

The Howey Political Report



The Howey Political Report is published by NewsLink Inc. Founded in 1994, *The Howey Political Report* is an independent, non-partisan newsletter analyzing the political process in Indiana.

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Subscriptions: \$250 annually via e-mail or fax; \$450 annually including the HPR Daily Wire. Call 317-254-1533 or 254-0535.

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“QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“Regrettably, my colleagues and I have concluded that the President needs authorization to use force to protect our country.”

- U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh, on the floor of the Senate on Wednesday

Bayh, Lugar take on Iraq resolution

Indiana’s senators shape war dynamic

By **MARK SCHOEFF Jr.** in Washington

Over the course of two days this week, Republican Sen. Richard Lugar met three times with Bush administration officials, including National Security Adviser Condoleeza Rice and Secretary of State Colin Powell, to work on the wording of a resolution authorizing President Bush to use U.S. military force against Iraq. On Wednesday when a congressional resolution was unveiled in a White House Rose Garden press conference, it was Democratic Sen. Evan Bayh who was standing among several of his Capitol Hill colleagues behind Bush.

But the resolution chords that Lugar and Bayh played were complementary rather than contrapuntal. A Lugar aide said that the congressional resolution reflected efforts by Lugar and Sen. Joseph Biden, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to narrow and sharpen the original White House proposal. The new resolution focuses more on emphasizing the need to work with the United Nations to build a broad coalition against Iraq, limiting the use of force to dismantling weapons of mass destruction in the country, and on requiring that Bush regularly report to Congress on military operations. Both the congressional resolution and one drafted by Lugar and Biden allow the United States to act unilaterally.

Bayh, who along with Sens. Joseph Lieberman (D), John McCain (R), and John Warner (R), introduced the Senate version of the congressional resolution, has become one of the Democratic Iraq hawks on whom Bush can count for support. Bayh's main objection to the original White House resolution was that it did not limit the president to using force only against Iraq rather than elsewhere in the

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SOUDER INCLINED TO SUPPORT BUSH ON IRAQ: U.S. Rep. Mark Souder said he will likely back a resolution giving Bush authority to use military force against Iraq. "I'm going through a process. I'm trying to get as much information as possible. Many of my concerns have been similar to those of Sen. Lugar." Souder was leery of the original White House resolution that gave Bush wider latitude than the current congressional resolution. "I'm inclined to support a resolution," said Souder. "The biggest thing is I wish they could establish more so the public could see it is a clear link (from Iraq) to al Qaeda." After meeting with U.N. weapons inspectors in 1997, Souder said, he is convinced that the country has chemical and biological weapons in its arsenal. "It's a question of when is the best time and what is the best way" to depose Hussein, he said. Bush may still have some way to go to generate broad and deep public support for a war against Iraq, based on what Souder heard at a recent town hall meeting. "I'm surprised at how divided it is back home," he said. "While a majority of people I talk to support Bush, they're queasy. They're lukewarm and nervous, but they don't know what else to do. They say, 'We need to get

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Middle East. Both the Biden-Lugar and congressional resolutions contain this restriction.

The congressional resolution "is very similar in purpose to other proposals out there," said Bayh spokesman Mark Kornblau. "It shares some of the same goals and approaches. It builds on Lugar-Biden."

Lugar spokesman Andy Fisher said, "The operating resolution has been molded in large part by Biden-Lugar insistence on improved language."

The *Washington Post* portrayed events as Bayh and Senate moderates pulling the rug out from under Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, who canceled a morning news conference. The *Post* reported in today's editions: "By midday, the White House had released the new text and Democratic Sens. Joseph I. Lieberman (Conn.) and Evan Bayh (Ind.) had gone to the Senate floor to introduce it and voice their support. Within an hour, Lieberman and Bayh were standing in the Rose Garden with Bush."

In his statement on the Senate floor before he went to the White House ceremony, Bayh said that the time has

come to confront Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. "Iraq presents a very significant potential threat to our country," said Bayh. "Saddam Hussein possesses chemical and biological weapons, and if events are allowed to run their course, will someday possess nuclear weapons." He said that even a small chance of Iraq using a weapon of mass destruction against the United States is too great a risk to take. "Regrettably, my colleagues and I have concluded that the president needs authorization to use force to protect our country against this sort of eventuality. Of course, we will continue to negotiate with the United Nations. Of course, we will gather our allies. But the time has come to unite, to do what it takes to defend our country."

