

The Howey Political Report



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“QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“If I start sharing bits and pieces, people are going to take sides. Everyone needs to take a look at the big picture in order to help farmers and home owners”

- Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan, to HPR

Kernan: Look at the ‘big picture’ on taxes

Says there is no ‘rift’ with Rep. Bauer

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**, in Indianapolis

Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan couldn't have been pleased when he read last Sunday's edition of the *South Bend Tribune*. There was one of the most powerful legislative Democrats - Ways and Means Chairman B. Patrick Bauer - complaining about being out of the loop and giving Kernan's tax restructuring efforts no chance of passage between now and 2003.

“I do not see a solution that would pass the legislature,” Bauer told the *Tribune's* Martin DeAgostino. “Kernan calls me regularly, but doesn't really tell me what's going on.” When DeAgostino asked Bauer what chances there are for a special session, Bauer responded tersely: “None.”

It was potentially devastating stuff from a Democrat perspective. So much so that when the newly elected Indiana Democratic Central Committee meets for the first time this Saturday in Indianapolis, the Bauer attack on the Kernan tax plan that doesn't even exist yet will be a prime topic of concern, discussion and possible mediation.

“We need to get everybody on the same page,” said 2nd CD Chair Butch Morgan of South Bend.

Kernan talked with *HPR* on Wednesday afternoon and emphasized several points.

“There's no rift between Rep. Bauer and me,” Kernan began. “And I don't want to get into whether or not he was misquoted.” For the record, DeAgostino stands by his story. The other speculation in political circles was that the two South Bend lawmakers had a grudge going back to the prevailing wage era debate. Not so, says Kernan.

Kernan emphasized patience. “I understand every one's desire to have the specifics,” he said of his plan of

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ELECTION TASK FORCE REJECTS VOTE BY MAIL: A task force recommending changes in the state's election system discussed -- but rejected -- a plan yesterday that would have allowed all registered voters to cast their ballots by mail (Lesley Stedman, Louisville Courier-Journal). Instead, the Bipartisan Task Force on Election Integrity recommended that the state allow anyone to cast an absentee ballot at a county clerk's offices before Election Day. Current state law limits absentee voting -- by mail or at the clerk's office -- to those people who swear in writing that they are unable to vote at their polling sites. Those voters must cite a reason, such as travel. "Our goal is to expand the opportunity to vote," said Democratic State Chairman Robin Winston, a member of the task force. The proposals include increased pay for poll workers, a statewide fraud hotline and allowing military personnel who waive their right to confidentiality to vote by fax. Most of the recommendations were approved unanimously and with little discussion.

LUGAR SAYS AMERICANS NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT BIOLOGICAL ATTACKS: U.S. Richard Lugar was asked by Jim Lehrer on PBS's Newshour

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which he expects to announce in mid-October. "I will not be talking about anything until we have a package put together. I'm not going to do that prematurely. This process, whether it happens tomorrow or three weeks from now requires bipartisan support. We'll need to work with members of both parties."

Kernan said that his staff (Bill Stuart) and Gov. Frank O'Bannon's legislative liaison (Terry Mumford) have had "different conversations" with several legislators. The Associated Press reported on Monday that State Sens. Tom Wyss and David Ford had had some cursory conversations dealing with the timing of the tax plan's release. Bauer and fellow St. Joseph County Democratic Reps. Craig Fry and Mike Dvorak all complained to the *Tribune* that Kernan wasn't keying them in.

Kernan said he is not interested in previewing people outside of his development team into the plan "until the whole thing is pulled together."

Kernan explained, "If I start sharing bits and pieces, people are going to take

sides. Everyone needs to take a look at the big picture in order to help farmers and home owners."

The lieutenant governor views the tax restructuring plan he will unveil in October as a "foundation" and starting point. "This will not take place behind closed doors," he said. "There will be hearings."

"This issue requires bipartisan participation."

