



HPI forecast: Super majority hold

Walorski expected to fend off Bock; Dems could pick up House seats, but not enough; Senate eyes on 3 river races

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

ENGLISH, Ind. – In the 2008 election cycle, we had the epic Barack Obama/Hillary Clinton presidential primary, and then Obama broke a 44-year Republican lock on Indiana's Electoral College vote as the Obamas, Clintons, McCains and Palins made more than 150 campaign appearances on Hoosier soil.

In the 2010 midterms, the Republicans stormed back, taking two Congressional seats, Evan Bayh's Senate seat and a 60-40 majority in the Indiana House. In 2012, we had the \$50 million U.S. Senate race that saw Richard Mourdock depose Sen. Dick Lugar in the primary, only to blunder and watch Democrat Joe Donnelly capture the seat, saw Mike Pence become the first governor in half a century without 50 percent of the vote, and Republicans took super majorities in both legislative cham-



HPI is forecasting the historic all-female GOP ticket of treasurer nominee Kelly Mitchell, Secretary of State Connie Lawson, and Auditor Suzanne Crouch to prevail, and House and Senate super majorities to hold

bers.

And the 2014 midterm? A comparative yawner.

Yes there is the historic all-female Republican statewide ticket, with this trio of Connie Lawson, Kelly Mitchell and Suzanne Crouch expected to prevail.

Yes, there are a cluster of Indiana House seats where Democrats are pressing Republican incumbents like Reps. Ed Soliday and Hal Slager in The Region. There's another set of Indiana Senate seats along the Ohio River that are tos-

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Indiana Democrats struggle

By **CHRIS SAUTTER**

WASHINGTON – There's a little known fact about Democratic congressional challengers in Indiana. They only defeat Republican incumbents in midterm elections. The last time a Democratic challenger knocked off a Republican incumbent to win a seat in the U.S House of



Representatives in a presidential year was in 1964 when Lee Hamilton defeated Earl Wilson in the 9th District.

Since 1964 Democrats have defeated congressional Republican incumbents only in off-year elections—1974, 1982, 1990, and 2006. No Democratic Senate candidate has won over an incumbent since Birch Bayh upset 3-term incumbent Senator



“There are appropriate ways to reach voters by phone, and I will take swift action against candidates who disregard our laws in an attempt to solicit votes.”

- Attorney General Greg Zoeller, warning candidates not to use robo calls



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Homer Capehart in 1962.

So why have Hoosier Democrats only won in midterm elections and why are they not more competitive in this year's election?

One simple answer to the first question is that Indiana is a Republican state — the "reddest" in the Midwest. The GOP presidential nominee almost always wins in Indiana with coattails large enough to ensure re-election for incumbent Republican members of Congress, while occasionally picking up additional seats held by Democrats. Unlike other states, in Indiana the presidential year only voter is more likely to vote Republican than Democrat.

The Democratic presidential nominee has won Indiana only twice since 1940 — in 1964 and 2008. Lee Hamilton readily admits that Lyndon Johnson's landslide victory paved the way for his first win in 1964. Andy Jacobs also acknowledged that LBJ carried him into the winner's circle in 1964, although Jacobs won an open seat previously held by a Republican.

Barack Obama's victory in 2008 over John McCain was too narrow to have coattails. However, Democrats picked up three congressional seats in 2006 in the most competitive districts in the state — the 2nd, the 8th, and the 9th — rendering a Democratic congressional pickup in 2008 unlikely in any event.

The answer to the second question is that midterm elections are historically bad for the party in the White House. Since World War II, the party controlling the White House has lost seats in every midterm election except two—in 1998 and 2002. Indiana Democrats have only knocked off House Republicans in midterm elections when Republicans controlled the White House.

This year, only one Democratic challenger—Joe Bock in Indiana's 2nd District—appears to be mounting anything approaching a serious campaign. Bock is a quality candidate who has been hammering incumbent Jackie Walorski for her vote last year to shut down the govern-

ment. Walorski narrowly won this swing district in 2012 and appeared vulnerable a year ago.

But Bock faces both the harsh reality of history and a national party that has turned its back on him. Virtually no national resources are making their way to the 2nd District. Instead, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has all but given up on challenger races and put most of their resources behind trying to save endangered incumbents. Walorski has used her money advantage to soften her own image while demonizing Bock.

Hoosier Democrats currently hold only two seats in the U.S. House, their lowest number since the 1950's. The odds of Hoosier Democrats picking up additional seats in the near future seem to be long.

Competition in U.S. House elections has been declining for more than 50 years, primarily due to built-in advantages for incumbents, but also due to increased partisan polarization and redistricting. The re-election rate is well over 90%, making it difficult to defeat an incumbent under almost any circumstance.

These days, congressional incumbents lose for one of two reasons — they are embroiled in scandal or they have grown out-of-touch. In the absence of scandal, it usually takes a wave year or at least a mini-wave year to take out even out-of-touch incumbents.

It was the 1974 Democratic wave following the Watergate scandal and President Nixon's resignation that helped Andy Jacobs re-capture the Indianapolis area seat he lost to William Hudnut in Richard Nixon's 1972 landslide re-election. Four other Democrats, Phil Sharp, Floyd Fithian, Dave Evans, and Phil Hayes, also defeated Republican incumbents in 1974.

Frank McCloskey upended two-term incumbent Joel Deckard in the 8th District in 1982, but only after Deckard got drunk and drove into a tree. The Reagan recession helped put McCloskey in a position to win. In 1990 Tim Roemer won back the South

Bend area district that John Brademas had held by defeating 5-term incumbent John Hiler. Hiler had lost touch with the district but may have not been a good match to begin with.

It was a Republican wave in 1994 that swept out two Democratic incumbents, McCloskey and Jill Long. It took another 12 years before Democrats would defeat incumbent Republicans: Joe Donnelly over Chris Chocola, Brad Ellsworth over John Hostetler, and Baron Hill over Mike Sodrel. Sodrel had beaten Hill two years earlier in a district that has been trending Republican for some time.

The unpopularity of the War in Iraq and George W. Bush's presidency in general greatly aided their efforts.

The Indiana Democratic Party is struggling much as it did in the early 1980's. It will take a major rebuilding effort and better national dynamics before Democrats can hope to regain the glory years when they held eight out of 10 congressional seats. ❖

Sautter is a Democratic consultant based in Washington.

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supers, including incumbent Republican Sens. Jim Smith and Ron Grooms and Democrat Richard Young fighting for their political lives. And freshman U.S. Jackie Walorski is facing a spirited challenge from Notre Dame's Joe Bock.

But compared to the last three election cycles, this has been a letdown, or, perhaps, just a breather.

Why?

First, many Democrats were reluctant to ante up in 2014, fearful that President Obama and the Affordable Care Act's vast unpopularity in Indiana would doom them at the ballot box. Historically, Democrats defeated Hoosier congressional Republicans in midterms, and only in midterms over the past generation, as Jim Jontz, Frank McCloskey, Tim Roemer, Baron Hill, Brad Ellsworth, and Donnelly will attest. Many Democrats decided that 2016 would present a better scenario.

Second, it is the one cycle in every four with no presidential, gubernatorial or U.S. Senate race on the ballot. The leading office is secretary of state. Until Supt. Glenda Ritz's upset victory in 2012, a Democrat hadn't won a constitutional statewide office other than governor and lieutenant governor since 1996.

Third, Hoosier Democrats are lagging in money, particularly during the homestretch. The statewide Republican ticket of Secretary of State Connie Lawson, Auditor Suzanne Crouch and treasurer nominee Kelly Mitchell crushed their Democratic opponents Beth White, Michael Claytor and Mike Boland by huge margins.

In legislative races, the Indiana GOP was killing Indiana Democrats in contributions in key legislative races. As of this week, the House Republican Campaign Committee had \$1.4 million cash on hand, compared to \$335,000 for its Democratic counterpart with the GOP out-spending Democrats in late money \$340,000 to \$126,000. The Senate Majority Campaign Committee had a \$245,000 to \$23,000 edge over its Democratic counterpart, with the Democratic Party putting in \$62,000.

The GOP-leaning Hoosiers for Quality Education outspent I-PACE \$87,000 to \$17,000 in the Senate and \$112,000 to \$72,000 in House races in the final month. The Associated Press reported that ISTA has spent \$1 million over the past six months.

A case in point is Democrat Deb Porter's challenge

| Top Senate Late Money Donors | |
|---|-----------|
| Senate Majority Campaign Committee | \$245,700 |
| Indiana Republican Central Committee | \$182,368 |
| Hoosiers for Quality Education | \$87,500 |
| Indiana Democratic Party | \$62,359 |
| IBRG (Indiana Chamber of Commerce) | \$40,872 |
| David Long for Senate | \$30,000 |
| Mike Pence Committee | \$24,000 |
| Indiana Senate Democratic Caucus | \$23,000 |
| I-PACE (Indiana State Teachers Association) | \$17,303 |
| Indiana Bank PAC | \$17,000 |

| Total Senate Late Money | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Republican | \$704,233 |
| Democrat | \$161,421 |
| Total | \$865,654 |

| Top House Late Money Donors | |
|---|-----------|
| House Republican Campaign Committee | \$340,600 |
| Indiana House Democratic Caucus | \$126,000 |
| Hoosiers for Quality Education | \$112,500 |
| I-PACE (Indiana State Teachers Association) | \$72,803 |
| Mike Pence Committee | \$14,000 |
| Operating Engineers Local 1401 | \$12,500 |
| IBRG (Indiana Chamber of Commerce) | \$12,000 |
| Indiana UAW | \$10,000 |
| Indiana Bank PAC | \$7,500 |
| Vision Concepts (Monarch Beverage) | \$7,000 |

| Total House Late Money | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Republican | \$574,894 |
| Democrat | \$274,403 |
| Total | \$849,297 |

to Rep. Soliday. In a tossup race critical in breaking the Republican super majority in the House, as of Wednesday, Soliday had received \$104,000 in late money from Indiana Republican sources compared \$28,000 from Democrats for Porter. In House District 19, Republican Julie Olthoff had \$75,000 in late party money compared to \$13,000 for State Rep. Shelli VanDenburgh. In the Fort Wayne seat held by Republican State Rep. Martin Carbaugh, \$69,000 in late GOP money had flowed in, compared to \$2,500 for Thad Geradot. In another rematch tossup race facing freshman Republican State Rep. Alan Morrison, Democrat Mark Spelbring received \$44,000 compared to \$109,000 for the incumbent.