Fisher said it is too early to tell whether Lugar and Biden will offer their resolution as an alternative to the congressional resolution.

"Today is a day of assessing where things are," said Fisher. "(Lugar) is going to be thoughtful over the next few days as debate starts in the Senate." Rules for Senate procedure on the resolution haven't been determined. ❖

Iraq resolution thrusts Bayh into key role

HPR's Brian A. Howey conducted this interview with U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh late Thursday morning.

HPR: Yesterday was a momentous day for you and the U.S. on Iraq. How did it come about?

Bayh: It was exciting. I was in an Intelligence Committee meeting at 10:10 a.m. and someone slipped me a note that John McCain was calling and I went out to take the call and he asked me if I would join him, Joe Lieberman and John Warner in being initial co-sponsors of the Iraq resolution. John and I had talked about these issues before and Joe Lieberman has seen me on several occasions express my opinion. I told them I would and from there, with virtually no preparation, I got on the Senate floor to speak and then we drove over to the White House.

HPR: How did the Lugar-Biden resolution proposal influence this?

Bayh: Dick and Joe were very instrumental in beginning the process of refining the resolution - basically convincing the White House that they needed to make some improvements on their initial resolution. It didn't really say anything about attempting to get cooperation from the United Nations or our allies, or reporting to Congress after hostilities commence. And then Dick Gephardt followed up on that in the House late Tuesday evening. Then there was an interest in taking that momentum from the House and keeping it going in the Senate.

HPR: What extent did you help shape the language in this?

Bayh: We took the House language. Rather than having a semantic argument over rhetorical differences, we were satisfied with the substance in what the House and President had agreed to, we didn't want to see it bogged down.

HPR: Your speech on the Senate floor seemed to shift momentum.

Bayh: It was important to have all four of us there - two Republicans and two Democrats. John McCain had run for president, Joe Lieberman for vice president. John Warner is ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee and I'm chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council. That demonstrated strong bipartisan support. Frankly, I had to do it on the spur of the moment. I literally sat down and on the back of an envelope just sketched out three or four points I wanted to make and then had to stand up and start speaking.

HPR: Is there a conscious effort on your part to further develop your foreign policy credentials?

Bayh: In terms of a conscious decision yesterday, no. But I have been speaking out on this issue of Iraq now for really a couple of months. What is on my mind is when you look from the Intelligence Committee on the investigation, the big lesson that we learned after 911 is we waited too long to deal with Afghanistan. There was a rogue regime there that allowed an international terrorist organization to make that country a platform for operations. We didn't do enough. Looking back, we know we should move sooner rather than later. Combine that with the fact that our intelligence isn't perfect; it will never be perfect. So if you do what some of my colleagues are arguing - waiting for an imminent threat of an attack on the United States, you run a very real risk of waiting too long. And the consequences could be disastrous.

HPR: What else what you like to tell the people at this point?

Bayh: First, I have no joy in my heart to reach the conclusion that the use of force may be necessary to protect our country. No one is happy about that. Regrettably, following 911, I've concluded we await events at our own peril. ❖

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Saddam, but I wish there were some other way to do it." The lack of Iraq mail doesn't mean that the issue won't make a difference in the election. Souder is in a safe seat, but the possibility of war has stoked some passion. "In my case, it stirred up the left in what was going to be a quiet race. I don't think (Iraq) is helping Republicans in Indiana. This could be problematic in the Long-Chocola (campaign)," he said

PENCE WANTS HOMELAND SECURITY ACT: U.S. Rep. Mike Pence voiced his opposition to adjourning before Congress completes its work creating the proposed Department of Homeland Security. "Before you project force, you secure your base of operations and supply lines," said Pence. "In July of this year, the House of Representatives labored mightily for hours and days and weeks to craft legislation creating a new Department of Homeland Security. We passed legislation to secure our base and ensure lines of communication between those who ensure our domestic tranquility. As we prepare to engage an enemy capable of attacking our nation and our homeland, I rise today to urge our colleagues in the other body to act. This Congress must not adjourn

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before the elections until we create a Department of Homeland Security and prepare this nation for the realities and the dangers that lie ahead."

