains murky, however, because numerous drugmakers and research institutions are scrambling to develop a vaccine, but none have yet won approval from the Food and Drug Administration. Some have applied for early-use authorization, a designation that allows the government to allow unapproved medical products to be used in emergencies when there are no available alternatives. Box said she believes the first vaccine to come will be from drugmaker Pfizer Inc., which is still in late-stage clinical trials and is being tested on more than 40,000 people. The vaccine requires two doses about 28 days apart and must be stored at minus-70 degrees. "We expect we would realistically have that vaccine in the state as soon as mid to late November," Box said. "So we are working very closely [with federal health officials] to make sure we have identified where this vaccine can be delivered, where we have the ultra-low cold storage, and really starting to allocate where we will have vaccination sites."



West lake corridor construction begins

MUNSTER — The decades-long journey to expand commuter rail service in Northwest Indiana arrived at its first station Wednesday, when federal, state, region and railroad officials

gathered to memorialize the final commitment to the West Lake Corridor, a \$355 million federal grant to help build the 8-mile rail line from Hammond to Dyer. (Steele, [NWI Times](#)) "This vision wasn't just rhetoric. It's reality. This is one of those 'all aboard' moments," said Gov. Eric Holcomb, who arrived at the site of a future Munster-Dyer station aboard a South Shore Line train using the CSX tracks that will parallel the West Lake line. The event had the official function of enacting the full-funding grant agreement that commits the Federal Transit Administration to its 38% share of the project.

Hoosier revealed to be 'Anonymous'

WASHINGTON — Miles Taylor, the ex-chief of staff in the Department of Homeland Security who has spent the past two months building a case against reelecting President Donald Trump, revealed himself Wednesday to be the presidential critic from inside the administration known only as "Anonymous" (IBJ). Taylor, a LaPorte native and Indiana University graduate with a degree in international security studies, served in the administration for two years. He wrote in a Medium post revealing his identity that his criticisms of Trump were "widely held among officials at the highest levels of the federal government. In other words, Trump's own lieutenants were alarmed by his instability." Using the nom de plume, Taylor first wrote a scathing New York Times op-ed in 2018 purporting to be among a group of people inside the administration working to protect the country from the president's worst instincts. The essay sent shock waves through Washington and set off a years-long guessing game of who might be its author. Anonymous reemerged in 2019 with a buzzy tell-all book, "A Warning," that described a chaotic and reckless president who posed a threat to America. "We alone must determine whether his behavior warrants continuance in office, and

we face a momentous decision, as our choice about Trump's future will affect our future for years to come," Taylor wrote in the Medium post. "With that in mind, he doesn't deserve a second term in office, and we don't deserve to live through it."

Region mayors pan Chicago shutdown

GARY — The mayors of Lake County's two most populous cities believe Illinois leaders are making a mistake by shutting down restaurants and other public places in response to a recent surge of COVID-19 infections (Carden, [NWI Times](#)). Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. and Gary Mayor Jerome Prince told a gathering of Northwest Indiana business leaders Wednesday they look forward to Illinois residents crossing the state line in the months ahead to patronize Region eateries, casinos and retailers that now are less accessible in their home state. "You got to recognize that there's a pandemic out there but you can't give businesses no chance whatsoever," McDermott said.

HD93's Jacob called to apologize

INDIANAPOLIS — Several Indiana Democrats and Republicans are calling on a Statehouse candidate to apologize after Facebook posts they believe he made a few years ago condemned both Roman Catholic and Islamic parishioners (Sikich, [IndyStar](#)). John Jacob is a 54-year-old Republican who is widely expected to win the red-leaning Indiana House District 93 in southern Marion County and Johnson County. Screen captures of Facebook comments that indicate they came from his account say the Islamic faith cannot coexist in the United States, Muslims are traitors who should be deported, and the Roman Catholic Church is a cult and of Satan, its parishioners should repent and leave the church, and the pope is an anti-Christ.