



## Republicans' Fort Wayne conundrum

Mayor Henry had more than a 10-to-1 money edge over Harper

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Almost a generation ago, Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke pushed through an extensive annexation process that was supposed to have brought tens of thousands of Republican voters into

Indiana's second largest city.

Four terms of Democratic Mayor Graham Richard and now Tom Henry have created the most conspicu-

ous, long-term example of a city's minority party controlling City Hall. Richard ran two high tech campaigns in his two decisive wins in 1999 and 2003. In 2007, Republi-



Fort Wayne Councilman Mitch Harper declared for mayor two years ago, but trailed Mayor Tom Henry by a 10-to-1 fundraising disadvantage by the end of 2013.

can nominee Matt Kelty self-destructed and was convicted of campaign finance charges allowing Henry to win easily. In 2011, Fort Wayne Republicans witnessed a primary blood bath with more than \$1.5 million spent by current SD15 Senate nominee Liz Brown, current IEDC Chairman Eric Doden, and Paula Hughes, who won the primary with a 5,000-vote margin over Brown, but lost to Henry by 1,634 votes.

Within months of Henry taking the oath of office, Fort Wayne Councilman Mitch Harper declared he would run. "I wanted to get

**Continued on page 3**

## Bayh and Democrats

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – What Evan Bayh is doing to the Indiana Democratic Party is criminal. If convicted by the party faithful, he ought to be banned from Hoosier Democratic activities for life.



The former governor and U.S. senator left the party in the lurch when he decided at the last minute that he would not seek reelection to the Senate, which essentially handed the office to Republican Dan Coats a few years back. Indiana Democrats pretty much thought that was the political end to Bayh, the son of former U.S. Sen. Birch Bayh, who is



**“Congratulations on the 20th anniversary of Howey Politics. Your efforts over the past 20 years have made a lasting contribution to our public debate and the quality of political journalism in our state.”**

*- Gov. Mike Pence*



is a non-partisan newsletter based in Indianapolis and Nashville, Ind. It was founded in 1994 in Fort Wayne.

It is published by  
**WWWHowey Media, LLC**  
**405 Massachusetts Ave.,**  
**Suite 300 Indianapolis, IN**  
**46204**

**Brian A. Howey**, Publisher  
**Mark Schoeff Jr.**, Washington  
**Jack E. Howey**, Editor  
**Mary Lou Howey**, Editor  
**Maureen Hayden**, Statehouse  
**Matthew Butler**, Daily Wire

**Subscriptions**

HPI, HPI Daily Wire \$599  
HPI Weekly, \$350  
Ray Volpe, Account Manager  
317.602.3620  
email: HoweyInfo@gmail.com

**Contact HPI**

www.howeypolitics.com  
bhowey2@gmail.com  
Howey's Cabin: 812.988.6520  
Howey's cell: 317.506.0883  
Washington: 202.256.5822  
Business Office: 317.602.3620

© 2014, Howey Politics Indiana. All rights reserved. Photocopying, Internet forwarding, faxing or reproducing in any form, whole or part, is a violation of federal law without permission from the publisher.

the greatest Democrat to represent Indiana at any level.

But Evan kept the door open a crack. He would never say never about a political future. And that stance froze Indiana Democrats in terms of lining up a candidate to run for governor in 2016, which in political years is just days away. With Bayh hanging out there somewhere, potential gubernatorial candidates were frozen. No one dared try to mount a campaign as long as the possibility existed that Bayh would run. And, not being able to mount a campaign means not being able to raise a dime.



Former governor Evan Bayh meets the press in July, saying a decision on the gubernatorial race will be determined at a later date. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Bayh kept saying that his twin sons would graduate from high school in late May and that he planned to move back to Indiana when they headed to college. And Bayh strongly hinted that when the sons graduated that he would make an announcement about governor. But May came and went and still there was nothing.

Indiana Democrats held

their state convention in early June and Bayh was nowhere to be seen. Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. worked the crowd with an eye on running for governor. So, too, did John Gregg, the party's 2012 gubernatorial candidate who narrowly lost to Republican Mike Pence.

About that time, McDermott told me that he had it on good authority that Bayh wasn't going to run for governor. He added that the same could be said about Gregg. McDermott was so pumped that he resigned the Lake County Democratic chairmanship to shed the Lake County image while he ran for governor.

And then the unthinkable happened, as far as McDermott is concerned. With a nuance here and another one there, Bayh was seemingly back in the picture.

While he was far from being a candidate, he continued to keep the others at bay. McDermott put any intention of running for governor on hold and announced that he would seek reelection as Hammond mayor next year. He would have, however, done that even if he were running for governor.

Despite all the talk about McDermott and Gregg running for governor, nothing has changed. No one is running until Bayh comes down from the mount and makes a statement. And even though Democrats are upset with Bayh, he will win if he runs for a couple of reasons.

First, Democrats will elect Bayh because he is, well, a Bayh. And secondly, more than just Democrats want to oust

Pence. ❖

**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.**



# HPI's 20th Anniversary Power 50 on governors

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Since Indiana governors were given the option to seek reelection after Gov. Doc Bowen's election in 1972, six of the seven men to serve have opted to do so, and five have been successful.



Republican Govs. Bowen, Robert Orr and Mitch Daniels and Democrats Evan Bayh and Frank O'Bannon all won second terms. Daniels defeated Gov.

Joe Kernan in 2004.

Gov. Mike Pence appears to be preparing for a reelection campaign, though his activities also suggest a potential presidential or vice presidential run in 2016.

In celebrating HPI's 20th Anniversary, we will be asking our subscribers to rate Indiana's modern era governors.

We will be asking our readers which governor had the most policy success? Which one had the greatest political impact? Which of these governors created

the most profound legacy?

Ponder the careers and terms of these seven men and email your thoughts to [bhowey2@gmail.com](mailto:bhowey2@gmail.com).

On Oct. 16 at the Antelope Club in Indianapolis, the HPI 20th Anniversary Power 50 list will be unveiled. Beyond two-decade Power 50, HPI readers will be rating Indiana's Congressional delegations, legislators, mayors, party leaders, lobbyists and political operatives.

Howey Politics Indiana began publishing on Aug. 11, 1994 in Fort Wayne. ❖



Gov. Evan Bayh greets former Govs. Robert Orr (left) and Doc Bowen in his Statehouse office (South Bend Tribune Photo).

## Fort Wayne, from page 1

the word out to some prominent people," Harper told the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette in August, 2012. The thought process was that the former legislator's early declaration would create a fait accompli scenario for the two-term city councilman.

But now just 15 months before the election, Harper has created more doubts than an air of inevitability. While Mayor Henry reported \$303,376 cash on hand in his 2013 finance report filed last January, Harper reported raising \$30,475, and had only \$24,475.59 cash on hand.

HPI attempted to contact Harper last week to get a better read on his campaign and any additional finances. An email address obtained via his campaign website didn't bring a response, which was reported in the Aug. 7 HPI edition.

"For the record, I have received no emails from you nor have you called," Harper said in an email to HPI

after the Aug. 7 edition was published.

HPI responded: "Then you need to fix your website. I sent you an email via your website. So, how's the campaign going?"

Harper responded, "Or you could try a bit harder."

In another email, HPI asked Harper to update his fundraising totals, how Henry is vulnerable and the issues he would concentrate on. Harper responded, "The students in one of my classes at St. Francis would know why those questions are declined, in a business or political setting."

So that's what we know about the Harper campaign. He has \$30,000 to show for two years of a declared candidacy. Other questions on campaign themes, the candidate's campaign team, Henry's perceived vulnerability, and how much Harper thinks he'll need to raise were ignored.

