

The Howey Political Report



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“QUOTE” OF THE WEEK

“In my opinion, you can’t be too careful. I prefer not to be a victim of violent crime.”

- U.S. Rep. John Hostettler, on why he carries a gun after he was detained and charged at a Louisville airport for a 9mm Glock in his luggage

Big guns for Borst, Dobis, Lawson

Anti-incumbency fuels challengers

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** in Indianapolis

The quote was stark, paranoid and illustrative of the biggest bogeyman lurking outside the Statehouse: Anti-incumbency.

“We didn’t do it,” proclaimed House Speaker B. Patrick Bauer in the *Times of Northwest Indiana*. “We’re innocent.”

He was stumping on behalf of two embattled Region Democrats, State Reps. Linda Lawson of Hammond and Chet Dobis of Merrillville. Both are facing stiff primary challenges in two weeks with the word “upset” not a stretch.

The big guns are not being limited to The Region. This Saturday in Greenwood and Indianapolis, members of the Senate Republican caucus are expected to rally around Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst, who is facing a stiff Republican primary challenge from Brent Waltz.

In all three of these races, the challengers bring in campaign trail assets. Lawson is being pressed by Hammond Councilwoman Kathleen Pucalik, who has an ally in Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott. Dobis’ challenger is Merrillville Councilman David Uzelac, who has done extensive door-to-door and has signs up all over the place while many Democrats are saying Dobis has not kept in touch. Borst’s challenger Waltz is president of the Johnson County Council and nephew of the mayor of Greenwood.

In all three races, the challengers have access to that conceivably could muster significant GOTV efforts in what is expected to be a low-turnout primary. The fuel for the challenger campaigns is that “anti-incumbency” feeling that has consistently shown that most Hoosiers and Americans

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KERRY LEADS IN BATTLEGROUND STATES: An ABC News/Washington Post poll of 1,201 adults, conducted over April 15-18 (+/- 3%), shows: 48% would vote for George W. Bush; 43% would vote for John Kerry; 6% would vote for Ralph Nader. In battleground states, 46% would vote for Kerry; 44% would vote for Bush; 7% would vote for Nader. (Battleground states are OH, MI, PA, MN, AZ, NH, NV, AR, FL, IA, ME, MO, NM, OR, WA, WV, and WI.) In the remaining non-battleground states, 50% would vote for Bush; 42% would vote for Kerry; and 6% would vote for Nader. In a two-way race, 49% would vote for Bush; 48% would vote for Kerry.

RASMUSSEN SAYS VOTERS KNOW WHERE BUSH STANDS: While many pundits are dismissive of the President's communications skills, 72% of Americans say they have a "clear idea of where he stands on the key issues facing the nation today." Just 14% say they do not. These figures include 84% of Republicans, 63% of Democrats, and 71% of unaffiliated voters. As for Senator John Kerry, just 47% say they have a clear idea of where he stands on key issues. Thirty-four percent do not.

HENKEL ACKNOWLEDGES

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feel the state/nation is on the "wrong track."

In today's Rasmussen Tracking, 38 percent of Americans say their personal finances are getting better while 40 percent say their finances are getting worse. A month ago, a CBS/*New York Times* Poll showed 54 percent feel the country is on the wrong track.

A number of Indiana polls over the past year have consistently shown that Hoosiers believe the state is on the wrong track. That was bolstered by more than 30 incumbent mayors who lost either primary or general elections in 2003.

The HD1, HD13 and SD36 races will give Hoosiers the first tangible evidence of how strong a strain the anti-incumbency virus is in 2004.

Dobis and Lawson probably have more to worry about with the property tax crisis igniting throughout Lake County. Lawson's district is mostly centered north of U.S. 30, where homeowners are under siege by property taxes that have jumped from several hundred dollars a year to several thousand. The Dobis district straddles U.S. 30, and while it's not been a hotbed of tax revolt like the lakefront community, HD13 is sprawling, has much new territory, and Dobis has not kept in touch, Democratic sources say. "There's a lot of ambivalence with the party people," said one Lake County Democrat. "The party people are enjoying his puzzlement, but they respect Chester's abilities." But with Gary Mayor Scott King pressing for a countywide income tax, with Gary, Hammond and Whiting all pondering local income tax, the situation in HD2 and 13 is ripe for rebellion.

Bauer's defense was animated. "Did we try to do something?" Bauer asked on Monday at Carpenters Local 599. "Absolutely. The impact was, we pushed through 43 percent worth of cuts from the Supreme Court-ordered reassessment."

