



HOWEY

Political Report

V 11, No 24

Weekly Briefing on Indiana Politics

Thursday, Feb. 17, 2005

Flying monkeys in an Escher print: Seeking Statehouse power boundaries

Bosma, Bauer, Peterson joust as serene Gov. Daniels awaits his time

By BRIAN A. HOWEY in Indianapolis

Where in the world do I even begin?

With the anarchy in the House? Or the governor's "power grab?" Sulking Democrats preparing to walk out? The Colts eyeing Los Angeles? Or the semi-ram-pant talk of a one-term governorship?

The Indiana Statehouse has become a cross between a multi-dimensional Escher print juxtaposed in a double-truck "Where's Waldo?" book spread. If there is a method to the legislative madness, it is not evident above the rutted slushy Hoosier horizon of February.

What can be assumed safely is that a quadruple power struggle is underway among Gov. Mitch Daniels, House Speaker Brian Bosma, House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer, and Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson. Waiting in the wings is Senate President Pro Tempore Robert D. Garton, the man most historically adept at making sense in an arena of nonsense. They are circling one another, jabbing, ducking and dancing.

Among Bosma, Bauer and Peterson, there are a fistful off issues floating around a saucer full of secrets that includes daylight-saving time, the budget, school funding, gaming and the Colts. The flying monkeys are slots, class sizes, and shivering Medicaid recipients lighting matches on windswept street corners. Glenda and the Wicked Witch of the Central Time Zone are in a catfight over a pair of red shoes.

If there was a serene figure amid the madness, it was Gov. Daniels.

On Thursday, the *Indianapolis Star* reported respected Washington Township MSD Supt. Eugene White had called him a "liar" for educational statistics he used in his Jan. 18 State of the State address. "They had to make public education in the state look bad in that presentation," the outspoken White said. "Yes, I'm



Gov. Daniels seemed to be reaching out to Hoosiers on Election Night at Hinkel Fieldhouse. But Democrats are seeing a "power grab." (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)



"The governor offered me a mulligan yesterday. I accept and offer him my apology."

— Supt. Eugene White, Washington Township MSD, a day after he called Gov. Mitch Daniels a "liar" (*Indianapolis Star*)

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:
\$350 annually HPR via e-mail;
\$550 annually HPR & HPR Daily Wire.
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calling the governor a liar."

Nestled among reporters for his Friday briefing while the angry phone calls mounted on Supt. White's switchboard, Daniels calmly suggested the superintendent was "having a bad day" and noted the chief of his alma mater had "always been a gentleman."

After a stormy 90-minute meeting with his school board early Saturday morning, Supt. White appeared and said, "The governor offered me a mulligan yesterday. I accept and offer him my apology."

Thus, the Daniels MO is emerging. Firm, but polite. After he and Bosma traded sharp words over school deficiency payments for two weeks and the Speaker apologized for his "tone," Daniels explained to reporters, "I'm not fighting with anybody. I know fights make a lot better press. Someday there may be, but there are no fights going on."

Power grab

Over the weekend, both the *Indianapolis Star* and the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* covered Democratic notions of a power grab. "The main story in the last six weeks is the power grab of the governor," said instigating Rep. Win Moses Jr. to the *Journal Gazette*. "I've never seen a person try to grab so much power, and it's unnecessary. He can be a good governor without it."

Said Rep. Chet Dobis, "Some folks think he's a dictator. He has a Washington mentality. The president has a whole lot of power. The governor has a lot of power, if it's the will of the legislature."

Specifically, they see Gov. Daniels' reform of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, the creation of an inspector general, his proposal to appoint a superintendent of public instruction, and the emergence of HB1703 that would allow a governor to appoint all Marion County judges, as evidence of a "power grab."

Of all the Democratic criticism, only one point -- appointing all of the Marion County judges -- smacks of political opportunism. Gov. Daniels didn't initiate that, and didn't endorse it either. But he didn't emphatically slap it away when asked by the press on Friday. But other points, such as appointing a superintendent, have had the backing of others, such as former Gov. Joe Kernan.

