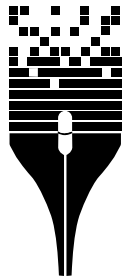


# The Howey Political Report



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## “QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“I’ve never worked so hard for something I’m not going to get....”

- State Sen. Harold ‘Potch’ Wheeler, on explaining his vote for a legislative pay raise, to the *Louisville Courier-Journal*

## A tired tax rebuke to O’Bannon-Kernan

### House Democrats do GOP’s bidding

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** in Indianapolis

There was a dash of deja vu - a very tired deja vu - when the press was called into Frank O’Bannon’s office on Monday where the governor announced a 50-cent-a-pack cigarette tax hike, and a suspension of the ill-advised personal property tin the wings - Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan - as “somber.” There wasn’t a legislative Democrat in the bunch.

State Rep. Markt Lytle, D-Madison, characterized the cigarette tax hike as “stillborn.” Ways and Means Chairman B. Patrick Bauer said it had a “very difficult road ahead. You have 16 counties in the state of Indiana that are tobacco counties.” State Rep. Bill Cochran, D-New Albany, added, “I’m not too sure we can pass this cigarette tax. I think we need to look at other alternatives” (*Louisville Courier-Journal*).

**By the end of the day** on Tuesday, the wheels had virtually come off the O’Bannon tax hike, one which a variety of the press corps reminded their readers would be the first since 1987.

What the Republicans thought about the plan was essentially irrelevant as they let House Democrats do their bidding. When Gov. O’Bannon showed up before a legislative committee - a move the *Times of Northwest Indiana* described as “risky” - the Republicans couldn’t muster up enough spine to press him on the particulars.

“I was trying to figure out who he was talking to,” said State Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville and a potential 2004 gubernatorial candidate. “He said the word ‘education’ at least 25 times, but when he had to be reminded that he

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# TICKER T A P E

**SENATE PASSES CHARTER SCHOOLS:** The Indiana Senate by a 34-12 margin voted for Sen. Teresa Lubbers's charter school bill late Wednesday. "I believe the governor has indicated he will sign it," Lubbers said. "I believe we'll have a strong charter school law" (Kevin Rader, WTHR-TV).

**BART AND THE PET VOTE:** Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson pulled off a savvy bit of politics and public policy last week. The city's humane shelter was without air conditioning, making for a disease-ridden environment for the thousands of cats and dogs that pass through. When the City-County Council failed to pass the necessary appropriation, Peterson put out the call to the private sector and received enough money to get the job done. Pets don't vote, of course, but many of their owners do, and we can see a great TV ad for the 1993 campaign already in the works.

**PERRON FORMS DLC CHAPTER:** Former Elkhart Mayor Jim Perron has formed an Elkhart chapter of the Democratic Leadership Council.

**LAKE COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S DAUGHTER RESIGNS:** Under mounting pressure from federal offi-



## Tax hike, *from page 1*

proposed a tax increase to solve this, he kind of shrugged that off and didn't really discuss it." Reporter Terry Burns of the *Times of Northwest Indiana* pressed Kenley, "So why didn't the Republicans put the governor on the spot and ask him the tough questions?"

Kenley opted for a tired response. "I think discretion indicated that this is not the time for a blood-letting session, but our questions haven't gone away. He's putting one foot forward and kind of coming out and talking to us a bit, so maybe (the questions) don't need to be asked in a way that inflames everybody."

Now, that's leadership.

## Feared contrast, anyway

The O'Bannon-Kernan administration came into this session riding high off a 15-point win last November. Their political capital had never been in a loftier position. It seemed like the perfect time to take a tax structure based on an old 1963 era economy and move it into the 21st Century.

