

Political Report

V13 N13

Weekly Briefing on Indiana Politics

Thursday, Nov. 2, 2006

Iraq: a 4-letter word in CD races

Democrats barely mention 'central issue' in '06 elections

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - The tsunami we began talking about eight months ago was supposed to have been set in motion by the geopolitical earthquake in Iraq and it was to deliver a Democratic majority to the U.S. House (and possibly beyond) with three Indiana seats in the mix.

But less than a week before the election, Iraq has been the big elephant on the table the candidates are trying to ignore. Democrat challengers Baron Hill, Joe Donnelly and Brad Ellsworth have hardly touched the issue in their campaign advertising. In last night's 9th CD debate at Jasper, U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel and Hill talked about health care, social security and minimum wage. But not Iraq.



President Bush with U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel last Saturday in Sellersburg. At left, Deb Meyer talks of her slain son, Jason, in an ad for Rep. Chris Chocola. At left, a DCCC ad on behalf of Joe Donnelly.

Donnelly released a TV ad called "Patriot" in which he called for "respect and honor of our troops," but assailed

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A last full measure of devotion

"... that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion. . . that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain. . ." — **President Lincoln**, Gettysburg Address, Nov. 19, 1863



Brian Howey's Column

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — This week, remember Army Spc. Brian Clemens, 19, Kokomo; Army Spc. Greg Sanders, 19, Hobart; Sgt. Robert E. Colvill, 31, Anderson; and Pfc. Luis A. Perez, 19, who grew up in East Chicago. They

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“QUOTE of the Week”



“Dave and all the other crooks at the Statehouse have to go.”

- Radio ad of Republican **Ron Arnold** (pictured) running on the radio station owned by his opponent, State Rep. **Dave Crooks**



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made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq. On Nov. 7 – Election Day – we will ponder Iraq. The political fates of five Hoosier members of Congress facing intense re-election bids – Republicans Chris Chocola, Mark Souder, Mike Sodrel, John Hostettler and Democrat Julia Carson – will be determined. Only one – Souder – voted for the Iraq war resolution. Sodrel and Chocola were not in Congress. Hostettler and Carson voted against.

With this election, voters will have to decide whether they are satisfied with the prosecution of the Iraq War. Some have called it “another Vietnam.” If only that were so. but it isn’t. Iraq is far more crucial than Vietnam. It sits atop the world’s second largest oil reserves. It shares lengthy borders with Saudi Arabia and Iran.

... **Army Pfc. Nathan E. Stahl, 20, Highland; Army Spc. Raymond L. White, 22, Elwood; Staff Sgt. Marvin Lee Trost III, Elkhart; Army Pfc. Nicholas R. Idalski, 23, Crown Point**

Three books this past year – Bob Woodward’s “State of Denial,” Thomas E. Ricks’ “Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq” and “Cobra II” by Gen. Bernard E. Trainor and Michael R. Gordon - reveal a troubling picture of the ramp up to war, the gathering and processing of intelligence, the invasion and aftermath. We find an intellectually incurious president and a defense secretary more worried about keeping troop levels down.

On Feb. 28, 2003, three weeks before the war and only six weeks into his job, retired three-star Gen. Jay Garner, charged with stabilizing post-war Iraq, met with President Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell,

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The Howey Political Report is published by NewsLink Inc. It was founded in 1994.

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Subscriptions:
 \$350 annually HPR via e-mail;
 \$550 annually HPR & HPR Daily Wire.
 Call 317-254-0535.

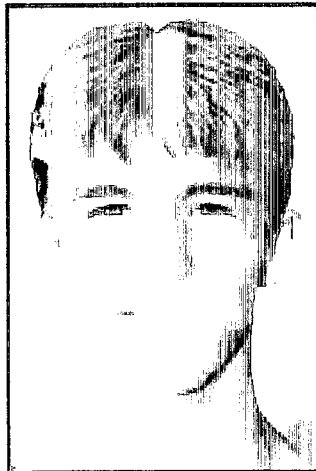
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Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. Garner had been handed a nine-point portfolio. He told the assemblage that four of them – dismantling weapons of mass destruction, defeating terrorists, reshaping the Iraq military, and providing security - were beyond the capabilities of his tiny team.



Pfc. Nathan Frigo, 23, of Kokomo

Woodward described the reaction: The president nodded. No one else intervened. No one asked the follow-up question of exactly who would be responsible if Garner wasn't. Were they important? Maybe Garner was wrong. The import of what he had said seemed to sail over everyone's

head. Nobody challenged. Nobody had questions about his plan.

Unfortunately, meetings like that were more the rule than exception.

... **Army Sgt. Jeremy W. Doyle; Spc. Christopher T. Monroe, 19, Kendallville; Army Spc. Matthew C. Frantz, 23, Lafayette; Staff Sgt. Richard A. Blakley, 34, Avon**

“Has he thought this through?” Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage asked Powell at one point. “What the president says in effect is we’ve got to press on in honor of the memory of those who have fallen. Another way to say that is we’ve got to have more men fall to honor the memories of those who have already fallen.”

... **Cpl. Aaron L. Seal, 23, Marine Reserve, Elkhart**

Ricks describes Congress as not a haven of hawks and doves, “but as Iraq loomed, it seemed to



consist mainly of lambs who hardly made a peep. The role of Congress in this systemic failure was different, because its mistakes were mainly sins of omission. Congress asked very few questions and didn't offer any challenge to the administration on the lack of postwar planning."

... **Lance Cpl. David J. Grames Sanchez, 22, Fort Wayne**

As the insurgency grew, civil war brewed, and 3,000 American GIs fell (none of whom, by the way, had a father or mother working at the White House or Capitol Hill), Indiana's congressmen were in lock step with President Bush. Souder, Sodrel and Chocola would do several quick day trips to Iraq and come back to tell us that we hadn't lost a battle.

Back in 1967, U.S. Sen. Birch Bayh began having doubts about Vietnam. He had voted for the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. "I went over there and tromped around for three weeks to see what was happening; talked to a lot of people; took helicopter trips at about tree-high level; talked to the guys in some of the hospitals there," Bayh recalled. "I started adding 2 and 2 and I ended up with 1."

Bayh and Sen. Vance Hartke, along with Senate Foreign Relations Chairman William Fulbright, parted with

President Johnson after about 25,000 Americans had been killed. Another 33,000 American soldiers would die.

Today, we are only beginning to see public doubt emerge after months of assailing "cut and run" Democrats. Sodrel said in Jasper last week that although Iraq is the central front in the war on terror, "it may not have been the central front before we went there. Maybe we shouldn't have been there."

