



JLT presses her investment war

With little money for TV, she takes aim at Major Moves

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Last week, it was St. Joseph County Democratic Chairman Butch Morgan who described Jill Long Thompson's campaign as "bizarre." This week, it was Treasurer Richard Mourdock, who used the same word to describe the Democrat's assault on Major Moves investments. And after a Wednesday press conference, much of the Statehouse press corps witnessed one of the strangest exchanges in modern gubernatorial campaign history. Now, it is your turn.

During her debate with Gov. Mitch Daniels Tuesday night, Thompson accused the state of making "risky" investments into Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae (the state has been investing in these funds for four decades) and "junk bonds." She said the governor was responsible for developing the state's investment strategies. "He is the architect of the program. He sold the toll road for 75 years. That's the



biggest part of his legacy and it is his responsibility as chief executive officer of the state; he is the CEO. It is Gov. Daniels' responsibility to ensure there is an investment policy."

"It saddens me to hear Ms. Long-Thompson make statements and comments about the Major Moves investments without having the proper facts," explained Treasurer Mourdock. "I think she did a disservice to her campaign and the taxpayers."

At a press conference Wednesday morning, Mourdock cited I.C. 8-14-14 and I.C. 8-14-5: the state treasurer

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Lake in fraud crosshairs

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON - Fraudulent voter registration threatens to create problems in this year's presidential campaign that will dwarf the "hanging chad" controversy in 2000 over the Florida vote, according to the leaders of an organization created by Republican nominee John McCain to prepare for the voting.



Former Sens. John Danforth, R-Missouri, and Warren Rudman, R-New Hampshire, co-chairs of McCain's Open and Honest Election Committee, held up Lake County as a primary example during a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington on October 14.



"He correctly cautions against the implicaton that hostile nations must be dealt with almost exclusively through isolation or military force."

- Sen. Dick Lugar on Sen.Obama



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Brian A. Howey, publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr. Washington writer
Jack E. Howey, editor
Beverly Phillips, associate editor

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Call **317-631-9450**.

HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA

PO Box 40265
Indianapolis, IN 46240-0265.

Contact Us

www.howeypolitics.com

bhowey2@gmail.com

Main Office: 317-202-0210.

Howey's Mobile: 317-506-0883.

Indianapolis Fax: 317-254-0535.

Washington: 202-256-5822.

Business Office: 317-631-9450.

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"The issue could be whether the election is fair at all," Danforth said. "This is a potential nightmare."

Democrats dismiss the warnings as a scare tactic designed to undermine efforts to register hundreds of thousands of low-income, minority and young first-time voters who may be inclined to support Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama.

Zeroing in on Lake County, Danforth said that more than half of 2,000 registration applications turned in to local election officials by the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) were faulty or rejected. He also highlighted a registration for Jimmy Johns, a local sandwich shop.

Secretary of State Todd Rokita has launched an investigation. In a letter to Attorney General Steve Carter, Rokita wrote that he had "secured credible evidence of fraud in the voter registration process" in Lake County.

Jim Brown, a Republican member of the Lake County Election Board, said that up to half of the 4,000 to 5,000 registration applications turned in by ACORN "on their face are no good."

In the third and final presidential debate on Wednesday, McCain excoriated the activist group, which says it has added 1.3 million new voters to the rolls, for "perpetrating one of the greatest frauds in voter history in this country, maybe destroying the fabric of democracy." He also questioned Obama's relationship to the organization with which he was involved early in his political career.

In a conference call with reporters earlier on Wednesday, Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker characterized attacks on

ACORN as a "desperate" attempt to keep a competitive Indiana in the Republican presidential column. "This is a coordinated effort by the McCain-(Sarah) Palin campaign and Republicans to suppress votes," Parker said.

Discovery of illegitimate registration applications as evidence that checks and balances in the election system are working, according to Parker. "The fact is they were stopped," he said.

It's not clear whether bad registrations will lead to tainted voting in northwest Indiana, an overwhelmingly Democratic area that almost propelled Obama to an upset win over Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-New York, in the primary.

Democrats and some Republicans maintain that Indiana's voter identification law will help ensure that people casting ballots are aligned with names on registration lists.

Controls built into the system reassure Rokita about balloting integrity. "He's very confident that there will be a fair and accurate election in Indiana," said spokesman Jim Gavin.

But the sheer volume of new registrations across the state--332,291 so far--is creating the potential for a busy election day. That has led to another Lake County controversy.

Early voting is underway in East Chicago, Hammond and Gary. The election board split, 3-2, on whether to allow pre-election-day balloting anywhere outside the county seat of Crown Point. The legal wrangling has bounced around between the federal district, state circuit and superior courts. As early as today, the Indiana Supreme Court will appoint a judge to settle the matter.

Brown said that Republican objections where the voting is occurring are 83 percent Democratic. "We felt (Democrats) were trying to game



DAN PARKER



the situation and not have a level playing field," he said.

Parker emphasized that the early voting is safe because it is taking place in government buildings. "It provides a convenient way for voters to cast their ballot - and that's what the process should be about," he said.

There may be enough of those ballots with a check next to Obama's name for him to become the first Democrat to carry Indiana since 1964. His campaign has opened 44 offices across the state and has volunteers working in each of Indiana's 92 counties.

"We feel good that Barack Obama's message is resonating with Hoosiers who want change," said Jonathan Swain, Indiana communications director for the campaign.

Republicans worry that a chunk of Obama's support is coming courtesy of ACORN, which is seen by them as an unwelcome interloper. "This is not Democrats and Republicans in Lake County," said John Curley, Lake County GOP chairman. "This is ACORN straight out of Chicago. They're putting Lake County through tons of misery. I personally think it is by design."

The group's activities could denigrate the registration process and shut out people of all political stripes, Brown said.

"Legitimate voters could have their ability to vote impaired," Brown said. "That's the real threat that groups like ACORN pose to our system."

Democrats say that the problem with voting over the last several elections is a lack of turnout. They argue that voter intimidation is a real problem while voter fraud is largely a trumped up political drama.

Danforth and Rudman said they hope to quell fears about election mechanics by working with the Obama campaign to establish joint poll monitoring teams in potentially volatile areas. They said that their outreach to Obama officials over the last month has been ignored.

"The effort to do this together would bring credibility to this election," Danforth said. "If they've got problems, tell us your problems. Let's try to resolve them. What we can't do is blow this off." ❖

Thompson, from page 1

is responsible for investing the funds of both the Major Moves Construction Fund and the Next Generation Trust Fund and not the office of the governor. "During a gubernatorial debate Tuesday evening, Ms. Long-Thompson incorrectly stated that the governor had that authority," Mourdock said.

Thompson found herself sideways with the Constitution, two of three branches of government and reporters. Asked by HPI if the governor should have the ability to appoint a cabinet so the "buck stops" with him, to quote a favorite source of Thompson (President Truman), she responded, "This is much simpler than that, Brian. This is his baby. This is his deal. He is the one who put together the Major Moves package. And then suddenly when someone questions how the money has been invested, the money that he says is a big part of his legacy, he has wrapped himself in this, he says, oh gosh, he doesn't have any responsibility for that."

If the legislature passes a law that the Indiana state police enforces, you don't expect the governor to also enforce that law, we responded. "How can the governor not take responsibility for how the money is invested?"

Thompson asked. "It is not the governor's office to actually make the investments, but it is the governor's responsibility and it is completely irresponsible for the governor to enter into a 75-year contract with \$3.8 billion at stake and then not take responsibility for how those dollars are invested."

