



Bucshon on the cusp of Congress

Heart surgeon expects to play key role in health ‘repeal & replace’

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Dr. Larry Bucshon appears to be on the cusp of winning a seat in Congress. Polls show him with double-digit leads over State Rep. Trent Van Haaften in a race many thought would be the traditional “Bloody 8th” battle that have played out in southwestern Indiana over the past two decades.

But Bucshon’s probable ascension to Congress may signal what could be a five-phase progression on American 21st Century health care. Its scenario would go as follows:

1. The Democratic controlled Congress passes the Affordable Care Act and President Obama signs it into law in March. It attracts the votes of Indiana Democratic U.S. Reps. Joe Donnelly, Baron Hill and Brad Ellsworth.
2. Bucshon and at least 38 other Republicans win Democratic seats on Nov. 2, forging a GOP majority in the U.S. House. If the Republicans can retake 10 Democratic U.S. Senate seats - a “steep challenge” in the eyes of



Washington political analyst Stuart Rothenberg because California is “slipping away” and the GOP will need to win two out of three races in Washington, Connecticut and West Virginia - Congressional Republicans would be in a position to force “repeal” votes in the next Congress.

Continued on page 3

Hoosier prairie fires

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. - The Indiana of today is one of strange tans and browns under a canopy of wilted greens. It’s like a winter carpet in summer. The harvest came in early, with dust trails visible for miles as combines strip the grain from our arid land. On the banked bends of county roads, you can find the yellow crescent of spilled corn from farm trucks loaded to the brim that glows at dusk.

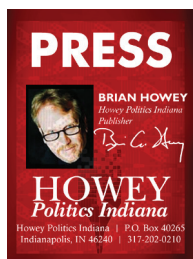
The torrents of rain we had in May and June disappeared in July as more than 40 days of 90 degree heat set in.

But more ominously - both agricul-



“I thought I was coming here for, at best, 10 years. I’ve stayed almost 50, so I missed the mark a little.”

- Lee Hamilton





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turally and politically - Hoosiers have been confronted with prairie firestorms this autumn. It can be wedged rocks sparking under the combines that light the tinderbox fields ablaze in places like Rushville and Franklin, sending red and yellow devils roaring across cornfields, fence posts and tree lines.

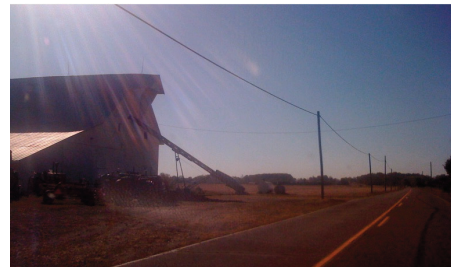
The prairie fires have invaded idled factories, stressed out council chambers, into schools, and of course the kitchens of the unemployed where Kraft macaroni and Ramen noodles are replacing T-bones and tenderloins. The prairie fires have blazed into campaign offices, where endangered incumbents toil to reconnect to the voters who brought them the victories of a few short years ago.

It's an utter contrast to that cloudy May night at the American Legion Mall where more than 20,000 sat in a gloomy shower to listen to Barack Obama and Stevie Wonder two years ago. Or that day, that muddy, gloomy day - Oct. 8, 2008 - when Obama came to the Indiana State Fairgrounds.

In the Oct. 9, 2008, edition of Howey Politics, the crisis was present, as it is now: Hoosiers had been hearing about the financial collapse, golden parachutes, bailouts and rescues. Earlier in the week on The Drudge Report, there was a report that the entire Western financial system was on the verge of collapse "within days." Mad money man Jim Cramer told viewers on the Today Show to sell all stock if they needed their money within five years. That followed record losses on the Dow, Nasdaq, and S&P that quickly spread across the globe. It was within this extraordinary crisis that Barack Obama came to the Indiana State Fairgrounds on a gloomy, muddy, rainswept

Wednesday. He brought with him variations on the messages of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and candidate Ronald Reagan. "We meet today in a moment of great uncertainty," Obama said. "I know we can steer out of this crisis. Our destiny is not written for us, but by us," Obama said. "That's who we are."

And Obama mimicked President Ronald Reagan and offered a variation of his "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" used in his 1980 campaign. Obama said that with the global financial markets under deep duress, "At this pace, we should be asking are we better off than we were four weeks ago?"



Today in Indiana, there is palpable anger at Obama, even though the Indianapolis Business Journal reported

last weekend that 100,000 Hoosiers are now back working in Hoosier auto plants. Between that day in October and the time Obama took his oath of office, we faced not only a Great Depression, but the potential loss of our beloved auto industry - from the Chrysler complex in Kokomo to the sprawling GM plant just south of Fort Wayne and the older plants in places like Bedford and Marion.

In this fall of discontent, the contours have changed and are confounded. Instead of hailing Obama as a president "who saved the auto industry" he is loathed by Republican candidates who say he perverted centuries of bankruptcy law. Had the 140,000-worker auto sector vanished, our own Great Depression would have been grueling and much more shocking than the steady loss of income we feel, or the shoots of poverty invading more neighborhoods, more food banks, more family kitchens.

When the UAW could have



saved the GM stamping plant and hundreds of their own jobs in Indianapolis earlier this month after taking wage concessions, they voted to close it down, instead of taking a chance, rebuilding a company and perhaps their own pay.

In 1982 I lived and reported in Elkhart, where the unemployment lines were long. President Reagan doled out surplus cheese and urged us to "stay the course" and even during those bleak times, we could envision what would become "morning in America."

Today, our new morning seems a long way away. There is no clear path. Our manufacturing sector is vanishing. In just about every Indiana city and town, you can find the ghost factories. There's a haunting one on West 56th Street in Indianapolis - Diversified Systems - where the playground for the company's day care center sits, weed infested and lonely.

We hear predictions that the jobless rate will hover in the 10 percent range through 2011. It may not come down below 8 percent until mid-decade.

Our homes are losing value. A mortgage lender told me that 40 percent of those he comes across fit that bill. A woman with a previously pristine credit score finds that because she missed one payment several years ago, her credit score sits at 683 and she must pay an \$1,800 "risk coverage fee" to refinance. There's no recourse to the three credit agencies: there is no one there you can talk to; no number to dial; no easy way to challenge a score. Even a well-documented rebuttal will bring this from Experian: It will fall off your credit score in 2013.

While incumbent political campaigns feel this heat from the sun, from the high pressure system stuck over Atlanta, creating a Hoosier island of drought, from idled factories and single mothers clawing out an existence, from jobless 53-year-olds who have no hope of regaining their prior salary, the fact is that Republicans and Democrats in Washington haven't worked together. They've spent the last two years seeking an advantage for Nov. 2. The

loser will be poised for a payback. The winner will almost certainly seek retribution. Suicides skyrocket in Porter and Vanderburgh counties.

The right raises the specter of "socialism." Yet, in last Friday's New York Times business section in an article on Eli Lilly & Company, an analyst for Barclays Capital - C. Anthony Butler - cited the company's longtime relationship to Indianapolis as an "impediment" to taking measures like slashing costs to preserve its margins and dividends despite Lilly cutting thousands of local jobs. "I worry that they can't do that because they're too ingrained in the fabric of the community," Butler said.

Is this the capitalism that will secure our futures? Or is it all about shareholders?

Most people I talk with outside of my political range are resigned to the winners acting like the losers. The Who summed it up four decades ago: "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss." Some wonder if Roger Daltry was on to something when he said, "Hope I die before I get old."

People on that soggy day at the Indiana State Fairgrounds looked at Barack Obama and sought "hope" and "change" and it is elusive. On TV tonight, Rep. Mike Pence can be found in an ad, standing in a storm-swept cornfield under the Hope, Ind., water tower saying "change is in the air, a whirlwind from Washington has swept into Indiana." We hear him say, "This is the moment. Freedom always wins."

But we must wonder.

If hope wins, that means that Republicans and Democrats have to work together, to form some semblance of trust, and compromise. That hasn't happened over the past two years. Perhaps it's time for a third party.

In this autumn of prairie fires, the blaze of my own cynicism - long missing from my character - smolders. Sometimes I think of Democrats and Republicans and whisper this: a pox on both your houses. ❖

Bucshon, from page 1

3. That would set the stage for vetoes by President Obama. Republican majorities would also attack the reforms in appropriations, according to U.S. Rep. Mike Pence.