Despite the money edge, Peter Hanscom, campaign director for the Indiana House Democrats, told the Associated Press, "We are well positioned and have the ability to break the supermajority."

In three dead-heat Indiana Senate seats along the Ohio River, Sen. Grooms received \$232,000 in late money as of Wednesday, compared to about \$5,000 for Democratic Floyd County Commissioner Chuck Freiburger. Democratic Sen. Young pulled in \$27,000 from Democrats in late money, compared to \$125,000 for Republican Erin Houchin. Sen. Smith had a \$139,000-to-\$40,000 advantage over Democrat Julie Berry. The only Senate race even close in state party late money involves controversial Republican Sen. Mike Delph, who had a \$22,000 lead in late money compared to \$16,000 for gay Democrat J.D. Ford.

These funds flowed in during the most critical part of any legislative race, within the final two weeks, when folks are beginning to pay attention. At the party level, this is a drubbing.

It isn't as if there were no compelling issues for Democrats. Gov. Mike Pence's rejection of \$80 million in federal pre-kindergarten funding raised the eyebrows of many Republicans, and was an issue just waiting for Democrats to exploit. And the bankruptcy of the parent company of the Indiana Toll Road lease also hit the news, with a federal judge accepting a reorganization this week.

Missing in action is former senator and governor Evan Bayh, who is sitting on a \$10 million war chest.

With the return of presidential and gubernatorial politics in 2016, Democrats hope they can be more competitive. But at the congressional level Republican incumbents are raising big bucks that can be salted away for the next cycle. Rep. Marlin Stutzman had \$608,000 cash on hand, Todd Rokita \$1.17 million, Susan Brooks \$907,000, Luke Messer \$534,000, Larry Bucshon \$543,000 and Todd Young with \$931,000.

For Indiana Democrats, for happy days to be here again, they must have dynamic gubernatorial and U.S. Senate nominees in 2016, and, well, money.

Indiana House Democrats need to make a net pickup of four House seats on Nov. 4 to break the 69-31 seat Republican super majority. The reality is that with the retirement of State Rep. Kreg Battles in HD45 and the reemergence of former Republican representative Bruce

Borders, that seat almost certainly ends up in the GOP column, so Democrats need to pick up five seats elsewhere.

At this point, HPI sees House Republicans preserving their super majority, which currently stands at 69-31 seats. Several Democrats HPI has talked with who have campaigned with House Democratic candidates haven't sounded optimistic about making those kinds of inroads.

Congressional

CD2: U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski (R) v. Joe Bock (D).

This was deemed the most potentially competitive congressional race in Indiana simply because Walorski had a closer-than-expected victory over Brendan Mullen in 2012 - by just under 4,000 votes - despite new maps that made the district more Republican. Walorski is a tenacious campaigner with a solid base, and the overall campaign dynamic of President Obama's unpopularity in Indiana, the opposition to Obamacare and the tepid recovery from the Great Recession gave her a strong tailwind this cycle. Bock has raised a credible amount of money, \$734,000 on his third quarter FEC report, but Walorski posted \$1.84 million. For that reason, the DCCC didn't come in and national forecasters like Stu Rothenberg and Charlie Cook quickly put Walorski into a "likely" or "safe" category. The bankruptcy of the lessor of the Indiana Toll Road was the kind of wild card we thought might come into play in this race, since Walorski cast the deciding 51st vote in the Indiana House for Major Moves in 2006. While she had a closer-than-expected reelection race that year, Bock at this writing had not exploited the issue, though it came up during a recent debate. We believe that Walorski will prevail. **Horse Race status:** Likely Walorski.

As for the other eight congressional races, all incumbents are expected to win easily.

Indiana House

Here is a race-by-race breakdown of House seats we are watching. All House races not listed are considered "safe" for the incumbents:

HD4: Deb Porter (D) v. Rep. Ed Soliday (R).

This is a pure tossup. The fascinating aspect of this race is that the unions are divided, with Soliday pulling in support from operating and building trades unions while the ALF-CIO and ISTA are backing Porter. Soliday has received \$104,000 in supplemental money as of 2 p.m. Wednesday. This race is drawing the greatest number of last-minute donations, with both candidates picking up strong support from labor unions (Carden, NWI Times). According to Indiana campaign finance reports, the Northern Indiana Operators Union Political Action Committee has given \$25,000 this month to Soliday, one of the few House Republicans to vote in 2012 against Indiana's right-to-work law. The chairman of the House Roads and Transportation Committee, Soliday last week picked up \$7,500 from the road builders'

Build Indiana PAC, to go along the \$5,000 they gave him earlier this year, and \$2,000 from the Northwest Indiana Contractors PAC. Gov. Mike Pence's campaign fund gave Soliday \$3,500 on Oct. 17 and pro-business groups and individuals kicked in \$18,000 more this month. Hoosiers for Quality Education PAC, a group supporting charter schools and private school vouchers, gave Soliday \$5,000 on Tuesday. The four-term lawmaker needs the money. He reported Oct. 10 just \$52,596 cash on hand and campaign debts of \$48,668, as Porter, a public school teacher for three decades, launched \$393,000 in television ads, according to her pre-election campaign finance report. Late Saturday, a campaign manager for Porter said the \$393,000 was not correct, that a clerical error added a zero and the number really is \$39,300. Joel Smith, of the Porter campaign, said it's working with the state to fix the error. The Indiana State Teachers Union's IPACE PAC is the top donor to Porter's campaign giving her \$63,000 through Oct. 10 and another \$14,000 since then. Iron Workers Local 395, the Laborers Union and United Food and Commercial Workers together kicked in \$10,000 for Porter this month. The House Democratic caucus added \$26,000 to Porter's fundraising total on Oct. 1. Soliday is running cable TV ads and sending out direct mail. Soliday defeated Democrat Greg Simms by just over 900 votes in 2012 in a redrawn district. Porter is a career elementary music teacher and president of the Portage association of teachers. She has been a delegate to the National Education Association convention. Democrats have been sending out attack mail pieces. Both Democratic and Republican sources tell HPI this race could go either way. **Horse Race status:** Tossup.

HD11: James Metro (D) v. Michael Aylesworth (R). Aylesworth, of Hebron, burned through \$36,756 since April 12 and his campaign was nearly \$5,000 in debt Oct. 16 when the House Republican Campaign Committee gave him \$41,000 to finish the race (Carden, NWI Times). His opponent, Democrat Jim Metro, of Cedar Lake, had \$35,844 to spend as of Oct. 10, thanks in part to \$49,303 in donations from the teachers' union. He has received \$30,500 from Democrats. Since then, Metro has taken in \$15,000 from the Operators Union of which he is a member, \$9,000 from Iron Workers, \$2,000 each from the Pipe Trades, Auto Workers and Food and Commercial Workers unions and \$1,000 each from three laborers union locals. Aylesworth has been endorsed by the NWI Times. Democrats have been sending multiple direct mail pieces attacking him for his backing of trade with China when he served on the National Corn Growers Board back in 2000. This is the open seat being vacated

| Total Pre-Elect Supplemental | Total DEM | Total GOP | Candidate | Dist. |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-------|
| 28,000 | 28,000 | | Deb Porter | 4 |
| 104,994 | | 104,994 | Ed Soliday | |
| 30,500 | 30,500 | | James Metro | 11 |
| 41,000 | | 41,000 | Mike Aylesworth | |
| 11,600 | 11,600 | | Mara Reardon | 12 |
| 26,200 | | 26,200 | William Fine | |
| 2,000 | 2,000 | | Jim Wieser | 15 |
| 9,700 | | 9,700 | Hal Slager | |
| 13,000 | 13,000 | | Shell VanDenburgh | 19 |
| 75,000 | | 75,000 | Julie Olthoff | |
| 38,303 | 38,303 | | Melanie Wright | 35 |
| 1,000 | | 1,000 | Jack Lutz | |
| 44,000 | 44,000 | | Mark Spelbring | 42 |
| 109,700 | | 109,700 | Alan Morrison | |
| 3,000 | 3,000 | | Phil Pflum | 56 |
| 1,000 | | 1,000 | Dick Hamm | |
| 68,000 | 68,000 | | Jeff Sparks | 62 |
| 109,300 | | 109,300 | Matt Uebelhor | |
| 26,500 | | 26,500 | Mike Schriefer | 74 |
| | | | Lloyd Arnold | |
| 2,500 | 2,500 | | Thad Gerardot | 81 |
| 69,000 | | 69,000 | Martin Carbaugh | |
| 6,000 | 6,000 | | Christina Hale | 87 |
| 1,500 | | 1,500 | Mike Friedman | |
| 27,500 | 27,500 | | Karlee Macer | 92 |
| | | | Brad Moulton | |
| 849,297 | 274,403 | 574,894 | | |
| Total Pre-Elect Supplemental | Total DEM | Total GOP | | |

by State Rep. Rick Niemeyer, who is seeking a Senate seat. It is being targeted by Democrats. Aylesworth had an early lead, but Democrats tell HPI they believe they've made inroads. Republicans have dropped direct mail and have a field manager on the ground. Aylesworth is a Hebron farmer, a state employee who has served on Porter County Council and has run for state rep before. He defeated Michael Mears, the police chief in Lynwood, Ill., by more than 500 votes, thanks to a strong showing in Porter County. Metro, a 10-year Cedar Lake Democratic Party chair and a member of the Lake County Plan Commission, edged out Phillip Kuiper, a three-term Lowell town councilman, by a little more than 180 votes in the Democratic primary. Niemeyer won this seat by more than 6,000 votes in 2012. **Horse Race status:** Tossup.