A reporter asked if there was anything in law to require the treasurer to follow a governor's investment wishes? "That could have been in the statute," Thompson responded.

Who should have determined if this was the governor's policy, and not the treasurer's? "The reason the governor needs to take responsibility for this is this is his package. This is his deal. You can't just say we're going to negotiate a deal for \$3.8 billion and then say, here is where my responsibility ends," Thompson said. "This is his baby."

In Thompson's view, the Constitution, the state treasurer and the Indiana General Assembly should have ceded authority on Major Moves investment to Gov. Daniels.

Another reporter said It sounds like this is a moral or ethical responsibility, and not a legal one. Would that be correct? "I think it is the responsibility of the chief executive officer of the state," Thompson responded. The reporter persisted: Is it a legal responsibility or a moral one? "I think it is a responsibility of a governor to ensure there is an investment policy for the \$3.8 billion. You can't just





say I'm going to enter into an agreement for 75 years ... and have that be your deal, your legacy, but its not your responsibility to invest those wisely. It is the responsibility of the governor who wrote the statute."

A reporter noted that it was actually the Indiana General Assembly which wrote the statute. "But he wrote the law," Thompson insisted. No, a reporter said, the legislature wrote the law; Daniels poposed the legislation and signed it into law. "But it is his deal," Thompson insisted. "It was his plan. It was his baby."

Another reporter said the written law created no duties for the governor. "It's as if you're creating one," the reporter said. Thompson responded: "It's his responsibility. If he's going to take credit for the dollars, and how the dollars are spent, then he has to take responsibility to ensure the dollars are invested in a way that doesn't expose taxpayers."

A reporter asked if Thompson should be elected, is there any way she could control the investments without changing the law. "Yes," Thompson said. "Putting an investment policy statement together."

Would that force a treasurer to do what you want him to do? Can you show us where in the law it would require the treasurer to invest the money the way the governor said? "I think there is a problem not just with the governor's not taking responsibility, but he was not responsible in signing a piece of legislation that doesn't require an investment policy."

The reporter asked the question again. Thompson said, "Um, an investment policy? Is that what you're talking about?"

The reporter: If you created an investment policy short of changing the law, is there anything to require the treasurer to follow? "I don't know if you would actually have to change the statute to make the investment policy work because I believe ... I need to check ... I've got some lawyers here in the room, but wouldn't it be done as a regulation? The investment policy? I believe it's a regulatory type of matter. I would check with legal counsel. The issue here is not the technical, whether it's in statute or how it's in statute, the issue is that Gov. Daniels put together a sale of the toll road and now says he has no responsibility for ensuring that the \$3.8 billion is invested in a way that doesn't expose the state to the loss of those dollars."

Mourdock's AA Investment Answer

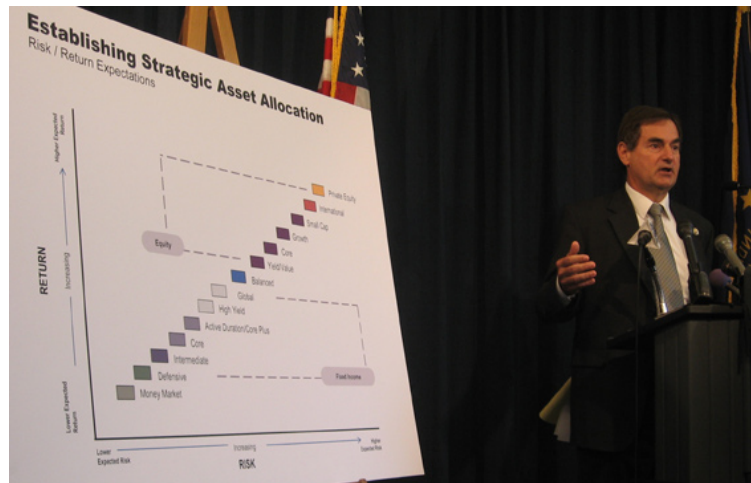
Mourdock essentially said that the Major Move investments have created solid returns as of June 30, the last quarterly report available. The next report comes out Nov. 15. Mourdock said that 9.9 percent of the Major Moves fund is considered "speculative grade investment." Mourdock explained, "That sounds kind of suspicious: speculative grade. You hear the words high yield bonds and junk bonds. If you were an investor which would you invest in? You'd pick high yield bonds, right? In fact, they are exactly the same thing. People use the term junk bonds to try and imply that there is some kind of impending failure that makes those inherently unsafe. In fact, according to Moody's, that portion of our portfolio have only 2.7 percent for failure. We have a portion of our portfolio - 2.7 percent - that might fail. What's that mean? If that failure took place our entire portfolio would be at risk at .002 percent. That 22 percent in Freddie and Fannie, that 9.9 percent

that I just defined for you, was last night characterized as risky investments that the state of Indiana has undertaken. My friends, anyone with a 401K - especially in the last four months - should be green with envy at the return we are making on our Major Moves investments. It's the safest you can do. It's the way to go."

Mourdock said the Major Moves investments have a rating of AA. He said that the combined return of Major Moves funds was 4.49 percent at the end of June. The

Next Generation Trust Fund returned 5.12 percent. The Construction Fund returned 4.32 percent. "That's pretty outstanding," Mourdock said. Major Moves investments have netted the state more than \$300 million.

But Teresa Ghilarducci, a former trustee appointed by then-Gov. Frank O'Bannon to the state's Public Employees' Retirement Fund whivh the Thompson campaign offered as a source, said that although investing in Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac was safe, that does not mean it was the right decision (Indianapolis Star). "Safety does not equal prudence," Ghilarducci said, adding that, in her view, no more than 5 percent of the fund should be invested in a single area. Ghilarducci, who taught economics at the Uni-



Indiana Treasurer Richard Mourdock defended his investments Wednesday at the Statehouse. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



versity of Notre Dame for 25 years and now teaches at the New School for Social Research in New York City, also said having 9 percent of the fund invested in speculative bonds was "too high."

The Star reported that Rick Phillips of the Government Investment Officers Association, said the state should be investing no money in those bonds. Many states, he said, have laws that ban them from investing in bonds rated below A. "Once you get into the B category, and clearly C, that's incredible risk," Phillips said. "I'm really surprised the state would allow that."

Mourdock called Thompson's statements during the debate "bizarre" and "unacceptable." He added on a day the Dow would gyrate once again, plunging 733 points, "We are in a time of incredible financial crisis in this country. The public is nervous. They are worried and every public official - and I think every candidate for office - ought to be doing all they can to lift people's confidence. And it's only somebody desperate who would come out and imply that what we've done in the state of Indiana is putting public funds at risk."

Then came our question: should someone like Thompson who repeatedly says she holds an MBA and Ph.D in business administration from IU understand what is basic investment terminology and strategy? "I remember when I ran for this office I was criticized for being a geologist," said Mourdock, a Republican and former Vanderburgh County commissioner. "This is pretty elemental knowledge. It does raise some serious questions as to how people view the business process if, with the MBA, if with the PhD, this basic knowledge is not believably transmitted to others."

And this from former Indiana University Kelley School of Business economist Morton J. Marcus, a somewhat frequent critic of Gov. Daniels: "Mourdock's review is excellent. This is just another time Jill Long Thompson has shown her lack of understanding. She's not quite Sarah Palin, but she's not ready to be governor of Indiana." Marcus noted that there are areas where Gov. Daniels can be credibly questioned, "but she hasn't brought them up. She proposes no alternatives. How would she have invested the money? No one could have known this kind of economic turmoil was coming."