But anxious Democrats fretted. The

public was not "educated" and "prepared," explained House Speaker John Gregg. There was considerable angst about the contrast with Congress poised to pass a trillion dollar tax cut. And the "wolves," as Gregg said, were not howling at the door.

to Dr. Zhivago's Siberian cottage than the Indiana Statehouse. Yes, there was a \$950 million shortfall (not quite 'thanks a billion'), but key legislators such as Senate President Pro Tem Bob Garton were cautiously predicting work wrapped up without a special session. Even with the near billion dollar shortfall, there was reason to be optimistic. "We're sitting right at a turning point," Gary L. Baxter, chief economist for the forecast panel, told the State Budget Committee of the current Recession Lite. "It's likely the worst is behind us or will be soon, and we're about to begin a recovery" (*Indianapolis Star*).

Late last week, the first trial balloons were floated out of the governor's office: A cigarette tax hike that could raise \$350 million might be in the offing.

Then came Monday's O'Bannon-Kernan press conference with key legislators missing. The additional piece of the

*Continued on page 3*

balancing act was to suspend Pat Bauer's controversial personal property tax that nobody understood what the implications were when it passed in 1999. Since then, it had bled the state millions of dollars of revenue while many mobile home owners didn't even realize the windfall. Within 24-hours, the plan was being dissed by House Democrats while Gregg and Bauer stood by.

It begged the question: Why hadn't Chief of Staff Jim Maguire and top legislative liaison Bob Kovatch lined up the House Democratic caucus?

It was a scene that had played out before over issues such as full-day kindergarten back in 1997. Despite being from the same party, O'Bannon and key legislative Democrats not only don't seem to be on the same page, they seem to be out of the loop, or, if they're in the loop, have little persuasive power to keep the governor from unveiling non-starter initiatives.

The tax contrast angst Gregg had been expressing over a comprehensive tax restructuring that could have been sold to Hoosiers as a necessary step to keep the state competitive instead reared its ugly little, gas-venting butt over a fringe revenue maneuver that tags O'Bannon and the silent, somber Kernan with the notion of being tax hikers.

### A tired twist in the wind

The whole legislative process seems tired these days. Back in the early '90s, when young Gov. Evan Bayh was in power, he wouldn't hesitate to schedule a state fly-around to bring to bear what he called much rarer occasions, Bayh would confront the Democratic caucus with well-enunciated profanity while his senior enforcers would twist arms or immobilize shoulder sockets. Or Bayh would bring in the loyal opposition and broker tax cut deals, like he did in 1995 with the excise tax cut.

Gov. O'Bannon isn't operating in that mode. He hasn't used the bully pulpit

much to push his programs or educate the public. O'Bannon has stumped the state over the past couple of months pushing education - now in jeopardy of being nearly flat-lined in the budget. He did a quick dash up to South Bend and Fort Wayne to press tougher utility accountability in what appeared to be a reaction to an *Indianapolis Star* story that his son was lobbying for Ameritech. The Senate has since pulled the teeth out of the bill.

Indiana public policy in the O'Bannon era seems to be like an ant farm with folks scurrying from here to there, busy, busy, busy, incrementally adding on to the vast tunnels with little thought given to where the network leads and its overall goals. It's a Wall Street style approach to policy where the next quarter's revenues take on much greater importance than positioning the state (beyond education) for five and 10 years down the road.

O'Bannon delivered \$1 billion in tax cuts, but they occurred haphazardly (remember Bauer's personal property tax) and have done little to reposition Indiana to better compete not only against our Midwestern neighbors, but in a globalized economy.

O'Bannon and Kernan would have taken some inevitable heat over a comprehensive tax restructuring if it had been contrasted with the trillion tax cut in Washington. But it was something that the adroit Kernan could have defended easily as a public steward willing to make the hard decisions in order to keep Indiana competitive. Instead, Kernan was cast in the role of waiting in the wings as the TV cameras compiled potential 2004 B-roll while his boss tossed out a stinkbomb tax hike that was doomed at inception by his own party.

Joe Kernan entered 2001 as an almost invincible pedigree ready to take power four years hence. Today, Kernan still stands as an attractive standard bear -

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## TICKER T A P E

cial, a Gary Housing Authority employee facing federal charges has resigned. Janelle Carter, daughter of Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter, last month pleaded guilty to two counts of illegally purchasing guns for someone else (Gary Post-Tribune).