Multiple local Republican sources, all speaking on background, have expressed doubts about Harper's ability to raise money and effectively communicate. One ex-

plained, "You can't raise much money when a conversation with a donor takes 90 minutes. I don't know anyone who can write a check who thinks he can win."

Even with Henry's meager 2011 plurality?

Henry seems to have turned the corner on a spate of violent crime the city endured, forming a gang and violent crime police unit. On the economic front, he said in his State of the City address last February, "Employers invested \$160 million, retained 4,000 jobs, and created nearly 900 new jobs. Ash Brokerage, BAE systems, Dana, press-seal gasket, and Shambaugh and Son are examples of companies that have sent a strong message that Fort Wayne is a place to invest and grow."

Harper helped lead two council overrides of Henry's vetoes on ordinances that will end collective bargaining for city employees. Harper noted that the overrides came in "dramatic" fashion.

Several Fort Wayne Republicans are now looking for an alternative. Brown is now running for the Senate. Doden lives just outside the city limits. Council President Tom Didier had only \$2,715 in his campaign account at the end of 2013 and Councilman Marty Bender has \$576. While both have been mentioned as potential candidates, neither is acting like one. Councilman John Crawford could self-fund a campaign startup, but sources tell HPI the radiologist is showing no interest and has closed out his campaign committee.

Two other potential candidates on paper are Allen County Sheriff Ken Fries, who lost the Senate primary race to Brown last May, and Allen County Commissioner Nelson Peters, who lost the 2007 primary to Kelty. Sources tell HPI that Fries is showing virtually no interest in the mayor's office. Neither is Peters.

One reason is that there is a referendum on the November ballot that would create a county executive, replacing the three-member board of commissioners. One source told HPI, "Nelson Peters could win a primary for mayor, but he's waiting for the countywide executive initiative. The county executive would basically be the mayor of the county." And in Republican voter rich Allen County, the GOP nominee for that position would be as inevitable as a Democrat running for mayor of East Chicago.



**Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry vetoes one of two collective bargaining bills. Both were overridden by the City Council which has a 6 to 3 Republican majority.**

As things stand to date, a Harper challenge to Mayor Henry seems the most likely scenario given that alternative candidacies aren't materializing to date. But for Fort Wayne to return to its Republican ways, the once boy wonder legislator is going to have to figure out how to win the confidence of donors and create a vision for the city.

### **Another candidate could emerge in Elkhart**

Local sources are telling HPI that the mayoral field could expand beyond two-term Democrat Mayor Dick Moore and State Rep. Tim Neese.

Moore will be 81 years old before the May 2015 primary, and as U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar learned in the 2012 Republican primary, age matters to voters. Moore has had two tough years in dealing with a sewer controversy that started in 2012 and eventually led to a large annexation plan put forth this year by the administration. Moore sought to annex 16 areas, but trimmed that back to 13. One was defeated and there could be challenges filed within weeks in court.

Neese declared for the office last year and is not seeking reelection. While mayors have had a tough time running and winning legislative, congressional and statewide races over the past two decades, legislators have had a bit more success seeking offices in city hall. State Reps. Dennis Tyler, Gary Cook and Mark Kruzan won mayoral races in Muncie, Plymouth and Bloomington, but State Rep. Craig Fry was mauled in a race for mayor of Mishawaka in 2011.

Sources tell HPI that neither the Democratic or Republican base is "enthralled" with either candidate. The perception is that Neese holds a slight advantage over Moore, but local sources tell HPI that another candidate may surface.

### **Walker challenges Hogsett on Hatch Act**

Marion County Republican Chairman Kyle Walker raised several questions Wednesday morning about Democrat Joe Hogsett's presumed candidacy (Milz, WTHR-TV). He cited several instances where he says Hogsett could have violated the Hatch Act while serving as U.S. attorney. The Hatch Act prohibits federal employees from taking part in various political activities while campaigning.

"There appears to be significant political coordination between Hogsett and multiple parties," Walker said. "This activity is ethically questionable and potentially illegal. For example, on the day Hogsett announced his resignation, Evan Bayh said that he had spoken with Hogsett recently but planned to keep their conversations private. Are we supposed to believe Hogsett didn't solicit Bayh's support? But on the same day Hogsett announced his resignation Evan Bayh coincidentally showed up in India-

napolis to hold a press conference at which he expressed his support for Hogsett's candidacy for mayor?"

### DeLaney presser today

State Rep. Ed DeLaney has scheduled a press conference at 10 this morning to discuss Mayor Greg Ballard's Pre-K education plan. DeLaney is one of two declared Democratic candidates for Indianapolis mayor.

### SD15: Endorsements for Brown

The Liz Brown for Senate campaign announced four endorsements today. Brown, R-Fort Wayne, earned endorsements from: The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) - Indiana's political action committee (PAC), or NFIB SAFE Trust; Indiana Chamber of Commerce's political action program, Indiana Business for Responsive Government; Indiana Farm Bureau Inc.'s PAC affiliate, Indiana Farm Bureau ELECT; and the Indiana Manufacturer's Association's PAC, IMPAC. "I'm pleased to have the confidence of these important voices in the business community," said Brown. "These organizations represent industries important to the economic vitality of our region. If successful this November, I look forward to working with these industries so that they continue to invest in Northeast Indiana. Business leaders, farmers and manufacturers all create valuable jobs and opportunities for Hoosiers in our region."

### HD22: Kolbe and Stinifer address issues

While HD22 Republican nominee Curt Nisly did not respond to a StaceyPage.com request for positions on issues, Democrat David Kolbe and independent Michael Stinifer did.

Kolbe, a former Kosciusko County prosecutor, told the website, "My platform is centrist. I believe that the best way to produce and manage functional legislation requires cooperation and compromise from both parties. I believe my political philosophy permits me to represent the interests of the widest array of constituents. The primary concern of conservatives relates to liberty and the primary concern of progressives relates to justice. I do not believe that these two aspirations are mutually exclusive. The conclusion of our pledge of allegiance provides: 'liberty and justice for all.' Thus, my appeal is to moderates in both parties as well as independents. Of course, some Republicans are center right and some Democrats are center left, but both points of view are compatible with functional democracy when legislators focus on common-sense problem solving."

Kolbe said he characterized "our movement as 'New Democrats.' The response has been favorable. A number of Republicans have voiced support for our public policy approach. My fellow Democrats are supportive inasmuch as my political philosophy is reflective of Indiana Democrats and quite similar to the approach taken by our party during the Clinton years. In order for our campaign

to succeed Republicans, Democrats, and Independents of like mind need to turn out to vote which is why we have embraced the campaign motto: Your Vote Counts."

On the issues, Kolbe said, "I am very concerned about properly investing in our infrastructure, including our transportation needs. Bridges and roads are crumbling and need our immediate attention. We need to continue developing our recreational infrastructure like greenways and bikeways. We need to continue to develop our cyber-infrastructure including expanding fiber (optic) access to our communities. I believe we need to work hard to insure that Indiana schools improve academically. Schools in our district are excellent and serve as an example for the rest of the state, and we can and will do even better. I believe we need to make college education affordable for young people, especially those coming from the middle class. We need to focus on ways to generate good jobs and reinvigorate the middle class which is rapidly diminishing."

Stinifer, a Republican running as an independent, explained, "My team and I believe I connected well due to the fact that they know I am one of their own. I was born and raised in Warsaw, Kosciusko County. I'm the kid who delivered their newspaper, the teenager who washed their cars at the local car wash and also washed their dishes when we had Digs diner. I was their student they would keep encouraging to do better and then their Marine who volunteered to go fight for their freedoms and beliefs with honor. God willing, I survived, and was blessed to graduate from Grace College. "While I am a conservative, let's make one thing clear: This is not a Democrat seat or a Republican seat. This is your seat. The people's seat. I answer to no one other than God and you the voters of HD 22. I don't want the state legislature to end up like Washington. If you look at what's going on in Washington, nothing at all is happening."

