

General Assembly in crisis mode

As pandemic engulfs state, a look at other sessions dealing with extraordinary events

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – When Speaker Todd Huston walked out of the Indiana House of Representatives on March 11 with the COVID-19 pandemic just beginning to get a death grip on his state, he recalled, “I remember leaving this chamber believing something historic could be taking shape.”

Huston’s premonitions might have matched those of his predecessors like Repub-

lican Speaker Cyrus M. Allen in November 1860, or Democrat Speaker Samuel Hamilton Buskirk who took the reins on Nov. 5, 1862, or Speaker Henry C. Crawford in 1932, James Merrill Knapp in October 1929 and again in December 1941, Speaker J. Roberts Dailey in December 1982, or Speaker John Gregg on Sept. 11, 2001.



Speaker Todd Huston takes the oath of office on Tuesday. He enters his first full session as speaker as the COVID-19 pandemic has put Indiana in a crisis mode.

Continued on page 3

Gregg eyes the chair

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – While Karlee Macer and Josh Owens have broached the sprawling subject as to how the barely credible Indiana Democratic Party recovers its relevance, informed and reliable sources are saying John Gregg, former speaker and gubernatorial nominee, is pondering the race for the chair.

Democratic sources tell HPI that Gregg has begun to reach out to office holders, signaling his interest in leading the party.

Sources tell HPI that Gregg is interested in rebuilding the party and not using the chair to stage a comeback for office. Gov. Eric Holcomb is a former Indiana Republican chairman and defeated Gregg in 2016 during the Donald



“I appreciated the vast majority, all but two obviously; it does set the right example. As Dr. Box says, ‘It works’. It is the state policy and it is locally enforced.”

- Gov. Eric Holcomb, on State Reps. Curt Nisly and John Jacobs’ refusal to wear masks during Organization Day.



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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



Trump/Mike Pence tidal wave.
 As the Woody Myers gubernatorial campaign struggled with fundraising in September, it was Gregg who lamented that Indiana Democrats "are sitting this election out. It's a missed opportunity."

Macer declared for the chair late last week, saying, "The current challenges facing our party are immense but not insurmountable. I'm excited to announce that I will be running for chairwoman of the Indiana Democratic Party. Because now more than ever, it's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work." Last year, Macer convened the Democratic version of the "Cornfield Conference" with Noble County Democratic Chair Carmen Darland in an attempt to revive the sagging party's fortunes.

Mike Schmuhl, who ran Pete Buttigieg's Democratic presidential campaign, took himself out of the running, saying in a statement to Howey Politics Indiana, "Since I moved back home to Indiana in 2009 to work for Joe Donnelly, electing Hoosier Democrats has been at the heart of my career, and it culminated in the historic 2020 Pete for America campaign. While I won't be a candidate for chair of the state Democratic Party next year, I will do everything I can to help our Indiana party to gain strength and secure victories in the years ahead."

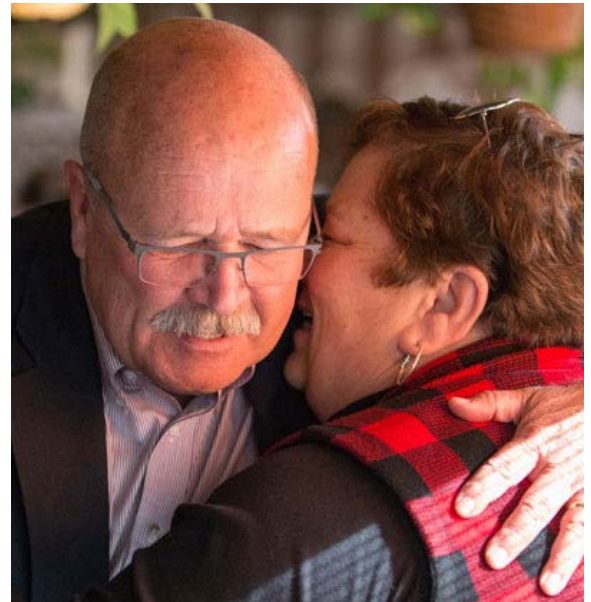
The party has lost every statewide race since 2014, controls only two of 11 federal offices and has super minority status in both General Assembly chambers. It controls only about a third of city halls, around 10% of county commissioners and, perhaps, fewer than 20% of county courthouse offices.

Owens issued an "Open letter to fellow Indiana Democrats, laying out four goals: "I believe the future of a winning Indiana Democratic Party will have these four areas of near-term focus: First, intense county-level

candidate recruitment efforts and staunch support of candidates running. Second, centralized digital and organizing clearinghouse efforts that are run year-round by state party on behalf of upcoming campaigns.

"Third," Owens said, "message focus that strikes at the heart of both individual and community needs. Finally, fierce and data-driven grassroots fundraising that continues beyond election cycles."

Owens finishes: "We must find consensus on a chair that will help us take that first step towards these goals. I am of the belief there is not a perfect person for this job, so



we should instead be focused on who can help us get started in building this foundation today. Our success will depend upon how carefully we lift each other up in this transition, for it is certain that standing together is our only path to sharing our values with a larger Hoosier audience."

Former St. Joseph County Democratic chairman Jason Critchlow observed in a Facebook posting, "I think anyone interested in the role should be looked at admirably and be given a fair shake. But, I can't help but think that the harsh reality of the position may not be registering across the board. The details and daily minutiae are much more comprehensive. The first questions

you will likely be asked are, 'Have you ever run a campaign in Indiana?' and 'Have you ever won a campaign in Indiana?' If you can't answer yes to one or both, it might not be a deal breaker, but you should have a good explanation as to why you feel that significance is overstated."

"I am not necessarily seeking to dissuade would-be candidates, but I think everyone should have their eyes wide open to what this position entails," Critchlow continued.

"Calling it a 'thankless' job where 'you can't make everyone (or sometimes anyone) happy' is probably doing it a disservice. So these are my friendly warnings to all those who dare enter."

Critchlow adds: "Believe it or not, having a vision,



plan, and strategy might be the easiest part of being a party chair. The details and daily minutiae are much more comprehensive.

"You will be responsible for raising hundreds of thousands of dollars," Critchlow continued. "No one will do this for you and it isn't raised by holding events. It's raised by spending hours upon hours speaking one on one with individuals and convincing them to put their trust in you. And you will have to do this without the benefit of any statewide office holders to assist in carrying the burden."

Former state chairman Kip Tew backed up Critchlow, tweeting, "As a former state Dem chair and county chair I can say that Jason hit the nail right on the head. Let me reiterate 2 points: Raising money and recruiting, they are by far the biggest part of the job. Elected leaders set policy, not chairs." ❖

Crisis, from page 1

These were men at the helm of "crisis" General Assemblies, facing a Civil War as in Allen's and Buskirk's cases, of the advent of the New Deal during the Great Depression and Gov. Paul McNutt's sprawling reforms in Crawford's case, or Speaker Knapp, who handled the gavel at the beginning of the Great Depression and, again, after Pearl Harbor.

In more contemporary times, it was Speaker Dailey who watched state revenues plunge in 1982, and Speaker Gregg following the al Qaeda terror attacks of 2001. These were the men to found themselves presiding as global and national events altered the status quo, forcing them to grapple with instant change and the often bitter economic carnage that followed.

Speaker Huston and his Senate colleague, President Pro Tem Rod Bray, are facing a once-in-a-century pandemic that has killed more than 4,500 Hoosiers, placed many of its 500,000 small businesses teetering, seen the state mow through much of its \$2.1 billion surplus, while its jobless rate has spasmed from 3.2% in February, to 16.9% in April, and back to 6.2% in October.

During the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918-19, presidents, governors and speakers played inconspicuous roles. Restrictions and remedies were in the hands of county health officials. A century later, in the days of 24-hour cable news cycles and social media, the buck stops



at the desks of governors, mayors and, now, legislative leaders (President Trump says he bears no responsibility).

"I severely underestimated the magnitude of the impact of COVID-19," Huston told the House chamber after being elected by bipartisan acclamation on Tuesday. He is now poised for history and appears to be borrowing a page from Raum Emanuel, former Chicago mayor and presidential chief of staff, who once said, "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that is an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before."

Huston explained, "As we continue to adjust to life living in a pandemic, it would be foolish not to consider what we've learned from it and what we can do better. We should never strive to return to a life similar to that of March 11, 2020, as that would mean we have not learned from one of the most monumental and informative experiences of our lifetime."

