

The Howey Political Report



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“QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“America must get rid of the hangover that we now have as a result of the binge, the economic binge we just went through ...”

- President George W. Bush

A Hoosier political agenda for the ‘00s

Conventions, constitution and debates

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** in Indianapolis

Since the Indiana General Assembly passed historic tax restructuring last month ... it’s been, well, quiet on the homefront. There has been no populist uprising against the tax shift. The rantings against incumbents have been mostly mere murmurs. Any angst and anger appears to be reserved for crooked corporations and their cooked books, or for the high cost of prescription drugs.

This gives rise to the thought that if the legislature can be so bold on taxes, why not move our sights to other structural deficiencies in the public policy and political process?

Here are some key questions that frame what we’ll call *HPR’s Political Agenda for the ‘00s*:

Why is our governorship so weak?

Why are races for the Indiana General Assembly so uncompetitive?

We heard constantly from Hoosiers talking about the “high cost of government,” yet we look around and see duplication of services out the wazoo.

The Indiana Constitution of 1851, largely based on the changing U.S. Constitution, was a product of a bygone era coming off a public financing scandal concerning canal construction. It doesn’t reflect the modern realities of rapid travel, communication or technology.

If we may be allowed to be so bold, here is *HPR’s Political Agenda of the ‘00s*:

Constitutional Convention

In 1994, Democrat Tim Jeffers did something almost unthinkable. Running for secretary of state, he vowed that if

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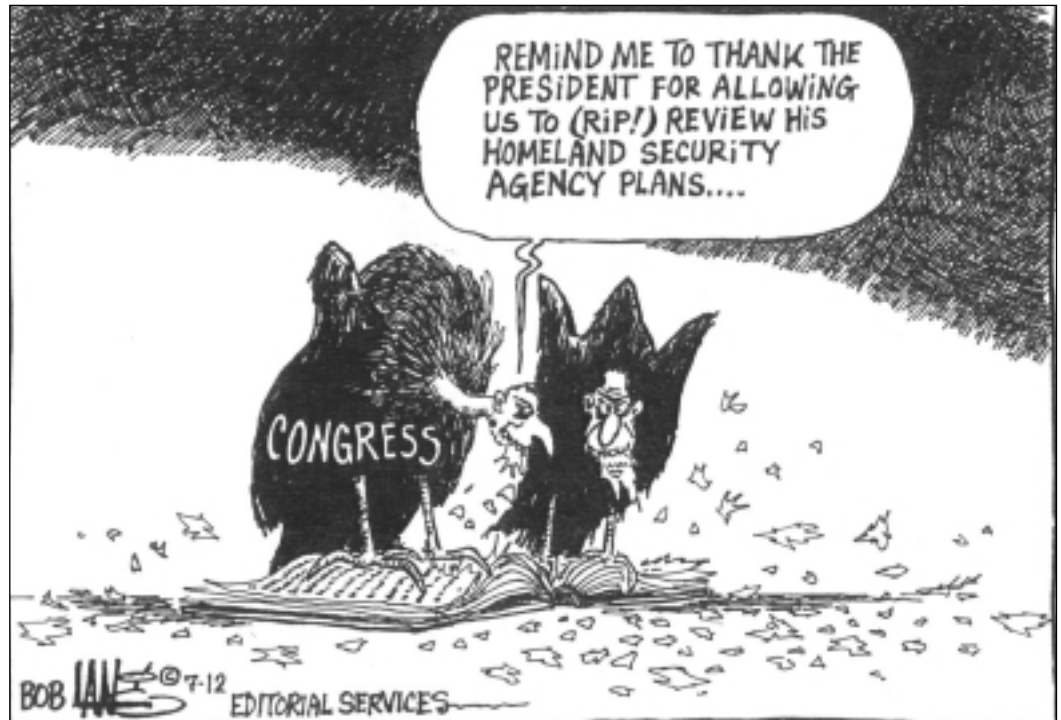
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BUSH AT 76 PERCENT IN INDIANA: A poll conducted by the Indiana University Public Opinion Laboratory in Indianapolis found that President Bush is enjoying a 76 percent approval rating among Hoosiers, higher than the 73 percent nationally." The poll "poll was conducted July 10-13 from the IU Public Opinion Laboratory and has a margin of error of 3.5 percent. Of the 802 self-described voters polled, 41 percent were Republicans, 31 percent Democrats, 22 percent independents and 6 percent from other political parties." Republicans gave Bush a 95 percent approval rating, while 60 percent of Democrats approved of his performance. Congress enjoyed a 56 percent approval rating from Hoosiers, above its national rating of 52 percent."