HD12: Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon (D) v. Bill Fine (R). Fine was nearly out of money until House Republicans swooped in Oct. 17 with \$13,500 to support his challenge to Rep. Candelaria Reardon. Reardon reported \$38,964 cash on hand after picking up \$20,000 from the teachers' union Oct. 6. **Horse Race status:** Likely Reardon.

HD15: Rep. Hal Slager (R) v. Jim Wieser

(D). Slager declared \$35,092 to spend as of Oct. 10, compared to Schererville Democrat Jim Wieser's \$7,612. Wieser since has picked up another \$2,000 from the United Auto Workers while Pence gave \$3,500 to Slager (Carden, NWI Times). Slager was endorsed by the NWI Times. Democratic direct mail has slowed in the last couple of weeks. Campaign sources tell HPI that Slager's polling has improved. Slager defeated Democrat Tommy O'Donnell by just 554 votes in 2012. Democrats can use high union membership in this district to rally their vote in what could be a classic turnout election. **Horse Race status:** Leans Slager.

HD19: Rep. Shelli VanDenburgh (D) v. Julie Olthoff (R).

Republicans and supporters of charter and private schools are making a last-minute push against Rep. VanDenburgh. On Oct. 16, Olthoff received \$75,000 from House Republicans and \$20,000 from Hoosiers for Quality of Education. VanDenburgh, whose \$33,404 campaign fund was more than twice the size of Olthoff's, picked up \$13,000 from House Democrats. The teachers' union also added \$2,000 to its \$54,303 in prior donations and Indiana bankers gave VanDenburgh \$1,000. Since HPI has published over the past 20 years, HD19 has frequently popped up as a GOP target and it's remained Democratic each cycle. We're skeptical it will be a pickup this year. **Horse Race status:** Leans VanDenburgh.

HD21: Jodi L. Buoscio (D) v. State Rep. Tim Wesco (R).

Republicans believe that Wesco will win this race. Wesco ran unopposed in 2012. Buoscio, a teacher at Elkhart Memorial High School, who is on the ISTA board of directors while chairing the ISTA District Council 1E, will attempt to tap into the education social media network that helped Supt. Glenda Ritz upset Tony Bennett in 2012. **Horse Race status:** Likely Wesco.

HD22: Curt Nisly (R) v. David Kolbe (D), Michael L. Stinfer (I). This is

an overwhelmingly Republican district and Nisly would have been expected to easily win after defeating State Rep. Rebecca Kubacki in the May primary, 4,623 to 2,516. Stinfer was supposed to muddle this race and potentially divide the GOP vote, but he was arrested in Elkhart County on April 26 and charged with operating a vehicle while intoxicated and endangering a person, and operating a vehicle with a BAC of .08 or more per breath, class A and C misdemeanors, respectively, according to reports published in the Elkhart Truth. On Aug. 16, Stinfer was pulled over outside a family member's home in Warsaw because a headlight was out on his car, according to campaign spokesperson Melissa Rone. He was "taken in" for a blood test, Rone said, which subsequently showed an elevated blood-alcohol level, she said. Warrants for Stinfer's arrest were issued Tuesday, Sept. 2, by the Kosciusko County prosecuting attorney's office. One charge is for a Class C misdemeanor of driving under the influence. The second is a felony charge for the same offense because re-offending after a first DUI conviction is automatically considered a felony, according to Indiana state law. With the Stinfer meltdown and the overwhelming Republican bent to this district, it's hard to see Kolbe pulling off the upset. **Horse Race status:** Likely Nisly.

HD32: Rep. Eric Turner (R) v. Bob Ashley

(D). Despite Turner's controversies and his announced decision to resign after the election, we still forecast the GOP will retain this seat. The story has not resurfaced after the initial Turner announcement and Ashley has been low-profile in this overwhelmingly GOP district. Most Republicans we've talked to believe GOP voters will elect Turner and then seek a replacement via caucus. Turner had a much closer primary race than anyone expected, edging out political newcomer Parvin Gillim. **Horse Race status:** Likely Turner.

HD33: Shon Byrum (D) v. Rep. Greg Beumer (R).

Beumer was chosen by caucus late last year to replace State Rep. Bill Davis. Davis defeated Charles Schemenauer 14,669 to 10,726. So

| Dist. | Candidate | Total Pre-Elect Supplemental | DEM | GOP |
|-------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|
| 4 | Deb Porter | 28,000 | 28,000 | |
| | Ed Soliday | 104,997 | | 104,997 |
| 11 | James Metro | 30,500 | 30,500 | |
| | Mike Aylesworth | 41,000 | | 41,000 |
| 12 | Mara Reardon | 11,600 | 11,600 | |
| | William Fine | 13,500 | | 13,500 |
| 15 | Jim Wieser | 2,000 | 2,000 | |
| | Hal Slager | 9,700 | | 9,700 |
| 19 | Shelli VanDenburgh | 13,000 | 13,000 | |
| | Julie Olthoff | 75,000 | | 75,000 |
| 35 | Melanie Wright | 38,303 | 38,303 | |
| | Jack Lutz | 1,000 | | 1,000 |
| 42 | Mark Spelbring | 44,000 | 44,000 | |
| | Alan Morrison | 109,700 | | 109,700 |
| 56 | Phil Pflum | 3,000 | 3,000 | |
| | Dick Hamm | 1,000 | | 1,000 |
| 62 | Jeff Sparks | 68,000 | 68,000 | |
| | Matt Ubelhor | 109,300 | | 109,300 |
| 74 | Mike Schriefer | 0 | 0 | |
| | Lloyd Arnold | 26,500 | | 26,500 |
| 81 | Thad Gerardot | 2,500 | 2,500 | |
| | Martin Carbaugh | 69,000 | | 69,000 |
| 87 | Christina Hale | 6,000 | 6,000 | |
| | Mike Friedman | 1,500 | | 1,500 |
| 92 | Karlee Macer | 27,500 | 27,500 | |
| | Brad Moulton | 0 | | 0 |
| | | 836,600 | 274,403 | 562,197 |

while this isn't exactly an open seat, Beumer is new to the ballot in the district. Byrum is a social studies teacher in Jay County and announced his candidacy the same day that Rep. Davis resigned. Beumer, R-Modoc, served two consecutive terms as a Randolph County commissioner. From 2001-2004, he served as the Region 8 director for the former Indiana Department of Commerce, which consisted of six counties in east central Indiana. He has also served as the director of community development for the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and as the executive director of the Randolph County Economic Development Corporation. Beumer has a strong Randolph base, Gov. Mike Pence is popular in this district and the Democrat has yet to drop mail or begin advertising. **Horse Race status:** Likely Beumer.

HD35: Melanie Wright (D) v. Rep. Jack Lutz (R). Wright is running TV ads in the Indianapolis market taking Lutz to task over votes against women's issues. Wright has also been endorsed by Supt. Glenda Ritz and will attempt to use her social media strategy to win this seat. What remains to be seen is whether the social media campaign that helped propel the Ritz upset over Republican incumbent Tony Bennett in 2012 can work at a district level. We're not seeing much support for Lutz by the HRCC. This looks like a potential pickup for Democrats, but Lutz has been a survivor. **Horse Race status:** Tossup.

HD42: State Rep. Alan Morrison (R) v. Mark Spelbring (D). Republicans believe they can hang onto this seat after an intense rematch. Democrats see it as a pickup opportunity and are dropping direct mail on behalf of Spelbring as well as infusing \$44,000, compared to \$109,000 for Morrison from Republicans. Morrison has a history of running in nailbiters. In 2010, he lost to State Rep. Clyde Kersey in HD43, 7,772 to 7,514. Redistricted into HD42, "Landslide" Morrison defeated Democrat Mark Spelbring two years later by a little more than 100 votes, 12,788 to 12,682. So this is expected to be another close rematch between Morrison and Spelbring. Spelbring has already run a 15-second negative ad against Morrison as well as a short bio ad. All indicators are that this could be tight. HRCC can be expected to run a full array of TV and direct mail on behalf of this freshman. We give a slight edge to Morrison, but it will be close. **Horse Race status:** Tossup.

HD45: State Rep. Bionca Gambill (D) v. Bruce Borders (R). Gambill is running a TV ad in the Terre Haute market featuring John Gregg's endorsement. Republicans have not responded with TV ads tying Gambill to President Obama, which would be lethal in this district. If you see that, that means this race has tightened. We see this as a GOP pickup. **Horse Race status:** Safe Borders.

HD56: Rep. Dick Hamm (R) v. Phil Pflum (D). We're not detecting Democrats seeing this as a pickup opportunity. After several challenges, Hamm finally defeated Pflum in 2012 by a 11,568-to-10,470 margin. Libertarian Mark Brimm polled 1414 votes. So this is another rematch and while it could be close, Hamm might have an edge due to what looks to be a fairly Republican year. The new district is essentially Republican Wayne County and Hagerstown. Democrats don't appear to be putting many resources behind Pflum to date. **Horse Race status:** Likely Hamm.

HD62: Jeff Sparks (D) v. Rep. Matt Ubelhor (R). Democrats are targeting Ubelhor with direct mail. The incumbent has responded with running broadcast TV in the Terre Haute market, cable in Monroe County and of this morning in the Indianapolis broadcast market. This is the rematch between Sparks, the principal at Linton-Stockton Junior High School, and Rep. Ubelhor. In 2012, Ubelhor defeated Sparks 13,993 to 12,477, so this race has the potential to be competitive. Democrats are targeting this seat and have pumped \$68,000 into Spark's campaign in the last week, while Ubelhor has received \$109,000 in late money from Republicans. The big question here is which party can turn out its base. **Horse Race status:** Leans Ubelhor.

