



Meth baby step sans leadership

Senate panel passes first major bill taking on Indiana's 'horrendous' meth epidemic as leadership mostly sits it out

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – On Tuesday the Senate Corrections and Criminal Law Committee was the first Indiana legislative panel to advance a major development in law enforcement efforts to combat meth labs. The bill (SB 536) contains a provision,

in fact two, that would impose some form of a prescription for cold medications containing the crucial ingredients for methamphetamine.

"This is the first time, I think, to have prescription language moving in the General Assembly," Justin Swanson, assistant legislative director for the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, told HPI. "I think it's a very small victory we cannot overlook. We'll



Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke in a public service TV ad. He called steps coursing through the General Assembly a good start to a "horrendous" problem.

certainly be back next year if we don't get it this year."

Meth is an absolutely pressing public health and safety issue for the state. Indiana led the nation the past two years with 1,808 (2013) and 1,488 (2014) meth lab

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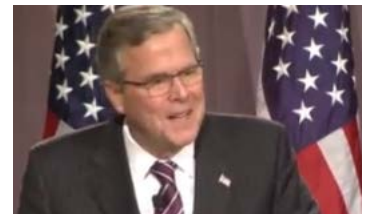
The GOP vs. Donnelly

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON – Even by today's standards of aggressive partisanship, Indiana voters were treated to a stunning display of intense interparty combat last week that contrasted sharply with traditional Hoosier political dialogue.

Each Republican member of the Indiana delegation signed a letter to Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly urging him to allow a homeland security appropriations bill to come to a Senate vote. The agency's funding will lapse on Feb. 27.

Republicans included in the legislation language that would nullify President Barack Obama's executive orders pre-



"I love my father and my brother. I admire their service to the nation and the difficult decisions they had to make. But I am my own man, and my views are shaped by my own thinking and experiences."

- Jeb Bush in Chicago



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venting the deportation of millions of undocumented immigrants.

Indiana's GOP House members – Reps. Larry Bucshon (8th CD), Todd Young (9th CD), Luke Messer (6th CD), Susan Brooks (5th CD), Todd Rokita (4th CD), Marlin Stutzman (3rd CD) and Jackie Walorski (2nd CD) – accused Donnelly of crimping the democratic process by supporting a filibuster.

Donnelly fired right back, saying that the Republicans were trying to score political points and have never done the hard work of passing a bipartisan immigration bill.

When Congress returns from its Presidents Day recess next week, it will only have a handful of legislative days remaining to resolve the impasse.

This would be a good time for congressional Republicans to implement the game-plan that former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush says he will use at the presidential campaign level.

Bush has indicated he will eschew hot-button issues that fire up the party's base and instead appeal to the middle of the electorate, even in the primary.

Congressional Republicans ought to risk upsetting their base by staking out a reasonable position on DHS funding, namely passing a straightforward bill that funds DHS while leaving the immigration fight for a different forum.

Acknowledging that Obama can exercise presidential authority to change immigration rules may rile primary voters, but it will raise Republican credibility with the middle, which must be won, if Bush or any other Republican is to take over the Oval Office and issue different kinds of executive orders.

It may be difficult for Republicans to admit that Senate Democrats can be as skillful in using minority power as Republicans were for many years. But a grudging acceptance will show the political maturity that they must demonstrate now that they're in

the majority in both chambers.

More importantly, funding DHS will save Republicans from severe political damage it is risking by shutting down the agency. If there is a terrorist attack, even after DHS is back up and running, Republicans will take the heat – and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will have a potent campaign issue.

In Indiana, Donnelly is more likely to come out of the DHS fight in better shape than the House Republicans. They are taking the fight to him.



He is portraying himself as the one seeking bipartisan compromise, an approach that echoes Indiana's political past.

"There was an old-school rule that clearly doesn't exist anymore," said Michael Wolf, a professor of political science at Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne. "[Former Sen.] Richard Lugar didn't throw darts. It is a cultural shift. [The partisanship] does match the culture of Congress right now."

For HPI readers who don't know or may have forgotten, I was an aide to Sen. Lugar in the mid-1990s. Although his centrist approach has fallen out of favor for the most part in Congress, Republicans should revive that tradition, if for no other reason than to keep from tearing themselves apart.

Moderate Republican senators may be pivotal to the party successfully governing, starting with determining its approach to immigration reform.

"There's a lot of polarization within the Republican Party," said James McCann, a professor of political

science at Purdue. "It's difficult for Republicans to figure out the politics of this. It's very much a wedge on the Republican side."

The good news for the GOP is that the Feb. 16 ruling by a federal judge in Texas to halt Obama's immigration orders may give the party the cover it needs to avoid internecine warfare and pass a clean DHS funding bill.

"Lawmakers who want to dial down the rhetoric and move toward the middle can say, 'We'll let the judicial process take its course now,'" McCann said.

The Texas judge, Andrew Hanen, may wind up saving the GOP from itself, at least when it comes to DHS funding. No matter how hard Republicans would try to pin

the agency's shutdown on Democrats, they are in charge of Capitol Hill.

"They were going to be the ones blamed," Wolf said. "The narrative was moving that direction. House Republicans were going to be under intense scrutiny."

Now the GOP has a chance to bask in a different kind of spotlight – one that shows them rising above petty partisanship, acting with maturity and securing a foothold in the political middle, where they can strengthen their majority. ❖

Schoeff is Howey Politics Indiana's Washington correspondent.