O'BANNON AT 41 PERCENT: Democratic candidates, including gubernatorial hopeful Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan, should not tie themselves closely to Gov. Frank O'Bannon because of his low approval rating, according to interpretation of a poll released Monday (Shannon Lohrmann, Lafayette Journal & Courier). O'Bannon's approval rating is at 41 percent, his worst as governor, said Brian Vargus, director of the Indiana University



elected he would work to abolish the office. "We can't afford to be spending \$2 million a year on a political stepping stone," Jeffers said. The winner, Sue Anne Gilroy, responded, "We can't afford to bury an elective office in a bureaucracy."

In most states, a gubernatorial administration includes the duties that are currently held by elected attorney general, auditor, clerk of the Supreme Court, superintendent of public instruction, secretary of state and treasurer. The buck doesn't necessarily stop at the governor's office.

In recent months, we've seen various parts of the executive branch spar (Gov. O'Bannon vs. Auditor Connie Nass) over policy. In 2000, Republican gubernatorial candidate David McIntosh found himself at odds with Supt. Suellen Reed, who was reluctant to criticize O'Bannon.

The Indiana governor does not fully control his own executive branch. The Constitution of 1851 created one of the weakest governorships in the U.S. A Hoosier governor's vetoes can be overridden by a simple majority, instead of two-thirds as is the case in 40 other states. He has no line item veto.

When the most important public

policy effort in a generation took place last month, the true power resided in the legislature, not the governor's office. The governor was a "facilitator" and "arbitrator." Yet voters can much more easily dispose of a governor than a legislator when determining where the buck stops.

A constitutional convention could address much more than just the governorship. With fewer than 20 competitive legislative seats out of 125 on the ballot this year, could the legislature be retailored to be more accountable to the people? Would a Nebraska "unicameral" system be more productive?

Do we really need 92 counties, which were created to bring government within a buggy or horse ride for most men? Florida, for instance, has three times the population and only 67 counties.

Do we really need township government? Would a more regional based governmental system create greater efficiencies and save far more money?

The mere thought of holding a constitutional convention brings visions of Pandora's box to some people.

Researchers aren't even sure if it would be possible to hold such a convention.

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According to Bob Rudolph of Legislative Services Agency, the 1816 constitution required the question of calling a constitutional convention to be put to the people at least every 12 years.

The case of *Bennett v. Jackson* in 1917 held that under the 1851 Constitution, a constitutional convention could not be called unless the question was first submitted to the people and the people consented (i.e., by referendum). The Indiana Supreme Court based its reasoning on the following provision from Article 1, Section 1 of the Constitution: *"For the advancement of these ends, the people have, at all times, an indefeasible right to alter and reform their government."*

Rudolph explained, "Probably the appropriate way to do this is by a bill that requires a public question to be put on the ballot because the only way a question can be put on the ballot under current law is under the authority of a statute enacted by the General Assembly."

However, the next governor, the Supreme Court chief justice and legislative leaders could hold a convocation, come up with a specific agenda of proposals that the legislature could enact.

This could be a leading issue in the 2004 gubernatorial election if the candidates are bold and visionary.

Gubernatorial convention

Currently, Indiana taxpayers are subsidizing at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars the duties the political parties used to do quite successfully: nominate their gubernatorial and U.S. Senate candidates at a party convention.