Daniels said after the debate that he actually "felt sorry for her. Someone did some very poor staff work." The governor added, "The irony of this must not be lost on you," Daniels told reporters. "If people like my opponent had their way there wouldn't be any money to invest."



Gov. Daniels hugs Democrat Jill Long Thompson as she positioned her chair at the IU debate Tuesday night.

Daniels said that the \$3.8 billion Major Moves funds earn more interest each year than the Indiana Toll Road did in 50 years.

During the debate, which began with the two candidates hugging briefly prior to the televised start, Daniels responded to her investment comments by saying, "I thought eventually we might see a kinder, gentler you, but evidently

it's not in (the) cards," Daniels said.

Seeking the data

This sequence also reveals how the beleaguered Thompson campaign operates - something akin to a Chinese fire drill. At Wednesday's press conference, Thompson said, "We have tried repeatedly to get information from the treasurers and auditors offices. The governor, the treasurer and the auditor all have a responsibility to be accountable to the public."

This is where Mourdock found himself "seething" during her debate remarks. He said his office was contacted verbally by a Thompson campaign staffer about obtaining investment information from the state's 22 money managers last Friday morning. Mourdock said that the request needed to be in writing and the Thompson campaign submitted one at 11:03 a.m. He said at 1:21 p.m. on Friday, his chief deputy began the process of pulling thousands of pages of documents together just as a holiday weekend commenced. There was a 3:30 p.m. Tuesday staff meeting to "start pulling all of this together" within the required seven business days. About four hours later, Thompson issued her broadside during the debate.

"I took that very personally," Mourdock said, adding that he was "surprised" the Thompson campaign didn't seek this information "the day after the primary."

JLT's Win Creases Closing

A week ago, HPI's analysis was that due to a developing national wave building around Barack Obama's presidential campaign, and the relative unpredictability of 300,000 new voters registered in Indiana, a crease to victory had developed for Thompson. We changed the race from "likely" Daniels to "leans," almost wholly on the notion that such a wave might drown the Daniels firewalls. There were three media polls - offering incomplete data we've analyzed over the past three editions - that appeared like a facade to bear this out.

This week, we sense Thompson's crease is quickly



closing. New campaign finance reports reveal that Daniels holds a \$1.066 million to \$245,000 cash-on-hand edge over Thompson. Her meager war chest could buy about one week's worth of TV and that's without paying any other salaries or bills.

When Obama appeared at the Indiana State Fairgrounds on Oct. 8, he could have cited Thompson and urged the huge crowd to support her candidacy. Obama didn't mention her. Thompson has since been chastised by the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette's editorial writers for her lack of support of the Kernan-Shepard reforms. Her debate with Daniels on Tuesday at IU was mostly panned by the media. The Indianapolis Star's Matt Tully took her to task for her "potshots" and added, "Underfunded and uninspiring, she took advantage of the statewide audience that Tuesday's debate provided but didn't bother to

explain why she would make a good governor. Why would she? It's so much easier to trash the opposition. Two-thirds of Tuesday night's debate was insightful. As for the other third? A desperate Long Thompson squandered a chance to define herself as anything but a negative campaigner."

The Louisville Courier-Journal noted Thompson's "awkward segues." The Democratic blog Blue Indiana put Thompson's debate performance this way: "This contest wandered into the political wilderness some time ago, forgotten as the flashy presidential circus rolled into town. Mitch's ubiquitous ads continue to peddle his wares unabated, and Jill Long Thompson has yet to find an articulate way to inject herself into the change narrative. Unfortunately, I doubt that will change over the next few weeks."

Five Families of the Democratic Party

We're not hearing endorsements of Thompson's candidacy by the Five Families of Hoosier Democratic Politics: The Bayhs, O'Bannons, Carsons, Pastricks and Maherns. Or from former Gov. Joe Kernan. In fact, Thompson is on a direct collision course with Kernan-Shepard Commissioner Louis Mahern, who appeared in Kokomo with former Lt. Gov. John Mutz to urge voters to end township assessing.

On the Kernan-Shepard front, Thompson appeared to shift, telling IACT in South Bend that she would support legislation giving local communities more power to consolidate functions, eliminate elected offices and streamline government without seeking prior approval from the Indiana General Assembly. This is in contrast to her Febru-

ary stance when she said she opposed all but one of the Kernan-Shepard recommendations. "Unlike Gov. Daniels, I don't believe that centralizing government power in Indianapolis is the answer. We need more local input, not less - and that will be a guiding principle of my administration." That comment revealed ignorance in the six Kernan-Shepard hearings across the state a year ago that were instru-



mental in the development of its 27 recommendations.

In 1994, congressional challengers Mark Souder, David McIntosh and John Hostettler had a combined \$30,000 on June 30. Yet they all ended up outraising Jill Long, Frank McCloskey and Joe Hogsett as the Republican wave left the continental shelf in July and grew in furious fashion late that September. If Daniels' blood was truly in the water, the money spigots would have opened. If the SEIU or the Democratic Governors Association saw polling as close as Selzer or Research2000 over the past month, wouldn't they have pumped money into a state where a Democrat would preside over the 2011 redistricting?

There is increasing and clandestine murmurs within Democratic circles that a Thompson victory would upset too many scenarios between now and 2012. Would Democratic House Speaker B. Patrick Bauer really want a Gov. Thompson? "That's like Mayor Daley wanting a Democratic governor of Illinois," said one prominent Democrat. Would U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh and Chairman Dan Parker really want to cede control of the Indiana Democratic Party to Thompson? Hoosier governors traditionally pick the chair. At least one source tells HPI that Thompson pressed Bayh for \$1 million from his war chest and was summarily rejected. Would the Jonathan Weinzapfels, Graham Richards, John Greggs, Bart Petersons and Thomas McDermotts (the beginning of our short list for 2012) really be pleased with a "Gov. Thompson?" Or the UAW, which spent about \$6 million on Jim Schellinger in the primary?

In essence, this is an orphaned nominee - the first in modern Indiana to lack funds for TV ads in October. The first with virtually no field organization, with lingering rifts



with labor. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the Thompson candidacy began perhaps its final wobble.

Gubernatorial notes: Lt. Governor Becky Skillman reported more cash on hand than Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jill Long Thompson, \$340,969.81 to \$246,000. Indiana's leading small business association - The National Federation of Independent Business - endorsed Daniels. "Gov. Daniels campaigned four years ago on a platform of aggressive reform and ending the politics-as-usual attitude in state government, and our members have resoundingly indicated that they want four more years of change with Mitch Daniels at the helm," said NFIB/Indiana State Director Barbara Quandt. The Evansville Chamber of Commerce endorsed Daniels. Then you have the Governing Magazine award. "It seems like everyone focused on jobs has endorsed Mitch," said Daniels campaign manager Eric Holcomb. A Bellwether Poll conducted on behalf of the Indiana Manufacturers Association shows that 31 percent of newly registered voters said they would vote straight Democratic, 19 percent straight Republican; and 37 percent said they'll split their ticket. Daniels led among those voters 49-30 percent. Without new polling data, we see the opportunity for Thompson slipping away. Thus, we return this race to ... **Status:** LIKELY DANIELS. ❖

The less you see JLT, the more you like her

By KEVIN KELLEMS

CANAAN, Ind. - In this space last week, my old friend Chris Sautter hypothesized that Jill Long Thompson

is on the verge of an extraordinary political victory.

Now, I've long appreciated Chris' enthusiasm for Hoosier political history, and capturing great chapters of it in documentary-



style videos. Unfortunately for him, if he films this chapter, it will not be about a colossal upset.