4. The vetoes would set the stage for the 2012 presidential and congressional elections where the Republican presidential nominee - New York Times columnist David Brooks predicted last week that it would be vociferous ACA critic and Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels - would battle the Obama reelection on a referendum on the health reforms. If Obama wins that election, the 2010 ACA reforms become

the entrenched law of the land.

5. But if the Republican nominee wins - most likely bringing along a Republican Congress, that sets the stage for what Bucshon calls "repeal and replace."

"If we repeal the current health care laws, there will be new provisions in the repeal legislation," Bucshon, a Newburgh heart surgeon, told HPI on Tuesday at a Broad Ripple Starbucks.

The scenario is a tall order. Many of the ACA provisions such as preventing people with preexisting conditions from losing their coverage are already underway.

Indiana - and Bucshon's candidacy in the 8th - could be the earliest indicator on whether Republicans can cash in on the anti-ACA movement spurred in part by the



Tea Party movement. Beyond Bucshon's big lead - an On Message Poll conducted on behalf of the NRCC showed Buchson leading Van Haaften 41-20 percent on Sept. 13-14 and the GOP led the congressional generic 45-29 in the 8th CD - Rasmussen Reports showed support for repeal declined to 50 percent this past week, the lowest since Obama signed the reforms into law, with 44 percent opposing repeal. Indiana voters, however, have supported repeal by more than 60 percent. Former Bush strategist Karl Rove is telling Republicans that due to the early closing of Indiana polls on Nov. 2 all eyes will be on the state as an early indicator.

Buchson is one of two medical doctors running for Congress in Indiana, with 3rd CD Democratic nominee Dr. Tom Hayhurst running an underdog campaign against State Sen. Marlin Stutzman for an open seat.

Hayhurst has backed the Obama reforms, noting, "As a medical doctor for over 35 years in Northeast Indiana, I understand that Hoosier families have bills to pay and they all seem to be going up. And nowhere is this more true than health care. For American families, the health care crisis is primarily an economic issue. A comprehensive and affordable basic level of health care can be provided to all Americans. It can be achieved with a health care system that is efficient, proactive, and makes economic and common sense. I support fiscally responsible proposals that extend a basic level of health care to all Americans while retaining the right of an individual or employer to choose the type of health care that is satisfactory for him or her."

Bucshon is critical of the Obama reforms from a conservative, free market standpoint. But he does not support repeal and going back to the pre-Obama days.

"As a physician, I have very serious concerns about the intended and unintended consequences of this bill as well as future access to quality medical services in the U.S.," he explained. "We will be heading toward a two-tiered system like in many countries that have government-run health care. This legislation will set the stage for those who can afford private care while the rest of us will have long waits and experience rationing due to financial concerns of the government. The ongoing physician shortage is likely to continue and may worsen. The quality of physician services is likely to decrease. We need healthcare reform, but not the type of reform which has been put into law."

One HPI source who operates a retirement center calls the current reform a "backdoor into a single-payer system." On Jan. 1, 2014, he and many other employ-

ers facing hundreds of thousands of additional expenses will almost certainly pay the lower fines the ACA requires for companies not providing health costs, allowing their employees to go into the government-provided health care pools.

Bucshon reiterated, "I believe that health care reform is necessary and that there are some common sense reforms that can help get costs under control within this legislation. This being said, the approach being taken by the Democrat controlled Congress is the wrong solution. I firmly believe that government oversight and control are not necessary to advancing us toward the goal of health-care reform. The private sector, with help of the federal government, can begin to solve the problems with our health care system by adopting common sense healthcare reform."

On his campaign website, Bucshon listed solutions that will "get us on the right track toward a more affordable system without compromising quality and access."

1. Enacting real medical liability reform to decrease the costs of defensive medicine and free courts of frivolous lawsuits. As a beginning, we need to implement a national system of tort reform similar to what exists in Indiana today. This includes caps on non-economic damages, restrictions on attorney contingency fees, and a statute of limitations on the filing of lawsuits. However, this is just a start. We still have problems with defensive medicine in Indiana. I believe a system of medical/legal review panels in each state will be required to solve the problem long term. This may require a constitutional amendment. Enacting legal reform will save the system as much as \$100 billion per year.

(Bucshon did not tell HPI what malpractice insurance costs his practice, but when a ballpark \$250,000 figure from other doctors we've interviewed was mentioned, he agreed that such a price is common.)

2. Reform is required to prevent insurance companies from unlawfully cancelling health coverage simply because a person is sick. "Insuring people with pre-existing conditions must be required at a reasonable cost," Bucshon said. "Elimination of annual or lifetime spending caps will protect people with catastrophic or chronic disease by ensuring health plans meet their obligations."

3. Allow small businesses to pool together through Associated Health Plans (AHPs) to leverage lower cost insurance on behalf of their employees. "This will make health insurance more affordable and accessible for small businesses," he explained.

4. "We need to allow auto-enrollment into





employer sponsored coverage, as long as employees are allowed to decline the coverage," Buchson said. "Currently, almost 10 million people have access to employer sponsored insurance and do not enroll. This represents a third of U.S. citizens who do not have health insurance."

5. Differences in state regulation of health insurance have resulted in significant variances in health insurance costs from state to state. "We need to allow Americans to purchase licensed health insurance in any state," Buchson said. "Insurance sold in a secondary state needs to still be subject to consumer protections and fraud and abuse laws of the policy holder's state of residence."

Doctors and specialists interviewed by HPI last winter explained that this type of reform would be the "single most effective way of bringing down insurance costs," a heart physician at St. Vincent said.

Richard J. Cockrum, a medical industry lobbyist for Capital Assets LLC in Indianapolis, told HPI, "I thought it was an interesting comment in your column that doctors said the interstate purchasing of insurance is one of the only cost savers. Did they explain how? The answer is that it will make for larger pools of risk. My response to that is: It is not how big your pool is but who is in it. I will take the risk of a pool if they are 21 and healthy and give you the General Motors pool, which is a perfect example that the size of a pool does not reduce costs."

Cockrum added, "President Bush tried every year he was in office to allow national associations to sell health insurance across state lines. It was opposed every year by insurance commissioners, attorneys general, and hundreds of consumer organizations. The reason of opposition is because the only way they could save by selling interstate is by being exempt from state requirements, including such things as minimal capital reserves, mandated benefits (autism, infant, obesity treatment, mammograms, prostate screening, etc)."

6. If a health insurance plan offers coverage to dependents, then the plan must cover dependents through their 26th birthday. "This will significantly reduce the number of young people who currently do not have health insurance coverage," Buchson said.

7. Standardization of health care forms and transactions is essential to reducing the administrative costs of health care. Standard insurance application and claim forms need to be required. A universal system to enroll doctors into health insurance plans is needed to reduce the costs and time required to enroll in hundreds of different plans.

8. Expand the accessibility to Health Savings Accounts.

9. Protect Medicare and Medicaid programs by creating a non-governmental commission to find and suggest implementation of the changes required to ensure

their long-term viability. "Clearly, some solutions will not be politically possible without non-governmental intervention," Buchson notes.

10. Buchson explains, "We need to find U.S. citizens who are already eligible for state or federal assistance and enroll them in the appropriate programs. This represents one-third of the uninsured."

11. Require states to establish either a functioning high risk pool or a reinsurance program and provide federal funding to assist these programs. Insurance offered through such programs will ensure everyone has access to affordable health care regardless of their health status.

Buchson laments the "unfunded mandate" that ACA has passed on to the states "at a time when they can least afford it."

He also calls the ACA a "jobs killer." He explained, "These mandates will increase the cost of doing business, driving some companies out of business and decreasing competition. This could eventually lead to total control of the market by the largest companies and the government, hurting our small businesses. This scenario could lead to the larger fear of a government-mandated single-payer system. The free market should prevail."

Buchson told HPI that "some of our smaller community hospitals could be in trouble" as bigger health entities such as Clarian, St. Vincent and Humana acquire hospitals in smaller communities. The communities that don't have such a facility will then fall behind on economic development. "That's a factor when a company looks at a town to set up operations," Buchson said.

Buchson talked of HPI's Phase 4. "Until we repeal the bill, I believe that over the next two years we will need to work toward revising many sections of the bill that are detrimental to the health care system and the businesses most affected," he explained. "The added taxation, unfunded mandates on the states, and Medicare cuts are a good place to start. I continue to believe that private sector solutions are the backbone of the American economy. Mandating private companies to spend a certain percentage of their dollars on services is a major over-reach by the federal government."