Going to direct primaries in 1976, the original intent was to free the gubernatorial process from the so-called "smoke-filled rooms" and give it to the masses. The problem is that the masses aren't interested. In 2000, only 19 percent of registered voters participated. Primary participation is usually under 25 percent.

Many voters who participate in November elections don't like to declare party preference.

While primary participation has declined, the loss of patronage for Republicans and Democrats has left these two institutions seeking ways to reinvigorate their activists. In 1996, the GOP activists favored Rex Early, while the people nominated Stephen Goldsmith, who lost. Perhaps the best way to accomplish that would be to allow those activists to choose their standard bearer, as they do the other statewide offices.

Vanderburgh County Commissioner Richard Mourdock, who ran for secretary of state this year and lost in a GOP floor fight, notes that out-state candidates are at a distinct disadvantage because "80 percent of Republican donors are from Central Indiana." He believes it gives those candidates a big advantage.

Proponents of a convention system believe that it would minimize the amount of money needed to run a campaign, and open the process up to candidates who aren't wealthy. It would concentrate the process toward the party activists and keep campaign advertising away from the masses until the autumn sequence. In essence, a convention system would save a lot of money for both the general public and the candidates.

The intent of the primary was to allow the people to select better candidates. Some may argue that Doc Bowen, Robert Orr, Evan Bayh and Frank O'Bannon have been a higher caliber of governor than Edgar Whitcomb, Roger Branigan, and Matt Welch (the last of the convention class; Bowen was nominated both ways).

Debate commission

With the exception of Gov. O'Bannon's campaign, virtually no one was satisfied with the gubernatorial debate formats in 2000. The three debates involving O'Bannon, David McIntosh and

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Public Opinion Laboratory in Indianapolis. Only 52 percent of Democrats approve of his actions. But in O'Bannon's defense, Vargus said, 30 other states are in bad fiscal situations and those governors have similar approval ratings. The governor's spokesman, Andrew Stoner, said once the impact of tax restructuring signed into law June 28 is known next spring, Hoosiers will feel better about O'Bannon's work."

LEGISLATURE AT 40 PERCENT: The General Assembly's approval rating increased, from 32 percent in March, after lawmakers adjourned their regular session without acting on the state's tax and budget problems, to 40 percent this month. But only 35 percent of those polled said the General Assembly's actions were necessary; 38 percent said they didn't know; less than one in five respondents reported following the session closely, while 18 percent said the legislature didn't need to act. Vargus said many respondents were more concerned that lawmakers needed a special session to pass the bill than they were that it included tax increases. More than 43 percent of the respondents could not name any action the legislature took during the special session. The poll also said that 51 per-

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cent of Hoosiers expect another domestic terror attack (WTHR-TV). Only 41 percent believe the U.S. is winning the war on terror; 38 percent said no one is; and 10 percent believe the terrorists are.

ABBOT TO CHALLENGE BUYER: Bill Abbott grew up in Ellettsville, works second shift at Bloomington's GE plant, rides a Harley Davidson motorcycle, is a member of the National Rifle Association and was an Eagle Scout. He's also the unlikely Democratic candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives in Indiana's newly drawn 4th District (Bloomington Herald-Times). Abbott acknowledges he's not your average Democrat running for Congress, but isn't concerned. 'You've got to give them a reason to vote, and a working guy trying to break in will give them a reason,' he said.

O'BANNON, GOVERNORS CALL FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE FUNDING: Gov. Frank O'Bannon led a bipartisan group of the nation's governors Friday in urging Congressional leaders in both parties to act now to form a Department of Homeland Security, including \$3.5 billion to fund state and local response activities. O'Bannon, along with Massachusetts Gov. Jane Swift (R) and California Gov. Gray Davis (D), circulated a

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Libertarian Andrew Horning were seen as a rigid format that minimalized interaction between the candidates and voters.

In contrast, the recent presidential debates change the formats (media panel, candidate interaction, and town hall) so voters can watch and listen to their candidates in varying circumstances.