"It's inaccurate completely. I haven't sought any authority that doesn't reside in this office," Daniels told the press Friday. "Maybe the loyal opposition is unused to a vigorous governor. Maybe they would prefer a passive one, but for four years they've got one who believes it's our duty to use the tools that are here as actively and vigorously as we

can. There was a very telling comment in *Governing* magazine. It said Indiana has no strategy; every agency speaks for itself. I remember writing in the margin, 'Not anymore.'"

Time for a one-term governor?

In just one month in office, Daniels has drawn a line in the sand by demanding a balanced budget in one year and offering up a tax increase, is seeking to modernize FSSA and BMV, and has replaced Commerce with the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. He is preparing to reprioritize educational spending (thus angering Supt. White by delaying a \$90 million bond issue with the 120-day moratorium). He has sought commission resignations in an attempt to get all aspects of state government on the same page. And he has chosen perhaps the toughest

issue in the last half century -- daylight-saving time -- to make his first legislative mark despite a nearly equalized polar split on that issue.

That has not to say there haven't been stumbles. A day after the *Star's* Matthew Tully recounted Daniels' "aw shucks" gubernatorial campaign where he rubbed shoulders with the lil' folks, the newspaper ran plans for a new multi-million-dollar home in Laurelwood, an exclusive subdivision in Carmel. The governor then had to tamp down suggestions coming from his chief of staff, Harry Gonso, that the governor's mansion might be sold. It was a story that has little public policy impact, but relevance to the people.

Cries of "dictatorship" and squeals of "liar!" should have been expected. The fact that they are coming so early in the Daniels experiment indicates there is a strong presence on the Statehouse second floor that has produced all the alarm from numerous special interest quarters.

A classic example of how Daniels is handling DST came at the Purdue Ag fish fry last Saturday at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. One Howard County resident in the audience challenged the Gov. Daniels to "leave our clocks alone" (*Brownfield Network*). This drew cheers and applause from about half of the group. When Daniels responded, "Sir, on this we disagree," the other half of the crowd erupted in applause.

The DST issue could give us the first glimpse of Gov. Daniels' legislative and political prowess. Deemed a non-starter by many at the beginning of the session, it passed the House Commerce Committee 6-5 on Wednesday. Head counters now believe they have 51 House votes, three leaners opposed, and 38 hard nays. That count occurred before State Reps. Steve Heim and Jackie Walorski told the *South Bend Tribune* they were moving into the yes column, though the



Escher's "Relativity."



Star reported today Walorski, who missed the vote, was in the no column. "I'm personally now convinced that there are legitimate economic benefits to this," Heim said. Both said the deciding factor for them may not be strong constituent opinion against daylight-saving time.

Our prediction is that DST will pass the House unless it gets caught up in a Caucus vs. Caucus pissing match that would be part of a Democratic payback for the 2004 gay marriage debate, walkout and election tactics. Both Reps. Carolene Mays and David Orentlicher voted against the bill, igniting speculation that Orentlicher could find a well-financed opponent in 2006 from the tech sector.

The budget

On Tuesday, the Ways and Means Committee passed a \$24 billion budget that would balance out in year two, not the first year as Gov. Daniels has insisted. It would contain no tax increase, but it is fraught with problems. It lowballs Medicaid at 3 percent increases, while Daniels is using a 5 percent figure some believe is too low. Daniels called the House GOP proposals on Friday "a good start," and while it didn't have the tax hike the governor wants, it did include \$24.5 million to hire 400 child welfare caseworkers.

Gov. Daniels has been emphatic that any budget he signs into law must be balanced in year one. He has consistently said that it should not include "gimmicks."

On Wednesday, Sen. Garton said, "I am certainly open to consideration of an increase in the cigarette tax. I merely mention it. There will be opposition to it. I mention it. I don't want the public surprised if it surfaces at some point."

