

THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT



The Weekly Briefing On Indiana Politics

The Howey Political Report is published 40 times a year by NewsLink, Inc. The Howey Political Report is an independent, non-partisan newsletter analyzing the political process in Indiana. It neither endorses candidates nor advocates positions of public policy.

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The O'Bannon era is set to begin

It could last anywhere from 15 months to 8 years

Larry Conrad's voiced boomed out over the Indiana Convention Center one sultry June night in 1986 as he nominated Evan Bayh for Indiana Secretary of State:

"If not him, then who?" Conrad said with oratorical embellishment. "If not now, then when?"

That was the day Evan Bayh catapulted in front of Frank O'Bannon to lead the Indiana Democratic Party out of generation in the political wilderness. All the momentum began that day, and despite O'Bannon's nearly full-time campaigning for a shot at the governorship during 1987, Bayh's momentum became apparent in early 1988.

The decision to step aside and allow Bayh to take the gubernatorial nomination uncontested was a dramatic moment for the state senator from Corydon.

"No one wants to be the dog in the manger," said Bill Schreiber, O'Bannon's political strategist.

O'Bannon recalled the day he convened his closest advisors to weigh the looming battle with Evan Bayh: Sitting in a room with all my advisors and having some say that's the thing to do and others saying, "No." It was really pretty traumatic.

"But ultimately the decision was mine," O'Bannon told HPR in an exclusive interview. "I felt that really what we are talking about was changing administrations and the party. And by far the best thing that could happen was not to have a primary fight. I felt I could bring the strengths I had along with those of Evan Bayh to give us the best chance to win in 1988. I think that was accomplished. And I feel real satisfied that that was the right decision."

In August 1995, there is no such deliberation. Frank O'Bannon is poised to assume the leadership of the Democratic Party. It will either build on Bayh's legacy and extend the party's

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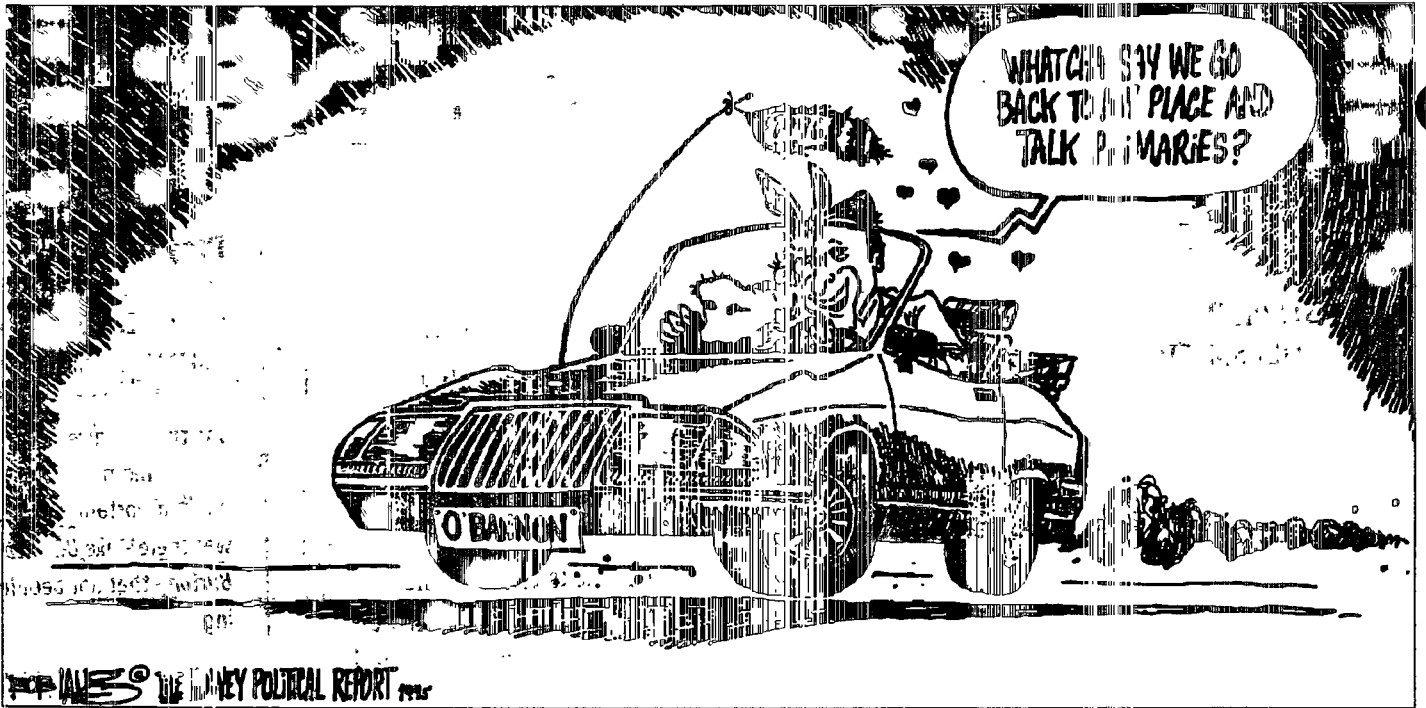
"QUOTE" OF THE WEEK