Van Haaften 'evolves'

One of the reasons Buchson has such a big lead in the polls is that Van Haaften is largely unknown across the sprawling 8th CD that reaches to counties well north of Terre Haute, bordering on U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky's 1st CD. He was plugged into the race as one of the "Bayh dominoes" following the junior U.S. senator's stunning retirement on Feb. 15.

While Buchson and Van Haaften both agree that "jobs and the economy" are the critical issues of this election, the Obama health reforms are the second most likely



topic they will hear. And Van Haaften has “evolved,” Republicans say “flip flopped,” on the issue.

The Evansville Courier & Press reported that on Facebook earlier this year, he listed himself as a fan of a left-leaning group then poised to oppose independent Connecticut Sen. Joe Lieberman, a former Democrat who was viewed as a potential obstacle to health care reform. The group view was titled, “If Joe Lieberman filibusters health care, I will donate to his opponent.”

Last year, Van Haaften spoke at a labor union-sponsored rally for health care reform. That day, he cited a sign proclaiming that, “In America, no one should go without health care, and that says it all for me. Next time a neighbor or friend talks to you and says, ‘I’m not sure about this health care situation,’ ask them if they believe as an American that each of us should be entitled to health care, no matter who we are, no matter where we come from. And I think that’s what this fight is all about, it’s just how great this country can be.”

The Courier & Press reported last week: Van Haaften now says he would not have voted for the health care reform bill that passed Congress in March. He supports “holding insurance companies accountable for abuses and ensuring they can no longer deny coverage because of pre-existing conditions. But I’m extremely concerned about the cost containment side of it. I’m not convinced that the costs of delivering health care are going to be kept down and that it’s not going to have a negative impact on small businesses in terms of taxes.”

Van Haaften’s website contains little on the subject. He supports reform that includes:

- Providing tax credits for small businesses so they can afford health care for their employees;
- Requiring insurance companies to cover people with pre-existing medical conditions;
- Eliminating the Medicare prescription drug “donut hole” to help seniors afford prescription drugs;
- Allowing children under 26 to be covered by their parents’ insurance policy; and
- Making health care in rural areas more accessible.

The doctor and politics

Buchson emerged as a GOP establishment-backed candidate in July 2009. Then Vanderburgh County Republican Chairman Nick Hermann and other 8th CD power brokers quickly backed Buchson, but he faced eight other candidates, including former Monroe County Chairman John Lee Smith and Tea Party activist Kristi Risk from Spencer.

Buchson edged Kristi Risk by a mere 32-29 percent margin. Buchson trailed Risk most of the primary election night before finally forging ahead late.

“We ran a good campaign in the primary,” the soft-spoken Buchson insisted. “We did what we needed to do.”

He is confident he has closed ranks and can count on Tea Party support. “I met with Kristi Risk two or three weeks ago. I’ve met with all of the candidates - you know we had eight in the primary - and we’re all on the same page.”

He has taken an array of conservative “free market” approaches. He wants to “eliminate government bailouts” and stop the distribution of TARP funds. When it comes to General Motors and Chrysler, Buchson advocates keeping “our government out of the business of seizing private companies. We have bankruptcy laws that could have dealt with GM. There could have been a normal bankruptcy that would have protected all creditors. The state of Indiana pension funds lost out.”

He is ardently opposed to the Cap-and-Trade legislation, noting, “every coal mine in Indiana except one is in my district. The other one is in DuBois County just outside of my district. It will take jobs away from Indiana.”

Buchson added, “The bill is about control of our industries. It is based on very poor data concerning global warming. The data does not support the premise that carbon dioxide emissions are playing a significant role in the world temperature variations. The temperature of the Earth has been changing over centuries with warmer and colder periods throughout history. This legislation will be devastating to the Southwestern and Wabash Valley areas of Indiana. It will lead to job loss and the loss of industry in the 8th District. Also, energy costs may increase three-fold.”

Buchson and Van Haaften have agreed to debate on Oct. 26 at WNIN-TV in Evansville.

Dems pulling out

On Wednesday, the Hotline Online reported that the DCCC cancelled its TV buy reservations for Van Haaften from Oct. 19 to Oct. 25. The NRCC’s Tom Erickson reacted, saying, “Washington Democrats are finally waking up to the harsh reality that career politician Trent Van Haaften is too extreme for Hoosier families. No one will be more heart-broken over this news than Van Haaften’s special interest friends who have lavished the lawmaker with gifts and trips over the years.”

It appears as though the days when a Hoosier medical doctor makes House calls are just around the corner. ❖



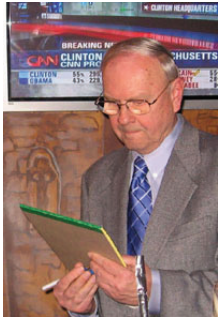


Running against the Indiana auto industry

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - No state, other than Michigan and Ohio, benefitted more than Indiana from the successful effort to save the American auto industry.

Yet, some Hoosier politicians, knowing better but shamelessly seeking to take advantage of voter dislike of anything termed "bail-out," claim that the decisive, successful government effort to save General Motors and Chrysler was neither successful nor needed.



Chrysler, rather than liquidating and sending the unemployment rate in the Kokomo area to over 20 percent, adds jobs and announces investments there. The still-too-high rate there is dropping, down from 12.6 a year ago to 11.7, not much above Indiana's statewide rate.

General Motors, rather than collapsing and sending the nation's economy over the brink on which it tottered, turns profitable, selling its now popular models at a pace enabling it to forgo some usual summer production shutdowns.

Indiana, with unemployment worse than the national average as it is, would have been devastated by the liquidation of General Motors and Chrysler. Liquidation was certain to come without the federal lifeline in a bankruptcy deal forcing the automakers and their union workers to make changes needed to survive and successfully compete.

In 2008, as the recession grew more threatening, Indiana ranked third in the nation, behind only Michigan and Ohio, in auto-parts jobs, and fourth in auto-assembly jobs.

If General Motors and Chrysler had gone down, those auto-parts jobs, so vital in many areas of Indiana, would have been liquidated along with the automakers. Ford, though needing no federal lifeline, supported saving its rivals because it depends on the same auto-parts operations that would have folded if losing work for two major customers.

Fear that federal funds to save the automakers would add billions to the deficit vanishes as the firms pay back what they received. Some projections are that the taxpayers could even make a profit as GM goes private again.

Fear of a turn to socialism, with critic taunts about GM being "Government Motors," also vanishes as the gov-

ernment steps out so that private investors can step in.

Criticisms of some other government stimulus efforts continue. And why not?

You have to be nuts, stupid or a partisan who can't admit the facts to claim that all the stimulus money was well spent for maximum results.

Also, you have to be nuts, stupid or a partisan who can't admit the facts to claim that the money to save the American auto industry was poorly spent and brought no results.

The Economist, that prestigious publication strongly advocating free markets, admitted it was wrong in criticizing the GM takeover, offering "an apology" to President Obama and saying "his takeover of GM could have gone horribly wrong, but it has not."

The publication said the lesson from the success is that for a government bail-out to work, "it must be brutal and temporary."

Not everybody apologizes for being wrong.

Indiana's state treasurer, Richard Mourdock, who sought to halt the lifeline for Chrysler in a suit to block the bankruptcy deal, even now pursues litigation for the political purpose of finding some court to say some aspect of the plan for Chrysler - and thus also for General Motors - was improper.

The serious threat already failed in the U.S. Supreme Court, and this additional litigation won't be able to shut down the Chrysler operations in Kokomo or cause ruin for auto-parts suppliers for General Motors in the South Bend area. Mourdock couldn't accomplish that before, and what Chrysler and General Motors accomplished won't be rolled back now.

But the continued effort enables Mourdock to raise funds and get publicity, neither of which he really needs for likely re-election as a Republican running in a very Republican year in a Republican-leaning state.

Murdock even convinces some folks, certainly those who want to be convinced that no government effort can be successful, that saving Indiana from economic devastation was wrong.

He insists that he really acted to save funds of Hoosier pensioners, whose money he had invested. Well, the amount negotiated for the pensions in the bankruptcy deal was higher than what was expected through liquidation.