With both Bauer and Senate President Pro Tem Bob Garton either specifically or by nuance stating that the tax plan won't get a fair hearing in the Indiana General Assembly until after the 2002 elections, Kernan reminded them, "Reassessment has already begun. It's on track to be in place in 2003. There is urgency to getting something done in the 2002 time frame. Otherwise it will significantly impact property owners in 2003."

HPR asked Kernan if Garton's talk of waiting until the 2003 session would be in time to stave off property tax hikes ranging from 13 percent statewide to as high as 45 percent in Marion County and more than 200 percent in Lake County.

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Sen. Simpson to appear at HPR Forum

State Sen. Vi Simpson, a leading Democrat on the issue of tax restructuring, will appear at the *2nd Annual HPR Forum Series* on Nov. 6 at the Westin Hotel in Indianapolis.

Tickets for the event are \$50 and can be reserved by calling 317-254-0535



or by going to the HPR website at www.howeypolitics.com (located at the bottom of the homepage).

The event is sponsored by Baker & Daniels, along with Vectren, DLZ, The Phoenix Group, the Indiana Democratic Party, National Graphics and Wilkerson Strategic Marketing.

The impact of redistricting, tax restructuring and an ongoing power realignment in Indiana will be the major topics.

National political analysts Stuart Rothenberg and Charlie Cook will join HPR's Howey and Mark Schoeff Jr. to survey the next two election cycles. In the day's first panel, U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer, State Sen. Mike Young, and Congressional candidates Chris Chocola and Melina Ann Fox will join the key map-maker, State Rep. Ed Mahern, to explore the impact of reapportionment.

Prior to Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan's luncheon keynote address, a panel on tax restructuring that will include moderator Pat Kiely, Budget Director Betty Cockrum, Sens. Luke Kenley and Vi Simpson, Rep. Jeff Espich, and 2000 gubernatorial nominee David McIntosh will explore the issue of tax restructuring. Leading Hoosier journalists Jack Colwell

of the *South Bend Tribune* and Amos Brown of the *Indianapolis Recorder* will weigh in with political analysis on restructuring.

On the day's final panel on Indiana's power realignment, Marion County chairs Ed Treacy and John Keeler; Lake County's Rep. Dan Dumezich; Democratic State Chair Peter Manous; Jim Kittle of the Phoenix Group, and 2000 lieutenant governor nominee Sen. Murray Clark will talk about the new realities of power on a panel chaired by outgoing Democratic Chair Robin Winston.

Nov. 6, 2001 Downtown Westin Hotel
7:30 a.m. Registration

8 a.m.: Breakfast, *Consequences of Redistricting* with U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer, State Sen. Mike Young, Chris Chocola, Melina Ann Fox, Rep. Ed Mahern, moderator John Ketzenberger of the *Indianapolis Business Journal*.

9-10:30 a.m.: *U.S. and Indiana Political Environs 2002-2004:* Stuart Rothenberg, Charlie Cook, Brian A. Howey, Mark Schoeff Jr., Ron Gifford, moderator Mary Beth Schneider, *Indianapolis Star*.

10:45-11:45: *The Politics of Tax Restructuring Part I:* David McIntosh, Sen. Luke Kenley, Rep. Jeff Espich, Budget Director Betty Cockrum, Sen. Vi Simpson. Moderator Pat Kiely.

Noon-12:45: Luncheon, *The Politics of Tax Restructuring Part II:* Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan.

12:45-1:15 p.m.: *Taxes & Punditry:* Brian Howey, Jack Colwell of the *South Bend Tribune*, Amos Brown of the *Indianapolis Recorder*, Moderator Ron Gifford.