Meth, from page 1

busts. County prosecutors believe only a fraction of the actual meth labs are being busted.

"It is a public safety threat that has the potential to endanger law enforcement, firefighters, and kids," Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke explained to HPI Wednesday. His city and county have been a meth hotspot in recent years, spurring local leaders to create a dedicated meth suppression task force.

In 2014, various authorities found 382 Hoosier children in meth lab environments. In the previous two years there were 458 and 388, respectively. These high numbers are a relatively recent phenomenon but, unfortunately, appear to be the new normal. During 2003-09, the annual range of children found in these dangerous circumstances was 125 to 185. Nearly all of these children must be taken into protective custody and often carry with them the scars of abuse and neglect.

Unfortunately, the toxic fumes and residue of meth labs cause grievous physical harm as well. For the period 2010-14, meth labs have injured 13 Hoosier children and killed one (in 2011), according to Indiana State Police statistics. A quick perusal of media reports finds not all of these injuries and deaths are included in ISP totals. In 2013, a fire resulting from his mother cooking meth killed an Indianapolis 7-year-

old. During the first month of this year, a Bluffton couple's 3-year-old boy died from meth exposure. During the last five years 56 in law enforcement have been reported as injured, but that figure is likely much, much higher. Speaking of meth labs, Delaware County Prosecutor Jeff Arnold told lawmakers last week, "I've been to way too many. I've seen too many children in too many meth houses with permanent lung damage."

There are lawmakers well aware of meth's havoc, particularly on children.

"A pediatrician in Bedford I've known took care of all my kids," Sen. Brent Steele told HPI Wednesday. "He says, 'I'm getting baby after baby sick and I do a blood test and they've got meth in their blood.' It's just eating us up."

Sen. Susan Glick, R-LaGrange, a former county prosecutor says Indiana's child service agencies are utterly frustrated with the state's meth lab problem. "They have such a negative attitude right now, because they're dealing on the frontlines with the meth problem," she told HPI. "They've got the criminals, they've got the families that are broken up, they've got the children who are lost because we have so many parents in

a husband-and-wife situation where one is addicted, quite often the second one is addicted, it affects the health of the children, it affects everything about their living, and we just have got to do something. It's not just the criminal hurting himself. Meth across the board hurts society. We've got kids who cannot sit still in school because they come from a meth home and are affected by this chemical



State Sen. Brent Steele has switched his position on meth after watching it ravage his hometown. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

compound that's in their blood, it's on their skin."

Indiana's meth boom has paralleled the proliferation of small-batch manufacturing techniques. Indiana meth cooks are often users themselves and prefer to "shake-n-bake" their poison in homes, motel rooms, and automobiles. These 'one-pot' labs are notorious for leaving behind toxic contamination that requires professional removal. Quite costly, the meth houses are often left to languish and exacerbate neighborhood blight. Moreover, 'one-pot' labs are prone to exploding and causing severe chemical and fire burns.

The Associated Press has reported the average hospitalization for an injured meth cook costs an estimated \$130,000. Adults hurt and killed by meth labs since 2010 number 168 and 13, respectively.

Leaders avoiding meth?

Tackling meth production with additional legal tools has been an issue that has bubbled up from below in Indiana public policy. Whereas top state leaders have been relatively silent, it's been local officials, like mayors, prosecutors, police chiefs, and sheriffs that have been the most vocal. They see the ravages of meth labs in their communities every day. They've lobbied the statehouse the past several years, unsuccessfully, for a PSE prescription requirement.

Coming from largely junior and middle-rank legislators of both parties, bills containing prescription requirements have faced perennial hurdles in committee.

In 2014, a prescription requirement bill by Rep. Ben Smaltz, R-Auburn, was heard in Courts and Criminal Code, but a vote was not allowed. This session, similar legislation by Smaltz and Rep. Wendy McNamara, R-Mount Vernon, were denied hearings in Courts and Public Health, respectively. Prescription bills in the Senate have not had any luck before this year either.

Republican legislative leadership has acknowledged the state's worsening meth problem and remarked that a prescription requirement might be the proper response, but they acknowledge there are deep divisions within their respective caucuses. A good many believe a prescription requirement would unfairly burden law-abiding Hoosiers who need the over-the-counter cold medications. Others also cite the potential strain a prescription requirement could put on primary care physicians.

When House Republicans named public safety as

one of their three top priorities for this session, HPI asked Speaker Brian Bosma about a prescription requirement. He said not only was his caucus divided, but so were Democrats and the rest of America.

"I am a fan of making it a prescription," Bosma told HPI back in October. "I know that presents difficulties. But with the smurfing epidemic of paying a couple of people to hit a couple of drug stores, it's very difficult to handle the mechanisms of what we've put together. For it to be a prescription-only item, I'm OK with that. It's a public policy issue we'll have to work through, but I'll vote for a prescription."

Shortly after the 2014 session, HPI asked Senate leaders the same thing. "I think this is one of the things we're going to have to tackle next year, no question," Senate President Pro Tem David Long said. "We may have to be more draconian on the availability of these ingredients. We've attempted to deal with it without having to go that extra step."

"I have been a proponent personally – I'm not talking for my caucus – for making the precursors a prescription requirement," Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane told HPI back in April. "I represent two counties (Delaware and Madison) with some of the highest rates of meth labs and meth busts in the state and I don't know of any other effective way to deal with it other than requiring a prescription."