**LEGISLATORS EXPLAIN PAY INCREASE TO TAXPAYERS BACK HOME:** Anderson area lawmakers found themselves explaining legislative pay raises to constituents on Saturday. "I thought long and hard on it because of the state's fiscal situation," State Sen. Tim Lanane said (Ken de la Bastide, *Anderson Herald-Bulletin*). "For many lawmakers, they can't justify the financial sacrifices in terms of their families." Lanane said a lot of good people are either deciding not to seek election to the Legislature or opting not to seek re-election because of the financial costs in terms of family income.

"Eventually we won't be able to attract a broad range of people," he said. Rep. Jack Lutz voted against the increase because of the state's revenue forecast and the impact on other state programs. "I think a pay raise is needed," he said, "but we're looking at a deficit in the budget. When you're taking money away from education, it's hard to

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# TICKER

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give ourselves a raise." Rep. Scott Mellinger voted for the increases, but would have voted against a raise for the judges and prosecuting attorneys if it had been a separate bill. "There are so many House members that have been here 15 years or longer and not received an increase in the salary. Anyone who voted no did so because of political reasons."

**SHINE CRITICIZES REPUBLICAN COUNTY COUNCIL:** Allen County Republican Chairman Steve Shine criticized the all-Republican County Council last week for caucusing behind closed doors (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Shine said that although the closed meeting was legal, it should have been open to the public. "Our organization stands for openness and complete disclosure," said Shine, who added that he would have vetoed the private meeting among council members, a county commissioner and the county attorney had he known about it. The caucus was conducted to discuss the proposed juvenile justice center. County Council President Mike Cunegin said the meeting was "really more of an executive session than a caucus," but later clarified his position to say the meeting was a caucus. "You can't call something a caucus and later say it was an executive session," said

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## Tax hike, *from page 3*

er, but he's beginning to accumulate the small cuts and nicks that in a better-thought-out scenario either wouldn't have occurred or could be better defended. His political risks become greater if the perception outlined by Ed Feigenbaum at Wabash College (16 years in power creates fossilization) take root outside the insider game. And what's occurring today isn't something that has caught the imagination of the vast public, but it's certainly shaping the perceptions in much tighter political circles that will gradually be conveyed to wider and wider networks.

**The only good** news for Joe Kernan in this stuffy, hot, smelly setting is that legislative Republicans have become so utterly calcified and confined in their ruts that they can barely refine credible responses that will carry much weight with the general public - other than the

few smokin' Joe Six Packs paying attention as their cig cartons were poised for inflation.

Sen. Kenley has persistently failed to step up and either ask the tough questions or come up with the logical alternatives that would even begin to cast him in the role as savior of the Grand Old Party.

**Behind him are** the tired, tired figures of Bob Garton, Joe Harrison and Jeff Espich, and the squirming mid-level senators.

At the end of last year's legislative session, the tired, tired Republicans didn't even perform their traditional fly-around to propagandize their gains and Democratic glitches in what was to be the year they would reclaim the governor's office.

Instead, the limestone halls and the two vast echo chambers play witness to the stodgy responses one might have heard a century ago : Harrumph! Harrumph! ❖

# PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

## Why dockside persists

Dockside gambling has been at the center of most sine die scenarios since the beginning of the General Assembly.

The most frequent is that it will become a Democratic bargaining chip when the budget goes down. Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst said on Tuesday in context with the cigarette tax hike, "I've heard it myself, that this is just a fake, this is just a sham, that it will get killed, and then we go back to gaming revenue. That is hard for me to believe,"

**Gubernatorial** spokesman Thad Nation, called the speculation "pretty convoluted" (Louisville Courier-Journal). "Dockside has never been a part of our equation. The governor is adamantly

opposed to it and does not wish to see it in the budget."