Lawson left little doubt she feels vulnerable, telling the *Times*, "People

think we're responsible for the property tax, and we're not." She added that she feels as if she's walking around town with a "target painted on my back."

Democratic sources tell HPR the McDermott organization "is really pushing Pucalik," who was the leading at-large council vote-getter in 2003. Sources say that Lawson's appearance at ousted Mayor Duane Dedelow's headquarters on the night of his defeat did not set well.

When Bauer stumped for Dobis in Merrillville at the Ross Township Democratic Club, the *Post-Tribune* described the meeting as one where "tempers flared" even though Uzelac wasn't present. HPR sources say the gathered Democrats were "hissing and booing" incumbents. Dobis defended the legislature's decision to "give controversial breaks to local steel companies," and added, "My job is not just bringing new jobs to the area, but also keeping the jobs that are already here."

Bauer displayed "a passionate show of support" for Dobis, according to the *Post-Tribune* and blamed the tax crisis on the Indiana Supreme Court. Bauer blamed Senate President Robert Garton for denying stop-gap remedies, saying, "The whole reason was, they did not want Kernan to put any feathers in his cap" (*Times of Northwest Indiana*).

SD36 about to pop

Like the redbud trees, the Borst-Waltz race is about ready to explode on TV and in the press. Sources tell HPR that Waltz has made a \$45,000 TV buy, and Borst will certainly match. The *Johnson County Daily Journal* reported today Borst started the year with \$109,662 in his campaign treasury and raised another \$116,289 through April 9, according to campaign-finance reports filed with the Indiana Election Division. Borst spent \$88,786 and had \$137,165 going into the final four weeks of the campaign. Waltz started the year with \$21,493, raised another \$66,950 and spent \$73,797. He

Dr. Sabato to headline 2004 HPR Forum

University of Virginia's Dr. Larry Sabato will headline the *2004 HPR Forum Series* on Oct. 1, the day after one of the scheduled presidential debates.

"With the Sept. 30 debate between President Bush and Sen. John Kerry, we will present HPR subscribers and friends the premier pre-election political event in Indiana," said HPR Publisher Brian A. Howey. "Dr. Sabato is one of the nation's leading presidential and political analysts. With the political landscape shaping up the way it is now, this should be an absolutely riveting event."

Said Sabato, who is founder and director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics, "So many things are happening at once on those two days that the event is bound to be fantastic."

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Dr. Sabato is "probably the most quoted college professor in the land," while the *Washington Post* called him "the Mark McGwire of political analysts" and he is dubbed by Fox News Channel as "America's favorite political scientist."

Dr. Sabato is currently working on two books about the 2004 election -- one to be published ahead of election day as a guide to voters, and one analyzing the election results in early 2005. The author of more than 20 books and countless essays on the American political process, his most recent books are *Midterm Madness: The Elections of 2002* (Rowman & Littlefield 2003), *Overtime: The Election 2000 Thriller* (Longman, 2001), and *Dangerous Democracy: The Battle Over Ballot Initiatives in America* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001). Others include *Peepshow: Media and Politics in an Age of Scandal* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), *Toward the Millennium: The Elections of 1996* (Allyn and Bacon, 1997), and *Dirty Little Secrets: The Persistence of Corruption in American Politics* (Random House/Times Books, 1996).

BoseTreacy Associates LLC has joined HPR as the primary sponsor of *HPR Forum Series*, scheduled from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday Oct. 1 at the downtown Marriott. Associate sponsors include DLZ and TechPoint.

Other associate sponsorships, with access to a Sept. 30 VIP screening of the presidential debate with Dr. Sabato, are available. For more information, contact Howey at brianhowey@howeypolitics.com.

Ticket information and other Forum speakers will be announced in May. ❖

had \$13,647 left over in his campaign as of April 15. Waltz was his own biggest contributor, having lent his campaign \$25,000 last year and another \$60,000 this year in personal funds, records show.

Senate Republicans are expected to go door-to-door for Borst this Saturday, one sign the chairman is feeling the heat. Another is his campaign putting out a January push poll last week showing Borst winning by more than 40 percent. Borst portrays Waltz as being inexperi-

enced by comparison. "I think I'm better prepared by life experience than my opponent is, for sure," Borst said (*Daily Journal*). Waltz counters that he is an investment banker, is running to Borst's right, and portrays himself as the candidate of the anti-tax, pro-life, conservative vote. He portrays Borst as entrenched and out of touch with voters. He showed the Daily a shoe with a hole worn in it from door to door campaigning. ❖

THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT

The Weekly Briefing On Indiana Politics



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LAKE COUNTY STORM: In a county hit harder by the reassessment than anywhere else in the state, Indiana's top tax official said there are no easy answers for residents now facing skyrocketing tax bills (Times of Northwest Indiana). "We have had storms across the state, but Lake County's equals the worst of them," said Department of Local Government Finance Commissioner Beth Henkel of the 2002 reassessment. "Results (from the reassessment), with the high tax rates in parts of Lake County, are shocking, and I acknowledge that." Henkel came to Gary on Wednesday night to speak with local lawmakers about potential solutions to the developing tax crisis. She said such solutions could include passing some form of income tax, using casino dollars to lower government levies, cutting local government budgets and applying tax settlement dollars from U.S. Steel as property tax credits. "Lake County relies on property taxes more than any other county to fund services," she said, adding that only three of Indiana's 92 counties do not have an income tax. "All areas of the state that have urban centers have developed some sort of income tax."

KING PROPOSES LAKE

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COUNTY INCOME TAX: — Leaders in Lake County should set up an income tax and spend all of a \$53 million tax settlement with U.S. Steel to ease surging tax bills that will soon arrive in homeowners' mailboxes, says Gary Mayor Scott L. King (Andy Grimm, Post-Tribune). During a meeting Wednesday at Gary City Hall, King and other local and state leaders hosted a "caucus" to discuss remedies for the sticker shock of property tax bills that have surged drastically under a new, state-mandated tax assessment formula. However, the meeting, which was broadcast on community access television but closed to the public, was just as much a forum for King and his fellow elected officials to explain the complexities of the tax issues without the presence of outraged property owners. "(Taxpayers) don't understand how this could happen and (how could) government at every conceivable level be caught unawares," King told an audience of state finance officials and legislators. "That is the system and the system needs to be fixed." While waiting for a legislative solution, King said he would urge the City Council to levy a 1 percent income tax on Gary residents and non-resident workers.

DELAWARE COUNTY TAXES GO UP: After a

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2004 Racing Form

Indiana 2004 Gubernatorial

Governor 2004: Republican: Mitch Daniels, Eric Miller. **Democrat:** Gov. Joe Kernan. **1996 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,075,342, Goldsmith (R) 997,505, Dillon (L) 35,261. **2000 Results:** O'Bannon (D) 1,230,345, McIntosh (R) 906,492, Horning (L) 38,686. **2004 Forecast:** Daniels and Miller debate tonight on WISH-TV at 7 p.m. It will be the first time voters will get to see Daniels in an extemporaneous role. Miller has had past exposure on his own cable television show. Kernan's MO is becoming clear. He is spending a couple of days a week announcing new jobs across the state. This week, he was in Columbus and Scottsburg. Last week, he earned extensive newspaper and TV coverage helping Cook Group announce 1,000 new jobs in Bloomington. The Kernan campaign hopes that this steady drumbeat of job creation will blunt Republican attacks over job loss. Kernan is also taking advantage of the perks of incumbency, surveying tornado damage in Jamestown and, again, getting extensive earned media coverage. Vice President Dick Cheney is returning to Indianapolis on Friday to help former White House budget chief Mitch Daniels in his bid for the governor's office (*Indianapolis Star*). Daniels is looking past his May primary battle with Eric Miller (Jim Shella, WISH-TV). The Republican candidate for governor says it's a calculated risk. Daniels doesn't consider a win a foregone conclusion, and says that if he loses, he will happily go back to private life. However, he has chosen not to argue about whether he or Eric Miller is, as he says, the most Republican. Daniels is on the road four or five days a week. He has visited all 92 counties in Indiana and will soon record a second stop in all 92. Along the way he tries to speak, not to Republican primary voters, but rather to voters in general. "I am trying, everywhere we go and in everything we say, to talk to as many Hoosiers across as broad a cross section as I can connect with and try to talk about unifying as a state and talk about issues that affect all six million of us," he said. The visit was a salute to the past, but former U.S. Sen. Max Cleland of Georgia was thinking about the present as he visited Indiana's Vietnam War Memorial on Saturday with Gov. Joe Kernan (Mary Beth Schneider, *Indianapolis Star*). The United States has gotten itself involved in another Vietnam in Iraq, Cleland said at the memorial on American Legion Mall where the names of 1,614 Hoosiers killed in that war are listed. It's time not to stay the course, as President Bush has insisted, but to change the course, said Cleland, who was in Indianapolis to speak at the Indiana Democratic Party's annual Jefferson-Jackson dinner Saturday night. Asked if he agreed that the nation is embroiled in another Vietnam War, Kernan said: "We all have different perspectives on different things. The common denominator is we all are fully behind every one of our men and women in uniform today, and I think that that's true of Republicans and Democrats. We're all Americans." A new TV for Gov. Kernan has the governor looking into the camera and saying, "I don't get caught up in politics. It is about people, not politics. Getting Democrats to cut business taxes and getting Republicans to cut property taxes." The ad ends with a man saying, "Making the changes that matter. Gov. Joe Kernan: Trusted leadership." Indiana first lady Maggie Kernan offered simple advice for a Democratic victory this fall to veteran party loyalists Wednesday. "We have to get out and register voters," she said. Indiana Democratic Party Chairman Joe Hogsett was more fiery, saying Democrats always represented the people when it came to jobs, homes, education and health care. "I think Gov. Joe Kernan connects with the voters well on job creation and economic opportunity," Hogsett said. Maggie Kernan, speaking to more than 150 people at local Democratic Party headquarters, said the monthly Rooster Booster Club was her favorite political stop, reminding her of an old movie featuring hot, smoke-filled rooms filled with politicians. Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis is getting her "political sea legs" as one observed noted when she appeared at the Marion County Democratic Chairman's breakfast today. At past events, the technocrat Davis seemed unsure of herself and didn't always know what group she was meeting and who was important. This morning, Davis worked the room "Bayh style," recalled personal details as she