If legislative leaders have at least voiced their individual stances on the issue, the state's chief executive has not used his bully pulpit to mention a potential prescription requirement, let alone advocate for tighter controls.

Asked last spring about whether he supports a PSE prescription requirement, Gov. Mike Pence answered, "We've talked about that; all options are on the table. We'll be looking in the budget session for resources and policies that will continue to give Indiana the tools we need to protect our kids from the scourge of meth."

Pence's 2015 budget and legislative agenda did not include anti-meth measures nor community corrections, which many on both sides of the prescription requirement believe are critical to stemming the tide of meth. Attorney General Greg Zoeller has also not taken a stance on a prescription requirement.

After SB 356's committee passage, and in light of



Gov. Pence has taken a passive approach to the meth manufacturing epidemic in Indiana. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

Indiana leading the nation yet again in meth lab busts, Pence told HPI on Tuesday, "I'm very proud of the work the Indiana State Police have been doing. It is both to the credit of our law enforcement community but it's also evidence how serious this challenge is in communities large and small across Indiana that we led the nation in meth lab busts. We're doing the work; we're going after it. This drug is a heinous poison and highly addictive and far too available. I'm not familiar specifically with the progress of that legislation, but if it gets to my desk we'll give it a fair look. This is an issue that we are leaning into in this administration and we'll continue to evaluate all policy options to confront it."

Sen. Steele flips on Rx

HPI has written extensively on how local leaders and sympathetic lawmakers have been raising awareness and building bipartisan coalitions backing the prescription approach. (See our April 24, 2014, and Feb. 5, 2015, editions.)

"In the brief time I've been in office, this issue has gotten more traction at the Statehouse. Before, hardly anyone would listen to us. Now, legislators from around the state really want to help," Mayor Winnecke, an ardent prescription requirement advocate, told HPI this week. "You don't always get what you want in year two or three. But it elevates into the public debate. People now understand that this is a huge public safety problem in this state."

One indication of that growing "traction" is Sen. Steele's about-face on a PSE prescription requirement.

In describing how he changed his mind, Steele told HPI the unrelenting news of meth's impact in his community made an impression: "My wife and I started ourselves a meth bust scrapbook for Lawrence County and every night we had somebody, kids involved," he explained. The scrapbook quickly filled up.

Steele has grappled with the issue since his days in the House, having introduced the first PSE bill in the Indiana General Assembly in 1997. He was confident when Indiana joined the National Precursor Log Exchange (NPLEx) in 2011. The multistate system tracks purchases and can issue stop-sale orders to pharmacies in real time; it enforces Indiana's daily, monthly, and yearly PSE purchase limits.

"We waited three years on the NPLEx to see if it had the desired effect," Steele told HPI. "I didn't think innocent Hoosiers should have to have a prescription, but it wasn't working. I came 180 degrees away from my old position. We've been sticking Band-Aids on a cancer."

This session Sen. Steele proposed SB 445, which would impose a universal prescription requirement for PSE cold medications but sunset in three years. "The State Police liked my bill the best. They think it the most effective. The governor, I heard, did not like my bill. You can verify that through his people," Steele remarked.

Committee deal making

Steele's bill was initially assigned to his own committee, Judiciary. However, it was reassigned to Sen. Mike Young's Corrections Committee, which has traditionally handled meth-related matters. Steele used to chair it.

However, Sen. Young's had his own anti-meth bill (SB 536), which would impose a PSE prescription requirement on those with drug-related convictions. Young believes a universal prescription is a step too far.

"I figured Mike (Young) would just go ahead and kill my bill and hear his," Steele explained. "But, he's stand up enough that he didn't do that. He said, 'Let the best bill surface.'"

Last week Chairman Young heard his bill and then allowed Steele to present his bill in the form of an amendment. Extensive testimony and discussion postponed a vote, but it was quite evident revisions were needed to Young's bill by itself. When the committee reconvened Tuesday, Young moved a revised bill that "blended" Steele's initial amendment with a revised version of SB 536. Other members had not seen the amalgamated amendment before the committee sat.

The committee ultimately passed the "blended" version 7-1. It would institute Young's drug-related conviction reporting starting in 2016 but also allow for an automatic "kick in" for Steele's universal prescription requirement if meth lab busts did not decline by the end of a three-year period.

As the revised language states, in January 2020 a certified report by the Indiana State Police of how many meth labs were discovered in 2019 will be filed. If that report finds 400 or more labs were discovered, then an "emergency rule" enacting a universal prescription requirement for PSE cold meds will go into effect starting July 2020. Like Steele's original bill and original amendment, there will be a three-year sunset. There is a "carve out" for PSE cold meds found by the Board of Pharmacy to be "extraction resistant or conversion resistant."

"He can count votes," Steele told HPI. "I'm sure if he moved my amendment it was going to pass. And, he is



State Sen. Mike Young told Sen. Steele, "Let the best bill surface." (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

chairman of the committee and he can move any amendment he wants. The blended bill is good because, if Mike is right, and I don't know if he is, then we won't need my bill. But if he is wrong, my bill will automatically kick in."

Young allowed Steele to set the meth bust threshold of 400. Steele said he arrived at that number from the claimed 75% reduction in meth busts for states, like Oklahoma, who have required a prescription of only drug convicts.

Though a longtime proponent of an outright PSE prescription requirement, Sen. Glick sees Young's drug-related conviction reporting as progress.

