



Our troubled Divided States of America



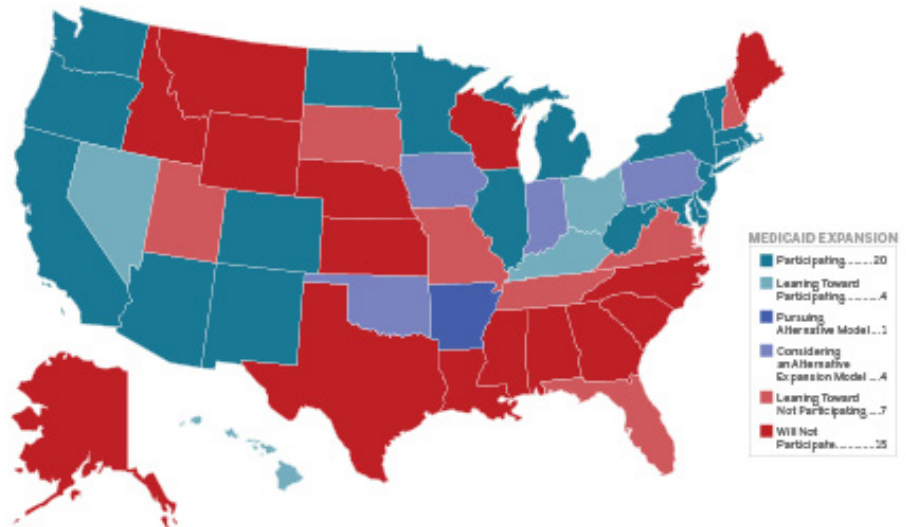
Safe districts, volumes of outside money, and segregated media bring a nation to its knees

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – On July 27, 2004, Illinois State Sen. Barack Obama’s rhetoric soared: “E pluribus unum,” out of many, one. Now even as we speak, there are those who are preparing to divide us, the spinmasters and negative ad peddlers who embrace the politics of anything goes. Well, I say to them tonight, there’s not a liberal America and a conservative America; there’s the United States of America. The pundits like to slice and dice our country into red states and blue states: Red states for Republicans, blue states for Democrats”

It was a speech that would propel him to the presidency four years later.

Beyond the Pledges: Where the **States** Stand on Medicaid
29 States Moving Toward Expansion—September 17, 2013



Today, we seem poised for a civil conflagration. Just look at the emerging map for Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act, where 29 mostly blue Demo-

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To the edge of the GOP cliff

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON – Even if Republicans accomplish nothing else from their standoff with President Barack Obama over the federal budget and his signature health care reform law, they will have changed the way Washington works – perhaps in a manner that winds up costing them politically.



Most of the time in the capital, policy debates are full of political posturing, threats and bluffs that end somewhere short of the brink. As the government shutdown heads into its third day, the GOP has pushed far past



“We’re not going to be disrespected. We have to get something out of this. And I don’t know what that even is.”

- U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman,
to the Washington Examiner



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the edge of the cliff.

The party is actually providing a real-time test of the hypothesis that Americans are so upset with so-called Obamacare that they will tolerate – even support – shuttering large chunks of the government and enduring potentially bad economic fallout.

It's a huge risk.

The blame for the impasse is surely going to fall on the GOP because the White House remains the most potent political force in the country, even when its occupant doesn't use the bully pulpit to its full rhetorical advantage.

At the outset of the shutdown, members of the Hoosier Republican congressional delegation were supremely confident that their party maintained the high ground.

"We were elected into the [House] majority to make substantial changes in the health care law," said Rep. Larry Bucshon, R-8th CD. "We all campaigned on that."

That kind of hard-line stance may be helpful to Bucshon in fending off a primary challenge next year. His next door neighbor in the delegation, Rep. Todd Young, R-9th CD, isn't under a threat from the Tea Party. But he, too, is comfortable with the GOP approach.

"I've gotten a lot of encouraging words from my own constituents on how we're handling this situation," Young said.

That kind of reinforcement is a result of the echo chamber created by redistricting. Rep. Todd Rokita, R-4th CD, is not worried about backlash. He said that voter sentiment in favor of the shutdown was strong during 12 town halls he conducted last month.

"We're doing exactly what our constituents asked us to do when we were home in August," Rokita told Hoosier reporters in a conference call earlier this week.

But the feedback that Hoosier Republicans are getting may not reflect broader reaction that could hurt

the party nationally – a spectrum of voters that ranges much more widely in political orientation than that which they find at home.

Obama is just as dug into his position in opposing the shutdown and defending the health care law as the Republicans are on the opposite side.

"One faction, of one party, in one house of Congress, in one branch of government, shut down major parts of the government – all because they didn't like one law," Obama said earlier this week at a White House event to mark the opening of state health insurance exchanges. "They've shut down the government over an ideological crusade to deny affordable health insurance to millions of Americans."

A brief meeting at the White House between Obama and congressional leaders on Wednesday didn't budge the stalemate. It appears that Obama will hold his ground even if the shutdown lingers until the country hits the so-called debt ceiling later this month.

"The president made clear to the leaders that he is not going to negotiate over the need for Congress to act to reopen the government or to raise the debt limit to pay the bills Congress has already incurred," the White House said in a statement.

That inflexibility is shared by most Republicans in the House. Bucshon maintains that approving a so-called continuing resolution to keep the government operating under current budget levels would be a compromise for his party.

"Many of us want further spending cuts," Bucshon said. "We're willing to give that up, if we get substantial changes in the health care law."

Young said that Republicans already have modified their position on undoing the health care law. First they wanted to defund the whole thing. Now they're insisting on a one-year delay in the individual mandate.

"We've stepped back in the



steps I just outlined," Young said. "Are we willing to go further? Conceivably. We're also looking for some movement from the other side."

A member of the House Ways and Means Committee, Young hinted that the impasse might be broken through a bipartisan agreement that revolves around rifle-shot policy like a repeal of the health care law's medical device tax and broad initiatives like tax reform.

"We may have a grander bargain ahead of us," Young said.

That would be a good thing for Republicans, if the

financial markets' sanguine reaction to the shutdown transforms into a downturn over the prospect of a U.S. debt default.

"I would hope everyone in Washington would push for a swift solution so we don't come close to...[the] debt-limit expiration date," Young said.

If Republicans go beyond that edge, we'll soon see whether the rest of the country is with them. ❖

Schoeff is HPI's Washington correspondent.

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cratic states are moving forward, while the majority of red Republican states – which will likely include Indiana – are rejecting the premise. This is going to create a stark division of have/have not states, with the perception differing sharply in the eyes of the beholder. Gov. Mike Pence has prioritized stable biennial budgets, while other governors have sought health insurance for a larger part of their uninsured populations. In the first three years of the Affordable Care Act, the difference could be measured in the tens of billions of dollars.

In the 2011 reapportionment, the map drawers in 30 Republican states created congressional districts that are whiter and more conservative than the rest of the nation.

Writing in the National Journal last March, analysts Charlie Cook and David Wasserman noted that in 2012 Republicans won only 48% of all votes cast for the House but 54% of the seats. Between 2000 and 2010, the non-Hispanic white share of the population fell from 69 percent to 64 percent, closely tracking the 5-point drop in the white share of the electorate measured by exit polls between 2004 and 2012. But after the post-census redistricting and the 2012 elections, the non-Hispanic white share of the average Republican House district jumped from 73 percent to 75 percent, and the average Democratic House district declined from 52 percent white to 51 percent white.