Hostettler suggested it might be time to "wind down," adding it "may be an indictment on the leadership and the direction that the leadership has taken the Congress, as well as the president's taken the country."

... **Army Staff Sgt. Jonathan Rojas, 27, Hammond; Marine Sgt. Brock A. Babb, 40, Evansville; U.S. Army Pfc. Nathan J. Frigo, 23, Kokomo**

The "deciders," the men and women who picked this fight are all still there. None has been in a war themselves. They haven't sent their own kids. They haven't gotten the message that, perhaps, new leadership is required to insure that our Hoosier brothers have not died in vain. ♦

Howey is publisher of The Howey Political Report, the weekly briefing on Indiana politics.

Iraq: From page 1

U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola for questioning his patriotism. Chocola did a commercial - "Deb" - featuring Deb Meyer, whose son, Jason was killed in Iraq. "Chris Chocola was there for our family," she said, before criticizing Donnelly for using "flag-draped coffins to raise money for his campaign." Baron Hill cut one TV ad titled "Iraq," but he criticizes U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel for voting against trauma care and job assistance for veterans, even as he says, "Anyone who puts their life on the line deserves all the help they can get."

Indiana and national polls have all shown diminishing support for the war in Iraq. A **South Bend Tribune/WSBT** poll released today cited the war in Iraq, at 23 percent, as the most important issue in determining their vote for Congress. Other top issues listed are the war on terror, 16 percent; the economy, 15 percent; taxes/

spending, 9 percent; health care costs, 8 percent; and immigration, 8 percent. President Bush's job performance rating continues to be low as well. That poll had Donnelly leading Rep. Chocola 40-47 percent.

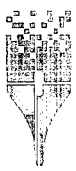
The war in Iraq has led respondent concerns in all four of the Tribune-WSBT-TV polls, with the percentage of those saying it will determine their vote growing from 17 percent last summer to the current 23 percent.

"Iraq is the issue, no doubt about it," Research 2000 pollster Delair Ali said Wednesday (Wen-sits, **South Bend Tribune**). He said the poll indicates that voters here have separated the war in Iraq from the war on terror.

A WISH-TV poll that asked, "Do you think going to war against Iraq for regime change was worth it, or not?" 40 percent said yes, 50 percent said no and 10 percent were undecided. But in the 8th CD, the yes/no breakdown was 44/45 percent and the 9th, 43/45 percent. Asked if the Iraq war made us safer, 31 percent said yes, 42 percent said



Secretary Rumsfeld, Vice President Cheney and Secretary Rice during a conference call with President Bush and Iraqi leaders. (White House Photo)



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less safe.

On Oct. 5, Pew Research reported, "Iraq has become the central issue of the midterm elections. There is more dismay about how the U.S. military effort in Iraq is going than at any point since the war began more than three years ago. And the war is the dominant concern among the majority of voters who say they will be thinking about national issues, rather than local issues, when they cast their ballot for Congress this fall."

Pew's latest nationwide survey finds 58 percent of the public saying that the U.S. military effort in Iraq is not going well, and a 47 percent plurality believes the war in Iraq is hurting, not helping, the war on terrorism. The poll finds extensive public awareness of a leaked intelligence estimate suggesting that the war is spawning more terrorism.

Today's **New York Times** reported: A substantial majority of Americans expect Democrats to reduce or end American military involvement in Iraq if they win control of Congress next Tuesday, and say Republicans would maintain or increase troop levels to try to win the war if they hold on to power on Capitol Hill, according to the final New York Times/CBS News poll before the midterm election.

The poll found that just 29 percent of Americans approve of the way President Bush is managing the war in Iraq, matching the lowest mark of his presidency. Nearly 70 percent of Americans said Mr. Bush did not have a plan to end the war, and an overwhelming 80 percent said Mr. Bush's latest effort to rally public support for the conflict amounted to a change in language but not policy.

Despite the polls, President Bush went out of his way to support Rumsfeld on Rush Limbaugh's Show Wednesday, saying he and Vice President Cheney (a constitutional office) would remain part of his administration through 2008. Bush said "both those men are doing fantastic jobs, and I strongly support them. Anybody who is in a position to serve this country ought to understand the consequences of words."

The president also said he did not anticipate an increase in the approximately 140,000 U.S. troops in Iraq, saying that U.S. commanders there had assured him that "they've got what they can live with."

While Bush was resolute, Indiana congressional Republicans began expressing doubts last week, even as Sodrel gambled last Saturday in bringing President Bush to Sellersburg in an effort to bolster his base. "Maybe we shouldn't have been there," Sodrel said last week about the

war in Iraq.

But at the Silver Creek HS rally, Bush told 4,000 Republicans, "The Democrats in Washington follow a simple philosophy: Just say no. When it comes to listening in on the terrorists, what's the Democratic answer? Just say no. When it comes to detaining terrorists, what's the Democrat answer?" Mr. Bush asked. "Just say no!" the crowd shouted.

Republican state committee woman DeeDee Bende explained, "I understand this strategy because I am from the Rove school of politics : motivate the base! The Bush rally was incredible and a big base motivator. I have heard the President speak many times and the Sodrel rally was second only to the President's 9/11 speech in the Capitol a few days after the attack on New York."

U.S. Rep. John Hostettler talked of "winding down" the U.S. war effort in Iraq. U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer told WTHR-TV, "This is a moment of a wake-up call. Iraqis have a wake-up call at the moment. They're not focusing on what I think that they should be focusing on," he said. Buyer suggested a pullout may be just what's needed to shake up the Iraqi leadership. You know what? If the US begins a precipitous withdrawal, maybe only then do they have this wake-up call of greater urgency to focus on their nation system," Buyer said.

A day later, a testy Rumsfeld told the news media to "just back off" from such talk.

Despite the deteriorating conditions in Iraq, Democrats did not push the issue. There were no statements from any of the five challenger campaigns about Rumsfeld's tenure through 2008.

Ellsworth's campaign insists that the candidates positions on posted on its website. Hill's campaign did not return phone calls. **The DCCC is running a TV ad for Hill that accuses Sodrel of "a failure of leadership," and cites "pork barrel spending, record deficits and billions of dollars of tax cuts to big oil."**

The reason Hoosier Democrats are tip-toeing around Iraq is, perhaps, they don't know what the solutions are. Do you stay the course? Even President Bush has dropped that phrase. Do you withdraw and create a failed state? Do you do what President Lincoln did and move the necessary people in until you find a U.S. Grant?