The facts are that Jill Long Thompson, determined and dogged as she may be, is running out of money and went five consecutive weeks without television, radio, print or mail advertising. More importantly, her campaign has no discernible, substantive message that distinguishes her in what has been a very crowded public dialogue this summer and fall.

Is Chris Sautter's theory that the less you know and see of Jill Long Thompson, the more you like her?

I suppose it is an understandable theory to offer for someone who is Thompson's childhood schoolmate and former media consultant. And it pins Thompson's entire hope to a phantom tidal wave of straight-ticket Democratic voters, hungry for "change" and "hope" but not listening closely enough to realize that is, in fact, what Gov. Mitch Daniels offers.

Strange as it may seem to some who haven't been watching closely, it is the behavior of Gov. Daniels' campaign that in some ways more closely mirrors key moves made by Sen. Barack Obama's. It is Gov. Daniels who set out to build coalitions across party lines, make inroads with groups that traditionally shun his party's candidates, amass a huge war chest, activate a statewide network of volunteers, and tirelessly offer Hoosiers a positive account of his record and a bold vision for the future.

In contrast, Thompson's campaign has been underfunded, uninspiring, and at times unable to connect in any meaningful way with Hoosiers. Panned by a range of observers for a lack of policy detail, the Thompson campaign has relied on negative barbs and tired rhetoric.

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Newt Gingrich
Former U.S. House Speaker
Advocate for Change

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Yes, we know she has an MBA and PhD, but less than three weeks from Election Day, it is not clear to most regular people what the organizing principle of a Thompson administration would be.

Of course, not every Daniels decision has been popular; that's the nature of true leadership. Nonetheless, we see him for what he is and always has been: a real leader, willing to take on big issues - even when it means taking reasonable risks. Hoosiers know their governor as a penny-pinching pragmatist, able to deliver on the big stuff like opening major new opportunities for good paying jobs while leading the fight to keep a lid on taxes.

Hoosiers know Daniels has a track record of working across party lines when possible; to balance budgets, cut property taxes, provide health care to the uninsured, and reform telecommunication laws. And they know Mitch Daniels won't shy away from the big problems either. After all, Governor's Bayh, O'Bannon and Kernan all supported I-69, Daylight Saving Time and full-day kindergarten, but it was Daniels who delivered on all three.

So on the eve of a groundbreaking election, one in which Hoosiers played a role in selecting the Democratic presidential nominee and now are engaged in the most competitive and expensive presidential campaign of their lifetimes, the other side is hoping voters aren't paying attention.

As the presidential campaigns continue to descend on Indiana, with more staff, more volunteers, more dollars, more ads, more energy, and more creativity, by contrast her field staff has been fired, the ads are gone, and the vision is lacking.

For Thompson to benefit much from a strong Obama performance in Indiana, Hoosiers would have to disavow their long history of ticket-splitting. In 1988, Hoosiers voted for George H.W. Bush, Dick Lugar and Evan Bayh. In 1992, they elected Bayh and Dan Quayle. In 1996, they went for Bob Dole and Frank O'Bannon. In 2000, George W. Bush, Dick Lugar and Frank O'Bannon all carried Indiana by impressive margins. In 2004, Bush, Daniels and Bayh carried the state. In none of these instances, did an under-funded underdog candidate ride coattails to victory in a statewide race for a major office.

And what of the new voters, the wild card to which Thompson's hopes are pinned? A recent survey of newly registered voters by the Indiana Manufacturers Association, found that 52 percent of these voters view Daniels favorably and prefer him in a head to head match with Thompson by 19 points, 49-30.

If Thompson believes she is on the brink of a major upset, it appears she has one person with her, an admirably loyal longtime ally and very talented operative. But the Democratic Governor's Association isn't contributing meaningful dollars, and neither is anyone else. The SEIU,

which once promised to spend, "whatever it takes," hasn't made a contribution since July.

Daniels' campaign, in contrast, has been simply stellar. The television advertising, still the most effective and reliable way to reach voters, has surpassed even that of the 2004 cycle. And the Daniels operation is anything but one-dimensional; The governor's personal contact with Hoosiers from all walks of life is unprecedented, and his campaign has knocked on over 100,000 doors and made more than 500,000 phone calls in recent months. Believe me, from my vantage point this is not a guy who leaves much to chance, because so much is at stake for Indiana's



Gov. Daniels on the road in Southern Indiana with ABATE last weekend. (Daniels Campaign Photo)

future.

Independent polling and internal polling for the Indiana GOP has consistently shown Mitch Daniels with double-digit leads. Of the slew of polls in this race, only those conducted for media outlets predict the race as anything less than a significant Daniels lead. If Thompson, the Indiana Democratic Party, the Democrat National Committee, the Obama campaign, or the Democrat Governor's Association had any polling showing this race close, wouldn't we have seen it? Wouldn't Thompson be using it to raise money or prove her legitimacy as a candidate?

Due to Obama's energy and the proximity of his Chicago media market, Democrats might have had a chance to make this a race, but it never got off the ground. It appears that Thompson's strategy, and Sautter's hypothesis, can be described in a single word: "hope." ❖

Kellems is a former aide to Vice President Dick Cheney.

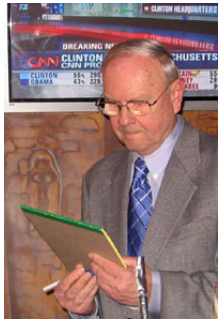


Sarah Palin, you're no Dan Quayle

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - I know Dan Quayle. Dan Quayle is a friend of mine. And Sarah Palin is no Dan Quayle.

At conclusion of the 1988 Republican National Convention, where Quayle was the surprise vice presidential nominee of that time, I was on a panel on national television discussing George H.W. Bush's selection of Quayle. Obviously, I wasn't there as a foremost expert on presidential politics but because I actually knew Quayle, knew him well, and had followed his career from the time he worked in the governor's office in Indiana right through service in the House and then the Senate.



And many calls came from the national news media, with inquiries about whether this guy was a lightweight, whether there were any stories about dumb or suspicious things he had done. The callers were disappointed.

My evaluation then was the same as after Quayle was vice president, a heartbeat away from becoming leader of the Free World.

Quayle was no lightweight.

Was he the best possible choice to be vice president, best to take over in the Oval Office amid crisis? No.

Could he have done so without endangering the nation? Yes.

Was he an outstanding U.S. senator? No. But his Senate record was at least as impressive as that of somebody like John F. Kennedy, for example.

He was neither the least nor the best in the Senate. While not even the best senator from Indiana - Dick Lugar towers over almost all who serve there - Quayle had gained knowledge in national and international affairs, had shown he could reach across the aisle to get things done and had become familiar with the way this nation works.

There are similarities with Sarah Palin. And a lot of differences.

Both were surprise picks. The selections were kept secret until the last minute, a disaster for Quayle, a plus for Palin. Both were picked for their looks more than for how they would look at some issue, and to bring more female voters to the Republican ticket.

Quayle had won big for Senate re-election in Indiana, getting a large majority of female voters in defeating a female opponent, Jill Long. So wouldn't he lessen the gender gap that hurts Republican candidates?

Palin would be the first Republican female nominee for vice president. So wouldn't she attract many of the women who had backed Hillary Clinton for the Democratic nomination?

John McCain learned from the mistake in how Quayle was presented to the nation. Quayle was called without advanced notice to a New Orleans rally to be introduced as the choice. He fought his way through the crowd, arriving breathless and unprepared. He never really recovered and became a national joke - unfairly so - after some gaffs that accentuated the image and delighted the late night comedians.