The 2004 gubernatorial election will feature at least one good orator (Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan), and possibly more (OMB Director Mitch Daniels, McIntosh and Eric Miller are proven public speakers).

An Indiana Gubernatorial - Senatorial Debate Commission should be established to research and determine the number of debates and formats.

This commission could include Republican Chairman Jim Kittle, Democratic Chairman Peter Manous, Libertarian Chairman Mark Rutherford, and, representatives of the news media,

academia, labor and business.

With the caliber of candidates poised for the 2004 nominations, it would be a good year to establish enduring debate guidelines.

Random thoughts

The lessons learned this spring and summer are these: Hoosier lawmakers can be bold - and do it in an election year. If they use common sense, logic and the art of compromise, Hoosiers will accept what they do.

Democracy needs maintenance. Defining and creating more efficient government, bolstering the political parties, and giving the people better venues to inspect top tier candidates would continue the historic momentum that occurred in late June at the Statehouse.

If nothing else, debating these issues would be good for a state that cannot afford to accept the status quo. ❖

PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

Indiana and the Colts

INDIANAPOLIS - If you've read the *Indianapolis Star* or watched WTHR-TV in recent weeks, you almost get the feeling that these two "news gathering partners" are greasing the skids for the Indianapolis Colts to flee the state.

A June 30 *Star* story about a poll conducted began with this lead: "If the Indianapolis Colts need a new stadium to keep them in town, most local residents don't want to pay so much as the cost of a hot dog to help them out." It reported a "scientific poll" that showed that 71 percent of Marion County residents "disapprove of using tax dollars to finance a new arena."

And then there was this late hit: "Most in Marion County call the Indiana Pacers their team, anyway. More than half of those polled -- 55 percent -- think the

NBA's Pacers are the most important sports franchise in the Indianapolis area. The Colts were favored by a paltry 16 percent."

Star columnist Bob Kravitz weighed in by noting Colts owner Jim Irsay's quote in *Street & Smith's Business Journal*: "My focus right now is getting a New Orleans deal, but improving (10 percent to 15 percent) on it. We need a commitment of a renegotiated deal, and it will involve cash and eventually a new stadium."

Kravitz opined, "Brother, can you spare a dime? The question isn't what we want, or whether the area's political and corporate leaders will capitulate. They always capitulate in these cases. The question is, how much of our money can they justify spending?"

Then WTHR featured a report on the same poll by asking this question: Should the RCA Dome be torn down if

the Colts leave?

So there you have it: poll-driven journalism by the region's current "thought leaders" in a black and white context on an issue that is shaded with a complex array of grays.

The reason I'm writing about it in a political column is, yes, Kravitz is right about one thing: It will likely be an issue coming before Marion County government and perhaps, the Indiana General Assembly. Now, before any more of us begin shooting from the hip to issue an opinion, perhaps all of us ought to take a deep breath and seek out the thousands of facts that make up these shades of gray. Irsay himself said in a statement, "This is a very complex issue. It's about revenue disparity, not a stadium."

Of the 31 NFL teams, 17 are now playing in stadiums built after the Colts arrived in Indianapolis back in the mid-1980s. Seven have undergone major renovations. Seven more teams (hey, that makes ... 31!) are currently in negotiations for stadium enhancements or better revenue deals. Of the cities that lost NFL franchises -- St. Louis, Houston, Baltimore, Oakland, Cleveland and Los Angeles -- all but one ended up with new or transferred teams, but at a much greater cost. As Indianapolis Deputy Mayor Michael O'Connor points out, each city that lost a team eventually came to the conclusion that it became "something their city was lacking."

Indiana has just passed a new tax restructuring package that in the next two to five years is expected to help us keep existing high-profile companies, attract others from competing states (and yes, the competition is intense), and grow new ones. When I'm asked how Indiana will replace the big name companies whose corporate headquarters have fled, I always answer, "The next generation of Consecos or Cook Groups or Lincoln Nationals are located in garages, basements or apartments right now." In order to grow these companies and attract others to the

Indiana-Purdue-Lilly sphere of cutting edge life science research, high caliber people tend to seek to locate in areas that offer rich, cultural diversity.