In his book "**Fiasco**," Thomas Ricks accused the Congress of acting as "lambs" and not asking tough questions. Hoosier congressional challengers are following the same script. ♦



Ellsworth, Donnelly and Hill at a presser with Sen. Brack Obama last month. (HPR Photo)



Sautter helping DCCC prepare for possibility of recounts

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON—New voting technology and laws combined with fiercely competitive races may result in no final results on Nov. 7 — including in the tilt between incumbent 9th CD GOP Rep. Mike Sodrel and Democratic challenger Baron Hill.

Hill requested a recount in 2004 in a race that he eventually lost to Sodrel by about 1400 votes. A Hoosier political veteran is helping the national Democratic Party prepare to deal with similar situations this year.

Chris Sautter, a Washington consultant who has worked on Indiana campaigns for more than 20 years, has been conducting recount training for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the political arm of House Democrats.

Sautter and Tim Downs, coauthors of *The Recount Primer*, have been teaching the fundamentals of reviewing election results to about 100 Democratic aides who will be sent to the most hotly contested districts around the country on election night.

"For the first time, we will have identified an individual whose responsibilities will include getting limited but important basic information in the event their race is too close to call on election night," said Sautter.

The Democratic aides will go to their respective districts armed with knowledge such as the type of voting that will be used in each county and the rules for absentee balloting. They also will know who the state and local election officials are.

The DCCC won't reveal how much it is spending on the recount initiative nor where it is targeting its workers. But putting this system in place will allow the party to respond quickly and forcefully if a contest comes down to the wire.

"We are very encouraged by what we think will be record turnout throughout the country, including Indiana," said Adrienne Elrod, a DCCC spokeswoman. "We want to make sure that we take the steps to protect voters' rights at the polls in November."

Sautter, who will spend election night at DCCC headquarters on call to provide recount guidance, credited DCCC Chairman Rahm Emanuel for the initiative. "Rahm's got a much more aggressive approach to campaigns than some have had in the past," said Sautter, who has been involved in every major recount over the last 20 years, including the controversial Florida presidential ballot in 2000.

If a race that is crucial to Democratic efforts to win the 15 seats it needs for House control is close enough for a recount, Emanuel is "going to make sure the money's there to do it (and) make sure it's staffed," said Sautter, head of Sautter communications.

Republicans ready for recounts

Republicans also are girded for potential recounts. Sodrel's campaign will draw on its experience from 2004.

"Our people are well aware of what's at stake and have been preparing for that all along," said Cam Savage, Sodrel's campaign manager. "It's possible we may not know (the winner) on election night, just like last year."

"My biggest concern is with the clerks running a fair election," he said. "There's a good old boy network in the district and (at) the court houses. Their refusal to follow the law is a problem."

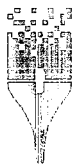
Savage did not accuse any clerks of malfeasance, but he did point to a recent incident in Clark County in which absentee ballots were not secured. The Sodrel campaign took their complaint to the election board, and the ballots are now under lock and key. "Election law is admittedly complicated, but if you're an election clerk, your job is to know the law," said Savage.

Indiana has been placed on a "states to watch" list by ElectionLine.org for "voter roll purges, problems during the primary with (Electronic Systems and Software) voting systems and the most-stringent-in-the-nation photo identification requirement at the polls," according to a report by the organization.

Secretary of State Todd Rokita "is holding voting system vendors accountable to the law," said Deputy Secretary of State Paul Okeson. "The goal is to ensure that they conform to the highest standards. We have a readiness plan in place," he said. ♦



Chris Sautter (left) with Mayor Bob Pastrick. (HPR Photo)



Bayh has a stake in this election

By MARK CURRY

WASHINGTON -Break out the lawn chairs, folks, the 2006 midterms, and the battle to control Congress, are here. At least three of Indiana's congressional races are promising some of the best and most expensive fireworks seen in these parts for quite some time.

Money is pouring in faster than a July gully washer. Yesterday, Congressional Quarterly reported almost \$1.5 million new expenditures in the 9th CD by the Republican and Democratic congressional committees. That's just what the national parties reported spending. In one day. In a single race. For representative.

As advertised, Evan Bayh has rolled up his sleeves and come home to join the fun. The boy from Shirkieville, who was raised on all things political, will be offering his good name and considerable talent to encourage voters to support Democratic candidates in the 2nd, 8th and 9th CD races.

Bayh's stake in these midterms is not just political, it's also personal. He's expended thousands of hours and millions of dollars preparing for a run at the White House in 2008. Indiana's three close races present opportunity and challenge to add substance to Bayh's assertion that his moderate brand can help Democrats win red state voters. The two-term senator would benefit should Tuesday's winners credit his assistance, but Democratic losses will be seen as a potential liability.

The senator's communications director, Dan Pfeiffer, tells HPR that Bayh is slated to attend nine events in Indiana, including five press events, two GOTV rallies, a J-J dinner and a breakfast fundraiser.

This afternoon Sen. Bayh will appear at the Kokomo UAW offices with Joe Donnelly, who hopes to unseat

Rep Chris Chocola in the 2nd. Research 2000 reported the Democrat was ahead in an Oct. 31 poll 50/47. This evening Bayh's schedule indicates he will attend the St. Joseph County Jefferson-Jackson dinner and fundraiser at the Mishawaka Fraternal Order of Police building.

Tomorrow he meets Donnelly at a breakfast fundraiser in South Bend, followed by a press event at the Schafer Gear Works. Sunday Bayh is slated to appear again with Donnelly at a press event in Logansport in the afternoon.

Sunday evening he will travel to Columbus for a press event with Baron Hill, who is challenging Rep. Mike Sodrel to regain the seat he once held in the 9th CD. An Oct. 29 poll conducted by Zogby indicated the Democrat was leading by a two-point margin (48/46).

Monday noon Bayh is scheduled to appear with Hill at a GOTV rally in Jeffersonville.

In the afternoon of the last day before the election, Sen. Bayh is set for a press event in Terre Haute with Brad Ellsworth. Recent media reports showed Ellsworth leading Rep. John Hostettler by seven to ten points. Monday night the Plumbers & Pipe Fitters Union plans a GOTV rally with Bayh and Ellsworth in Evansville. ♦



Evan Bayh, seen here with 8th CD Democratic candidate Brad Ellsworth, will campaign between now and Tuesday on behalf of three Hoosiers who hope to unseat Republicans in the midterms. Ellsworth's campaign and races in the 2nd and 9th CDs offer Bayh an opportunity and challenge to add substance to the claim that his moderate brand can help the Democratic Party win red state voters. (Bayh FLICKR photo)

Chocola's faltering ad strategy

By RYAN NEES

KOKOMO - The race in Indiana's Second district might best be described with that old playground adage: "I'm rubber, you're glue. Whatever you say bounces off of me and sticks to you."