Even the pensioners benefitted in Indiana, a state benefitting so much from the saving of the American auto industry. ❖

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



Ellsworth's 'lobbyist' assault finally lands, but it may be too late

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Within minutes of the Feb. 2 reemergence of Dan Coats as an Indiana Senate candidate, Indiana Democrats were fixated not on Coats as a former congressman, senator, potential secretary of defense, or ambassador.

They saw in Coats a "lobbyist" at a time when the profession ranks below pundits, used car salesmen and warehouse pianists on the fear and loathing scale.

"He's going to ask the Tea Party for support when he helped get TARP funds for Bank of America?" Indiana Democrat Chairman Dan Parker asked last winter.

It all pointed to a certain day - as it turned out, this past Tuesday - when "the lobbyist" would pay. Or as Liz Farrar, spokesperson for Democrat Brad Ellsworth's campaign, explained, "This is the day Dan Coats' campaign has been dreading. The day when Hoosiers learn exactly what Dan Coats has been doing since he abandoned Indiana 12 years ago to become a high-priced Washington lobbyist."

The Ellsworth campaign debuted "Sold Out" with a very modest 1,000 gross rating points buy in the Indianapolis media market. It calls Coats a "lobbyist who sold out Indiana to line his pockets" and attacks the Republican for making "millions as a Washington lobbyist while his firm was helping corporations ship jobs overseas."

Expecting this job, Coats had a response ad in the can and ready for airing the same day in media markets across the state. "With so many critical issues, this campaign should be conducted on the highest level," Coats says, looking into the camera. "Unfortunately my opponent has decided personal attacks are more important. He doesn't understand that this election isn't about me, it's about you. He supports President Obama about 90 percent of the time. That's the basic choice and all the false negatives ads can't change what is important."

The Ellsworth ad is the first since he last aired a TV ad six weeks ago on Aug. 17.

It also came as a new spate of independent

media polls showed the U.S. Senate race virtually out of reach. A WISH-TV poll conducted by EPIC-MRA showed Coats with a 51-33 percent lead over Ellsworth. A second EPIC-MRA poll conducted for WSBT-TV had Coats ahead 44-29 percent. Parker notes that despite five weeks of TV, Coats numbers have remained static.

Liz Soditi of the Associated Press reported over the weekend that Democrats "had all but written off at least three Senate races in North Dakota, Indiana and Arkansas. The party hasn't reserved any air time to protect incumbent Blanche Lincoln or help Brad Ellsworth win an open seat in Indiana."

Ellsworth ended last week learning that Sen. Bayh would shave off a sliver of his \$12 million war chest, with \$500,000 given to Indiana Democrats to apparently split



among the U.S. Senate race, the 2nd and 9th CDs where Reps. Joe Donnelly and Baron Hill are in dogfights, and the dozen or so Indiana House races that are still in play. Secretary of state candidate Vop Osili - even with Republican Charlie White's nutty meltdown that will result in a special prosecutor - probably won't see much of the Bayh trove. Parker said the money will be "left up to my discretion, but it's going to be invested in making sure we maintain control of the Indiana House, and turning out votes for our Senate candidate, Brad Ellsworth, and our congressional candidates."

The \$500,000 for the homestretch would be enough to buy about 1,100 gross rating points statewide, enough to drive one message in one race for about one week, but not including the Chicago media market.

Kevin Kellems, a spokesman for Coats, called the Ellsworth "Sold Out" ad "extremely predictable" and thus the campaign responded.



The Dan Coats campaign had this ad in the can awaiting the Ellsworth lobbying attack ad.

"Ellsworth is trying to impugn Dan Coats' character," Kellems said. "That's not what voters are looking for. People already know about Dan Coats' character. If he was unknown, they might have a shot, but this is the wrong campaign."

Coats entered the final month extremely confident, telling Lake County Republicans on Saturday morning, "We are on the cusp of victory." He told the Evansville Courier & Press he was thinking of his first speech on the Senate floor. "I want to let my future colleagues know where I'm coming from. It's very substantially different from what I experienced before," he said. "I've heard an awful lot here since February when I started all this. I have a very good understanding of what Hoosiers are thinking."

He warned the Lake County GOP, "Victory is not assured by fancy speeches or candidates' commercials and signs. Victory is assured by the people like you, willing to come out of your homes and businesses and neighborhoods to contribute, sign up to work for the candidate of your choice, make sure people are registered to vote, get the candidates messages in the hands of voters and get them out to vote on Election Day."

For the "Sold Out" ad to work for Ellsworth, he must up the media buy and expand it to South Bend, Fort Wayne, Evansville and Louisville in order to try to cut into Coats' margin. Money could be a huge impediment unless Bayh or national Democrats comes up with more funds. Parker told HPI that Ellsworth has enough money to stay up on the air through Election Day. On Friday Bayh will campaign with Ellsworth in Sellersburg, Evansville and Indianapolis.

And there are the debates, beginning at 8 p.m. Monday at IUPUI. Ellsworth has to land an indelible punch there, changing the subject and putting Coats on his heels. His supporters, however, must guard against a false sense of security. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Coats ❖

Democrats to raise ethical issues on Bischoff challenger McMillin

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

FRANKLIN - Indiana Democrats are expected to raise ethical issues on HD68 Republican challenger Jud McMillin next week.

A Sept. 18, 2006 Dayton Daily News story reported: A Centerville woman who was the victim of an aggravated burglary, and a reluctant potential witness against her boyfriend, who was a defendant in the case, has filed a lawsuit against an assistant Montgomery County prosecutor claiming legal malpractice and other actions. Crystal Stapleton claims former assistant prosecutor Judson G. McMillin pursued a romantic relationship with her while prosecuting her boyfriend. The issue was first raised in November by an attorney for John Charles Gonzalez, 25, also of Cen-

terville. But a judge ruled that while there may have been poor judgment in the case, it was not grounds for dismissal. Gonzalez later pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 60 days in jail. McMillin previously said he did nothing wrong because the relationship

didn't start until after he dropped out of the case on Sept. 9, 2005, and was replaced by another prosecutor. McMillin resigned from the prosecutor's staff on Sept. 16, 2005, and joined his father's law firm in Brookville, Ind. McMillin could not be reached Friday for comment.

"Bob Bischoff had information on McMillin he didn't use in 2008," said Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker.

HRCC's Mike Gentry told HPI this morning that the Montgomery County Bar Association "cleared Jud of any wrong doing." He also said that a civil suit in the case was dismissed. "Bob Bischoff engineered a whisper campaign last cycle," Gentry said. "If Bob Bischoff wants to play that game, there's plenty we can talk about him, too."

Indiana Democrats are taking aim at the open HD46 seat being vacated by State Rep. Vern Tincher, State Rep. Dick Dodge in HD51, and State Rep. Ed Clere in HD72.

Sources tell HPI that Indiana Trial Lawyers are anteing up \$50,000 to infuse in the campaign of Auburn attorney Codie Ross, who is challenging Dodge. Democrats





had been running cable TV in the Angola/Steuben County portion of the district and are now up on broadcast TV in the Fort Wayne market. The Democratic Blue Indiana blog observed: The GOP incumbent in this northeast Indiana district has a history of under-performing on Election Day, and his Democratic challenger this cycle is probably the strongest candidate he's ever faced. Picking up this seat would increase House Democrats' narrow margin for error in the chamber.

Gentry told HPI that HRCC polling shows Dodge leading Ross "in the high teens."

In the open HD46 seat, Indiana Democratic chairman Dan Parker has been consistently high on township trustee Bionca Gamble, who won a contested primary. Democrats are running ads for Gambill in the Terre Haute media market. Blue Indiana observed: This is a traditionally-conservative district left open by a well-liked Democratic Representative. This district closely resembles those held by several vulnerable Democratic Representatives, so holding this open seat would be a very good sign for other vulnerable districts. The Democratic majority in the Indiana House is currently the only thing preventing the defeat of three Democratic members of congress through gerrymandering.

In HD72, it's simply pay back time after Rep. Clere upset Democrat Bill Cochran in one of those eye-popping losses that no one really saw coming. Republicans note that Clere is vigorously working his district. New Albany attorney Shane Gibson will have the more enthusiastic support of Mayor Doug England and other party members who felt that Cochran wasn't a good campaigner and didn't bring home the bacon. Blue Indiana observes: Clere won this traditionally Democratic seat by 108 votes in the most shocking Indiana House upset of 2008. Winning it back will provide valuable breathing room for the Democrats' narrow, four-seat majority ahead of redistricting. Republicans note that Clere won the seat during the Obama tide, and believe he has a good chance to hold on during what most observers expect will be a Republican wave year.