HORSE RACE

greeted party faithful, and gave a riveting speech. **Republican Primary Status:** *Likely Daniels;*
General Status: *Tossup.*

Indiana 2004 Congressional

Congressional District 2: Republican: U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola, Tony Zirkle.

Democrat: Joe Donnelly. **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. **People:** Urban/rural 73/27%; median income \$40,381; Poverty 9.5%; Race 84% white, 8% black; 5 Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 34/50%. **2000 Presidential:** Bush 53%, Gore 44%; **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** R+5; **2002 Result:** Chocola 95,081 (50%), Long Thompson 86,253 (46%); **2004 Money:** The FEC report filed by Chocola for the first quarter of 2004 shows that the candidate raised \$186,505 in contributions for the three-month period ending March 31 (James Wensits, *South Bend Tribune*). According to the report, Chocola has raised a total of \$900,009 for his re-election campaign. After expenditures, the report shows Chocola with \$633,737 in cash on hand. Donnelly said he has raised \$141,180, with \$108,030 of that total collected in the past quarter. Donnelly listed expenditures of \$66,137 in the report, and currently has \$75,118 in cash-on-hand. **Status:** *Leans Chocola.*

Congressional District 3: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mark Souder, William Larsen.

Democrat: Steve G. Hope, Maria Parra, Mark Summers. **Geography:** Fort Wayne, Goshen; Kosciusko, Whitley, LaGrange, Steuben, DeKalb and parts of Elkhart and Allen counties. **Media Market:** South Bend-Elkhart, Fort Wayne. **People:** Urban/rural 65/35%; median income \$44,013; Race: 87% white, 6% black, 4.5% Hispanic; Blue/white collar: 36/52% **2000 Presidential:** Bush 66%, Gore 33%. **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** R+17. **2002 results:** Souder 92,566 (63%), Ridgon 50,509 (34%). **2002 Money:** Souder \$518,717, Ridgon \$131,458. **2004 Outlook:** Souder has posted one of the slimmest bank accounts for House incumbents who are hoping to be re-elected to another term, underscoring his confidence in the strong Republican tilt to the northeast Indiana district (*Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*). As of March 31, Souder had \$55,986 on hand. The first northeast Indiana congressional campaign commercial of the 2004 political season attempts to ease voters' unease about job loss. "I work to keep taxes and interest rates low, to fight government regulations that arbitrarily cost this area jobs. I work to get airport and highway dollars in this region," Souder says in the radio commercial, which will run for two days throughout the area. "I work to make sure we get our tax dollars for our universities so we can compete. I fight to stop Communist China from cheating," his ad says. Souder does not mention his opponent in the May 4 primary, fellow Republican William Larsen. **Primary and general status:** *Safe Souder*

Congressional District 4: Republican: U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer, Dennis Hardy, Mike

Campbell, Brian Paasch. **Democrat:** David Sanders, Bill Abbott. **Geography:** Tippecanoe, Clinton, Boone, Montgomery, Hendricks, Morgan, Lawrence and parts of Marion, Johnson, Monroe, Fountain and White counties. **Media Market:** Lafayette, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Evansville, Louisville. **People:** urban/rural 68/32%; median income \$435,947; Poverty 8%; Race 93% white, 1.3% black, 2.6% Hispanic; blue/white collar 29/56%; **2000 Presidential:** Bush 66%, Gore 31%; **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** R+18; **2002 Results:** Buyer 112,760 (71%); Abbott 41,314 (26%). **2002 Money:** Buyer \$924,869, Abbott \$21,634. **2004 Outlook:** State Sen. Mike Young has endorsed Hardy. **Status:** *Safe Buyer.*