"In other words, while the country continues to grow more racially diverse, the average Republican district continues to get even whiter," Cook observed.

In 2000, House Republicans represented 59 percent of all white U.S. residents and 40 percent of all non-

white residents. But today, they represent 63 percent of all whites and just 38 percent of all nonwhites.

"What do all these numbers boil down to?" Cook asks. "House Republicans have done a remarkable job of sequestering Democrats into the minority, but in the process they've also reduced their own incentive to reach out to groups their party badly needs if it wants to stay relevant beyond the Southern confines of the Capitol."

So when U.S. Reps. Marlin Stutzman, Jackie Walorski, Todd Rokita and Susan Brooks come home, they find a constituency urging them to do anything they can to kill Obamacare, even if it means a shutdown and default. As Walorski is discovering, even her ardent brand of conservatism is not good enough for the further rightward reaches of her party which ponders a primary challenge.

In the Pew Research poll released just hours after the U.S. government shut down at midnight on Tuesday, four out of 10 conservative Republicans described themselves as "angry" at the federal government. It is far higher than any other demographic Pew surveyed. Only 26 percent of the total surveyed were described as "angry."

Washington Post columnist Michael Gerson, a former aide to U.S. Sen. Dan Coats and speechwriter for President George W. Bush, observed on Tuesday how the ideological split in the Republican Party is deepening, moving far beyond Barry Goldwater's denunciation of Eisenhower Republicanism, and Ronald Reagan's rejection of the Rockefeller brand.

"Tea Party populism, however, moved quickly beyond this point," Gerson observes. "We are no longer seeing a revolt against the Republican leadership, or even against the Republican establishment; this revolt is against anyone who accepts the constraints of political reality. Conservatives are excommunicated not for holding the wrong convictions but for rational calculations in service of those convictions."

Exhibit A would be former U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar.



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid refused to negotiate with House GOP.



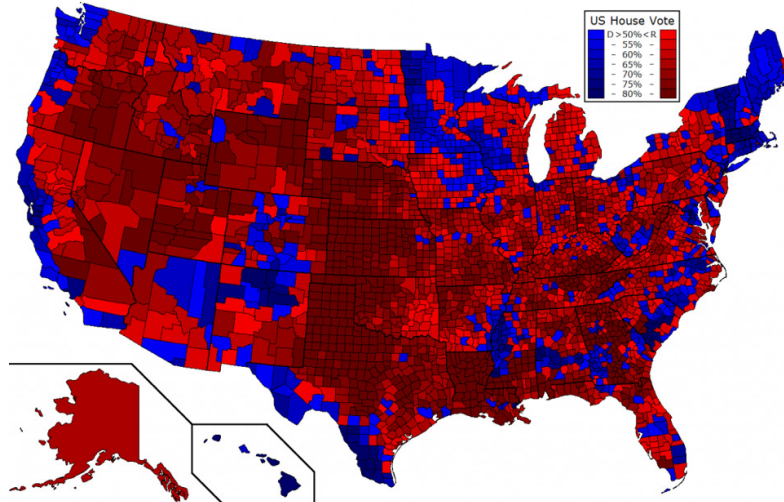
The National Journal's Ron Fournier places current events into far greater context: "Step back. Try for a moment to extrapolate what a government shutdown and discredited U.S. currency could do to the economy and the public's faith in government," he wrote. "Think beyond next year's congressional elections or even the 2016 presidential race. Factor in existing demographic and social trends. I did, and this is what I concluded: 1. The Republican Party is marginalizing itself to the brink of extinction. 2. President Obama can't capitulate to GOP demands to unwind the fairly legislated and litigated Affordable Care Act. To do so would be political malpractice and a poor precedent for future presidents. 3. Despite the prior two points, Obama and his party won't escape voters' wrath. Democrats are less at fault but not blameless."

Fournier concludes: "This may be the beginning of the end of Washington as we know it. A rising generation of pragmatic, non-ideological voters is appalled by the dysfunctional leadership of their parents and grandparents. History may consider October 2013 their breaking point. There will come a time when Millennials aren't just mad as hell; they won't take it anymore."

Look no further than Republican LaPorte Mayor Blair Milo, one of five "Millennial mayors" elected in 2011. "I am as disgusted with the politics of D.C. as anyone and find the shutdown to be the showcase of how broken the state of politics currently is," Milo told HPI. "My understanding of human nature is that individuals will not change habits they believe to be bad, no matter how much they want to, until they become truly disgusted with the habit. As an optimist, I can only hope that this current state of dysfunction in D.C. and the government shutdown can be the defining moment when Millennials and many others will feel so disgusted with partisan politics that they will match their opinions with action."

Here in Indiana, we've watched U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman embrace the defund movement, which propelled the government into shutdown, and, by Oct. 24 a potential defaulting on our national credit, and we have witnessed the party patriarch, Sen. Coats, calmly explaining that

2012 Congressional U.S. House Vote by County



without a Republican Senate and White House, it will be impossible to do. The Coats brand of adult supervision was mostly ignored by his young House colleagues, who continued to rail at Obamacare and participate in show votes that had no possibility of becoming law. At one point over the weekend, U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon repeatedly referred to Obamacare as a "bill" instead of the law that it is.

There are other

reasons for this polarization.

The Citizens United and Speak Now rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court, initiated by Terre Haute attorney Jim Bopp Jr., opened the flood gates for outside special interest groups such as Club For Growth, Americans For Prosperity, Planned Parenthood and American Bridge, to essentially nationalize federal races in states. This is why Indiana had a \$51 million U.S. Senate race in 2012. The supreme irony is that the result was the flipping of Lugar's safe Republican Senate seat to one now held by U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly, a Democrat who had voted for Obamacare.

Or as Shane Goldmacher wrote in the National Journal last November, "Money didn't talk in 2012, it screamed. But as any tantrum-throwing 2-year-old knows, screaming guarantees attention, not success."

Populist Tea Party candidates who won U.S. Senate nominations in low-turnout primaries essentially propelled safe or heavily leaning Republican seats in Indiana, Delaware, Colorado, Missouri, Nevada and Maine into the Democratic column (See page 6). What could have easily been a 51-49 Republican Senate majority last November became a 55-45 Democratic one.

Then there is the 24/7 ideologically segregated news media. The Fox News, MSNBC and Daily Show watchers get completely different takes on American politics and policy. On Tuesday, ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" exploited this division by man-on-the-street interviews where people were asked which they preferred: Obamacare or the Affordable Care Act? The answers were both hilarious and disheartening (see the video clip at www.howeypolitics.com). U.S. Reps. Todd Rokita and Marlin Stutzman were lampooned by Jon Stewart on "The Daily Show" on consecutive nights. The entire Indiana delegation continues to



receive their pay.

Earlier that day, the blame game took shape. The exasperated President Obama would say, "One faction, of one party, in one house of Congress, in one branch of government, shut down major parts of the government – all because they didn't like one law. They've shut down the government over an ideological crusade to deny affordable health insurance to millions of Americans."

Asked by NPR's Steve Inskeep on Tuesday about "offers" he could make to end the impasse, the aloof President said, "Steve, when you say what can I offer? I shouldn't have to offer anything. They're not doing me a favor by paying for things that they have already approved for the government to do. That's part of their basic function of government; that's not doing me a favor. That's doing what the American people sent them here to do, carrying out their responsibilities."

His arcing echoes of 2004 and 2008 have dissipated.

