



Little clarity in governor's race

All eyes on Pence and Weinzapfel, but few answers

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - In a week many thought would bring clearer definition to the 2012 Indiana gubernatorial race, there was actually little. Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel announced on Tuesday he will not seek a third term and added that he would spend the next several months pondering a run for governor. So there is just a modicum of clarity there.

On the Republican side? It appears U.S. Rep. Mike Pence hasn't shaken Potomac Fever, despite telling supporters in December that he was more "Flat Rock" (river, in the 6th CD) than Potomac.

Pence had said that a decision would come after Jan. 1. On Monday, several Republican sources told HPI that Pence is scheduling Lincoln Day dinner keynotes



U.S. Rep. Mike Pence addressed Indiana Republicans on election night. With a wide open road open for GOP governor, he has yet to shake Potomac Fever. (HPI Photo by Isaac Daniel)

across Indiana. As one source noted, "If he is running for president, it would be an interesting and novel strategy. We could call it the Win Indiana Strategy!" The thrust of that

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Math and bipartisanship

By **LUKE MESSER**

INDIANAPOLIS - With partisan antics dominating the first day of the General Assembly this year, many pundits are predicting the most partisan General Assembly in years.



After all, this thinking goes: with 60 votes in the House and a filibuster proof majority in the Senate, Republicans won't need many Democratic votes to pass their agenda. As a result, there will be little incentive for Republicans to reach out to Democrats (and, little incentive for Democrats to "bail out" Republicans).



"I am committed to restoring fiscal health, reforming entitlement programs and balancing the budget."

- U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, after being sworn in Wednesday



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Frankly, I think the one-sided election results of 2010 may lead to a very different dynamic. In fact, despite opening bell antics on Wednesday, we may be in store for the most bipartisan session in decades.

As a former state legislator, I have talked to countless legislators from both parties who have grown weary of the constant partisan bickering in the Statehouse. One of newly-elected Speaker Bosma's first acts of leadership was to name two Democrats to committee chairmanships – a move that was unprecedented in Indiana history. Both Speaker Bosma and Senate President Pro Tem David Long indicate plans to extend further graces to Democratic legislators in the coming weeks and months.

Those graces are welcome and will help, but the biggest incentive for bipartisan cooperation may come from simple math. Statehouse veterans will remember that the 1996 general election (following the 1994 landslide) produced a 50-50 split in the Indiana General Assembly. In the following 14 years, neither party reached a majority of more than 53 members in a caucus.

Narrow majorities lead to lots of talk about the need to work together, but the underlying politics of a narrow majority make true bipartisanship difficult to achieve. In each of the past seven elections for Indiana General Assembly, the losing caucus had fallen just a few hundred votes short of obtaining the majority. Each year, both caucuses knew the next election would be close and could swing either party into power.

In an effort to claw its way back into the majority, the caucus that was out-of-power routinely provided no votes for the majority caucus's budget, pushed controversial amendments designed for the next election's mailers, and walked out or utilized other procedural techniques to make life generally difficult for the party in power.

Don't get me wrong. Most legislators are not all that political. They take their jobs seriously and work hard to do the right thing on policy matters. In fact, most want to work across the aisle. That said, most legislators also believe in one very clear rule: the state would be in better hands if their caucus is in charge of the General Assembly.

Simply put: for 14 years, narrow majorities have kept the election stakes very high and encouraged caucus discipline on the big issues of the day.

In 2011, we have the opportunity for a much different dynamic. With a 60-40 Republican majority in the House, the ability to draw more favorable districts in 2011, and the likelihood of President Obama leading the national Democratic ticket in 2012, the chances of a 1996-like swing back for the Democrats seems remote, at least in the next election cycle. As a result, Democratic legislators will have few incentives to push a partisan agenda and simply "wait until next year."

The truth is that many members of the current Democratic caucus are conservatives, who believe in fiscal discipline and the need for education reform and other government reforms. Putting caucus politics aside, they will be freed up to vote their conscience. Moreover, as a practical matter, legislators who want to get things done for their district may be more willing to work with the majority party and less likely to tow the party line.

With the governor's leadership, legislators will be debating some very big ideas in 2011.

There will no doubt be clear philosophical differences and times of party line votes - but opportunities for common ground exist. And, there is hope for less political gamesmanship than we have seen in more than a decade. ❖

Messer is a former Republican state representative.



Governor, from page 1

news is that if Pence is considering the White House, his time would be better spent in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina.

By Tuesday, Pence spokesman Matt Lloyd explained, "Congressman Pence and his family have made no decision about their future." It came after Politico revealed that Pence would be speaking in South Carolina - a key early primary state - this Saturday. "Congressman Pence has always taken opportunities to speak at Republican events in Indiana and around the country and will continue to do so," Lloyd said. There was no further time frame given on a Pence decision.

Heading into the 2010 fall election, there was rampant speculation that Pence was preparing to come back to Indiana for a gubernatorial run and the events prior and since the Nov. 2 election tended to support that. Pence barnstormed the state on a bus emblazoned on the side with the phrase "Standing Strong for Indiana." He resigned as Republican Conference chair just hours after the election. Then, just prior to Christmas, the biggest hurdle was cleared when Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman announced she wouldn't run, citing "minor health problems."

The Skillman exit fueled unsubstantiated speculation that Gov. Mitch Daniels helped clear the way for a Pence gubernatorial run in an effort to unclutter his own potential White House bid. The way that story goes, Daniels made it clear to Skillman that she wouldn't have his support and without it, she had little chance in a primary with Pence.

Daniels was asked when he knew of Skillman's decision in December and he responded, "Ahead of time." Skillman told WIBC's Greg Garrison he found out the morning of her announcement. Daniels said, "It was an appealing notion that she might. She would have been a great

governor. I assumed she would compete." It was a key and constant question over the past year: would Daniels get behind Skillman? We may never know, but there was this clue: Asked if Daniels will endorse Pence, Daniels said, "My practice has been to let the people decide."

In the September 2008 Howey-Gauge Poll, we learned that Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman had a 51 percent total awareness among Indiana voters and 67 percent among Republican primary voters. Her favorable recognition stood at 25 percent, far above her 5 percent unfavorable.

These should have been troubling numbers for a sitting, four-year lieutenant governor. They were similar to those of Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan in 2002. Former Democratic State Chairman Robin Winston reacted to Kernan's 40th percentile fame factor and recounted how Lt. Gov. Frank O'Bannon had much higher awareness. The reason is that O'Bannon gave up his 1988 gubernatorial bid to join the ticket with Gov. Evan Bayh, then spent the next seven

years positioning himself as heir apparent. If O'Bannon did a jobs announcement in Evansville, he would stop at union halls and party headquarters in Princeton, Vincennes and Terre Haute on the way back to Indy.

O'Bannon had the same type of inevitability that Lt. Gov. Robert Orr had in 1980 after eight years as Gov. Doc Bowen's No. 2. There was no doubt about Orr and O'Bannon: they were party nominees-in-waiting.