The Colts are part of that. It makes Indiana a "major league" state. They are part of the fabric of a metropolitan area that has brilliantly used what the people love -- sports -- to create a nationally recognized economic cluster.

A couple of years ago, I wrote an article for *NUVO Newsweekly* in which it was stated that "if we're going to build the Colts a new stadium, here are 10 other things that need to be done first."

Of that list, Indianapolis has made significant strides in seeking solutions to its sewage overflow into streams (a billion dollar problem), building new schools and air conditioning old ones, and seeking mass transit.

If Indiana journalists want to keep "our tax dollars" away the greedy Colts, perhaps the most productive research should not be polls, but how other cities -- Washington, Baltimore, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Houston, St. Louis, etc. -- funded new stadiums or kept their sport assets. In every community, different solutions were deployed.

Back in 1997, a Democratic governor (Frank O'Bannon) and a Republican mayor (Stephen Goldsmith) used their ingenuity to build Conseco Fieldhouse, a nationally recognized state-of-the-art facility that didn't add one penny to the property tax rolls. Former Indiana Democratic Chairman Robin Winston used to end his speeches by saying, "There's nothing wrong about Indiana that can't be fixed with what's right about Indiana."

Can Hoosiers step up, determine our collective values, decide to defend assets as we seek new ones, determine the proper and relative facts, and do what O'Bannon and Goldsmith did five years ago? I believe the answer is yes. Bring on the proper research! ❖

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letter signed by 46 governors calling on Congress to "expeditiously enact legislation creating the Department of Homeland Security and provide states with adequate funding for our first responders."

RESCINDED INVENTORY TAX WILL CAUSE COUNTIES PROBLEMS: A new state law that will eliminate the inventory tax will also force county officials to decide between two unattractive options to recoup the lost revenue: Making homeowners pay higher property taxes or making individuals pay more income taxes (Lesley Stedman, *Louisville Courier-Journal*). When lawmakers passed a landmark tax and budget bill last month, they touted the elimination of the property tax on business inventory as one of its most important provisions. But they left county officials to decide just how and who should make up the revenue. "This may provide for good economic development, but from an administrative standpoint, it's not the be-all-end-all," said Matt Brooks, executive director of the Association of Indiana Counties. "The legislature strove to reduce property taxes and in the process of doing that has created a Catch 22." If local officials do nothing, the tax on business inventory will be gone in 2007, but the

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county will still collect the same amount of money. The owners of property still on the tax rolls will be left to pick up those costs, a burden that will vary dramatically from place to place. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Larry Borst, who inserted the provision eliminating the inventory tax into the bill, said no county would need to raise local income taxes more than about one-quarter of 1 percent to protect homeowners from a property tax increase. For someone earning \$35,000 annually, that increase would be \$87.50.

POLLS GAUGE BUSH: A Newsweek poll of 1,000 adults conducted July 11-12 (+/-3%) shows: 68% approve of the job Bush is doing as president; while 22% disapprove and 10% don't know. A new Time/CNN Poll of 1,003 adults conducted July 10-11 (+/-3.1%) shows: 70% "approve" of the job George W. Bush is "doing as president"; 24% "disapprove." 72% think accounting scandals "are not isolated incidents of wrongdoing" and "may indicate a pattern of deception on the part of a large number of companies." 43% "trust" George W. Bush more to "handle the current accounting scandals"; 41% trust Democrats in Congress more; 10% said "neither." 44% "trust" Democrats in

Indiana 2002 Racing Form

TRENDLINE: The *White House Bulletin* reported "The debate on corporate accountability carries with it heavy undertones of congressional control. Republican strategists fear that Democrats will ... be able to use the issue to paint Republicans as beholden to big business, and the country needs a Democratic Congress as a counterweight. Potentially playing into those arguments is an August 15 deadline set by the Securities and Exchange Commission, which has required the CEOs of 947 US corporations to certify in writing that their financial statements are legit. If they cannot so certify by that date, they have to explain why.