But Rep. Rokita (pictured below on MSNBC last weekend) was sensing "victory" and there is little doubt that when he and his colleagues attend the 2014 Lincoln



Day dinners, they will find adulation, even if they've passed no bills into law. "I think we're going to win," Rokita said on Tuesday in a conference call with reporters. "The longer this goes on, the weaker the obstructionist hand will get." He said that

constituent sentiment in favor of slowing the health care law was strong in his district during 12 town halls he conducted in August. Phone calls on Tuesday to his office ran 60-40 in support of the shutdown.

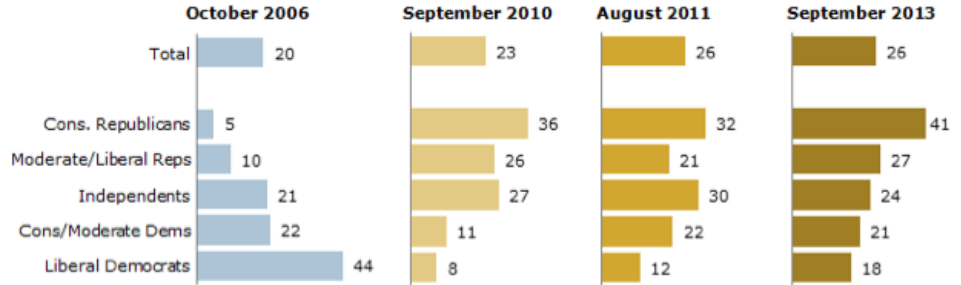
"This is part and parcel of our commitment to fight and keep the republic," Rokita said.

But in today's Washington Examiner, Stutzman offered up this embarrassing quote: "We're not going to be disrespected. We have to get something out of this. And I don't know what that even is."

The question heading into October will be, what kind of republic will we have after a lengthy shutdown and a debt default? ❖

Who's Angry at the Government? Conservatives Today, Liberals in 2006

Percent angry with the federal government



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 25-29, 2013.

Obama won't negotiate until funding is restored

New York Times

WASHINGTON — In their first meeting since a budget impasse shuttered many federal operations, President Obama told Republican leaders on Wednesday that he would negotiate with them only after they agreed to the funding needed to reopen the government and also to an essential increase in the nation's debt limit, without add-ons.

The president's position reflected the White House view that the Republicans' strategy is failing. His meeting with Congressional leaders, just over an hour long, ended without any resolution.

As they left, Republican and Democratic leaders separately reiterated their contrary positions to waiting reporters. The House speaker, John A. Boehner, Republican of Ohio, said Mr. Obama "will not negotiate," while the Senate majority leader, Harry Reid, Democrat of Nevada, said Democrats would agree to spending at levels already passed by the House. "My friend John Boehner cannot take 'yes' for an answer," Mr. Reid said.

The meeting was the first time that the president linked the two actions that he and a divided Congress are fighting over this month: a budget for the fiscal year that began on Tuesday, and an increase in the debt ceiling by Oct. 17, when the Treasury Department will otherwise breach its authority to borrow the money necessary to cover the nation's existing obligations to citizens, contractors and creditors.

Only when those actions are taken, Mr. Obama said, would he agree to revive bipartisan talks toward a long-term budget deal addressing the growing costs of Medicare and Medicaid and the inadequacy of federal tax revenues. ❖



Why the U.S. Senate isn't Republican today

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The Senate, says U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, is an unpredictable place.

Asked by Fox News' Sean Hannity last month whether his Obamacare defunding efforts will pass the upper chamber, Stutzman said, "We have to wait to see what happens in the Senate. All of the different procedural tricks the Senate can play, who knows how it plays out? We have to wait and see."

The reason the U.S. Senate is such an unpredictable place is that, factoring in two independents who caucus with the opposite party, the GOP faces a 55-45 Democratic majority, largely forged after the historic March 2010 vote for the Affordable Care Act.

Sometimes history repeats itself, and other times, history should be repeated. There is a sizable section of the Republican Party, both here in Indiana and nationally, who seem oblivious to the fact that not only did President Obama defeat Mitt Romney 51-47% last November for reelection, but that the Senate stayed in Democratic hands.

And the key reason the Democrats have a 10-seat majority is what happened here in Indiana, Missouri and Maine in 2012, as well as in Delaware, Colorado and Nevada in 2010. Those were states where going into the cycle, Republicans had reasonable expectations of holding on to reliably Republican seats with incumbent Sens. Dick Lugar and Olympia Snowe, and in the other states where Democratic incumbents were in extreme danger of upset.

Had the Republicans run the table in those states – and it is not overstating the notion that they could have – the U.S. Senate right now would be entirely predictable for a Republican majority that would have been 52-48.

The reason Senate seats in these states are either Democrat or independents caucusing with them, are Tea Party Republicans who surfed a wave of populism in low-turnout primaries or packed conventions, and then self-destructed against Democrats who had little expectation of

victory.

The reason the Senate is unpredictable rests on the campaigns of Indiana's Richard Mourdock, Delaware's Christine O'Donnell, Nevada's Sharron Angle, Missouri's Todd Akin, and Colorado's Ken Buck. Right there, the GOP would have tied up the Senate, 50/50.

This epic blown opportunity came about on "temperament" issues. Many of the Republican candidates operated in Tea Party, 9/12 and pro-life circles where their rhetoric was an assumed value. But injected into an atmosphere where election victory hinged on attracting independent and female voters, the ideology conveyed a temperament of intolerance, ignorance and inflexibility.

Here's a brief recap of the six missed opportunities for Republicans and a Senate Majority:

Indiana: The March 2012 Howey-DePauw Indiana Battleground Poll revealed a tight race between Lugar and Indiana Treasurer Richard Mourdock. But in the fall showdown with U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly, who voted for the ACA two years prior, Lugar had a commanding 50-29% lead, while Mourdock and Donnelly were tied at 45%. Lugar, who had polled more than 7 million votes in federal races since 1974, saw his state operations atrophy following his 2006 reelection

which was uncontested by Democrats. He wasn't interested in Lincoln Day speeches, where Mourdock was a constant presence, but on national security and energy issues. Mourdock spent much of 2011 cultivating the 90 or so Tea Party groups around the state, won their emphatic endorsement that September, then tag-teamed with Indiana Democrats to exploit Lugar's residency issues two months before the primary. Mourdock won a stunning 61-39% primary victory, but his post-election remarks filled Democrat and super PAC quivers with an array of video clips and soundbites, and his Oct. 23 "God intends" rape remark in the New Albany debate ignited a torrid social media reaction that imploded his campaign. Mourdock, as well as campaigns of Mike Pence for governor and Tony Bennett for superintendent, experienced a collapse of female support on the way to a stunning 50-44% loss to Donnelly.

Missouri: Three months before Mourdock's rape remark, U.S. Rep. Todd Akin said in a TV interview about pregnancy involving rape, "From what I understand from doctors, that's really rare. If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down. But let's assume maybe that didn't work or something. I



From left Todd Akin, Richard Mourdock, Christine O'Donnell, Sharron Angle, Ken Buck, Angus King, and Sens. Olympia Snowe and Dick Lugar.



think there should be some punishment, but the punishment ought to be on the rapist." Democrat U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill, who like Donnelly had voted for the ACA, had been one of the most vulnerable Democrats of the cycle, but her candidacy immediately rebounded as the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee pulled support from Akin, who refused to step aside. McCaskill defeated Akin 55-39%, a distinct improvement over her 50-47% win over incumbent Republican Sen. Jim Talent in 2006.