Defanging son of Unigov

There was also the defanging of Mayor Peterson's Indianapolis Works initiative, with House Republicans consigning it to more "study." In addition to the House GOP's newfound tax mania, they have set themselves up for blame should Peterson respond with police and fire layoffs next summer. It was a program endorsed by Sen. Richard Lugar and wouldn't have cost the state anything.

Taxes, slots and Colts

In last week's edition of *The Howey Political Report*, our analysis was that Indiana Republicans had to choose between tax increases or gaming to keep the Colts. On Monday, the stunning answer appeared to be tax increases after the House Public Policy Committee rejected a slots bill, a move that appears to have doomed that funding mechanism. It's a watershed moment for Indiana Republicans, who have just returned to power in the Indiana House.

"I think it means the issue of whether we will expand

gambling at the race tracks is dead," said State Rep. Luke Messer. "Funding for the Colts is dead."

Monday's bill turned into one of the earliest 2006 election cycle showdowns between Bosma and Bauer, who was present for the committee debate, eating an apple which put more movement in his toupee than finding a solution for the Colts. All four committee Democrats voted against the bill. Bauer appears to be maneuvering House Republicans into tax increases or risking the loss of the Colts to Los Angeles. Either one will give his caucus potent issues for Democrats who will be running to regain control without President Bush or Gov. Daniels on the 2006 ballot.

It followed a mini-bombshell Friday when Speaker Bosma said he had opened up his own negotiations with the Colts and suggested something almost unfathomable before this year's bizarre session: a regional tax. "I met (Wednesday) evening with representatives for the Colts to begin putting a reliable plan on the table," Bosma said (Kevin Rader, *WTHR*).

By mid-week, there was no apparent method to the madness when it came to the Colts. The *Indianapolis Star's* Matthew Tully reported, "Despite the day's rhetoric, many lawmakers returned to the Statehouse on Tuesday expressing optimism that a stadium financing plan would survive this year's legislative session. The catch: No one has any idea what that plan will be. Gov. Mitch Daniels has largely stayed out of the nitty-gritty of the debate." He expressed surprise at Monday's events, but indicated a Colts deal was possible.

Republicans and relativity

For Indiana House Republicans appear to have rejected a one-year, 1 percent tax increase on \$100,000 households to balance the budget (a conservative principle?), but are content to raise taxes on Indianapolis residents or develop a regional taxation mechanism that would bring in suburban dollars to keep the Colts. They have also proposed ticket taxes, which would make the NFL product even more unaffordable for middle class families, and have floated the notion of restaurant and cigarette tax hikes. They rejected slots for horsemen who have played by the rules, but there is talk on the second and third floors of legalizing 15,000 video poker games owned by outlaws in scores of neighborhoods.

All are seachange positions for a caucus vehemently anti-tax increase since 1988.

Legislative leaders and mayors seemed to be seeking Waldo in an Escher print. What is down one week could be up the next. Meanwhile, the constitutionally weak new governor waits serenely, sweetly on the sidelines, talking up his new friends in the loyal opposition, and patting harried and suspicious legislators on the back with "nice try" and "good start" on their befuddled budgets. ❖



Pence talks Social Security, health care and marriage

INDIANAPOLIS - U.S. Rep. Mike Pence sat down with HPR Publisher Brian A. Howey at the Starbucks on North Keystone last Saturday to talk about the big domestic issues of the day: Social Security reform, health care and the coming federal marriage amendment. Pence heads the conservative caucus in the U.S. House

HPR: What role will you play in the coming Social Security debate?

Pence: It will be less me and more House conservatives. I helped take an early and vocal role in developing the boundaries of Social Security, tax reform, judicial reform and education reform. I said this to the White House a couple days ago: I think a legitimate criticism of conservatives in the last four years was that we didn't make our importance felt early enough. We didn't make the principles of where we were prepared to support legislation known. I think that is a moral imperative when we take on the kind of major policy initiatives the president is considering on taxes, the courts and Social Security.