Chris Chocola found that out the hard way in July, when he began running television ads claiming that





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"Joe Donnelly wants to raise our taxes but he has a problem paying his own." The ads ticked off a list of fifteen late payments Donnelly made that "resulted in thousands of dollars of penalties" while he was donating hundreds of thousands of dollars to his 2004 campaign. The facts were damaging, and in any other year, might have been crippling. But Chocola found that voters didn't care much, and a South Bend Tribune / WSBT / Research 2000 poll showed that a whole 71% of respondents said that the late taxes didn't make them less likely to support the Democrat. This the result of months of opposition research and well over a million dollars in television and radio advertising that Chocola pumped in to the district.

Poll after poll, Donnelly's unfavorable numbers stayed generally steady, moving up just 5 points in the course of a month of withering attacks, but remaining below 40%. And Chocola's unfavs continued to suffer, as the stench of his campaign rubbed off on his polling. They in fact balanced his favorable numbers, at about 45-45% for three polls in a row.

In short, Chocola's once again depending on negative campaigning, gambling that his attacks will stick. But for two months, his strategy has floundered, vetoed by a harshly anti-GOP environment. Last month Charlie Cook characterized it in this way: Democrats are Teflon, and

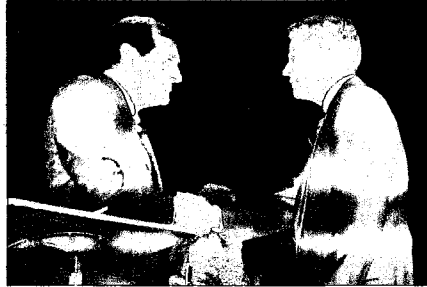
Republicans are Velcro.

The two-term Republican incumbent is in office thanks almost entirely to the negativity he deployed against Jill Long Thompson and Joe Donnelly, but he did so to the detriment of developing any sort of pool of personal affection with his constituents—he's never even cracked 55% of the general election vote.

When times get tough, Chris Chocola has little to fall back on. What's a Congressman to do? For Chocola, his only recourse is to continue hitting Donnelly, hoping something will stick.

So "imagine this," began a Chocola radio ad unveiled this week, "your employer deducts payroll taxes from your paycheck, but instead of sending your taxes to the government, your employer keeps them for himself. Sounds illegal, doesn't it? Well it is, but Joe Donnelly did exactly that."

The ad alleges that Donnelly's rubber stamp company, Marking Solutions, pocketed \$90,000 of its employees' payroll taxes, withholding them from the government. Upon discovering the fraud, the ad says, the IRS put a lien on the company. But Chocola's tried this trick before. It didn't work. It's unlikely to work now. In any other cycle, it might. And you can bet the same narrative will be dragged out in 2008, and deployed against a Congressman Donnelly. ♦



Abdul's election forecast

By **ABDUL-HAKIM SHABAZZ**

Brian Howey and I have a little bet going. The pundit who makes the best predictions gets a case of their favorite beer. Howey, get ready to go the store and buy my 12-pack Goose Island because here are my predictions...

U.S. Senate – Republicans will likely keep, but only by a couple seats. Virginia and TN will go to the GOP. Missouri will likely go Democratic, thanks to Rush Limbaugh turning off voters by making fun of Michael J. Fox and his promotion of stem cell research. Final 52-48.

US. House – The Democrats get this one. The odds are just working in their favor. Final 220-215.

Indiana State Senate – GOP stays in control.

Indiana House of Representatives – A couple scenarios are possible here. Democrats get control, but not

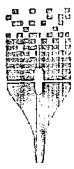


by much 52-48. The less likely outcome, but definitely the most fun, would be 50-49-1. Democrats get the majority, Republicans get 49 and the Libertarians get 1. Rex Bell, the Libertarian candidate in HD 54 is polling at 33% in a three-way race with incumbent John Saunders and Democrat David Sadler. Saunders has been at the center of controversy involving a family member's hit and run accident. Bell, according to my sources, has a very good reputation in the district based on his construction business. With enough of that support, Bell just might pull an upset and be the King maker at Market and Capitol. It's unlikely, but still the most fun scenario.

Marion County Prosecutor – Republican Carl Brizzi beats Democrat Melina Kennedy by 7 points.

Extra prediction – I also predict there will be a ton of litigation following the Nov 7 election. Record absentee ballots have been filed in this election, which ironically enough is where voter fraud is most likely to take place. Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of lawsuits.

Those are my predictions, based on what I know today. That could change, but it's on paper now and I stand by my predictions, at least until they're shown to be wrong. ♦



Michael Lindenberg, TIME- With rock-solid credentials as a Christian conservative, a vote against the war in Iraq, and a record of bucking both his own House G.O.P. leaders and President Bush, Congressman John Hostettler of Indiana looked to be an unusually strong Republican incumbent in his campaign for a seventh term this fall. But with two weeks to go, Hostettler finds himself trailing by double digits in some polls and having to defend himself, not just against charges that he can't beat Democrat Brad Ellsworth, but against claims that he isn't even trying. Brian Howey, who has written the Indiana-based Howey Political Report since 1994, the year Hostettler was first elected, wrote last week that the congressman "is signaling to key 8th [District] allies that he is essentially pulling the plug on his troubled re-election bid." Hostettler responded the next day with an enthusiastic, if vague, denial, and said he's not quitting the race. Since then, Hostettler has increased his public appearances in and around Evansville, stepping beyond the tight-knit circuit of evangelical Christians on whom he has always most depended — and, some critics say, focused too narrowly — on for support. "Going into this campaign, I really thought Congressman Hostettler had the most compelling story of any Republican incumbent in Indiana," Howey said. "He voted against the war. ... And he has been more than willing to go against his party — as he did with the Medicare prescription plan, which he called the largest expansion of entitlements since the Great Society." But a record doesn't count for everything in a year when even independent Republicans are having a tough time running away from their troubled party. And Ellsworth, a conservative two-term sheriff from the district's largest county, has actually raised three times as much money as Hostettler, whose campaign did not return calls for comment on the race. Still Hostettler, who has insisted that he is running to win, has had a lot of help from the national Republican Party, which has spent more than \$1 million in television airtime, allowing the congressman to wait until the past couple weeks before airing his own ads. Hostettler may have thought his vote against the war in Iraq would have neutralized the issue that Democrats across the country are using to great effect. But it isn't necessarily enough to fend off voters' growing disillusionment with the G.O.P.'s handling of the war. ❖

COLUMNISTS
Indiana

or 90 days ago, the number of Republican retirements is lower than average and Democrats are running, though not by design, fewer battle-tested candidates with records of winning tough races. And it is also true that the GOP field organization, the "72-Hour Project," field tested in 2002 and put fully into place in 2004, is a phenomenal operation, but it will be severely tested with a party that, this year, seem considerably less enthusiastic than two and four years ago.