"If they think they have to destroy Frank O'Bannon to be successful, they need to know they're playing with a boomerang...."

- Bill Schreiber on 1996 GOP tactics

INSIDE FEATURES

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HUMOR

MILL

We've all heard the phrase "It's as big as Texas." After Rex Early's Indy 500 birthday bash last week, perhaps the new measuring stick as to successful fund-raisers from here on out will be: "It's as big as Rex's...."

Devil's Dictionary by Ambrose Bierce

Arena, n. In politics, an imaginary rat-pit in which the statesman wrestles with his record.

Fib, n. A lie that has not cut its teeth. An habitual liar's nearest approach to truth: the perigee of his eccentric orbit.

Prejudice, n. A vagrant opinion without visible means of support.

Andy Jacobs surfaces on 'The List'

"Thank you," Bill Schreiber said as we walked out the door of his Statehouse of ice, "for not asking me who Frank's running mate is going to be."

"I know better than to ask such a stupid question at this stage," was the response.

There was a moment of silence and this was hurled back at Schreiber: "But since you brought it up, has HPR's speculation been on target, or have we been full of it?"

The List, Schreiber said, had been accurate. That means Baron Hill, Ann DeLaney, Mike Harmless, Joe Kernan, Jill Long, Pam Carter, etc., will be under consideration for the final decision that will come after the May 1996 primary when all the political necessities can be properly calculated.

"In fact, *The List* keeps getting bigger all the time," Schreiber said.

"Oh?"

Take Andy Jacobs for example, Schreiber said. The hunch is that the congressman from Indianapolis won't run again for re-election. He's got the young kids...and Congress is not the kind of life suited for a doting parent...all the traveling....

Andy Jacobs? Hmmm. "Frank 'N Andy in '96."

That's got a bit of a nice ring to it.

"Steve Goldsmith's worst nightmare," Schreiber said, amused.

O'Bannon's official stance is, "That decision will be made after the primary and after consultation with a lot of leaders around the state."

"I have told everyone that I want them to know I have not considered anything together with any one person at this time. The political climate will be important...and a lot of factors will go into the decision at that time."

O'Bannon and Jacobs. Frank 'N Andy. It would be a blend of two Democratic power-houses - one from the state and the other from federal government. O'Bannon already has close to \$1.5 million under the belt, meaning he's doing OK in the fund-raising. That could free Jacobs, famous for running congressional races for \$10,000 or less, to travel the state, becoming something of a Hoosier Bill Proxmire.

The Almanac of American Politics calls Jacobs "one of the nation's quirkier and more distinctive politicians." His legendary frugality - he refused to board an airplane that crashed in 1974 because only first class seats were left - might help O'Bannon defuse any GOP assault of tax hikes. Plus, Jacobs has the potential to cut into Goldsmith's Indianapolis power base, should they both arrive on their tickets.

Frank & Andy. An intriguing list.

Early's birthday bash brings some 'mo

HORSE RACE

<u>CANDIDATE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
STEPHEN GOLDSMITH	1 to 1	Goldsmith gets generally good marks for handling the July disturbance on Indy's north side. But Mason-Dixon poll shows O'Bannon within statistical margin of error.
REX EARLY	1 to 5	Rex's birthday bash packs 'em at the Speedway, accenting the notion that if we chose the nominee in convention, he would win. There's momentum, but no convention.
PATRICK ROONEY	1 to 7	Rooney tries to take the tax cut high ground, but gets tepid response from media. <i>Star</i> runs it in news brief. The candidate was a little shaky during the press conference.
ROBERT GARTON	1 to 10	Garton "officially" announces campaign, to scant media coverage. Several key reporters didn't even know about the event. Repeat after me: earned media is your friend....
GEORGE WITWER	1 to 25	<i>Star's</i> Mary Beth Schneider gives George a Sunday column boost.