Those lessons include the relative poor health of Hoosiers, the "nimbleness and flexibility" of the state's approach to K-12 education, and the need for more broadband to support hybrid approaches to schooling, as well as to support businesses. "We need a wide array of options for all students," Huston said. "We will work diligently to provide more of those options to families in the future. Our students have faced an incredibly challenging eight months and we must do everything we can to help them get back on track to a successful outcome they and their families desire."

This week, Huston and Bray were signaling they were preparing to take the lessons from the 2020-21 pan-

demic to new levels. A business, school and non-for-profit liability reprieve is likely to pass with bipartisan support and head to Gov. Eric Holcomb's desk sometime in January or early February. Huston pledged 100% funding for all schools. At Monday's Indiana Chamber preview, all four caucus leaders seemed prepared to enact a cigarette tax to cut down on bad health exposed by the pandemic.

Appearing at the Indiana Chamber's virtual preview session Monday, Huston added, "There's going to be a whole series of challenges and hiccups. It's going to be imperfect. We're going to be making things up as we go." Senate President Pro Tem Rod Bray announced that senators would be limited to 10 bills.

There seemed to be general consensus among Bray and Huston with Democrat leaders Rep. Phil GiaQuinta and Sen. Greg Taylor on using federal CARES Act funds to plug billions of dollars the state owes the federal government on the depleted Unemployment Insurance fund, as well as passing a cigarette tax. The IndyStar reported in September the state has paid out roughly \$5 billion to 157,500 Hoosiers under the state and federal programs between March 1 and Aug. 29. Of that amount, more than \$1.2 billion was in state benefits.

On the cig tax, Huston said, "On the budget side, to clarify, I think the concern is how do those dollars get used? It's been slow to reduce rates, but it will be a declining revenue source." Bray added, "I agree with the speaker. We want to be very thoughtful on how the money will be spent on the front end," adding that he wants it to be directed to "improve health standards."

Huston was reflective, at one point saying, "One of the big takeaways is what do we learn from the pandemic? Great companies have adapted to the pandemic. Government has to be the same way. What are the things we should and should not do?"

Throughout Indiana's 204-year history, there have been a number of "crisis" sessions of the General Assembly, dating back to the collapse of the state's economy due to canal bankruptcies of the 1840s, which paved the way for the 1851 Constitution. We've isolated five other "crisis" sessions from the Civil War, to the Great Depression, the oil shock recession of 1979-82, and 2002 following the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

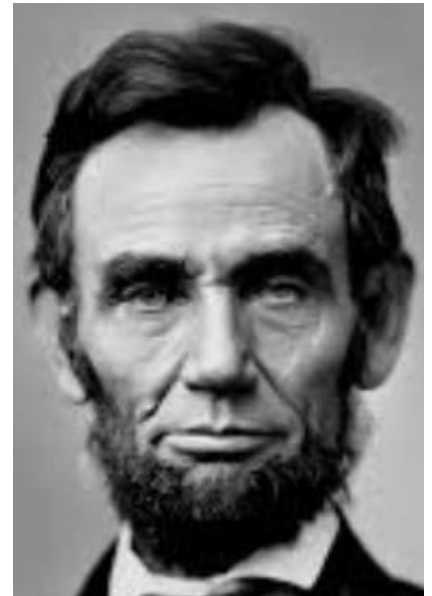
Here are five other "crisis" General Assemblies that faced unprecedented situations that forced speakers and governors to become experimenters and innovators.

Civil War in 1860 and 1862

Speaker Cyrus M. Allen was just the second Republican House speaker, voted in on Nov. 7, 1860, as Republican Gov. Henry Lane and Lt. Gov. Oliver P. Morton took power. Lane quickly resigned, Morton ascended and

appointed Lane to the U.S. Senate a month before South Carolina seceded from the Union. By the time Abraham Lincoln was sworn into office as president, 11 southern states formed the Confederate States of America, launching the bloody Civil War.

Gov. Morton raised an army and kept a lid on the



General Assembly, but Democrats took control in 1862, electing Buskirk speaker on Nov. 5, 1862, less than two months before Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. In what Wikipedia describes as the "Battle of Pogue's Run, Gov. Morton had soldiers disrupt a Democratic state convention, where many leaders of the Democratic Party were arrested, detained, or threatened. With copperhead Democrats in control, Morton feared they would force Indiana out of the Union and seize control of the Statehouse. Morton instructed Republican legislators to flee in Madison, where they could easily cross the Ohio River into Kentucky if the copperheads sought their return to Indianapolis by force to forge a quorum. Gov. Morton then surpassed his constitutional powers, negotiating with New York banker Henry Lanier to fund the state and its troops in the Union army. Buskirk apparently never did gavel the House into session."

Following General Sherman's conquest of Atlanta, Lincoln and Morton were reelected in 1864, bringing Republicans back in control of the General Assembly on Nov. 9, with Republican Speaker John Petit of Wabash gaveling the House back into session.

McNutt New Deal era reforms in 1933

With Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt's landslide victory over President Herbert Hoover in 1932 following the 1929 stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression, Democrat Gov. Paul McNutt found huge Democratic super majorities in the General Assembly. In 1933, Gov. McNutt and Speaker Crawford used this oppor-



tunity to install the Executive Reorganization Act.

Wikipedia explains: "The act effectively rolled back over 50 years of restrictions the legislation had placed on the governor in appointing officials, in having control over policy, giving him a measure of control over the more independent branches of the administration, and also granting new and expanded powers to the lieutenant governor. Also passed in the opening weeks of the 1933 General Assembly (pictured above) was the gross income tax. Previously almost all state revenue had come from property tax which fell disproportionately on farmers and rural citizens, while since the 1920s the majority of citizens were living in Indiana's cities."

The other notable contribution McNutt and Crawford made was the creation of the three-tiered alcohol distribution system put in place following the passage of the 21st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Oil shocks, inflation and 1982

In 1979, revolution toppled the Shah of Iran, which was followed by oil price shocks and then the American embassy hostage crisis. Even more significantly, to counter inflation the Federal Reserve had a series of interest rate increases (a mortgage in this era came with an 18% interest rate), and home sales plummeted by 30%. Heavy manufacturing, including steel production in The Region and the auto plants were hardest hit, with Indiana losing more than 100,000 manufacturing jobs. The term "rust belt" began to be used to define the Midwest.

Gov. Robert D. Orr was on a "stay the course" mission to maintain his legislative majorities during the 1982 mid-term. "Democrats were calling on the governor to tell Hoosiers what bad shape we were in," Speaker J. Roberts Dailey recalled in his book, "Mr. Speaker: Inside Six Sessions of the General Assembly."

"The governor never misled anyone about the gravity of the situation, but he did not indicate a tax increase would be necessary," Dailey wrote. "In 1982 we did not win

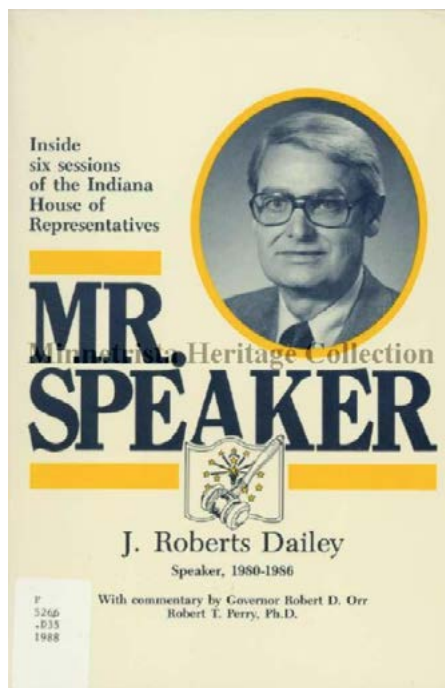
by as great a majority as in 1980, but we kept a healthy majority. I believe we kept that majority because the governor refused to say, 'We're out of money; we've got to raise taxes.' If he had done so, it would have been a much more difficult election."

South Bend Tribune columnist Jack Colwell observed: "Gov. Bob Orr laughed five days before the election when asked at a news conference in South Bend about Democratic claims that his administration was heading toward a debt approaching \$400 million. Republicans retained control of both houses of the legislature in the Nov. 2 election, although with reduced margins. Right after the election, the State Budget Agency provided the red ink figures."

The deficit facing them was \$450 million. Ways & Means Chairman Pat Kiely recalled he and Gov. Orr sitting Republican legislators in the Governor's Office, telling them, "Without a tax increase, we're going to have to shut down the schools."

"At that time, Indiana income taxes for individuals and corporations were extremely modest when compared with taxes in other states," Dailey said. "We agreed to present the problem to our caucuses, get their input and get back with the governor. We strongly favored retaining funding for schools and essential state services rather than tackling the difficult process of cutting back appropriations, so we decided to proceed with a tax increase. In three days of special session, we approved a modest increase in taxes, but without any help from the Democrats."