"It's a good first step," she told HPI. "It's going to inconvenience some people. But I think we have such a dangerous situation developing with this manufacturing of meth in homes, in apartments, and in hotel rooms, it's just too much danger.

"We've got to give Young's bill an opportunity to work," she said. "But I'm sure we're going to get above 400 (meth busts in 2019). If it fails, we can act sooner."

Asked about the significant reduction in meth busts needed to avoid the automatic kick-in, Chairman Young told reporters, "We believe it will work and it won't go that way. Whether 400 is the right number or not, I don't know, it may change. But, we had to have something. We're not going to let meth pervade our communities without trying to stop it."

"As the bill stands right now, the General Assembly is OK with 399 meth labs every year," IACT's Swanson told HPI. He noted prescription-only states saw drastic declines in meth busts and have since sustained annual totals in the single digits. "We have an evidence-based solution and we're still not doing it," he remarked.

"It makes every Hoosier pay for a small percentage of the population of Indiana who actually use Sudafed products. I think the better approach would be you require a prescription and you put the cost on the people who are actually using the product."

Moreover, IACT believes Young's convictions reporting to NPLeX will do little to abate smurfing PSE to meth cooks. Fake IDs are already a loophole to the existing system as well as the fact many smurfs do not have prior drug convictions because they are usually neither meth cooks nor users. Describing your average Hoosier smurf, the Madison County prosecutor told the committee, "They're poor people trying to get a few bucks."

"The reporting of meth-related convictions does not do anything to stop the smurfs who are buying it and giving to the meth cook," Rep. Smaltz told HPI several

weeks ago. "The smurfs who are doing this don't typically have a felony record for it. They're small-time helpers of the whole process. If you ignore them completely you really don't do anything."

Steele hopes meth busts will decline with conviction reporting, but confessed, "I don't predict that, though."

The Rx bill's future

Senate Appropriations was scheduled to hear SB 536 this morning. Whereas last week the conviction reporting, collating, and forwarding costs for the Indiana State Police were unclear, figures reported to the LSA indicate an upfront outlay of \$116,800 the first year and continuing costs of around \$55,000 per year. It's over these costs IACT cries foul. There could also be considerations as to lost sales tax revenue due to the two prescription requirements, first for convicts and, if the automatic kick-in is activated, for everyone.

Assuming it makes the appropriations hurdle, the full Senate will hear the bill next week before the crossover deadline. If the Senate super majority follows its normal procedures, there will be no amendments around the committee chairman on second reading.

It's uncertain how an up or down vote will go, but it's a very strong possibility the first anti-meth bill with, in fact, two types of prescription requirements will be passed by at least one chamber of the Indiana Legislature.

HPI cautiously predicts almost all Democrats will vote for the measure and a sufficient number of Republicans, especially from heavily meth-affected areas, will carry it over the edge.

If assigned to the analogous panel in the House, SB 536 will head to Chairman Tom Washburne's Courts and Criminal Code Committee where it might find a sympathetic launching pad to the full House. Washburne proposed conviction-reporting legislation (HB 1563) similar to Young's original bill. Moreover, he represents northern Evansville and is well aware of meth's impact on local communities.

"I hope we are able to get at least one good bill out of this session," Glick told HPI. "It's just too important to let it keep continuing."

Asked about SB 536, Mayor Winnecke described it as "incremental progress."

"We'll take it. I personally would prefer a shorter time frame, but I don't want to be too critical. I guess I would see more positive than negative. In Evansville, smurfing is a huge problem. You pay a guy \$20 and he gets PSE and some of the product. That's a huge problem here. Our meth suppression task force tell us this happens all the time. Anything we can do, and I mean the collective we, to restrict and hinder the bad guy's ability, is good." ❖



Panel advances religious freedom bill

INDIANAPOLIS – A proposed Indiana religious freedom law that's divided some business groups and Gov. Mike Pence passed a state Senate committee Wednesday (Associated Press) Supporters of the bill say it would protect people and businesses from being compelled to provide services for same-sex weddings and other activities they find objectionable. They also maintain the proposal would shield religious minorities from government interference. The Indiana Chamber of Commerce and other business groups told the Senate Judiciary Committee last week that the Republican-sponsored proposal could hurt the state's reputation and make it more difficult to attract companies. The bill "prohibits a governmental entity from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion." The committee quietly passed the bill Wednesday without Democrats present, which now heads to the Senate.



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WAYS & MEANS PASSES BUDGET: The House Ways and Means Committee passed a Republican budget bill Wednesday that increases funding for schools, roads and maintains about \$1.8 billion in reserves (Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). But Democrats spent the day trying to alter key provisions of the two-year, \$31.2 billion spending plan – without much success. House Bill 1001 now moves to the full House for consideration next week. The bill includes almost \$470 million in new money for Indiana's K-12 schools but also changes the funding formula that dictates how the money is distributed. "Even though you are putting more money in, the bottom line is we still have school corporations that lose dollars," said Rep. Greg Porter, D-Indianapolis. A count of full state funding to K-12 schools shows that 91 districts will lose money in the first year. However, 83 of those are losing children in their enrollment count. The bill also sets aside \$400 million in additional highway dollars over the biennium on top of the Indiana Department of Transportation's regular budget. The budget anticipates that Indiana's private school voucher program will grow from 29,000 students this year to 40,000 students in 2017, costing upwards of \$173 million. The committee did agree to a few small amendments offered by Democrats on Wednesday. One cuts the funding for a regional cities initiative being pushed by Gov. Mike Pence. He proposed \$42 million a year for that initiative in the budget. But Pence's budget folks raided several existing funds to pay for it. The regional cities initiative is a matching grant program that Pence hopes will propel one or two areas of the state into a destination regional city. After the amendment, only \$20 million remains per year for the program.