That wasn't the case with Kernan, who initially rejected the 2004 race when Gov. O'Bannon chose Peter Manous as Democratic state chairman in 2002 without his imprimatur. The only reason Kernan was on the ballot in 2004 was the result of O'Bannon's death the year before.

With Skillman, that type of inevitability was never there. I asked members of Gov. Mitch Daniels' political team several years ago about a succession to Skillman in 2012 and was astonished when they answered, "It's never come up." Then came the Howey-Gauge poll numbers showing 49 percent didn't know who she was. Such numbers were not insurmountable, but



Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman on Election Night at Union Stations. She surprised many supporters when she abruptly left the race just before Christmas. (HPI Photo by Isaac Daniel)



to put it into perspective, Jill Long Thompson was able to increase her name ID between the February 2008 Howey-Gauge Poll (44 percent) to 71 percent in September, but she carried only 40 percent of the vote that November on the way to an 18 percent loss to Daniels.

Into this relative vacuum came Pence, who gradually surpassed Skillman as the nominee-in-waiting.

Now Pence finds pretty much a wide open highway to the GOP gubernatorial nod and with Evan Bayh out of the Democratic race, he will be a heavy favorite in the 2012 general election.

There is little doubt that Pence harbors presidential ambitions. The path through the Indiana governorship, supporters believe, will give him needed executive level experience and poise him for a 2016 run with a potentially open White House. That's with the huge assumption that President Obama wins a second term in 2012. In that scenario, a bid from "Gov. Pence" would align him historically with other modern governors - Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush - who then made the leap to the White House.

But the Pence strain of Potomac Fever comes with a compelling scenario. He watched an obscure state senator from Illinois make the dramatic leap to the White House between 2004 and 2008, with Barack Obama defeating the heavily favored Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primaries and then Sen. John McCain in the general. Pence looks at the 2012 presidential field and doesn't see a prohibitive favorite standing in his way. The closest figure would be Mitt Romney and many observers see him with many chinks in the armor, particularly when it comes to the decisive health reform issue that will likely be a key issue in 2012.

In his letter to House colleagues when he resigned the conference chair, Pence talked about moving on to serve "Indiana and the nation." He added, "I do not know what the future holds for my little family, but I do know who holds the future." He said on ABC's "This Week" in November and then repeated at the Detroit Economic Club later that month that his decision would be made "where



U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly's "heart" is in Congress, but will look at the governor's race and the U.S. Senate race if the 2nd CD becomes untenable for a Democrat in redistricting. (HPI Photo A. Walker Shaw)

we can make the most difference on what matters most to us."

The most compelling scenario - beyond the lack of a GOP presidential frontrunner - is the "historic calling" element. Pence has engaged President Obama from the earliest days of his term. On Obama's first presidential trip outside of Washington - in February 2009 in Elkhart - Pence was calling him to task at a Columbus town hall over the stimulus bill, legislation Pence insisted would do little to begin the economy's recovery. On that front today, Pence's prediction looks prescient. With Matt Lloyd insisting that "no decision has been made," it appears that Pence may be war gaming out a potential White

House scenario. And there is little risk in doing so. Gov. Daniels has asked that potential gubernatorial candidates "stifle" their ambition. While potential candidate Murray Clark has left the Indiana GOP chair, there is little chance that other possible candidates will be in a position to outmaneuver Pence on the gubernatorial front.

Beyond Clark, perhaps the most potent candidate would be House Speaker Brian Bosma, who has raised millions of dollars for House Republicans and has a 60-man network in all corners of the state if he finds Pence going national. Others - Treasurer Richard Mourdock, Senate President Pro Tempore David Long - are not acting like gubernatorial contenders.

So the Republican gubernatorial apple is Pence's for the wanting at this moment. It would be one of the most dramatic political moments in modern Indiana history if Pence leaves it hanging low on the tree in order to reach for something far bigger. But since 2002, this state's political establishment has been through many surprises.

Indiana Democrats

For Indiana Democrats, it appears the timeline for this race to sort out extends into late Spring or early Summer. Weinzapfel took himself out of the 2011 race for reelection on Tuesday setting the stage for a potential 2012 gubernatorial run. "I'll take a good, hard look at that,"



Weinzapfel said at a press conference, according to the Evansville Courier & Press.

HPI reported on Sunday that a Weinzapfel reelection was unlikely. As for the wide-open Democratic gubernatorial race, the mayor said, "I don't think it's any secret that I enjoy politics. I love public service, but I also, more importantly, love my family. They're all things I have to take into consideration to figure out what my next step in life is, whether it's continuing a career in public service or going back to the private sector."

Weinzapfel declined to provide a timetable for his decision other than to acknowledge that a decision "should probably be made sooner rather than later. The course of action taken by the Legislature in this long session will really probably set the parameters for what the 2012 campaign for governor would be like, so there are a lot of factors that enter into it."

Weinzapfel already had a Democratic primary opponent in Vanderburgh County Treasurer Rick Davis. Sources tell HPI that recent internal polling apparently shows Weinzapfel vulnerable on his role in rescinding the county homestead tax credit in 2009, the new downtown arena being built to replace Roberts Stadium, and a \$107,000 salary for a key economic development official recently hired.

Informed and reliable sources tell HPI that a number of people have approached U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly about a potential run.

"Until the maps come out, Joe Donnelly's first and foremost priority is to serve as congressman," said St. Joseph County Democratic Chairm Butch Morgan. "I don't think a lot will happen until the maps come out. If the maps make it difficult or impossible for Joe Donnelly to run for Congress, he'll take a hard look at governor and U.S. Senate." Morgan listed former congressman Brad Ellsworth, Senate Minority Leader Vi Simpson and former House speaker John Gregg as potential candidates. All of these



Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel won't seek reelection. Many political observers in the city believe he was vulnerable. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Democrats are keeping low profile these days.

Gregg has told HPI he is not interested in a run, but a number of influential Democrats believe that Gregg is being "coy" and has not made the Gen. Sherman declaration. Sen. Simpson told HPI on Tuesday that she will monitor the situation and should be on a potential candidate list.

As with Bosma and Long, any decision from Simpson on a run likely would come after the Indiana General Assembly closes its session on April 30.

Gregg has said he will back Weinzapfel, but one influential Democrat told HPI that he couches that support with the phrase "if he runs."

With Weinzapfel saying he will take several months to decide, the time line for Indiana Democrats appears to be months in the offing to coalesce around a candidate. ❖

Donnelly votes against Pelosi

WASHINGTON - Rep. Joe Donnelly, the Granger Democrat who narrowly survived, showed his independence by being one of 19 Democrats who did not vote for Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., for speaker. Because Republicans control the House, Donnelly's vote was not a factor in the election of Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, as speaker (Indianapolis Star). Donnelly voted for moderate Democratic Rep. Heath Shuler of North Carolina because, he said, the party needs new leadership.