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION REJECTS GOP PLAN: Members of the State Board of Education have denounced a Republican legislative proposal to move ISTEP-Plus testing from the fall to the spring (Indianapolis Star). "To begin again on new test development is not only ill-advised, but educationally and fiscally irresponsible," said the bipartisan, 11-member board headed by Republican Suellen Reed, state superintendent of public instruction.

MAHERN ACCUSES GOP OF USING STATE RESOURCES: Democrats on Wednesday accused House Republicans of misusing state resources for election purposes (Niki Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Republicans then fired back that Democrats only stooped to allegations because they are frustrated and afraid they might lose their House majority in November. In strategically timed back-to-back news conferences Wednesday, Democrats clearly tried to divert attention from a legislative agenda Republicans have been rolling out for several weeks. And by coming out with their ethics

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Chocola-Thompson has subtlety of STOMP

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

ROCHESTER - After all the checks are cashed and all the votes are counted -- hopefully sometime late in the evening of Nov. 5 or in the wee hours of Nov. 6 -- the race between Republican Chris Chocola and Democrat Jill Long Thompson will shatter all congressional level spending records in Indiana.

Will it be \$4 million combined? Or \$5 million? Chocola aide Laura Zuckerman begs off, more content to talk about STOMP, or Strategic Taskforce to Organize and Mobilize People. The Chocola campaign is importing Republicans from U.S. Rep. Fred Upton's Southwestern Michigan district to help the candidate stump.

"We'll be distributing 150,000 door hangers, 10,000 yard signs, 30,000 bumper stickers," Zuckerman said.

If STOMP is the working acronym, here, this campaign has conducted itself with similar subtlety.

Of all the politicians in Indiana in the fall of 2002, Chocola has the most pressure heaped on his shoulders. He's amassed a huge war chest in a race against Long Thompson that will break all Indiana spending records on the congressional level, and this in an inexpensive media market. He's had President Bush and Vice President Cheney in. He's attracting the likes of E.J. Dionne Jr., of the *Washington Post*, with future visits from the networks, CNN, NPR and the *New York Times* virtually assured.

The balance of the U.S. House may fall on Chocola's race.

And there are liabilities. He's a former CEO in a year of corporate scandal; perhaps the worst year in a century to be running for Congress as a CEO. He just helped sell his company, CTB Corp. of Milford, to billionaire Warren Buffett. The timing was curious, coming late this summer after Indiana Democrats accused Chocola of cutting employee benefits and the workforce, citing Securities and

Exchange Commission documents showing CTB employment levels decreased from 1,600 to 1,100. Chocola bristled in the opening moments of Tuesday night's debate with Long Thompson, saying he had actually helped create 900 jobs and that no benefits were cut.

Chocola explained, "The campaign we run has been entirely documented, accurate and factual." He noted one of Long Thompson's television advertisements was pulled from the air. That was actually an ad paid for by the Indiana Democratic Party and it attempted

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to underscore the alleged cuts while linking Chocola to the corporate debacle, urging the Republican to "practice Hoosier values, not Enron values." While the ad is long gone, the fear of Republicans is that the taint will endure.

Last weekend, Chocola trailed Long Thompson by 4 points in the latest *South Bend Tribune* poll, still within the margin of error, but up from a 3 point lead last summer. And, it came after President Bush's Sept. 5 visit to South Bend.

Talk about pressure.

And there he was at Rochester High School Tuesday night, sans tie, sleeves rolled up, debating Thompson before nearly 400 people.

Chocola was serious, though he attempted to soften his stern but clean cut image with humor (when he was asked about out-of-state trash coming into Fulton County, he quipped, "Now that's a trashy question"). He doesn't have the touch for retail politics like a gladhander. Instead, he's the earnest young man, extremely focused; sometimes boisterous. He needled Long Thompson, the former U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary, on the fact that he had the Farm Bureau endorsement.