"The special session generated an overwhelming feeling that what we were doing was bad medicine, but necessary," Dailey continued. By the 1983 biennial budget session, Dailey regretted the action. "The 1983 budget spent most of the increase, and we weren't prudent in our spending. Although Republicans were



in the majority, they gave in to the Democrats' spending programs."

Gov. Orr paid a political price, defeating Democratic State Sen. Wayne Townsend by a 52%-47% margin in 1984 while President Reagan was reelected in a 49-state landslide. Orr had won office 57.7% to 41.9% over Democrat John Hillenbrand in 1980.

Dailey added, "We did learn one thing, however. When you have an unpleasant task, it's best to get it over with as quickly as possible."

Sept. 11 and the 2002 special session

There were warning signs that the prosperity forged by President Reagan in the 1980s and maintained by President Clinton (who actually presided over federal budget surpluses in his final four years in office) was doomed. There was the dot.com bubble burst of 2000, an over-inflated Nasdaq which saw 75% of its value wiped out, as well as accounting scandals at Enron and Swissair. The S&P 500 had lost 43% of its value between 2000 and 2002.

Then came the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks that killed more than 4,000 Americans at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Flight 93 where a passenger uprising spared the U.S. Capitol. Gov. Frank O'Bannon faced a very different economy than his first four years in office.

HPR observed: "The year 2001 presented the 'day and night' division of the O'Bannon tenure. He had won a 15% victory over David McIntosh in 2000 on a record of decreased crime, more cops, 300,000 new jobs, his 'Taxpayer Protection Plan,' and, by the way, tax cuts that inspired the bumper sticker, 'Thanks a billion.' Shortly after his 2001 inaugural, the bad news began tumbling out of a national recession. O'Bannon's priorities were the budget (which he let become law without his signature) \$600 million out of balance, and a full-day kindergarten plan, which ultimately was killed by Ways & Means Chairman B. Patrick Bauer. Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst was calling for dealing with reassessment in 2003. By Sept. 11, 2001, when terror struck the nation, Indiana was reeling with the loss of more than 100,000 manufacturing jobs, a decline in personal income, and virtually no cogent economic development strategy."

In early 2002, O'Bannon announced his "Deficit Management Plan" that called for \$366 million in permanent spending cuts, \$406 million in one-time spending cuts, and \$1.09 billion in transfers from other funds, for a total of \$1.86 billion. "I have preached and preached against one-time fixes that do nothing to address the gap-

ing budget deficit Indiana faces," O'Bannon said. "Band-Aid fixes are ill-advised and spending cuts are hurting Hoosiers."

In April, O'Bannon called a special session. In the April 11, 2002, edition of the Howey Political Report, we observed: "Gov. O'Bannon did what had to be done: Call a special legislative session. But in doing so, he retreated from an earlier stated notion that a deal had to be in the works before calling the kids back. He offered no specific starting point. Between the time Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan announced his plan last fall and when the regular session ended March 14, O'Bannon and his key legislative liaisons had virtually no contact with Republican leadership. This tired, tired governor didn't have the stamina to gear up a campaign and make his case before the people in all corners of the state."

In the May 16 edition, we reported: "This past week, after Gov. O'Bannon reneged on a promise to provide a tax restructuring plan as the Indiana General As-

sembly convened in special session on Tuesday, he deferred to Ways and Means Chairman Bauer, whose revamped plan included pull tabs for Marion County as a way to provide \$500 million in new revenue. Bauer suggested that O'Bannon may have to accept some things he finds odious."

What ensued was what HPR described as a "surreal atmosphere." As Gov. O'Bannon equivocated, State Rep. Jim Buck camped out in a tent on the Statehouse lawn to protest, while the Senate

reconvened to the song of Seymour grade schoolers singing, "What Is Hoosier?"

House Minority Leader Brian Bosma (who had to shake off a case of histoplasmosis) and retiring Democratic Speaker Gregg "both appear to have recalibrated the gravity of the crisis at hand, in part due to the \$86 million deficit in April revenues, with a similar dent expected later this month. 'We are in extraordinary times in our state, perhaps extraordinary in institutional memory,' Bosma said. 'We are willing to talk about solutions and we are willing to talk about compromise.'"

Chairman Borst added, "I have no idea what the governor is even for or against."

In the May 16 HPR edition, we observed: "This year, with O'Bannon aloof and Budget Director Betty Cockrum leaving, House Speaker John Gregg and majority leadership retiring, and Bauer aggressively running for speaker, the context for who cuts a deal and how is as murky as an Indiana cornfield on a May flood plain."



As the special session began and wandered, HPR reported: "Not only did Bosma find four additional GOP votes on Saturday, he personally directed an agonizing stare-down vote on June 6 that sent the bill to a Senate in turmoil. In the subtle pandemonium of that day with an elusive 51st vote, Bosma began protesting. 'Chill, Bosma, or you'll be back in the hospital,' Gregg shouted

Bosma rushed from his front row seat to Rep. Mary Kay Budak, whose light was glowing nay. 'Is it 50 now?' the LaPorte Republican nervously asked her caucus leader. Bosma glanced up at the board and faced the most dramatic decision of the year. If House Bill 1001ss didn't get 51 votes, the issue would be dead. (State Rep. Matt) Whetstone's light on the tally board finally went nay, and Budak nervously fingered her button. Bosma glanced at the tallyboard one last time, then grimaced and told her, 'Do it.'"

It wasn't until late June that a deal was struck,



driven by Borst, with Lt. Gov. Kernan working in the hallways, and Gov. O'Bannon finally stepping up, with HPR observing: "It took God six days to create the heavens and earth; and it took the O'Bannon-Kernan administration and the Indiana General Assembly eight months and seven mind-numbing days with little rest to accomplish something that appeared to be much more complex – to bring Indiana's tax code into the 21st Century ... less than five months before an election.

"O'Bannon's most vital 72 hours weren't at the beginning, but at the end of the process. At his tactical best, it was O'Bannon who pressed for the ultimately successful concurrent resolution course. 'The governor made some right decisions in the last few days,' said Kiely. 'Bauer pretty much put his plan together in isolation of the governor's office. The governor was helpful in the end, the lieutenant governor was more helpful to get more Democrats to pass the thing. We were adjusting our plan.'" ❖

Energy report draws fire

Howey Politics Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS – Seven months after Indiana lawmakers passed a bill prohibiting utilities from shutting down coal-fired power plants before May 2021, a state energy task force is considering a sweeping array of measures that seem to favor existing large-scale utilities, many of which still burn coal, over providers of renewable energy (IBJ). The Indiana 21st Century Energy Policy

Development Task Force, which was set up to guide lawmakers in crafting a long-term energy plan, released draft recommendations Wednesday after months of testimony. One of the findings of the task force is that Indiana's existing regulatory framework

of large utilities "represents the best regulatory structure" for satisfying the five goals of energy reliability, resilience, stability, affordability and environmental sustainability. The draft report did not say how that finding was made, or by whom. The 15-member task force is made up of lawmakers from both parties and both chambers. In the last session of the General Assembly, many Republicans said the state needed to pause during the industry transformation to cheaper energy and figure out whether the energy grid would be threatened by a continued move away from coal. In the meantime, large utilities across Indiana have announced plans to shut down thousands of megawatts of coal-fired generating capacity in favor of

cheaper fuel sources, such as natural gas, solar and wind. The draft sets out seven recommendations, including that the General Assembly consider legislation to standardize property tax assessments and caps with respect to renewable energy projects and facilities. The draft does not include any recommendations on energy efficiency, net metering or on-site generation. "The Task Force should resoundingly reject this draft report," said Kerwin Olson, executive director of Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana. "It completely ignores substantial testimony given throughout the process and dismisses the current business plans Indiana utilities already have on file."

CAIR calls for Rep. Jacobs to resign

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) called for the resignation of a newly elected Indiana lawmaker who posted anti-Catholic and anti-Muslim messages to his personal Facebook page. Republican State Rep. John Jacob posted Facebook comments falsely claiming that Islam cannot coexist with the United States and that Muslims are traitors who should be deported. He also reportedly stated that the Roman Catholic Church is a Satanic cult. Jacob said his posts had a "fuller context," but did not offer details. "A person who holds such bigoted views is clearly unable to fairly represent a diverse community," said CAIR Government Affairs Department Director Robert S. McCaw. "We urge Mr. Jacob to resign, or failing that, Republican leaders should remove him from their caucus." ❖



Election Fraud

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – Important fact number one: Al Gore did not concede to presumed President-elect George Bush until Dec. 13, 2000. The political system survived.