HPR: Some people are saying that Social Security doesn't begin to have problems until 2018. So why is it a crisis now, compared to health care costs to the middle class or America's energy needs which are quickly going to put us in a fight for oil with China? Why not 2009?

Pence: The only thing I can say is if we don't deal with it now, we will deal with it at some future date. We've made promises our kids and grandkids can't keep. With retirees -- 40 million on Social Security and Medicare going to swell to 80 million when the Baby Boom retires -- I think time is of the essence. There is a great deal of focus on 2018 when we begin to have a shortfall between income and outgo. But the timing is exactly right when we realize the first Baby Boomer will retire next year. At age 45, I'm on the tail end of the Baby Boom. So literally in the next 20 years you're going to have tens of millions of Americans retiring, living longer, healthier lives, all of which are good things. If we get in front of the shortfalls now, I think the true, prudent reform that we can address those issues without the kind of disappointment and collective pain



U.S. Rep. Mike Pence with his wife Karen on Election Night 2004. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

that future generations are going to have to face.

HPR: The average citizen is hearing a crossfire right now between the White House and Congressional Democrats, who are offering a perspective 180 degrees away. Who should they believe?

Pence: Facts are stubborn things. Having done a couple of town halls already, when you look at the facts, you look at the kind of America that existed when it was formed, the fact that in 1950 there were 16 people for each retiree, now there are three, and in the next decade there will be only two. When you think of the doubling of 40 million retirees to 80 million, facts are stubborn things. Common sense dictates that when you ask two people to do in 2020 what 16 people were doing in 1950, you've got one of three choices. You can ask the taxpayers to do a lot more. You can ask Social Security recipients to take a lot less, or the better choice, make the dollars flowing into the system work harder, saying to younger Americans in exchange for a higher rate of return on the same amount of money, would you be willing to forego on a voluntary basis benefits in the system. Right now I'm trying to push the people in the 6th District of Indiana to look at the facts. Words matter and the White House is talking about a problem, not a crisis. Medicare, we have a crisis.

HPR: Vice President Cheney said last week on Fox News that we're still going to have trillions of dollars of shortfall. That's mind-boggling. Why not look at a payroll tax increase or raise the retirement age?

Pence: Couple of things: There is no question the creation of personal retirement accounts alone do not solve the structural crisis within Social Security. Unless you marry it to those younger Americans who elect to have a personal savings account, that we want you to give up, on a dollar-for-dollar basis every accumulated dollar in the personal retirement accounts dollars (they have) built up in the traditional system. That helps immensely. The White

House is talking about the way the benefits grow, the way they are indexed. President Jimmy Carter switched us from inflation to a wage index, ironically because wages were falling in the 1970s. Well, with the growth for the last 25 years in the economy, wages consistently outgrow inflation in the economy. So the White House has proposed that for Americans under the age of 55, we switch back to the infla-



tion or a CPI based system. I think that's ill advised. Rather what we ought to do, at the point of your retirement, if you chose your personal retirement account, then you go with inflation on your base benefit. If you stay with the current system, we'll give you the higher return on investment based on the wage index. But you make that decision at the point of retirement. I believe so much in personal retirement accounts and like millions of Americans who elect to choose them, that in and of itself will bend that curve that literally shows short-falls in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

HPR: What about the 45 to 55 age group, the new notch babies?

Pence: I haven't heard much from them at all. Most of the angst I've heard so far comes from Americans who fear it will endanger the system. I say very consistently and respectfully that the system left alone is in real danger. I have learned just enough in Congress in the last four years to know Congress' ability to wait until the last minute and then make the wrong decision.

HPR: What about raising the retirement age?