"What the voters told us in the 2010 election was that they wanted a change," Donnelly said. "And I believe a moderate approach with a dedication to working across the aisle, something I know is important to both me and Congressman Shuler, is the best way forward." ❖



Daniels says Dems in better position to achieve deficit reduction

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON - Gov. Mitch Daniels came to Washington on Wednesday to proselytize about the urgent need to cut the federal deficit and debt while suggesting that those of the opposite political faith – Democrats – are more favorably positioned than his party to get the job done.

"You're better equipped than people who wear my uniform are to lead this drive back to solvency," Daniels told Democrats in the audience at a dinner at the Newseum, where he was one of three recipients of the inaugural "Fiscy Awards" sponsored by Washington groups devoted to fiscal prudence.



Daniels said that voters give Democrats the benefit of the doubt as the more paternalistic party, which means it has more latitude to make major changes in federal spending. But that requires, in Daniels' view, the emergence of Democratic leaders who will abandon the party's tendency to promote government expansion.

Daniels spoke at a venue on Pennsylvania Avenue just blocks from the White House. He suggested that the current occupant, President Barack Obama, could achieve major advances in reducing the nearly \$1.3 trillion federal deficit and the federal debt that's approaching the \$14.3 trillion mark that will require congressional action to raise the debt ceiling later this spring.

"It may not be his view of what's right," Daniels said in an HPI interview after his remarks. "If he chose to, he'd be the most effective, and I'd lead the cheers."

As he usually is during visits to Washington, Daniels was coy about whether he wants to run for president himself. "I'm a long way from any such decision," Daniels said. "I'd like to contribute (to the political discourse). I'm working on the problems of Indiana."

His success in transforming the state's budget deficit to a surplus while reducing property taxes is the primary reason he was honored with a Fiscy by the Comeback America Initiative, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, and the Concord Coalition.

"This is a guy who taught us how to run a state," said Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wisconsin and another Fiscy recipient. Ryan was honored for outlining a plan to make structural changes in entitlement programs like Social Security

and Medicare.

The other Fiscy winner, Sen. Kent Conrad, D-North Dakota, also praised Daniels' leadership of Indiana. "We need more of it in this town," Conrad said.

But the place where Conrad works, Capitol Hill, is likely to continue to be dysfunctional on fiscal issues. Conrad was part of a national deficit commission in which 11 of 18 members voted to approve in early December on a sweeping overhaul of the federal budget and tax system that would result in a \$4 trillion reduction in projected deficits.

It's unclear, however, whether the new Congress, riven by partisan divisions between a Republican House and Democratic Senate, will adopt any of the commission's ideas.

While Congress struggles with fiscal matters, Daniels is not inclined to offer his own roadmap.

"Nobody wants to hear a plan from me," Daniels said. "When I'm asked questions, I give 'for instances,' I give examples."

He said his open to any kind of plan that reduces the deficit. "I'm going with anything that makes the math work," Daniels said. Those ideas, however, did not percolate during the 2010 election, which was dominated by Tea Party activists advocating fiscal restraint.

The election was "all diagnosis, no prescription," Daniels said. Tackling Social Security and Medicare is "all work to be done."

Achieving solvency will occur only with significantly higher economic growth, according to Daniels. It also will require tax reform, but he cautioned against relying solely on increasing taxes for higher income levels, which could undermine the economy.

"I am for a tax system that generates more revenue," Daniels said. "But we better be very mindful of how we go after it. We've shot ourselves in the foot before – and we could do it again."

Most importantly, political leaders have to level with Americans about the challenge of fiscal rebalancing, Daniels said. It can't be done simply by banning earmarks or eliminating waste, fraud and abuse, which "trivializes something much, much larger."

Daniels is optimistic that the country will accept sacrifices needed to achieve solvency.

"I really believe...that our fellow citizens will have the courage to support the necessary actions if we have the courage to propose, advocate and explain them," Daniels said. "I do believe we're going to get to the point where the American people will say, 'If that's what it takes for my kids to grow up in a more prosperous country, let's go.'" ❖



Goodnight suggests a Democratic Cornfield Conference

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

KOKOMO - Perhaps Hoosier Democrats need their own "Cornfield Conference."

That's the opinion of Democratic Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight (pictured) after Hoosier Democrats lost 12 seats in the Indiana House of Representatives on Nov. 2, 2010, four in the Indiana Senate and two in the U.S. House. He didn't specifically talk about future senator Homer Capehart's Daviess County event on Aug. 26-27, 1938, which took place on his farm and is largely credited with revitalizing the moribund Indiana Republican Party during the Great Depression.



But he cited former House Speaker John Gregg (who owns a beautiful spread nestled in the corner of Knox County, a stone's throw from Sullivan County and just across the White River from Daviess County), Reps. Donnelly and Carson, and Senate Minority Leader Vi Simpson, along with Democratic mayors as a core party group that should come together to determine a future course.

The void Indiana Democrats face is even more pronounced with the exit of Evan Bayh, who has been the party lion since 1988, and the lack of a clear-cut gubernatorial nominee, with its biggest, most -successful names - Gregg, Kathy Davis, Bart Peterson, Graham Richard - showing a lack of interest in the top executive perch.

Goodnight is the kind of party official Democrats should pay heed to. He released a campaign poll this week that showed him with a 77 percent job approval rating, coming in a city that was decimated by the near liquidation of General Motors, Chrysler and Delphi, it's jobless rate rising to 18 percent last year. Goodnight has been a font of innovation, launching a city-Howard County consolidation effort, while backing many of the Kernan-Shepard reforms that many in his party opposed.

He does not have a Republican opponent to date. And while he isn't interested in running for governor in 2012, he is concerned about the direction Hoosier Democrats are heading in the next couple of election cycles.

Goodnight is calling for the creation of a Democratic Party council made up of mayors, legislators and congressional level personnel to help forge a vision beyond what he calls a mindless defense of the status quo in general and the Indiana House in particular.

"We have some successes," Goodnight said. "Congressman Donnelly did a good job of defending some of the things he's done for Kokomo. If you look at Marion County, they won every countywide race. They were focused and energized and they had a lot of good candidates."

While some Indianapolis Democrats like State Rep. John Bartlett did everything they could to spike any of the Kernan-Shepard reforms, there were others like State Reps. Ed DeLaney and Mary Ann Sullivan who supported reform and were able to defend their House seats in the GOP tidal wave.

Goodnight believes that the overriding emphasis has been on Indiana House races and yet there was little on the policy front to pitch to voters.

"It's hard to play defense for two years and not have anything to really brag about on mail pieces," Goodnight said.

Some legislation that he described as "common sense" and "good government" were blocked by House Democrats.

"The fact that you have city and county employees sitting on their own councils is a problem," Good-





night said. "There are federal and state laws on who can run and hold offices. I felt like they were just saying no to any ethic reform or any of the consolidation or government reform issues and they weren't offering any new ideas. They missed the boat."

Goodnight crossed swords with former House Speaker B. Patrick Bauer when he attempted to defend Ron Herrell's House seat by blasting Republican Councilman Mike Karickhoff's council votes on some tax issues that were also supported by Goodnight and other council Democrats.