### 2016 U.S. Senate: Baron returning

Several Democrats have told HPI they have received change of mailing address forms from former congressman Baron Hill, who is relocating to Indianapolis from Washington. It is kindling speculation that Hill may be seeking a rematch with U.S. Sen. Dan Coats. There has also been talk of a potential 2016 gubernatorial run. In 1990, Hill lost to Sen. Coats 54-46% two years after Gov. Robert Orr appointed him to the seat vacated by Vice President Dan Quayle. Hill won the 9th CD in 1998 over Republican Jean Leising 51-48%, lost the seat to Republican Mike Sodrel in 2004, and then won it back in 2006 in a rematch. U.S. Rep. Todd Young defeated Hill by 14% in 2010. ❖





# All's 'fair' for candidates at the Hoosier expo

By MAUREEN HAYDEN  
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – Mike Boland wasted little time plunging into the crowd at a booth serving deep-fried dough covered with powdered sugar, the fairground delicacy better known as an elephant ear.

The Democratic candidate for state treasurer shook sticky hands on a recent evening but seemed unfazed. Over the course of several days at the Indiana State Fair, he and his volunteer staff were quite comfortable with the goodies fried, dipped or served on a stick.

Boland, a retired educator who moved to Indiana two years ago from Illinois, has run for office and won. But that was always in local races where knocking on doors seemed the best way to meet voters. "You can't knock on all the doors in Indiana, so you really have to rely on events like this," he said. "You get to see a lot of people up close."

His Republican opponent, Kelly Mitchell, shares his appreciation for the fair as a place to meet the electorate. Like Boland, she's running her first statewide campaign. On a recent morning, she introduced herself to fairgoers while recommending the MacDaddy, a grilled sandwich stuffed with macaroni and cheese.

**Caloric indulgences**, agricultural displays, a midway and packed concert schedule lure people from throughout Indiana, making the fair a ready place for politicking, especially for statewide campaigns. By the time the 17-day fair ends this week, about 900,000 visitors, many of them voters, will have passed through its gates.

For candidates, the more exposure to voters, the better. That's especially so during what's described as an "off-off" election year, when only three statewide races are on November's ballot. Every 12 years in Indiana, there are local and congressional races on the ballot, but no race for governor, U.S. senator or president. The statewide races are for the three least-known offices, auditor, treasurer

and secretary of state.

"It doesn't feel like an off year when you're in the middle of it," said Mitchell, a former Cass County commissioner who until recently ran the TrustINDiana local government investment fund. "But it can be tough to get voters interested."

**Political scientist** Andy Downs, of the Mike Downs Center on Indiana Politics at Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne, agreed that candidates have a lot of convincing to do. "People wonder why those offices are elected to begin with," he said.

All of this year's candidates are taking their first shot at statewide runs. Two of the Republicans, Secretary of State Connie Lawson and Auditor Suzanne Crouch, are former state legislators. Both were appointed to their current posts to fill vacancies.

For almost all of them, the fair is an easy and inexpensive way to meet and greet voters, even if the conversations don't run very deep.

Republicans are hoping their all-female slate will appeal to voters, while Democrats aim to tap discontent with Republicans who control the both chambers of the legislature and the governor's office. The Libertarian Party, which had big presence at the

fair two years ago, when "Survivor" star Rupert Boneham ran for governor, has scaled back this year.

Despite the fair's convenience, it does fall early in the campaign.

"People will get engaged later," said Mike Claytor, an accountant, attorney and Democrat running for auditor. "The question is: What will they get engaged about?"

On a recent evening at the fair, before Claytor went on a search for a pork tenderloin sandwich, his wife was getting more attention than he was for a blue ribbon she'd won for her photography.

**Crouch, his Republican** opponent, was also sharpening her photo skills, albeit for a different purpose. She posted snapshots of herself at the fair on her campaign's Facebook page. One has her standing near the statue of a dairy cow. She's hugging a cartoon soybean in another.

Meanwhile, both Lawson and her Democratic opponent, Marion County Clerk Beth White, posted on Twitter about attending the Indiana Pork Producers' ham breakfast



Republican treasurer nominee Kelly Mitchell campaigns at the Indiana State Fair. (CNHI Photo by Maureen Hayden)

on opening day, mandatory fare for Hoosier politicians.

In on years, off years or even off-off years, avoiding the fair is unthinkable. "You've got thousands of people from around the state in one spot," Downs said. "If they don't go, they can be very easily accused of not being a serious candidate."

**U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly**, a Democrat from South Bend, won't be on the ballot for another four years, but he had a significant presence during the fair's first week. He held a Senate committee field hearing on the financial exploitation of the elderly, then followed that with lunch

at the fair's Pioneer Village.

Donnelly picked the right day, \$2 Tuesday, when the usual \$8 admission is discounted. It was also Golden Hoosiers' Day, when seniors rode the tractor-pulled shuttle around the 250-acre fairgrounds for free. Donnelly's hearing was packed. "I don't think I could have gotten a crowd like that anywhere else," he said. ❖

**Maureen Hayden covers the Statehouse for the CNHI newspapers in Indiana. Reach her at [maureen.hayden@indianamediagroup.com](mailto:maureen.hayden@indianamediagroup.com).**

## Boland compares Indiana to Illinois

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Evan Bayh and Dan Coats came back from Washington to run for political office in Indiana. But rarely have we had a politician from another state come into the state to run.

That's the case with Democratic treasurer nominee Mike Boland. The 16-year Illinois House member from the Quad Cities area moved to Indiana to be near his grandchildren. He became active with Hamilton County Democrats, had a conversation with former Indiana Democratic chairman Robin Winston, who suggested he run for treasurer, and it became a reality when he talked about it with current Chairman John Zody. He was formally nominated at the Indiana Democratic Convention in May.

Boland faces Republican Kelly Mitchell in what can only be considered an uphill battle.

**While Boland** has been crisscrossing the state in an effort to accrue earned media in what will likely be an under-financed campaign, the key question HPI had for him is the difference in political cultures between these two Midwestern states.

Stereotypically, Illinois is seen as a corrupt state dominated by hardball Daley-

era machine Chicago politics. But a Business Insider study reveals that Illinois ranks as the 16th most corrupt state in the union, behind fourth place Kentucky and 13th place Ohio. Indiana ranked 32nd. Fortune Magazine ranked Illinois fourth and Kentucky ninth. In 2008, the New York Times had Illinois ranked seventh in the number of convictions, but 22nd per capita per million residents (Indiana ranked 40th).

**Illinois has seen** four governors convicted of crimes and sent to prison, including the most recent Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich and Republican George Ryan, preceded by Govs. Otto Kerner (D) and Dan Walker (R). Boland remembered seeking \$60 million for his district on one day, and voting to impeach Blagojevich the next in the case involving the sale of President Obama's Senate seat. "He just did a lot of stupid stuff," Boland said of the Democrat now residing in federal prison, adding that it wasn't a difficult vote.

By contrast, the last Indiana governor to serve time was Gov. Warren T. McCray, who battled growing Ku Klux Klan elements that had been elected to Indiana government, including an estimated half of the Indiana General Assembly. Indiana's attorney general was a Klan member, who attempted to sue McCray for embezzlement after his ranch went bankrupt. A federal case against McCray succeeded in 1923, forcing him to resign, and he was sentenced to three



**Democratic treasurer candidate Mike Boland talks about his campaign at Howe Politics Indiana.**



years in prison. In 1930, President Hoover pardoned him. Boland makes a distinction between the rough and tumble politics of Chicagoland, and the "downstaters." "I've never had any problem with corruption," Boland said, noting that the House district he represented was home to two state prisons. "I wouldn't want to be there and be incarcerated. Seeing the inside of those prisons was great incentive."