Maine: Sen. Snowe won her 2006 reelection bid with 74%, and her other two Senate victories had been 60% or higher. But the moderate Republican was turned off by Senate leadership that declared making President Obama a one-termer was a higher priority than pragmatic governance. She essentially ceded this reliable GOP seat to the popular independent Gov. Angus King.

Delaware: In 2010 just as the Tea Party movement surfaced into a populist force, U.S. Rep. Mike Castle, the former governor, had been expected to easily defeat Democrat Chris Coons, until Christine O'Donnell won a primary upset by just 3,500 votes. Coons went from being an 11-point underdog to Castle to defeating O'Donnell by 16% as she had to run a TV ad denying that she was a witch. In a legendary TV ad that could have been scripted by Monty Python down at the Ministry of Silly Walks, O'Donnell

said, "I'm not a witch. I'm nothing you've heard. I'm you. None of us are perfect, but none of us can be happy with what we see all around us. Politicians who think spending, trading favors and backroom deals are the ways to stay in office. I'll go to Washington and do what you'd do."

Nevada: In 2010, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid was extremely vulnerable. But controversial Assemblywoman Sharron Angle won a four-way primary with 40% of the vote. A Rasmussen Reports poll showed her with a 50-39% lead over Reid and she was quickly backed by Sarah Palin, FreedomWorks, Club For Growth, Joe the Plumber and Phyllis Schlafly. Angle's campaign became gaffe prone, at one point telling a hypothetical 13-year-old rape victim that she could avoid abortion by "turning a lemon situation into lemonade." She employed skywriting as a campaign tactic and told a group of Latino students they looked "Asian." She lost to Reid 50-44%.

Colorado: Ken Buck, a mostly unknown Republican district attorney, upset Lt. Gov. Jane Norton with extensive Tea Party support in the primary. In a general election matchup, polls showed Norton with a significant lead. But Buck compared homosexuality to alcoholism and at one point during the Republican primary said he should be elected over Norton because he didn't wear "high heels." Democrat Michael Bennet defeated Buck 48-46%. ❖

Bailey announces challenge to Rep. Young in 9th CD

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Former Democratic Seymour Mayor Bill Bailey announced he plans to challenge U.S. Rep. Todd Young in the 9th CD in 2014.



"Today congress is dysfunctional and unproductive," Bailey (pictured) said Monday morning in Bloomington. "Congress is really the people we elect to represent us, and congress will con-

tinue to be dysfunctional as long as we re-elect those that have shown their inability to get anything done except argue. Members of Congress seem more interested and intent on finger pointing, political bickering and polarizing than governing."

Young, R-Bloomington, was elected in 2010 after defeating former congressman Mike Sodrel and Travis Hankins in a bitterly fought GOP primary, then raised around \$1.9 million to defeat U.S. Rep. Baron Hill in the general

election by 52-42% despite Hill's \$2.1 million war chest. In 2012, Young won reelection by defeating Democrat Shelli Yoder 55-45%.

According to OpenSecrets.org, Young has raised \$514,837 this for the 2014 cycle and has \$364,971 cash on hand. In 2012, Cook Political Report released its updated figures on the Partisan Voter Index, which measures each congressional district's partisanship relative to the rest of the country. Indiana's 9th CD has a PVI of R+9, which is the 125th most Republican district in the country. In 2008, John McCain (R), carried the district 53-47 percent over Barack Obama (D). In 2004, George W. Bush (R) won the district 62-38 percent over John Kerry (D).



Bailey served as mayor of Seymour from 1983 to 1990. He is a former member of the Indiana House and headed the Seymour Chamber of Commerce.

"My work experience as a business owner, a mayor, a state legislator and as the president of a small town chamber of commerce has been about solving problems, creating industrial parks and jobs, making partnerships and coalitions for healthy downtowns, building learning cen-



ters, and making lives and futures better," Bailey said. "We need a representative in congress who believes in term limits and not congressional stepping stones and ladders to higher office. We need someone who knows what it is like not to have health insurance for his family. We need someone who believes that people deserve the same equal treatment as corporations. Like never before we need a congressional representative who isn't owing to extremist factions and is willing to work across the political aisle to get things done – someone who will work for the futures of our children and grandchildren."

The 2014 Congressional campaign cycle is off to a relatively slow start with few competitive races on the horizon. U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks is being challenged by Republican insurance broker David Stockdale in the 5th CD primary.

U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-Howe, will be challenged by Democrat Justin Kuhnle, a college student who ran in 2012. U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski could be challenged by Libertarian Curt Nisley, husband of Elkhart County Republican Chairwoman Mary Nisley.

In the 4th CD, U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita is being challenged by Libertarian Joe Bowman. In the 7th CD, U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, D-Indianapolis, has two Republicans - Brian Fecteau and Wayne Harmon - running.

The race that most anticipated - a potential primary challenge to U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon, R-Newburgh - has not materialized. Earlier this year, the Club For Growth targeted Bucshon to be "primaried" but no Republican challenger has surfaced. The 2012 Democratic nominee Dave Crooks has announced he will not seek a rematch.

6 seeking Pond seat

Six local men have officially filed to run in the House District 85 caucus to replace Rep. Phyllis Pond, R-New Haven, who died last Sunday (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The caucus is scheduled for Oct. 8. The deadline to file is Friday. The winner of the caucus will serve the remainder of Pond's term, ending late next year, and earn an edge in the May primary. Three men had already announced their intention to run – Fort Wayne lawyer Casey Cox, realtor Denny Worman and corporate executive Dave Heine. In addition, three others have filed with the Indiana Republican Party – Ken Richardson, Mike Cameron and Ken Knoblaugh. Local businessman Ric Runestad said he is not running in the caucus.

Bates signals run

Former Republican Senate candidate Don Bates Jr. wrote to GOP county chairs saying he will run for treasurer.

Meanwhile, Marion Mayor Wayne Seybold picked up the endorsements of Marion County Chairman Kyle Walker and former state chairman Jim Kittle Jr. ❖

What the polls are telling us

CBS on shutdown

A CBS poll released today shows 72% disapprove of the shutdown and 25% approve. Among Republicans, it stands at 48/49%, while Tea Party support is at 57%.

Real Clear Politics on Obamacare

Real Clear Politics lists 243 polls taken on Obamacare since its passage and 95% of those polls (231 of 243) have shown that the American people oppose Obamacare, while only 4 percent (10 of 243) have shown that they support it. (The other 2 polls — 1 percent — have shown a neutral result.) Of nearly 250 polls more than two-thirds (171 of 243) have shown double-digit opposition.

CNN/ORC on debt limit

A Wednesday CNN/ORC Poll finds that Americans say by 56-38 that not raising the debt limit would be bad for the country, and would blame Republicans over Obama by 53-31%. Some 56% of Americans said it would be a bad thing if the debt ceiling was not raised, with 38% saying it would be a good thing. By a 51% to 43% margin, the public said it is more important to raise the debt ceiling than to delay Obamacare.

Quinnipiac on debt limit

64% to 27%, in a Quinnipiac University survey released Tuesday oppose blocking an increase in the debt ceiling as a way to dismantle the Obamacare. Democrats have a 9% lead on the generic House ballot in 2014.

Pew Research on conservative anger

Pew Research found that anger is most palpable among conservative Republicans – 41% say they are angry at the federal government, compared to 26% overall.

Gallup on compromise, principle

Gallup has 47% believing the budget debate is an attempt by both sides to gain a political advantage, while 37% see it as a battle over principles. 53% want political leaders to compromise while 25% said leaders should stick to principles. Among GOP 38% favor compromise while 36% want to stick to principles. Tea Party is supported by 22%.