TRENDLINE: When talk turns to tax cuts, don't forget the teacher's pension's fund.



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TICKER TAPE

Play of the Week

From the point of sheer numbers, Rex Early's birthday bash and the great media coverage he got from Indy TV stations and the *Star* give him some needed momentum. Even more importantly, it was who was there - like U.S. Rep. Dan Burton - that got people talking.

HPR predicted last month that one Republican candidate would try to seize John Gregg's tax cut notions for his own political benefit. Pat Rooney did just that on Tuesday, urging Gov. Evan Bayh to call a special session of the legislature to enact a one-month moratorium on taxes. Rooney's problem was that GOP legislative leaders were given 24-hours notice, but were not consulted. Lt. Gov. Frank O'Bannon was also cautious. "I think it's too early to make any decisions. I think it could be one of the alternatives, but I think we need to really be cautious and wait for the forecast of revenues in December. The second thing would be to see what the federal Congress does to more federal responsibilities back to the state."

Capitol Hill sources tell HPR that U.S. Rep. Mark Souder's comment concerning Waco and child abuse in some Southern states has undermined his effectiveness here.

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Thursday, Aug. 24, 1995

TICKER

T A P E

"He can't expect to do business with anyone from Kentucky or Tennessee for at least a couple of years," the Republican source said.

Despite the remark, Souder's political vulnerability appears to be minimal at best. Even after 4th CD Democrats met during a LaGrange County picnic on Aug. 20, no credible names have emerged as a potential opponent. *State Rep. Win Moses* told HPR that he and former *State Sen. Graham Richard* have nixed the idea of a challenge. They aren't interested in dealing with the frequent flier lifestyle.

Here's an interesting way to gauge the looming national clout of *Gov. Evan Bayh*. Joe Pastrick of East Chicago was recently named treasurer of the Democratic National Committee. That's not a bad place to have a political friend.

Stuart Rothenberg writes in the *Rothenberg Political Report*: "Ideally, the GOP would like to use affirmative action to force Democrats - and the president - to defend preferential treatment (not merely equal opportunity), thereby ensuring the movement of swing blue- and white-collar voters to the Republican Party. But if the Republicans overplay the issue, they risk mobilizing black voters and liberal

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Democrats preparing to retake the House by regaining seven seats lost in '94 tidal wave

Last March, HPR identified seven Indiana General Assembly House seats that were redistricted for Democrats, but were won by Republicans during the 1994 tidal wave.

In addition to the seven seats lost, Democrats will be targeting seats in Muncie, Connersville and Batesville.

Here is an update on those seven House districts, who's running and what the early line is:

30th District (Kokomo)

'94 results Padfield 8,589
Howard 7,363
Difference 1,226

Notes: Democrats believe Jon Padfield is extremely vulnerable due to his support of tort reform, prevailing wage, the repeal of fair share and his "Hatch letter." Earl Howard lost the seat in 1994 not only to the GOP tidal wave, but also due to a lack of work. Howard County Democrats have tapped Ron Harrell, who lost a 1992 Senate race to Sen. Steve Johnson. The party appears united behind Harrell and at this point, the district is leaning Democratic.

43rd District (Terre Haute)

'94 results Kimmel 8,549
Kearns 7,092
1,457

Notes: Vigo County Councilman Cliff Lambert is expected to get the Democratic nomination. He is director of the Hulman Center on the ISU campus and is chairman of the Indiana Arts Commission. County Councilman Mark Blade has decided not to run. While Lambert will be tough, Kimmel has earned grudging respect in political circles. This could be a toss-up.

46th District (Vigo, Clay, Owen)

'94 results Lohr 8,160
Tincher 8,034
126

Notes: Like Padfield, Democrats would love to knock off David Lohr, an out-spoken conservative. He narrowly defeated Vern Tincher, who

vowed on Election Night to regain the seat. Tincher is already working hard and will certainly benefit from a rejuvenated Vigo County Democratic organization under Mayor-elect Jenkins. But Lohr has developed a core of ardent supporters and cannot be dismissed. Leans Democratic.