"Being a downstater was a much different political culture than Chicago," Boland said. "I used to teach state and local government. I used to teach about the differences between states and I knew of Indiana government."

And then Boland dropped a little bomblet. Asked about the greatest difference between Illinois and Indiana, Boland said, "It is a different world. There is a lot of corruption here. The Ethics Committee just lets them get away with it."

Boland was referring to recent cases involving State Rep. Eric Turner, who was absolved of conflict of interest charges brought before the House Ethics Committee, former Supt. Tony Bennett, who received a \$5,000 fine from the State Ethics Committee for conducting reelection campaign business on state computers, and INDOT manager Troy Woodruff, who was described by Indiana Inspector General David Thomas as going right up to the ethical and legal line during a family land sale involving his agency. ❖

## Pondering 'our children' and 'their children'

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Let's ponder "our children" and "their children."

First, Gov. Mike Pence made a wise call this past week when he ordered the Department of Child Services to begin reimbursing families who had adopted special needs children.



A class action lawsuit filed earlier this summer alleged the state of Indiana was essentially a "deadbeat parent" in the words of one LaPorte mom, for renegeing on a promised subsidy. It prompted me to write a column a few weeks back suggesting to Pence that supporting these families with the designated \$10 million in funding was a more appropriate priority than touting a \$2 billion budget surplus, part of which was created when those subsidy monies had been reverted to the general fund.

The governor, who called for Indiana to be the most pro-adoption state in the union during his annual address last January, did not disappoint. "Although the State Adoption Subsidy is only a small piece of the assistance the State of Indiana offers to adoptive parents, it is my belief that funding the program this fiscal year is the right thing to do," Pence said. "At the same time, the Adoption Study Committee is now looking at this issue, and we appreciate their work to develop recommendations that address the needs of Hoosier families and effectively promote adoption."

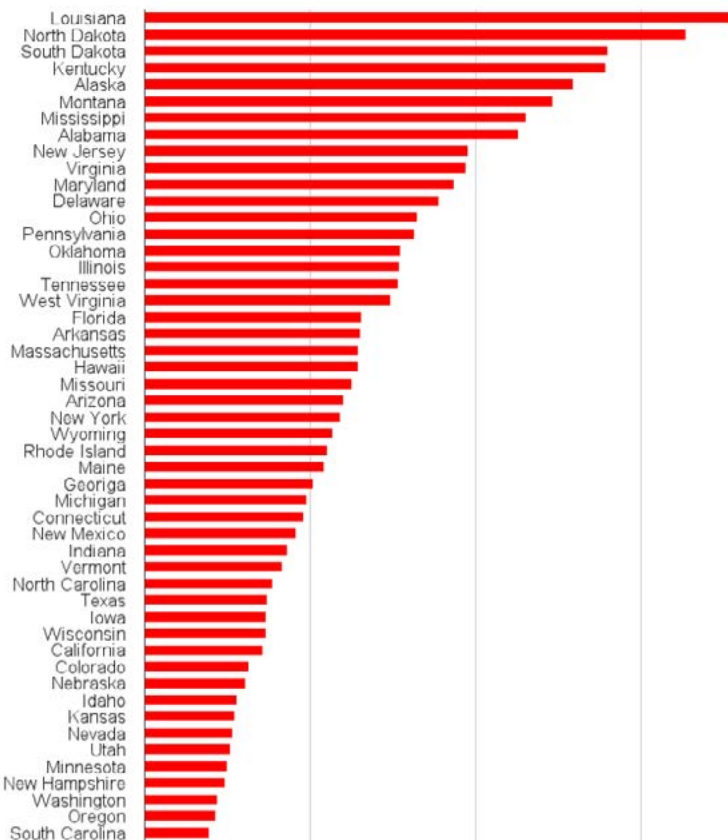
It's appropriate the issue be studied. And the expectation is that the Pence administration will extend its support for adoption beyond the tax cuts for families who go the course that he proposed and signed into law earlier this year. It is a noble cause.

Sharon Pierce, the CEO of the adoption agency, The Villages, told Indiana Public Media that research shows the subsidies lead to more adoptions. "They encourage families who aren't sure about their stability economically, and I think that's the reality of the times we're living in to take that step, that this is a partnership between the state of Indiana and the adoptive families," she says.

**Beyond the adopting families,** the issue of children in Indiana courses through an array of issues.

This summer, we've learned that of Indiana's 804,202 families with 1,562,861 children, 22% live in poverty (\$23,380 income for a family of four). That is 338,089 children, according to the National Center for

Most Corrupt States





Children in Poverty. Of these, 68% (229,567) of children in poor families live with a single parent. And 9% (30,785) of poor children live in families with no parent present.

In 2013, we learned that 80,000 Central Indiana kids don't know where their next meal will come from. "Nearly half of Indiana students now use the school meal programs and those are just the kids who sign up," observed Indiana Youth Institute CEO Bill Stanczykiewicz. "We know there are eligible students who do not enroll."

We know that in the past decade, per capita income has fallen 13.6 percent for Hoosier families, the second highest decline in the United States. No wonder that the middle and poorer classes are feeling under siege.

**The state has not been** oblivious to the pressures families face. In 2013, the Family Social Services Administration authorized an additional \$23 million to child care expenses in fiscal year 2014, a 58% increase from the previous year for low-income, working families.

Then there is the illegal child immigrant issue, or "their children." Last month we learned that 245 unaccompanied Central American children were placed in Indiana by the U.S. government.

On this front, Gov. Pence protested to President Obama, saying in a letter, "In Indiana last week, we learned from media reports that more than 200 unaccompanied children had been placed by the federal government with sponsors in our state. Only after these media reports were published did the state receive notice from the Department of Health and Human Services that in fact 245 unaccompanied children had been placed in Indiana during the period from January 1, 2014, through July 7, 2014. While we feel deep compassion for these children, our country must secure its borders and provide for a legal orderly immigration process. Those who have crossed our border illegally should be treated humanely and with decency and respect, but they should be returned expeditiously to their home countries to be reunited with their families rather than being dispersed around the United State in sponsored placement or long-term detention facilities."

**The sad fact is that Congress** has repeatedly punted on immigration reform and border security issues. This is one of the reasons that the approval rating of Congress stands at historic lows (14 percent in the recent NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll). Many expect President Obama to address the issue with an executive order, which is likely to ignite a political firestorm.

It prompted Ezra Klein of Vox to observe that when Congress comes to a "gridlock," action doesn't stop.

Like a jammed interstate, many people will opt for the exits and local streets. When Congress fails to act, action happens elsewhere.

These issues of how we care for our own children, and now those following the yearnings of our own ancestors, is worthy of deep thought. Many Hoosier families were once the "huddled masses" who came to the U.S. legally via Ellis Island to escape pogroms, war and starvation.

Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Sonia Nazario, who



wrote the book "Enrique's Journey" about a Honduran boy who made a perilous journey a decade ago to find his mother in the U.S., sees children like these 245 souls now on Hoosier soil not so much as economic seekers, but as "refugees" trying to escape murderous drug cartels who recruit these kids to be runners, lookouts and eventually enforcers. Many times this occurs in their own schools.

**While Pence calls for them** to be reunited with their parents – often illegal immigrants now residing in the U.S. – Nazario believes returning them to their home countries means "sending children back to their deaths." She says these "refugees" should have due process as opposed to an "expedited return" to their homeland.