National Journal on GOP

According to the latest United Technologies/National Journal Poll, 46% of respondents said "there has been no change" in the GOP's views since the 2012 election. Thirty-two percent of respondents said the GOP is "further from representing" their own views, twice as many as those who said it has gotten closer to them (16%). ❖



ACA and red state constituent service

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS -- On Monday evening, as Congressional gridlock over the Affordable Care Act was grinding parts of the federal government to a halt, I was at a "town hall" meeting sponsored by the Indiana Minority Health Coalition, sitting with a crowd of people who just wanted help understanding how the new law is supposed to work.

As the politicians in the nation's capital competed for camera time to denounce each other for shutting down the government over the loved/hated law known as Obamacare, the people I sat among politely asked for help navigating their way through the online health insurance exchange that was set to go live the next morning.



They didn't come for a policy debate over a law that's been in place since March 2010. They came for some practical advice for how to use the

newest part of the law to go into effect.

Helping them get what they needed was state Rep. Ed Clere, a New Albany Republican who chairs the House Public Health Committee and has been touring the state, attending the Coalition's town halls. He's taken a practical approach to Obamacare, trying to figure out what it means for the 800,000 Hoosiers who are uninsured. As he told the crowd: "Whether we like it or not, the Affordable Care Act is the law."

From the questions asked, it was clear that many in the audiences had jobs but no health insurance, or had jobs with health insurance that provided them with minimal coverage. They were part of the "working poor" who make up the majority of the uninsured or under-insured in this state and in this nation.

Among those in the audience who asked questions was a young man enrolled in a master's program in public health, which he's financed with student loans on the belief that more education will help him build a better and more prosperous life. His dilemma: At 27, he's too old to be covered by a parent's health insurance plan (which Obamacare extended to age 26) but worries he has no extra money in his tight budget to afford even a basic, no-frills health insurance plan offered under the new health insurance marketplace.

It was little comfort to him to find out that he likely won't be penalized under the ACA if he doesn't buy

health insurance, because his income is so low. It was even smaller comfort to him to find out that he probably could have qualified for the Medicaid insurance program had the State of Indiana opted to expand Medicaid and take federal dollars provided by the ACA to pay for it.

And there was no comfort offered by the explanation that Indiana Gov. Mike Pence opposes the ACA, and its Medicaid expansion provision, because, as he said recently, he thinks it's a job-killing law that's making "the future bleak for too many families."

About 300,000 Hoosiers, like this young man, who could have enrolled in Medicaid through the new health exchange, won't be eligible for health insurance coverage because of that decision.

About 500,000 more Hoosiers who are uninsured will be, but they're having to figure out that out pretty much on their own. Indiana, like many other Republican-run states, has also opted out of running its own health exchange and is letting the federal government do the work – and take the heat if things go badly. As Gannett News Service recently reported, states that signed up to run their exchanges got much money to hire staff to help the uninsured navigate their way through the process.

Maryland, for example, which is running its exchange, received \$24 million to hire assisters. Indiana received just \$2 million from the federal government for its public health centers and about \$2 million for four other groups to help people sign up for coverage.

You can go on the Indiana Department of Insurance website to find a list of people, called "navigators," who are the only ones legally allowed to help people sign up for coverage. But you'll see scores of communities in Indiana with no navigators. It's not easy to become one: Indiana has tacked on more requirements, above and beyond the federal rules, to become a navigator. And Indiana has barred its navigators from providing "advice on specific plan selection" unless they become a licensed insurance broker.

During the 2013 session, as his fellow Republicans in the Statehouse were working diligently to undermine the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, Clere spent his time trying to negotiate a path under the federal law that would ensure that the uninsured working poor in Indiana would gain access to health care. He sought to amend a Senate bill, for example, with language that would require the Governor negotiate a reasonable Medicaid expansion.

His decision to take part in the town halls meetings sponsored by the Indiana Minority Health Coalition came in part because he saw the state was doing little to help Hoosiers understand how to navigate their way through the ACA. "It's so important to have these kinds of meetings," Clere said.

At last Monday's town hall meeting, he said the



controversy and complexities surrounding the ACA's insurance exchange were causing the kind of problems that make people more vulnerable to scam artists trying to sell bogus health plans to the uninsured.

"It's a high visibility issue with mass confusion," Clere said. "Everybody's heard of Obamacare. Everybody knows something big is going on. What they don't know are the details."

Clere was also struck by the irony of what was unfolding Monday evening: As the fight in Congress over the ACA was shutting down the federal government, the people attending his town hall meeting were clamoring for help on how to use the law. "It shows the divide between the political elite and the people who most need access to insurance," he said afterwards. "People want solutions, not pointless partisanship. There are plenty of reasons to ques-

tion the design and sustainability of the ACA, but those are debates for another day. Whether we like it or not, it's the law, and as state policymakers, we should focus on getting the best possible deal for Indiana."

What is happening here is a new twist on the notion of public service.

Republican opponents of the Affordable Care Act have attempted to kill the law in its crib, even though it lost the White House last year and failed to take majority control of the U.S. Senate over the past two cycles. This, apparently, extends to the implementation stage. The more people who opt in, the more likely the ACA succeeds.

In "red states" like Indiana, the idea of "constituent service" runs head long into a political calculation. ❖

Maureen Hayden covers the Statehouse for CNHI.

Data that makes us feel good

By **MORTON MARCUS**

BLOOMINGTON - It was delightful to read in the newspaper and on the internet that Kokomo, Elkhart-Goshen and Columbus were among the leading metropolitan areas in economic growth in 2012. The report came from the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis, and stimulated local public relations people to rejoice with news releases that were sheer exhilaration.



After all, the combined 381 metro areas of the United States managed growth of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by just two percent for 2012. But our stars shone:

Elkhart-Goshen 11 percent, Columbus 10 percent and Kokomo 8 percent. Blow that trumpet, thump that gong. Don't let reality cast a shadow where the stars are shining.

The joy could have been as great and the self-congratulatory remarks from state and local offices could have been more useful if the full story were told.

Adjusted for inflation, GDP for the Elkhart-Goshen metro area remains \$586 million or six percent below its 2007 peak. The Kokomo metro area is \$507 million or 12 percent below its 2007 peak. These two sterling trend setters remain among the most economically depressed areas in the U.S.

Kokomo ranks 367th of 381 metro areas in its compound annual rate of growth from 2007 to 2012.

Elkhart-Goshen ranks 321st. These two Indiana metro areas suffered severe declines in 2008 and 2009 from which they have not recovered. Yes, they are doing better, but, as noted above, each has an added half billion dollars of output to generate before they return to their 2007 levels.

Columbus, by contrast is among the elite metro areas in the country, with real GDP 10 percent greater than in 2007. Bloomington and Lafayette also are among the top 100 metros in average annual real growth rates between 2007 and 2012.

The fanfare that accompanied release of these numbers is not unusual. We have many offices and "news" services that are agents of happy tidings. To see data in perspective is not part of their mission statements.

They take almost any news release at face value. For example, both Trine University in Angola and the University of Notre Dame in South Bend recently released their economic impact studies. Trine modestly claims a \$73 million impact on Indiana while Notre Dame touts a billion dollar impact on the South Bend community. (A Notre Dame home football game is worth \$18 million, in case you wondered.) Colleges and universities feel impelled to declare their importance through annual economic impact studies. Such studies are generally massive agglomerations of dubious assumptions. These studies are for public relations and not for critical examination. Yet they are reported by the media as if they were solid academic research when they have many inherent faults. What is the academic community trying to prove to whom?