There's important opposition from Democratic House Speaker John Gregg and Republican Senate President Pro Tem Bob Garton.

**So where does** the pressure come from to keep dockside on the table

In the Senate there are 13 riverboat districts (which represent counties receiving gambling revenues) and 10 are represented by Democrats, including Minority Leader Richard Young. In the House, of the 26 riverboat districts (including Rep. Jerry Denbo of French Lick), 22 are represented by Democrats, including Speaker Pro Tempore Chet Dobis, Majority Whip Paul Robertson, and Black Caucus Chair Charlie Brown. ❖

# COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

**Jack Colwell**, *South Bend Tribune* - The part of Kosciusko County in the present 3rd, now represented by U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer, D-South Bend, shifts out of the district in the Democratic plan, which is likely but not certain to become law. Big significance. (State Rep. Ed) Mahern noted that Kosciusko County is regarded in some methods of sampling as the most Republican county in the state, one that often votes solidly Republican in statewide races in which the Democratic nominee is winning just about everywhere else. In the 2000 race for Congress, Roemer was trounced in Kosciusko County by Republican challenger Chris Chocola: Chocola, 10,364; Roemer, 4,504. Roemer won in a close race in the district. It wouldn't have been such a close call, however, without the Kosciusko County totals. ❖

**Sylvia Smith**, *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* - (U.S. Rep. Mike) Pence has the makings of a politician who could make the transition from the House to the Senate or from Congress to the gubernatorial mansion. His years of being a talk-radio host not only polished his patter, it gave him wide name recognition in the various markets where his program aired. He demonstrated the ability to raise money. He looks good. He's got silvery hair, which conveys both sexiness and gravitas. Yes, I know it's repugnant to suggest physical appearance is a factor in political success, but it happens to be true. So the question remains: Why didn't the Democratic powers-that-be try to neutralize the one member of the GOP congressional delegation who most threatens a fifth-straight Democratic gubernatorial term or the next open Senate seat? It would have been so doable. Imagine, for a moment, that Rep. Ed Mahern put Pence

in his sights. What mischief could Mahern have created? The most obvious is to abandon the Kerns-Buyer mess and create a far more diabolical Pence-Burton nightmare. ❖

**Max Jones**, *Terre Haute Tribune-Star* - Everywhere Brian Kerns looks, there are incumbent Republicans staring him in the eye. And his plan, at least for now, is to meet this new challenge squarely - by moving his home from Vigo County to Hendricks County, where he plans to run against Buyer for the new 4th District seat. By not challenging Hostettler, Kerns leaves Vigo County high and dry. The makeup of the new 8th District gives a Democrat a fighting chance to defeat any Republican candidate, especially if the Democrat happens to be Speaker of the House John Gregg. Gregg is a popular Knox County Democrat whose conservative views on critical social issues would make him a formidable opponent. Gregg, like Kerns, is a known political commodity in Vigo County. Getting Gregg in the place of Kerns is probably something most people in Vigo County would find acceptable. But Gregg is no sure thing. That means Vigo County could eventually end up with Hostettler as its congressman, and there is little evidence to suggest such a development would be anything but bad for this part of the state. ❖

**Dave Kitchell**, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune* - Tom Weatherwax has a big decision on his hands, and it's not whether to bag his groceries in paper or plastic. Tom has to decide if he wants to run for Congress — and decide soon. But with the stroke of a pen, things can change overnight in politics, and if Cass County remains in "the new 2nd District," his name has to be on a short list. ❖

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Steve Key, lawyer for the Hoosier State Press Association. Shine said: "Just because it's legal doesn't mean it's politically correct. We are the servants of the public and the public's business must be discussed in the open."