And it is also true that the GOP national party has had more money than their Democratic counterparts, not necessarily each committee, but overall, though that gap is the narrowest in 20 years, undermining yet another traditional GOP advantage. For those who were not paying close attention to politics in 1994 or whose focus was on a single state or district, the concept of a 'wave election' is foreign and is radically different from the "all politics is local" elections of 1996-2004. For others whose sympathies lie with Republicans, it is difficult to deal with the possibility, or growing probability, of a profound rejection of their party — that Karl Rove and Ken Mehlman could actually lose an election. For diehard Democrats, who are so used to snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, they are having a hard time seeing their party actually win a majority in the House for the first time in five elections. The bottom line is that at this stage, Republicans should consider themselves lucky if their net losses stay in the 20-25 range in the House, four or five seats in the Senate, and between five and eight governorships. It would be a tough election, losing their majorities in the House and governorships, but it would fall short of the devastating losses that are possible. But the chances of this thing going bigger — far bigger — still exist, and there are quite a few veteran Republican strategists, people who have done tons of races in all kinds of states and districts for many years, who are bracing themselves for that distinct possibility. ❖

Jack Colwell, South Bend Tribune - Shrieking sounds. Scary characters. Voices of doom. Halloween? No. Something scarier: The political campaigns in contested congressional races around the nation. While kids decide which scary characters to portray in their costumed quest for treats, political consultants decide which scary characters to portray in TV warnings in their quest for votes. Nancy Pelosi is the choice of the Republican consultants. That's why Congressman Chris Chocola warns that a vote for Democratic challenger Joe Donnelly is a vote for Nancy Pelosi for speaker of the House. President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney mention her, too, warning that if that Democrats gain control of the House, Pelosi will be speaker. One difficulty with this is that most voters in places like the battleground congressional districts in Indiana are not likely to respond: "Oh, no, gasp, not Nancy Pelosi." A more likely response is: "Who's Nancy Pelosi?" What of Iraq? That's the No. 1 issue. ❖

Charlie Cook, National Journal- — National polling continues to show a wave of at least the same magnitude of 1994, looking at right direction/wrong track, Congress and presidential job approval and the generic congressional ballot test and maybe even worse. At the same time, it is certainly true that the playing field of competitive districts is smaller, though significantly bigger than 30, 60



Battle for the House pits Dem direct mail vs. GOP TV

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - They have almost a \$1 million financial advantage. They have considerably more staff. They've had good economic news this summer to buoy their hopes.

Yet, less than a week before voting, the best case scenario for Indiana House Republicans could be a 50/50 split, HPR is forecasting today. If Democrats run the table on the six "tossups" in HPR's Horse Race, they could end up with the "56 in '06" or better that had been an early rallying cry of House Speaker Brian Bosma. This comes after HPR did a seat-by-seat review of the Battle for the House.

The trends are fascinating. The Democrats seem to be doing well even though DST and Major Moves aren't the silver bullet issues; they aren't sharing VAN lists with the unions (as they have in past election cycles); they have virtually no vision; and they have largely eschewed TV and are using a Waltz/Walker direct mail strategy that defeated Sens. Larry Borst and Bob Garton

We believe that four Republican House seats have a very strong potential to flip to the Democrats: State Reps. Steve Heim, John Smith and Troy Woodruff, and the open seat vacated by State Rep. Ralph Ayres. Of those four, the Woodruff seat appears to be the most volatile. Written off as anything from dead meat to toast following this past legislative session, the Woodruff seat has been a veritable "roller-coaster ride," according to several sources. "You poll on Monday and Tuesday and Woodruff is in the lead," one operative said. "You poll on Wednesday and Thursday and Battles is in the lead."

Woodruff's flipped vote on Daylight saving time, and his groveling defense of it for months afterward, along with his wife's controversial employment at INDOT was enough to put him on almost everyone's vulnerable list. Woodruff, by all accounts, has skillfully raised money, walked his district and has acti-

vated part of the ground organization from U.S. Rep. John Hostettler to claw back into the race.

Davis calls the race a dead heat.

But HPR puts it in the "likely takeover" category for several reasons: the potential defeat of Rep. Hostettler, Iraq, the DST and other controversies. If Rep. Woodruff can overcome all of that, he becomes a political survivor par excellence.

State Rep. John Smith, R-Kokomo, is in deep trouble. State Rep. Steve Heim has closed his race from a double-digit deficit to approaching the margin of error. Sources tell HPR that Democrat Sylvia Graham has opened a lead over Edmond Soliday in HD4, the seat vacated by Ayres.

There appear to be two sharply contrasting strategies in play here. The Democrats are mostly missing in action on TV advertising. In HD31, State Rep. Tim Harris is in a heavy points buy in Indianapolis. Democrat Larry Hile isn't up on TV and appears to have a very slim lead in a race decided by only 150 votes in 2004.

The Democrats poured a lot of resources into an early direct mail program several weeks ago, stopped, reassessed, and have now resumed their direct mail in a number of targeted races: Harris vs. Hile, Woodruff-Battles, State Rep. Billy Bright vs. Dave Cheatham, State Rep. Tom Saunders vs. David Sadler, the rematch between State Rep. Bill Davis and Ron Liggett, State Rep. Larry Buell vs. John Barnes, and former Goshen Mayor Mike Puro's challenge to State Rep. John Ulmer.

In some races - Reps. Bright, Lehe and Wooduff, and against Dermody - the heavy early Democratic mail didn't move the numbers. However, LaPorte County Democratic sources say that Renner cut a Dermody lead from over 10 points to within the margin of error. Dermody campaign sources tell HPR that tracking for the Republican shows him with a 12-percent lead and topping 50 percent over the past three days.

Sources tell HPR that Rep. Ulmer has only a "slight" lead over Puro, the three-term Goshen mayor and former toll road administrator.