Of course, that was Gore's second concession. He took his first one back until the process went through the courts. Surely the media would not prefer that Donald Trump had conceded and then taken it back after supporters raised issues of fraud?



It is important to establish some more basic points. A president-elect is designated after the Electoral College votes and before a president is sworn into office. It is not anointed by

the media. By all evidence presented thus far, and likely to be presented, former Vice President Joe Biden is the presumed president-elect. This isn't a repeat of 2000, one state with an incredibly close count, but a fairly decisive apparent win though with many narrow victories for Biden: Georgia 0.3%, Arizona 0.3%, Wisconsin 0.6%, Pennsylvania 1.2%, Nevada 2.4% and Michigan 2.6%.

Given the closeness and the extraordinary changes in voting patterns, an election not primarily determined in private voting booths on Election Day, the apparent losing candidate has a right to pursue legal questions that arise.

The fact that the media is demanding an immediate coronation is not professional journalism. Neutrality was lost earlier, but even feigned neutrality – nodding here and there to fairness – has been abandoned for overt cheerleading, complete with tears.

Vice President Biden, on the other hand, has remained publicly calm. He has a commanding lead, understands that no proof of significant fraud looms, and has confidence in the legal system. Biden knows that while political points could be made by highlighting the juvenile behavior of the president in not sharing information two and a half months ahead of Biden's likely inauguration, he instead chose to point out that we can only have one president at a time. Perhaps the media should take some journalism notes from Joe Biden.

Most Republicans who hold elected office, meanwhile, have maintained relative public silence concerning the even the wildest charges of fraud by the president and those who claim he won. When they defend the legal right of the president to pursue all claims of fraud, real or not, they are trusting the courts to resolve it fairly. Courts are hardly a perfect way to make final decisions but it is far

better than the alternatives. What system would people prefer, guns?

The media's defense of its partisan behavior is that President Trump is undermining the credibility of Joe Biden's election, which undermines faith in our political system here and abroad.

Oh, how the worm has turned. What goes around comes around. (Perhaps there is a more modern expression to capture that point, but I'm a conservative. Or maybe just stuck in a Biden time capsule.)

Perhaps Trump defenders can take a partisan memo from Newsmax or a comment from Parler as the Democrats did from the rumor-filled, partisan Steele memo. Then have the supporters of Trump's in the FBI pursue it for the next four years and use wiretaps to see if a President Biden actually coordinated ballots in Detroit or worked with George Soros to rig voting machines.

The Democrats and the media have spent four years exploring, charging and implying that Trump worked with Russia in nefarious ways. They lampooned him as a Russian agent, or at least panting over a potential hotel deal. Or that Putin had something on him. As the storyline went, Trump owed his soul to the Russian devil. That is why the Russians tried to manipulate the election.

Impeachment revolved around the same Russian theme, Ukraine version. All of those efforts attempted to undermine the legitimacy of Trump's election by the American people.



For the Democrats and their allies in the media, who for reasons ideological and personal felt Trump was a danger to America, there was something missing: Evidence. But, as in alleged election fraud, fearing things happened is not proof that things did happen.

Ironically, by the House Democrats pursuing impeachment over actions in the Ukraine, they brought the issue of Hunter Biden front and center. The response of his father was to not want to talk about his son. But anyone with half a brain knows that Hunter got the job because of his connections, whether they were presumed or real, and whether or not his father actually intervened.

Denying that just fueled constant speculation of a cover-up. Seriously, now that Joe Biden is likely going to be our president, do you think that is going to stop now? The Democrats, in effect, raised it, took the issue to the level of impeachment, and thus created a chimeral monster to torment Biden during his time in office. In politics, that was incredibly dumb and led to a predictable unfair cut to Biden by his own party.

Congressional Republicans have been dealt a difficult hand in how to handle the president's desperate desire not to be viewed as the loser he is about to become. Court after court is dismissing his claims. The near disaster of local Republicans refusing to certify the votes of hundreds of thousands of mostly African-American Democrats in Detroit was avoided. The vote certifications will continue to occur. All court decisions must be resolved by Dec. 8. The Electoral College will vote on Dec. 14.

Many of those who voted for him, perhaps the majority, found the president personally offensive. But in this country, we have real divisions on big issues: Greater or less socialistic economic policies, how best to avoid war,

killing babies through abortion, immigration reform and how to handle border control, criminal justice and respect for minorities, poverty, whether to support and reform law enforcement or to defund and transfer law enforcement money to other social goals, how to improve the environment, how to handle sharp strategy differences in the battle against COVID-19, and many other issues that are extremely important.

The nation continues to be relatively evenly divided on those issues. A party's loss of the presidency, therefore, is viewed not just through the prism of a political loss, but a loss that impacts the most important things we each believe in. Many people believe, want to believe, and/or want others to believe that the only reason their side lost was because of cheating. Both sides. This desire is not going to disappear.

Adults in the room, on both sides, need to stay calm. Fortunately, thus far, Republicans in Congress and presumed President-elect Joe Biden have. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman.

President Trump and this loyal Republican

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – I am a partisan Republican. I voted for President Donald Trump. I wanted him to defeat Biden and arrest any further slide of our country into the grip of socialism.

I desperately wanted to jam a Trump victory into the faces of CNN, MSNBC, CBS, ABC, NBC, The New York Times, the Washington Post, Facebook, Twitter, Nancy, Chuck and all the rest of the usual suspects. At this point it looks like a Trump victory will not happen.



The electoral deck is stacked against him and the massive mail-in voting and overwhelmed vote-counting operations in historically ethics-challenged Democrat-machine-run urban centers appears to present a series of hurdles that cannot be overcome. While I

would never suggest to President Trump that he just throw in the towel without fully exploring the depths of potential Democrat chicanery, I would suggest that he consider the impact of his every action on our nation and on our reputation throughout the world.

While I am a loyal Republican, I am first and foremost a proud American. As an American, I do not want to see our judicial system decide elections. It is OK for

judges to decide on points of election law and the intricacies of what the words "is" and "shall" mean. It is even OK for those judgments to be appealed up the line. I just don't believe it is good for the courts to be injected into the regular operations of a free and fair election. For this reason, I do not want to see President Trump drag out this election through endless court actions. I believe this would be damaging to our long-term national interests.

The United States serves as a tremendous beacon of hope throughout the world to those who live in the shadow of oppression. We have always been the shining example of how a free people should conduct themselves and how governments should be selected. It is damaging to our national prestige that President Trump is trying to cast this election as being stolen from him without any substantive proof. It makes our nation look foolish in the eyes of the world and emboldens every tin horn dictator or dictator wannabe.

In addition, I believe that President Trump owes it to the American people to begin the process of a smooth transition of his administration to a possible and probable new administration of Joe Biden. It is vitally important for every new administration to hit the ground running.

A new president must have a firm grip on national security issues and his potential cabinet members should be entitled to an open exchange of information so that they may be able to do their jobs on day one. If by some amazing turn of events, the election pendulum should shift back in President Trump's direction, then what harm would have been done by sharing information with your former opponents? I suppose you could keep some of the real juicy information such as the alien spacecraft at Area 51 secret, but virtually all other information could be shared.

I am also deeply troubled by President Trump's

rumored threats to go on a firing binge of anyone in government who has not completely kowtowed to him. This is dangerous to weaken many key departments during a transitional time and it gives sustenance to our enemies around the world. It also threatens to destroy or seriously damage the reputations of men and women who have dedicated themselves to the service of their country. They deserve much better than this. Trump's Twitter firing of Defense Secretary Mark Esper reeked of childish petulance and just outright revenge for Esper's failure to support Trump's demand that our military be used to put down civil insurrection in America's cities. This is not a television reality show.

You just can't treat people like this. Firing a cabinet head via Twitter was not just ill-advised, it was a calculated act of meanness.

Let's get real. You know and I know that Donald Trump's days in the White House are numbered. The election will not be overturned. Joe Biden will be our next president of the United States. At this point, President Trump can either leave 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue with class and in a manner that reflects wonderfully on our amazing system of government, or he can go kicking and screaming like a deposed third-world dictator. The decision is his but it is a decision that will reflect on each of us.

It is difficult to tell a proud man like Donald Trump that he has been defeated and that he must accept that defeat and withdraw from the most powerful job in the world. Trump's closest friends and advisers must come forward and tell him that he is done. They can commiserate with him about all of the would haves, could haves and should haves, but at the end of the day, it is time to be an American and accept the inevitable and help your successor get off to a good start.