Pence: It is not the right answer. On a calculator it might make sense, but it would be biased against people who work with their hands. It goes in the wrong direction when you consider that the average life expectancy of African-American men is 67. Therefore they have about one year of eligibility. Half of African-American men would get one year of eligibility. All the taxes they've paid for a lifetime go to benefit other people who live longer. My dad died at the age of 58 in 1988. I've had my staff do the math and we determined that had my father lived until today, my mother and father would have made \$90,000 more. It's gone. With a personal retirement account, it's such a powerful idea because your family still realizes the money you've been putting away.



HPR: Where should health care and energy be on the national problem/crisis scale?

Pence: The news this past week on whether it's \$700 billion or \$1.2 trillion, the Medicare prescription drug benefit is going to, at a minimum, cost twice as much as what they said it was going to cost when it passed a year and a half ago. I don't think anybody lied about those numbers ... I think the numbers lied ...

HPR: But the numbers went up by \$150 billion a month or two after Congress passed the plan. It was low-

balled.

Pence: Yes, overnight. But the nature of entitlement spending is that the numbers are always wrong and they are always low. That's why it should have been an entitlement, it should have been a specific benefit targeted to the specific person needing that prescription coverage. We do have a crisis in the cost in health insurance, particularly for small business America. I've got a bill that would repeal the early '90s mandates from Washington that small businesses fall under the guaranteed issue requirements that big corporations have fallen under. We think that's resulted in a doubling or tripling of health insurance premiums in the last decade. There is no question concerning the spiraling costs of Medicare will, over time, be a much greater threat to the fabric of the federal government in terms of its percentage of obligations confronting this nation with employer based health insurance.

HPR: Should it be employer based?

Pence: I think so. It's been a 100-year experiment that's worked pretty well. In small business America, where increasingly more people are working for companies under 50 employees, you don't have a large enough risk pool. You've got to allow small businesses to enter into that larger risk pool.

HPR: Why is gay marriage such a pressing issue to society?

Pence: I think that's as good a question to ask constituents as it is elected officials. There is no issue I heard more about last fall than people's concern for the sanctity of marriage. There is a sense that is rational that the Supreme Court is edging ever closer to redefining marriage the way they redefined the right to life in all 50 states in one fell swoop. I don't think it's driven by bigotry or the darker angels of our nature. People believe that marriage matters. They want the institution of marriage protected. I talked with Sen. Frist a couple weeks ago and he said the marriage amendment will be in the top 10 policy objectives in the next two years. The timing of that may be event driven with the timing of court cases.

HPR: What is your take, not so much on "civil unions," but on establishing property and death bed rights for any two people willing to make a commitment to each other?

Pence: I have mixed emotions about civil unions. I worry that we would be playing semantic games if we would establish a new classification of equal stature to marriage. But with regard to the compassionate allowing people to be with their partners during a severe illness or the ability to transfer property through inheritance, those are all things that could be dealt with and should be dealt with through state law.





Taxes, GOP and the Carson Show

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS -- Before House Republicans pursue an array of 11 tax increases for Marion County residents, figuring they are just whacking Democrats, they might want to consider the recent success of John C. Warren Jr. and Jon Elrod. You've heard of them, right?

No?

Warren is the Center Township 5th District board member. And he's a Republican.

Elrod is the Center Township 7th District board member and he's a Republican.

The conventional wisdom is that Marion County is turning into a Democratic bastion. It began when Mayor Stephen Goldsmith got only 58 percent of the vote against Z.

Mae Jimison in 1995. Jimison had raised only \$32,000. In 1996, Goldsmith lost Marion County to Gov. Frank O'Bannon 137,898 to 120,977. But Goldsmith trailed GOP Coroner John McGoff by 10,000, suggesting some of his problems were both personal and mayoral baggage.

The county Republican machine appeared to seize up completely when Mayor Bart Peterson ended 32 years of GOP rule in 1999, and then the City-County Council went Democratic in 2003.

And there were compelling Democratic successes in 2004 when Democrats swept the county offices of treasurer (by a 51-45 percent margin); coroner (52-48 percent); and surveyor (52-46 percent) for the first time in modern history.