Gentry said that HRCC polling shows Clere leading "in the high teens" though he would not share specific polling in either the Clere or Dodge races.

In HD26, a race that many thought would be tight given State Rep.

Randy Truitt won it in a recount in 2008, the HRCC polled and has Truitt leading Democrat Paul Roales 58 to 27 percent. Trevor Foughty of the Indiana Republicans noted that Truitt's fav/unfavs stand at 60/19 percent, even better than Gov. Daniels at 59/34 percent.

The generic numbers in HD26 favored Republicans 48/31 percent. Foughty told HPI that Truitt benefitted from TV ads HRCC ran in last summer. But he said they believe Truitt's lead is "largely a function of the environment."

"We're feeling pretty good about that one," Foughty said. "That one is down on the priority list a little bit." Which means that HRCC can redirect resources to either shore up an incumbent like Dodge and channel into one of its 20 or so challenger races.

In HD17, Democrats are running ads on behalf of State Rep. Nancy Dembowski in the South Bend media market. She is facing Republican Frances Elert.

Democrats also believe they caught a break when HRCC sent out mail pieces tying State Rep. Scott Reske to President Obama. "I hope they send out another Obama piece," Parker said, saying that it has stoked Reske's base in Anderson. "Kyle Hupfer doesn't realize that Scott Reske doesn't win elections in Pendleton, but in Anderson."

In HD21, Democrat Dwight Fish accused Republican Timothy Wesco of misusing a homestead exemption for his Osceola home. However, Democratic St. Joseph County Prosecutor Mike Dvorak announced on Wednesday that he would not prosecute Wesco.

HD44: Rep. Michael, Baird debate

Health care. Same-sex marriage. Tax caps. Those were just some of the issues District 44 Indiana state representative candidates Jim Baird (R) and Nancy Michael (D) discussed Wednesday night at a local candidates' forum (Barrand, Greencastle Banner-Graphic). "Education and jobs will be No. 1," Michael said. "We need to focus on what we can do to make Indiana a better environment

for new business, and we need to make sure we are hiring Hoosiers first. There are also a lot of problems with education funding." Baird said a first order of business for him would be to "stabilize the government and activate an entrepreneurial attitude." "The key to that is education," he said. Baird said he found it alarming that statistics showed only 58 cents for each of Indiana's educa-



State Rep. Nancy Michael and Putnam Commissioner Jim Baird debate Wednesday night in Greencastle. (Banner-Graphic photo)



tion dollars actually ended up being used in the classroom. "Teachers are being shorted in their ability to educate our greatest resource," he said.

Michael said the issue of overcrowding at Indiana's prisons weighed "heavy on my heart." "Overcrowding is an issue that needs to be addressed by looking at sentencing," she said. "I would also concentrate on mental health. There are 29,000 people waiting on waivers (to be able to access mental health treatment), and that's unacceptable."

When asked about energy conservation, Baird said he considered the issue "extremely important." "Indiana still uses a lot of coal, and we have to protect those jobs," he said. Michael said she believed sustainability was not just an issue for Indiana, but for the entire United States. "We are the ones who are going to have to set the pace for change," she said. Baird agreed. "We have to use technology to integrate and develop products that are more efficient," he said.

The candidates had vastly different takes on the subject of access to health care. "Access to health care is a right," Michael said. "I really struggle with this, because there are people who, through no fault of their own, simply can't afford it. This is a big issue." Baird didn't agree. "I'm not sure it's a right, but it is important," he said. "Obamacare is not the answer ... it negates our Healthy Indiana Plan." "Obamacare" is a colloquial name that has been attached to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care act, which was signed into law by President Barack Obama on March 23. The law includes numerous health-related provisions to take effect over a four-year period, including expanding Medicaid eligibility, subsidizing insurance premiums, providing incentives for businesses to provide health care benefits, prohibiting denial of coverage or claims based on pre-existing conditions, establishing health insurance exchanges and support for medical research.

Secretary of State: Into 'Tossup' zone

A WISH-TV poll shows Republican Charlie White leading Democrat Vop Osili 39-29 percent, with Libertarian Mike Wherry at 5 percent. "It says we got 26-percent of the folks who are undecided and who are still looking for someone who is going to represent them," says Osili.

Indiana Democratic Chairman Parker said he expected Osili to go up on TV with ads next week. Kyle Cox



Republican Charlie White has gone from a "safe" race to a tossup.

of the Osili campaign also indicated that TV was coming in the near future.

The race is potentially volatile after allegations of vote fraud surfaced late last month against White, who subsequently resigned his Fishers Town Council post acknowledging he had moved from his district. Hamilton County Prosecutor Sonia Leercamp will appoint a special prosecutor and Secretary of State Todd Rokita's office is investigating and will turn over a report to the special

prosecutor. In coverage of the WISH-TV poll, reporter Jim Shella repeatedly referred to the White situation as a "scandal."

The allegations have spurred a wave of earned media across the state along with a column by Indianapolis Star columnist Matt Tully. A Post-Tribune editorial called on White to leave the GOP ticket.

The WISH-TV poll is the first numbers in the race that up until September most figured would be a "safe" Republican race. With the Democrats potentially investing money in this race, it has turned competitive. In 2006, Secretary of State Todd Rokita won reelection by 2 percent over now State Rep. Joe Pearson. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

2nd CD: Donnelly up by 9%

Last week we were wavering on whether to put the this race in our "Tossup" zone. But a WSBT-TV poll had U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly leading Republican State Rep. Jackie Walorski 39-34 percent, but when it added in "leans toward" voters Donnelly was up 48-39 percent.

Walorski told WSBT-TV the same thing her campaign manager told HPI last week: "We are in a great position. At the end of the day, the poll that counts the most is on November 2nd. And getting out and turning our voters, I believe that we absolutely we will."

Donnelly's fav/unfavs stand at 47/32 percent, compared to Walorski's at 32/35 percent. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Donnelly

9th CD: Both parties ante up

The NRCC is pumping \$140,000 into the 9th CD on behalf of Republican Todd Young. "I think they see the momentum that we're seeing on the ground on a daily basis," Young campaign spokesman Ryan Burchfield told the Louisville Courier-Journal. "We definitely welcome the help."

In all, the GOP group's independent arm has



spent nearly \$300,000 during the general election campaign in an attempt to defeat Hill.

On Wednesday, Democratic sources say the DCCC would make a corresponding buy on behalf of U.S. Rep. Baron Hill. The sources said the buy will start in the Louisville market and will extend into the Indianapolis market.

The ad, "Southern Indiana", draws a sharp contrast between Baron Hill and Young with local supporters of Hill saying, "Todd Young is not one of us." It focuses on the fact that Baron Hill is a lifelong resident of Southern Indiana while Young is from Carmel and once described the 9th CD as in the "middle of nowhere."

It also focuses on Young's stances on issues such as support for a 23 percent national sales tax. The Hill campaign charges that Young signaled his support for the 23% tax at a Republican debate in North Vernon during this year's primary election, and then again during the endorsement process of the Independence Caucus, a radical Tea Party group.