Palin had well crafted speeches prepared for her for both her introduction and the convention. Still, she has become a national joke, the best thing to happen in decades for Saturday Night Live ratings.

Quayle may have absent mindedly followed an erroneous spelling bee card, silly but not indicating any lack of preparedness to have his finger on the world's most dangerous button during a dispute with Russia. But he never cited being in a state where some could see Russia as his credentials on foreign policy.

Quayle never stumbled and bumbled in answering simple questions about court decisions or newspapers he reads. Quayle left himself open in the vice presidential debate to that famous line that he was "no Jack Kennedy." He also answered the questions, didn't keep repeating rehearsed lines and didn't cheapen responses with winks, claims to be Dan Six-Pack or "you betcha" lingo.

Quayle made no claims that ignorance of Washington would make him better suited to lead Washington. That was the argument of Jimmy Carter, who campaigned as a Washington outsider and then proved to be a poor president because he couldn't figure out how to get things done as the president, the ultimate Washington insider.

Speaking of Washington, Sarah Palin makes Dan Quayle look like George Washington.

Call at 3 a.m.? There should have been no terror at the thought of Quayle answering. Palin?

Colwell has covered Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune. ❖



Former Vice President Dan Quayle greets staff at the Sheraton at Keystone at the Crossing. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



McCain started fast, then emotion took over

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Republican John McCain had a forceful opening 30 minutes of his debate with Barack Obama on Wednesday night, the final time the two will meet prior to the Nov. 4 election. Talk of Joe the Plumber dominated the early part of the debate. But the most illuminating part of the debate may have been on issues such as future U.S. Supreme Court justices and abortion, topics that have had scant attention until last night.

But the breakout moment was when McCain declared "I am not George Bush."

An aggressive McCain opened the plumber sequence by saying, "I would like to mention that a couple days ago Sen. Obama was out in Ohio and he had an encounter with a guy who's a plumber, his name is Joe Wurzelbacher. Joe wants to buy the business that he has been in for all of these years, worked 10, 12 hours a day. And he wanted to buy the business but he looked at your tax plan and he saw that he was going to pay much higher taxes. You were going to put him in a higher tax bracket which was going to increase his taxes, which was going to cause him not to be able to employ people, which Joe was trying to realize the American dream." He reminded Obama that he had talked about "spreading the wealth" and said it was tantamount to "class warfare."

Obama responded that he would help Joe out by a tax cut for 95 percent of the population and went on to mention Warren Buffet. "Warren Buffett, for example, could afford to pay a little more in taxes in order..." Obama began. McCain interrupted: "We're talking about Joe the plumber."

McCain continued to score early points when Obama said he would only tax the rich and Exxon Mobil, "which made \$12 billion, record profits, over the last several quarters, they can afford to pay a little more so that ordinary families who are hurting out there -- they're trying to figure out how they're going to afford food, how they're going to save for their kids' college education, they need a break."

McCain responded and said, "Nobody likes taxes. Let's not raise anybody's taxes, OK?"

Obama: "Well, I don't mind paying a little more."

A few minutes later, Obama attempted to draw Mc-

Cain out over the economy. He said the U.S. must avoid the "policies that we pursued over the last eight years is not going to bring down the deficit. And, frankly, Sen. McCain voted for four out of five of President Bush's budgets." McCain bluntly said, "Sen. Obama, I am not President Bush. If you wanted to run against President Bush, you should have run four years ago."

What McCain mostly passed on had been dominant chatter leading into the Hofstra University debate. He failed to link Obama with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid as conservatives have tried to ignite that triumverate as one that will going on a spending spree.

McCain talked of an "across the board spending freeze," but Obama cornered him when the topic turned to Gov. Sarah Palin's special needs child saying that McCain's budget "hatchet" would cut programs such as those for special needs children. "I think it's very commendable the work she's done on behalf of special needs. I agree with that, John," Obama said. "I do want to just point out that autism, for example, or other special needs will require some additional funding, if we're going to get serious in terms of research. That is something that every family that advocates on behalf of disabled children talk about. And if we have an across-the-board spending freeze, we're not going to be able to do it. That's an example of, I think, the kind of use of the scalpel that we want to make sure that we're funding some of those programs."

Both candidates passed on saying to the other's face what their negative campaign commercials were saying at each one.

Asked about whether Joe Biden and Sarah Palin were prepared to assume the presidency, Obama refused to take that bait. McCain, however, noted that Biden had been wrong in his vote against the first Gulf War. "In Iraq, he had this cockamamie idea about dividing Iraq into three countries," McCain said. Obama said of Palin, "You know, I think it's -- that's going to be up to the American people. I think that, obviously, she's a capable politician who has, I think, excited the base in the Republican Party."

When the debate turned to Obama's relationship with Weather Underground radical William Ayres, McCain said, "We need to know the full extent of that relationship. We need to know the full extent of Sen. Obama's relationship with ACORN, who is now on the verge of maybe perpetrating one of the greatest frauds in voter history in this country, maybe destroying the fabric of





democracy." Obama said of Ayers, "Forty years ago, when I was 8 years old, he engaged in despicable acts with a radical domestic group. I have roundly condemned those acts. Ten years ago he served and I served on a school reform board that was funded by one of Ronald Reagan's former ambassadors and close friends, Mr. Annenberg. Mr. Ayers is not involved in my campaign. He has never been involved in this campaign. And he will not advise me in the White House. So that's Mr. Ayers."

As for ACORN, now involved in controversy in Lake County, Obama said, "ACORN is a community organization.

Apparently what they've done is they were paying people to go out and register folks, and apparently some of the people who were out there didn't really register people, they just filled out a bunch of names. It had nothing to do with us. We were not involved."

McCain said he would not have a pro-life litmus test. Obama agreed to an extent, saying, "Well, I think it's true that we shouldn't apply a strict litmus test" and added, "I am somebody who believes that Roe versus Wade was rightly decided. I think that abortion is a very difficult issue and it is a moral issue and one that I think good people on both sides can disagree on." ❖

McCain has to take one for the team

By DAVE KITCHELL

LOGANSPOUT - There comes a time late in every Indianapolis 500 when the leaders have a chance to win and racers in the middle and back of the field keep competing for the sake of their teammates.

Nobody can blame Michael Andretti for blocking out competitors to allow another Andretti to catch up on the lead lap, take the lead or even lengthen one. Such is the game that's been played for years at the brickyard. Even in auto racing, a sport known for its individuals, teams and team performance matter.



That's beginning to look like the case with John McCain and Sarah Palin who will be shifting some of their attention to Indiana in the final weeks of the presidential campaign. Polls solidly place Democrat Barack

Obama anywhere from nine to 11 points ahead of McCain, and, for the first time, over the magic 50 percent mark. Just a month ago, the race was a virtual tie, but since the Wall Street collapse, Obama has turned a race within the margin of error into one that's clearly his to lose.

With one debate to go, McCain may not be able to reverse the numbers nationally. His best hope is to focus on toss-up states, one of which is Indiana. McCain's forces have pulled out of Michigan, leaving Indiana and Ohio as the only Midwest states that might not be in Obama's column in November.

But let's be realistic, if McCain can't win Indiana, Republicans in the state are in real trouble. He owes it to candidates for state offices and even county offices to protect the base. In essence, he could do for them what

a driver in the Indy 500 can do once the chance to win appears unrealistic: Do what's possible to help a teammate win, i.e., yield all the space possible when a teammate needs to pass and be conspicuously in the way when a driver who isn't a teammate wants to pass.