Goodnight and Bauer had a polite coffee together in the final month of the campaign to make sure a civil war didn't ensue. Ultimately, it is now ex-speaker Bauer and ex-Rep. Herrell along with a 60-seat GOP House majority. Bauer and his new team of consultants and pollsters crazy-quilted a patchwork of mailers assailing Republican challengers as abortion pill pushers, polluting coal miners and friendly to child predators.

Asked what Indiana Democrats stand for, Goodnight laughed.

"There's a lot of us that stand for progress," he answered. "I can't speak for all of us, but we have to stand for doing what's best for all citizens and not what's best just for certain groups. You have to do what's best for the entire group. I'm not sure we're focused that way."

"My point is we can't continue every two years just concentrating on winning the House with a disregard of almost every other office," Goodnight added. "Forget about the Senate, mayoral races, sheriff races. We have to come up with a better strategy than that. Once the Legislature completes the maps, that's the best time to figure it out."

Goodnight noted there is "not a clear leader." ❖

'Bipartisanship' in the House gets a knuckle sandwich from Bauer

By **SUZANNAH COUCH**

INDIANAPOLIS - Bipartisan efforts were missing in action when the Indiana House opened its session Wednesday.

When bill list number one was read, State Rep. Terri Austin, D-Anderson, said House Rule 115 was violated.

Austin made a point of order saying that "each bill should be read in name and title individually."

Minutes later, House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer quoted the Indiana Constitution and he said "every bill shall be read by title."

Bauer said that he was just doing his job as minority leader. "I'm just trying in a way to help you manage this. There are bad things coming down the pike that can be eliminated," he said, in reference to Right to Work legislation some Republicans are planning to pursue.

State Rep. Jerry Torr, R-Carmel, said Speaker Brian

Bosma is doing what Bauer, the speaker from 2006 through 2010, did for four years.

State Rep. Jeffrey Espich, R-Uniondale, stood at the podium and said that he had hoped for bipartisanship since Bosma had appointed two Democrat committee chairs in Reps. Steve Stemler and Chet Dobis. It was the first time a speaker had appointed chairs from the other party in the state's 194-year history

Espich said that the House could spend 20 minutes



House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer argues with State Rep. Jerry Torr just minutes into the opening day of the session on Wednesday when Democrats demanded the reading of all bills. Rep. Austin is in the background in red. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



a day reading bill lists, or "we can spend our time to keep taxes low and create an atmosphere of creating jobs."

State Rep. William C. Friend, R-Macy, addressed the issue of time management as well. "If we are abusive of the way we manage our time it just doesn't affect the minority party, but the majority party as well," Friend said.

Freshman Republican Jud McMillin, R-Brookville, spoke in the chamber for the first time, saying, "The reason I was elected was people in Indiana want to see a fundamental change and that change won't come if we constantly bicker. So let's get to work."

Democrats proposed the rejection of the Right to Work Bill on the first reading from bill list number two. The proposal was defeated by 58-38 party line vote.

In a press conference after the session closed, Bosma discussed bipartisanship within the House with emphasis on cooperation, noting that Bauer and former Democratic Speaker John Gregg had handled the bill reading the exact same way. Bosma called the Democratic antics "ridiculous" and "ludicrous" and said, "What they were trying to do is to keep bills away they disagree with."

"We'll work with those who are willing, and work around those who are not," Bosma said.

This morning the House met for approximately 16 minutes. Bosma addressed the bipartisan effort of both parties. He had been asked by the press and members of the Republican caucus if the bipartisanship effort was dead. Bosma said there was nothing further from the truth. He said that the majority will be reaching out to the willing in the minority.

Contrary to yesterday's opening session, the bill lists were handed down on the first reading. Bauer also addressed the bipartisan effort of both parties in his point of personal privilege. "Today's another day; there's another call for bipartisanship and you shall have it if we follow the rules," Bauer said. He added that the House should work together for the state. He said that the House should fight the good fight and use the rules of the Indiana State Constitution. ❖

Samm Quinn, Shelby Salazar and Jessica Wray contributed to this report.

A mature Senate approach

By **ZACH OSOWSKI**

INDIANAPOLIS - The Indiana Senate started its 2011 session Wednesday with good wishes, but chamber leaders said that they soon would have many issues to argue about.

Right after the clerk read the numbers of the first 200-plus bills and resolutions, Senate President Pro Tem-

pore David Long welcomed new and old members and said he realized it was "an exciting day for all of you."

He also acknowledged that this will be a "challenging session" given the concerns about what is expected to be a \$28 billion state budget for a state where the unemployment rate has hovered around 10 percent for the past two years. He acknowledged that the senators would be "fighting numbers to make the budget work."

He also said that it would take a bipartisan effort to get a budget passed, but he was confident the Senate will reach a "balanced budget at the end of the day."

Senate Minority Leader Vi Simpson agreed that the budget will be the biggest issue for this session. "The budget is going to be much tougher than most people imagine," she said.

She also said she worried that because Republicans have a 37-13 majority they might pull budget priorities out of the mainstream. "I hope we don't get waylaid by any radical new members of the General Assembly," the senator said.

Sen. Tim Lanane, D-Anderson, also saw budget challenges, but said it was only one of several. Another big one will be redistricting. "It (redistricting) is a difficult task because (of) the makeup of the parties and the maps are in place for 10 years," Lanane said.

Sen. Luke Kenley agreed the budget will be a big issue, and said the challenge of crafting will be complicated because Gov. Mitch Daniels, a Republican, made budget cuts that must be followed through the fiscal year. "The people will not be happy (about the cuts) since the economy is recovering," said Kenley, the powerful chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee who will put his stamp on any budget bill.

Kenley identified education reform as another important issue. Parents can already move their children out of failing public schools, but Daniels and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett want to give some parents more options.

Daniels and Bennett want to open new charter schools, broaden access to virtual charter schools, and allow parents to use public dollars to pay for tuition at private schools. "The time is right to do things to provide better opportunities for students in failing schools," he said.

Sen. Brandt Hershman, R-Wheatfield, said that, while the budget and education will be important, he also wants the Legislature to concentrate on other issues. He said he wants to focus more on the economic side of things and create jobs through "economic reconstruction" and reducing the corporate tax rate. ❖

Megan Banta, Lauren Casey, Sarah Seward and Monica Harvey were contributors to this story.



Epic 2-year health reform battle begins

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

KOKOMO - There was this woman at Republican headquarters in Kokomo last August who charged then Republican Senate candidate Dan Coats with a mission:

"I urge you to start out by repealing all the major legislation from this session. Obviously Obama will veto and it will be sustained. But take the vote."

Beginning Friday, and reaching an early crescendo next week, the new Republican majority in the U.S. House is expected to strike against what they call "Obamacare" - the Affordable Care Act - that passed by a mere seven votes in the U.S. House last March.