HD72: Kevin Sue Bailey (D) v. Rep. Ed Clere (R). Bailey has a campaign video saying that Indiana public schools are actually attracting families from Kentucky, and she questions Gov. Mike Pence's decision to reject \$80 million in federal pre-K funds. Rep. Clere's wife, Amy, was subject of a News & Tribune story saying she created fake Facebook accounts to participate in a discussion. Bailey is an English professor at Indiana University Southeast who previously taught at Floyd Central High School. She is seeking her first elected office in her challenge to Clere, who won reelection in 2012 by defeating Democrat Sharon Grabowski 16,177 to 13,557. Clere won this seat in 2008 when he upset State Rep. Bill Cochran. With the Kentucky Senate race dominating the TV media market, it will be tough for Bailey to penetrate a message. **Horse Race status:** Likely Clere.

HD74: State Rep. Lloyd Arnold (R) v. Chris Coyle (D). Arnold succeeded Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann, who defeated Democratic Majority Leader Russ Stilwell in 2010. A Democratic caucus selected Chris Coyle of Derby, who is an advanced EMT. Coyle is seeking traction on the school funding issue that is a hot topic in Southern Indiana. HPI traveled with Gov. Pence across Southern Indiana recently and the rural school funding issue was raised several times. "In 2012, my opponent spent hundreds of thousands of dollars telling our community he was one of us. Less than six months after being elected, he voted

to cut funding to every public school in his district and send hundreds of millions of dollars to private, for-profit schools in Indianapolis," Coyle said. "No matter what party you are from, that is wrong." **Horse Race status:** Leans Arnold.

HD78: Rep. Holli Sullivan (R) v. Vanderburgh Commissioner Steve Melcher (D).

Democrats are attacking Sullivan as being an unelected representative. Sullivan won a caucus replacing Auditor Suzanne Crouch just before the General Assembly commenced last January. Melcher is a longtime officeholder, but he made headlines earlier this month when he was hospitalized in intensive care for a heart attack. Melcher appears to be recovering, but what once looked like a potential pickup for Democrats doesn't look as promising now. Sullivan ran early TV in the Evansville market last June to gin up her name ID. She can also expect campaign trail support from Crouch, who is very popular in the district. **Horse Race status:** Leans Sullivan.

HD81: State Rep. Martin Carbaugh (R) v. Thad Gerardot (D).

Carbaugh has received \$69,000 in late money from Republicans. He upset incumbent and former Fort Wayne mayor Win Moses in 2012, 11,681 to 9,979. He faces Democrat Gerardot, who was selected by caucus for the nomination. Gerardot, 28, works at Lincoln Financial assisting individuals to make informed decisions about their retirement futures. He has been active in community organizing in the LGBT community for four years. He also recently finished working for Freedom Indiana, the campaign to prevent a constitutional ban on gay marriage. Democrats are targeting this seat. HRCC has run broadcast TV on behalf of Carbaugh and believe that has boosted his name ID. But the Republicans on the Fort Wayne City Council pushed anti-collective bargaining ordinances, overrode Mayor Tom Henry's vetoes, and consequently stirred up the labor unions. So this could be a close race. **Horse Race status:** Tossup.

HD89: State Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer (R) v. Surveyor Debra Jenkins (D).

We don't detect Democrats making a significant investment in this race. Kirchhofer upset Democrat incumbent John Barnes 8,066 to 7,468 in 2010, then ran unopposed in 2012. She faces Marion County Surveyor Jenkins. This race bears watching because not only is Indianapolis trending Democrat, but the party will be seeking to ramp up turnout on behalf of Clerk Beth White in her race against Secretary of State Connie Lawson. Kirchhofer's campaign has knocked on 9,000 doors thus far and has dropped direct mail pieces. Jenkins campaign has been quiet to date. **Horse Race status:** Likely Kirchhofer.



HD92: Rep. Karlee Macer (D) v. Bradford Moulton (R).

This race had not been on our radar, but Democrats must be seeing something they don't like because they just dumped \$27,000 into Macer's campaign this week. It includes a mailer that calls attention to her jailed independent opponent. She was in the news after the arrest of independent candidate John

Couch, who had been stalking her. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Macer

Indiana Senate

Republican State Sens. Ron Grooms and Jim Smith and Democrat State Sen. Richard Young are all fighting for their political lives. Sources in both parties describe all three of these races as tossups, though several independent sources tell HPI that these races are all trending Republican. One informed and reliable source told HPI on Wednesday, "I think Republicans will win two out of the three, but I wouldn't be surprised if they win all three."

Another potentially competitive seat is SD15, where Republican Liz Brown has polled well thus far. The turnout element in Brown's race against Democrat Jack Morris is the referendum to change the county commissioner system into an elected county executive.

We forecast that Republican Rep. Rick Niemeyer (SD6), Jeff Raatz (SD27), Chip Perfect (SD43), Eric Bassler (SD39) and Rep. Mark Messmer (SD48) will all easily win open seats vacated by Sens. Sue Landske, Allen Paul, Johnny Nugent, John Waterman and Democrat Lindel Hume, with a net gain of one seat for Senate Republicans in this grouping.

With Republicans holding a 37-13 super majority, it is difficult, though not impossible, to project enough Democratic inroads to end the super majority in that chamber, particularly with Republicans projected to easily pick up SD48.

Here's a race-by-race rundown:

SD15: Liz Brown (R) v. Jack Morris (D).

Democrats believe they have a shot at this open seat vacated by the retiring State Sen. Tom Wyss. About \$100,000 has come into this race in late money, most going to Brown from the GOP. There was a strange Journal Gazette story earlier this week that reported Morris's law partners may be committing voter fraud, but the candidate's campaign emphasized that Morris is properly registered to vote from his home. Tim Henderson of the Senate Democratic Campaign Committee told HPI his party has invested heavily in this race, spending about \$125,000 in broadcast TV over the past month. They also saw the Journal Gazette story as a sign that Republicans are "nervous" about this race. Republican sources tell HPI that

Brown has polled well since the primary, but Democrats are hoping the anti-union actions by the GOP-led Fort Wayne City Council will spur their voters to come out in what will likely be a turnout election. The other wild card is the referendum that would create an elected Allen County executive. **Horse Race status:** Leans Brown.

SD29: State Sen. Mike Delph (R) v. J.D. Ford (D).

Democrats have invested in J.D. Ford, who has brought in big guns such as U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly and 2012 gubernatorial nominee John Gregg. Ford has knocked on 20,000 doors and is running ads on TV. Delph’s potential problem was articulated by Indianapolis Business Journal Publisher Mickey Mauer, who served in the Daniels administration, who wrote in his column this week, “You have a chance to defeat a politician who consistently supported a ban on same-sex marriage to its bitter end and who had pressed to embody this hate law in the Indiana Constitution. You have a chance to defeat a politician who is a pariah in his own party – thrown out of the Republican caucus, stripped of his press secretary and leadership title. You have a chance to defeat a politician who writes unfortunate and unseemly remarks on social media. You have a chance to defeat a politician who harbors the archaic belief and spouts the unscientific blather that Earth was created 5,000 years ago and who insists that man walked with dinosaurs. Well, you can do this with just one vote. One vote to help the good people of Indiana oust Mike Delph as state senator in the 29th District. The man to elect is J.D. Ford, a viable candidate who believes in America’s core values but advocates fair treatment for all.” Democrats believe that Ford can attract the support of moderate Republicans in Hamilton and Boone counties and they hope that Beth White’s secretary of state campaign will push up Democratic turnout and totals in Marion County’s Pike Township. Delph has raised north of \$250,000 and is running TV ads and putting out direct mail. Democrats have been unable to reveal any polling that shows this to be a close race and Delph has internal polling showing the incumbent will win. We still think Delph rallies his base and pulls this one out, but an upset here would be a surprise, not a shock. **Horse Race status:** Likely Delph.

SD38: Sen. Tim Skinner (D) v. Jon Ford (R).

About \$100,000 in late money has poured into this race as Republicans think they can pick this seat off. **Horse Race status:** Leans Skinner.

SD45: Sen. Jim Smith (R) v. Julie Berry (D).

GOP and independent sources tell HPI they have polling showing Smith’s numbers creeping up over the past week. He is facing an intense challenge from former Jefferson County Commissioner Berry. They cite the voters

| Total Pre-Elect Supplemental | Total DEM | Total GOP | Candidate | Dist. |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-------|
| 25,825 | 25,825 | | Jack Morris | 15 |
| 74,219 | | 74,219 | Liz Brown | |
| | | | Jake Hoog | 27 |
| 15,804 | | 15,804 | Jeff Raatz | |
| 16,240 | 16,240 | | J.D. Ford | 29 |
| 22,168 | | 22,168 | Mike Delph | |
| 46,000 | 46,000 | | Tim Skinner | 38 |
| 60,753 | | 60,753 | Jon Ford | |
| | | | Steve Lindsey | 39 |
| 23,784 | | 23,784 | Eric Bassler | |
| 40,456 | 40,456 | | Julie Berry | 45 |
| 139,607 | | 139,607 | Jim Smith | |
| 5,000 | 5,000 | | Chuck Freiburger | 46 |
| 232,172 | | 232,172 | Ron Grooms | |
| 27,900 | 27,900 | | Richard Young | 47 |
| 125,726 | | 125,726 | Erin Houchin | |
| | | | Larry Vollmer | 48 |
| 10,000 | | 10,000 | Mark Messmer | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| 865,654 | 161,421 | 704,233 | | |
| Total Pre-Elect Supplemental | Total DEM | Total GOP | | |

focusing on the election in the final week, and their dislike for President Obama and Obamacare, as well as the bleed over from the Kentucky U.S. Senate race where Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell is fending off a challenge from Secretary of State Alison Grimes. The Louisville media market has been dominated by that U.S. Senate race, though it has attacked Democrats such as Bill and Hillary Clinton. That race has also crimped available media time, which could hinder the three challengers. **Horse Race status:** Tossup.

SD46: State Sen. Ron Grooms (R) v. Floyd County Commissioner Chuck Freiburger (D).