"Why do you think Farm Bureau endorsed me?" Chocola asked Long Thompson at one point. She responded, "A Republican party chairman is on the PAC committee, which may have influenced that decision. I've been endorsed by Farm Bureau before."

Chocola retorted: "Well, they endorsed Tim Roemer. They recognized when someone's rhetoric does not match their record." He later accused Long Thompson of lacking "real life experience." She responded, "I don't know how much more real life experience you can have in operating a farm and teaching."

Veteran *South Bend Tribune* reporter Jack Colwell attended most of the previous debates. His Wednesday lead after the Rochester debate was "More smile; less bile."

It was a debate that began when *Rochester Sentinel* Editor Bill Wilson asked both candidates why the race "was so nasty," Long Thompson replied, "I've worked hard to stay positive. My opponent started the negative advertisements in the middle of August, earlier than anywhere in the state."

Chocola responded with the "entirely accurate and factual" quote.

Colwell watched the 2nd CD race decline into a gutter brawl. He's mentioned to both candidates, who have run in a combined eight congressional-level races, something to the effect of, "Do you realize that the two of you are going to end up being the most despised people in the district?"

Long Thompson made a concerted effort to add a softer touch. When she was almost skipped during one of the questioning sequences, she smiled and said, "These men!" It was a subtle underscoring of recent polling by the *South Bend Tribune* that showed her running 11 percent strong with female voters.

On Sept. 24, Long Thompson attempted to change the tone of the campaign, releasing an ad in which she looked right into the camera and said, "Growing up on a farm, one of my jobs was to clean

out the barn. My opponent's ads often remind me of that task. Let's set the record straight. I'm a fiscal conservative and when I served in Congress I repeatedly voted against raising your taxes."

After the debate, she insisted that she's been smeared by the same negative brush that Chocola has used. "When your opponent goes negative, people just think that you're going negative, too. It was important to make that statement a week ago and make it clear that I care about the voters. I live in this district."

Again, a jab at Chocola, who lives less than a mile into the 3rd CD.

"Basically, it's a dead heat. This goes right down to the wire," *Tribune* pollster Del Ali concluded. The pollster said the results are good news for Long Thompson in the sense that she has withstood the campaign visit for Chocola by President Bush and all the media attention for the presidential appearance without losing support.

Long Thompson has tried to deflect the war issue by echoing Chocola's, "I'm standing shoulder to shoulder with the President." She's hoping the dour economic news kicks in and puts her over the top despite the coming onslaught of Bush-financed Chocola TV.

Asked if this would be a war election or a pocketbook one, Long Thompson replied, "It's going to be about security, both with the war and the economy."

Chocola, sitting in his Mishawaka campaign headquarters last week, essentially agreed, telling HPR that people are concerned about the economy and jobs.

Congressional District 2:

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. **Status:** *Tossup.*



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concerns before the GOP event, Republicans had to spend more time reacting to the allegation than talking about their newest proposals to improve education. At Democrat Rep. Ed Mahern's news conference -- which he clearly stated was political -- he talked of several news releases about Republican ideas recently put out on state stationery and using state equipment and state employees' time. Then Republicans conducted news conferences around the state on the same message as the releases and with candidates challenging incumbent Democrats attending. House Republican leader Brian Bosma dismissed the accusations as "baseless" and said it is a "desperate" response by Democrats.

NUNN-LUGAR PROGRAM FACES SETBACK: The U.S. government has spent \$230 million trying to build a Russian plant to destroy thousands of tons of deadly chemical munitions from the old Soviet arsenal. This month, unless Congress acts, the Pentagon will begin closing down the project without laying a single brick or eliminating a single weapon (*USA Today*). The facility was designed to wipe out one of the world's most worrisome stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction: nearly 2 million artillery shells and missile

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warheads filled with deadly nerve gasses. Stored in open racks in a cluster of wooden warehouses in the town of Shchuch'ye, they are among the most portable, ready-made weapons of mass destruction a terrorist could obtain. Even the smallest shells, which fit in a briefcase, can kill 100,000 or more if set off in a crowded city.