The election was not stolen from Donald Trump. In my opinion, Donald Trump lost the 2020 Presidential Election for five reasons. First, the pandemic severely damaged a wonderful economy. Second, President Trump's almost cavalier attitude about the severity of the coronavirus made him appear inept and tone deaf. Third, the virus gave certain states the ability to mail ballots out to every registered voter and the result was that millions of people who would have never gotten off their butts to get out and vote, checked a box on the mailed out ballot and sealed Trump's fate. This was not fraud. This was politics dressed in the garment of public health.

Lamentable, but unassailable. Fourth, politics is the art of addition and not the art of subtraction or division. You don't spend four years treating people with

disrespect and a lack of civility without it jumping up and biting you at your moment of weakness. The pandemic weakened Trump sufficiently for some high-profile Republicans to feel emboldened enough to have their moment of revenge. The Trump presidency died by death from a thousand cuts.

I saved the biggest reason for Trump's defeat for the last. The most important reason that Donald Trump was defeated was the one-sided treatment of the president by the mainstream press and major social media. Our Founding Fathers felt that freedom of the press was so vital to our nation that they enshrined it in the 1st Amendment to the Constitution. Unfortunately, freedom and fairness of the press are not the same thing. Donald Trump was beaten to a political pulp by a daily relentless barrage of orchestrated propaganda churned or chummed out by the mainstream media. Social media took away Trump's only effective way of responding to this assault by using censorship and partisan counter-messaging. Once again, lamentable but legal in a free society.

There will be other elections in our future. The dark days of winter will pass and voters will once again have an opportunity to cast their ballots. Let us act today in such a way that will ultimately do our nation proud and pave the way for future election victories. ❖

Dunn is a former Republican Howard County Republican chairman.

Election take-aways

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – Every year right after an election, I’d find a small pile of requests waiting for me from journalists. They wanted some sort of comment on what it all meant. “What are the voters telling us?” they’d ask.

It’s human nature to want to make sense of such a complex picture – to draw conclusions from many millions of individual decisions. But it is also politically important, because how elected officials interpret the results – or seek to convince others to interpret the results – goes a long way toward shaping the impact of the election.



The key thing to recognize in the wake of November’s voting, and this will not come as news, is that we live in a sharply divided

country. When the votes are all counted, projections suggest Joe Biden will wind up with about an 8 million vote, 4 percentage-point lead, hardly a landslide but still a decisive margin. At the same time, Republicans retain a narrow margin in the Senate and made gains in the House.

What all this adds up to is a governance challenge. Without Republicans and Democrats agreeing to find common ground, it will be hard for the U.S. to exert strong influence around the world and to get ambitious things done. When voters are as on edge as they still appear to be, building a broad and sustainable consensus in favor of difficult policy decisions is arduous.

It’s also worth remembering that our election is watched all over the world, and not casually. Ordinary citizens and political leaders in country after country pay close attention. Because the U.S. plays such a critical global role, they worry when they see us conducting an election that the losing side characterizes as corrupt or in some way faulty.

That’s why the statements of the outgoing president and his Republican allies have been damaging. They feed into the false narrative Vladimir Putin has been trying to peddle about our system, that it is falling apart.

In the runup to the election, my chief concern was about efforts to suppress votes. Yet despite the obstacles thrown in their way, millions more Americans voted this time around than ever before. Their determination to make their voices count despite long lines and other inconveniences was inspiring.

Similarly, the remarkable efforts by state and local elections administrators of both parties to hold a free and fair election in the middle of a pandemic with more turnout than they’d ever experienced ought to be recognized and celebrated. It was a heartening dis-

play of dedication to American values. It is not a perfect system; we always have islands of misconduct. But I used to spend election day going around to visit precincts, and always was deeply appreciative of the seriousness of election day workers from all walks of life and backgrounds. They understood what was at stake and wanted to make sure our system worked and was fair and honest.

So, to see one party mounting an all-out attack on the integrity of the countless Americans who view running elections as a sacred trust is, to put it mildly, disturbing. We’re all pleased or disappointed with the results of elections, depending on our preferences, but win or lose, our civic duty as citizens is the same.

We should take pride in our country and its ability to conduct these elections fairly. The dangerous game of questioning the validity of the vote could have reverberations for years to come, and sow even more division than we already face.


The point is a lot of candidates lose in an election. Half of them, roughly. A vital part of our democracy is how we and they come out of it – that we accept the result and continue to support and improve the system, always working toward a more perfect union.

This is what makes it possible for us to govern in this great and diverse country. Americans can accept differences of opinion and not condemn the people who voted for a different candidate. We accept the results of the election and move on. To behave otherwise is to weaken our democracy, perhaps beyond bearing. ❖

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

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

2020 Turkey Awards

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – With Thanksgiving almost here, it's time to present the annual Turkey of the Year Awards.

Recipients may cry fowl. But even if they haven't been turkeys all year, each winner has done something to merit this prestigious recognition.

The awards for 2020:

The Turkey of the Year Award in political timing goes to Pete Buttigieg. Pete won the Iowa caucuses the one time there was no national spotlight on the winner because results were delayed for weeks.

Kamala Harris gets a turkey for winning an office often belittled in importance.

Mike Pence gets a turkey for losing an office often belittled in importance.

Attorney General Curtis Hill is awarded a turkey for groping, this time for political relevance, with his letter criticizing St. Joseph County health officials for their anti-COVID efforts.



In local education, South Bend school board member Leslie Wesley deserves a turkey for her unique way of warning students about plagiarism.

A turkey stuffed with Rose Garden thorns is presented to Rev. John Jenkins, Notre Dame's president, for doing what he admonished students not to do, participating in a super spreader celebration without a mask or social distancing.

In local business promotion, the turkey goes to Dr. Mark Fox. The health official's pleas for COVID precautions hurt business at local hospitals and funeral parlors.

Rudy Giuliani wins the turkey for supporting actor for his role in "Borat."

Best supporting actress? Kim Kardashian for her role in the presidential campaign of Kanye West.

For legislative lobbying, a turkey goes to Michigan militia types for storming the Capitol building and standing threateningly in legislative galleries with military-style weapons.

In polling, there was fierce competition. The winner is a Washington Post/ABC News poll finding Joe Biden ahead by 17 points in Wisconsin.

The Turkey of the Year for a political slogan goes to "Defund the Police."

An award for counting his turkeys before they're hatched goes to Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer for warning that Democrats could pack the Supreme Court.

In higher education, Jerry Falwell Jr. wins for

losing his presidency of Liberty University due to bizarre behavior not exactly embraced by evangelicals.

In sales, the turkey goes to Lysol for killing an opportunity presented as a coronavirus cure by stating: "Under no circumstances should our disinfectant products be administered into the human body."

Russia's Vladimir Putin gets a turkey for failing this time to help his candidate win.

For return on the dollar, a turkey goes to Michael Bloomberg. He spent a billion dollars on his own presidential campaign, winning only in American Samoa, and then poured in over \$100 million for Joe Biden in Florida, Ohio and Texas, states Biden lost.

A turkey for a chorus line in St. Joseph County goes to Republican celebrants at an election night event. Tribune and the Elkhart Truth journalists and family were felled by COVID after coverage. Celebrants ignored masks, social distancing and dance critics.

In music, an award for a political endorsement song goes to Taylor Swift. She lent her song "Only the Young," not for a young candidate but for one who just turned 78.

A turkey is in the mail for Postmaster General Louis DeJoy. With mail delays he causes, the bird won't exactly be fresh when it arrives.

In political analysis, Chasten Buttigieg gets the turkey for contending in his book that the news media



POLL: PETE SURGES IN IOWA *DRUDGE REPORT*

devoted too much time to the chicken sandwich issue, despite it being huge in every battleground state. Right there on pages 212-13.

In mathematics, the Turkey of the Year Award goes to President Trump for this virus calculating back on Feb. 26: "When you have 15 people and the 15 within a couple days is going to be down to close to zero, that's a pretty good job we've done." His math didn't add up in the Electoral College either. ❖

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

One country can't have two presidents

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS – I hate being right. I really do. It's a painful burden to carry on my shoulders, this crystal ball that sees so clearly into the future. But, yet again, here we are at a moment in which I must say, "I told you so."

Two weeks before Election Day, I wrote in the Indianapolis Star that the next four years of life in the United States of America are destined to be as turbulent as the past four because neither supporters of Joe Biden nor supporters of Donald Trump were prepared to lose.



Sadly, that premonition has come to pass, so why not double down?