BILL WOULD PROHIBIT GENDER ABORTIONS: Talk of banning abortions based on gender selection or fetal disability sparked a heated debate Wednesday in the Senate Public Health Committee (Evansville Courier & Press). Senate Bill 334 – authored by Sens. Travis Holdman, R-Markle and Liz Brown, R-Fort Wayne – would prohibit health providers from performing abortions if the doctor knows the procedure is desired because of the fetus's sex or a potential disability. The bill passed the committee 7-4 as amended. The original bill included criminal penalties for providers who performed abortions in those circumstances but the committee amended those out of the legislation. Opponents questioned why the bill is needed if a provider couldn't be charged. But Brown said the legislation helps preserve the value of women and people with disabilities. She pointed out that in China, families value a baby boy over a baby girl, which leads to abortions. But Sen. Vaneta Becker, R-Evansville, quickly countered that argument. "I know you that you cited China, but in the United States we have not found that sex selection has been a reason" for an abortion, she said. "None of the research supports that."

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION BILL DEAD-LOCKED: The conservative cause asking states to call the first constitutional convention since the nation's founding is facing some skepticism among Indiana legislators (Associated Press). The Senate Judiciary Committee deadlocked 5-5 Wednesday on whether to endorse a resolution for Indiana to support calling such a convention. Supporters say they believe states need to stand up to the federal government's expanding reach and growing debt. Two Republican senators joined three committee Democrats in voting against the resolution, preventing it from advancing to the full Senate. Some opponents said they worried about such a constitutional convention running amok.

RIECKEN PRESSES FOR MED SCHOOL FUNDING: An Evansville state lawmaker on Wednesday tried unsuccessfully to increase state funding for the regional medical school campus planned for Downtown in the proposed budget making its way through the Indiana General Assembly (Schneider, Evansville Courier & Press). The Republican-controlled fiscal committee for the Indiana House voted down the additional funding proposed by state Rep. Gail Riecken, an Evansville Democrat and candidate for mayor. "I should say I'm very appreciative of where we are ... but I really felt like I needed to put that on the table," Riecken said. The House's budget allows organizers of the project to finance \$36 million to construct the school, which Indiana University officials say falls in line with the original size plans for the building. But state funding requests by the three public universities involved in the project totaled nearly \$50 million and would provide for a larger building. Riecken requested the committee to agree to that funding level on Wednesday." ❖

Pence presidential bid could be determined on Jeb Bush's traction

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The numbers involving former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush are both shocking and pedestrian and within their context, could play a pivotal role in Gov. Mike Pence's political future.

The Washington Post reported last weekend that Bush's "money juggernaut is far eclipsing the efforts of his would-be rivals." We've seen the \$100 million figure kicked around in the national press. We know that in George W. Bush's first four months as a candidate back in 1999 he raised a field-altering \$37 million. So a \$50 million Bush benchmark by the end of April would not be surprising.

But the pedestrian part of the equation were the numbers from three NBC/Marist Polls conducted in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina. Bush posted 16% in Iowa (1% behind Mike Huckabee), 18% in New Hampshire where he leads Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker by 3 points, and 15% in South Carolina where he trails favorite son Sen. Lindsey Graham by 2 points.

The Bush strategy is to replicate W. in 1999, which is to raise so much money that it sucks away the oxygen from other potential rivals. W.'s early haul in 1999 pushed former Vice President Dan Quayle and others out of the race early.

Where Bush is finding less traction is on the populist side of the equation. Leading in only one of three key early states, that is good news for Pence. It means that GOP voters aren't anywhere close to sorting out the field. Gov. Walker is creating the most early buzz, but occupying that zone early on is a precarious proposition at best.

Pence is active on the home front, giving a Lincoln dinner speech before 130 people in Lafayette, while drawing around 30 pro-Glenda Ritz protesters, last week.

He will be giving two more Lincoln speeches in Broad Ripple tonight to Washington Township Republicans and in Knightstown next Tuesday.

There are two competing schools of thought as to what Pence will do in May. Howard County Republican Chairman Craig Dunn told HPI, "After hearing Gov. Pence speak at the Tippecanoe Lincoln Day and speaking with him informally, I now believe that he will enter the beauty pageant after session. He had the biggest entourage that I've ever seen last evening. His speech sure sounded like a dress rehearsal for the big leagues."

It comes as Pence is scheduled to appear at a Club For Growth event in Palm Beach, Fla., on Feb. 26-28. Also appearing are Bush, Sen. Marco Rubio, Gov. Scott Walker, Sen. Ted Cruz and Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal. Earlier this month, Club For Growth President David McIntosh, a close Pence friend who preceded him in Indiana's 6th CD, said in Washington, "I'm a huge fan of Mike Pence. If he were to decide to run for president, I would be very excited." Club For Growth has a vast money network that Pence could tap.