In HD57, Democrat J.D. Lux has been aiming mail at Republican Sean Eberhart. In one recent direct-mail ad for Lux, a male hand is seen taking a cookie from a clear cookie jar. The implication is obvious



House story lines include (top) State Rep. Billy Bright with House Speaker Brian Bosma, Democrat Mike Puro's challenge to State Rep. John Ulmer, Kreg Battles' challenge to Rep. Troy Woodruff, and State Rep. Tom Saunders.



(Shelbyville News). "Sean Eberhart knows an opportunity to help himself when he sees it," the ad reads. Another one of Lux's direct-mail ads shows a photograph of the Lucas Oil Stadium under construction. "Why did Sean Eberhart vote to raise your taxes to build this football stadium?" the ad reads. "Because Mitch Daniels asked him to."

The last several campaign cycles, Republicans and Democrats sparred mostly on TV. However, after watching the shocking losses of Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst in the 2004 Republican primary, and Senate President Pro Tempore Robert Garton last May - both victims of six to 10-piece direct mail campaigns in the final weeks of those races, House Democrats have changed strategy.

In the Saunders race, the incumbent is coming off a family scandal involving a hit and run accident involving his son. Saunders was not indicted in an alleged coverup, but is now involved in a race where the Libertarian candidate has gnawed into his support.

Three seats in the shadows of the Indiana Toll Road are still in play: Puro vs. Ulmer and the open seats of State Rep. Mary Kay Budak being fought between Republican Tom Dermody and LaPorte Councilwoman Andrea Renner, and HD 4 between Soliday and Graham. The Soliday-Graham race, taking place within the expensive Chicago media market, is the perfect place for a direct mail campaign.

The '06 Battle for the House may not be going entirely to script. Toll Road State Reps. Jackie Walorski, Dick Dodge and Marlin Stutzman appear to be cruising toward re-election, and, to a less secure extent, State Rep. Don Lehe. "Everyone knew it was going to be tough to hold on to the House," said Marc Lotter of Gov. Mitch Daniels communications staff. "It's just coming down to a different set of seats."

Seats that appear to be coming into focus late include the Davis-Liggett rematch, Harris vs. Hile, where sources say that Hile had a precarious 1 percent lead, while Republicans have aimed a big TV buy against State Rep. Teri Austin on the immigration issue.

Indiana Democrats were also dispersing money to incumbents who were not thought to be in trouble: State Reps. Craig Fry (\$50,000), Bob Bischoff (\$38,000) and Dave Crooks (\$37,000).

Is there any good news for Republicans? They conducted what's been described

Battle for the House HPR Forecast: D 52, R 48

Likely Takeover (4-R)

Heim (Dembowski)
J. Smith (Herrell)
Open (Ayres: Soliday v. Graham (D))
Woodruff (Battles)

Tossups (6-R; 0-D)

Bright (Cheatham)
Harris (Hile)
Saunders (Sadler (D), and Bell (L))
Davis (Liggett)
Ulmer (Puro)
Buell (Barnes)

Leans (2-R; 3-D)

Lehe (Sutton) Austin (Metzger)
Open (Budak: Dermody vs. Renner) Micon (Basham)
Orendlicher (Densborn)

Likely (6-R; 1-D)

Lutz (Mengelt) Mahern (Elrod)
Open (Hoffman: Knollman vs. Lanning)
Dodge (Rauan)
Walorski (Kovach)
Stutzman (Rorick)
Open (Messer: Eberhart vs. Lux)

Safe (33-R; 45-D)

(33 Republican) Gutwein, Wolkins, Ruppel, Friend, McClain, Thompson, Richardson, Turner, Buck, Torr, Whetstone, T. Brown, Foley, Frizzell, Behning, Murphy, Noe, Pond, Borrer, Bell, Espich, Ripley, Crouch, Duncan, Koch, Open (Yount: M. Smith), Burton, Cherry, Leonard, Neese, Borders (Bledsoe), Open (Thomas: Thomas v. Thompson (D), Bosma (Fuldauer), **Hinkle (Olds)**

(45-Democrats) Avery, Lawson, Harris, C. Brown, Bauer, Niezgodski, Dvorak, Pelath, Cheney, Grubb, Stevenson, Open (Aguilera: Reardon), Dobis, V. Smith, Kuzman, Bardon, Tyler, Reske, Kersey, Welch, Pierce, Goodin, Robertson, Cochran, Oxley, Stilwell, Open (B. GiaQuinta, P. GiaQuinta), Moses, Dickinson, VanHaften, Day, Summers, Mays, Crawford, Porter, Pflum (Bell), Fry (Hiler), Bischoff (Ullrich), Open (Stemler v Theobald), Crooks (Arnold), Tincher (Dallas), Denbo (Patton), **Hoy (A. Smith), Klinker (Rhoda) ♦**

as a "massive voter ID" program early and are in the midst of an 11-day GOTV program. Congressional Republicans such as Rep. Mike Sodrel have long expressed confidence that the GOTV efforts could pull out the election for

him. Statehouse Republicans will be placing similar hopes in this program. ♦



Polls, lies and video tape

Trendline No. 1: The universal opinion is that this campaign cycle has been the nastiest on record.

Congressional Races

Congressional District 2: Republican:

U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola.

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 Result:** Chocola 140,496 (54%) Donnelly (D) 115,513 (45%) **2006 Forecast:** The polls are all over the map.

It appears that "Undecided" may have a major say in determining who the next 2nd District congressman will be. A new **South Bend Tribune-WSBT-TV** poll shows Donnelly with a narrowing 50-47-point lead over Chocola, with 3 percent of those polled still unsure how they will vote in Tuesday's election. The poll, taken Monday and Tuesday by Research 2000 of Rockville, Md., sampled 400 likely voters throughout the district and had a 5 percent margin for error. A **Zogby/Reuters** Poll (Oct. 24-29, 500 LV), had Donnelly is ahead 52-39 percent. That's a vastly different scenario than an RT Strategies Poll in the 2nd CD shows the race is tightening. The Oct. 24-26 poll of 944 likely voters has Democrat Joe Donnelly leading U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola 48-45 percent with 7 percent undecided. An RT Strategies poll on Oct. 8-10 had Donnelly leading 50-46 percent. Donnelly's internal polling shows him with a 7 percent lead. "All our internal polls show a dead heat," said Chocola campaign spokesman Brooks Kochvar. **Status: LEANS DEMOCRAT**

Congressional District 3: Republican:

U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. Democrat: Fort Wayne Councilman Thomas Hayhurst. **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%), Rigdon 50,509 (34%). **2004 Results:** Souder, Parra 2004 Results: Souder 171,389 (69%), Parra 76,232 (31%). **2006 Forecast:** NRCC drops another \$73,475 into this race to shore up Souder. Northeast Indiana is about to send a liar to Congress (Smith, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Or so each of the candidates says. In their debate and in commercials, both Rep. Mark Souder, R-3rd, and Democrat Tom Hayhurst have told voters that the other distorts the truth and maligns his character. "The character attack he just made was disgusting," Souder said of Hayhurst during a televised debate after Hayhurst said Souder had "abandoned his own promise" not to run for more than six terms. "I'm tired of my opponent saying I lied," Souder said. He is on the ballot for a seventh term. A Hayhurst radio commercial says: "If Souder thinks character assassination is a Hoosier value, he's definitely been in Washington too long." In a TV ad, Hayhurst says, "Mark Souder has sunk to distorting my positions and attacking my character." **Status: LEANS SOUDER**

Congressional District 7: Republican: Eric

Dickerson. Democrat: U.S. Rep. Julia Carson. **Geography:** Indianapolis. **Media Market:** Indianapolis. **People:** Urban 99.7%; median income \$36,522; poverty 13.5%; race white 63, black 29.4%, Hispanic 4.4%, Asian 1.3%; blue/white collar 26/58%; **2000 Presidential:** Gore 55%, Bush 43%; Cook Partisan Voting Index: D+6. **2002 Results:** Carson 77,478 (53%), McVey 64,379 (44%). **2004 Results:** Carson 121,303, Horning (R) 97,491, Campbell (L) 4,381. **2006 Forecast:** U.S. Rep. Julia Carson leads Republican Eric Dickerson 49-43 percent with



What's worse? A candidate for Congress who beats his wife, bites his kid, gets arrested and goes to jail...or a candidate who lies about it?

Eric Dickerson is accused of doing both.

8 percent undecided in a TeleResearch poll (Oct. 25-28, 622 likely, +/- 4.0%) conducted on behalf of **The Howey Political Report**. The poll included a 30 percent African-American sample. Of the respondents, 34 percent were Democrat, 40 percent Republican and 26 percent indepen-



Political Report

dent. "Carson appears to have a lead," said Jeff Lewis of TeleResearch. "For Dickerson to get parity, he's going to have to pull all of the undecideds." Carson is in a tough race for re-election. Her campaign started running a batch of positive image ads on the same day National Democrats go after her Republican opponent with the gloves off. Her yard signs sell love, but there is no love in fliers hitting some 7th District mail boxes attacking Congresswoman Julia Carson's opponent. "I'm absolutely shocked and appalled," says Republic Eric Dickerson. The ads were done by the National Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in Washington and not by Congresswoman Carson. Carson told Eyewitness News "I'm outraged by it." One mailer we were given reads: "What's worse? A candidate for congress who beats his wife, bites his kid, and goes to jail or a candidate who lies about it? Eric Dickerson was accused of doing both." The Democratic mailer is talking about Dickerson's 1991 domestic violence arrest. The prosecutor later dropped all charges. Last month the Congresswoman brought the old charges up again to Indianapolis Star reporters and now they are back in the fliers. "I didn't authorize it," said Carson. "I told them no negatives in this campaign and they dropped that piece anyway. I feel very, very bad about that." Republican Dickerson said he wants a public apology from Julia Carson. "This mailer tells me we've been right all along, that it's a neck-and-neck race, the Carson camp is desperate to the point the Democratic National Committee is throwing thousands of dollars in this race now to try and save her seat," said Dickerson. Brian Howey, who writes the **Howey Political Report**, calls it "probably the most scurrilous campaign literature I've even seen. When you see this dropping in the mail in the last week of the campaign," Howey said, "that tells me they think she's vulnerable and they're going to pull out all the stops they can to save her." **Status: TOSSUP**

Congressional District 8: Republican: U.S. Rep. John Hostettler. Democrat: Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth. **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 Results:** Hostettler 145,576, Jennings (D) 121,522, Garvin (Green) 5,680. **2006 Forecast:** Ellsworth has opened up a 10 percent lead over U.S. Rep. John Hostettler (**HPR**). An RT Strategies Poll (Oct. 24-26, 1,065 likely voters)

has Ellsworth leading 53-43 percent. Invoking the prospect of a House of Representatives controlled by "liberal extremists," Hostettler urged almost 300 cheering supporters Wednesday night to vote next week (Langhorne, **Evansville Courier & Press**). In a six-minute speech during a rally at The Centre, Hostettler reiterated his campaign's central theme: a Democratic victory in the 8th District would bring House Minority Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and her lieutenants a step closer to power in a new Democratic House majority. "In six days, Hoosiers in the 8th District of Indiana and Americans all across our country are going to head to polls to cast their votes," Hostettler said. "... What hangs in the balance is nothing less than the destiny of the United States of America." Can't rule out the Hostettler machine, but even close allies are telling us they are worried. **Status: LEANS ELLSWORTH**

Congressional District 9: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel. Democrat: Baron Hill. **Media Market:** Evansville (11%), Indianapolis (23%), Louisville (55%), Dayton, Cincinnati (10 percent). **People:** urban/rural 52/48%, median income \$39,011; race white 94%, 2.3% black, 1.5% Hispanic; blue/white collar: 34/50%; **2000 Presidential:** Bush 56%, Gore 42%; **Cook Partisan Voting Index:** R+8. **2004 Presidential:** Bush 59%, Kerry 40%. **2002 Results:** Hill 96,654 (51%), Sodrel 87,169 (46%). **2002 Money:** Hill \$1.144m, Sodrel \$1.62m. **2004 Results:** Sodrel 142,197, Hill 140,772, Cox (L) 4,541. **2006 Forecast:** The NRCC is pumping \$450,000 more into this race against Hill. Hill narrowly leads Sodrel in a **Zogby/Reuters Poll** (Oct. 24-29, 500 LV), by 48 percent to 46 percent, well within the margin of error. The last Zogby poll in the 9th was released in early October and had Hill leading 46-38 percent.