Indiana Congressional Races

Congressional District 2: Republican: Chris Chocola. **Democrat:** Jill Long Thompson. **Geography:** South Bend, Michigan City, Mishawaka, Elkhart, Kokomo, Plymouth, Logansport; LaPorte, St. Joseph, Starke, Marshall, Pulaski, Fulton, Cass, Carroll and parts of Howard, Porter, Elkhart and White counties. **Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Indianapolis, Lafayette, Chicago. **Websites:** www.jilllongthompson.com; www.chocolaforcongress.com **2000 Result:** Roemer (D) 107,076, Chocola (R) 98,367. **2002 Forecast:** Long Thompson has supported a set of principles for corporate accountability. They include: allowing stockholders to vote whether their company's executives should be eligible for stock option plans; imposing criminal penalties for securities fraud; better laws pertaining to the shredding or fabrication of documents and evidence; requiring stock and derivatives sales by corporate officers to be reported the same day; and establishing a regulatory board for auditors (Christina Seiler, *Rochester Sentinel*). Chocola will report having raised \$889,000, with \$602,000 in cash on hand on July 1 (Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune*). Long Thompson finished her 110-mile walking tour of the district and said in South Bend Monday, "In walking the new 2nd District, I did something my opponent can never do. I walked by my house." **Status:** *Tossup.*

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. **Websites:** www.foxforcongress.com; mikepence.house.gov/ **2000 results:** Pence (R) 106,023, Rock (D) 80,885, Frazier (I) 19,070. **2002 Forecast:** This race is beginning to draw national attention. Last week the *Washington Post* observed, "As he approaches his first House re-election bid, Pence appears to have been aided by redistricting. Under its new lines, the renumbered 6th District gave George W. Bush 59 percent as the 2000 Republican presidential nominee. Nonetheless, Indiana Democrats say they have a shot to oust Pence this year. They have an active challenger in Melina Fox. Fox is banking on the district's population bases of Madison County, which includes the city of Anderson, and Delaware County, site of the city of Muncie. Both are urban manufacturing centers where Democratic voters are prevalent." The *Post* quoted IUPUI's Dr. Brian Vargus, "Fox has surprised local observers with her ability to gain support. The advantage is still with Pence, but he's going to have to work for it." Fox may have come up with the best election tactic this cycle to date. She commenced a tour of the 6th CD in a convoy of Studebaker Larks and other vintage models. "A generation ago the demise of the Indiana-based Studebaker automotive company revealed in the aftermath a corporation that had shifted pension funds into other uses," Fox said. "When the company went under, it wiped out retirement nest eggs for thousands of Hoosier families. It was the Enron tragedy of its day. Experts agree that the Studebaker tragedy in Indiana led directly some years later to Congress passing the Employee Retirement Income Security Act. Congress must protect families and not coddle the corporations." Fox added that, "Even in Indiana, workers at Indianapolis Power &

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Light Co. watched helplessly this year while the management decisions made by the new parent owner of IPALCO sliced the value of their retirement plans." Pence will head a congressional task force overseeing the creation of the new Department of Homeland Security (John Clark, *Columbus Republic*). He said the appointment to Security First Taskforce is the fulfillment of a congressional proverb: "Be careful what you suggest, because you will end up chairing it. About six weeks ago, I mentioned in the conservative caucus that I thought we ought to have a task force in place to monitor wasteful pork barrel spending disguised in the Department of Homeland Security," he said. "I tend to think freshman are seen very much like privates in the military -- expendable." Pence said. **Status:** *Leans Pence.*