Another prominent Indiana Republican activist, speaking to HPI on background, also believes Pence will run. "Absolutely he's going to run," the activist said. "Pence is f---ed. There is no way he could win reelection. These teachers are going to vote in droves and they are pissed. Pence is going to get all the blame and all the venom." This assessment is in the face of a recent Public Opinion

Strategies Poll conducted for the Indiana Realtors that had Pence's approval at 62%.

The activist continued that in a presidential race, Pence would have a significant debate advantage. "Jeb is going to have a lot of money, but I don't know if that's enough," he said.

The Weekly Standard's Stephen Hayes reported this week he believes Pence won't. "The early betting was that Pence would seek the chairmanship of the Republican Governors Association," Hayes wrote. "When he didn't, many Washington Republicans took his decision as a sign that he would run. Sources with ties to three rival campaigns say they expect Pence will pass on the

race."

Hayes clearly sees the Pence potential, writing, "Pence is a movement conservative and a talented communicator. He's an old-school, Reagan-style conservative, hawkish on national security, unwavering on issues of importance to social conservatives, and a consistent eco-



Gov. Mike Pence with former congressman and personal friend David McIntosh, who now heads Club For Growth at CPAC in 2014.

conomic conservative. If he runs, he will have an opportunity to appeal to grassroots conservatives without scaring establishment and big-money Republicans."

And then there's Politico's Mike Allen, who listed a 2016 GOP presidential "leader board" on Monday (Bush, Walker, Sens. Rubio, Rand Paul and Cruz) which did not include Gov. Pence. But Allen notes, "Our leader board, of course, will change in radical ways in the weeks ahead, especially if another governor, John Kasich of Ohio, Mike Pence of Indiana, gets serious."

What could influence a Pence decision?

Here are several points Pence will almost certainly weigh after the sine die of the Indiana General Assembly. They are:

- How much money has Jeb Bush raised by the end of April and is there a corollary response in the polls? If Bush raises \$50 million, that isn't necessarily a definitive game changer, as former Texas Gov. John Connally would attest. If he's in the \$65 million range or more, it might be.

- What is the GOP base response to Bush's support of Common Core? It is this issue where Bush and Pence find the sharpest policy relief, with Bush vowing not to change his support despite deep conservative suspicion, and Pence being the first governor to repeal.

Boston Globe reporter Matt Viser observed that Bush won't back away. "In my view, the rigor of the Common Core State Standards must be the new minimum in classrooms," Bush said in November. "And so for those states that are choosing a path other than Common Core, I say this: 'That's fine. Except you should be aiming even higher and be bolder and raise standards and ask more of our students and the system.' I just don't feel compelled to run for cover when I think this is the right thing for our country. And others have, others that supported the standards, all of a sudden are opposed to it." Pence has made the Common Core repeal a consistent policy burnishment. Walker, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and Mike Huckabee all once either outright or tacitly supported Common Core and have now back-

tracked.

- Will Common Core become a determinate factor? It could. Viser reported that in a survey conducted this month for Bloomberg Politics and Saint Anselm College, 20% of New Hampshire Republican primary voters said Bush's support for Common Core was a "deal killer." Only 40% said it was not a real problem, while 28% said they would have to consider the issue. But another poll

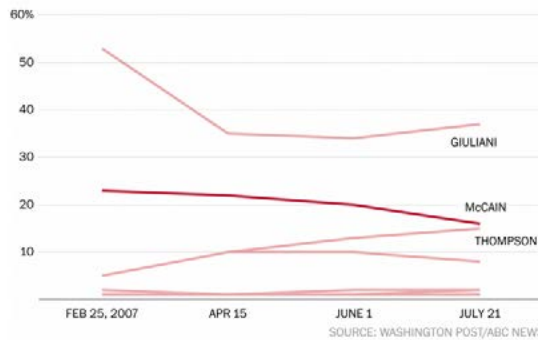
conducted by Vanderbilt University found that 38% of Tennessee Republicans opposed national education standards implemented across the states; that number rose to 61% when it was called "Common Core" in the poll question. So this is a branding issue.

- What will the immigration issue do to Bush and Gov. Walker? In 2006, Bush wrote a Los Angeles Times reporter that "the notion that we would felonize folks that have been here and that are contributing to our progress is just plain wrong. Penalizing the children of illegal immigrants by denying US citizenship is wrong." So here is another policy divide between Bush and Pence, who voted against the Dream Act on Dec. 8, 2010. Walker backed a 2006 Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act, a bill authored by Sens. John McCain and Ted Kennedy (Politico).

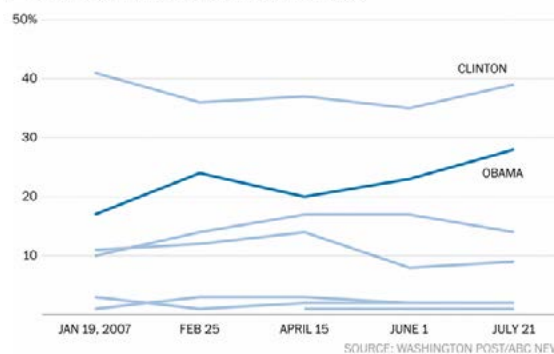
- Is there "Bush fatigue" with Republican voters? Particularly with conservative primary voters who watched President George W. Bush plunge the U.S. into a trillion dollar budget deficit and make the biggest entitlement expansion since the Great Society? On Wednesday before the Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs, Bush attempted to set himself apart from his presidential brother and father. "I also have been lucky to have a father and a brother who both have shaped America's foreign policy from the Oval Office. I recognize that as a result, my views will

often be held up in comparison to theirs' – sometimes in contrast to theirs." Bush then says, "I love my father and my brother. I admire their service to the nation and the difficult decisions they had to make. But I am my own man – and my views are shaped by my own thinking and own