1:30-2:30 p.m.: *Indiana's Political Realignment:* John Keeler, Ed Treacy, Peter Manous, Sen. Murray Clark, Jim Kittle (Phoenix Group) and Rep. Dan Dumezich, with concluding remarks by Mike McDaniel and Peter Manous. Moderator: Robin Winston. ❖

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Monday night about how seriously Americans should take chemical/biological attacks after the crop duster story was revealed. Lugar responded, "The average American should take it very seriously. The pilots and other hijackers really have gone to school in many ways and we're just simply getting another layer of this. But the crop dusting mechanism is one that could be utilized to spread at least a weapon of mass destruction. I would hasten to add before people become alarmed that this takes some formulation. It is a very intricate process, but it's not beyond people." Lugar said both the U.S. and Russians have agreed to destroy chemical stockpiles. "We've guarded in Russia in seven places, 40,000 metric tons is what they have and we're destroying ours. But the facts are that terrorist groups attempt to get their hands on at least small portions of this or formulations. We saw in the Aum Shin Rikyo attack in Tokyo some success at least in making sarin gas from precursors." Lehrer asked Lugar if he had "any doubts about the culpability of bin Laden" in the Sept. 11 attacks. "No doubt whatever," Lugar responded. "The only point that Secretary Powell has made is that proof is going to be given. It

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will come in various forms depending upon the security situation with countries that we want support from; but we have the proof. bin Laden has been indicted again and again throughout the world. The proof of his culpability in past situations is really beyond any type of question. In the current situation, however, it's apparent that the President and Secretary Powell feel that some further word is needed with some of our allies, with some of our friends, with some that we're networking with. That apparently is going to be forthcoming within limits."

HAMILTON SAYS OTHER ATTACKS ARE LIKELY: Former U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton told WTHR-TV's Tom Walker that he won't be surprised if there are other terrorist attacks in the U.S. in the near future. "I think we'd be very foolish, very foolish to think that we're free and clear," Hamilton said.

GAS MASKS SELL OUT IN BLOOMINGTON, INDIANAPOLIS: The Bloomington Herald-Times reported on Tuesday's editions that an army surplus store there has sold out of gas masks. John Ratliff, owner of the local Army/Navy surplus store, said he's sold out of his normal stock of 10 of the masks. The Israeli and Russian gas masks run

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"I don't know how you could get something in place to mitigate something that is underway," Kernan said. "The bills will go out in March 2003 and they will be due in May."

Kernan emphasized that he was not interested in arguing with anyone in the legislature about the plan or its timing and insisted there would be plenty of time for all relevant people to weigh in.

Legislative angst

If nothing else, Kernan has gotten a sneak preview into the fragile, egotistical and fratricidal legislative psyche. State Rep. Craig Fry, told the *Tribune*, "The wolves have to be at the door before people will accept major changes," Fry said, "and they're not there yet." Fry's verbiage was similar to that of Speaker John Gregg, who in a March 15, 2001 *HPR Interview*, said of restructuring, "Let's make sure the wolves are at the door. When I see the wolf, and I'm at the door, would I love to see something done about it? Only if it's real tax restructuring."

If Gregg - who has not weighed in on the Bauer/Kernan matter publicly - is speaking through Fry, it is a peculiar stance for the Speaker who will want to at least be considered as a Kernan running mate in 2004. In fact, going into this critical sequence, the thought of Kernan not having Gregg and Bauer along side he and Gov. O'Bannon when the plan is unveiled in October would be nothing short of damaging to its chances.

Bauer did not return phone calls from *HPR*. But Pat Kiely of the Indiana Manufacturers Association had talked with the Ways and Means chairman. Bauer, he said, may have reacted so negatively to Kernan's activities because of next year's elections. "I think this is a decision on who is important when," Kiely told *HPR*. "The House Democrats are trying to hold on to the majority in 2002 and Kernan is 2004. Last time I

spoke with Pat he didn't feel he had enough support at this time for any tax increase and it appears the administration continues to operate in a vacuum."

In contrast to Bauer, Republican legislators seemed to taking a wait and see attitude. Sen. Tom Wyss, R-Fort Wayne, said he recently met with Kernan assistant Bill Stuart. "Basically the meeting was to see if I would be willing to listen to anything," Wyss said (Mike Smith, *Associated Press*). "It wasn't like they were making a presentation. I told them I'd be willing to work with them any way I could." Sen. David Ford, R-Hartford City, said he met with Stuart last week at Stuart's request. "He didn't have any details, no time frame, but they hoped to have a plan," Ford said. "I really wasn't ever sure why we had the meeting."