Congressional District 7: Republican: Brose McVey. **Democrat:** U.S. Rep. Julia Carson. **Libertarian:** Andy Horning. **Geography:** Indianapolis. **Media Market:** Indianapolis. **Websites:** www.juliacarson.house.gov; www.broseforcongress.org **2000 Results:** Carson (D) 91,300, Scott (R) 61,818, Ali (L) 2,513. **2002 Forecast:** McVey out-raised Carson for this reporting period. Total net contributions during this period totaled \$227,272 compared to Carson's contributions of \$187,643. For the cycle to date, McVey has raised \$ 498,984 maintaining his lead over Rep. Carson's contribution total of \$459,464. This is another race where the candidates are beginning to engage on the corporate cooked books issues. McVey came up with a pre-emptive strike last week, calling on federal and state regulators to initiate aggressive efforts to protect AES/IPALCO investors, Indianapolis-area electric ratepayers, and the company's local employees and retirees, whose pensions and 401(k) programs depend on AES stock. "I welcome the President's leadership, and encourage Congress to act quickly to restore common sense to our pension laws and accounting procedures," said McVey. "I am convinced that our community faces a more urgent crisis of its own, one that demands immediate attention. I believe the serious situation facing AES Corporation may well represent another Enron in the making." On Monday, Carson engaged the issue publicly, joining colleagues in a press conference calling on the House Republican leadership to act in the interests of American workers and investors by expediting the Comprehensive Investor Protection Act, to the House floor for a vote. **Status:** *Leans Carson.*

Congressional District 8: Republican: U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. **Democrat:** Bryan Hartke. **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. **Websites:** www.bryanhartke.com; www.house.gov/hostettler/ **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:** Hostettler was one of only eight Republicans who opposed the GOP prescription drug plan that passed the House last week. Hostettler thinks the bill would create an expensive new entitlement program when most seniors already have some type of coverage. Hartke said he will continue to talk about the need for prescription drug coverage. "The seniors that I've spoken with look at this as one of their most important issues," Hartke said (*Indianapolis Star*). But unlike 2000 nominee Paul Perry, who made health care the centerpiece of his challenge, Hartke said it will be just one of the issues he talks about. Jobs, education and Social Security also are on the list. **Status:** *Likely Hostettler.*

Congressional District 9: Republican: Mike Sodrel. **Democrat:** U.S. Rep. Baron Hill. **Geography:** Bloomington, Columbus, Lawrenceburg, Rising Sun, New Albany Jeffersonville, Madison, Nashville; Spencer, DuBois, Orange, Crawford, Perry, Harrison, Washington, Jackson, Brown, Jennings, Scott, Floyd, Clark, Jefferson, Switzerland, Ripley, Ohio, and parts of Dearborn and Monroe counties. **Media Market:** Evansville, Indianapolis, Louisville, Dayton, Cincinnati. **Websites:** www.house.gov/baronhill/, www.mikesodrel.com **1994 results:** Hamilton 91,459 (D), Leising (R) 84,315. **1996 Results:** Hamilton (D) 128,885, Leising (R) 97,747, Feeney (L) 2,315. **1998 Results:** Hill (D) 92,477, Leising (R) 87,278, Feeney (L) 2,397. **2000 Results:** Hill 125,978, Bailey (R) 101,790, Chambers (L) 4,634. **2002 Forecast:** Hill joins U.S. Rep. Mike Pence in pressing against a delay for truck engine makers to adapt new clean air specs, at the behest of Cummins Engine. **Status:** *Leans D.*

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Congress to handle current scandals; while 33% trust Republicans in Congress. A Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll of 900 registered voters conducted July 9-10 (+/-3%) showed: 72% "support" US "military action to remove Iraqi President Saddam Hussein"; 18% "oppose" that; 10% were not sure.

WHITE HOUSE TO ANNOUNCE \$150 BILLION BUDGET DEFICIT: The White House plans to release new budget deficit projections that will show the federal government to be as much as \$150 billion in the red this fiscal year, according to congressional budget experts (*Washington Post*). But the Office of Management and Budget also is expected to predict a smaller budget deficit for the next fiscal year, in sharp contrast to private forecasters and even Republicans on Capitol Hill, the experts said.