If Obama does manage to carry Indiana, the questions that impact would have on the ballot begin to play out. Will the voters for Obama cast ballots for other Democrats? That's the big question that has to be on the minds of Republicans and Democrats in this state.

And even if Obama doesn't carry Indiana, a high turnout for him could be enough to push several Democrats into the win column.

Obama's chances were the subject of a roundtable discussion in last week's installment of Indiana Week in Review with Jim Shella. Former Indiana GOP chair Mike McDaniel pooh-poohed the idea, saying that Obama's millions spent in Indiana have never put him ahead here. But the Star's John Ketzenberger reminded him that at least two polls have projected Obama ahead. When McDaniel questioned the Star poll's validity, Ketzenberger reminded him of last year's Star poll which showed an upstart named Greg Ballard as a possible winner in the Indianapolis mayoral race.

Point made. Point taken.

If the Obama lead continues to widen, McCain will have to make it a point to spend more time in Indiana than any political observer would have thought necessary even six months ago. It's hard to believe Indiana has suddenly become as prominent as Ohio, Florida and Pennsylvania in the presidential mix.

Then again, it's hard to believe 15 banks have gone under this year nationally, that Chrysler and General Motors are talking about merger, and that the federal government may take an active role in managing large banks.

It's hard to believe some of these changes are really happening. The only remaining question in this election appears to be how much of the population is willing to agree that Obama is a change they can believe in for the next four years. ❖



Souder is nervous

Trendline No. 1: NBC political director Chuck Todd said on the Today Show that economic meltdown is hurting the GOP. "Republicans up for re-election are getting punished," Todd said. "This is hurting Republicans up and down the ballot." He said that there is a 50 percent chance that the Democrats will pick up 60 seats. "They could pick up more Senate and House seats than 2006," Todd said. "That's how bad things are for Republicans. Every day the Dow has one of these days, Republicans are seeing their tracking plummet."



Trendline No. 2: State officials say Indiana has 4,428,464 registered voters, including 740,970 new and updated registrations. For the presidential election four years ago, the state had 4,296,602 registered voters, including 565,368 new and updated (Indianapolis Star). [private]

Congressional

2nd CD: Republican: Luke Puckett. Democrat: U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly. **2008 Outlook:** With the stock market continuing to plummet Friday, Donnelly and Puckett are far apart on the best economic course to take (Kokomo Tribune). Puckett toured the district Thursday, blasting Donnelly's vote for Congress' \$700 billion economic stabilization bill as violating "the sacred trust of our free-enterprise system." "The markets have not responded positively, the crisis is still with us," Puckett said. "Washington offered up more plans to expand the size of government without actually dealing with the root of our economic problem." Donnelly responded with his own critique of Puckett's preference of an alternative "bailout" plan, first put forth by the House Republican caucus. "Unfortunately, by the time they were done implementing that plan, the patient would be dead on the table," Donnelly said. "We're not in a position where we can have ideological discussions." While Congress authorized Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke to

purchase shares in banks and bad mortgage assets, the money hasn't yet been injected into the system. Donnelly said the markets will stabilize when that happens, probably early next week. The key difference in the two positions — the one passed by Congress early this week and Puckett's plan — is the fact Congress' bailout plan would allow the Secretary of the Treasury to purchase equity positions in the mortgage and banking sectors. That, said Puckett, is tantamount to "nationalization" of the markets. "It sounds too much like socialism," he said. "And it sounds too much like a little island country to the south of us, namely, Cuba." Puckett got some campaign help Tuesday from a well-known Republican congressman (South Bend Tribune). U.S. Rep. Mike Pence, R-Columbus, campaigned with Puckett at a Mishawaka fundraiser and then at a small rally inside St. Joseph County Republican headquarters in South Bend. Pence, who is running for his fifth term in the House, said Puckett has strong leadership skills. "If you haven't noticed, he's a fairly energetic guy," Pence said. "The first time I met him, I was overwhelmed by his personal faith, by his energetic approach to his candidacy and by his optimism about America." **Status:** Safe Donnelly

3rd CD: Republican: U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. Democrat: Michael Montagano. Libertarian: William Larsen. **2008 Outlook:** Souder is nervous. He believes he can pull this race out unless Obama carries the state, which he still doesn't believe will happen. Sources tell Fort Wayne



MICHAEL MONTAGANO

Observed that \$487,000 has been committed to television advertising by the DCCC in the Third District. That represents an approximately 1900 point buy which means even the most casual television viewer is likely to be exposed to the advertising numerous times. The first ad is to begin running this morning. Among this group of potential upsets, Souder might be the most vulnerable (Roll Call). His campaign operation appears to have engendered the most criticism among Republican operatives familiar with these newly competitive races.

Montagano has raised more money than Souder, has made inroads with the 3rd district's moderate and business-minded Republicans who have never warmed to Souder's strident conservatism and has developed a reputation for being personable. Souder has never faced a competitive general election race, has never been a big fundraiser and is viewed as abrasive. One Indiana-based GOP operative expects the strong conservative lean of the Fort Wayne-area district and the presidential turnout to ultimately save



Souder's job. But he said the Congressman isn't doing himself any favors with his advertising, and he added that media there would be cheap for the DCCC to purchase. Democratic presidential nominee Sen. Barack Obama (Ill.) is making a strong play for Indiana's electoral votes, and his organization might also aid Montagano on Election Day. "I think Souder's under 50, and I think it's in single digits," the Indiana Republican operative said. "Do I think it's in the margin [of error] yet? No. But Montagano doesn't have to be in the margin yet. There are still three weeks left." Some Republicans report hearing of similar conversions in Ohio, Indiana and North Carolina, and they fear that the change is irreversible. Voters who have been blaming Bush and Republicans in general for the financial crisis now seem to be tying it around McCain's neck as well. Rep. Mark Souder, an Indiana Republican, said he was looking at an "Obama tide" in his district and wondering about his own re-election: "Can I withstand a firestorm?" (Los Angeles Times). "The impression of McCain on the economy is that he wanted more deregulation than Bush" at a time that voters are demanding more help from the government, he said. "I'm not sure right now that McCain can carry seven states," added Souder, whose home state has not picked a Democrat for president since 1964. "In the end I think McCain will carry Indiana. But if you are fighting for Indiana, you are in trouble." A Cooper & Secrest Poll (503 Likely Voters — MoE +/- 4.4% Oct. 6-7) taken for the Mike Montagano congressional campaign, shows U.S. Rep. Mark Souder with a 44-39 percent lead. Libertarian William Larsen gets 4 percent and 13 percent are undecided, Souder's fav/unfavs are both 48%. **Status:** Leans Souder

4thCD: Republican: U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer. Democrat: Nels Ackerson. **2008 Outlook:** Buyer has \$806,324 cash-on-hand compared to Ackerson's \$100,632. Buyer raised \$270,674 in 3Q TO Ackerson's \$128,782. Buyer's numbers do not include an \$80,000 event last held Friday in Indianapolis, his largest one day even. **Status:** LIKELY BUYER