But the victories of Warren and Elrod only begin to suggest that there might some reverse migration going on. It's even more interesting when you consider that in 2000 Gov. O'Bannon received 79 percent of the vote in Center Township, compared to 74 percent for Gov. Joe Kernan in 2004. Gov. Mitch Daniels polled 3,000 more votes there in 2004 than David McIntosh did in 2000.

The reason? Some Democrats tell HPR that the people moving into the nicely restored Fall Creek neighborhood and into the fine townhouses along the Canal and other regentrified areas of Center Township are tending to be more Republican than Democratic. The profile is that Indianapolis expatriates who were moving to Carmel, Fishers, Zionsville, Avon and Noblesville are getting sick of the traffic congestion on their commutes back to downtown. They may be empty nesters. And they are moving back downtown to take advantage of the cultural amenities there, trading 45 minute traffic



jams for brisk walks or bicycle rides to downtown towers.

There is another interesting trend to keep an eye on and it is the political prowess of U.S. Rep. Julia Carson. Her machine won national attention from the *Wall Street Journal* following her decisive victory over Republican Brose McVey in 2002. Carson defeated McVey 77,478 to 64,379 (53-44 percent) that year, even though McVey out-raised her \$1,105,370 to \$1,099,924. In the presidential year 2000 general, she drubbed Republican Marvin Scott 91,689 to 62,233 (59-40 percent) while out-raising the Republican \$340,203 to \$82,504.

But in 2004, Carson defeated lightly funded Republican Andy Horning 121,303 to 97,491, or 54-44 percent. Horning raised a mere \$25,601 (compared to \$586,641 for Carson).

The other thing to note is that the Carson Show turned out only 40 percent of the vote in Center Township, compared to 57 percent in increasingly Democratic Pike Township to the northwest.

The Carson victory was decisive, but it wasn't the kind of overwhelming tidal wave one might have expected, particularly with a governor's race in full swing, and over a gadfly opponent who was not taken seriously by Indiana or national Republicans. Early on election eve, when Carson held a narrow lead over Horning, there was anecdotal talk among Democrats who defected from the Carson Show, expressing concern about her health, her many missed votes, and their desire to see the next generation step up.

Part of this malaise could have been that nobody took Horning seriously. Others point to Gov. Kernan's under-achieving campaign, highlighted by a lack of presence at the Indiana Black Expo.

But consider what happened next. Carson spent Election Night in the hospital. After more media reports centered on her illness, African-American leaders led by State Rep. Bill Crawford conducted a news conference, telling people to back off.

Then in January, City-County Councilor Steve Talley cut a deal with the 14 minority Republicans and three Democratic freshmen, and ousted Council President Rozelle Boyd, who had been on the council since 1965.

Could that have been the most tell-tale crack in the Center Township Democratic old guard?

Marion County should be politically competitive for the next generation, with Prosecutor Carl Brizzi getting the next big test in 2006. It appeared to be trending Democratic. But perhaps at the Center Township core, that is not the only cross-current in play. Republicans may be coming back, unless they get whacked by legislative tax fiends. ❖



Gary Truitt, *Brownfield Network* - Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels, in his first Ag outlook speech on Saturday, told a group of over a thousand farmers and Purdue alumni just what they wanted to hear. In his speech just prior to the Purdue Alumni Fish Fry Daniels pledged to make agriculture a central part of his administration. "This will be the most pro ag administration Indiana has ever known for many many decades," Daniels said. He said he truly believes that Indiana agriculture has great upside potential and he and Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman will be working hard to help Indiana realize that potential. He stressed that he feels agriculture is important not just for farmers but for all 6.1 million Hoosiers. The Governor drew rousing applause from the crowd of over 1,000 at the State Fairgrounds when he talked about sweeping changes he has made at IDEM. The crowd also cheered when he talked about reforming the property tax system and when he generously praised Purdue. ❖