**STEPHANOPOLOUS COVERS TERRE HAUTE EXECUTION PLANS:** George Stephanopolous reported from Terre Haute on ABC's Good Morning America Monday about the impact of the Timothy McVeigh execution scheduled for May 16. He quoted Mayor Judy Anderson, "Our chiefs have been meeting with the warden, with the sheriff, FBI and marshal for months. We're thinking the worst could happen, but praying for the best." Two parks will be reserved for protesters. The sheriff has essentially "deputized" the entire city. Stephanopolous reported that 1,400 journalists will descend on the city. "The joke was Tom Brokaw couldn't find a room," Anderson said. "There were plenty of women who offered their extra bedrooms." And Stephanopolous asked one man, "What's your reaction to all of this?" He replied to him and the other news media: "Lay off."

**PIKE COUNTY SHERIFF UNDER INVESTIGATION FOR RAPE:** Indiana State

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Police are investigating an allegation that Pike County Sheriff Jeff Clements raped a neighbor in his home last week (Louisville Courier-Journal). Police searched Clements' mobile home late last Friday, hours after the alleged attack, and collected swabs of stains they found in the living room and tissues found in the bathroom, according to records filed in Pike Circuit Court. In addition, Vanderburgh County Prosecutor Stan Levco said his Pike County counterpart asked him Monday to act as special prosecutor and determine whether charges should be filed against Clements and whether the case should go to a grand jury. Last August a judge issued a restraining order against Clements barring the sheriff from the property of Richard Bush of Velpen for one year. Bush said Clements threatened him, according to court records, and said he would burn his house down.

**HASTERT TO KEYNOTE INDIANA GOP DINNER:** U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert will be the keynote speaker for the Indiana Republican Party's spring dinner, set for May 18, Chairman Mike McDaniel announced. McDaniel has been reappointed to chair the National Republican State Chairmen by Virginia Gov. James Gilmore.

**Indiana 2002, 2004 Racing Form**

**Governor 2004: Republican:** David McIntosh, Sen. Murray Clark, Sen. Luke Kenley, Sen. Teresa Lubbers, Eric Miller, Pat Kiely, George Witwer. **Democrat:** Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan. **1996 Results:** O'Bannon (D), Goldsmith (R), Dillon (L). **2000 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,230,345, McIntosh (R) 906,492, Horning (L) 38,686. **2004 Forecast:** Yes, yes, it's early, but this is a topic that is coming up already. We believe David McIntosh is still the odds-on favorite for the nomination. He plans to stay in Indiana, work in the private sector, and help Republican party building. He realizes where his problems were - staffing, a lack of research on key issues (property taxes) and the blistering heat he took over his Congressional voting record. That last point should be moot in three years. The biggest problem facing McIntosh was that had he lost with 48 or even 46 percent of the vote, the GOP establishment might be more inclined to buck history and go with him a second time. But McIntosh finished in the Linley Pearson strata and that is something he has got to explain. We'll be keeping an eye on State Sens. Luke Kenley and Murray Clark, with the latter already making Lincoln Day rounds. Of the two state senators, Kenley is the most mystifying. Some observers, such as *Indiana Legislative Insight's* Ed Feigenbaum, see him as the front-runner, but Kenley has consistently evaded the spotlight, in part because he is in the suppressed middle generation of Republican senators unable to throw off the Garton/Borst/Harrison dinosaur yoke. Kenley made a mild challenge to Garton last year, which was immediately and categorically dashed. Kenley has had ample opportunity to pick a variety of issues to take center stage and never has. That doesn't seem to be gubernatorial fodder to the ol' Horse. Clark earned generally