Hill spent a good part of the week traveling to about a dozen cities touting his recent endorsement by the National Rifle Association. "Baron is going throughout the district to talk about it," said campaign spokesman Daniel Altman. Hill campaigned in Salem, Paoli, Ferdinand, Tell City, Versailles, Madison, Jasper, North Vernon and Corydon. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

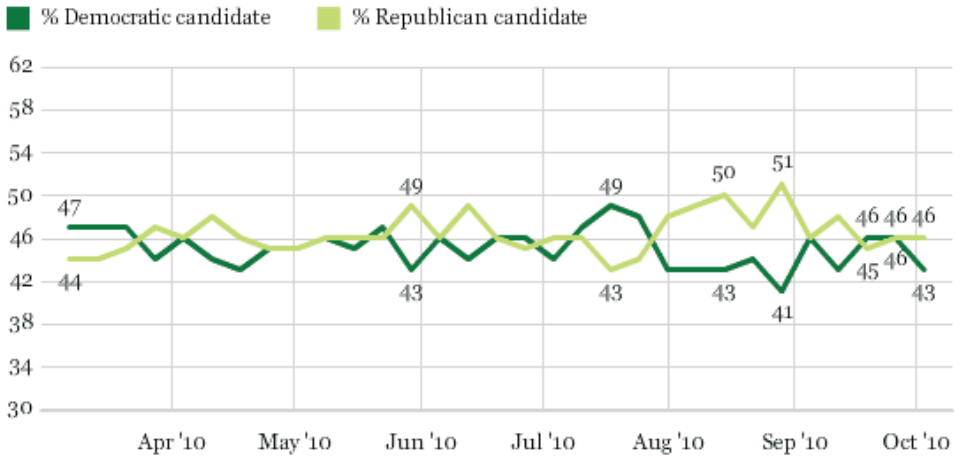
Marion County prosecutor

Gov. Mitch Daniels is featured in a TV ad for Marion County Prosecutor candidate Mark Massa. Daniels said when he searched for his chief counsel, "Unquestioned integrity came first, deep experience came next. Mark Massa was the natural choice. Mark Massa is exactly what we need for the next Marion County prosecutor." **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

Pence stumps for candidates

Republican U.S. Rep. Mike Pence is hot on the campaign trail, attending fundraisers, opening campaign offices, making speeches and talking to voters (Martin, Associated Press). But he's doing all those things for other candidates, raising cash for campaigns across the country while stockpiling political capital for himself that could pay off should he decide to seek higher office such as a

Vote Preferences in 2010 Congressional Elections, Based on Registered Voters



GALLUP

2012 White House run. Pence, the No. 3 Republican in the House, has visited candidates in Florida, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia and Maryland in the last several months. He's held fundraisers for Indiana U.S. Senate hopeful Dan Coats and nearly half a dozen Indiana congressional candidates, and Pence volunteers have made phone calls and traveled the state supporting other candidates. In his spare time, Pence has raised more than \$1 million for the National Republican Congressional Committee. Pence said the busier-than-normal campaign season is needed because the stakes are so high in the Nov. 2 election. "What we've been doing around Indiana and the country this year is of a much greater magnitude, but I believe that times call for it," he said. Pence sent contributions totaling \$105,000 to 70 candidates across the country - including a handful of contenders in the critical early states of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina (Politico).

Polling

Less than a month before the midterm elections, the political landscape remains strongly tilted toward Republicans, although Democrats have made modest improvements with voters since their late-summer low point, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll. Democrats have cut in half the GOP's early-September advantage on the question of which party's candidates voters say they will support on Nov. 2. They have also made small gains on the question of which party people trust to handle big issues, such as the economy and health care. Among likely voters, Republicans hold a six-point edge, 49 percent to 43 percent, on the congressional ballot. At this time four years ago, Democrats led by 12 points. ❖



Democrats Republicans

52 48

Republican Pickup

HD46: (Open, Tincher) Bionca Gambill (D) vs. Bob Heaton (R)
HD73: (Open, Oxley) Ryan Bowers (D) vs. Steve Davisson (R)

Tossup

HD17: Rep. Nancy Dembowski (D) vs. Frances Elert
HD30: Rep. Ron Herrell (D) vs. Mike Karickhoff (R)
HD37: Rep. Scott Reske (D) vs. Kyle Hupfer (R)
HD70: Rep. Paul Robertson (D) vs. Rhonda Rhoads
HD76: Sen. Bob Dieg (D) vs. Wendy McNamara (R)
HD89: Rep. John Barnes (D) vs. Cindy Kirchhofer (R)
HD19: Dan Klein (R) v. Rep. Shelli VanDenBurgh
HD31: Rep. Joe Pearson (D) vs. Kevin Mahan(R)
HD44: Rep. Nancy Michael (D) vs. Jim Baird
HD72: Shane Gibson (D) vs. Rep. Ed Clere(R)
HD77: Rep. Gail Riecken (D) vs. Cheryl Musgrave(R)

Leans D

HD36: State Rep. Terri Austin (D) vs. Kim Bulta (R)
HD66: Rep. Terry Goodin (D) vs. Jim Lucas (R)
HD74: Rep. Russ Stilwell (D) vs. Susan Ellspermann
HD62: Rep. Sandra Blanton (D) v. Matt Ubelhoer (R)
HD68: Rep. Bob Bischoff (D) vs. Jud McMillin (R)
HD75: (Open, Avery) Mike Goebel (D) vs. Ron Bacon

Leans R

HD15: Timothy Downs (D) vs. Rep. Don Lehe(R)
HD92: Brett Voorhies (D) vs. Rep. Phil Hinkle (R)
HD51: Cody Ross (D) vs. Rep. Dick Dodge (R)

Likely D

HD27: Rep. Sheila Klinker (D) vs. Don Brown (R)
HD43: Rep. Clyde Kersey (D) vs. Al Morrison
HD97: Rep. Mary Ann Sullivan (D) vs. Wes Robinson
HD42: Rep. Dale Grubb (D) vs. Clerk Sharon Negele
HD86: Rep. Ed DeLaney (D) vs. Kurt Webber

Likely R

HD4: Thomas Webber vs. State Rep. Ed Soliday
HD21: (Open, Walorski) Dwight Fish vs. Tim Wesco
HD26: Paul Roales (D) vs. Rep. Randy Truitt (R)
HD24: State Rep. Rich McClain vs. Tim Banter (D)

Safe

Democrats: Fry, Lawson, Harris, C. Brown, Bauer, Cheatham, Niezgodski, Dvorak, Pelath, Stevenson, Rear-
don, Dobis, V. Smith, Bardon, Tyler, Moseley, Pflum, Pierce, Welch, Battles, Stemler, GiaQuinta, Moses, Pryor,
Bartlett, Porter, Crawford, Summers, Day.

Republicans: Open-Borror (Morris), Open-Bell (Heuer), Open-Ruppel (Kubacki), Open-Clements (Van Nat-
ter), Open-Duncan (Frye), Open-Murphy (Speedy), Yarde, Dermody, Messmer, Neese, Gutwein, Wolkins,
Friend, J. Thompson, Richardson, Turner, Davis, Lutz, Torr, Steuerwald, T. Brown, Borders, Foley, Culver,
Leonard, Cherry, Saunders, Knollman, Eberhart, Burton, M.Smith, Koch, Crouch, Lehman, Espich, Pond, Noe,
Bosma, Behning, Frizzell. ❖

* Status Changes are bold faced



The signals of mismanagement

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - Nothing clears my mind like a brief visit to my professional pill-pusher. Dr. Kenneth Kopay charges only \$3.50 per minute, which means that he makes \$210 per hour. At 30-billable hours per week, his gross earnings for a 40-week year are \$252,000. Out of this he has to pay rent for the office, wages and benefits for his staff, and subscriptions to numerous high-end magazines.



Morton Marcus
Column

"Doc," I say, "seems to me you are netting less than a quarter million bucks a year, which definitely makes you un-rich. Don't you think you are doing a disservice to your med-school colleagues by pulling down their average return on education?"

Kenny says, "Listen, I get a haircut every week. My barber gets \$15 from me each visit. That's his fee plus tip. If he cuts four heads an hour, for 46 hours a week, 50 weeks a year, he'll gross \$138,000. He's

got rent and reading expenses just as I do, so he's also un-rich."

"What's the point?" I ask.

"What do you think is the point?" he replies with that practiced professional cadence.

"I think you don't want to talk about your income," I say. "However, I want to discuss it because I'm concerned about you, barbers and other service providers who cannot readily increase the productivity of their jobs. All they can do is increase their prices to keep up with inflation.

"Yes," I continue, "you could work more hours or give fewer minutes to each client, as could the barber. But that might reduce the quality of your work and reduce the demand for your services. There's not much you can do by incorporating more technology into your practice. Sure, a massaging couch might help you just as computer-guided scissors could aid the barber."

Suddenly, Dr. Kopay turns on the 54" TV screen and asks me to identify what looks like a foggy photo of Saturn.

"That's a business going out of business," I reply promptly.

"Interesting," he says. "Tell me more about why

this business is going out of business."

"Dirty toilets," I answer.

"Truly?" he says.

"Dirty toilets," I repeat. "They signal customers and employees that management does not care about them as people. Most people take toilets seriously. A dirty toilet is an affront to people who care about themselves, their families, and their fellow citizens. Management can always blame the users of the toilets for persistent filth and disarray, but ultimately it's management's responsibility."

"At what age did you become a discerning toilet critic?" Kenny asks.

"Just after I figured out how the unemployment rate is calculated," I respond.