All of these issues are fraught with political, ethical and moral dilemmas. If we grant those here asylum, won't that just trigger future waves? If we return them to Guatemala and Honduras, are they doomed? If we don't honor commitments to adopting families, are we discouraging others to follow that course? Does the notion of lower taxes trump the potential state support of nearly a quarter of our children living in poverty, with many unsure of where their next meal comes from?

Our citizens and policymakers have a lot of work to do. ❖

# Brooks wants ongoing Benghazi investigation

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS — U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks believes there is “more work to be completed and more to be investigated” on the Benghazi episode.

Her comments to Howey Politics Indiana come after a House intelligence report corroborated much of the Senate’s conclusions that there was no serious cover-up by the Obama administration.

Many considered it a great coup for Brooks when the freshman Republican was chosen to be among only seven fellow Republicans and five Democrats to sit on the House Select Committee to investigate the Sept. 11, 2012, attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, that killed Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans. It followed five other House committees that had already investigated the attack but was armed with a broader mandate and investigative powers.

Following her appointment, Brooks felt important questions remained unanswered: “We need to know if security at our embassy was adequate and why requests for additional security to protect more than 30 Americans at a key diplomatic post were denied. We need to know whether our military response was sufficient and timely. We need to know why some members of the administration were slow to fully acknowledge a terrorist attack had actually occurred.”

**Chairman Trey Gowdy** (R-SC) announced this week the Select Committee would host its first hearing in September. When the panel was being formed earlier this year Republican House members were clamoring for a spot with the expectation there would be high-profile televised hearings well underway by now, before some members’ primaries and definitely before the November election. There are heavy expectations, especially on the right, to find some form of a ‘smoking gun’ against either the White House or the upper levels of the State Department, then under then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Instead, much of the panel’s work has been

behind closed doors, taking in-depth depositions and briefings through the FBI and also through its team of hired investigators. Many have commented that Rep. Brooks’ experience as a U.S. attorney is exactly what the inquiry needs for this thorough work.

**The focus of the** upcoming hearing will, according to Gowdy, focus on the State Department’s Accountability Review Board recommendations and their ongoing implementation. In a late 2012 report, that board found the consulate was indeed attacked by terrorists, not a mob as the administration initially told the media, and that various “systemic failures and leadership and management deficiencies” led to inadequate security to deter or withstand such an attack.

Besides the House, State Department, and major



U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks is seen to the right of House Benghazi Select Committee Chairman Trey Gowdy earlier this summer.

media outlets, the U.S. Senate also investigated the attack and the administration’s handling. In January 2014 the Senate’s Select Committee on Intelligence issued a report, which found the attack could have been prevented through greater security and inter-agency dialogue, particularly between the CIA and the military. The result was insufficient assets within the region to respond adequately and timely to any concerted attack in Benghazi. More importantly from a political angle, the bipartisan report dispelled allegations of a political cover-up, finding: “[T]here were no efforts by the White House or any other Executive Branch entities to ‘cover-up’ facts or make alterations for political purposes.”

**With the Select** Committee a month away from what appears to be the first of many hearings, another recent House report is raising the question among many, especially Democrats, if any more instructive lessons can be gleaned from congressional inquiries.

The latest House findings are, however, murky because they remain classified. Immediately before the August recess the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence unanimously approved to declassify their



report. It now awaits intelligence community review.

Initial reactions and comments on the House Intel Report corroborate much of the Senate's conclusions and suggest findings of no (serious) wrongdoing or cover-up by the Administration. Ranking Democrat on the panel U.S. Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger has made the following statements regarding the report and no other member has yet come forward to challenge them:

**"This report shows** that there was no intelligence failure surrounding the Benghazi attacks that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other brave Americans. Our investigation found the intelligence community warned about an increased threat environment, but did not have specific tactical warning of an attack before it happened, which is consistent with testimony that the attacks appeared to be opportunistic.

"Additionally, the report shows there was no "stand down order" given to American personnel attempting to offer assistance that evening, and no American was left behind.

"The report also shows that the process used to develop the talking points was flawed, but that the talking points reflected the conflicting intelligence assessments in the days immediately following the crisis.

"Finally, the report demonstrates that there was no illegal activity or illegal arms sales occurring at U.S. facilities in Benghazi. And there was absolutely no evidence, in documents or testimony, that the intelligence community's assessments were politically motivated in any way."

Asked for an initial response to the House Intel Report, Rep. Brooks told Howey Politics: "Several committees have conducted work that will assist the Select Committee as it continues its investigation into the attack on our Benghazi consulate. But there is more work to be completed and more to be investigated. As Chairman Gowdy has noted, the Select Committee has already succeeded in reaching out to new witnesses who did not participate in previous investigations. The public deserves all relevant facts on this attack that killed four Americans and the Select Committee is working in a bipartisan fashion to provide these facts."

**Rep. Brooks also stressed** that a Select Committee has a "broader mandate" and can "piece together a cohesive and comprehensive picture of the events before, during and after the attack on our consulate."

The House Intel Report is adding fuel to Democrats' accusations that keeping the issue of Benghazi alive is more an exercise to score political points against the current president and a future presidential hopeful, Clinton, who is expected to eventually testify before the Select Committee. It might be revealing that Chairman Gowdy has said his initial focus will be on how the State Department is implementing its Accountability Review Board's recommendation instead of an alleged 'stand down order' during the attack or post-attack White House

'talking points.'

With only limited time to hold hearings in September, it's a certainty the Select Committee's work will carry on well past the November elections. If and when the full House Intel Report is declassified and scrutinized by members and experts, it could raise more questions for the Select Committee to pursue or, conversely, lend weight to the argument that Benghazi is more a subject of politicization than actual study at this point. ❖



## Young's constituents want DC tone change

By MATTHEW BUTLER

INDIANAPOLIS — U.S. Rep. Todd Young says he's hearing that Hoosiers are anxious about policies and governing of both the President and Congress.

HPI spoke with Young after the Indiana Chamber of Commerce officially endorsed him for this November's election, and asked the two-term congressman, who is now touring his district during the August recess, what he was hearing from constituents on the campaign trail.

"I'm hearing a lot of sentiments that I share," Young told HPI. "The tone in Washington has become too strident. There is too little focus on coming up with creative solutions to pressing problems. People are anxious and they're angry, quite frankly, about the policy deficiencies and governing deficiencies of the current presidential administration and Congress more generally."

Young thinks specifically targeted policies in terms of their formulation and execution will not only make for better programs but also serve as a vehicle for bipartisan collaboration and actual legislative output. Few would disagree these have been lacking in recent years.

"Evidence-based policymaking is something that our office has really been focusing on," Young remarked, "including a number of different programs in areas where we believe there are promising opportunities. This ought to be a bipartisan approach to policymaking," Young believes. "It's a more incremental approach but it's exactly what's needed."

**An example of this** approach is his Social Impact Bond Act, which he co-introduced with Democratic Rep. John Delaney (MD) in June. It aims to reward proven social programs with greater public-private investments. HPI has already covered the bill in depth (Aug. 1).

"We're getting positive feedback and bipartisan encouragement and some national exposure. The American Enterprise Institute has agreed to profile this policy issue in an upcoming forum and the Subcommittee on Human Resources under Ways and Means is going to hold a

hearing on my bill. That's the first step to vet it in a public way and line up more cosponsors. Every day, seemingly, we get more people, Republicans and Democrats signing on." Young serves on both committees.

**Young is convinced** that an emphasis on infrastructure is essential for the federal government, citing the "internal improvements" of the Whig Party and early Republican Party during the 19th century. "There are genuine investments in 'public goods' we can make to grow our economy."

Young recently voted for a temporary funding 'patch' for the Highway Trust Fund, but he agrees with critics it is only temporary. A long-term funding mechanism has remained elusive. He is confident the Ways and Means Committee will investigate and debate solutions in the next

Congress.