**HORSE RACE**

good marks as LG. He made the ticket due to his fundraising skills and the McIntosh/Clark ticket did not suffer for lack of money. But Clark was more of a silent partner. The other reason he was added to the ticket was to bolster GOP chances in Marion County, where O'Bannon won by 50,000 votes. Oops. Then there's history - no governor ever coming from Indianapolis. It seems trite, but Sens. Clark and Lubbers are going to have to have an answer for that if they decide to proceed. We've got Lubbers on the list because people are talking about her, but she has sent few signals that she's really interested. If she is, that opens a whole new dynamic in the race. Eric Miller is also testing the LG circuit, but his weakness would be giving the GOP a chance to reach out to moderates and women who have been more than willing to vote for Evan Bayh and Frank O'Bannon. Miller just doesn't seem to be the bridge needed to accomplish that. Kiely is whip-sharp and could forge a credible tax plan, but we don't detect much fire in his belly. If he's suing the state over the shelter allowance, that would cause some problems. As for 1996 LG nominee George Witwer, we don't detect much interest in him other than with the pro-life, Christian right. Russ Pulliam of the *Indianapolis Star* mentioned U.S. Rep. Mike Pence, but if there's a lesson to be learned from 2000, it's not to run for governor while you're serving in Congress. Pence would have to give up his seat to effectively do so, and we think he's having too much fun in Washington to even consider a move. The same holds true for any other incumbent Member of Congress. If McIntosh hasn't coalesced establishment GOP support by early 2003, we'll be keeping our eyes open for a new name possibly emerging from the business sector. **Status:** Leans D.

**Congressional District 2: Republican:** Chris Chocola, State Sen. Thomas Weatherwax, State Rep. Bill Friend. **Democrat:** Roger O. Parent, Jill Long Thompson, State Sen. Bill Alexa, State Rep. Mike Dvorak, Katie Humphries, Cleo Washington. **Geography:** LaPorte, St. Joseph, Starke, Marshall, Pulaski, Fulton, Cass, Miami, Carroll and parts of Porter, Elkhart and White counties. **Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Indianapolis, Lafayette, Chicago. **2000 Result:** Roemer (D) 107,076, Chocola (R) 98,367. **2002 Forecast:** More details on the new 2nd CD voting propensity emerge. The new district voted Bush 130,659 and Gore 105,784. O'Bannon defeated McIntosh 141,606-94,962. Freeman-Wilson (D) topped Steve Carter (R) 113,303-110,429. In 1998, Auditor Connie Nass (R) topped Bob Hill (D) 81,093-77,288; and Clerk of Court Brian Bishop (R) topped Doug Leatherbury (D) 83-155-71,781.

Describing her as a "Clinton aide," the *South Bend Tribune* reported that former Congresswoman Jill Long Thompson is about to re-enter politics. "I'm serious," Thompson said of the prospect of running for the Democratic nomination. She said an actual announcement "would not be appropriate until I know what the congressional district actually is. I've found the majority of voters in Indiana for the most part vote for the perso.," Some Democratic Party strategists looking at the new district are known to be enthusiastic about a Thompson candidacy, in part because of her experience as a congressional candidate and because they see her political appeal as similar to that of U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer, D-South Bend, who represents the present 3rd District. He has announced he won't seek another term. Roemer attracted many independents and Republicans with a moderate approach, especially on fiscal matters. "I've never voted for a tax increase," Thompson said of her congressional voting record. "I'm very fiscally conservative," she said. "I'm also strong on labor issues and worker rights." State Sen. William Alexa of Valparaiso, whose term expires in 2004, has told friends he is weighing a run. On the Republican side, the *Elkhart Truth* reported, "Chocola has not said yet if he will run in the Second District if his home is drawn out, as Democrats have proposed." Chocola spokesman Nicholas Tyszka released a statement, saying, "Let me be very clear: Chris Chocola is running for Congress in the new Second District. There's nothing to speculate about. Whether politics is to blame for drawing him out, or civility keeps him in the new district. Either way, Chris will be the next Congressman to represent this area. It's just that simple." **Status:** *Tossup.*