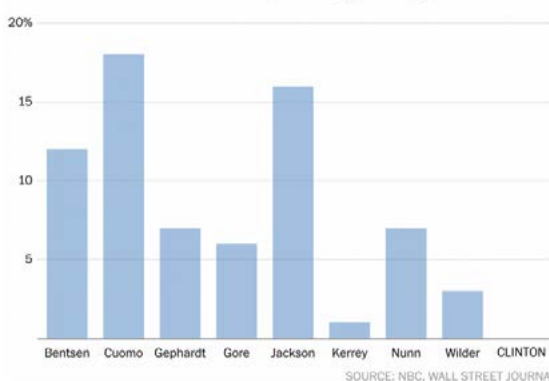
2008 Republican primary polling



2008 Democratic primary polling



March 1991 Democratic primary polling

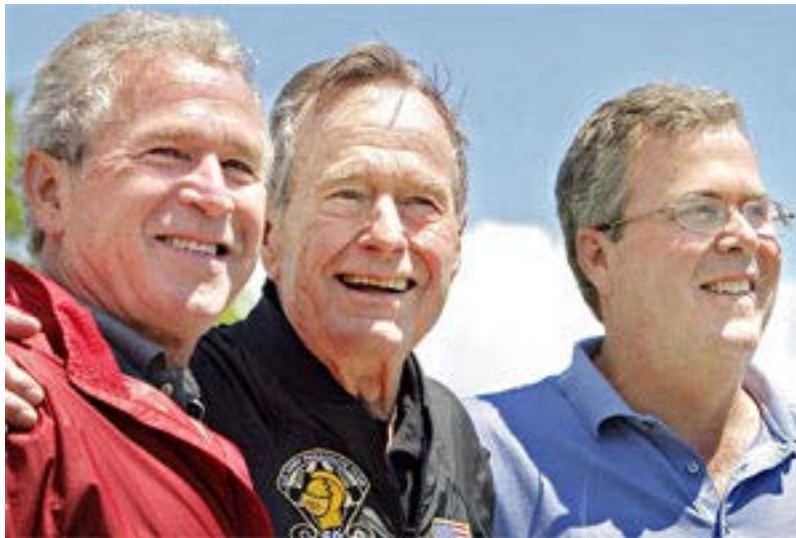


experiences." It will be fascinating to see how this delineation plays in the next spate of polls, particularly among red state primary voters.

A Quinnipiac Poll from the swing states of Colorado and Virginia gauged the potential "Bush fatigue". CNN reported: As in past polls, Bush continues to face the burden of his family name. About 4-in-10 Colorado voters and 35 percent of voters in Iowa and Virginia said they were less likely to support Bush because his brother and father have both been president.

In addition to his tepid standing in primary states, in the general election matchup with potential Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, Bush is being smoked by a Real Clear Politics composite 53.6 to 40.9%. A January poll by ABC/Washington Post had Clinton leading 54-41%. In the primary, where very conservative voters tend to dominate in Iowa and South Carolina, this could be a real problem for Jeb Bush. And a CNN/ORC poll released Wednesday showed that 64% saw Bush as a candidate of the past while only 33% saw him as one of the future (Hillary Clinton stood at 48/50%).

■ How many potential Pence rivals will implode? Gov. Christie is in deep trouble with his vaccine quotes in London and then his sophomoric evasion of the press in the days that followed. Sen. Paul also took on some hot water over the same issue, then pandered to the press with a photo op vaccine shot. And Mike Allen's Playbook carried this post on Tuesday: "President Paul? Wall Street on high alert: His 'audit the Fed' push makes him dangerous in the eyes of finance execs." Gov. Walker, the current hot candidate, "punted" on an evolution/creationism question in London. Walker is also under scrutiny for lacking a college degree. If elected, he would be the first since President Truman not to have a degree. It is unclear at this writing on the potential impact. Running for president



The Bush dynasty (top) and Gov. Mike Pence on Monday. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

is a crap shoot. Running in this surreal environment without a slam dunk "heir apparent" is a potential dicey proposition.

■ Will the Koch Brothers commit to another candidate? The Pence speculation in tandem with his strategy of not jumping in at the beginning of the year is that the Koch brothers could financially jumpstart a Pence presidential campaign. This week Bloomberg News

reporter Julie Bykovicz connected the dots between the billionaire brothers and Gov. Walker, observing: "The Kochs have pledged to marshal some \$900 million to spend on a fight for the presidency, and although they may not wade directly into the GOP primary muck, their ties to Walker appear stronger than to anyone else considering a run."

On another day in another week and in another publication, we've read similar David Koch affinity for Gov. Pence, who has key former aides dispersed through Americans For Prosperity. Charles Koch has "personal affection" for Sen. Paul. But Bykovicz reported: While Tim Phillips, the president of Americans for Prosperity, said that his group won't endorse a candidate in the primaries, his praise for Walker is effusive. "The difference Scott Walker has made with his

policy achievements is as transformative as any governor anywhere in a generation," he said in an interview. "That's why his appeal flourishes for activists and for donors."

Would a Pence candidacy declaration change the Koch dynamic? Only a handful of people would know.