9th CD: Republican: Mike Sodrel. Democrat: U.S. Rep. Baron Hill. Libertarian: Eric Schansberg. **2008 Outlook:** Sodrel said he believes Americans face losing liberties gained in

the Revolutionary War if Obama defeats Sen. John McCain. Electing Obama also would mean more government regulation and higher taxes, Sodrel said (Columbus Republic). "As your (county party) chairman pointed out, we're in danger of electing a tyrant," Sodrel said. "I don't think he's a communist; (Karl) Marx said you had to do it with bullets. I think he's a socialist, and he wants to do it with ballots," Sodrel said. 9th District Republican Party Chairman Larry Shickles released the following statement in response to a letter that Baron Hill sent to supporters: "I'm disappointed that Baron has decided to play this off as comical. While a debate of this format would certainly be unusual, I think it would provide valuable information to voters. Democrat Officials have portrayed it as only suitable for Law Enforcement purposes and not the political arena. Law enforcement officers use lie detectors because it makes their job of identifying true criminals and the truth easier. Criminals typically do not like the use of such machines and apparently career politicians share that feeling and are afraid as well of lie detectors, but public servants who run for office who have nothing to hide should not have a problem being hooked up to one. That's why I suspect both Mike Sodrel and Eric Schansberg have agreed to such a format for a debate. They have nothing to hide. In a letter to supporters, Baron called the lie detector proposal "childish behavior" and claimed the Republican Party is attempting to "distort my record." **Status:** Leans Hill

Statewides

Attorney General: Republican Greg Zoeller. Democrat: Linda Pence. **2008 Outlook:** Former Vice President Dan Quayle was in town to push Zoeller's candidacy. Quayle said that Zoeller, a former aide, "is up to the job" and called him a "hard worker" and has "integrity." Zoeller was asked if he thought the winner of this race would follow the gubernatorial race. Zoeller expects Daniels to win and said he will be up on TV for the rest of the campaign. Zoeller believes that many 18 to 23 year olds who have registered won't be voting a straight ticket that might help Pence. "I don't think they are going to be straight party voters. They will look at the candidates." **Status:** Tossup



GOP attorney general nominee Greg Zoeller with former Vice President Dan Quayle on Wednesday. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



Superintendent of Public

Instruction: Republican: Tony Bennett. Democrat: Richard Wood. **2008 Outlook:** Wood is in Africa, but campaign manager Kathy Dale would not describe the trip as a safari. Wood is in South Africa for two weeks visiting schools, learning about what is going on in education globally, Dale said. Bennett has a slight lead over Wood 36-29 percent in a WISH-TV poll. However, 35 percent -- nearly as many as supported Bennett -- were undecided. The poll was a telephone survey of 800 likely voters conducted by Maryland-based Research 2000 from Sept. 29-Oct. 3. The rumors had him wearing a khaki outfit, riding in a jeep in the African bush looking for lions and elephants. **Status:** LIKELY BENNETT

Legislature

Overview: We believe the best pickup opportunities for Republicans are HD26 (Truitt vs. Polles), HD63 (Messmer vs. Burger), and HD46 (Heaton vs. Tincher). But Democrats could pick up HD15 (Lehe vs. Sutton), HD31 (Harris vs. Pearson), HD44 (Thomas vs. Michael) and the two Indianapolis seats: HD89 (Barnes vs. Swatts) and HD97 (Elrod vs. Sullivan). There is a great deal of negative contrasting mail dropping in these races.

HD46: Republican: Bob Heaton, Democrat: State Rep. Vern Tincher. **2008 Outlook:** Brooks LaPlant is back! Tincher has dropped nasty mail noting former State Rep. LaPlante was fined \$10,000 by the Indiana Election Board for campaign finance violations while Heaton served as campaign finance director. You get the feeling that Tincher won't have much remorse over using that tactic. **Status:** Tossup.

HD89: Republican: Christopher Swatts. Democrat: John Barnes. **2008 Outlook:** Swatts is running a heavy rotation of cable TV ads saying Barnes opposes property tax caps. **Status:** Tossup

HD97: Republican: State Rep. Jon Elrod. Democrat: Mary Ann Sullivan. **2008 Outlook:** Elrod is running TV ads saying Sullivan is opposed to the tax caps and that if their views prevail, property taxes will go up. The ads use a split screen of two

Indiana House Horse Race

Democrats

51

HD26 (Open) Polles vs. Truitt
HD63 (Open) Messmer vs. Burger
HD46 Tincher vs. Heaton

HD5 Fry vs. Miller
HD17 Demobowski vs. MacKillop

HD75 Avery vs. Strauss
HD37 Reske vs. Gaskill

Republicans

49

Tossups

HD15 Lehe vs. Sutton
HD31 Harris vs. Pearson
HD44 Thomas vs. Michael
HD89 (Open) Swatts vs. Barnes
HD97 Elrod vs. Sullivan

Leans

HD35 Lutz vs. Mengelt
HD4 Soliday vs. Chubb
HD92 Hinkle vs. DeKemper

Likely

HD20 Dermody vs. Cooley
HD38 Clements vs. Snow
HD52 (Open)Yarde vs. Papai

Safe

Democrats: Austin, Bischoff, Blanton, Robertson, Lawson, Harris, C. Brown, Bauer, Cheatham, Niezgodski, Dvorak, Pelath, Stevenson, Rear-don, Dobis, V. Smith, VanDenburgh, Bardon, Klinker, Herrell, Tyler, Grubb, Kersey, Pflum, Pierce, Welch, Battles, Goodin, Stemler, Cochran, Oxley, Stilwell, Avery, Van Haaften, Riecken (Open), GiaQuinta, Moses, DeLaney (Open), Pryor (Open), Bartlett, Porter, Crawford, Summers, Day.

Republicans: Borrer, Neese, Wolkins, Walorski, Ruppel, Friend, McClain, J. Thompson, Richardson, Turner, Davis, Torr, Steuerwald, T. Brown, Borders, Foley, Culver (Open), Leonard, Dodge, Cherry, Saunders, Knollman, Eberhart, Burton, M.Smith, Koch, Duncan, Crouch, Lehman (Open), Espich, Bell, Pond, Noe, Bosma, Murphy, Behning, Frizzell. ❖

identical homeowners Sullivan received endorsements from a wide variety of organizations, ranging from the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce to the Indiana State Teachers Association. "I'm so pleased to have support from such a diverse group," Sullivan said. "I've spent the past year reaching out to community leaders, constituents and organizations like these to let them know why I want to serve this district." Sullivan recently announced "The Mary Ann Plan," which focuses on five major areas: our ailing economy, our education system, our health care crisis, the property tax situation and the pressing need for government reform. Sullivan articulated her plan after collecting input from the district she seeks to represent. "As a state representative, my door will always be open, and I intend to bring everyone to the table," Sullivan said. "More importantly, I'm not going to turn my back on the district to run for something else. I'm 110 percent committed to this job." **Status:** Tossup



Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-

Star: Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star: In a debate long ago, one candidate derided his rival's "new ideas" and demanded to know, "Where's the beef?" Over the past eight months, Hoosiers have been served a triple cheeseburger-sized portion of the 2008 presidential politics, with only a side-order of Republican. If they peek under the campaign bun, they're bound to ask, "Where's McCain?" On Wednesday, his Democratic opponent, Barack Obama, visited Indiana for the 46th time in 2008. John McCain has been here twice — Feb. 22 and July 1. Of course, Obama's first 40 Hoosier stops came during his tight Indiana primary race against Hillary Clinton, who blanketed the state, too. McCain had no real opposition, and didn't have to stump here. That still leaves the GOP ticket appearing far less focused on Indiana folks. Here's a suggestion for McCain: Come and get the beef. Why not shake a few hundred hands and sample the succulent buried beef made at the Tangier Community Center during the famed Parke County Covered Bridge Festival, now under way? He could bring running mate Sarah Palin, and she could hunt deer with a bow, while the senator enjoys coffee and a sandwich.