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. **People:** urban/rural 59/40%; median income \$39,002; poverty 9.7%; race: 93% white, 3.8% black, 1.3% Hispanic; blue/white collar 35/49%; **2000 Presidential:** Bush 58%, Gore 40%; **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** R+10; **2002 results:** Pence 118,436 (64%), Fox

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year's respite from tax increases, local property taxes have jumped again (Muncie Star Press). Delaware County tax rates - which will be used to formulate tax bills due June 18 - increased throughout the county's 30-plus taxing units, the county auditor's office said Wednesday. The tax rate for residents of the city of Muncie went up more than 30 cents, due in large part to rate increases to fund budgets for city government and Muncie Community Schools. County government, the Muncie Public Library and Muncie Sanitary District had lesser increases. For a theoretical Muncie property - a house worth \$65,000 on land worth \$10,000, with homestead and mortgage exemptions - the auditor's office said the tax bill would be \$502 for a half year. For a theoretical Mount Pleasant Township property - a house worth \$110,000 on land worth \$10,000, with homestead and mortgage exemptions - the tax bill would be \$654 for a half year. The rate for Muncie residents was set at \$4.29 per \$100 of assessed valuation, up from \$3.98 last year. Most of the increase could be attributed to increases in the tax rates that fund local government and schools budgets. The city government rate went up 11 cents and the Muncie Community Schools rate went up 9

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cents. "All the tax rates went up," Deputy Auditor Donna Patterson said.

BECKER, SERVER RAP FSSA: The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration is being criticized for not following a state law that would make more Hoosiers eligible for home health care instead of spending tax dollars on nursing home care (Evansville Courier & Press). State Rep. Vaneta Becker, R-Evansville, and state Sen. Greg Server, R-Evansville, said Family and Social Services administrators have refused to explain to them why the agency has failed to implement Senate Bill 493, which went into effect nearly 10 months ago. Becker and Server held a joint news conference Wednesday with representatives of AARP and the Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana asking the public to demand that the Family and Social Services Administration make changes to the Medicaid waiver program and follow the law as outlined in the Senate bill. They also called on the agency to abide by a new law that requires Family and Social Services to explain in writing its reasons for not meeting statutory deadlines and its plan of action. The report is due to state lawmakers by May 1. "Why isn't the program being implemented by FSSA

63,871. **2002 Money:** Pence \$1.2m, Fox \$342,987. **2004 Outlook:** Pence reported \$368,719 on hand. Fox, who had just begun fundraising in late February, did not file a report. Pence took some heat from a Fox supporter at a Ball State town hall meeting last weekend. "I was never informed we are using hired guns," Pence said later. Pence said President Bush did an excellent job during last week's press conference "communicating the resolve of the United States to see Iraq through to democracy." **Status:** *Likely Pence*

Congressional District 8: Republican: U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. **Democrat:** Jon Jennings, Bill Pearman. **Green Party:** Clark Gabriel Field. **Geography:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Greencastle; Posey, Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, Pike, Martin, Daviess, Knox, Sullivan, Greene, Owen, Clay, Vigo, Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Warren and part of Fountain counties. **Media Market:** Evansville, Terre Haute, Indianapolis. Lafayette. **People:** Urban/rural 58/42%; median income\$36,732; poverty 10.7%; race white 93.7%, black 3.7%, Hispanic .9%; blue/white collar: 32/52%. **2000 Presidential:** Bush 56%, Gore 42%; **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** R+8. **2002 Results:** Hostettler 98,952 (51%), Hartke 88,763 (46%), **2004 Forecast:** Hostettler's gun incident at the Louisville airport and the legal charges he faces is the kind of thing that could signal an end to his shaky tenure in Congress. Hostettler was detained at Louisville International Airport when security detected a handgun in his luggage. The congressman said he had forgotten it was in the luggage. He was detained and questioned by the FBI before he was put on another flight on Monday. While some suspect this was a publicity stunt to highlight Hostettler's strong NRA stances, the fact that it comes at a time when polls show most Americans are expecting a domestic terror attack is politically dangerous. Jennings raised almost twice what Hostettler did during the first three months of 2004, but he also spent nearly four times as much as Hostettler during that time (Jessica Wehrman, Evansville Courier & Press). Jennings had \$194,552 on hand as of March 31, spending \$76,798 and raising \$162,277 between Jan. 1 and March 31. Hostettler, meanwhile, had \$110,835 on hand as of March 31, spending \$19,205 and raising \$83,713 between Jan. 1 and March 31. **Status:** *Tossup.*