"One idea," he offered, "is to look at miles driven and tie one's payment into the Highway Trust Fund to that." He did not think raising the gasoline tax was likely nor a viable funding source, considering the increasing usage of more fuel-efficient and alternative-fuel vehicles.

"We need to be thinking about getting more per each transportation buck," Young said. "We need to be facilitating more public-private partnerships. We're working on some legislation in our office which is currently being scored by the CBO which might help."

Young also noted aging inland waterway systems affect all Great Lakes states. "We need to come up with a mechanism to assure the Army Corps of Engineers is fully funded," he said. ❖

## Personal consumption expenditure data

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – The good folks at the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis have come up with a new number, one we have never seen before. Now, for the first time, we have personal consumption expenditures (PCE) for states, which means we also have per capita PCE since we already have population figures for the states.



This revelation is like an astronomer discovering a new planet. It will cause many regional economists to rewrite and rerun their equations. Policy makers will ignore the figure for a while, as they do with anything new. Then they will announce goals for per capita PCE and tell

us that number represents our collective well-being. It's only a matter of time.

Before we have a chance to understand how these new numbers are put together, pundits will pronounce their significance and draw conclusions from them. Ah well, we might as well plunge into the fog and see how far we can get.

**Personal consumption** expenditures represent the spending of consumers on goods and services. Also included is the spending by not-for-profit organizations for goods and services consumed by households. Thus, the wages of paid workers at a food bank would be included because that spending is for the benefit of the people who use the food bank.

In 2012, the latest year for which we have data, Indiana's PCE totaled just under \$212 billion or 1.9 percent of total PCE for the nation. In 1997, Indiana's share was 2.1 percent. Without adjusting for inflation, this spending averaged 4.2 percent in annual growth, below the U.S. annual average of 4.7 percent.

**When we look at Indiana's** per capita PCE growth, it was 3.5 percent (at an annual rate) compared with the nation's 3.8 percent. During this period of time, the U.S. population grew faster than the Indiana population.

How did Hoosiers spend that \$212 billion in 2012? Health care absorbed 18.4 percent of our spending while taking only 16.6 percent nationally. We spent 14.9 percent on housing and utilities whereas the country spent 18.1 percent on this category. A greater share of our spending (5.1 percent) went for gasoline and other energy products, compared to the nation's outlays at 3.7 percent.

From these new numbers we will hear Indiana employers repeating the mantra that their low wages for Hoosier workers are justified by the lower cost of living in Indiana. The per capita PCE for Hoosiers in 2012 was \$32,418 or 8.7 percent below the national average of \$35,498.

**As pointed out repeatedly** in this column, our lower level of spending is most likely due to our lower wages rather than the other way around. People can only spend what they have. What determines our earnings is the value of what we produce rather than where we live.

If we want to spend more, then we have to earn more. To earn more, the value of what we produce must be greater in the eyes of the world. Another call center will do little to increase our earnings and our spending. ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at [mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com](mailto:mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com).**



# ‘Worst’ Obama poll means little now

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – A nationwide poll by Quinnipiac University this summer finds Barack Obama ranked by a third of respondents as the worst president since World War II. He topped the “worst” list, finishing just a bit “worse” than George W. Bush.

What does this mean? Nothing. And a lot.

It says nothing about how Obama will rank in history. It’s far too early to rank a president still in office. And popularity polls as a president leaves office don’t necessarily forecast how that president will be regarded in history.



Harry Truman, disliked by so many Republicans, as Obama is now, left office with dismal approval ratings. Now, Republican as well as Democratic political figures quote Truman and praise his “buck stops here” decisions at the close of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War.

In one survey of historians, the ones identified as having conservative views ranked Truman higher than liberal evaluators.

The reverse happens as well, with highly popular presidents evaluated later by historians as not really accomplishing enough to be viewed as great. John Kennedy comes to mind.

But the Quinnipiac poll also means a lot.

It goes along with other polls to show that President Obama isn’t too popular right now. In the latest NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, the president’s approval rating was only 40 percent, a new low in that poll. Disapproval was at 47 percent. This means Obama lacks national political support to push through programs and projects.

**This means** he can’t help his party in some crucial election contests as Republicans seek to win control of the Senate as well as the House. This means Washington stalemate is likely to continue. And all of this

means that Americans, so dissatisfied with what’s not happening in Washington, may well drop Obama’s approval rating still lower. That approval would really have to plummet, however, to reach lows recorded by Gallup pollsters for other presidents since World War II. Truman had a low of 22 percent approval in 1952. Only Kennedy, with a low of 56 percent, never had a Gallup approval rating below 50 percent.

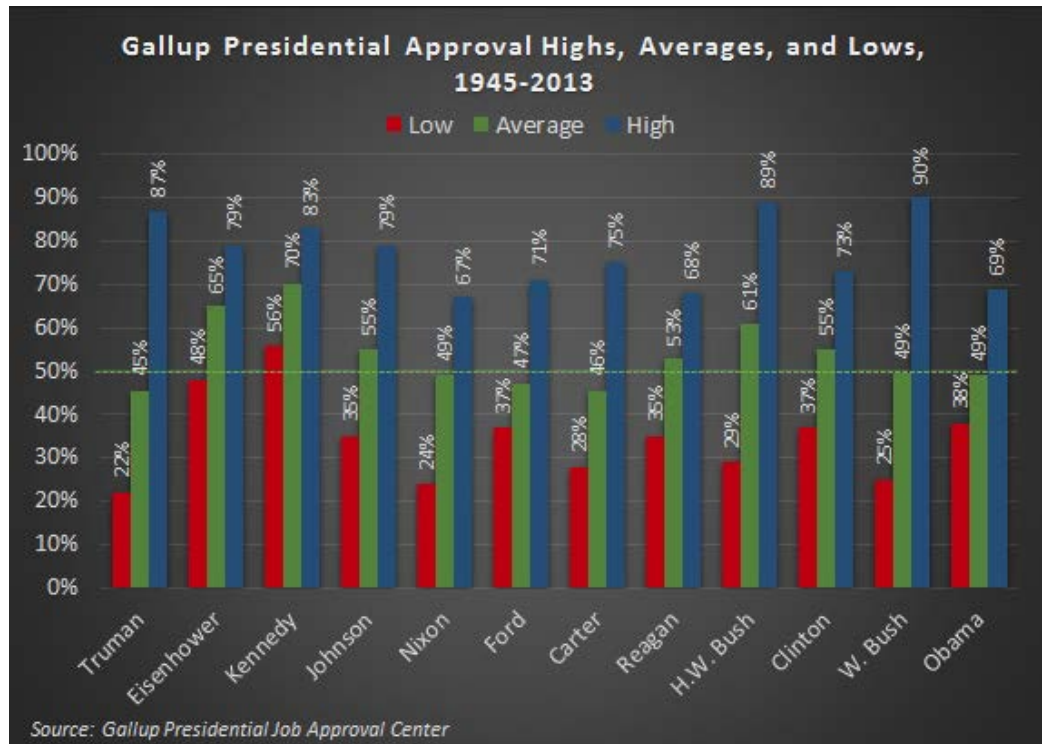
The only other president never to hit an approval rating as low as Obama’s 40 percent is Dwight Eisenhower, whose lowest ever in Gallup was 48 percent approval. Approval percentage lows for the other presidents were Lyndon Johnson, 35; Richard Nixon, 24; Jimmy Carter, 28; Ronald Reagan, 35; George H.W. Bush, 29; Bill Clinton, 37; George W. Bush, 25.

**Presidents have ups and downs in polls.** Historians look back afterward, not at the popularity swings but at achievements for the nation, especially in handling tough times – war, economic downturns and battles over extending rights and benefits for the people.