74th District (Bocsville)

'94 results Lambert 10,589
Phillips 10,314
275

Notes: It's easy to find a Democrat who would bet a paycheck (but, perhaps, not a Hoosier Millionaire ticket) on retaking the seat of the former House Speaker. Support is lining up behind union activist Russ Stilwell in this very Democratic seat. Leans Democratic.

80th District (Fort Wayne)

'94 results John Becker 5,206
Gia Quinta 5,199
7

Notes: Ben GiaQuinta's last hurrah will be to regain this seat. Hatch letter will be an issue. But strong Allen County GOP will make it tough. Toss-up.

97th District (Indianapolis)

'94 results Hefley 4,782
Cantwell 4,037
745

Notes: Cantwell's nephew, Eddie Mahern, is a cinch for the nomination and is expected to give Hefley a tougher time than in '94. Leans Democratic.

100th District (Indianapolis)

'94 results Womacks 3,969
Day 3,818
151

Notes: John Day, a '60s-style liberal, is expected to seek his old seat. State Democrats are trying to get a new name, I know 1994 Secretary of State nominee Tim Jeffers to run. If Day is the nominee, Womacks might return. Toss-up.

COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

George Will, *Washington Post* - The interesting occurrence during the Dallas event was the delivery of a speech deserving of the designation "presidential." It was by Sen. Richard Lugar and was a sober treatment of a subject people prefer not to think about. The interesting development after the event was that next to nothing was reported about his seven-page speech, other than cursory references to his six opening paragraphs, which reiterated his promise to abolish the IRS and taxation of income. The rest of his speech concerned the possibility that an American city will be destroyed. Nuclear terrorism is "but one small step" away and is becoming more probable because of "grossly inadequate" control of fissionable material in the former Soviet Union. Next time journalists lament that candidates are not as serious as, well, journalists, remember how few of them reported it when Lugar discussed the possibility of a person with a bomb in a suitcase killing everyone in Oklahoma City.

John Krull, *Indianapolis News* - Who would have thought that, when the Citadel issued recruiting appeals for quality men, Mike Tyson was the quality of man they were talking about? After all, only Iron Mike and his supporters seem to take the kind of pride in demeaning a woman that the Citadel's students did in forcing Shannon Faulkner to quit. Those well-disciplined lads at the South Carolina military school applauded and cheered when Faulkner dropped out. Apparently no one ever taught them that kicking an opponent when he or she is down is rude.

Stephen Chapman, *Chicago Tribune* - The senior senator from New Jersey announced last week that he wouldn't run for re-election, and suddenly he attained greatness. I was waiting for Bill Bradley to become a towering figure in American public life, instead of a better-than-average senator whose legislative achievements never quite matched his name identification. But Bradley chose the shrewdest possible way to make his exit: depicting the existing political

system as too sordid and hateful for one as decent as he. Maybe Bradley is sincerely disenchanted and thinks badly needed reforms cannot come from the existing parties. But a less charitable interpretation could explain his action. He may not want to run for re-election simply because he's afraid he'll lose.

Sylvia Smith, *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* - I'll remember my two-week stay in Fort Wayne this summer as "that hot August when a 12-year-old kid was charged with murder." The unbearable heat was made worse by the unbearable shock of the city's youngest murder suspect. The unbearable must be borne. Our stomachs may churn, our minds may fog, but this temperature and humidity must be endured because there's nothing to do about them. Must we say the same about children who kill?

Mike Dooley, *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel* - If you're trying to save some money on the food bill, political dinners apparently aren't the place to start. According to an issue of *Common Cause* magazine, a recent Democratic fund-raising dinner in Hollywood sponsored by Steven Spielberg cost \$50,000 a couple. Not to be outdone, House Speaker Newt Gingrich threw a little soiree for his National Empowerment television operation. There, the price tag was also \$50,000. A person.

Dan Quayle, *Huntington Herald-Press* - Move over Ross Perot. Enter Sen. Bill Bradley. And maybe Colin Powell. American politics this fall will not be consumed by questions about Whitewater or which Republican will emerge as the main challenger to Bob Dole. Instead, it will center on speculation over third-party candidates for the presidency. Party loyalty among the American electorate may not be gone forever, but it's gone for now. Independent voters are energized about change; they're determined to make a difference and are still in the mood to break some china. The likelihood that 1996 will produce a three-man race, or even a four-man race, grows every day.