He laughs. I laugh. We have good laughs at these sessions.

"Do you have special affinity for toilet attendants," he inquires.

"Not more than I do for anyone who performs an important social function for which s/he is poorly paid and given little respect. Yet technology can raise the productivity and wages of toilet cleaners. However," I add, "facility managers don't have the money to reward productive waste workers. Higher management often does not see the value of clean toilets beyond the executive suite."

"Is this fixation," he asks delicately, "on toilet matters something that troubles you? Do you hear commodes running through the night?"

"No," I say. "It's just that the important things are ignored, taken for granted, assigned low priority because we believe that, in our times, the basic problems have been solved. It's not true. Dirty toilets are not different from the disasters waiting to happen to pipelines, computers, sewers, streets, bridges. They are the clear signs of a society that, through ignorance, has stopped caring about itself."

"Our time is up," Kenny says.

"It may very well be," I respond. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an independent economist, speaker, and writer formerly with IU's Kelley School of Business.



Preparing students needs to start sooner

By **JESSICA WRAY**

FRANKLIN - In a press conference call with college and university student journalists, President Barack Obama discussed his administration's work toward lowering the cost of higher education and strengthening the curriculum so graduates can compete in an international workforce.



One of the points Obama made was that one third of college students and approximately more than half of minority students fail to earn their college degree after enrolling in an institution.

High school's main purpose is to prepare students for a higher educational system or the workforce. Public school systems have become so centered on standardized testing and its correlation to funding that it makes me wonder if America is

losing the edge in critical thinking.

College preparation in critical thinking, problem solving and real-life application is difficult to transition to when high schools emphasize test-taking strategies over how to become a life-long learner.

Could lack of preparation be the cause for these failing rates? Even if the rates increase, will students be prepared to enter into this new workforce with strong international competitors? If for 12 years students have been mastering tests rather than the material, will four years in a higher education system really be what breaks that cycle?

The beauty of a liberal arts education is the well-rounded background that it gives students. It promotes the development of skills and knowledge outside intended areas of study.

The narrow focus in high school on standardized test scores, and the pressure for students to learn

how to take tests rather than master the material, diminishes the goal of preparing students in a similar fashion.

If students are worried about scores, how will they absorb skills necessary in a career-focused world?

It starts with the government taking action to increase freedom of instructors to creatively shape their lesson plans. Yes, there needs to be national standards and assessment for higher education entrance, but the overwhelming amount of tests needs to be reduced.

I respect Obama's plan to better prepare students for the workforce, but it needs to start much sooner than college. Our competitive issues do not lie solely with higher education institutions, but in elementary and secondary education school systems.

Preparation is the problem.

If we can get back the outside-of-the-box thinking that America is supposedly known for, we can retain our position as number one in college graduates. By trying to compete with other countries in test scores, we have lost sight of America's educational crowning-glory: critical thinking and analytical problem solving. ❖

Wray is a freshman Franklin College student in the Pulliam School of Journalism. She is from Franklin.

HOWEY *Politics Indiana*

When Chris Cillizza of the *Washington Post* posed the question to readers across the nation - Who's the most influential political journalist in your state? - the answer in Indiana was this: Brian A. Howey of *Howey Politics Indiana*. Since 1994, *Howey Politics Indiana* has provided news, analysis and commentary from throughout Indiana and Washington D.C. Howey reaches the most influential insiders with his newsletters and the masses with his weekly newspaper column and www.howeypolitics.com.

Photo: Howey with Richard Lugar and Sam Nunn in Russia.



The Washington Post
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2007

"The Best Indiana Political Reporter: *Howey Politics Indiana* editor Brian Howey."



Rich James, Post-Tribune: In its heyday, East Chicago had it all -- especially on Friday night when it was payday at the steel mills and the ore boats docked in the harbor. There was money, lots of money. And booze. Oh, how it flowed. And there were, well, you get the picture. And if you were hungry, East Chicago was home to the two best dives in Northwest Indiana -- Hot Dog John's and Taco Joe's. Jobs were abundant and paid the kind of money that a young guy had never seen before. It was almost obscene. There wasn't such a thing as foreign steel back then. At least no one talked about it. Steel mills were cash cows. And they didn't mind sharing. Any kid who walked out of a high school graduation ceremony could get a job in one of the mills on Monday morning. And he probably bought a brand new car on Tuesday. Life was good. I suspect that because there was so much money in the city, crime wasn't the problem it is today. Everyone who wanted a job had one. There was no need to steal. There were no gangs and few thugs. Blacks, Hispanics and those from countries across Western and Eastern Europe lived in harmony. We're talking the 1960s into the 1970s. East Chicago also was the envy of virtually every politician in the county -- and much of Indiana for that matter. The city was an awesome political force. Some say it was the last strong Democratic machine in the nation. No candidate in his right mind filed for office in Lake County without first genuflecting in East Chicago. It didn't even matter if East Chicago wasn't part of the office for which you were running. It just demonstrated the length and muscle of the East Chicago political arm. And anyone running for county-wide office had little chance if he didn't have the backing of the East Chicago precinct organization, which walked in lockstep with whomever was mayor because the committeemen or their relatives had jobs with the city. If you were endorsed in East Chicago, you could count on the vast majority of the votes because residents followed the advice of the committeemen. And most importantly, the votes were virtually all Democratic. Republican wasn't spoken there. And for half a century, someone from East Chicago was the county Democratic chairman, further ensuring the city's place in county politics. And any Democrat worth his salt came to seek East Chicago's blessing before announcing his candidacy for governor. I sometimes thought it was a little more special to be mayor of East Chicago than governor of Indiana. The city had a long, strong run. But suddenly Friday nights weren't quite as much fun. As Mayor Robert Pastrick was seeking an eighth term in 1999, Stephen Stiglich -- a political force of his own -- took him on for the second time. And he lost again. That campaign led to the making of "The King of Steeltown" -- a documentary by Chris Sautter -- a native Hoosier living in Washington, D.C. The political unrest mounted as Pastrick narrowly won

a ninth term in 2003 over George Pabey. There are those who say the conviction of Mayor George Pabey a week ago may have been the final curtain for the city that fell hard from on high. ❖

David Brooks, New York Times: (California Republican governor nominee Meg) Whitman is representative of an emerging Republican type -- what you might call the austerity caucus. Flamboyant performers like Sarah Palin get all the attention, but the governing soul of the party is to be found in statehouses where a loose confederation of über-wonks have become militant budget balancers. Just as welfare reformers of the 1990s presaged compassionate conservatism, so the austerity brigades presage the national party's next chapter. Mitch Daniels, the governor of Indiana who I think is most likely to win the G.O.P. presidential nomination in 2012, is the spiritual leader. Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey is the rising star. Jeb Bush is the eminence. Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana and Rob Portman, a Senate candidate in Ohio, also fit the mold. These are people who can happily spend hours in the budget weeds looking for efficiencies. They're being assisted by budget experts from the Hoover Institution, the Manhattan Institute and freelancers like Bob Grady, who did budgeting in George H.W. Bush's administration. Members of the caucus have a similar sense of the role history has assigned them. "This state had a party for 10 years and I'm the guy who got called in to clean up the mess," Christie says. ❖



Doug Ross, Times of Northwest Indiana: If you consider politics a three-ring circus -- and how can you not? -- then your attention has been directed to the center ring, where the candidates and political animals now are performing tricks with tax cuts. It's an entertaining act, to be sure. The debate now is on whether the Bush tax cuts set to expire at the end of the year should be allowed to die or should be extended. Or should the tax cuts for the middle class be extended but not for the wealthy? Or should the middle class tax cuts be enhanced? All this happens while the national debt is growing, looking more and more like Old Testament-style storm clouds on the horizon. Former U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, who wants his old job back, discussed this when he met Thursday with The Times Editorial Board. "We've got a mega problem here," he said. His solution, however, is to lock in permanent tax rates -- he doesn't like that the cuts were temporary -- low enough to make business owners confident enough to start investing in their businesses again, buying more equipment and expanding their payrolls. Coats wants to attack spending. All of it. "Mandatory spending also has to be on the table," he said. ❖



BMV commissioner Miller arrested

INDIANAPOLIS - Bureau of Motor Vehicles Commissioner Andrew J. Miller was arrested Wednesday after police say he exposed and touched himself in front of an undercover officer in a Downtown public restroom (Indianapolis Star). Miller, 40, Carmel, was held in the Marion County Jail on an initial charge of public indecency, records show. Bail had not yet been set. Police arrested Miller after they say he masturbated and asked an undercover officer to touch his genitals in the men's bathroom at Claypool Court, 110 W. Washington St., at about 1:30 p.m., according to police records.