The *South Bend Tribune* quoted State Sen. Robert Meeks, R-LaGrange, saying that Kernan told him about a month ago that he would keep Meeks informed of the process, but has not telephoned him since. "I haven't heard a thing," Meeks said. "I know he's doing something, but I have no idea what it is."

Sens. Larry Borst and Bob Garton did not comment on the internecine Democratic warfare this week, but *HPR* knows that legislative Republicans were delighted to have Bauer become their stalking horse. In their view, Bauer's potshots and the swirling uncertainty around Kernan's efforts are unnerving the business community, a group that wasn't afraid to split from their GOP heritage and support Govs. Bayh and O'Bannon in the past four election cycles.

The other aspect of this becoming clear is that House Democrats are petrified about running in new districts in 2002. Any kind of "tax increase" even if it is used to reduce other taxes (as Doc Bowen did in 1973) is freaking House Democrats out. They appear to be putting their own survival above this critical positioning of Kernan maintaining the governorship for Democrats in 2004. ❖

PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

Bush's rendezvous

Last Thursday's speech by President George W. Bush will be correctly judged in the context of history, one, five, 20 years from now.

Few speeches find an instant judgment that is accurate. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" address to Congress on Dec. 8, 1941 is an example and perhaps an exception because it mobilized a terrified and angry nation when an evil world closed in. The Winston Churchill May 1940 speech where he told an embattled Britain, "We shall fight them in the hedgerows ... we shall fight them on the beaches ... we shall never surrender!" rallied a shaken public and transferred the confident bulldog attitude of a leader to the people.

An instant analysis of a speech can be dangerous. The *Chicago Times* described President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address like this: "The cheek of every American must tingle with shame as he reads the silly, flat, and dish-watery utterance of the man who has to be pointed out to intelligent foreigners as the President of the United States."

The *London Times* reported of the Gettysburg Address, "Anything more dull and commonplace it would not be easy to produce." To the contrary, the *Chicago Tribune* observed, "The dedicatory remarks of President Lincoln will live among the annals of man."

There are times when a President can reflect the national mood, as President Reagan did following the Challenger tragedy, observe a profound injustice when he called the Soviet Union the "evil empire" when key aides pleaded with him not to, or make a civilized demand when he stood in Berlin and said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall."

President Kennedy's 1961 inaugural address established a modern baseline for

the reciprocal duties of a nation and her people when he proclaimed, "Ask not what your country can do for you"

It is with little trepidation that I make these observations of President Bush's speech Thursday night, near the U.S. Capitol dome that was targeted for destruction until the common men of Flight 93 rose up to prevent our military from shooting them down.

The Bush speech was absent the bravado that had pulled him away from the moorings of statesmanship, as had happened on Monday when he talked about bringing Osama bin Laden in "dead or alive." While it was a speech that prepared a nation for war ... a different war, the keywords were appropriate for what it ultimately was - a proper defense of civilization.

Patience.

Justice.

Preparedness. "Be ready," he advised to the military and home guard, "make us proud."

To Muslims, he said, "We respect your faith. Its teachings are good and peaceful."

To our psyche, Bush talked of a president's normal appearance before Congress. "The entire world has seen the state of our union and it is strong." But he observed, "Tonight we are a country awakened to danger."

There was calm resolution. To the Taliban, Bush emphatically stated, "Hand over every terrorist" and advised, "These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion."

And to the rest of people, Bush proclaimed, "This is the world's fight; this is civilization's fight."

As I observed last Friday when Bush spoke to America at the National Cathedral, the president rose to the occasion. ❖

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about \$17 each, but were sold by last week. He's ordered nearly 50 more, but doesn't expect them for another two weeks — still faster than it will take for a shipment of American flags, also a hot commodity, to reach his store. He's taking more than 20 calls a day from potential buyers interested in gas masks and stores in Bedford and Indianapolis are sold out, too, he said. Roll Call reports that gas masks for every House Member and floor staffer were placed in an area readily accessible to lawmakers in the Capitol roughly a year ago to guard against a chemical or germ warfare assault, according to senior House staffers. "There are masks all over the Capitol."