Much has changed since President Obama signed it into law. In a political sense, two Hoosier congressmen who voted for the measure - Democrats Brad Ellsworth and Baron Hill - were defeated last Nov. 2. And four new Republicans in the Indiana delegation - Sen. Coats and U.S. Reps. Marlin Stutzman, Larry Bucshon, Todd Rokita and Todd Young - have vowed to do what they can to repeal the reforms.

"If we pass this bill with a sizable vote, and I think that we will, it will put enormous pressure on the Senate to do perhaps the same thing," Rep. Fred Upton, who will be the new chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said on "Fox News Sunday." "But then, after that, we're going to go after this bill piece by piece."

In a policy sense, many of the reforms are already in place, such as closing the Medicare Part D "doughnut hole" - which can cost seniors up to \$3,600 in prescription drug costs annually. Kids cannot be denied insurance coverage because of a pre-existing condition. College kids can remain on their parents insurance plan until age 26. You can't lose your insurance coverage if the policyholder gets sick. There are no longer lifetime limits on payments for coverage.

Much of the rest of the health reforms won't come

into place until 2014, by which time supporters say it will bring 32 million Americans into health insurance coverage.

The problem for Democrats and President Obama is that the Real Clear Politics polling composite shows 40.5 percent of Americans support the reforms and 52.8 percent oppose. In Indiana, between 55 and 60 percent of those polled have consistently been against the reforms.

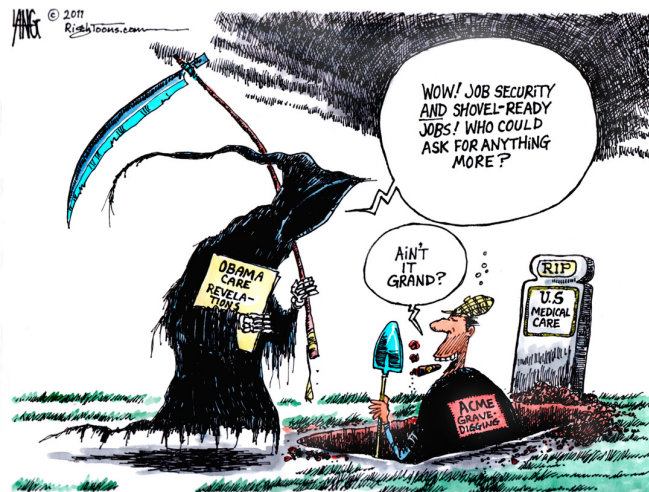
In the latest Rasmussen Reports poll conducted on Dec. 26, 60 percent favor repeal of the national health care law, and 46 percent strongly want that. Seventy-six percent of voters with health insurance now rate their coverage as good or excellent, only 4 percent said it was "poor" and 45 percent believe the new laws will force them to change coverage.

In talking with a number of businessmen, many are facing health care costs escalating in the six figure range (though they were experiencing double digit annual increases prior to the reforms). That's where Republicans like Upton assail the reforms as a job-busting tax on small business. Several businessmen have told me that by 2014, their companies are likely to pay fines and let their employees enroll in the public insurance pools the reforms create. They see it as a backdoor "public option" that Republicans so bitterly opposed.

Republicans want to repeal, and then replace with an incremental approach, citing such issues as allowing insurance companies to sell across statelines. Gov. Mitch Daniels, who reacted with "sorrow and discouragement" at the legislation, noted that the "next governor is going to face a massive Medicaid cost." He added that there will be "trillions of dollars" in added tax costs to future generations and said that any other read is "fraudulent." In his mind, the tax benefits should have gone to individuals with an emphasis on preventative care "as opposed to this massive federal expansion."

While the House will pass the repeal in the coming days, it will get nowhere in the U.S. Senate and certainly President Obama will veto even if it did.

So what we are seeing in the earliest hours of the new Republican House majority is the first markers in the 2012 presidential race. That election will be where the epic battle on health reform plays out. If Obama wins, "Obamacare" is here to stay.





If a Republican - perhaps Gov. Daniels - enters and wins the presidential race, then a complicated rollback will begin.

Coats told me after that day in Kokomo that if the reforms are repealed, "We have to present a clear alternative." And that is what I worry about. President Reagan and our own Doc Bowen - then Health and Human Services Secretary - achieved health reforms in the

late 1980s that might have prevented the kind of problems that helped produce the Obama reforms, only to watch Congress roll them back during the first Bush presidency. And that rollback created the crushing dynamic that caught millions of Americans (like myself) in the insurance death spiral.

So I anxiously await a credible Republican alternative. ❖

Time to ponder the 2011 HPI Power 50

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - With four new members of Congress, more than a dozen new Indiana General Assembly members and significant changes in the Daniels administration, there will be significant changes in the 2011 Howey Politics Indiana Power 50.

The Power 50 has been published every year since 1999. The list is designed to weigh and rank the 50 Hoosiers who will most likely have the biggest impact on the coming year. It gauges not only current standing, but expectations.

In 2011, the top newsmakers will come from the Statehouse on the biennial budget process, redistricting, education and local government reforms. We also have municipal elections, so there will be a change of the guard in many cities across the state.

As always, HPI invites readers to weigh in. Feel free to nominate those you think should be on the list, or give us your own list. We will form the 2011 list based on feedback from our readers as well as HPI contributors. Send your nominations to: bhowey2@gmail.com.

Normally the Power 50 list is published on the first Thursday of the new year. But with the prospects that Mike Pence will be making announcement in January, we decided to push this year's list back to Thursday Feb. 3.

Here is the 2010 HPI Power 50 list:

1. Gov. Mitch Daniels
2. U.S. Rep. Mike Pence
3. U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar
4. U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh
5. U.S. Rep. Baron Hill
6. Speaker B. Patrick Bauer
7. Senate President David Long
8. Education Supt. Tony Bennett
9. FSSA Commissioner Anne

Murphy

10. Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman
11. U.S. Rep. Dan Burton
12. U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly
13. U.S. Rep. Brad Ellsworth
14. House Minority Leader Brian Bosma
15. State Sens. Luke Kenley and Brandt Hershman
16. OMB Director Ryan Kitchell
17. Evansville Mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel
18. Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard
19. Commerce Secretary Mitch Roob
20. State Rep. Randy Borrer
21. U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky
22. State Rep. Kreg Battles and State Sen. Connie Lawson
23. Secretary of State Todd Rokita
24. State Rep. Ed DeLaney
25. Treasurer Richard Mourdock
26. Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry
27. U.S. Rep. Mark Souder
28. Earl Goode
29. Marty Morris
30. IMA President Pat Kiely
31. ISTA President Nate Schnellenberger
32. Chamber President Kevin Brinegar
33. House Majority Leader Russ Stilwell
34. Senate Minority Leader Vi Simpson
35. Budget Director Chris Ruhl
36. Indiana Republican Chairman Murray Clark
37. Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker
38. Mike Gentry, HRCC
39. Kristen Self, HDCC
40. Betsey Burdick and Eric Holcomb
41. Mike Sodrel and Todd Young
42. Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi
43. Matt Greller, Indiana Association of Cities & Towns
44. Greenwood Mayor Charles Henderson
45. U.S. Rep. Andre Carson
46. Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott and Lake Sheriff Rogelio Dominguez
47. Attorney General Greg Zoeller
48. Ways & Means Chairman William Crawford
49. Farm Bureau President Don Villwock
50. State Reps. Scott Pelath and Jeff Espich

2010 Power List invited to Tea Party
Partnership with grip Indiana politics in 2010

By BRIAN A. HOWEY and PHILIP KROEMER

INDIANAPOLIS - A year of economic crisis and political uncertainty has led to the possibility of a second Great Depression and a new effort to take control of the federal government in 2010. The Tea Party movement is the most visible sign of this movement in Indiana.