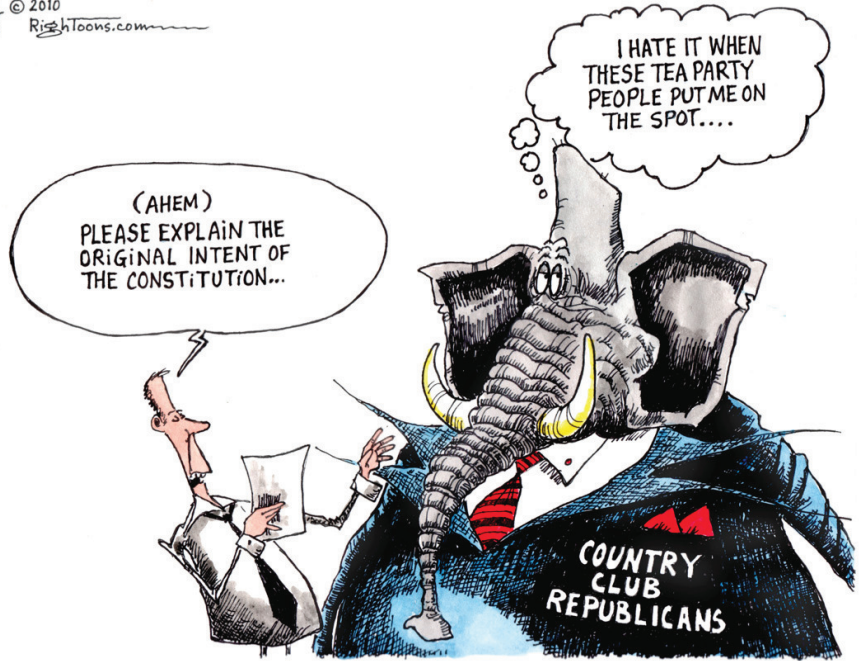


Jane Jankowski, spokeswoman for Gov. Mitch Daniels, declined comment on Miller's arrest. Miller was appointed to the \$115,000-a-year post of BMV commissioner in December 2008. He previously was director of the state's Office of Disaster Recovery.

Poll: 62% favor property tax caps

INDIANAPOLIS - A new poll shows most Indiana voters favor a ballot measure to place property tax caps into the state constitution. The poll released Thursday by WISH-TV shows that 62 percent favored the constitutional amendment while 24 percent opposed it. A state law generally limits property tax bills to 1 percent of homes' assessed value, 2 percent on farmland and rental property, and 3 percent on business property. Backers of the amendment say it would make it harder to undo the caps. Opponents say it would hurt local governments'

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and schools' ability to raise money and deliver services. Polling firm EPIC-MRA conducted the statewide telephone poll of 500 likely voters from Sept. 29 through Oct. 1. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points.

Daniels stands by IURC shakeup

INDIANAPOLIS - The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission canceled a hearing this week on a controversial Duke Energy proposal to build a generating plant in Edwardsville. The IURC had no choice (WTHR-TV). It is without a chairman after Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels fired David Lott Hardy for ethics violations. Things sometimes look different in the light of day, but 24 hours after firing his IURC chairman, Gov. Daniels says it was the right decision. "Zero tolerance means zero," said the governor. The governor fired Hardy because he knew that IURC chief counsel Scott Storms was up for a job with Duke, while presiding over Duke cases. Storms eventually left

his state job to work for the energy company. "We wanted to reaffirm to people that, if they are making public decisions, they should not be doing it at any time during which someone might think that they have any other motive," said Daniels.

Pacurar undecided on mayoral run

EAST CHICAGO - During a Wednesday morning news conference, East Chicago's city controller and temporary mayor announced that though he thought he was the best candidate for the job, he still was undecided about running in the upcoming mayoral caucus. Charlie Pacurar, 70, was expected to announce whether he would run in the Oct. 16 election to finish the former mayor's term. Pacurar said he had heard from about 15 of the 36 precinct committeemen who would be voting, but that he wanted to hear more opinions before deciding. Former Mayor George Pabey was stripped of his title last month after a jury convicted him of conspiracy and stealing



government funds to revamp his home in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood. Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., who is the chairman of the Lake County Democratic Party and running the caucus, said candidates have until next week to file with the party. In the interim, he said he has met with several prospective candidates. "I met with Jessie Ortiz, Anthony Copeland, Rich Media, John Aguilera and Charlie Pacurar in the same room," McDermott said. "We went over the rules of the contest with them. I made it very clear that I'm remaining neutral. We gave them a list of voters, the precinct committeemen. They won't change. I'm thinking about the party and trying to be level-headed in a tough situation."

Pannos' Nevada home foreclosed

LAS VEGAS - A debt of \$1.8 million brought foreclosure on a Lake County political insider's Las Vegas-area home, Nevada property records show (Times of Northwest Indiana). The recent Nevada foreclosure case is one of three cases in which Michael Pannos has either lost or faces losing property because of unpaid mortgages. The Times reported last week that in addition to the mortgage foreclosure on Pannos' multimillion-dollar former summer home in Culver, Ind., Pannos' Merrillville residence also is tied up in pending foreclosure proceedings in Lake County court. But prior to the sheriff's sale last week of Pannos' Culver home, worth at least \$2.4 million, he lost a nine-room home on about 2 1/2 acres in Enterprise, Nev., to foreclosure sale. Enterprise is located just outside Las Vegas.

DeLaney proposes IURC approval

INDIANAPOLIS - A state

lawmaker is calling for changes in the process for selecting members of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission, a move Gov. Mitch Daniels said Wednesday he may be willing to consider (Indianapolis Star). State Rep. Ed DeLaney, D-Indianapolis, said he is drafting legislation requiring the Senate and House to approve nominees to the commission -- a process similar to those used in more than 30 other states. Currently, the governor names members of the commission. DeLaney's proposal comes in response to controversy swirling around the IURC after its former general counsel, Scott Storms, recently left for a job with Duke Energy of Indiana. It was the latest in a series of moves critics see as a troublesome revolving door between Indiana's largest electric utility and the powerful five-member commission that rules on rate-increase requests and other regulatory matters. "We don't have adequate protections in the current system," DeLaney said. "Legislative approval would require the governor to explain publicly why he believes a nominee is the right person for the job, and that person would also have to face the public to answer questions and make commitments." Daniels fired IURC Chairman David Lott Hardy on Tuesday after an internal review found Storms didn't remove himself from IURC regulatory matters involving Duke this summer while he was talking to the utility about working there. The review concluded that Hardy, who was appointed to the IURC post by Daniels, was aware of the situation but took no action.

Indiana won't fight Illinois toll fees

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana officials say they have no dog in the fight when it comes to the Illinois Tollway Authority's attempt to collect \$7.4 million in undiscounted back tolls and

finances it claims are owed by Hoosier motorists (Carden, Times of Northwest Indiana). The Illinois Department of Transportation and the Indiana Toll Road Oversight Board, chaired by INDOT Commissioner Michael Cline, will not get involved in the dispute that is roiling more than 100,000 Indiana drivers who use the Illinois Tollway, according to INDOT spokesman Wil Wingfield. Wingfield said the reciprocal agreement giving Indiana drivers with transponders discounts on the Illinois Tollway and Illinois drivers a like discount on the Indiana Toll Road is strictly between the Toll Road's private operator, Illinois and the E-Z Pass Interagency Group, which coordinates electronic tolling in 13 states.

Palin approval at 22 percent

WASHINGTON - Fewer than one in four Americans have a favorable view of Alaska former Gov. Sarah Palin, a standing that would present a considerable hurdle if she jumps into the race for president in 2012, according to a CBS News poll. The poll, released Wednesday night, found that 22 percent of the 1,129 Americans who were surveyed had a favorable opinion of the 2008 Republican vice presidential nominee, while 48 percent viewed her unfavorably. Nearly one in three Americans said they were undecided or not sure about her. Among those who viewed Palin unfavorably were 73 percent of the Democrats surveyed, 44 percent of independents and 22 percent of the Republicans. By contrast, 44 percent of Republicans and 6 percent of Democrats had a favorable opinion of her.