As historians look back, I suspect that George H.W. Bush will be accorded higher and higher ranking and that his son will not. Johnson will look better to historians. Carter will not.

How about Obama’s chances in history? We are too close for the perspective historians will have later in evaluating our times. Also, Obama isn’t even half way through his second term. What challenges are ahead in this dangerous world?

We do know some factors that historians will consider. They will look at the Congress, now with an approval rating of only 14 percent in that NBC/WSJ poll. Will historians credit Obama for doing the best he could with



a stalemated Congress or blame him for contributing to stalemate?

They will look at the Great Recession, something Obama inherited and successfully kept from becoming another Great Depression? Or his fault for a slow recovery?

**They will look at** Obamacare. Will it be hailed in the future as doing for health care what Social Security did for retirement? Or will it fail? Will it eventually be repealed?

They will look at Vladimir Putin. Presidents are evaluated in dealing with foreign adversaries. Will Obama be praised for responding to Putin's wild antics with cautious but effective pressure to put Putin in his place? Or will Putin's place be that of a successful aggressor?

They won't look at the Quinnipiac poll. ❖

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

## Embrace the college experience



**By MICHAEL HICKS**

**MUNCIE** – This week marks the beginning of class at many American universities. Like most professors I am eager to join in the renewal of the fall semester. There are precious few experiences as full of promise and pregnant with opportunity than the start of school at an American university.

I have written often about the importance of higher education and the superb investment opportunity it offers the wise and diligent student. I have also written of significant changes universities must soon make. I will return to those matters in later columns. This week I intend to be a bit more self-indulgent and offer some heartfelt and frank advice to students.

First, about half of all young people try college, but only half of that group finish a degree. The difference between these groups is almost wholly due to old-fashioned hard work and perseverance. Natural talent helps, as does having a supporting and financially secure family, but nothing replaces pure dogged effort and drive. No one said it better than Thomas Edison, "Genius is 1 percent inspiration, 99 percent perspiration." So, take it from this professor; work hard and don't let up.

**Second, there are tens** of millions of people around the world who would gladly change places with an American college student, and do just as well, but they don't live in this land of opportunity. So approach this experience with some humility. In truth, if you come to college humble and with a willingness to stick with it, you'll do well. Still, there is much you can do to enhance the experience.

College is not simply vocational education lead-

ing you to a good job. You'll take roughly 40 courses in college, and you have no idea which one will be most important in 30 years. Neither does anyone else. Education towards a career is important, of course, but so are the arts, humanities and social sciences courses. Today's single-minded focus on career education couldn't be more misguided. Never before in the history of the world has exposure to a wide breadth of learning been so important. Do well, and a good job will come.

**Take the hard classes.** Skip the easy electives and seek out the really challenging ones where most students don't get A's. Here is where you really learn to write, read, create and think. Live simply unless you relish student debt, and don't be afraid to talk to professors.

Make a point to go into every building on campus. See what those folks are doing, be it blowing glass, writing algorithms or sequencing DNA. Remember, every important idea over the past 800 years has leapt from a college classroom or lab.

College lets you reinvent yourself like few other places can. Cast away your shyness and meet people who look and act differently than you. Fearlessly share with them your ideas, perspectives and values. Be nothing less than audacious with this opportunity and remember what an old professor told me: "You may be whatever you resolve to be." ❖

**Michael J. Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Francis Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University.**



# We want government to fail less often

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – Whatever our political stripe, we all want government to fail less often. Citizens and the media need to pressure elected officials to spend more time digging into the nitty-gritty of fixing bureaucracies.

As election season approaches, I've been pondering a crucial issue about the role of government in our society. It's that our government often fails, and that we need to address this. What's odd is that while the frequent failures in government's performance are very much on ordinary people's minds, politicians don't talk much about fixing them.



True, you might hear a few words about the issue when members are back in their districts this month revving up their reelection campaigns, but for the most part they'll be focused on issues like jobs and the economy.

This is understandable, because that's what their constituents expect to hear about.

But it's also a shame, because we need a healthy dialogue about why government often fails and how to fix it. There's ample cause for concern. The VA appointments scandal; the botched launch of the Affordable Care Act; duplicative programs to help low-income families; the 28 years of missed inspections that led to the explosion of the fertilizer plant in West, Texas; scandals at the General Services Administration and the Secret Service; a broken federal appointments process; the regulatory screwups that contributed to the Great Recession; auto recalls that should have happened much sooner than they did; the failure to prevent the 9/11 terrorist attacks by sharing information within government; bridge collapses and infrastructure failures. There's a long and dispiriting list of occasions when the federal government has fallen short.

**Yet the issues surrounding** government performance don't stir the passions. Progress comes slowly, the media's not especially interested in the tedious story of building competence, and politicians themselves look for home runs, not singles. They want to make grand proposals, not spend their time digging into the nuts and bolts of fixing bureaucracies.

Moreover, as political scientist Paul C. Light has amply demonstrated, government failures happen for a long list of reasons that cannot be fixed easily, painlessly or quickly. Sometimes problems are rooted in policies that were ill-conceived, too complicated, or not well communicated. Sometimes the policies were fine, but the resources necessary to implement them were inadequate or mis-

used. Politics often gets in the way of good policy, with efforts to undermine programs by making their implementation difficult or by cutting staffs and budgets.

**There are organizational** and institutional problems, poor oversight, poor leadership. No matter how good a policy, if good people aren't available to carry it out, it will fail, and government has alarming difficulty attracting and keeping highly qualified administrators. Often, leaders are bored by the nitty-gritty of management. Still, these are challenges, not barriers. If our political leaders wanted to focus on improving government management and policy implementation, there's no shortage of fixes they could make.

They could ensure that federal agencies use pilot and trial programs much more frequently than they do now.

They could mandate better and more rigorous evaluation procedures and the use of metrics that lay bare what works and what doesn't. There's more attention being paid these days to efficacy than there used to be, but it's still a trickle compared to what's needed.

They could avoid rushing to announce programs, strive to get it right rather than get it quickly, and pay as much attention to follow-through as to the launch. Think about long term, not the next election, and make sure the mission is sharply defined.

They could devote far more attention to how government will recruit, retain, and train the smart, highly qualified workers we need to carry out ever-more-complex programs. And they could vow to reduce the number of political appointees in favor of filling most positions on the basis of merit.

**They should certainly flatten** the chain of command and reduce the layers of bureaucracy within federal departments and agencies, so that it's easier for top administrators to see what's taking place on the front lines.

In the case of Congress, it needs to ensure that vigorous oversight of programs becomes a habit, not the rarity it is now. All of us want government to fail less often, whatever our political stripe. So here's my suggestion: As election season approaches, insist that your favored candidate work harder on making government more effective and efficient. ❖

**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.**

**Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier:** At first listen on Monday, there was something so unsavory about our congressman, Todd Rokita, whipping up two full-fledged crises — Central American children at the U.S. southern border and the African scourge of Ebola — into one pungent sound bite. When he was called out for mixing metaphors on an Indianapolis radio program, making national headlines along the way, the Republican from Indianapolis was defiant, crying: Context, man, context! “That really hits a nerve with the liberals and folks on the left,” Rokita said Wednesday in a follow-up interview with WIBC in Indianapolis. “So, this is the way they do. This is nothing new. They grab onto something, take it out of context, and now it’s a distraction. And I refuse to let it be a distraction.” But did he really back away, whether in his own press statements or in interviews given to media he believes are not dominated by “folks on the left”? Or was it the case of a congressman from a safe district, seasoning a red meat issue with just the right amount of hyperbole and persecuted outrage to work the crowd and make his base salivate? This is a good time to take a deep breath and consider the context. And let’s let Rokita explain. Here’s where it started, on Greg Garrison’s show on WIBC. It’s conservative talk radio, and Rokita, a frequent guest, is usually in his element with the host and the audience. On Monday, when talking about the stream of children coming across the border from Central America, Rokita discussed a letter members of the Indiana delegation wrote to the Obama administration. The letter covered legitimate concerns about accounting for children landing with sponsors in states, including a reported 245 in Indiana.