If city governments or the Chambers of Commerce are impressed by such numbers, we have to wonder about their naïveté. But then they are the ones who tout the GDP growth numbers. Economic data are part of a large scale fantasy exchange. ❖

Marcus is an independent economist.



What Rokita did on his summer vacation

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – When you hear the term congressional recess, it normally conjures up images of congressmen and senators frolicking on a playground and sharing jungle gyms and teetertotters with lobbyists and major contributors. In fact, most taxpayers get downright irritated with the notion that our elected representatives are allowed a recess at all.



The popular mantra is that “Congress isn’t doing anything and therefore is on perpetual recess.” While that may be true with elected officials such as Sen. Joe Donnelly, who has developed the nickname “Duck `em Donnelly,” it certainly is not true of 4th District Rep. Todd Rokita.

Congressman Rokita went into overdrive in August. Instead of sunning himself on the beaches of Bimini like a Charlie Rangel, Rokita spent his recess directly engaged with the citizens of the 4th District. Now, you can stage appearances that allow very little interaction with real life Hoosiers, similar to Sen. Donnelly’s media events, or you can get in the trenches at free-for-all town hall meetings.

In addition to numerous visits with businesses and community groups, Rokita held 12 well-publicized town hall events that were open to the public up and down the immense geographical boundaries of the 4th District. Congressman Rokita visited with over 2,500 citizens to discuss their concerns and ideas in a free-wheeling exchange of viewpoints. The typical Rokita town hall was almost Lincoln like in allowing an open and frank discussion of critical issues, with no issue being out of bounds. One such town hall, in Danville, was attended by over 500 Hoosiers and lasted nearly two hours.

The 4th Congressional District in Indiana is one of the most Republican-dominated districts in the nation. Many congressmen with a solid majority of party stalwarts in their district and a high approval rating by their constituents might have taken the opportunity to brush up on their golf game, take a junket or just unwind. However, Todd Rokita is not your garden variety representative. His drive to meet as many constituents as possible and listen to them is why his poll numbers are off the charts. People appreciate it when their congressman comes to town and looks them in the eye.

Rokita’s efforts during August were nothing new. The man knows how to work. Way back in 2001 and 2002, Rokita drove over 70,000 miles, attended 130 Lincoln Day dinners and personally met over 1,500 Republican delegates in his quest to be elected the youngest secretary of state in the nation. That willingness to work, coupled with great name identification gained from getting out and about while secretary of state, helped him become the leading Republican votegetter statewide in his 2006 reelection and emerge from a crowded field of 13 candidates when he ran for Congress in 2010.

Voters in the 4th District and elsewhere throughout Indiana have told me that they have appreciated Todd Rokita’s public policy work. His work with implementing Indiana’s voter ID law has become legendary across the country. He didn’t back down from proposing a simple and fair method of redistricting. Although his plan was not ultimately approved, Rokita’s fingerprints are all over the much more condensed and concise legislative and congressional districts that were approved.

In Congress, Rokita has launched his Red Tape Rollback initiative to tackle and eliminate harmful regulations holding back American business. To date, 25 ridiculous regulations have been dumped due to the congressman’s work. He has been a deficit hawk who definitely understands that our country cannot support massive deficits indefinitely. He has coauthored a free market alternative to the Affordable Care Act and worked to return block grant Medicaid funds to the states in an effort to return power to the states and enhance efficiency of their expenditure.

To those who may wonder why I’m gushing about my congressman, it’s because at a time when Congress is coming under attack from just about everyone, it is important to recognize representatives who are working hard, keeping their nose clean and doing the job for which they are paid. Todd Rokita is doing that.

For Democrats laboring under a delusional sense of grandeur following “Duck`em Joe” Donnelly’s electoral accident in 2012, I simply tell them that the Indiana Republican bench is deep and our young, diverse band of talented elected officials offer many years of future headaches for their party.

Like in the great Dickens novel, “A Tale of Two Cities,” it was the best of times and it was the worst of times. Todd Rokita spent his summer recess working hard to represent his constituents and Donnelly spent his recess hitting softballs at staged events and dodging the issues that mean the most to real Americans. Hoosier Madam Defarges have begun their 2018 knitting. ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.



Finding the balance for security and privacy

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON - Congress has some challenging work ahead. It needs to restore the proper balance between effective intelligence-gathering and intrusion into Americans' privacy.

Washington is beginning to debate the proper extent of government eavesdropping powers in the wake of Edward Snowden's revelations about the NSA. It's hardly as robust a discussion as it should be, but it's a desperately needed start.



The colossal effort to monitor Americans' communications has been going on for at least seven years, under two presidents. It constitutes an expansion of government power without precedent in the modern era. Yet while some members of Congress were informed about it – and all had the opportunity to learn – none saw an urgent need

for public discussion. This is astounding. It took the actions of a leaker to spur any real airing of the matter on Capitol Hill.

Even now, it seems unlikely that Congress will make significant policy changes. That's because all the nation's key actors and institutions appear to approve of the surveillance programs. By its silence, Congress clearly supported them. Presidents Bush and Obama backed them. The intelligence community, a powerful voice on national security issues, has resolutely defended them. The courts that are supposed to keep them in line with the Constitution have been deferential to national security authorities, raising a few questions from time to time, but in the end approving all but a handful of tens of thousands of data-gathering requests.

And the American people, by their lack of widespread outrage, have signaled that in this one case, at least, they believe the government can be trusted to keep us safe.

In short, Congress – the forum where issues of such national importance should be hashed out – missed its chance to lead a reasoned national debate over how extensive we want surveillance over Americans' communications to be. It's unlikely that genie can ever again be forced back into its bottle.

Yet even the director of national intelligence, James Clapper, who once denied point-blank to Congress that the government collects data on millions of Americans, now sees the need for some sort of change. "We can do with more oversight and give people more confidence in what we do," he said in a mid-September speech.

Yes, indeed. Here's the problem: Once given power, the government rarely yields it. So you have to think not only about its present use, but how it will be used a decade or even more from now. Even if you concede that the current administration and its intelligence leadership have been responsible stewards of the powers they've been given – and I don't – that is no guarantee that the people who follow them, or the people who come after that, will be equally trustworthy.

This means that Congress has some challenging work ahead. It needs to restore the proper balance between effective intelligence-gathering and intrusion into Americans' privacy. It needs to demand more thoroughgoing accountability from the intelligence community. It needs to exercise greater oversight and insist on more transparency, more information, and more constraint on surveillance programs, defining what is truly relevant to an investigation, creating more stringent definitions of which communications are fair game, and finding ways to assure Americans that protecting their privacy and civil liberties need not mean the wholesale vacuuming-up of every domestic phone and email record in existence.

There is no place for the timidity Congress has shown so far on these issues.

Our system depends on a vigorous Congress. The administration argues that it can provide rigorous intelligence-gathering oversight, but it has yet to prove it can do so, and in our system of checks and balances, it's not enough to have one branch of government overseeing itself. Congress, the courts, and the presidentially appointed Privacy and Civil Liberties Board all have to step up to their responsibilities.

Americans should demand action to strike a better balance between privacy and security. In the past, the congressional overseers of the intelligence community have been captivated, if not captured, by the people they're supposed to be supervising. Same with the courts. And the administration has hardly been forthcoming. That means it's up to the American people to insist that our leaders do their jobs. It's no less true today than it was at our founding: the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.