Sodrel called on Hill to denounce the derogatory comments made by his ally Sen. John Kerry. On Wednesday, Hill sent a letter to Sen. Kerry expressing his disappointment. He also returned a \$1,000 donation. "Anyone who puts their life on the line for this great country deserves our full support," said Hill. "Sen. Kerry's remarks about our brave men and women serving in Iraq were unacceptable and disturbing." **Status: TOSSUP**

Legislative Races

House District 4: Republican: Ed Soliday. Democrat: Sylvia Graham. **2004 Results:** Ayres 19,656, Siegers (D) 8,850. **2006 Forecast:** Our sources say that this is a probable Democratic pickup, with the champion fisherwoman leading by about 10 percent. And, remember, this seat was safe GOP until Ayres abruptly resigned late last summer. **Status: LEANS D (LIKELY TAKEOVER)**



House District 5: Republican: Jeremy Hiler. Democrat: State Rep. Craig Fry. 2002 Results: Fry 8,618 Crawford (R) 5,705. 2004 Results: Fry 10,947, Reddy, 10,507. 2006 Forecast: Dems have rushed in some late funds here, possibly as insurance. **Status:** SAFE FRY.

House District 15: Republican: State Rep. Don Lehe. Democrat: Newton County Sheriff Myron Sutton. **2002 Results:** Lehe 9,975, Baranowski (D) 5,641. **2004 Results:** Lehe 16,623, Childress (D) 8,153, Bell (L) 565. **2006 Forecast:** Democrats are dumping a huge amount of direct mail into this race. **Status:** LEANS R

House District 17: Republican: State Rep. Steve Heim. Democrat: Nancy Dembowski. **2004 Results:** Heim 14,100, McLiver (D) 8,321, Foley (I) 854. **SD5 Results:** Heinold (R) 24,753, Dembowski (D) 24,398. **2006 Forecast:** The Democratic direct mail campaign was devastating for the incumbent. Our sources say he has closed the gap to "right at the margin of error." But if Joe Donelly runs strong in the 2nd CD, as expected, we think Heim's seat flips. **Status:** LEANS D (Likely Takeover)

House District 20: Republican: LaPorte School Trustee Tom Dermody. Democrat: LaPorte City Councilwoman Andrea Renner. **2002 Results:** Budak 12,551, Gillon (L) 2,540. **2004 Results:** Budak 12,944, Spevak (D) 10,013, Schadowsky (L) 1,038. **2006 Forecast:** Democratic sources had told us that Renner's direct mail program has allowed her to close a 10-point gap to with 3 or 4 percentage points. Dermody has out-raised here \$220,000 to \$170,000. This is only a 48 percent Democratic district, but Gov. Mitch Daniels' favs are only 22 percent in the district. But Dermody's tracking shows him with a 12-point lead and topping 50 percent for the first time in the past three days. **Status:** LEANS R

House District 21: Republican: State Rep. Jackie Walorski. Democrat: Bob Kovach. **2002 Results:** Mangus 10,722. **2004 Results:** Walorski 13,753, Kaser (D) 7,737. **2006 Forecast:** We believe Walorski will win, though the Democrats have jumped dumped some TV money into this race. **Status:** LIKELY REPUBLICAN.

House District 26: Republican: Tippecanoe County Councilwoman Connie Basham. **Democrat:** Joe Micon. **Geography:** Lafayette, West Lafayette, Tippecanoe County. 2002 Results: Scholer 5,630, Micon 4,731. 2004 Results: Micon (D) 10,077, Basham (R) 9,471. **2006 Forecast:** Our sources are telling us that Basham has closed "inside high single digits." Democrats say that by going negative against Micon, she broke a campaign promise. **Status:** LEANS D

House District 30: Republican: State Rep. John Smith. Democrat: Ron Herrell. 2002 Results: Herrell (D) 9,017, Rudolph (R) 6,966, Fridholm (L) 379. **2004 Results:** Smith 12,398, Herrell (D) 11,279. **2006 Forecast:** cans. **Status:** There is consensus from our Republican and

Democratic sources that this seat will likely flip. Herrell has sent out about 16 mailers; Smith has sent three and has run a bio TV ad. **LEANS D (LIKELY TAKEOVER).**

House District 31: Republican: State Rep. Tim Harris. Democrat: Blackford County Commissioner Larry Hile. **2002 Results:** Herrell (D) 9,017, Rudolph (R) 6,966, Fridholm (L) 379. **2004 Results:** Harris 10,480, Hile (D) 10,330. **2006 Forecast:** Harris is running heavy Indianapolis TV; we have yet to see an ad by Hile. Our sources say that Hile had a 1 percent lead in this race and was about to drop more direct mail. We see this as the bellwether seat for the Indiana House: tight in 2004, well away from the toll road, the DST time zone split, and the area has benefitted from some of the Daniels' administration's economic development initiatives. **Status:** TOSSUP.

House District 33: Republican: State Rep. Bill Davis. Democrat: Ron Liggett. 2002 Results: Liggett (D) 9,143, Thornburg (R) 6,895. **2004 Results:** Davis 13,330, Liggett 10,924. **2006 Forecast:** Democrats tell us they think Liggett can win, but Republicans are equally confident. Davis is about to run a heavy point buy on Fort Wayne and Indianapolis TV. This race moves from Leans R to ... **Status:** TOSSUP.

House District 27: Republican: Lafayette Councilman Jack Rhoda. Democrat: State Rep. Sheila Klinker. **2004 Results:** Klinker (D) 12,462, Crites (R) 6,374. **2006 Forecast:** This was a feint to keep Rep. Klinker "across the river" and from helping the Micon campaign. **Status:** SAFE DEMOCRAT.

House District 36: Republican: Francie Metzger. Democrat: State Rep. Teri Austin. **2002 Results:** Augstin 8,640, Kincaid (R) 7,918. **2004 Results:** Austinm 14,170, Carrell (R) 8,669. **2006 Forecast:** With Republicans possibly losing Heim, Smith and possibly Bright and Woodruff, they are hoping to pick off this Democratic seat. Metzger's immigration ad accuses Austin of helping illegal immigrants break Indiana laws, which is a real stretch. One of the worst, venal ads we've seen. We think Austin survives. **Status:** LEANS D.

House District 49: Republican: State Rep. John Ulmer. Democrat: Mike Puro. **2004 Results:** Ullmer 17,592. **2006 Forecast:** Republican sources tell us that Ulmer has a slim lead. They express chagrin that he is not campaigning or raising money. Puro has won three Goshen mayoral elections and senses a huge opportunity. This race moves from Leans R to ... **Status:** TOSSUP

House District 55: Republican: Tom Knollman. Democrat: Dale Lanning. **2004 Results:** Hoffman 17,410, McGlothen (D) 6,864, Marcum (L) 800. 18,202, Durber (D) 7,318, Bod (L) 1,194, Cramer (I) 577. **2006 Forecast:** Knollman has opened up a 15-point lead. It had been a deadheat until Lanning was rebuked by the local Farm Burerau chapter and its endorsement was withdrawn. **Status:** LEANS REPUBLICAN.