BAYH, LUGAR SPLIT ON YUCCA MOUNTAIN LEGISLATION: U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh voted against legislation that would allow the transportation of spent nuclear waste through Indiana, citing his strong concerns about the safety of such shipments by truck and rail. U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar voted for the measure. The U.S. Department of Energy wants to store the nuclear waste from 131 facilities around the

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country at a facility in Yucca Mountain, Nev. Bayh said his concerns stem from the long-term nature and volume of the transportation project, which seeks to ship 77,000 metric tons of used radioactive fuel rods over 38 years, with much of it set to be transported through Indiana. "The Department of Energy has no specific plan for how it will move nuclear waste across the country to Yucca Mountain, and has indicated that accidents during the transportation of this material are inevitable. The sheer length and volume of this project increases the risk of an accident occurring in Indiana or another state," Bayh said. "This is a real concern that directly affects the safety of all Hoosiers." Lugar said transporting the radioactive fuel "poses less risk than the transportation of hazardous material that occurs every day on our highways. Nuclear waste is transported in heavily secured casks, and each piece is less than the critical mass required for an explosion or meltdown" (Sylvia Smith, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette).

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COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Niki Kelly & David Griner, *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* -- It's always popular for politicians to run on promises never to raise taxes. The problem arises when they don't actually stick to the vows. Case in point: Eight Indiana lawmakers signed the "Taxpayer Protection Pledge" offered by Americans for Tax Reform and then proceeded to vote for tax increases just weeks ago when they helped pass the budget and restructuring bill. The culprits are Reps. Matt Whetstone, R-Brownsburg; Vern Tincher, D-Riley; Robert Cherry, R-Greenfield; Richard Bodiker, D-Richmond; John Frenz, D-Vincennes; Win Moses Jr., D-Fort Wayne; Jeff Espich, R-Uniondale and Sen. John Waterman, R-Shelburn. The pledge seems pretty simple -- "I, (blank), pledge to the taxpayers of the (blank) district of the State of (blank) and to all the people of this state, that I will oppose and vote against any and all efforts to increase taxes." But as these things tend to go, even the plainest of language isn't always clear. Moses is one of those who signed the pledge -- albeit years ago (he says 1996; they say 1998). At the time, he thought it was only valid for the current election cycle. "For that two-year period, I was certain it was not right for my constituents to raise taxes, so I signed," he said. "The next pledge I threw away, but it turns out you are on for the rest of your life." While Moses might have an excuse because of the time elapsed, at least two state representatives -- Cherry and Frenz -- did sign it in 2000, which would cover this term's voting record. Moses and others were even hassled during the special session by Republicans who told him he couldn't vote for the tax increases due to the pledge. "My intent was a two-year period. As the future goes on, I will do what's best for my district and sometimes that means a tax increase," he said.

"(Americans for Tax Reform) are clearly out of touch with what you have to do to represent your state." Moses has even written letters to the D.C. tax group trying to get his name removed from the list but was told his name is on the list forever. Not exactly true, said Reform Communications Director Jonathan Collegio. To get your name off you simply have to denounce the pledge to your constituents and get re-elected under that platform. "Signing the pledge is very attractive to voters," Collegio said. "If you are going to break the pledge, I think it's only fair that you let the constituents know." ❖

Lesley Stedman, *Louisville Courier-Journal* -- House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Patrick Bauer, D-South Bend, said last month that he would be surprised if the state will have the money -- despite the tax increases -- to even pass what he called a "straight-line" budget, with increases only in mandatory services such as Medicaid. Some senators predicted that legislators -- and Hoosiers -- could be facing additional tax increases when the General Assembly reconvenes in January to write the next two-year budget. But the politics of a tax increase two years in a row are especially difficult. Bauer says they're nearly impossible. He said it's highly unlikely lawmakers would take the political risk of approving another tax increase after passing so many in a special session this summer. But either O'Bannon and lawmakers will be forced to make cuts -- or at least pass a budget that doesn't increase spending -- or the General Assembly will have to increase taxes again. Only a spectacular economic recovery will spare these public officials of such tough decisions. For now, many have their fingers crossed.

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