Lake's E911 consolidation moving in wrong direction

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – After five years of planning and fighting and planning and fighting, it seems Lake County is still far away from arriving at a consolidated E-911 system as required by state law. In fact, it now seems that the county is moving in the opposite direction in terms of bringing all 17 public safety dispatch centers onto the same page.



Because there had been little progress in pulling all the municipalities together, the county finally did what it should have done from the start: It hired an expert. Brian Hitchcock is being paid more than \$100,000 annually to unite the county into one emergency response system.

Based on what has happened since Hitchcock was put on the payroll this summer, it appears that he might need twice the salary to consolidate 17 municipalities, which is synonymous with herding cats.

And then the tiny town of St. John complained that it would have to pay an unfair amount under the estimated cost of the consolidation plan. St. John actually said some municipalities are cutting their emergency response costs in an effort to reduce what they would ultimately have to pay into a countywide E-911 system.

As a result, St. John is proposing that there be two 911 centers in Lake County – one for the northern half and one for the southern communities. It follows the north-south divide that has fostered a racial split in the county for years.

While state law mandates that the county merge E-911 operations by the end of 2014, it also allows for two call centers. But County Commissioner Roosevelt Allen, D-Gary, who is on the E-911 Commission, wants nothing to do with two dispatch centers. Allen has said it will be too costly, largely because there would be a duplication of highly expensive equipment.

A meeting is scheduled for late October among public officials to sign interlocal agreements to help bring finality to the process. But that meeting has been put on hold and may not happen.

So disgruntled are some of the communities that there has been talk about changing the state law that mandated the mergers, which likely isn't going to happen

to satisfy one county.

Finally, there is talk about ignoring the law to see if the state will follow through on its threat to punish the locals by withholding millions of dollars. Again, the lack of unity begs the question whether there is a leader in Lake County.

Or, perhaps, the ongoing talk about the State of Lake is true. ❖

Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for The Times of Northwest Indiana.

GOP colleagues blast Cruz

Politico

WASHINGTON - Ted Cruz faced a barrage of hostile questions Wednesday from angry GOP senators, who lashed the Texas tea party freshman for helping prompt a government shutdown crisis without a strategy to end it.

At a closed-door lunch meeting in the Senate's Mansfield Room, Republican after Republican pressed Cruz to explain how he would propose to end the bitter budget impasse with Democrats, according to senators who attended the meeting. A defensive Cruz had no clear plan to force an end to the shutdown — or explain how he would defund Obamacare, as he has demanded all along, sources said.

Things got particularly heated when Cruz was asked point-blank if he would renounce attacks waged on GOP senators by the Senate Conservatives Fund, an outside group that has aligned itself closely with the Texas senator.

Cruz's response: "I will not," according to an attendee.

The closed-door Wednesday meetings hosted by the Senate's conservative Steering Committee are supposed to be private, so senators interviewed for this article asked not to be named.

"It seems that there is nothing the media likes to cover more than disagreements among Republicans, and apparently some senators are content to fuel those stories with anonymous quotes," Cruz told POLITICO. "Regardless, my focus — and, I would hope, the focus of the rest of the conference — is on stopping Harry Reid's shutdown, ensuring that vital government priorities are funded, and preventing the enormous harms that Obamacare is inflicting on millions of Americans." ❖



Father Link's foray into the Indiana Penitentiary

BY JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – David Link, for 24 years the Notre Dame Law School dean, has gone to prison. And he has learned a lot behind the ancient, ominous walls of the Indiana State Prison in Michigan City.

Dean Link, the name by which he's still best known, or Father Link, the name now more appropriate since he became a priest at age 71, wants to do something about what is and what isn't going on behind those walls and elsewhere in the so-called corrections system.

What is going on?

Too often it's a dehumanizing process, with a prison code against ever smiling in the grim existence. Those incarcerated amid gang control and sexual attacks behind those walls often are released as greater dangers to society than when sentenced.

In a new book, Link explains:

"The incarcerated person is exposed to higher education of a destructive sort. Schooled in the art of lying and manipulation, he or she becomes, as a result, a more sophisticated, expert social deviant, and the expansion of the crime cycle continues."

A young inmate can learn from hardened lifers how to commit bigger and better crimes, how it's best to leave no witnesses, how it's better to shoot it out rather than surrender if police arrive.

What isn't going on?

Too often there's no system of rewards, such as early release, for those who mature, work to take advantage of real education opportunities, become model prisoners and help others to cope and reform.

Referring to inmates he works with, at religious services and in counseling in the cellblocks, Link says:

"**Many of these men have** made stupid mistakes. But once they have found God and if they are no longer a threat to society, why do we keep them in here?"

Why? With our long sentences, sometimes for nonviolent crimes that bring no prison sentences in other nations, the United States leads the world in the number and the percentage of residents it incarcerates, bringing billions upon billions of dollars in cost for taxpayers. And what results?

Link offers suggestions for better results in "Cam-erado, I Give You My Hand," written by Mura Poston Zagrans. She tells how Link, after a distinguished career as lawyer and law school dean, decided following retirement from Notre Dame and the death of his wife, Barbara, to become a priest. He was ordained in 2008 at age 71. Since he already was involved in work at the prison, he became a chaplain there.

Link proposes ways to lower the incarceration rate – about one of every 100 adults – while lowering costs for taxpayers and making it safer for society after release of inmates.

He says the mission of incarceration really should be correction, with emphasis on "healing" rather than vindictive punishment. Psychiatric and medical attention could work better than cellblock horrors.

Nor should the criminal justice system be a game. Prosecutors should seek truth rather than just high conviction rates to impress voters at election time, Link says. He proposes appointment of prosecutors for a better brand of justice than provided through partisan elections.

Link would require all lawyers to participate in representing the poor, now so often so neglected in criminal cases, either with legal services or in contributions to defense funds.

He would have a stricter code of ethics for prosecutors and defense attorneys, with both obligated to seek truth rather than just a win. Categories of crimes need to be adjusted, Link says, with lesser sentences or no prison time for relatively minor or nonviolent crimes, and judges should be empowered to consider the degree of seriousness in sentencing rather than having set terms.

Link contends that jails and prisons, while never plush, should provide diagnosis and treatment for social illnesses, not be just places for vengeance against offenders. Of vital importance, he says, is providing sentence modification for people showing readiness to return to the community, for their sake and for the taxpayers.

With recidivism high, especially when those released can't find work, Link proposes tax incentives for employers who hire ex-prisoners, particularly those learning skills while incarcerated.

Soft on real criminals? No. Tough on a failing system? Yes.

To the proposals by Father Link: "Amen." ❖

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





Larry Sabato, University of Virginia: Tuesday, Oct. 1 represented perhaps the best day for Democrats in the U.S. House this cycle. At midnight, the federal government shut down, an event that Democrats believe will greatly damage their Republican adversaries. At this point, it's hard to see how Republicans ultimately come out of this battle looking good: Republican leaders seem to be worried sick about the showdown, and it's probably only a matter of time before Speaker John Boehner cuts a deal with President Obama that does not involve significantly delaying or defunding Obamacare. (The GOP House gambit may also collapse via defections in the Republican ranks.)