Morton Kondracke, *Roll Call* - In 1991, defense-hawk Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) caught the presidential bug, abandoned his record and opposed the first Persian Gulf War -- a big mistake. Has the same thing happened to Sen. Evan Bayh (D-Ind.)? Last week, Bayh -- one of the four lead sponsors of the resolution that authorized the 2003 Iraq war and chairman of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council -- was one of just 13 Senators to vote against the confirmation of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. The others were all liberal Democrats, plus Independent Jim Jeffords (Vt.). Bayh, who was on the short list for the vice president nomination in 2004, is an all but certain presidential candidate in 2008, and possibly the leading moderate in the race. So was his "no" vote on Rice a bid to win favor with the anti-war mainstream of the Democratic Party? Significantly, the arguable Democratic frontrunner, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (N.Y.), voted for Rice. Taking a page directly from the centrists' post-2004 playbook, Clinton also went out of her way to show respect for foes of abortion and other "values" voters. Bayh's vote mystified some of his friends in the DLC. "He does strange things sometimes," one of them said. Another speculated that Bayh, normally cautious, is eager to "raise his profile" and "step out" on national security issues. Bayh's staff insists that positioning for 2008 had nothing to do with his vote. They insist that he remains a supporter of the war, but believes that the Bush administration has badly mishandled it and that Rice, as a principal manager, does not deserve a "promotion." In the absence of further evidence of caving to the left, I'm inclined to accept that explanation. ❖

Jack Colwell, *South Bend Tribune* - Tim Roemer had no chance in his bid for Democratic national chairman once the abortion issue was, as he says, affixed like "a radioactive anvil around my neck." Now, the question is whether the Democratic Party itself will be weighted down in a similar fashion by the same issue. Roemer wasn't seeking the chairmanship to overturn *Roe v. Wade* or to strike the abortion rights plank from the party platform. But with some of the attacks on his candidacy, you would have thought that he was. The call by the former congressman from South Bend was for inclusion in the party, not for excluding anyone -- pro-choice or pro-life -- on the single issue of abortion or on other social issues where Republicans have been appealing successfully to mainstream America. Would Roemer have been an effective chairman, helping Democrats to expand appeal beyond the blue states on the East and West Coasts and into the vast red areas of the rest of the nation? Maybe. The Democratic leaders in Congress thought so when they encouraged him to run. Would Roemer instead have been ineffective, too moderate, too centrist, too wishy-washy to vigorously challenge Republicans and excite the Democratic base? Maybe. Many of the members of the Democratic National Committee thought so in turning to Howard Dean. ❖

Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough, *Washington Times* - Some conservatives in the Senate are increasingly unhappy with the way Sen. Richard G. Lugar, Indiana Republican, is running the Foreign Relations Committee. It's not just that his persistent criticism of President Bush last year on Iraq garnered him poster boy status with the John Kerry presidential campaign, alongside Republican Sens. John McCain of Arizona and Chuck Hagel of Nebraska. Our sources say it's the way Mr. Lugar sets the agenda. Among the complaints: Few hearings are held on conservative issues, including the U.N. oil-for-food scandal and the total corruption of Saddam Hussein. Experts summoned to testify on Iraq were almost all uniformly negative toward achieving the mission. Mr. Lugar does more to reach out to Bush critics and committee Democrats, such as Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware, than he does to conservative Republicans. Mr. Lugar champions few resolutions and fewer still on conservative foreign policy issues. Mr. Lugar criticized the failure to pass a State Department authorization bill, which would impose the Senate's will on selected foreign policy issues. Andy Fisher, Mr. Lugar's spokesman, rebutted the conservatives' complaints, point by point. "I am sorry that some anonymous Senate staff may have attacked a Republican senator," Mr. Fisher said. "Lugar has supported President Bush more than 98 percent of the time. ❖



Bosma, Espich doing town meeting in Bright's district

MADISON — Indiana House Speaker Brian Bosma and other Republican leaders will hit the road in state Rep. Billy Bright's district Friday with town hall meetings in North Vernon and Madison, lunch, and tours of Sandstone, Madison State Hospital and the Indiana Economic Development Corp. regional office (*Madison Courier*). The Republicans who will accompany Bosma and Bright on the House GOP Caucus trip will include Rep. Jeff Espich of Uniondale, chairman of the budget-writing House Ways and Means Committee, and Rep. Bill Ruppel of North Manchester, chairman of the House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee. Bright is vice chairman of Ruppel's committee and is a member of the Ways and Means Committee.