PENCE HEADS TO TERRORISM CONFERENCE IN BERLIN: U.S. Rep. Mike Pence today will travel to Berlin as the only Member of Congress attending the Conference on the Threat of International Terrorism. On Friday Pence will lead a roundtable discussion on "Responding to Terrorism: A View from Capitol Hill." Pence explained, "During the panel discussion, I first plan to share the sentiments of many of my colleagues in Congress. The Members I have spoken to expressed their profound gratitude for the outpouring of sympathy and support

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from our European allies. It is also clear that on Capitol Hill and throughout America, we have set aside partisan differences to reach a common goal: crushing terrorism around the world."

CARSON PROPOSES HUMAN BAILOUT BILL: U.S. Rep. Julia Carson stood with Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) and other Members of Congress to announce the introduction of the Displaced Workers Assistance Act. This legislation will be introduced as hundreds of thousands of airline workers face unemployment after the tragic events of September 11th. The bill will provide financial assistance, training, and health care coverage to employees of the airline and related industries who lose their jobs as a result of the attacks on the United States.

DANIELS TO SPEAK IN FORT WAYNE NOV. 5: White House budget chief Mitchell Daniels will headline the Allen County Republican Party's annual bean dinner Nov. 5 (David Griner, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). "Even before this happened, the nation's economy was the prevailing subject matter in political circles," said Steve Shine, Allen County GOP chairman. "The economy had

Terrorism sets back fiscal conservatism

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

WASHINGTON - In the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist assaults in New York and Washington, a bedrock issue for many Hoosier politicians has eroded. Fiscal conservatism, a principle espoused by Republicans and conservative Democrats in the Indiana delegation, has faded as Congress responds to the human, infrastructure and economic consequences of the attacks.

The week before the terrorists struck, Congress was embroiled in a debate over how to protect the Social Security surplus, which composed most of this year's projected \$156 billion budget surplus. Shortly after the attack, Congress passed a \$40 billion measure to finance emergency needs and retaliation. Last week, a \$15 billion bailout was approved for the airline industry. Now members are considering an economic stimulus package that could total \$100 billion.

Each congressional member interviewed by *HPR* agreed that Congress has acted correctly in the aftermath of Sept. 11. "Our primary responsibility is to quickly ensure better security, protect the homeland and deliver justice to the people who did this to our country and the world," said Rep. Tim Roemer (D-3rd CD), a member of the House Select Committee on Intelligence.

The spending bills, however, have changed the political calculus. "The number one reason the Democrats were holding up the budget and the number one reason conservatives were holding up the compromise is because we didn't want to get into spending the Social Security surplus," said Rep. Mark Souder (R-4th CD). "Now we're only arguing how fast we'll eliminate the surplus, not whether we'll eliminate the surplus."

Rep. Mike Pence (R-2nd CD) said: "There is a general acceptance that

there is a difference between a peacetime budget and a wartime budget. The actuarial perfection we were fighting for two weeks ago is no longer the order of the day." But Pence said that doesn't mean that Congress has become spendthrift. He said that fiscal discipline was applied in the airline bailout. The final package included a larger percentage of loan guarantees and a smaller percentage of cash grants than the airlines wanted.

Congress should tread carefully when it comes to the stimulus package, said Roemer. He advocates waiting to see how the economy performs in the upcoming quarter. "Caution and vigilance are the key terms right now," he said. "We need to put together a stimulus package that really responds to economic needs and not to lobbyists' or special interests' needs."

Back on the hustings in the new 2nd CD, a district that largely encompasses the 3rd CD from which Roemer is retiring, Republican candidate Chris Chocola supports the decisions Congress has made since Sept. 11. "These are investments that are necessary in the short-term and will have long-term payoffs," he said. He also promotes a capital gains tax cut. "That would be the most beneficial move to prop up the stock market and the economy. We need to continue to find ways to make the economy grow."