Indiana 2004 Legislative

Senate District 36: Republican: Sen. Larry Borst, Johnson County Council President Brent Waltz. **Democrat:** Terry Rice. **2000 Primary Results:** Borst 7,513. **2000 General Results:** Borst (R) 24,621, Reno (D) 12,120, Williamson (L) 1,026. **2004 Forecast:** *Indiana Legislative Insight* reported on Monday that a poll, which it didn't identify, has Borst leading Waltz 59% to 19.3%. Waltz told HPR that was a "push poll" taken last January. With the Borst campaign leaking that poll at this time, what does that tell you? We sense desperation along with a historic Republican penchant to "win the poll." Waltz said the Marion Party GOP conducted a recent poll showing Borst leading 55-45 percent. We originally reported that as an Indiana GOP poll. "That means if we can change 500 votes, we'll win," Waltz said. The Indiana Farm Bureau ELECT Pac endorsed Borst. Former IUPUI pollster Brian Vargas said a Waltz win would be a "major upset" (*Daily Journal*). "There has been no reasonable organized opposition at the party level against (Borst), and one should not overlook the impact of the state party and the Marion County Republicans and what they do," Vargas said. "He's got to get out the voters, but he's got every reason to be confident going into this primary." **Primary Status:** *Tossup.*

House District 12: Republican: Dan Fagen. **Democrat:** Rep. John Aguilera, Alicia Lopez-Rodriguez. **2002 Results:** Aguilera 7,343. **2004 Forecast:** Lopez-Rodriguez is running an intense challenge, is getting support from 2003 East Chicago mayoral candidate George Pabey (and, perhaps, behind the scenes from Democratic Chairman Stephen Stiglich), and with the tax revolt underway, the incumbent could be vulnerable. We've moved this race into ... **Primary Status:** *TOSSUP.*

House District 13: Republican: Open. **Democrat:** State Rep. Chet Dobis, Merrillville Councilman David Uzelac. **2002 Results:** Dobis (D) 8,379, Azcona (R) 3,906. **2004 Forecast:** We sense with the growing tax rebellion in Lake County and a spirited challenge from Uzelac, this race is ripe for an upset. **Primary General Status:** *TOSSUP.*

- Brian A. Howey ❖

Lugar seen as a 'marginalized elder' on Iraq

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - A *Los Angeles Times* analysis by Mary Curtius ran this week in the *South Bend Tribune* and the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*.

It presented a portrait of U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar that Hoosiers are not accustomed to. It started in a familiar fashion: "For almost 20 years, as one of the most respected internationalists in Washington and a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., was a man whose voice counted when it came to U.S. foreign policy."

But then Curtius observed, "Now, however, as Iraq teeters on the brink of chaos and U.S. casualties soar, Lugar has played no significant role in one of the most critical foreign policy issues of his career. The Bush administration has openly ignored him. And, to the disappointment of admirers in both parties, Lugar, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has held back from forcing the issue."

The analysis continues, "In part, Lugar's isolation is symptomatic of how little Congress is being consulted by the administration. And in part, Lugar's lack of influence on Iraq policy may reflect his own decisions about how cautious to be in expressing his concerns. To be sure, Indiana's senior senator is one of only a handful of congressional Republicans willing to express even the slightest concern about President Bush's policies in Iraq. In recent weeks, he has suggested that more troops are needed, he has pointedly asked who would rule in Baghdad's planned new government, and he has questioned whether Bush's June 30 deadline for turning over power is realistic. But he has not mounted the kind of direct challenge to a president's policies that some of his colleagues have privately hoped he might."

The analysis goes on to note that

Lugar "has increasingly been viewed as a marginalized elder statesman." And there was this quote: "There's a sense that he's just not stepped up," said a rueful senior Senate Democratic staffer. "He's always been a very loyal Republican, never been a bomb thrower. By virtue of that, everything he says carries enormous weight."

In the months leading up to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, Lugar did question whether the Bush administration had the post-war thought out. In an April 28, 2003, *Indianapolis Eye* essay, Lugar noted, "Even in Iraq, the administration has not been completely forthcoming with either the Congress or the public about what it's going to take to turn that country into a stable democracy."

A couple of weeks later as he introduced Bush at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, Lugar told partisan Republicans, "His religious faith, his dogged determination, and his good judgment have led us to victory in Afghanistan. That victory was followed by a victory over the ruthless dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. I believe in his leadership and I am grateful he is president."