**Congressional District 4: Republican:** U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer, U.S. Rep. Brian Kerns. **Democrat:** Open. **Geography:** Tippecanoe, Clinton, Boone, Montgomery, Hendricks, Morgan, Lawrence and parts of Marion, Johnson, Monroe, Fountain and White counties. **Media Market:** Lafayette, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Evansville, Louisville. **2000 Results: Old 5th CD:** Buyer (R) 132,035, Goodnight (D) 81,423; **Old 7th CD:** Kerns 131,562, Graf (D) 65,174. **2002 Forecast:** Buyer has hit the road to familiarize himself with the new Congressional district he will be running in next year. The 5th District he served since 1993 has been eliminated and he will run in the new 4th District, apparently against freshman U.S. Rep. Brian Kerns. Both are Republicans. The new district extends from White County, where Buyer lives in Monticello, to Lawrence County in southern Indiana (Associated Press). Buyer was in Clinton, Boone, Monroe and Lawrence counties last week to meet with local Republicans. Buyer said he has "to be sensitive that Lawrence County is still within (GOP Rep.) John Hostettler's district." **Status:** *SAFE R.*

**Congressional District 6: Republican:** U.S. Rep. Mike Pence. **Democrat:** Melina Ann Fox. **Geography:** Anderson, Muncie, Richmond; Wells, Adams, Blackford, Jay, Madison, Delaware, Randolph, Henry, Wayne, Rush, Fayette, Union, Decatur, Franklin, and parts of Bartholomew, Shelby, Johnson and Allen counties. **Media Market:** Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Dayton, Cincinnati. **2000 results:** Pence (R) 106,023, Rock (D) 80,885, Frazier (I) 19,07. **2002 Forecast:** The White House political arm identified Pence as a potentially "vulnerable" freshman who should be assisted when possible by the President. Democrat Mel Fox is close to setting up an exploratory committee. **Status:** *LEANS R.*

**Congressional District 8: Republican:** U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. **Democrat:** House Speaker John Gregg, Paul Perry, State Reps. Russ Stilwell and Jonathon Weinzapfel. **Geography:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Greencastle; Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, Pike, Martin, Daviess, Knox, Sullivan, Greene, Owen, Clay, Vigo, Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Warren and part of Fountain counties. **Media Market:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Indianapolis, Lafayette. **1994 results:** Hostettler (R) 93,529, McCloskey (D) 84,857. **1996 Results:** Hostettler (R) 109,582, Weinzapfel (D) 106,134, Hager (L) 3,799. **1998 Results:** Hostettler (R) 92,227, Riecken (D) 81,381, Hager (L) 3,395. **2000 Results:** Hostettler 116,860, Perry (D) 100,461. **2002 Forecast:** The White House political arm identifies Hostettler as one of the top 10 vulnerable House Republicans. **Status:** *TOSSUP.*

- Brian A. Howey

# TICKER

## T A P E

**GOV. O'BANNON EXPECTED TO SIGN LAKE COUNTY TAX BILL:** Lake County Democrats believe Gov. O'Bannon will sign a tax reform package aimed at solving most of Lake County's assessment problems (Terry Burns, Times of Northwest Indiana).

**PETERSON LAUDS O'BANNON SIGNING OF METH BILL:** Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson, Public Safety Director Robert Turner and Indianapolis Police Chief Jerry Barker joined Gov. O'Bannon as he signed House Bill 1892, a new state law stiffening the penalties for methamphetamine crimes. The new law was one of Peterson's 2001 legislative goals, as well as a key part of his 1999 Peterson Plan. "Crack cocaine hit the country hard in the 1990s, and it is vitally important to our city and state to stop methamphetamine from becoming the next big crisis," Mayor Peterson said.

**WINSTON RALLIES AROUND GOVERNOR'S PLAN:** Indiana Democratic Chairman Robin Winston began rallying the public around Gov. Frank O'Bannon's legislative program. "The O'Bannon plan continues the remarkable improvement in our public schools, strengthens our superior network of public universities, invests in the promise of high technology,

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# TICKER T A P E

and protects the ability of senior citizens' to opt for living at home instead of in nursing facilities. It's a plan the Legislature should approve." Winston observed, "If the General Assembly approves the two-year O'Bannon budget, here's what we all get: Funds to continue improving schools, including providing all school districts with a minimum of a 2 percent funding increase and an average of a 4 percent increase; Increase in appropriations of about 4 percent annually for universities as well as \$4 million annually to continue initial operations of the Community College of Indiana; \$25 million annually to invest in high tech enterprises from the Indiana 21st Century Research and Technology Fund; \$15 million increase during the next two years for CHOICE, the state's in-home care program for senior citizens that provides an alternative to nursing homes."