Tracy Warner, Fort Wayne Journal

Gazette: Speaking to municipal officials Monday, Jill Long Thompson indicated she would apply the brakes to recommendations of the Kernan-Shepard commission, a position likely to go over even better with county officials. But in voicing concerns about the report to the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, Long Thompson said she would seek hearings that have already been held and seek legal changes that have already been made. While commending the work of the Kernan-Shepard Commission, Long Thompson told the audience that, as governor, she would "hold a series of public hearings around the state before proceeding with any of the commission's recommendations," her campaign's news release said. Getting ideas from the public is good, but the bipartisan commission itself already conducted a series of public meetings before issuing its recommendations. Long Thompson also said she would support legislation giving local communities more power to consolidate functions, eliminate elected offices and streamline government without seeking prior approval from the Indiana General Assembly. That's largely what a bill championed by state Sen. David Long and adopted in 2006 does, though few localities have successfully used House Enrolled Act 1362. Like many local officials, Long Thompson called for decisions about reorganizing local government to be made locally, not statewide. That's a good idea in theory, but, in fact, it will very likely require legislative action to push some of the commission's more significant recommendations into

law. Long Thompson's stance on Kernan-Shepard is emblematic of a campaign that has largely failed to show how the Democratic candidate offers a better alternative to Gov. Mitch Daniels. Even Democrats are privately voicing their disappointment in the former congresswoman's campaign. Granted, Daniels has Long Thompson at a disadvantage in fundraising — but that makes it even more important for the challenger to deliver a clear message with an overriding theme.

Leslie Stedman Weidenbener,

Louisville Courier-Journal: Just a day after Democrat Barack Obama visited the Indiana State Fairgrounds for a rally with tens of thousands of his supporters, South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham came to Indiana to make the case for Republican John McCain. Indiana is "an important state," Graham said, a few hours before he spoke to leaders at the Indiana State Republican Dinner. He called Indiana a "state we

have to win, a state we will win." The fact that Graham -- McCain's most loyal political ally and perhaps his most able surrogate -- even uttered those words is a testament to the state of the presidential race. If you've paid much attention at all, you know Hoosier voters haven't sent their electors to vote for a Democrat for president since 1964, when Lyndon Johnson was elected. The Republican and Democratic presidential candidates have paid nearly no attention to Indiana for years. Leaders of both state parties tell stories about their inability even to get basic yard signs and bumper stickers to pass out to supporters in previous elections. There were no candidate visits to the state, unless the candidates were here to raise money for themselves or someone else. But with a staff of roughly 100 people in Indiana and millions of dollars in advertising here, Obama seems to have made it a race. His fairgrounds speech last week was his 46th campaign stop in the state and sixth since the May primary. He made a personal plea for Hoosiers' votes. "Indiana, if you will stand with me, if you will work with me, if you will vote for me in 27 days ... we will win this general election," Obama said. "You and I together are going to change the country and going to change the world."

Rich James, Post-Tribune:

"Indiana is now in play." "Indiana is a battleground state." Music to the ears. For the first time since 1964 -- when Lyndon Johnson carried the state -- the pollsters are saying Indiana could go blue. How many election nights have you watched and heard the TV anchors put Indiana in the red column before any other state? Things are changing. The Fat Lady hasn't yet sung, but she's warming up in the wings. ❖





Palin rally sells out at Verizon Wireless

INDIANAPOLIS - The McCain-Palin campaign reports that Friday's Road to Victory Rally featuring Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin at the Verizon Wireless Music Center nearly sold out in 24 hours (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette).

Those who have requested tickets online at www.johnmccain.com but have not picked them up yet are urged to visit their nearest ticket center as soon as possible. They are being distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. A ticket is required to attend. Those still wanting a ticket may want to call ahead to the nearest ticket distribution center to see if tickets are still available, the announcement said. Because the 24,000-seat venue in Noblesville is expected to be full, the gates will open early to accommodate traffic and provide additional time for guests to pass through security. Parking lots will open at 11 a.m., doors, open at 1 p.m. and the program begins at 4:30 p.m.



Michelle Obama in Fort Wayne

FORT WAYNE - Michelle Obama repeated Wednesday the message she first brought to Fort Wayne in April: Indiana matters. Obama spoke at Grand Wayne Center on behalf of her husband, Democratic presidential nominee Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois. "Barack really gets it (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). He gets it because he's lived it," she said. "Don't we want someone in the White House who knows what it's like to carry a little debt?" The Obama campaign still has its eye on Indiana as a swing state that could put the Democratic nomi-

nee in the White House, and despite a lead in many polls – and references by speakers at the rally to "the future first lady" – Michelle Obama said Wednesday the campaign isn't taking anything for granted. "Barack Obama will be the underdog until he is sitting in the White House," she said.

Quayle called Palin

INDIANAPOLIS - Having once been on the receiving end of criticism about his youth and qualifications to be vice president, Dan Quayle said he offered a little advice to Gov. Sarah Palin recently: "Just go out and be yourself." Twenty years after he was George H.W. Bush's surprise running mate, Quayle reflected on history repeating itself with a little-known, 40-something politician being chosen as the Republican vice presidential nominee (Corbin, Evansville Courier & Press). This time it's Palin, the governor of Alaska and Sen. John McCain's running mate. Quayle was in Indianapolis to attend a fundraiser Tuesday for Greg Zoeller, his former aide who now is the Republican nominee for state attorney general. Zoeller, who faces Democratic nominee Linda Pence, said Quayle helped raise an estimated \$50,000 for his campaign. On Wednesday, Quayle recalled how in 1988 he was elevated from a little-known Indiana senator to vice presidential candidate overnight. "Even though I had been in Congress for 12 years and I was known more than (Palin) was, still it was an announcement and an appointment that was not expected," Quayle said of the intense campaign frenzy that year. Although Quayle did not feel the media treated him fairly in 1988, he declined to say whether he thinks the same is true for Palin. Quayle told the Alaska governor: "Look, just be yourself. You were selected by John McCain because of who you are and what you have done, and don't let them take anything away from you.". Despite some predictions that Indiana might be a

battleground state this year, Quayle believes the McCain-Palin ticket will carry the Hoosier state and win its 11 electoral votes.

Obama rally at Grant Park election night

CHICAGO - It's not a done deal yet, but all indications are that campaign officials are leaning toward Hutchinson Field on the south end of Grant Park as the site of their election night party (WBBM-TV).

Rep. Hill says things going 'too well'

COLUMBUS - Democrats should fight like crazy through the election and not assume any race is won, no matter what lead the polls show, a current and a former congressman warned Wednesday (Columbus Republic). U.S. Rep. Baron Hill, D-Ind., and former U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton, D-Ind., spoke to about 25 people at a fundraising lunch for Hill at the Harrison Lake Country Club clubhouse. Hill, who spoke first, said his campaign for re-election was going "almost too well" in the last two-plus weeks before the election.

Statewides report funds

INDIANAPOLIS - Republican Tony Bennett, superintendent of Greater Clark schools, raised \$106,449 in the quarter ending Sept. 30 and had \$40,419 in his race for state superintendent of public instruction. His Democratic opponent, Richard Wood, raised \$27,226 for the quarter and showed a deficit of \$1,570 (Louisville Courier-Journal). New Albany native Greg Zoeller, running for attorney general, raised \$445,987 during the quarter and had \$470,061 for the last weeks of the campaign. His Democratic opponent, Linda Pence, raised \$372,078 and had \$640,062 to spend.