LEGISLATIVE TIMELINES

BY KATE COFFIN

INDIANAPOLIS - As the Senate convened for the first time in 2010, the House is expected to be "a hot stove" due to the election and the impact of the "stimulus" package. The House is expected to be a hot stove due to the election and the impact of the "stimulus" package.

QUOTE

"What's so wrong with the system right now is it costs \$1.20 roughly to give away a dollar. We ought to devote the money we save to the poor people."

- STATE REP. ED DELANEY, on his bill to abolish income tax

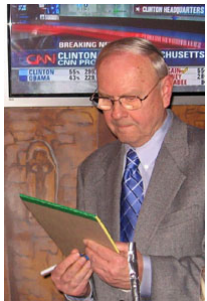


START treaty passage was a victory for Lugar

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - Republican leaders in the Senate, anxious to hinder President Obama, no matter the cost, turned what they could have hailed as a Republican success into a major victory for the president, a stinging defeat for them.

Ratification of the New START treaty is really a victory for a Republican senator, Indiana's Richard G. Lugar, a leader in the fight for ratification of the treaty with Russia for mutual reduction of nuclear warheads.



Ratification is really a victory also for the dozen other Republican senators who put country ahead of divisive politics and provided the needed two-thirds vote.

Ratification is really a victory as well for Republican views on need for modernization of our nuclear weapons, with agreement now on the funding to

make sure the weapons are ready, not rusty.

Republican leaders could have claimed accurately that Lugar, who has achieved remarkable success in eliminating horrible weapons in the former Soviet Union that once were aimed at us, provided Republican influence as the mentor for a senator named Obama on need for further reduction of that nuclear threat.

They could have cited the treaty as a bipartisan achievement, building on the arms reduction initiatives of Republican presidents going back to Reagan.

But the two top Republican leaders in the Senate, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky and Jon Kyl of Arizona, chose instead to do all they could to defeat the treaty, from filibuster to fib about lack of study of the document. It was the subject of exhaustive hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with section by section analysis and testimony in support by the nation's top military officials and an array of Republican and Democratic foreign policy experts.

There even was humbugging by the ratification foes that bothering now with national security and ramifications for future Russian cooperation on Iran, North Korea and Afghanistan showed disrespect for Christmas. Guess those senators had important Christmas parties with lobbyists and big contributors earmarked on their calendars.

McConnell made clear his intent, right after Republican gains in the November elections, when he said: "The single most important thing we want to achieve is for

President Obama to be a one-term president."

Of course he wants a Republican president elected in 2012, not reelection of Obama.

But "single most important" objective?

More important than national security and a strong bipartisan show of resolve in dealing over the next two years with Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan, Russia and the rest of the world?

McConnell railed in treaty debate about "some politician's desire to declare a political victory and host a press conference before the end of the year."

Depriving Obama of an opportunity to cite New START treaty ratification as an achievement for American foreign policy and national security is more important than strengthening U.S. standing and security in the world?

Weakening Obama for the next election was more important than concerns about weakening the president in any further efforts for Russian cooperation and in pushing for Middle East peace and economic and trade agreements in a world already wondering about U.S. stability?

Embarrassing Obama with key word changes in the treaty, which the GOP leaders sought, was more important than the fact that the changes would void the treaty, leave us without inspections of Russian nuclear compliance and end negotiations on arms reduction?

Ironically, instead of depriving Obama of treaty ratification and weakening and embarrassing him, the Republican leaders deprived themselves of the opportunity to hail a Republican role in ratification at their own press conference.

They weakened what could have been their claim of supporting the bipartisan cooperation the voters want, allowing instead the credit for the bipartisanship to go to Obama.

They embarrassed themselves in rejecting the plea for ratification by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and treaty support from former Republican secretaries of state, from Henry Kissinger to Condoleezza Rice.

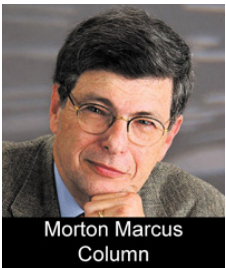
They see victory ahead over Obama. The November elections enhanced chances for that 2012 victory. But the Republican leaders risk a Pelosi-like image for the next election as voters view Congress. They could in their blatant partisanship, as shown in trying to stop a bipartisan START, snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. ❖

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



Hoosier economic development has been threatened

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**



Morton Marcus
Column

INDIANAPOLIS - Another year, another "new" legislative session, another season of Cubs' baseball. Thus far the saddest bill proposed in the General Assembly allows Hoosier local governments to seek bankruptcy and management by a state-appointed agent. This bill is a backdoor confession that the state government's 30 year war on local governments has succeeded. Bankruptcy is the flag of surrender and state management is occupation by a

foreign power.

Ostensibly this legislation is aimed at Gary where fiscal shenanigans are not the art form that they are in Indianapolis. Gary today, where tomorrow? With so many communities in financial distress, essential governmental functions are starving for dollars and leadership.

It is difficult to head an agency that no one wants to support, even if its activities are vital to the future of the locality. We know about the cutbacks in public safety and education across the state. But there are less publicized problems of equal long-term importance.

For example, this may be the year that economic development in Indiana comes apart openly.

In the past we have been entertained by the annual reports of the state's Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) telling us about more jobs than ever promised and more capital investment than ever on the drawing board. But what is happening on the local level? Are all new or expansion projects the result of action by the state agency? Doesn't any credit go to Local Economic Development Organizations (LEDOs)? Are there any deals that are made without the state's gentle touch?

It is no secret that many LEDOs find the IEDC high-handed, secretive, and uncooperative. In most cases the IEDC, however, is trying to protect the client's confidentiality with the implication that local groups have loose lips.

All the wondrous news out of the IEDC leaves the impression that LEDOs may be unnecessary and counter-productive. This concept is perfectly in accord with the financial squeeze on businesses and local governments. Why put up money for something the state covers so well without local input? When the IEDC brings the client to town

for the ribbon cutting, the mayor and the county council president will get an opportunity to utter some clichés; if the governor shows up, they may even get on TV.

When many LEDOs were formed in the early 1980s, the motivation was to restructure the local economy after the loss of significant firms.