The late money for Sen. Grooms has ballooned up to \$232,000, up from just under \$100,000 last week. The Senate Majority Campaign Committee has pumped in \$141,000 in supplemental funding. This is a rematch, with Grooms defeating Freiburger 21,019 to 18,965 in 2012. Our sources believe that this race is trending toward Grooms, citing the unpopularity of President Obama and the bleed over from the Kentucky U.S. Senate race. **Horse Race status:** Tossup.

SD47: State Sen. Richard Young (D) v. Erin Houchin (R).

While Republican sources believe this race is a tossup, they also believe that Houchin will pull off the upset. Sen. Young has decided not to go nega-

tive, and that decision could end his political career. This is Sen. Young's first campaign in the redrawn SD47 and he faces Houchin, a former congressional district Republican chair and aide to U.S. Sen. Dan Coats. Young has been portrayed as last conservative Democrat in the General Assembly. Young has a name ID advantage, which prompted Houchin to begin her TV with a bio ad. The Kentucky U.S. Senate race is severely crimping TV time. Sources tell HPI this race is within the margin of error. **Horse Race status:** Tossup.

U.S. Senate

By LARRY SABATO, KYLE KONDIK and GEOFFREY SKELLEY

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. - While many races remain close, it's just getting harder and harder to envision a plausible path for the Democrats to retain control of the Senate. Ultimately, with just a few days to go before the election, the safe bet would be on Republicans eventually taking control of the upper chamber.

We say eventually because there's a decent chance we won't know who wins the Senate on Election Night. Louisiana is guaranteed to go to a runoff, and Georgia seems likelier than not to do the same. The Georgia runoff would be Jan. 6, 2015, three days after the 114th Congress is scheduled to open. Vote-counting in some states, like Alaska, will take days, and other races are close enough to trigger a recount. Generally speaking, candidates who have leads of three points or more in polling averages are in solid shape to win, but in this election five states -- Republican-held Georgia and Kansas, and Democratic-held Iowa, New Hampshire, and North Carolina -- feature a Senate race where both of the two major polling averages (RealClearPolitics and HuffPost Pollster) show the leading candidate with an edge of smaller than three points.

What makes the Democrats' situation so precarious is that Republicans have polling leads of more than three points in five other states, all of which are currently held by Democrats: Arkansas, Louisiana, Montana, South Dakota, and West Virginia. Two others, Democratic-held Alaska and Colorado, show Republicans leading in both averages, but by more than three points in just one. (These averages are as of Wednesday afternoon.)

The Senate math starts with the seats that are not up this cycle and the safe seats that are not on the verge of flipping parties. Of the 83 seats that fit those categories, 42 are held by Republicans and 41 by Democrats.

Democratic incumbents in Minnesota, Oregon, and Virginia all occupy seats we rate Likely Democratic, and Rep. Gary Peters (D) is well positioned to keep the open

seat in Michigan in Democratic hands. These four holds put Democrats at 45 seats.

Republicans have two surefire pickups in Montana and West Virginia, and they can probably count on South Dakota, too. This is a ratings change for the Crystal Ball -- we're moving the Mount Rushmore State from Leans Republican to Likely Republican. Ex-Gov. Mike Rounds' (R) troubles don't seem sufficiently large enough to open the door for Rick Weiland (D) or ex-Republican Sen. Larry Pressler, whose position in the race has faded to some degree. We also rate both the Kentucky and Arkansas races as Likely Republican, with the Razorback race providing the GOP with its fourth pick-up. Accounting for these contests, Republicans are at 47 seats in our calculus.

Now this is where things get murkier. Alaska, Colorado, and Iowa appear to be edging toward Republicans. In our Crystal Ball ratings, we've had both Alaska and Iowa leaning to the Republicans, and we continue to do so even though there's uncertainty in both states, Alaska in particular: If any Democrat confounds the polls, it could be Sen. Mark Begich (D). Iowa is also close, although state Sen.

Joni Ernst (R) has consistently held a small lead in public polling, and Democrats are sounding alarms about Rep. Bruce Braley's performance in the state's two eastern, more Democratic-leaning congressional districts.

Polling in Colorado misfired in both 2010 and 2012, underestimating the Democratic vote in both years, and Democrats are banking on a similar mishap, along with the state's new all-mail balloting boosting Democratic turnout, delivering an upset victory for Sen. Mark Udall (D), who trails in nearly

all independent polling to Rep. Cory Gardner (R). That is possible, but there is also reason to be skeptical. For one thing, Gardner is unquestionably a superior candidate to Ken Buck, the Republican who fumbled the 2010 race against Sen. Michael Bennet (D). So we're calling Colorado Leans Republican, now, too, to go along with Alaska and Iowa. New Hampshire and North Carolina still lean to the Democrats. The latter contest is particularly close at this point, though Sen. Kay Hagan (D) still retains a slim lead over Thom Tillis (R). Even though he's made up considerable ground in New Hampshire, a victory by former Massachusetts Sen. Scott Brown (R) would still rank as mildly surprising -- and a sure-fire indicator of a big GOP night. For now, though, the Democrats are narrowly ahead, and that makes the Democratic total 47 seats.

Complicating matters are the two contests that we rate as Toss-up/Leans Runoff, meaning that we can't pick a final winner at this point because we expect overtime. In Georgia there are enough undecided voters to push either David Perdue (R) or Michelle Nunn (D) over the top on

| REAL CLEAR POLITICS ELECTION 2014 | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Battle for Senate | RCP Averages |
| 45 Dems 10 GOP 45 | GOP +7 Pick-Ups |
| Top Senate Races | RCP Average |
| Colorado | Gardner (R) +3.3 |
| Iowa | Ernst (R) +2.1 ▲ |
| North Carolina | Hagan (D) +1.0 |
| Georgia | Perdue (R) +0.5 |
| Kansas | Orman (I) +0.9 |
| Alaska | Sullivan (R) +2.2 |
| New Hampshire | Shaheen (D) +2.2 |
| Kentucky | McConnell (R) +4.4 |
| Louisiana | Cassidy (R) +4.5 |
| Arkansas | Cotton (R) +5.0 |

Nov. 4, but it won't be easy. Let's say for the moment that both Louisiana and Georgia go to runoff. Finally, there's one seat we still view as a pure toss-up: Kansas. That's not only because the race is very tight, but also because it's hard to say with which party independent Greg Orman would caucus if he defeats Sen. Pat Roberts (R).

If we give Democrats most of the breaks in the

close contests, it's certainly possible they could achieve a 50-50 Senate split, and thus a Biden majority (with the vice president breaking the tie in their favor). Yet given the fundamentals of the 2014 cycle, that outcome remains unlikely. The Republicans have more credible paths to 51 than the Democrats do to 50. This was true in January and it is still true just days from the election. ❖



A \$4 billion campaign met with apathy

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS – An estimated \$4 billion will be spent on the 2014 elections, a midterm cycle record. This money is being used to support candidates, attack candidates, and try to persuade Americans to show up at the polls on Nov. 4.



And yet, historically low voter turnout is expected across Indiana and nationwide on Tuesday. In most areas, officials expect their cocooned party base will show up, just not in huge droves as they would in a presidential election year. More

middle-of-the-road voters, however, will probably stay home, even though they are the ones who could tip the balance in many contested races.

Why stay home? Well, politics is a big turnoff to a lot of people. Shocking, I know. All that spending has proven to do is drive Americans further away and make them feel like voting is an endorsement of a few bad actors when voting should be an opportunity to send a message to the politicians who need to stop their childish antics.

It's why those of us who spend time working in and writing about politics are often made to feel ashamed of our involvement. And while there is plenty of shame to go around in this business, brought about by others who knowingly mislead the public to suit their motives or willingly ignore the many problems we face because reelection cannot be guaranteed otherwise, I'm not ashamed.

In fact, the hijacking of contemporary politics by those with no desire to produce progress only fuels a fire in me to be more involved and to be a stronger participant in our democratic republic. Just as the clowns alone do not determine the success of the circus, I have no interest in allowing the clowns of politics to determine the future of this country. Aye, but there's the rub.

Those candidates, those campaigns and the media

have been given free rein to turn elections into games because not enough of us turn out to vote. More attention is paid to what's called the horse race – who's up, down, and falling; who raised the most money; who got the best endorsement; who has the catchiest sound bite. Elections, though, are not games. They have real life consequences for 300 million-plus Americans living today and millions more to come. Therefore, we each have an obligation to ourselves to stop allowing others to treat elections like a game.

Decisions will be made as a result of this Tuesday's election that will have lasting impact on our lives. Town council members will determine when and how roads are paved. State representatives and senators will debate and decide whether to change the school funding formula and how to best allocate state tax dollars. Members of the U.S. Congress will play a role in charting the path forward for our economy, tackling our debt and, perhaps, reforming the Affordable Care Act. Those who get elected at every level of government will have a lot on their plates and we have the responsibility to pick the best people to handle the load. So, if you haven't already, read up on the options available to you and make informed decisions about your future and the future of your family and friends. My suggestion is that if in your research you come across a candidate who doesn't offer ideas and plans, don't vote for them. I'm not concerned about their party affiliation. Show them the nearest exit.

When you do find candidates who have offered ideas, and do have solutions for the problems that face us, hear them out. Read their website, check out a few stories about them on the campaign trail, listen to what they have to say. Then, at exactly 6 a.m. on Nov. 4 (if you follow all the steps above you'll be that excited to participate in the great privilege of voting), head to your designated polling location and exercise your right to vote.

Our founders gave us a republic, if we could keep it, as Benjamin Franklin famously said. Keeping it requires coming out from the soothing glow of our smartphones and casting votes today that will better our future. Let me put it this way: If you're tired of only the ideological extremes having a voice, Nov. 4 was meant just for you. Get out and vote. ❖

Pete Seat is senior project manager at the Indianapolis-based Hathaway Strategies.

Lawson v. White: Little notice, big impact

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – At 4 feet, 11 inches tall, Democratic candidate Beth White may be height-challenged but wants voters to know that she doesn't suffer from a shortage of humor.