But this week, as Lugar commenced Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings on Iraq, he observed, "On some occasions during the past year and a half, the administration has failed to communicate its Iraq plans and cost-estimates to Congress and the American people. During the weeks leading up to the war in early 2003, the Foreign Relations Committee held multiple hearings in pursuit of answers to basic questions about plans for Iraqi reconstruction. Administration officials often were unable or unwilling to provide adequate answers. This week, the administration may again have missed an opportunity by declining to send the highest Defense Department official possible to testify at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's hearings."

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when the dollars are already available," Becker asked. "We have heard too many excuses and not enough answers and the citizens of Evansville as well as Indiana, who desperately need health-care services, have waited too long for answers."

LVC RAPS PENCE RECORD ON ENVIRONMENT: Pence has compiled one of the most pro-industry, anti-environmental voting records in Congress, according to the League of Conservation Voters (Muncie Star Press). The non-profit LCV has published a National Environmental Scorecard rating every Congress since 1970, the year of the first Earth Day. Out of the 41 most important environmental votes that have occurred in the House since Pence took office, he voted to protect the environment only three times, according to the Scorecard. "Mike Pence's environmental voting record is appalling," said Warren Vander Hill, distinguished professor of environmental studies at Ball State University and chairman of the Five Rivers Group of the Sierra Club. "But, in fairness, it reflects very well the Bush-Cheney position on these issues - give all that you can to oil and gas interests, and care little about future generations."

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RECORD CROWD FOR DEMOCRATS: About 1,350 Democrats attended Saturday night's fund-raising dinner. Indiana Democratic Party Chairman Joe Hogsett said the event was the largest the party had ever held, raising more than \$300,000 (Indianapolis Star).

NADER COMING TO IUPUI ON SATURDAY: Independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader was not on the Indiana ballot in 2000, but petitions are circulating at Ball State University to try to ensure his candidacy in 2004 (Muncie Star Press). "It is important to put him on the ballot to have a choice," said Tyler Gough, a student at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis who lives in Muncie. "The two-party system does not adequately represent everybody." Nader, the renowned consumer and social activist, will stop in Indianapolis on April 24 for Take Back the Earth Day on the IUPUI campus. He will speak at 4:15 p.m. near the University College Building, 801 W. Michigan St. Nader needs 29,552 signatures of registered voters by June 30 to get on the Indiana ballot. The Ralph Nader for President campaign can be found online at www.vote-nader.org.

SEN. KRUSE SWORN IN: After more than a decade of being called "Representative," Dennis Kruse got a

PERHAPS... WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

ELKHART - On May 11, the Elkhart County Commissioners, the County Council, and mayors and city councilmen from Elkhart, Goshen and Nappanee will convene to talk about ... government restructuring.

It may not be going as far as what happened in Allen County last winter when 14 Fort Wayne City Council and Allen County Council members unanimously signed a resolution urging the study of government restructuring. But Elkhart County is conservative (Eric Miller is expected to carry the county in the May 4 primary), so the fact that it is gathering up local officials to even talk about government reforms is significant.

State Sen. Marvin Riegsecker, R-Goshen and a former county commissioner, is open to the idea. He flirted with joining State Sen. David Long's bill that would have created a study commission in Allen County on the merger issue.

Long ended up pulling that bill after then State Rep. Dennis Kruse incited rural Allen County residents that their way of life would end if Fort Wayne and Allen County were to merge.

In pulling that legislation, Long said the people in Allen County simply "weren't ready" to proceed.

But what is happening across the state is that some elected officials who only a few years ago would have been openly skeptical and recalcitrant on even entering formal talks are now doing so.

In a speech I gave to the Elkhart County League of Women Voters Wednesday (attended by Sen. Riegsecker, Goshen Mayor Allan Kauffman, Concord Township Trustee Nyla Moore, and a number of county and legislative candidates), I expanded on the question that helped ignite the debate across the state: "Do we really need townships? Do we really need 92 counties?"

I explained to the group, "All I

am trying to do is get people to understand that with an aging population, a global economy, homeland security costs, billions in combined sewer overflow costs, skyrocketing Medicaid costs, and decaying infrastructure, the demands on tax dollars are going to require historic efficiencies."

The problem is that some groups and people, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and State Rep. Bob Kuzman, are isolating and, to some extent, demonizing only one layer of government: The townships. A Chamber study last winter suggested townships were spending too much in administrative costs performing poor relief duties.