Those job and payroll losses endangered other local businesses and a severe, protracted slump could be anticipated locally. Leading citizens and government officials responded by supporting the LEDO movement.

In the next few years there is strong chance that we will see many LEDOs submerged into regional groupings. Others will be swallowed by Chambers of Commerce. Still others will be split so that one part is under the city and another under the county.

Because money is hard to find, some LEDO boards may decide to assign a fund-raising task to the economic development professional they hired to head the LEDO. This is like asking the surgeon to raise money for the hospital.

Today LEDOs throughout the state will be easy targets to scale back because they are "too expensive." The economy today, however, demands that LEDOs be strengthened, not weakened. Competition will be intense for business expansions in 2011 and 2012. The best prepared communities will have a strong advantage with a LEDO that has sustained support and a knowledgeable, flexible staff.

It will take more than simple property tax abatement and a welcoming smile to attract today's business executive to Mytown, Indiana. A community ready for a new firm or an expanding company has a LEDO staff with the knowledge and skill to match the community's resources to the needs of the searching firm.

That knowledge and skill does not survive a starvation budget and a minimalist mission. ❖

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



Mark Kiesling, Times of Northwest Indiana: He may not be sheriff as of yesterday, but Roy Dominguez isn't about to turn his back on politics. His former chief of staff, Oscar Sanchez, said last week he will make a formal announcement this month about challenging Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott Jr. in his re-election bid. This is about as surprising to McDermott as discovering Hammond is on Lake Michigan. He predicted this move last month when he and I were talking about the mayor's race this year. "One of the sheriff's hand-picked candidates will run against me, and I know exactly who it's gonna be, it's gonna be Oscar Sanchez." He reiterated that this past week to Times reporter Bill Dolan, saying, "Roy Dominguez asked him to run as a political payback to me. Oscar is doing what his boss is telling him to do." Sanchez, naturally, dismissed that notion, saying he was his own candidate with his own platform. Hammond's mayoral race promises to be something most Lake County elections are not: Newsworthy both in the primary and general election. McDermott and Sanchez are both Democrats, and McDermott is looking forward to a serious Republican challenge in the fall as well. Hammond is an odd city. Sure, it has its share of Democratic Party apparatchiks who will punch the straight ticket, but it also has a surprising number of people who vote for the person and not the party. It was in 1983 that Tom McDermott Sr. won the mayor's office as a Republican and kept it until leaving to become head of a Northwest Indiana business think tank. He was succeeded by Republican Duane Dedelow Jr., and Dedelow was turned out by a slim margin by McDermott Jr., who originally tried to run on the GOP ticket but was told to wait for Dedelow to finish one more term. McDermott Jr. then went to the late Democratic Party Chairman Bob Stiglich, who gave his blessing for him to run as a Democrat even though his voting record was Republican. So what makes McDermott think that Dominguez has it in for him politically? Dominguez thinks it goes back to a time when both men were seeking higher office. "He told me he would support me for governor if I would support him for (U.S.) Senate," Dominguez said. "Although I supported him, he didn't get enough support statewide, and when the time came, he didn't support me for governor but instead came out for Brad Ellsworth." ❖

Matt Tully, Indianapolis Star: It's been a long wait for Brian Bosma. More than four years ago, voters gave Democrats control of the Indiana House, a result that cost Bosma, a Republican, his post as speaker. He spent the next four legislative sessions leading the House minority, a humbling post that involves watching many of the policies you support get pushed aside year after year. But

when lawmakers convene today, Bosma will be back in his old seat at the front of the House chamber. With last fall's GOP landslides, he's been given a second shot as speaker. He said his second chance gives him a rare opportunity. "I was essentially the CEO of a large operation," Bosma said when we talked this week. "And then I had a few years as a lower-level manager, which gave me the opportunity to critique my efforts and those of my successor. And now I have the chance to be the CEO again." So what will he do differently? Since the election, Bosma, who represents parts of Lawrence Township and Fishers, has talked about changing the way the minority party is treated in the House. It's perhaps the most intriguing promise he's made -- the type of change a chamber hobbled by tired traditions that favor political insiders could use. He said the first sign of the change will be seen when lawmakers return to Indy today. The traditional first-day meeting of committee chairs will for the first time be bipartisan, as Bosma offered two of the posts to Democrats. "That's not the only outreach that will be occurring," he said. "For our democracy to be strong, we have to be respectful of all views, even if we disagree with them." ❖



Sylvia Smith, Fort Wayne Journal

Gazette: All indications are that Sen. Richard Lugar won't let his 80th birthday be a reason to retire at the end of his current term. Assuming he remains in good health, Lugar will run for a seventh term in 2012 and win, despite the tea party's vow to kick his butt out of office. If the Tea Party movement maintains its energy -- a big if -- Lugar will have plenty of company on the primary ballot. And that will lead to his victory for a seventh term. It's Politics 101: The next best thing to no primary opposition for an establishment candidate is lots of opponents who compete for the disgruntled, anti-incumbent voters. Just ask Marlin Stutzman. He's a congressman now, but he probably would be a senator-elect except for all the other Tea Party candidates on Indiana's GOP Senate primary earlier this year. Sixty-one percent of the voters in the Republican primary voted for a tea party candidate, but Dan Coats (the only one not supported by Tea Party groups) won. The four Tea Party candidates split the majority vote, and the establishment candidate won even though he received just 39 percent of the total GOP ballots. If the Tea Party stays the Tea Party -- an intensely local movement that's highly suspect of hierarchies, such as statewide organizations -- the Coats strategy will work just fine for Lugar. If the Tea Party morphs into a more structured political movement that coalesces behind one candidate, it could derail Lugar ... but it would also alienate many Tea Party activists who value idealism over political pragmatism. ❖



Daniels to speak at CPAC confab

WASHINGTON - Indiana Gov Mitch Daniels will attend CPAC, speaking to the annual conservative confab on Feb 11th, a source tells POLITICO. It's another sign that Daniels is thinking seriously about a White House bid. He has previously eschewed the Republican cattle call circuit, insisting that he's entirely focused on his day job. The CPAC appearance offers Daniels a high-profile platform to address his comments last year that there ought to be a truce on cultural issues to address the country's pressing fiscal problems. He has since sought to clarify his assessment, but the remarks have raised concerns among the GOP's social conservative wing.