TICKER TAPE

Democrats, who will support the president and/or Democratic candidates up and down the ballot.

Allen County Democrats convene on Saturday to select a replacement for out-going chairman *Don Brogan*, who resigned under pressure. Almost certain to be elected in local attorney *Brian Stier*, who has handled the day-to-day operations.

Bill Styring of the Indiana Policy Review Foundation notes that the Indiana Department of Education is applying for federal matching funds to create a "state nutrition support network." Says Styring, "The State Department of Education are those same folks who have done such a bang up job raising student test scores, abolishing illiteracy and fixing up failed urban school systems. It makes sense to ask why they are looking for new worlds to conquer when their basic mission remains; um, unfulfilled."

Dan Quayle's speech at the Iowa GOP straw poll had folks talking about a possible relaunching of a presidential campaign. *Jules Witcover* of the *Baltimore Sun* wrote of the Quayle speech, "It had the precision and delivery that led some in the crowd to indicate that they wished he had not decided to stay out of the race." *continued on page 7*

O'Bannon to gear his 1996 gubernatorial campaign on jobs, housing, agriculture

HPR INTERVIEW

"They say Southern Indiana Democrats are conservative, but I'll have a strong orientation for people and their needs. That's a lot of what Judy and I have done all our lives."

- Lt. Gov.
O'Bannon

It will be gradual, but Lt. Gov. Frank O'Bannon will begin playing a more conspicuous political role as the Bayh administration wanes and he gears up for what most people predict will be a highly-contested gubernatorial race in 1996.

It is a race that O'Bannon has been preparing for since 1987. HPR had this conversation with O'Bannon about the looming 1996 campaign:

HPR: Your campaign appears to be in pretty good shape. What is your overview at this point?

O'Bannon: The campaign plan we wrote about a year and a half ago is pretty much on schedule. We'll get our fund-raising headed in the direction to compete with any Republican nominee there is. I still feel that there's a good chance I'll be the only Democratic candidate. I do have strong support from the governor and all the Democratic congressmen, Democrat mayors. We chose our consultants last March and I feel we got the best in the country. With only nine governor's races, the feeling is this will be the premiere race. Judy and I have dedicated ourselves to 100 percent of the time - outside my duties - to working this campaign.

HPR: Will you use your eight years as lieutenant governor as your primary vision, or will it be a jumping off point?

O'Bannon: Certainly it will be a jumping point to look forward. One of the decisions in deciding to run is that lieutenant governors have as part of their campaigns is their past service in the administration. You have to judge whether that is an advantage and a positive. I concluded that that would be a very positive thing. But there is still many things to do as there always is. We will move forward from this administration. I think there are so many good signs about Indiana. Yet we know we still have to lay advance foundations for the future. When you look at the unemployment rate, the surplus generated by very active business in this state, when you look at the Census Bureau report that

our growth has been 3.8 percent, that means more people are moving into Indiana than moving out for the first time since the 1950s. That means the leadership around this state both in the public and private sector have been doing a very positive job at improving the human condition.

HPR: One of the defining moments of your term as lieutenant governor occurred in 1993 when you posted the state troopers at the Senate voting board to try and break the budgetary logjam. Do you agree with that?

O'Bannon: It's more dramatic than my leadership shows many times. But I think the purpose was exactly the same. I think some will construe it as trying to get that particular piece of legislation passed which I'm not even sure of what all the details were at that time. It was really an attempt to break the stalemate; break the partisanship to get people talking to each other again so we could conclude the state's budget and move into the next biennium.

HPR: Are there other defining moments in your tenure as lieutenant governor?

O'Bannon: I would say, in a broad sense, three things are the most satisfying. We have built up local capacity to make decisions in economic development. State growth is local growth and that means strong local leadership. You see that in both the public and private sector. I think that has been a key thing that I've spent a lot of time on out in the state. The second thing is agriculture in this state is still one of the top industries. I think we've supplied leadership, with strong support from agri-business groups. The third thing is housing. As chairman of the Housing Finance Authority, I think we've brought together the housing issues and have created a variety of programs and a comprehensive statewide plan for the first time in the history of Indiana. I think it's timely, since we have more people moving into Indiana than moving out and as businesses expand it shows the need for the planning of decent, affordable housing. So we have a lot of grants

out for surveys in a lot of cities.