**NO RULING ON CHAIBAI COMPLAINT:** A special committee met more than a week ago to hear evidence on the contested election of Lake County GOP Chairman Roger Chaibai, but the state party has yet to rule on a complaint charging him with appointing Democrats to serve as Republican poll workers (Rich Bird, Times of Northwest Indiana).



## Buyer looks for Tippecanoe County inroads

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

WASHINGTON - Republican Rep. Steve Buyer may be able to take advantage of lingering bitterness from last year's 7th CD Republican primary to make inroads in Tippecanoe County, an area encompassed by the new 4th CD that is now Buyer's home.

A congressional district map approved last week by the Indiana House Elections and Apportionment Committee, has combined parts of Buyer's current 5th CD and the current 7th CD, which is represented by freshman GOP Rep. Brian Kerns. A map released by Senate Republicans eliminated U.S. Rep. Julia Carson's 9th CD and created eight GOP districts. Its chances of passage are nil.

**Kerns, who** survived a tough primary last spring against Lafayette community activist Bob Griffiths, met with the Tippecanoe County Republican Central Committee on April 17. Last year, county Republicans yearned for a local congressman after more than 30 years of 7th CD representation from former GOP Rep. John Myers, Kerns' father-in-law, and two terms of former Rep. Ed Pease. Kerns, Myers, and Pease are all from the Terre Haute area, which is part of the 8th CD in the new map.

Some Lafayette Republicans never did develop a liking for Kerns. "There is still that influence in our county," said Ruth Davidson, Tippecanoe County GOP chairwoman. "The group that supported Bob Griffiths also knows Steve Buyer personally. It wouldn't surprise me if a lot of them support Buyer."

**But Davidson** said Kerns has his strengths, too. "Brian has accomplished things for Tippecanoe County," she said. "I'm going to try to remain neutral. (Kerns and Buyer) each has support in our county. We have to be careful as a central committee, because this is going to set (the district) for the next 10 years."

During the congressional recess, Kerns and Buyer have been meeting new constituents. Kerns "has made several vis-

its to Republican officials in the new counties," including Lawrence and Johnson, said spokesman Steve Lutes. Buyer, who is not considering running in the new 2nd CD, according to a spokesman, has been introducing himself in Boone, Clinton, Lawrence (a southern Indiana outpost far from Buyer's home), Tippecanoe, Hendricks, Morgan, Monroe and Marion.

Buyer's name identification is up in the new counties thanks to previous advertising. "We did a lot of TV and radio out of Indianapolis every cycle," said Mike Copher, Buyer's chief of staff. Kerns also bought TV in Indianapolis in 2000.

Another boost to Buyer's ID was the high profile he maintained during the disputed Florida presidential vote recount.

**Buyer's new** House Energy and Commerce Committee assignment is helping him. That perch has given him entrée into health, manufacturing, telecommunications, and energy issues-and financing opportunities. He has a dozen fundraisers scheduled over the next few weeks. His former committee - Armed Services - didn't offer the same avenues to money. "Our events have been standing room only," said Copher. "It's like Christmas."

But Kerns is a tenacious campaigner who has built support through the projects he oversaw as Pease's district director and chief of staff. He has a spot on the House Transportation Committee and benefits from his relationship to Myers. Perhaps just as important is the fact that he currently serves the majority of the 12 counties that would comprise the 4th CD.

Ultimately, this kind of analysis may not mean much. "This is pure volatility," said Amy Walter, House editor of the *Cook Political Report*. "Once you get into a situation like this, all bets are off. It comes down to who will work harder." ❖

## CONGRESS WATCH