The five paragraphs that follow were words originally crafted for that piece but that have been seen by no eyes other than mine. Thankfully, since my hard drive resides with me and not in a Delaware repair shop, and the cloud absorbs and retains data above my head, I can share with you those never-before-published and all-too prescient thoughts:

What is actually likely to happen – and almost guaranteed to happen – is unrelenting institutional madness. The idea that a Biden victory is somehow a panacea for political fragmentation or that his supporters will quietly accept the result of a Trump victory is an illusion.

Similarly, Trump supporters will be in no mood to settle up with Democrats who have spent four years unable to catch their breath as they spewed detestable rhetoric toward the president and his base.

Politics no longer ends at the water's edge, and respectful reconciliation no longer comes at the oath of office ceremony. There won't be a honeymoon period when the new or returning president is left to his own devices for a few months or a hundred days.

No matter who wins, we'll immediately see the formation of a not-so-shadow government that lives not in international exile but within our domestic boundaries.

One government – the elected one with the power to implement policy – will sit behind the Resolute Desk in the

Oval Office and the other – the unelected one with the power to mobilize millions in opposition – will occupy a penthouse in Trump Tower or a basement in Wilmington, Delaware.

That's it.

That's what I wrote and never published. And if that's the kind of content that hit the cutting room floor, imagine how good the published work was.

But, of course, it doesn't have to be this way.

Among my fondest memories of working in the George W. Bush White House was the Bush to Obama transition. And that's not because I liked the end result of the election, far from it, but because we were a small part of something much bigger than ourselves – the peaceful transition of power.

President Bush made it clear to everyone that we were to cooperate and coordinate with the incoming Obama team at every level.

We produced hundreds of pages of briefing materials, detailing the minutiae of forwarding phones to the complex, yet streamlined, process of formulating policy; we invited Obama's staff to join us in the Oval Office, the Rose Garden and the East Room to get a feel for the unique logistics of White House events; and I personally spent hours on the phone with them after January 20th, when no longer on the government payroll, to answer questions they had along the way.

We did all that because it was the right thing to do.

The voice of the opposition will remain alive and well. We will continue to hear both sides of the debate. Biden will tell us where he stands and Republicans will tell us where they stand. We will continue to be a nation with two parties, but we can't be a nation with two presidents. I'm right about that, too. ❖

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

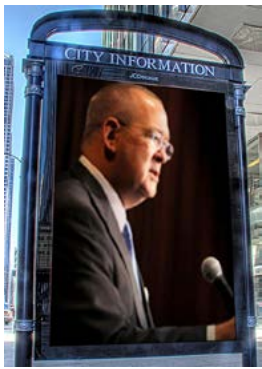
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Some new and better data on labor markets in the COVID recession

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – The COVID recession played havoc with America's labor markets as well as the official statistics that we use to describe them. This generated plenty of misunderstanding about the state of the economy. With the passage of time and supplemental surveys of workers, a clearer explanation is now emerging.



January 2020 was the last month of economic expansion. Though employment continued to grow in February, other hints of a downturn were already occurring. Part-time workers lost jobs and the labor force began to shrink. From January to April, the unemployment rate rose from 3.6 to 14.7%

in what was far and away the most rapid job loss in U.S. history.

However, by April, a full 8.2 million fewer men and women were counted as participating in the labor force. This accounting was the result of a survey question conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Department of Labor. The question asked unemployed respondents if they were actively looking for a job. If they said no, they were dropped from the labor force rolls.

Importantly, the unemployment rate is the share of the labor force that is unemployed divided by the labor force. If someone is dropped from the labor force, they are removed from both the numerator and denominator of that fraction. This caused the reported unemployment rate to be more than 3.0 percentage points lower than it would otherwise have been.

This led to some pretty wild speculation, including the notion that workers were not looking for jobs because the supplemental benefits from the CARES Act were too generous. While there was no doubt some anecdote to lend truth to that, economists were doubtful.

After all, we study human behavior in the face of constraints, and the huge decline in labor supply was wholly inconsistent with previous examples of benefit changes. Something else was at work, and the culprit was likely child care.

The Census reports that in 2019 between 7.0% and 8.0% of American workers have young school-aged children (age 5 to 12) at home and are either single parents or a dual-income family. I choose this age range because children under 5 aren't typically in school (and so

already have some sort of child care arrangements), and children aged 13 and older might be able to remain at home without constant supervision. Of course, individual experiences may vary.

The Census also maintains a couple of surveys that measure work life, the American Time Use Survey and the National Longitudinal Study of Youth. These surveys report that between 42% and 50% of workers with children can telecommute to work. Census surveys conducted during COVID reported that more than a quarter of workers did some telecommuting, which would allow for some child care while still employed. All those social media posts of funny kids on zoom calls are a by-product of this arrangement.

This means that between 8.6 million and 9.9 million workers with kids in school and no way to telecommute would've faced difficult choices about work and family care. So, the deep drop in labor supply observed last April was sufficient to have caused the loss of more than 8.2 million workers from the labor force. Of those who left the labor force, 4.2 million were women and 4.0 million were men, despite the fact that women hold jobs where they can telecommute at much higher rates than men —19% to 32% higher, according to those same surveys.

Another wrinkle in the labor market data is that workers who receive benefits are obligated to seek work. So, the steep decline in the labor force rankled many who saw this as unemployed workers failing to meet their obligations under the unemployment security rules. However, the workforce question on the Census survey does not distinguish between workers who are temporarily laid-off (and thus not obligated to look for work) and those who are permanently unemployed.

So, a worker who is temporarily laid-off and staying at home to care for kids would likely have been counted as dropping out of the labor force.

The widespread closure of schools and the continuing rolling quarantines alone are sufficient to explain all the labor force declines of the COVID pandemic. In fact, that labor force declines weren't more widespread suggests that a lot of workers are leaning on extended families, neighbors and friends to watch children. ❖

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.

Biden's COVID task force will devise a plan

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – President-elect Biden has selected his COVID-19 Task Force. It is peopled by medical, scientific and health practitioners and administrators. Unencumbered by disbelief and gross incompetence, they can provide the best approach at this stage of the pandemic.



In the parlance of sports, this task force will devise a game plan. But, as they and we know, a game plan requires execution and adaptability to both anticipated as well as unanticipated conditions. From my standpoint, a second task force is needed. It is not sufficient to know what needs to be done. How do we get compliance with what needs to be done?

We have been told to wear face masks that cover our mouths and noses. This is a primary means of protecting ourselves and others from the virus. Many businesses post signs saying, "Masks are required to enter here." To what extent is that requirement enforced? We have all sorts of useful data on the pandemic, but I've not seen compliance data.

Do members of this first task force have the background in human psychology to make recommendations to ensure protective compliance which can be measured objectively?

Where are the experts in psychology with the experience of influencing millions of minds in short periods of time? How do we get my relatives and neighbors, as well as yours, to wear masks and get vaccinated? Biden and America need the most effective people in campaign

design, experts in advertising, and masters in persuasive preaching from the pulpit.

Equally important is expertise in manufacturing and logistics. We await the results of innovation and rigorous research for vaccines. Next comes the great task of producing and distributing those vaccines for all nations. COVID-19 vaccines are not an American issue; they are a humanitarian concern. We cannot be safe if other nations are at risk. We cannot visit foreign places or have others visit us in a world overwhelmed by the virus. Neither romance nor commerce can be conducted effectively by Zoom alone.

The military has an extraordinary record of moving materials. So too do commercial carriers like FedEx and UPS. Will there be stringent requirements to move the enormous number of doses needed to protect many millions of people?

And who will administer the vaccines? Certainly, we want the best-trained people, but do we really need professional, government-certified personnel? How many hours of training are necessary to develop the large cadre of those who deliver the ultimate vaccine shots?

Equally, we must alter the Trump administration plan of vaccine distribution via our local pharmacies if politically motivated questions are required. Immigration status is not a relevant qualification for vaccination.

The battle to end this COVID pandemic is likely to be the greatest single mass event since the launching of Noah's ark. Humanity cannot afford poor construction of our vessel nor inept management of its voyage. ❖

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



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A look at the 2020 map for U.S. Senate races

By **KYLE KONDIK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Here's a hot take as we look ahead to the 2022 midterm: Democrats may have a better chance of winning a Senate majority than a House majority in the next national election.

That is not to say Democrats have a great chance of winning a Senate majority – they don't, particularly if Republicans hold the two Georgia Senate seats in a Jan. 5, 2021 runoff. Rather, it suggests that the Democratic Senate path might be more plausible than the Democratic path in the House, given looming redistricting and reapportionment and the history of presidential party House losses in midterm elections.