Bosma pushing life issues

INDIANAPOLIS - Legislation that critics fear will chip away at a woman's abortion rights stands its best shot in nearly a decade now that Republicans control the Statehouse (*Indianapolis Star*). After debate that moved some lawmakers to tears, an Indiana House committee -- under GOP control for the first time since 1996 -- endorsed legislation Wednesday that would require abortion clinics to be licensed and inspected once a year. The bill also declares that a fetus is viable at 20 weeks -- in what may be a first in the nation. The bill now advances to the full House for consideration. An abortion-

related bill also advanced in the Senate, as a committee endorsed legislation requiring that a woman be offered the chance to see an ultrasound and hear a heartbeat before the abortion. Those are among at least 10 bills introduced this session dealing in some way with abortion or pregnancy. House Speaker Brian Bosma, R-Indianapolis, deemed the "life" bills a priority for anti-abortion lawmakers, but said the issue isn't partisan.

Meeks opposes cig tax hike

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana Senate President Pro-Tem Robert Garton, R-Columbus, said Wednesday he would consider a cigarette tax increase of 25 cents to 40 cents per pack to erase the state's deficit and pass a balanced budget (*Times of Northwest Indiana*). Appropriations Chairman Robert Meeks, R-LaGrange, said he was opposed to the hike because it would hurt many retailers in his district in far northeastern Indiana who sell cigarettes.

Kentucky, Illinois looking at cig tax hikes

Kentucky Gov. Ernie Fletcher has proposed raising his state's cigarette tax to 34 cents per pack initially and then to as much as 53 cents, depending on the taxes in other states. Lawmakers there are looking at smaller numbers but still are considering a rate increase. On Wednesday, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich's proposed 75 cent-per-pack cigarette tax hike.

Saunders' son to face charge today

NEW CASTLE - Prosecutors plan to file a single charge against Andrew Saunders today for leaving the scene of an accident that killed a New Castle man (*Muncie Star Press*). Saunders, the

23-year-old son of State Rep. Tom Saunders, could face between 2 and 8 years for the felony charge, said deputy prosecutor Mal Edwards. "Other charges are still a possibility, but nothing definite at this point," he said. The elder Saunders, a member of the Indiana House of Representatives since 1996, has said his son doesn't remember the accident.

Lead poisoning bill passes Senate

INDIANAPOLIS - Legislation to ensure that more Hoosier children are protected from the dangers of lead poisoning advanced Tuesday through the Indiana Senate (*Terre Haute Tribune-Star*). Co-authored by State Sens. Connie Sipes, D-New Albany; Vi Simpson, D-Ellettsville; Bille Breaux, D-Indianapolis; and Tim Skinner, D-Terre Haute; Senate Bill 538 requires the state to improve its lead poisoning reporting, monitoring and preventive procedures. The measure received bipartisan support, passing by a vote of 48-0. According to the latest statistics, Vigo County has the highest percentage of lead-poisoned children in the state. The state average is 5.1 percent of tested children with high blood-lead levels, with Vigo County's percentage at 11.2.

Bush suggests Social Security tax hike

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. - President Bush is not ruling out raising taxes on people who earn more than \$90,000 as a way to help fix Social Security's finances (*Associated Press*). At the same time, he renewed his pitch Wednesday for Congress to approve an overhaul that would include Social Security private accounts for many workers. ❖