HPR: The Republicans are talking about defining you, much like Sen. Dan Coats successfully did against Joe Hogsett in the 1992 Senate race. Will you let them?

O'Bannon: I think they'll always try to do that. I think I've been defining myself for the past 20-odd years for the public to see. I consider it to be a strong foundation over all those years, not as an occupation, but as a service. I think with the work I've done with the governor these eight years, there will be much to define there as far as job creation, housing improvements, and agriculture growth and value added. I think it's just getting the message out. If they say there is no definition there, it will be probably counter-productive.

HPR: Will you be ready to begin the definition process immediately after the May primary?

O'Bannon: I think so. The art of getting your message out is being visible and getting it to different medias. Our campaign will focus on some of our own efforts to make me more visible. All candidates have their strengths and that's what we'll play to. The other side will have to look for what they consider weaknesses and do the negative approach. When you run for office these days you just have to be prepared for this and that's one of the factors Judy and I talked about an awful lot; throwing that burden on family and friends when you get into those kinds of campaigns.

HPR: Some of your associates say you have found your campaign stride and comfort zone...

O'Bannon: Yes, I'd say when I approached it first in '87, carrying the message and public speaking and the appearance of the speaker was not emphasized as much. When you look back at the different governors over the last 25 years, when they read their speech or weren't the most articulate, it didn't seem to be a hindrance to their greatness. I feel confident; like it's coming together. Based on what we're doing, we can win in 1996. Now all the external factors you can't control and you don't worry about them. It's what I can do.

HPR: You mentioned 1987 earlier. Was it a tough decision for you and Judy to step aside and let Evan go ahead and run unopposed?

O'Bannon: Oh, sure it was. After you

work for a year almost full time most of 1987, it was investing a lot of time and money and your friend's time and money, then to make a different decision. Sitting in a room with all my advisors and having some say that's the thing to do and others saying, "No." It was really pretty traumatic. But ultimately the decision was mine. I felt that really what we are talking about is changing administrations and the party, by far the best thing that could happen was not to have a primary fight. I felt I could bring the strengths I had along with those of Evan Bayh to give us the best chance to win in 1988. I think that was accomplished. And I feel real satisfied that that was the right decision. I have some pride that we strengthened the Democratic Party to make it a stronger, two-party state.

HPR: Some felt Bayh undercut you when you broke the beer baron bill tie and then he vetoed the legislation? What happened?

O'Bannon: I had consistently voted in favor of the right to contract with you wholesalers and distributors the same way Pepsi and Coke do. I just followed consistently what I had done.

HPR: In the past legislative session we saw a wholesale conservative assault on issues like prevailing wage and fair share. Are those themes you will run against?

O'Bannon: Yes, I think when you have those themes come out of the legislative and they haven't for over 60 years for prevailing wage and 20 years for fair share, it moves the state away from strong cooperative leadership and economic development. I think labor has been a strong leader in the communities to make the communities grow.

HPR: How would a Gov. O'Bannon differ from a Gov. Bayh?

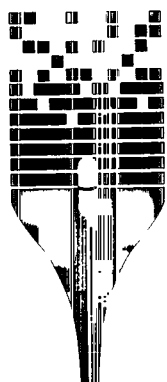
O'Bannon: There will be a difference in the style of leadership and you'll find that with Bob Orr and John Mutz, or a Doc Bowen, a Matt Welsh or a Roger Branigan. I don't see how a comparison can really be made. I'll be what I've been in the past: a person whose leadership style features a lot of inclusion. There will be a lot of consensus. They say Southern Indiana Democrats are conservative, but I'll have a strong orientation for people and their needs. That's a lot of what Judy and I have done all our lives.

TICKER T A P E

U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar finished seventh in the Iowa straw poll with 466 votes, behind Illinois businessman Morry Taylor and Alan Keyes. The Lugar campaign had scoffed at the significance of the straw poll, but tried to mobilize Hoosiers to go out and vote anyway. Witcover wrote of the Lugar speech, "The most thoughtful speech was given by Lugar, whose sober demeanor and style made him stand out like a well-behaved schoolboy amid a gang of schoolyard scrappers." Witcover added that Lugar's call to heed *Ronald Reagan's* 11th Commandment "fell on deaf ears."