The *Times of Northwest Indiana's* Brendan O'Shaughnessy reported on a Wednesday Chamber seminar, "The chamber's controversial study concluded that consolidating many government offices and duties at the county level would save between \$64 and \$122 million in property taxes statewide. In Lake County, the study said more efficient poor relief would save nearly \$8 million, almost all of it in Calumet and North townships.

"This is not a personal attack against elected officials," said Stan Pinegar, the chamber's tax expert. "It's more a debate about the office that person holds and whether it should be updated 150 years later."

Which is good. But the Chamber and other organizations need to go far beyond the townships and study all of Indiana's interlocking government strata. If Kuzman's bill had destroyed townships, all it would have done is put a layer of inefficient government on another layer of inefficient government (cities and counties). That could have been a disaster.

Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis is conducting a "Peak Performance" study on Indiana government, across the board. There should be others doing the same. ❖

COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune* - Never hold a news conference when you don't have news. Sound advice for a mayor, a governor and even for the president of the United States -- especially for the president. That most unusual presidential news conference last week illustrates the point. President Bush, who looked as though he wished he wasn't there, should not have been. When he had no news to capture headlines in his 17-minute opening statement, questioning turned to two topics that are key factors in his drop in approval ratings: The deteriorating conditions in Iraq and the hearings of the 9/11 commission. If the president had been prepared with some snappy answers for the obvious questions -- and why wasn't he? -- the appearance still could have done him some good, or at least less harm. Instead, he rambled, dodged direct responses and fouled off soft pitches from the questioners that should have enabled him to hit a home run. Apology for 9/11? No. Not as if he was accepting personal blame. But why couldn't he observe, as nemesis Richard Clarke did, that all of government had failed to prevent the disaster -- the Clinton and Bush administrations -- and for that he was sorry? Aren't we all sorry that it somehow was not prevented? When asked the only really tough question of the 15 he faced, a question about how he was "so wrong" in initial statements on oil money, weapons of mass destruction and being greeted as liberators in Iraq, he missed a chance to hit back effectively. Worst of all, when asked for his biggest mistake, there was an embarrassing silence as Bush seemed befuddled at the thought that he ever had made a mistake. "I'm sure something will pop into my head," he said. But nothing did. Was he trying to provide material for

a skit on Saturday Night Live?. ❖

John Mellencamp, *Rolling Stone* - Buddy Holly was a complete and utter hillbilly. I'm very proud of that. So much of our musical heritage is from the country. People always ask me, "Why do you stay in Indiana?" Well, I have to. Just about every song, every sound that we emulate and listen to was created by a hillbilly, born out of the frustration of a small town where there ain't much to do in the evening. That's one thing I loved about Buddy Holly. ❖

Rich James, *Post-Tribune* - I've never met state Rep. Linda Lawson, D-Hammond, but I think I'd like her. Having covered the General Assembly years ago, I still have a special passion for the place and the process. I keep up from afar with what's going on, particularly watching what the Northwest Indiana delegation is doing -- or not doing -- down there. I've been impressed with what Lawson has done in terms of the bills she has sponsored and the success she's had getting them through the system. She deserves to go back, but she has a couple of things working against her this primary. Unfortunately, they are both beyond her control. She deserves a better fate. Her first problem is the city's new mayor -- Thomas McDermott Jr. Even though they are both Democrats, McDermott is working hard for the candidacy of Hammond City Councilwoman Kathleen Pucalik. It's Lawson's husband, Jim Hornak, who has drawn the ire of McDermott. Hornak, an official in the Carpenters union, was one of the Democrats for (Mayor Duane) Dedelow during last fall's election. McDermott had a snit. ❖

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new title Wednesday - "Senator." Kruse, a Republican from Auburn, was officially sworn in to the Senate District 14 seat after resigning his House post of 14 years. "My time in the House of Representatives has been an outstanding experience for me personally in my life, and it's with sadness that I leave the House of Representatives," Kruse said. "But at the same time, it's a joyous occasion for me to enter into my new position as a senator here in the state of Indiana." He was elected in a caucus last week to serve the remainder of the term of the late Sen. Charles "Bud" Meeks, who died March 22.

ONLY ONE CANDIDATE FOR KRUSE HOUSE SEAT: The selection of Rep. Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn, to fill the seat of the late Sen. Charles "Bud" Meeks, created two vacancies that will have to be filled (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). State party communications director Marc Lotter said Friday the caucus will not be conducted until after the May 4 primary. Kruse is expected to officially resign his House seat Monday and will be sworn in at 11 a.m. Wednesday in the Senate chambers. So far, there is only one declared candidate to fill Kruse's House term - chief deputy and former DeKalb County Sheriff Jay Oberholtzer.

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