REP. HERRELL SURVIVES WEST NILE VIRUS: A state lawmaker said Tuesday that he has tested positive for having had the West Nile virus, but it is no longer active in his body. "They don't know exactly when I had it, whether it was with this illness or whether I had it two years ago," said State Rep. Ron Herrell, D-Kokomo. Herrell said he felt sick for about two weeks last month with flu-like symptoms, including headaches, a slight fever and a scratchy throat (Associated Press).

PERRON FORMS EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE: James Perron, Elkhart's four-term mayor from 1984-99, is exploring a run for mayor again (Elkhart Truth). Dave Miller, the city's mayor since 2000, is standing by a previous statement that he plans to seek a second term during next year's municipal election. So let the war of words begin in Perron vs. Miller --

Indiana 2002 Racing Form

Trend Line: There are two ways to read the events of this past week: The Democrats coalescing around President Bush may neutralize the war issue, allowing the final month of the campaign to focus back on the economy, a situation that would tend to favor Democrats, or it will present a scenario where Americans will continue to rally 'round the president. Political analyst Stuart Rothenberg put it like this: "Congressional Democrats now find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place. They still have a chance to generate a small Democratic wave that is large enough for them to hold the Senate and even win the House, but that chance shrinks a bit every time Democrats argue publicly about the best strategy to employ against the president over the war. The economy may be important, but, certainly from a journalist's point of view, it can't hold a candle right now to an approaching war, especially one that raises questions about chemical, biological and nuclear weapons."

Indiana Congressional Races

Congressional District 3:

Republican: U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. **Democrat:** Jay Rigdon. **Geography:** Fort Wayne, Goshen; Kosciusko, Whitley, LaGrange, Steuben, DeKalb and parts of Elkhart and Allen counties. **Media**

Market: South Bend-Elkhart, Fort Wayne. **Websites:** www.jayrigdon.com; www.house.gov/souder/ **2000 results:** Souder (R) 131,051, Foster (D) 74,492. **2002 Forecast:** While Rigdon is waging the most energetic Democratic race that Souder has experienced, we don't believe Souder is in any trouble at this point. This race is not on the radar with state and national parties on either side. **Primary Status:** *Safe Souder.*

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:** Fox, trying to regain momentum in this race, distributed to reporters a videotape showing Pence acknowledging that his plan for diverting Social Security funds is the same thing as privatization. The tape shows Pence saying last April in Richmond, "Now let me speak to the issue of what gets called privatization, but I prefer to refer to the idea as individual savings accounts." Fox said, "It's hard to tell where Mike Pence stands on this issue, which is critical to the economic security of many Hoosiers. He says he's against it, but he appears to be in favor of it in every substantial aspect -- and that's dangerous for Hoosiers." Fox said that Pence endorsed the President's plan for changing Social Security. The plan, developed by a special commission, was widely acknowledged to entail the concept of privatization. In August, Pence said he opposes privatization and added that he always has. "So how come he said privatization and his plan were the same things in April?" Fox said. "How come in August, after his party began advising incumbents to backpedal on privatization, Pence was suddenly an eternal opponent of an idea that his campaign's supporters, like the Club for Growth, fervently champion?" Pence told the *Muncie Star Press* Wednesday, that his position on Social Security has been consistent, saying, "I oppose and will only oppose any effort to privatize Social Security. I would never support any effort by the government to yield its historic role in administering public retirement funds." **Status:** *Leans Pence.*

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Congressional District 7: Republican: Brose McVey. **Democrat:** U.S. Rep.