Rokita followed with the line that landed him in hot water: “He said, look, we need to know just from a public health standpoint, with Ebola circulating and everything else — no, that’s my addition to it, not necessarily his — but he said we need to know the condition of these kids.” Bucshon quickly steered clear of Rokita’s comment. And Rokita, who declined to discuss the matter with most media, was back on WIBC on Wednesday, talking with host Tony Katz. “I guess I’m guilty of using the word Ebola in an interview about the border crisis,” Rokita said. But Rokita is shrewd enough to know the dog whistle effect of stringing an illegal immigration problem largely stemming from Central America and deadly diseases being spread an ocean away. He understands the partisan value of doubling back on words he said were out of context and then doubling down on them, given the chance. “The sudden spread of Ebola in Africa is merely one example of how we must take deliberate care to prevent an outbreak of any type of disease inside our borders,” Rokita said in a statement prepared in his defense. “So far, it’s been said that the United States has found over 70 people from Ebola-stricken African countries entering our country from the southern border since January of this year. ... My larger point was also clear: We need to know the medical condi-

tion of everyone crossing our border.” It’s perfectly valid to agree with Rokita’s assessment of a broken immigration system. But if this is about context, as he says, understand what’s being said without being said. Rokita is right. This is about context. It’s just more unsavory, even after a few listens, than he lets on. ❖

**Larry Sabato, Politico:** There’s one anniversary that has recently been roundly ignored: The centennial of popular elections for the U.S. Senate. One of the great innovations of the Progressive movement, the 17th Amendment took the election of U.S. senators away from state legislatures in 1913, where it had resided since the Constitution became effective in 1789, and put power in the hands of the people. The amendment, after ratification on April 8, 1913, went into countrywide effect with the midterm election of 1914, though the first Senate contest to take place under the new rules was a special election in Maryland in November 1913. (For you trivia buffs out there, the winner was Democrat Blair Lee.) Of course, it took three election cycles—all the way to 1918—to make popular election universal, as only one-third of the Senate is elected in any given year. The Progressives saw this reform as critical to bypassing the corruption apparent in some state legislatures, where organized special interest groups essentially bought Senate seats for politicians they could

control. Thank goodness all that money-driven venality is in our distant past. Americans in the 21st century would never put up with it, right? So, a hundred years on, how’s it working? My Crystal Ball colleague, Geoffrey Skelley, has recently taken a detailed look at our century-long voting experiment with the Senate. Since the ratification of the 17th Amendment, there have been 1,811 popular Senate elections (regular and special), and more than 2.1 billion votes have been cast. Incumbent senators, including appointed ones, have always done well, though perhaps not as well as you might guess: 76 percent of the incumbents have won (1,105 of 1,459)—which means that about one in four incumbents has lost. Of the relative handful of senators who have been defeated, 107 were ousted in a party primary and 250 in the general election. From the very beginning of the Republic, then, there were fears of a small-state stranglehold on the Senate. And this was at a time when the population ratio of the most-to-least populated states (Virginia and Delaware, respectively) was a manageable 13 to 1 or so. In 2014 this chasm has grown into a great gulf. Democratic California has 66 times the population of solidly Republican Wyoming; both states have two senators. It works both ways, in partisan terms: Strongly conservative Texas has 42 times the population of liberal Vermont. Add it all up, though, and the totals are stunning. Just 16 percent of the U.S. population elects fully half of the Senate. ❖





## Clinton, Obama ‘hug summit’

MARTHA’S VINEYARD - The “hug summit” finally took place Wednesday night (Political). President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton mingled amiably at a party on the elite vacation enclave of Martha’s Vineyard, a day after the former secretary of state called the president to make clear she meant no ill will in a complex interview about foreign policy with The Atlantic’s Jeffrey Goldberg that was published over the weekend. The two saw each other at a party thrown by longtime Clinton friend Vernon Jordan and his wife, Ann, on Martha’s Vineyard, where Clinton held a book-signing for her memoir “Hard Choices,” and where Obama and his family are vacationing. According to a read-out from White House officials, the party was a birthday celebration for Ann Jordan at the Farm Neck Golf Club with about 150 guests, including Bill and Hillary Clinton. President Obama gave the first toast, followed by Hillary Clinton and Vernon Jordan. It was unclear if the two actually hugged, as a statement from Clinton press aide Nick Merrill had joked they would. But they certainly made clear that they were moving past a controversy that both sides described as overblown by the media. “The president and first lady also were happy to have the chance to spend time with Secretary Clinton and former President Clinton,” said a White House spokesman.

## Turner company sold for \$2.3B

INDIANAPOLIS — A company that was part of an ethics investigation into a top Republican lawmaker is being sold to an Ohio company as part of a \$2.3 billion deal (Associated Press). The Indianapolis Business Journal reports HealthLease Proper-

ties is being sold for \$950 million to Ohio’s Health Care REIT. HealthLease is part of a business model that House Speaker Pro Tem Eric Turner battled to protect during the 2014 legislative session. The Ohio company also agreed to buy 45 nursing home projects from Turner’s family company for \$1.4 billion when they are completed. Indiana’s House Ethics Committee determined that Turner didn’t violate any ethics rules when he lobbied privately to



kill a proposed ban on nursing home construction. But the panel also said Turner’s actions merited a review of those rules.

## Indiana ACA case to be heard

WASHINGTON – A federal judge will hear arguments in October in Indiana’s challenge to the insurance premium subsidies available through the Affordable Care Act (Indianapolis Star). Indiana’s challenge is similar to two that have already been heard by other federal courts and that have divided those courts. It affects the more than 100,000 Hoosiers who have bought insurance using the subsidies because they’re not covered through an employer or a government program like Medicare. If the challenge is successful, residents in states like Indiana that have deferred to the federal government to run its health exchange will no longer be eligible for the subsidies.

## 3 IURC nominees named

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) Nominating Committee announced today the names of the three nominees they are submitting to Governor Mike Pence for appointment to the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission. Those nominees are: Carol Drake, Robert Hartley and James F. Huston. The

Nominating Committee has nominated these three candidates to fill the current vacancy on the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission created by the resignation of Commissioner Jim Atterholt. Governor Mike Pence will appoint one person to fill the remainder of Commissioner Atterholt’s term which expires on March 31, 2017. Members of the Nominating Committee are Committee Chair Gwen Horth, Eric Scroggins, John Blevins, Larry Buell, Win Moses, Michael Evans, and Michael Mullett.

## Indy Dems question contract

INDIANAPOLIS - Democrats on the City-County Council are questioning the legality of more than \$12 million in consulting contracts signed by Republican Mayor Greg Ballard’s administration for work on the proposed criminal justice center. The city, which has paid about \$800,000 to consultants so far, doesn’t have enough money available to cover the full cost of the contracts, said Bart Brown, chief financial officer for the Democratic-majority council. Brown contends that the contracts were signed in violation of state procurement law, which requires council approval for multi-year obligations that aren’t already funded. Brown called it a “bait-and-switch.” Ballard spokesman Marc Lotter couldn’t speak to the legality of the contracts, but he said the city won’t be on the hook for the full amount.

## Emanuel approve rate dips to 35%

CHICAGO – A new Chicago Tribune poll shows Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s approval rating has dropped to 35 percent, down from 50 percent about a year ago. The dissatisfaction leaves an opening for Chicago Teachers Union President Karen Lewis, who holds a small lead over Emanuel.