While Lugar forces downplayed the straw poll, they see U.S. Sen. *Phil Gramm's* tie with front-runner *Bob Dole* as a potential beginning of the end for the Kansas senator. If Dole continues to falter - and he may have to explain bouncing Social Security checks this fall if the budget falls through as well as a lack of progress on the Contract with America - the real race will be to see who becomes the challenger.

Former President *Gerald R. Ford* will participate in the inaugural ceremonies for the Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne on Sept. 21. Upon taking the presidential oath following the resignation of *President Nixon* in 1974, Ford told the nation, "I'm a Ford, not a Lincoln."



**“One
of the
best”**

“The Howey Political Report is one of the best state political newsletters in the country. Brian’s 1994 election analyses were consistently on target. I can’t imagine why anyone really interested in Indiana politics wouldn’t subscribe to the Howey Political Report...”

**- Charles E. Cook
Cook Political
Report, Washington**

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O'Bannon is 'off to a good start'

From Page 1

Statehouse power by either four or eight years, or it could last only another 15 months, depending on how Hoosier voters see things in November 1996.

O'Bannon is off to a good start. There is close to \$1.5 million cash on hand. He is within the statistical margin of error in a head-to-head matchup against the Republican front-runner, Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith. The Democrat has retained the prestigious consulting firm of Greer, Margolis, Mitchell, Burns and Associates along with the Garin-Hart polling firm.

And there is momentum coming from the Bayh-O'Bannon administration. "The administration has held up after seven years better than anyone could possibly have imagined," Schreiber said. "On the balance, we're way ahead of where we ever thought we'd be."

Even fears that President Clinton might drag the Democratic ticket down in Indiana have been tempered by the events in Washington. Clinton was supposed to have had a disastrous month with the Waco and Whitewater hearings. The former had a greater negative impact on U.S. Rep. Mark Souder - a Republican - than on any Indiana Democrat.

There's also the intangible campaign trail demeanor. "Frank has always been a good person. He's now becoming an extremely good candidate," Schreiber observed.

That's not to say there aren't clouds hovering over the horizon. The Washington-based Cook Political Report views the 1996 Indiana gubernatorial race this way:

"The race to replace popular but term-limited Gov. Evan Bayh could develop into either a real barn-burner or, if the national political playing field tilts sharply in Republicans' favor again, a walk for the GOP. Indiana today is marginal for Democrats and the ceiling for them in a statewide race here is fairly low - they probably could hope to pull off a single-digit victory at best."

The most ominous numbers for O'Bannon go back to the 1992 presidential race, when George Bush topped Clinton by a 43-37

percent margin. O'Bannon's name will appear on the ballot directly below Clinton's in 1996. Worse, a July 26-28 Political/Media Research Poll of 822 voters gave Clinton a statewide re-elect score of only 28 percent.

The good news for O'Bannon is that Hoosiers have become ticket splitters. While Clinton drew on 37 percent of the vote in 1992, Bayh cruised to a 64 percent victory.

Democrats predicting a Goldsmith victory in the May GOP primary see a general election race full of vivid contrasts: the urbane Indianapolis mayor versus the small town businessman. Even Hoosier Republicans will acknowledge the contrast between the steely Goldsmith whom Ann DeLaney constantly refers to as "ambition in a suit" against the soft-drawling O'Bannon who presided over six years of job growth.

Curt Kovener, publisher of the *Crothersville Times*, supplies the anecdotal evidence of O'Bannon's Bufton Hoosier roots. Shortly after Kovener had purchased the newspaper in 1983, he called O'Bannon to ask about the annual Indiana Democratic Editorial Association meeting.

"Frank said, 'Why don't I just come and pick you up,'" Kovener said. "After he got here, he and Judy wanted to check out the local nature preserve, which was my old stomping grounds. We drove around and watched the birds. It's the last thing I expected from a state senator. He didn't have to do that."

There will be dynamics that may transcend any national trends, which, incidentally, certainly aren't guaranteed to go the Republicans' way if the Contract With America stalls out in the U.S. Senate.

One Indiana element is the impact of the prevailing wage issue of the 1995 legislative session and whether it will ignite labor in traditional Democratic strongholds in Gary, South Bend, Terre Haute and the Ohio River counties. Another is affirmative action.

If those issues ignite Democratic constituencies, O'Bannon will have an easier time off-setting GOP strength in Central Indiana.