Julia Carson. **Libertarian:** Andy Horning. **Geography:** Indianapolis. **Media Market:** Indianapolis. **Websites:** www.juliacarson.org; www.broseforcongress.org **2000 Results:** Carson (D) 91,300, Scott (R) 61,818, Ali (L) 2,513. **2002 Forecast:** Last week, an HPR/TeleResearch Poll had Carson leading McVey 45-31 percent (with Horning at 6) in a sampling that included 45 percent Democrats, 31 percent Republicans and 24 percent independents on Sept. 21-24. The Indianapolis Star/WTHR poll released on Tuesday had Carson leading McVey 42-38 percent (Horning had 5) with a sampling of 39 Republicans, 35 percent Democrats and 20 percent independents. In a district that Al Gore carried with 54 percent of the vote, the ol' Horse is comfortable with the TeleResearch sampling as we watch yet another poll decisively undersample Center Township. Remember, HPR/TeleResearch nailed the 1998 Carson/Hofmeister race within a half percent (18.5 percent) when all other polls were calling it a tossup. So what's our take? At this writing, we suspect the real story is in between the two polls, around 7 to 9 percent with Carson still leading. Carson has not responded to McVey's two weeks of heavy and effective TV. That's allowing McVey in the game and closing the gap. Carson appears to be relying on past formulas of a powerful GOTV. However, she has not faced the caliber of opponent that McVey has displayed thus far. For instance, McVey's latest TV has taken what many believed to be the chief Republican liability -- the economy -- and turned it into his "We can do better" message. With Carson's continued ambiguity on the Iraq war, her lack of denunciation of the Bonior-McDermott folly in Iraq, a potential Jewish backlash, and evidence that voters are inclined to split tickets (beyond Sheriff Frank Anderson), this presents a very dangerous scenario for the incumbent. We expect this race to tighten and an upset is possible. Republicans tried mightily and with credibility to spin this race into HPR's tossup zone. Normally, we rely on independent polling data to show the race within the margin of error. We find the *Star/13* poll extremely suspect, yet we sense that right now, the momentum is with McVey. At least for this week, we'll do a Stu Rothenberg-style status compromise.... **Status:** TOSSUP/LEANS D.

Congressional District 9: Republican: Mike Sodrel. **Democrat:** U.S. Rep.

Baron Hill. **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:** Sodrel began airing his second TV ad with an endorsement by Sen. Richard Lugar. The national and local chapters of the VFW endorsed Hill, who serves on the Armed Services Committee. **Status:** *Leans Hill*

Indiana House Races

House District 17: Republican: Steven Heim. **Democrat:** Ralph Winters.

Geography: Plymouth, Culver, Marshall. **1998 results:** Cook 10,448, Beck 5,596. **2000 Results:** Cook 13,428, Roush 5,859. **2002 Forecast:** Republicans believe Heim has the upper hand in this race and Democrats appear to be acknowledging that they've got their work cut out for them. **Status:** *Tossup.*

House District 36: Republican: Andy Kincaid. **Democrat:** Terri Austin.

Geography: Madison and Delaware counties. **2000 Results:** Jack Lutz (R) 12,397, Austin 11,487. **2002 Forecast:** Democrats are expressing increasing confidence that they will take this seat. **Status:** *Tossup.*

House District 86: Republican: State Rep. Jim Atterholt. **Democrat:** Dr. David

Orentlicher. **Geography:** Indianapolis, Boone, Hamilton counties. **1998 Results:** Sturtz 6,677, Wonderly 6,385. **2000 Results:** Atterholt 17,320, Goodloe-Coe (D) 9,708, Perry (L) 1,178. **2002 Forecast:** *Jerusalem Post* publisher Tom Rose, a Washington Township native, endorsed Atterholt. This is a significant development in that the Republicans are trying to neutralize Orentlicher's Jewish base. **Status:** *Tossup.*

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They exchanged jabs in the 1999 election when Miller ended Perron's string. But with the primary seven months away, the door remains open for others to declare their candidacy. "As I travel the city, I most often hear a variation of this sentiment: 'Jim, the city has lost its direction and its ability to get things done. We're worried about what's in store down the road,'" Perron wrote in a press release Tuesday announcing that he has formed an exploratory committee.

WORST HOOSIER HARVEST TO FOLLOW ONE OF THE BEST: After one of the best years for Indiana farmers, 2002 is shaping up to be one of the worst, with farm income expected to drop about 40 percent (Mark Jewel, Associated Press). Indiana farm income is expected to decline from \$964 million last year to between \$550 million and \$600 million this year, according to a projection earlier this month by Purdue agricultural economists.