But the uncertainty surrounding the war on terrorism will force Congress to tighten the government's belt. Republican Sen. Richard Lugar, ranking member on the Senate Agriculture Committee, on Wednesday admonished the House not to take up the farm bill in the near future. "It is time for the administration to give a clear idea what the money situation is," he said in a statement. "As we are dealing with war, the internal security of the country, and the enormous economic problems

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facing the country, we need to determine what is adequate for rural America and agriculture. To proceed down the road in

debating a farm bill before we have some context would be inadvisable." ❖

Terrorist attack halts political activity

By **MARK SCHOEFF Jr.**

WASHINGTON - Politics as usual has become politics unusual following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Fundraising and other activity has ground to a halt while a cease fire has replaced most of the partisan warfare on Capitol Hill. The campaign arms of the House Democrats and Republicans have suspended fundraising and politicking. The National Republican Congressional Committee moratorium runs through Oct. 1. The Democratic stand down is indefinite. In Indiana, Rep. Mike Pence (R-new 6th CD) and Chris Chocola, a Republican candidate in the new 2nd CD, are not seeking funds for the time being.

"Right now, raising money for political campaigns is not the highest priority on people's minds," said Chocola. One of the Democrats running in the new 2nd CD, Jill Long Thompson, has only attended one political event since Sept. 11-- and it wasn't in the district. She honored a prior commitment to participate in a Sept. 21 dinner in Whitley County. But she did not deliver a political speech there. Otherwise, her campaign has been on hold.

For the most part, the rhetoric in Washington has quieted, too. The new tone allows Congress to show a united front to the enemy during a time of war. "It's important that right now we don't have conflict," said Rep. Mark Souder (R-4th CD).

For instance, differences over the \$40 billion emergency aid and retaliation package approved two weeks ago were settled behind closed doors at the leadership level. Among the areas of conflict were the size of the measure and the rules for dispensing the funds. "There were some pretty brass knuckle arguments

going on (that) week," said Souder. But they were muffled.

Members agree that unity will be maintained on matters of defense and intelligence. "We are moving toward the single objective of America's national security," said Pence. "The national interest is the defining characteristic." In the area of homeland defense, "I wish President Bush 100 percent success," said Rep. Tim Roemer (D-3rd CD).

Even in an amorphous atmosphere like the one that will surround the war on terrorism, the battle mode cannot last indefinitely. At some point, probably sooner rather than later, Congress will return to domestic issues that will inevitably separate Democrats and Republicans. "We will continue to articulate differences with the Bush administration on environment, education and campaign finance reform," said Roemer. "We can't neglect the key issues on our domestic agenda, such as education, or the terrorists will win on that front."

Pence said: "Partisanship is coming back, and frankly it should. This is an institution that has (members with) strong differences on the size and scope of government and the extent of judicial power." The foxhole mentality won't permanently alter the political atmosphere. "You feel a different kinship with members of the other party," after living through a terrorist attack with them, Souder said. "That doesn't mean you don't disagree over farm policy. The lingering benefit of bipartisanship will be tonal."

It's too early to tell what the effects of the terrorist attacks will be on the campaign trail. Candidates are mostly in a low-key fundraising and organizational mode. ❖

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gone up to the No. 1 issue at dinner tables across the country and across Allen County.

DANIELS FLIES COMMERCIALLY TO INDY: Budget Director Daniels was in Indianapolis last weekend and was greeted at Indianapolis International Airport with a chorus of "God Bless America" sung by airport workers and a handful of members from a local search-and-rescue crew who returned home Thursday after a week of searching the ruins of the World Trade Center in vain for survivors. White House press secretary Ari Fleisher noted that both he and Daniels were flying commercially, with Fleisher expected to be in Indiana for the Formula One race this weekend.

INDIANA WELFARE UP: For the first time in seven years, the number of Hoosiers on welfare has increased -- a trend seen across the country as layoffs from a worsening economy force more workers to seek public assistance (Michele McNeil Solida, Indianapolis Star). The state's welfare caseload jumped 13 percent during the fiscal year that ended June 30, with nearly 13,000 Hoosiers added to the rolls over the previous year. In all, nearly 112,000 Hoosiers received welfare checks.