Since the Civil War, the president's party has lost ground in the House in 37 of 40 midterm elections, with an average loss of 33 seats per election. Additionally, and as Sean Trende of RealClearPolitics recently observed, Democrats seem likely to lose seats through the decennial reapportionment and redistricting process once new House seat allocations and district lines are in place for the 2022 election.

With Democrats likely to hold a slim majority in the low 220s in the next House (218 is needed for a majority), Democrats could enjoy a good political environment but still lose their majority. That's because Republicans are only going to need a single-digit-sized net seat gain to flip the chamber, and they have a stronger hand to play in redistricting across the nation than Democrats do.

In a bad environment, Democratic House losses could be severe, particularly if the party's recent gains in highly-educated suburban areas erode with Donald Trump no longer in the White House.

If 2022 turns out to be a bad Democratic year – as it has been for the president's party in each of the last four midterms – the Senate would remain Republican.

But there are sufficient Democratic targets for the party to win a narrow Senate majority if the political environment is not a burden.

Senate midterm history is not quite as bleak for the presidential party as the House history is. Yes, the president's party often loses ground in the Senate in midterm elections, but the losses are not as consistent: Since the Civil War, the president's party has only lost ground in the Senate in 24 of 40 elections, with an average seat loss of roughly 2.5 per cycle.

This speaks to the nature of the Senate, where only a third of seats are up each cycle (it's also worth noting that Senate popular elections only started nationally in 1914, so this long timeframe covers the pre-election period, when state legislatures elected senators).

If we restrict the history just to the post-World War II era, the presidential party Senate losses in midterms are higher, 3.5 seats on average, with the president's party losing ground in

13 of 19 midterms. (These figures are calculated based on the Brookings Institution's Vital Statistics on Congress.)

Still, there are exceptions to the usual presidential party Senate losses. Two years ago, for instance, Republicans actually netted Senate seats during the 2018 cycle despite above-average losses in the House – this was due in large part to the Democrats having to defend 26 of the 35 seats contested in 2018, including several in dark

red Republican states. Republicans were on defense in 2020 and have thus far shed only a single net seat, but they have more defense to play overall than Democrats do in 2022.

Assuming Republicans hold the Georgia seats – we currently rate both as Toss-ups – the Senate would be 52-48 Republican, and Democrats would need to net two seats in 2022 to take control of the chamber with an assist from Vice President-elect Kamala Harris' (D) tiebreaking vote. As we will explain,

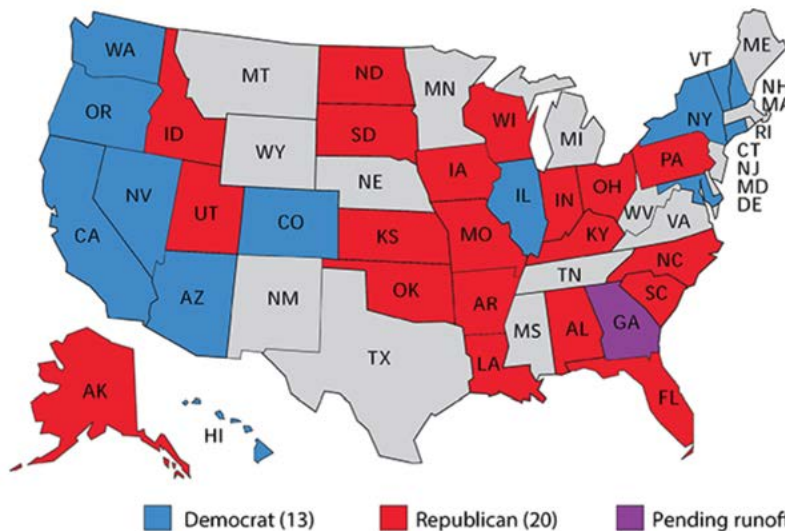
both sides have at least a few credible targets in the upcoming cycle.

Map 1 shows the seats up in two years. Republicans are defending 20, Democrats are defending 13, and one other seat is not yet determined: The victor in the Georgia special election runoff, either Sen. Kelly Loeffler (R-GA) or the Rev. Raphael Warnock (D), will have to defend the seat again in 2022.

We aren't going to release formal ratings of these races yet, but let's go through them in three categories: Not Competitive, Potentially Competitive, and Probably



Map 1: 2022 Senate races



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Competitive. These categories only apply to the general election in each state.

Let's start with the longest list: The races we do not see as competitive.

Not Competitive: 15 R, 9 D

Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington

Right off the bat, we feel comfortable suggesting that roughly two-thirds of the 2022 Senate races (24 of the 34 on the ballot) seem like locks for the current party that holds these seats. None of these states were particularly close in the 2020 presidential election: Iowa, which gave Trump an eight-point victory, was the closest. Whether the Hawkeye State is competitive or not may depend on whether state institution Chuck Grassley (R), who has served in the Senate since 1981, decides to run for another term, although Republicans likely would be favored to hold the seat in any event given the state's rightward turn over the last four statewide elections.

Beyond Grassley, other octogenarians considering whether to run again are Sens. Richard Shelby (R-AL) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT), though there would be little doubt about their respective parties holding their seats if they became open. Leahy remains the only Democrat ever elected to the Senate from Vermont – remember, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) is still technically an independent. Republicans did win a Senate seat in Illinois as recently as 2010; the state hypothetically could be close in a really bad Democratic year, but there are a lot of pieces that would need to fall into place for Republicans to really push Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL). Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) came close to losing to former Missouri Secretary of State Jason Kander (D) in 2016, but Kander has already said he won't seek a rematch, and Democrats appear to be a spent force in Missouri (and Indiana, too, which was hotly-contested in 2016 but could very well be sleepy in 2022).

Potentially competitive: 2 R, 1 D

Colorado, Florida, Ohio

One of the signs about which way the wind was blowing in 2014, a great Republican midterm, was when then-Rep. Cory Gardner (R, CO-4) changed his mind and decided to challenge then-Sen. Mark Udall (D-CO) in early 2014. Gardner ended up beating Udall by two points as Republicans netted nine Senate seats. Gardner then lost in this year's election by 9.3 points to former Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) -- although Gardner did better than Trump, who lost the state by 13.5.

If 2022 is going south for Democrats, a sign may be if Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) is in trouble as he seeks a third term. The Democratic trend in Colorado is obvious, and Bennet may be able to hold on even in a 2014-style environment, particularly if he does not draw a strong op-

ponent.

On the other hand, if Republicans end up struggling in 2022, perhaps that could endanger Sens. Marco Rubio (R-FL) or Rob Portman (R-OH) in states where Democrats have had several bad elections in a row.

Probably competitive 3 R, 3 D, 1 undecided

Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin

That leaves seven races where we are assuming a high level of competition, although not all of these races are guaranteed to be close in the end. Democrats are defending three of these states, Republicans are defending three, and one other – the Georgia special – will be decided in January. Let's set that one aside and focus on the remaining others.

The six closest states in the presidential election all feature Senate races in 2022: Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, and they are all included here. The seventh is New Hampshire, a politically fickle state where Joe Biden performed very well in 2020, carrying the state by seven points after Hillary Clinton carried it by less than half a point four years ago. Its inclusion here is predicated on the Republicans producing a strong challenger for Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH) -- and they very well may have such a challenger waiting in the wings.

The GOP's top choice to run against Hassan is almost certainly Gov. Chris Sununu (R-NH), who just easily won a third, two-year term. Sununu considered running against Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) in this past election, but ran for reelection instead; immediately following the election, Sununu's campaign manager signaled in a tweet directed to Hassan that Sununu may be closer to taking the plunge this time, and a Hassan-Sununu race would be very expensive and closely contested.

Republicans seem likely to take another shot at Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ), who will be back on the ballot in search of a full term in 2022, and Republicans may be able to produce a nominee who performs better than outgoing Sen. Martha McSally (R-AZ), who lost in 2018 and 2020. Term-limited Gov. Doug Ducey (R-AZ) would seem to be the leading potential Republican candidate, although there are plenty of other possibilities.

In Nevada, former Gov. Brian Sandoval (R-NV) would be a great potential opponent for Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), but Sandoval could have run for Senate six years ago.