SEN. SMITH CHARGED WITH TAX EVASION: State Sen. Sam Smith, D-East Chicago, was released on his own recognizance after being booked on seven felony counts for allegedly failing to pay state income taxes or enough sales taxes on services provided by his funeral

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home (Associated Press). A pretrial hearing was set Dec. 19 for the East Chicago Democrat, who was charged Wednesday in connection with a yearlong investigation into spending from the Build Indiana Fund. Smith did not enter a plea, but his attorney, Linda Pence, said she is confident the matter "will be resolved in a positive way."

HALL SAYS SHE WAS INDICTED DUE TO RACE: If she weren't black, Gary city Clerk Katie Hall contends, she never would have been indicted by a federal grand jury. There weren't enough blacks on the grand jury that indicted her and her daughter, chief deputy clerk Junifer Hall, to fairly consider charges against her, according to documents. Hall made those claims last month in U.S. District Court, asking that all 22 felony charges against her and her daughter be dropped. Wednesday, federal prosecutors Bernie Van Wormer and Jonathon Marks delivered a 13-page response to those claims, on behalf of U.S. Attorney Joseph Van Bokkelen, saying Hall is "simply wrong." Hall's attorneys provided no evidence backing up their play of the race card and prosecutors made that point in appealing to U.S. District Court Judge Rudy Lozano not to approve Hall's motion to dismiss.

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COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune* - Democrat Jill Long Thompson clings to a narrow lead in the second Research 2000 poll on her race with Republican Chris Chocola in Indiana's 2nd District. But Long Thompson trails in something else. Money. How much? We won't know until the candidates disclose their campaign finances in reports that must be filed by Oct. 15. Those reports will show contributions and expenses through the end of this month. It's certainly not going out on a limb to predict that the reports will show Chocola will have a lot more cash on hand for the crucial final weeks of this tight, nationally-significant race. A key question is this: If this is a toss-up, and it still is, even if Long Thompson really has pulled just a bit ahead, can she afford with more limited resources to avoid pulling back on expenditures just as Chocola is ready for an all-out blitz, TV and elsewhere, in the final weeks? The last campaign finance reports, reflecting contributions and expenditures through June 30, showed Chocola with a 3-to-1 lead in cash on hand. ❖

Dan Carpenter, *Indianapolis Star*.

You couldn't quite call it a Whitewater on White River, but the megaprobe of the big bad Build Indiana Fund appears to qualify as our own version of an elephant laboring to deliver a mouse. Or a miniature donkey, if you're cynical enough to note that dedicated Republican prosecutors happened to net only Democrats in both the Washington and the Indiana expeditions. I'm not that cynical, yet. Besides, the sample is too small in our case to draw any partisan inferences, even if it looks unseemly that two flamboyant black Democrats from northwest Indiana, a preacher and a state legislator, are being held aloft for the photographer on the dock. What's significant to me are the

sheer numbers. After a yearlong investigation by the Indiana State Police, Indiana Department of Revenue, Internal Revenue Service, FBI and Marion County Prosecutor Scott Newman, a highly controversial program that has given away \$260 million in public funds yielded just a few instances of actionable criminal conduct. ❖

Sylvia Smith, *Fort Wayne Journal*

Gazette - Odd as it seems, a campaign commercial that appears only a few times and then is pulled off the air by a TV station has more potency than if it had run its course. If Republican congressional candidate Chris Chocola didn't know this before, I bet he does now. Earlier this month, the Indiana Democratic Party started running ads on four South Bend TV stations trying to link Chocola's business decisions with the likes of Enron's and WorldCom's shenanigans. Chocola said it was inaccurate and filed a complaint with the stations. The station managers agreed and spiked the ad. "In a political campaign, it's assumed a few blows are going to fall below the belt," said WNDU-TV manager Jim Behling. "The spot that associates Chocola with Enron and WorldCom is real low and real hard." It's unusual for a TV station to censor a political ad, and "unusual" is another word for "news." So the attack ad -- which might have merited a single story in the newspaper -- was the subject of much higher-profile attention. Thick-skinned politicians shrug off the most blatant distortion of their records or personal histories. But many are like the rest of us: When they feel maligned, they're indignant and want retribution. These politicians play in to the opposition's hands. Chocola got the Democratic Party's ad off the air. But he also got five days of newspaper and TV stories about the dust-up. ❖