Bucshon serious about repeal vote

WASHINGTON - Rep. Larry Bucshon took his first big step Wednesday as the new representative of Indiana's 8th Congressional District before he even took the oath of office (Straub, Evansville Courier & Press). Bucshon, a Republican from Newburgh and one of 94 freshman lawmakers sworn in as a members of the 112th Congress, agreed before he even assumed office to co-sponsor legislation intended to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which is better known as the health care reform law. The new Republican majority in the House intends to pass and send to the Senate legislation aimed at undoing what President Barack Obama considers the biggest accomplishment of his first two years in

office. The effort likely will go nowhere because it's unlikely to gain serious consideration in the Senate, and then there's always a presidential veto with which to contend. But Bucshon insists the vote is worth the effort to show, if nothing else, that the new GOP majority is listening to its constituents. "For me, I campaigned on it, and I really believe it is a job-killing bill that hurts business," Bucshon said from his new suite in the Longworth House Office Building. "I believe it will blow out the budget. There are some good things in it, and there will be a replacement bill. I know that the status quo is not acceptable." Bucshon, one of two heart surgeons serving in Congress, said he hopes to aid in the development of whatever package Republicans devise to replace health care reform. The key, he said, is to create more competition within the health insurance industry to make coverage more affordable. "We can help with tax incentives once we get prices under control," he said. "We wouldn't be showboating. It's what a majority of the American people want us to do. It will show people we're serious." Bucshon said he considers it "a serious vote on a serious issue."

'Good to be back' says Sen. Coats

WASHINGTON - On the other side of the Capitol, Dan Coats, a Fort Wayne Republican who previously served in the Senate for 10 years before his retirement in 1999, was sworn in as the new senator from Indiana. He takes the seat of Democrat Evan Bayh of Indianapolis, who decided not to seek re-election after two terms (Evansville Courier & Press). Coats took the oath of office administered by Vice President Joe Biden in the Senate chambers at 12:13 p.m. EST. He was accompanied to the front of the chamber by Sen. Richard Lugar, of Indiana, and former Vice President

Dan Quayle, whose son, Ben, was elected to Congress from Arizona. "It feels very good to be back," Coats said at a post-oath reception attended by a couple hundred supporters in the Capitol Visitors Center. "I never thought I would do this ever again." Coats said he is reclaiming his old seat "with a real sense of purpose," intent on righting the nation's fiscal policies. "I am committed to restoring fiscal health by reducing spending, reforming entitlement programs and balancing the budget. Recognizing that spending cuts alone will not solve all our problems, I will work to promote a pro-growth agenda in areas such as trade and tax policy that will start putting people back to work." Coats said he is "grateful for the trust and confidence Hoosiers have placed in me to serve the people of the great state of Indiana. It is a tremendous honor and privilege to represent Hoosier values in our nation's capital."

Rokita sees 'trail mix' fiscal diet

WASHINGTON - "We're not going to make people happy," said Rep. Todd Rokita, R-Indianapolis, as he sat on the office couch he plans to sleep on to save money on housing. "We are going to be selling trail mix -- the healthy stuff (Indianapolis Star). The other side has been selling Twinkies." Rokita's tough spending talk had support from at least one constituent, Cindy Dunaway, 54, Plainfield. The retired physician and restaurateur, who was the first volunteer to walk through Rokita's campaign office last year, came to Washington to celebrate his induction. "I was just very concerned about the way our country is headed right now, some of the problems that Todd will be tackling here soon, primarily the national debt and our out-of-control spending," Dunaway said.



Pence tells states to find fiscal order

WASHINGTON - Cut spending, raise taxes and fees, and accept billions of dollars from Congress. That's been the formula for states trying to survive the worst economy since the 1930s (Associated Press). As Republicans prepare to take control of the House and exert more influence in the Senate, it's clear that option No. 3 will soon wither. States will continue to face substantial deficits over the next few years, but they will have to get by with the end of stimulus spending and less financial help from the federal government. In recent interviews, top GOP lawmakers made clear it will be much less. "We've got to put our fiscal house in order in Washington, D.C.," said Rep. Mike Pence of Indiana. "It's going to be essential that leaders at the state level roll their sleeves up, make the hard choices and put their fiscal health in order, as well."

GOP freshmen 'disgusted'

INDIANAPOLIS - Newly-elected State Rep. Mike Karickhoff said he was disappointed, and State Rep. Heath VanNatter called it "disgusting." The House Democrats' attempts to force votes on right-to-work bills Wednesday were described in various other ways by the Kokomo-area legislators' GOP colleagues, some not as charitable (Smith, Kokomo Tribune). House Ways and Means Chairman Jeff Espich, R-Uniondale, called the Dems' procedural moves "mischief." Karickhoff, who was spending his first day in a legislative session, settled for "unfortunate." "Today's events I thought were unfortunately what a small number of Democrats have been attempting to do for quite some time, which is prohibit any discussion of a number of issues," Karickhoff said.

The legislative procedure of formally putting bills into the legislative process and assigning them to committee is called "passage on first reading." As with the Kokomo Common Council, where Karickhoff served, bills must pass on three readings to be eligible to be signed into law by the executive. Unlike the city council, however, the first reading in the House doesn't usually require a vote. At least that's how the House has worked for the past 40 years, Espich, a longtime legislative veteran, said Wednesday. Republicans denounced the tactic, saying no one had looked at the bills in question. "I think you'll see individual votes on specific pieces of legislation, but [the Democrats] were trying to do this before there was any discussion, any debate or committee hearings. They were basically taking away individual legislators' rights, individuals' rights to debate and discussion," Karickhoff said. "I don't think a bill should be killed before it has a chance to be seen or heard by anybody," VanNatter said. "I think they have a right to go to committee."

Support builds for state smoke ban

INDIANAPOLIS - Support is building to make Indiana the 34th state in the nation to impose some kind of state-wide smoking ban, although questions remain about whether to exempt some businesses, including casinos and bars (Louisville Courier-Journal). Forty cities, towns and counties in Indiana have imposed bans of varying reach, and supporters say they think 2011 could be the year the General Assembly passes a statewide restriction. "With each passing year the public is more interested in this legislation," said state Rep. Eric Turner, R-Marion. "And we're kind of behind the curve. When I travel to other states and visit a sports bar to

watch a game, there's nobody smoking there." Bans in other states and Indiana communities have shown that businesses — even restaurants and bars — don't suffer big losses, Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels said in December. He said he would encourage a vote on the issue and would sign legislation imposing a state-wide ban. "There seems to be growing momentum" for it, Daniels said. Indiana's smoking ban is supported by the state chamber of commerce. And John Livengood, president of the Indiana Restaurant Association, said "every year the chances get better." "We're heading in that direction," said Livengood, whose restaurant members are so divided on the issue that the group no longer takes a position against it. The Indiana House has passed a ban four times, although with different exclusions, including casinos and bars. But the proposal has repeatedly bogged down in the Indiana Senate. Last year, Senate President Pro Tem David Long, R-Fort Wayne, killed the bill. Long conceded then that he knew the state would eventually adopt a ban, "but I just don't think we're there yet."

Doden enters FW mayor race

FORT WAYNE - Eric Doden wants to be the city's next chief executive — and its chief marketer (Lanka, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Doden, 40, announced his plans Wednesday to run for mayor of Fort Wayne. Touting his business credentials, Doden said the city needs a leader to inspire it to reach its full economic potential. A mayor, he said, not only needs to run a city but sell the community to businesses and entrepreneurs. Doden is director of investments at Ambassador Enterprises. "I believe Fort Wayne can and will experience an economic renaissance," he said. His announcement creates a crowded Republican