In a campaign ad, one of the first launched in this lackluster election year, the two-term Marion County clerk makes fun of her physical stature as she pledges to create shorter waiting times for voters if elected secretary of state.



"Sometimes shorter is better," she says as she's

seen walking under a low-hanging tree branch that smacks a taller passerby in the face.

White must make a big leap to win an office held by a candidate who is better known and better funded. Republican Connie Lawson, a former Hendricks County clerk and state senator, was appointed to the post in 2012 after her predecessor was convicted of felony voter fraud.

To become the state's chief elections officer, both women are counting on years of experience in political office and the loyalty of party voters.

White, who has a law degree, has served as clerk of the state's most populous county and counts making the office more customer-friendly among her accomplishments. She has promised to make voting easier for Hoosiers; she's an advocate for extended early voting, longer poll hours and a redistricting process freed of partisan politics.

Lawson, too, argues for more voter engagement in a state that saw only 13 percent of its registered voters go to the polls for the May primary elections. Her record on elections, as a state senator, includes support for countywide voting centers and for the state's voter ID law, efforts that she says make it "easier to vote but harder to cheat."

Lawson is also on the air with a 30-second television ad, which focuses on "safeguarding" Hoosiers' votes, money and future. It touches on the lesser-known duties of the office, as enforcer of securities regulations, regulator of automobile dealerships and manager the state business services division.

Up until mid-October, the race was relatively free of controversy. That changed when White accused Re-

publicans of trying to suppress voter turnout by targeting people whose names were purged from the state's old voting rolls in a process overseen by Lawson.

The Republican Party fired back, announcing that it was filing a complaint against White over campaign material that didn't include a required disclosure notice. White said it was an oversight, but Republicans charged that whoever oversees elections ought to know the law.

Of the three statewide races on the Nov. 3 ballot, the secretary of state's may be most critical politically. The seat has been a launching pad for politicians including former Gov. Evan Bayh, a Democrat, and U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, a Republican. The outcome is also critical to Libertarians, the only minor political party with a place on the Indiana ballot. Their candidate, Karl Tatgenhorst, has run a low-profile campaign on a budget of about \$3,500. Due to laws that limit ballot access, he needs at least 2 percent of the vote for his party to remain on the ballot for the next



Republican Secretary of State Connie Lawson (left) faces Marion County Clerk Beth White.

four years.

"The real issue is making sure the people of Indiana are properly enfranchised and given every opportunity to vote," he said.

HPI Horse Race status: Likely Lawson.

Crouch has more than incumbency edge

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – Suzanne Crouch has more than incumbency to her advantage in the race for state auditor.

Appointed last December to fill the vacant post, Crouch has taken to the campaign trail with verve. She's turned her red eyeglasses into a signature look, passing out red plastic frames to supporters.

The Republican's gregarious nature – she once sang on the floor of the state's House of Representatives in support of a music therapy bill – gives her an edge with voters over her more introverted opponent, Democrat Mike Claytor, an accountant who's never run for office.

Crouch, a two-term county auditor who later served 10 years in the Indiana House, has also accumulated an impressive campaign war chest. She had almost \$500,000 in cash at the end of September, the end of the last reporting period, or 15 times more than Claytor.

"Among Republicans, there's been a lot of excitement about this election," Crouch said.

Still, the Democratic challenger has been undaunted in his efforts to capture voters' attention. Early in the race, Claytor called a press conference to decry the state's then-policy of not allowing same-sex couples married elsewhere to file joint tax returns if they are Indiana residents.

Republicans pointed out that the auditor has no authority over tax forms. But Claytor's tactic worked. The little known and underfunded candidate captured media attention with his support of marriage equality and forced the opposing party to respond.

Claytor has aggressively poked at Republicans, including Crouch, as well.

In public appearances and in ads on cable networks, he has focused on the "cost of government corruption" in a Republican-controlled state, and he's minimized his lack of elected experience by bragging that he's not a politician. He does remind voters that he has state government experience. A certified public accountant, he spent 15 years with the State Board of Accounts before leaving for private practice.

Least known is Libertarian candidate John Schick, who has reported raising and spending no money on his campaign. Schick, a management consultant with an MBA, has promised to strengthen audit controls for spending state money. He's also pledged to defend what he calls "constitutional limits" that should apply to new spending initiatives by Republicans and Democrats alike.

All three candidates have spent time explaining the auditor's job to voters. Crouch describes herself as the state's "chief financial officer." Claytor wants it to be more like "the internal auditor of state government." By statute,



Democrat Mike Claytor, who hopes to be the first CPA as Indiana auditor, faces Republican incumbent Suzanne Crouch.

the job entails paying the state's bills and its employees, distributing tax revenues due to local governments, and accounting for state funds.

On the campaign trail, Crouch has talked about her efforts to increase transparency, including proposals to live-stream meetings of the state's pension and finance boards. The state's "transparency portal," which her office oversees, has earned kudos from national public interest groups. Claytor contends the portal is not always accurate or easy to use and vows to improve it.

For all three candidates, it's their first statewide race.

In 2010, voters elected Republican Tim Berry to a four-year term as auditor, but he resigned last year to head the state Republican party. His appointed replacement, Dwayne Sawyer, resigned after a few months, citing personal reasons. Last December, Gov. Mike Pence appointed Crouch to the job.

HPI Horse Race status: Safe Crouch.

Mitchell favored over Boland for treasurer

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

BLOOMINGTON – Republican Kelly Mitchell won a three-way Republican convention floor fight last June and ended up with a Democratic opponent, Mike Boland, who served in the Illinois General Assembly.

Boland has said conducted a spirited campaign and offered to donate his salary to charity. Indiana Republican Chairman Tim Berry responded, "It's easy for Mike Boland to pledge to donate his salary when he still collects two pensions from the State of Illinois totaling nearly \$100,000 a year. Mike helped bankrupt Illinois public pensions and hike income taxes 67 percent as a legislator in Illinois. Hoosiers don't take too kindly to that kind of reckless spending."

While Mitchell has low name ID, the former Cass County commissioner will benefit from the GOP trend and assume the office where she worked for former treasurer Richard Mourdock.

HPI Horse Race status: Safe Mitchell. ❖

How St. Joe County could go Republican

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – How Democratic is St. Joseph County?

Well, if Republicans win two key County Council races, it won't be Democratic at all in either the executive or legislative branches of county government. Republicans already have and are sure to retain 2-1 control of the



Board of Commissioners, the executive branch.

Republican campaign strategists are targeting those crucial council races, seeking to win 5-4 control of the council, the legislative branch.

Needless to say, county Democratic Chairman Jason Critchlow is seeking to get out the vote, always potentially the majority vote for his party in the Democratic-leaning but not Democratic-dominant county.

Democratic incumbents will win for sheriff and county assessor. No Republicans filed to oppose them. County Council member Mike Hamann, the Democratic nominee for county auditor, appears certain to win.

There are potentially close races for prosecutor and county clerk, where Democrats have seemed to have a lead. But voter turnout efforts by both parties will be important there.

County Republican Chair Deborah Fleming has made no secret of her intent to target key races. Republican sweeps are unlikely in St. Joseph County. But Republicans, when they don't just sit back with woe-is-me complaining about some long-gone Democratic "machine," can win a few races, maybe quite a few.

Republicans targeted the key commissioner race in 2012, with control of the board at stake, and won it, gaining 2-1 control of the executive branch.

They will retain control. The commissioner seat up this time is held by Republican Andy Kostielney. No Democrat filed to oppose him

Whether Republicans can win control of the County Council isn't as exciting or important as the quest of Republicans to win U.S. Senate control this November. There is, however, one similarity.

Republicans have a very good chance of winning control of the Senate because of the number of seats now held by Democrats that are up this time in battleground states. Republicans have at least a good shot for control of the County Council because of the number of seats now held Democrats that are up this time.

The simple math:

Democrats now have a 6-3 majority on the council. Kind of like what is expected in St. Joseph County. Five seats are up this time. And four of them are held by Democrats. One Republican and two Democrats are highly likely to win, especially the Democrat running unopposed.

The two targeted races will determine it. Two Democratic wins would mean a continued 6-3 Democratic majority. Two Republican wins would mean a 5-4 Republican majority. A split would leave a 5-4 Democratic majority, short of power to override vetoes by the commissioners.

The key races are:

District B: Incumbent Democrat Corey Noland vs. Republican challenger Dennis Jordan. Jordan lost to Noland by only 166 votes in 2010.

District H: Incumbent Democrat Robert McCahill vs. Republican challenger Terry DeMaegd. McCahill won by 232 votes in 2010, defeating Fleming before she became the GOP chair.

Potential for a huge Democratic plurality is always there in races where a popular Democrat runs against a so-so or tarnished Republican. For example, Sen. Joe Donnelly carried the county by over 25,000 votes over Richard Mourdock in 2012, going on to win statewide.

Democratic congressional nominee Joe Bock needs a big St. Joseph County lead for any chance of defeating Congresswoman Jackie Walorski in the Republican-flavored 2nd Congressional District. He will have nothing like the Donnelly margin because the total vote will be down considerably from a presidential election year. But only a solid percentage in St. Joseph County will give Bock a chance districtwide.

Republicans, where seen by independents and ticket-splitters as having the better candidate, have for decades carried the county. Sen. Dick Lugar and Gov. Doc Bowen are examples. Sen. Dan Coats carried the county in 2010. So did the GOP candidate for secretary of state, who ran against a Democrat with a funny sounding name. That gave Republicans first listing on the ballot and all the precinct inspectors this time.

How Democratic is St. Joseph County? Voters on Nov. 4 will answer that. ❖

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

Some big ideas for this election

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Though a large swing is predicted to favor the GOP, it is clearly out of frustration with the current administration.

The midterm elections offer your columnist a delicious opportunity to write about elections. To start, I have to note that a search of Google Scholar, a ready outlet for academic research, yields some three-quarters of a million hits on elections and economy. It is a broad topic, so I will focus on three things.

First, this election demonstrates the short duration of some political “revolutions.”