Democrats also got good news in the congressional generic ballot polling. Quinnipiac's national survey showed Democrats with a notable nine percentage point edge (43%-34%) on the generic ballot, which asks respondents whether they plan to support a Democratic or Republican candidate in the next U.S. House race in their district. Public Policy Polling and Rasmussen, two other firms, showed Democrats leading by five and four points, respectively, in other surveys that came out this week. These polls aren't yet predictive, but the results are noteworthy nonetheless -- all three pollsters showed an uptick for Democrats from their prior survey. Does this mean that the House is in play? Not necessarily: We continue to believe that the Republicans are strongly favored to hold control of the House, although we're less certain that Republicans are better positioned to add seats. Given the natural advantages Republicans have going into this midterm, the blame for a collapse -- if it indeed happens -- probably could be summed up in a Radiohead lyric from a song ("Just") released around the time of the last government shutdown: "That's what really hurts/ Is that you do it to yourself/ Just you and no one else." Simply put, there's no reason why the House should be in play this cycle, and if it is in play the Republicans will have only themselves to blame.

It's worth noting that after the last unpopular government shutdown in 1995-96, the Republicans under Speaker Newt Gingrich retained the House in the 1996 elections. It is equally of note that the GOP lost nine seats and also lost the popular vote for the House -- a rare occurrence that last happened in 1942 (when the Democrats retained the House even though the GOP won the popular vote in the midst of World War II). In 2012, of course, thanks to artful redistricting and the high concentration of Democratic votes in urban areas, Republicans won a 234-seat majority while dropping the popular vote for House by nearly 1.4 million votes.

Whenever the shutdown ends -- and when the debt ceiling is raised (assuming it is) -- it will be interesting to see how the various votes go in the House. Already,

Republicans from more moderate districts are trying to differentiate themselves from the more conservative members of their caucus. The final House vote on Obamacare was 219-212, with 34 House Democrats joining all Republicans in dissent. Academic studies have shown that Obamacare was a driving force in the Democrats' devastating 2010 midterm losses, in which 66 previously Democratic seats flipped to the Republicans. ❖

Marc Chase, NWI Times: "To the victor belongs the spoils." This famous quote from former New York Sen. William L. Marcy has been ringing true in our political system for generations. Marcy's middle name fittingly was Learned, and his quote was both brutally honest and accurate. Indiana Democrats of our own era would do well to remember this immortal string of verbal wisdom from an Andrew

Jackson Democrat of the 19th century. It appropriately applies to the outcry we've been hearing lately from modern Hoosier Democrats upset that Daniel Elsener — essentially a career Republican — is allowed to hold an appointed position on the State Board of Education as a political independent. To a point, I understand the frustrations of the Hoosier donkey party. As Times Statehouse Bureau

Chief Dan Carden has so aptly reported, Elsener was first appointed to the position in 2005 by GOP Gov. Mitch Daniels. At that time, Elsener was appointed as a Republican, not an independent. Voting and campaign records show Elsener cast ballots in the Republican primary nine out of 10 times since 1994 and donated \$10,575 to GOP candidates and groups supporting Republicans since 2001. This all makes Elsener's political allegiances very clear. And state law dictates that no more than six members of one political party sit on the 11-member education board. So when Republican Gov. Mike Pence recently reappointed Elsener to the board, this time as an independent, some Dems cried foul that this tipped the board excessively into the GOP's favor. They're right, it did. But it seems the system under which our government operates allows for this imbalance. ❖

Russ Pulliam, Indianapolis Star: Designed to boost academic standards nationally, Common Core has fired up fierce political debates in Indiana and other states. Critics on the right object to the federal government dictating standards to the states. Critics on the left see Common Core as a business-driven plot to force conformity on students. In Central Indiana a flight from the Common Core is driving some families to the even higher challenges of classical education. Common Core seems to represent an experimental, risky approach for families who want a longer track record. ❖





Ritz, Elsener feud spills over

INDIANAPOLIS - Tension between Democrat state superintendent Glenda Ritz and the Republican-appointed Indiana State Board of Education exploded into a direct confrontation Wednesday over who controls the board's meeting agenda (Elliott, Indianapolis Star). Before the board could hear a recommendation about the state's troubled A to F school rating system, Ritz, who serves as the board chair, had sharp exchanges with board members Dan Elsener, a self-described independent, and Tony Walker, a Democrat. Wednesday's trouble began when board member Sarah O'Brien's request to hear a staff report was denied by Ritz, who said the matter could be addressed later in the agenda when staff was scheduled to speak. That prompted Elsener to make a motion to change the agenda, which was quickly seconded. But Ritz held her ground. "We have a lot of work to do today," she said. "The motion is out of order. I am not recognizing the motion." Walker then moved to suspend the board's rules that give Ritz control of the agenda. The motion was also seconded, and Ritz again declined to call a vote. Walker and Elsener were incredulous. "We have a motion and a second, and you're telling us we aren't going to be able to vote on it?" Elsener asked. After considerable debate and consultation with staff about the board's rules, Elsener asked to speak, which Ritz permitted. He complained that his professional disagreements with Ritz at last month's board meeting led to personal attacks on his character that he said were "out of bounds." "I have never received so many venomous, negative,



accusatory-type email communications as after the last board meeting," he said. "Someone is feeding a narrative, very negative information. It's cheap politics. It's tearing people down."

No panel consensus on Common Core

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana lawmakers studying the state's use of a national set of reading and math education standards haven't been able to decide whether they recommend those be kept, changed or dropped (Elkhart Truth). The six Republicans and six Democrats on the committee voted Tuesday to approve a report with no direction on how the state should proceed with the Common Core State Standards. Committee co-chairman Rep. Robert Behning, R-Indianapolis, said a proposal to drop the Common Core and implement Indiana-designed standards has been considered by panel members, but hasn't gained enough support. Behning, who has supported the Common Core standards, said he had hoped for a consensus among the committee members. "We're not too far away from getting some agreement, but at this point in time we don't have it," he said. Sen. Carlin Yoder, R-Middlebury, said he wanted to see Indiana create new standards that borrow from the Common Core and the state's previous standards. "I heard from parents, teachers and community members that Indiana must maintain its sovereignty with regard to our education standards, and withdrawing from Common Core allows us to do just that," Yoder said.

Judge rules against DNR on deer farms

CORYDON - A Harrison County judge has ruled that the Indiana

Department of Natural Resources has no authority to regulate a Southern Indiana fenced deer hunting operation (Weidenbener, Statehouse File). Circuit Judge John Evans said the deer purchased by the Whitetail Bluff operation are privately owned and not property of the state. "DNR's actions seeking to regulate Whitetail Bluff's guided hunting activities constitute an improper exercise by an executive agency of the authority of the Indiana legislature contrary to the Indiana Constitution Article 3, Section 1," Evans wrote. The decision comes in a case filed by the operation's owner, Rodney Bruce, in 2006, shortly after DNR officials announced that a new interpretation of state law made fenced hunting operations illegal. Evans initially issued a preliminary injunction preventing the state from shutting down Whitetail Bluff and other operations.

Crucial stretch for Illiana

CHICAGO - A meeting Friday in Chicago kicks off what could be a wild, two-month ride for the Illiana Expressway (Benman, NWI Times). The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's transportation committee is expected to take a vote for or against the Illiana Expressway at its 9:30 a.m. monthly meeting Friday at the Willis Tower, with its recommendation passed on to the full CMAP board for a vote Oct. 9. A similar process is kicking into gear at the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, which expects to open a public comment period on the Illiana Expressway on Oct. 14. The Portage-based agency also will host four public comment meetings during that period. The vote of both organizations is critical to the expressway getting built. Each agency's approval is needed to make federal funds available for the project in their respective states...