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GUN SALES UP: Last week's terrorist attacks might have made the stock market plunge and grounded the airlines, but one sector of the economy saw sales jump -- gun sales (Paul Baylor, *Anderson Herald-Bulletin*).

HENDERSON, COYNE GET NEW DEMOCRATIC POSITIONS: Tim Henderson and Jeff Coyne, both of Indianapolis, will serve in key staff positions for the Indiana Democratic Party, Chairman Robin Winston announced. Henderson becomes political director of the party, Winston said. Coyne will succeed Henderson as finance director, Winston said. Coyne served the 1996 O'Bannon-Kernan gubernatorial campaign as an administrative assistant. In 2000, he was the state party's field coordinator in north-central Indiana.

MAYORS BACK DOCKSIDE: Indiana's mayors and other municipal leaders support dockside gambling or an increase in the gasoline tax -- or both -- to provide \$100 million annually for roads. (Lesley Stedman, *Louisville Courier-Journal*) The executive committee of the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns approved a position statement yesterday that calls on lawmakers to provide "a dedicated, stable funding source" for city and county transportation needs.



COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune* - President George W. Bush, like his father before him, has been superb in rallying the nation and seeking international support at a time of crisis. So, there is no surprise that the president, whose popularity had slipped with the economy, now stands in many polls with record approval. While it is traditional that a president's popularity rises in a crisis, particularly when there is a threat from abroad, this president's climb in approval ratings has been spectacular. Higher than for his father amid the stunning military successes in Desert Storm. As high -- higher in some polls -- than recorded for the eloquent Franklin D. Roosevelt after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Approval for the way the president is doing his job was near record highs even before his powerful speech Thursday night. Now, it's unprecedented. Gone is the criticism that the man can't deliver a speech. He brought cheers from Democrats as well as Republicans in Congress. He brought tears to the eyes of many Americans stirred by his words and his determined, letter-perfect delivery. Not only was his speech to Congress well received, but his spontaneous remarks since the terrorist attacks have been in most cases appropriate in avoiding being too belligerent or too soft. While he will never be ranked with FDR or JFK in eloquence, the perception that he can't string a dozen words together in a coherent sentence has vanished. ❖

Mike Leonard, *Bloomington Herald-Times* - Jerry Falwell still wins the Loony Award for blaming the Sept. 11 attack on the United States on the ACLU, abortionists, feminists, gays, lesbians and the group People for the American Way. He also wins the Weasel Medal for claiming that his hate-filled, scapegoating tirade was misquoted and then, "taken out of context" — before finally capitulating

with a mealy-mouthed apology that his comments were made at an inappropriate time. ❖

Dave Kitchell, *Logansport Pharos-Tribune* - What others appreciate, we take for granted Patriotism is a funny thing with Americans. There have to be plenty of patriotic folks behind all those flags, but throughout history, many of the people who care so deeply about our country and our role in the world have come from other countries. The Marquis de Lafayette was from France, and there are American cities named for him. Before Irving Berlin wrote "*God Bless America*," he emigrated from Russia. Al G. Wright, the Purdue band director who wrote the well-known "*I Am An American*" pre-game flag ceremony that was on national television Saturday, is from Great Britain. These examples may serve only to make one valid point, but it's an important one: Americans probably don't know how good they have had it for so long, and it often takes someone from another country to put our freedom and quality of life in proper perspective. ❖

Gary Gerard, *Warsaw Times-Union* - Here are some other things bin Laden knows. He knows that if he remains in Afghanistan we can't launch any kind of substantial military operation against him unless it comes from Islamic soil, like in Pakistan. He knows that if that happens, it will infuriate Islamics who view him as a hero. He knows he can then frame this as his -- and Islam's -- struggle against the Great Satan of the West and gain sympathy from Islamic nations. He knows if this happens, it will be easier to enlist larger numbers of "soldiers" to further his cause. All of this brings him closer to what I believe is his true goal -- a Jihad or holy war. A war between his concept of good and evil. ❖