It is six years into President Obama’s term, and if the polls and prediction markets prove right, this election will see the largest GOP majority since the Truman presidency, along with a strong senate majority. This too may not last, but it is a remarkable turnaround in political fortunes, animated almost wholly by an electorate dissatisfied with the outcomes of public policy.



The coming weeks will offer much blame casting, but no thoughtful Democrat should mistake this as anything other than a widespread repudiation of this president’s policies. Fortunately for Republicans, there seems to be a shortage of thoughtful Democrats, a condition the GOP should view with silent empathy.

Second, the meme of the 2016 election is becoming clear. For the Democrats, the leftward pull of Elizabeth Warren will exert great influence. For the GOP, the coming two years offer a chance to lay out a pragmatic opposition to the last decade in economic, social and foreign policy.

Casting a pall over all of this is America’s reluctant but inevitable involvement in what some call a war on terror. I think it is rapidly becoming an Islamic civil war, but whatever it is called, it will consume blood and treasure for much of this century. Wishing it away will not do. The next president cannot simply pretend to be involved in setting an agenda. The future will require more than the past and that will animate much of the 2016 election.

Finally, by this election we should have learned much about the limits to government. From 2009 to the present, we have experienced the most extensive and expansive interventions in private decisions since the Great Depression. Some of that intervention worked, some made no difference, and some made the economy far worse.

The rescue of financial markets ended up costing little and doing much, while the vast government borrowing in 2009-2014 over-reached in a way that will impact

two generations of Americans. It also fueled economic inequality (or at least that is what Thomas Piketty’s theories suggest), lessened our trust in government and revealed the extreme inequalities an activist government creates in markets.

Whatever specific policies become the fuel for the next election, domestically a fairer tax system and greater opportunity for young people will emerge as imperatives. One side wants to achieve these goals with a larger, more expansive role for government. The other side wishes to lessen the influence of government to get us there. I think the 2014 election signals the dominant feeling of most Americans. The good news for our republic is that these really are big and significant ideas that we debate. ❖

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.



No wonder GOP can’t get a Lake foothold

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – Is it any wonder Republicans can’t get a foothold in Lake County.

Three days before the Nov. 4 election, Lake County Republicans will hold a get-out-the-vote rally at the Niemeyer Auction Barn on Indiana 2 on the west side of Lowell. Gov. Mike Pence will be among the featured guests. Other statewide candidates expected to attend are Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann, Secretary of State Connie Lawson, Auditor Suzanne Crouch and Kelly Mitchell, the GOP candidate for state treasurer. Lawson, Crouch and Mitchell are on the Tuesday ballot.



Rallies just prior to an election are designed to energize the party faithful in hopes of a strong showing at the polls. But this one has a twist not seen among either party in Lake County for decades, maybe ever. Yep, those attending to show their support also will have to fork over \$20 to take part. Wow.

Speaking of getting out the vote, there are two key races in Lake County and one in Porter County when it comes to the House of Representatives.

If Democrats are to break the Republican supermajority in the House, they need to pick up three seats. The best chance for Democrats is in the 15th Dis-

trict where Democrat Jim Wieser is challenging Republican Rep. Hal Slager, who is finishing his first term. Both are Schererville residents. Because of the Republican attacks on public education, Wieser has made the state's public school system his top priority.

Democrats also are looking to have a chance in the 4th House District in Porter County where four-term incumbent Republican Ed Soliday is being challenged by Democrat Deb Porter. And, yes, it is no coincidence that Porter is a public school teacher. Soliday, however, hasn't always followed the party line when it comes to votes on public education. He is, nevertheless, a Democratic target.

And, back in Lake County, Republicans think they have a chance to pick up a seat against four-term incumbent Democratic Rep. Shelli VanDenburgh in the 19th District. Republican Julie Olthoff is providing the opposition. And, for the first time, the man whose actions led to a dramatic change in the way Indiana assesses property will be on the ballot.

It was almost two decades ago that St. John resident Joe Gomeztagle filed suit against the state of Indiana challenging the way it assesses property. What resulted was a decision in state tax court in favor of Gomeztagle. The tax court ruled that Indiana must convert to a fair market value system of assessing property. The assessments largely are based on the price of recent home sales.

The question for Gomeztagle is whether enough time has elapsed since the court ruling for people to have forgotten. The change in assessments led to substantially higher tax bills in St. John Township, which is home to many of the wealthiest in Lake County.

And Gomeztagle is running for what? He is the Democratic candidate for St. John Township assessor. He faces Republican incumbent Melody Kikkert. ❖

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.

Income disparity increases across state

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Those concerned with economic development often believe that raising per capita personal income (PCPI) is their numeric objective. They see this number as the measure of economic well-being. I contend PCPI should not be the focus of their efforts since they have little influence over PCPI. We'll get to that next week.

However, let's see how Indiana and its counties have done over the long run, 1970 to 2012, a period of time sufficient to judge the results of an economic devel-

opment plan or the performance of those responsible for implementing that plan.

We'll consider ourselves in terms of the nation rather than the more limiting comparison to Indiana alone. In 1970, Indiana's PCPI was 8.6 percent below the national figure; by 2012 it was 13.7 percent short of the U.S. PCPI. Where the U.S. grew by an average annual rate of 4.66 percent in those 52 years, Indiana advanced by 4.54 percent.



That seemingly small difference, compounded over a half century, was worth nearly \$2,300 in 2012 for every Hoosier, the difference between \$38,622 per person in 2012 and the \$40,914 we could have enjoyed if we grew at the national rate.

In 1970, Marion County had the top PCPI in the state, 5.1 percent above the nation's figure, but it fell to 9.2 percent below the nation by 2012. Second place was held by Hamilton County in '70 at 5 percent above the nation, but in the intervening years, Hamilton rose to 26.8 percent higher than the U.S. Never the less, Hamilton remained in second place, this time, 2012, behind neighboring Boone County which moved from 12th to first place.

Porter County showed little change, moving from fourth to third place where Elkhart County had resided in 1970. But Elkhart had a mighty fall in that time, moving down from 3.7 percent above the nation's PCPI to almost 20 percent below that level in '12, ranking 42nd in the state. This was the second greatest fall among the state's 92 counties, exceed only by Miami County's decline from eighth place to 91st.

Where four Indiana counties exceeded the nation's PCPI in 1970, five achieved that distinction in 2012. Cast out of the elite group were Marion and Elkhart, but Boone, Dubois and Hancock are now in. The rise of Dubois was dramatic from 52nd to fourth place, while Hancock rose from 13th to fifth.

Of those 28 Indiana counties with PCPIs less than 80 percent of the national figure in 1970, six managed to rise above Indiana's PCPI in 2012. While that sounds good for Brown, Decatur, Franklin, Knox, Posey and Warren, you recall that Indiana's PCPI fell relative to the nation.

Two more counties, Ohio and Pulaski, squeezed above the 80-percent level, but 20 other counties remained in that lowest group.

The income disparity among the counties within the state increased from a difference between the highest and the lowest of 46 percentage points in 1970 to 67 percentage points in 2012.

Do our policy makers care? ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.

The business tax repeal war continues

By SHAW FRIEDMAN

LaPORTE – How else to explain Kevin Brinegar's testy performance at Thursday's session of the Business Personal Property Tax Commission? I was present to testify



on behalf of the LaPorte County Commissioners. Brinegar started ranting about "misrepresentations" and "lies" told about the Chamber's position on eliminating the business personal property tax.

Brinegar's really upset that a bipartisan coalition of mayors and county commissioners from throughout Indiana had come together this past legislative session to block the state Chamber's plan to eliminate the tax

which would have meant an unbearable loss of about \$1 billion to local government.

While nearly a half billion would instantly get shifted to long-suffering individual homeowners through higher property taxes, the debate also centers on who is to pick up the remaining lost half billion and the only answer the Chamber has come up with so far is to propose increases in local option taxes.

So the tax commission has been compelled by the Chamber and its allies on the commission to slog through forced hours of testimony by fiscal experts looking at a veritable alphabet soup of local option taxes and what ways there might be to increase those taxes without locals knowing what went on. Sen. Richard Thompson's plan to eliminate separate taxes like CEDIT and COIT and just throw those into "bigger buckets" is a good example of the Chamber trying to make up the revenue lost from a windfall going to a few big corporations by pounding the little guy with larger local option taxes.

Fortunately, local government officials of both party stripes have gotten wise to this game and have said "no" in resounding numbers. Real replacement revenue for elimination of the business personal property tax would mean Chamber officials having to address the age old issue of corporate scofflaws who are dodging nearly a half billion annually in corporate income taxes by off shore shelters, transfer pricing or the range of accounting tricks and games identified by agencies like the non-profit, non-partisan Multi-State Tax Commission.

It's gotta gall Brinegar and the state Chamber that local officials are onto their game. Folks like Goshen Mayor Allan Kaufman, one of the longest serving mayors, who was quoted earlier this year as saying "there is a big disconnect between local chambers of commerce which care about quality of place and understand its connection

to economic development and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, which is championing the elimination of the business personal property tax, with no suggestion for replacing lost revenue, and doesn't seem to understand that cities can't be economic engines if local government and schools suffer."

Sorry, Kevin, but simply telling locals they can raise local taxes to pay for a windfall gift to Indiana's most profitable corporations like BP and Eli Lilly isn't what we mean by "replacement revenue." The Chamber has never taken the tough stand to say that if it felt the business personal property tax was somehow a deterrent to business, that it would find "replacement revenue" from other business sources like income lost to tax shelters and off-shore tax havens. That's why the Chamber's position has been so weak and indefensible.

On top of that, the Chamber can't cite any reliable studies indicating this particular tax is an actual deterrent to economic development. Studies like that done by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute, reported in the Indianapolis Star Feb.7, said elimination of the tax would have negligible effect on business relocation decisions.