The three most vulnerable Republican-held seats are in three closely-contested states, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Sens. Richard Burr (R-NC) and Pat Toomey (R-PA) have already announced their retirements. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) may or may not run again. So these may all be open seats, which would be a change from the 2018 and 2020 cycles, when almost all of the top races on both sides featured incumbents running for reelection. ❖

Govs. Holcomb, Whitmer, Walz, Pritzker, DeWine, Evers & Beshear,

Washington Post: For eight months, the covid-19 pandemic has devastated American families everywhere. To fight this virus, governors across the country have listened to medical experts and worked around the clock to protect our families, the brave men and women on the front lines, and our small-business owners. No matter the action we take, we understand that our fight against covid-19 will be more effective when we work together. That is why we, a group of bipartisan governors, are joining forces today to urge families across our region, and Americans everywhere, to do their part to protect themselves and their loved ones from the spread of covid-19. When it comes to fighting this virus, we are all on the same team. Right now, cases and hospitalizations are skyrocketing in the Midwest and across the country. As the weather gets colder and more people head inside, it will get worse. It is more important than ever that we double down on mask-wearing and physical distancing to help more people get through the winter and protect those on the front lines of this crisis — our doctors, nurses, grocery store workers and truck drivers. There is hope on the horizon. Pfizer and Moderna have both announced that early analyses showed that their vaccine candidates are effective. This is great news, but it doesn't mean we can let our guard down and loosen the safety measures we have made in our daily lives. It's crucial that we keep our infection rate low so we can distribute the vaccine as quickly as possible when it's ready. We must remember that when the vaccine is approved, it will take time to distribute, and we need everyone to continue doing his or her part to protect one another from covid-19. With Thanksgiving around the corner, we urge all Americans to stay smart and follow recommendations from medical experts: Get together with your family via Zoom to ensure your loved ones stay safe. If you are planning to spend Thanksgiving with people outside your household, we urge you to reconsider. ❖



R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., American Spectator:

On November 7, Joe Biden stepped up to the mic somewhere beyond the confines of his basement and solemnly declared, "Let this grim era of demonization in America begin to end here and now." He was not talking about Donald Trump's referring to him as "Sleepy Joe." Nor was he rebuking the president for joking about his repeated confusion over where he was when he delivered his latest address. Was it from Tulsa, Oklahoma, or from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, or was he still in his basement? Joe was calling for an end to everyone's foul language and blood-curdling threats uttered along the campaign trail. And in the privacy of one's own home. Well, for once, I am with Joe. Let the demonization end now. I, for my part, will apologize to Joe for mentioning his past lapses into plagiarism. I shall even apologize for calling him a cheat. It looks to me like

he was guilty as charged, but let bygones be bygones. I shall even let indiscretions recorded on Hunter's laptop be handled by the authorities. Once again, let bygones be bygones. However, there is one matter I hope Joe will apologize for. He called Donald and those who have supported Donald racists repeatedly while campaigning. He also called them xenophobic and white supremacists. And there was, among his Democratic friends, talk of the Republicans' homophobia and misogyny. In keeping with Joe's November 7th declaration, how about apologizing for those moments of demonization too? Yet I am afraid that it is going to be difficult for the Democrats to swear off obloquy and name-calling, because most Democratic leaders believe their Republican opponents are racists, misogynists, white supremacists, and probably Imperialists. You know, Christopher Columbus was the first Republican. ❖

Evan Bayh, Real Clear Politics: Once the final votes are counted, an incoming Biden administration will want to prioritize rebuilding America and creating millions of new jobs as we come together as a nation in the fight against COVID-19. Clearly, there was a lot on voters' minds — from a raging pandemic, an uncertain economic future, and a new push for a more equitable America. Rebuilding America and creating millions of new jobs will be essential to achieving all of these things and must be a key priority for the next president. As a governor and senator representing Indiana for many years, I am committed to supporting new technologies that allow us to create jobs in Indiana and across the nation. The Hoosier State has more manufacturing jobs per capita than any other state, and the next four years are going to be critical if we want to rebuild America with new construction projects that create more U.S. jobs. When it comes to our industrial and construction industries, I have long been an advocate for onshoring industrial and construction capacity — whether it is American jobs, workers, or the materials we need to construct new buildings and infrastructure. And what this pandemic is teaching us is that we need to keep and maintain that critical capacity here in the United States. We need this industrial revitalization, and I am encouraged by the changes we are seeing in new construction projects across the United States, specifically the use of innovative technologies to streamline and advance projects that are made with American steel. And Indiana is the largest steel-producing state in the nation. SpeedCore, a revolutionary composite steel wall core, is being used in new construction projects around the country. In the U.S., the Rainier Square Tower, a striking 58-story mixed-use high-rise in Seattle, was the first constructed using this new innovation. The building took only 10 months to erect, and SpeedCore shaved the construction time by 43% compared to traditional alternatives that include curing time for each concrete pour. The steel in SpeedCore can support up to four floors of decking by itself, making it possible to erect four floors in a week. ❖

Holcomb, Box warn of COVID spread

INDIANAPOLIS — As COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in Indiana continue to shatter new barriers by the day, the state's top health official said Wednesday she doesn't expect the ongoing surge to slow soon, and pleaded with Hoosiers to wear masks and avoid crowds (Russell, IBJ). "I can't predict how much higher it will go, but I can tell you we're on an exponential growth curve right now and we do not expect it to turn around quickly," Dr. Kris Box, state health commissioner, said during Gov. Eric Holcomb's weekly press briefing. "In the next several weeks, we will continue to see cases climb, individuals hospitalized, and unfortunately, more deaths." Despite the wave of new cases, Holcomb said the state will not make adjustments to the restrictions announced last week, when he signed an executive order. "I know I sound like a skipping record, but there's a cause and effect to all of this," Holcomb said. "As we see community spread occur and rise, that leads to [COVID-19] cases rising, that leads to hospital admissions rising, and with that, beds are filled."



Health workers make urgent appeal

INDIANAPOLIS — Three health care workers from around the state talked candidly Wednesday about rationing care, struggling to staff hospitals and holding patients' hands when they die as COVID-19 surges in the state (Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). They spoke during Gov. Eric Holcomb's weekly briefing as he continues to prod people into taking safety measures against the spread. "We are no longer the front line of attack for this. We are the last line, and we need help," said Sarah Paturalski, vice president of nursing and clinical services at Memorial

Hospital in South Bend. "We need our communities to pull together. We want to be here when you need us, but we need help in order to continue to do that."

Minkler to step down as DA

INDIANAPOLIS — Josh Minkler, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Indiana since 2015, announced on Wednesday that he is resigning this month and will be joining an Indianapolis-area law firm (IBJ). Minkler, 57, led the Southern District during a period it won convictions in a string of high-profile cases, including the prosecution of top executives of nursing home giant American Senior Communities for a fraud-and-kickback scheme.

School staffer dies of COVID

FISHERS — An elementary school staff member at Hamilton Southeastern Schools has died due to COVID-19, Superintendent Allen Bourff tweeted (IndyStar). Pam Podany died on Tuesday night, Bourff said in his tweet. Podany was the head cook at Thorpe Creek Elementary.

Holcomb seeking total NCAA tourney

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric Holcomb said Wednesday during his weekly COVID-19 update that the governor's office will do everything it can to support the NCAA bringing all of March Madness to Indianapolis. The men's basketball committee announced Monday that the NCAA is in preliminary talks with the state of Indiana and city of Indianapolis to hold the entire 68-team national tournament in and around Indianapolis (IndyStar). Holcomb said he is working with NCAA president Mark Emmert to support a "successful and safe tournament." "It's obviously a one-time

event that Hoosiers will step up like we always do, in various venues, to make it possible if it's safely doable," Holcomb said. Indiana was already scheduled to host the Final Four in Division I (Indianapolis), Division II (Evansville) and Division III (Fort Wayne). "Truly the road to the Final Four is I-69 in the state of Indiana," Holcomb said.

Mayor Roswarski tests positive

LAFAYETTE — Lafayette Mayor Tony Roswarski was in isolation at home Wednesday morning after testing positive for COVID-19 Tuesday evening, City Clerk Cindy Murray said (Lafayette Journal & Courier). Murray said Roswarski will be in quarantine for the next two weeks. She said that those who had close contact with the mayor had been notified. "We're up and running here at the city — the mayor has put together a pretty good team," Murray said.

Half GOP believe election rigged

WASHINGTON — About half of all Republicans believe President Donald Trump "rightfully won" the U.S. election but that it was stolen from him by widespread voter fraud that favored Democratic President-elect Joe Biden, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll. Altogether, 73% of those polled agreed that Biden won the election while 5% thought Trump won. But when asked specifically whether Biden had "rightfully won," Republicans showed they were suspicious about how Biden's victory was obtained; 52% of Republicans said that Trump "rightfully won," while only 29% said that Biden had rightfully won. Asked why, Republicans were much more concerned than others that state vote counters had tipped the result toward Biden: 68% of Republicans said they were concerned that the election was "rigged," while only 16% of Democrats and one-third of independents were worried.