Indeed, it's not only Democrats but Republican local officials who have pushed back hard against this tax's elimination. Folks like Elkhart County Commissioner Mike Yoder who see this for what it is: "From my perspective, this looks like a political move that will not create more jobs. I see zero benefit to this and think it is a bad idea." To Yoder's credit, he's been one who says we ought to look at going after the multi-national and multi-state corporations who are not paying their fair share of Indiana corporate taxes. Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke, another Republican, said that in his years serving as an elected official, he doesn't recall a single business deciding against locating to Vanderburgh County because of the state's business personal property tax.

Duke Bennett, mayor of Terre Haute and a member of the restructuring commission put it well when he said earlier this year that if the business personal property tax was eliminated, "we can't be an economic engine if that happens. If we don't have good police and fire and streets and parks, people aren't going to want to do business in Terre Haute anyway."

What's obviously rankled Brinegar is that he is no longer able to claim this or that tax cut means instant prosperity or a "lifting of all boats." He's gotten his way on one tax cut favoring business after another, whether it was elimination of the inventory tax, reduction of the corporate income tax, slashing of the inheritance tax that only hit wealthy families and now the cut to the bank tax, all of which has cost local governments dearly.

Fortunately, local officials of both party stripes know that Indiana's tax burden on business is relatively low. They well understand that simply cutting taxes is "old style economic development" and savvy mayors like LaPorte's Blair Milo say that having reasonably maintained infrastructure and a well-trained workforce is part of the

'new toolkit' needed to induce business siting decisions.

Charts given to the commission and produced by the Indianapolis Business Journal on Oct. 13 demonstrate that less of the overall tax burden falls on business in Indiana than 46 other states. Brinegar has cried wolf so long and so hard that folks just aren't buying what he's selling anymore. They know that eviscerating local government's ability to provide services by endlessly cutting the tax base is not the way to grow new jobs.

No wonder Kevin's in such a sour mood. ❖

Mickey Mauer, Indianapolis Business Journal:

You have a chance to defeat a politician who consistently supported a ban on same-sex marriage to its bitter end and who had pressed to embody this hate law in the Indiana Constitution. You have a chance to defeat a politician who is a pariah in his own party—thrown out of the Republican caucus, stripped of his press secretary and leadership title. You have a chance to defeat a politician who writes unfortunate and unseemly remarks on social media. You have a chance to defeat a politician who harbors the archaic belief and spouts the unscientific blather that Earth was created 5,000 years ago and who insists that man walked with dinosaurs. Well, you can do this with just one vote. One vote to help the good people of Indiana oust Mike Delph as state senator in the 29th District. The man to elect is J.D. Ford, a viable candidate who believes in America's core values but advocates fair treatment for all. It is Ford's most ardent desire to serve the people of Indiana as a state senator for the 29th District. Wake up, fellow Republicans. Even though the 29th is a Republican district, we can exercise independent judgment as we did when we elected Democrat Joe Donnelly and, before that, Evan Bayh, to the U.S. Senate. Be practical. We need to dump Delph. His views and actions are an embarrassment to the party. If Ford doesn't measure up, we'll find a Republican candidate who will represent the party and the state of Indiana with intelligence and dignity. ❖

William Nangle, NWI Times: Watch results of the Nov. 4 election in Allen County. It may be the predictor of a change in Indiana government. Voters in Allen County, home to Fort Wayne, may decide to scrap the current county government structure under the direction of three county commissioners in favor of electing a single county executive. The Indiana General Assembly this year approved legislation allowing voters there to decide through a referendum. The campaign over the issue has become heated, with Allen County Commissioner Nelson Peters championing the change and the Indiana Farm Bureau aggressively opposing it. "We need to convince voters that the current system is bad," Peters told me. "It is slow and clunky." Giving impetus to the campaign for change was the near loss of an industrial plant and 200 jobs. "We were told at 1 p.m. that the company needed a decision by 4 p.m. We couldn't get all the commissioners

together in time, and besides we are required to post a 10-day advance notice of our meetings." "The companies and contractors can't wait for a decision," Nelson said. "They need action quickly to advance a project that will ultimately benefit the community." And so the argument for a county executive is that someone with authority to act is overseeing county government on a day-to-day basis much as a mayor does for a city. "There are many instances where a quick decision is needed," Nelson said. Under the single county executive plan, the county council expands its membership and serves not only as it already does for fiscal matters but becomes the legislative authority. My assessment of the driving force behind the Allen County referendum is Indiana's governmental structure put into place during the era of the horse and buggy is out of date. In spite of strong political resistance, the legislature of this modern era has opened the door for positive change. Allen County in seizing the opportunity may be the first county to have improved county government. I hope the change is approved and spreads throughout the state. It's time Indiana was part of the jet age. ❖



Tim Etheridge, Evansville Courier & Press: All the political wonks that I know and/or read believe that Indiana Gov. Mike Pence's decision to not apply for up to \$80 million in federal funding for preschool education is a sure sign that he's positioning himself to run for president. If, as is often the case, the presidential field winnows itself down, then perhaps someone who has taken extraordinary steps to benefit social conservatives and painted himself as a champion of states' rights will be the victor. I see it differently. What I read into a series of Pence decisions is that he has no desire to be governor of Indiana. In effect, he's trying to throw re-election, in part, as reported exclusively on Thursday by Courier & Press Statehouse Bureau Chief Chelsea Schneider, by declining an opportunity to give 5,700 children an early start on education in the next four years. What Pence said, basically, was that, left on our own, Indiana will figure out what's best. That's also pretty much what he said about the Affordable Care Act and the expansion of Medicaid, so that while other states — including neighboring Kentucky — are seeing a higher percentage of populace covered by insurance, Hoosiers continue to lag. In effect, by turning down a chance to expand the initiative, for fear of it not meeting expectations, Pence is writing off a generation. Pence found his support in groups such as Hoosiers Against Common Core, which praised him for having "the good judgment and courage to walk away from millions of potential federal dollars." Most voters, I believe, will see it differently, as a callous disregard for the future of thousands of Hoosier children. If it gets him a presidential nomination, it won't get him a win. And it should be his ticket out of the governor's mansion come 2016. ❖

Southern Indiana poverty up 60%

NEW ALBANY - The poverty rate in Southern Indiana increased by nearly 60 percent from 2000 to 2010 after decreasing by 12 percent in the 1990s, according to a study by an Indiana University Southeast research team (News & Tribune). Findings from the study that was conducted through the Applied Research and Education Center at IU Southeast will be discussed in a series of public forums in November. The team led by Melissa Fry, the center's director, used public data for four Southern Indiana counties — Clark, Floyd, Harrison and Washington. The purpose of the study was to "highlight the implications for thinking about services that support stability and economic security and prevent poverty," according to the introduction. The study found that the concentration of the poor in Southern Indiana's high poverty tracts more than doubled between 2000 and 2010, from 12 percent to 30 percent. Conversely, the rate of poor people living in low poverty areas decreased from 48 percent to 21 percent over the same 10-year period. "That's very disconcerting because that [high poverty] concentration can lead to the negative cycles and feedback loops that can lead to more consistent poverty," Fry said. She said there are three reasons for increases in local poverty: the economic recession which began in 2008, a slow pace in the recession recovery and cuts in supporting government funds.

Complaint v HD84

Dem over residence

FORT WAYNE — A Fort Wayne resident has filed a complaint with the local election board alleging that Fred Haigh, Democratic candidate for

state representative, does not legally reside in the district he wants to represent (Sade, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Haigh is running against Republican incumbent Bob Morris in House District 84, which represents much of northeast Fort Wayne. In his complaint, filed Tuesday, Paul Ensley contends Haigh lists his address as 2525 Kingston Point in Fort Wayne, but Haigh's actual residence is in Quincy, Michigan. Ensley also said that Haigh has put up numerous campaign signs that do not include the required disclaimer stating who paid for the advertising. Haigh said the disclosure was a printing error. After selling that home, Haigh and his wife were renting a home on Kingston Point in Fort Wayne.



GOP poised to win more legislatures

WASHINGTON - Republicans have the opportunity to take control of a record number of state legislative chambers across the country this year, as Democrats play defense in unfavorable terrain (Washington Post). The Republican landslide in 2010 and the subsequent redistricting process in 2012 gave the GOP control of a nearly unprecedented number of legislative chambers. Today, the party controls 59 of the 98 partisan chambers in 49 states, while Democrats control only 39 chambers (One legislature, Nebraska's is officially nonpartisan). Once election results are tabulated in the 6,049 legislative races on the ballot in 46 states this year, Republicans could find themselves running even more.

Jeb throws cold water on 2016 talk

DENVER – Jeb Bush is throwing cold water on his son's statement that the former Florida governor will more than likely run for the 2016 presidential nomination (Politico). In an interview that aired Thursday on

MSNBC, Bush — backstage at a campaign event in Colorado on Wednesday for Republican Senate candidate Cory Gardner and gubernatorial candidate Bob Beauprez — said that his son's opinions didn't necessarily reflect his own. "He's got an opinion. He didn't talk to me," the former Republican governor said, when asked about George P. Bush's statement last Sunday that it's a better than 50-50 chance his father will run for president. "When you have kids, you'll probably have the same frustration," he told MSNBC's Kasie Hunt. "You love them to death and they have their own opinions. But I'll make up my mind, just as I've said, at the end of the year." "There's nothing new here," Bush added.

Indiana monitors 5 for ebola

INDIANAPOLIS — Health officials are monitoring five people who recently traveled to Indiana from the West African nations of Guinea, Sierra Leone or Liberia for symptoms common with Ebola disease (Associated Press). The Indiana State Department of Health said Wednesday that all five people are considered low-risk and are cooperating with health officials. It says two other travelers already have completed monitoring. The state health department isn't identifying the counties where travelers are being monitored.

Correction

INDIANAPOLIS - In Wednesday's HPI Daily Wire, we ran an incomplete version of a Fort Wayne Journal Gazette story regarding alleged illegal voting by law partners of SD15 Democratic nominee Jack Morris. Morris is properly registered to vote at his Fort Wayne residence. The correct Journal Gazette story has been posted on that edition of the HPI Daily Wire.