GOP sources tell HPI that while the Kochs may not formally back candidate during the primary process, Pence will have access and carry weight with the sprawling Koch bundling network.

HPI's take? A game time decision

A prediction? The official Pence campaign response is a reelection bid is the current priority, though the rhetoric, schedule and actions fuel an alternative universe. The environment in early May could be vastly different than the one we found on President's Day. It will be . . . a game-time decision. ❖

Gregg, Hill inch toward 2016 decision as Dems rally 'round Ritz

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – As speculation continues on whether Gov. Mike Pence might opt for a 2016 presidential run, two potential Democratic challengers are inching toward a decision. And Supt. Glenda Ritz, who has been at the center of controversy at the Statehouse, appears to be gearing up for reelection.



John Gregg told Doug Ross of the NWI Times that he is nearing a decision. "I'm weighing it real heavily," Gregg, the 2012 Democratic nominee, said last week. "It was the closest race in over 50 years," Gregg said of his 2.3% loss to Gov. Mike Pence, who polled just 49% of the vote. Gregg added that from his perspective, Republican actions to strip Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz of her powers are "Miracle-Gro" for his grassroots support.

Former Congressman Baron Hill told Fox59 that the 2016 Indiana gubernatorial race is "winnable" for a Democrat. "Absolutely it's a winnable race," said Hill. "I think we're getting to a point in time where I have to make that decision sooner than later."

Hill also weighed in on the legislative Republican agenda to strip Ritz of her automatic chairing of the State Board of Education. "Clearly teachers feel under attack and superintendents feel like we're moving in the wrong direction in terms of our educational policy," said Hill, whose wife was a teacher. "It's about talking to people, Democrats and Republicans, trying to find common ground and common solutions and unfortunately right now that's not going on."

Ritz took center stage on Monday, as educators from around the state rallied on her behalf at the Statehouse. "I am an educator and I know what we need in our schools," Ritz told the crowd to thunderous applause and cheering. "Today's rally is about students." Adding to the

day's rhetoric that non-educators in the legislature were meddling in classrooms, Ritz told the assemblage, "You've done your call to action. They need to hear from you. They need to respect the work we do every day." The day's efforts revolved around opposition to pending legislation that would allow the governor-appointed SBOE to elect its own chairperson. Currently, statute dictates the superintendent fulfills that role.

The next day, the Senate voted to remove Ritz as the automatic chair of the SBOE. The assault on Ritz's positions not only have brought about defense from educators, but drew op-ed pieces written by Gregg and Hill, though neither spoke at the rally on Monday. With Ritz within the Republican bullseye, there had been talk of a potential Ritz 2016 gubernatorial campaign, with the superintendent responding with a "never say never" quote. However, sources close to Ritz are tamping down talk of a gubernatorial bid, telling Howey Politics Indiana that a reelection bid is still in the works.

While all of the anti-Ritz legislation is expected to easily pass in the two GOP super majorities, some Republicans are expressing caution and reluctance. State Sen. Randy Head, R-Logansport, defied his party leadership



Supt. Glenda Ritz speaks to a Statehouse rally that drew about 1,000 educators on Monday. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

with his nay vote. "It's not the right thing to do to take powers away from an elected official in the middle of her term," Head told CNHI's Maureen Hayden. "I respect a lot of the people who voted in favor of the bill; in their minds they are trying to solve the problems that exist between the State Board (of Education) and the Superintendent."

State Sen. Jean Leising, R-Oldenburg, questioned the political wisdom of the vote. "For me, the timing was wrong," Leising told CNHI. "The perception of people right

now is: That for some reason, the governor, the superintendent, the state board and the Republicans in the General Assembly are at odds. And so to me, any action taken like this is going to be perceived as political."

Leising said she could support the part of the bill that gave the Legislature more say over who sits on the State Board of Education, which would take away the power of the governor to appoint all its members. "But the timing is all wrong," she said. Leising acknowledged that the current system isn't working, noting the repeated and heated disagreements between the Democrat Ritz and board members appointed by Republican Gov. Mike Pence. But she said there was plenty of blame to go around. "I just think there is so much rhetoric back and forth," Leising continued. "To be honest, it reminds me of middle-school girls fighting. And I don't want to participate in that. I think its time for everybody to act like grownups and deal with real issues which is educating kids."

A number of Republican sources have told HPI they fear the legislative action is going to mobilize educators in the same manner they did in 2012, when they played a crucial role in the stunning upset of Republican incumbent Supt. Tony Bennett.

Senate President David Long took steps to correct what he calls "misinformation."

"It's also important to note what the bill does not do," Long said. "Senate Bill 1 does not remove the superintendent of public instruction as a board member or even prevent the superintendent from serving as chair. It does not remove the superintendent as head of the Department of Education, and it does not make the superintendent an appointed position in state government. The unprecedented dysfunction we've seen on the board in the past two years is unacceptable. This legislation is an effort to get the board back on track, which is in the best interest of everyone in our state."

Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane, D-Anderson, said during testimony, "This dysfunction, it's manufactured. It's a manufactured dysfunction that's being thrown out there to convince someone that we have to act. We can't wait."

On the health care front, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that 218,000 Hoosiers had signed up for health insurance via the federal exchange. Hill told Fox59 that he's glad the state was able to reach a deal with the federal government to expand the Healthy Indiana Plan. "I wouldn't have done it that way, but anytime you can get 350,000 people on board for Medicaid expansion, I'm for it," said Hill. "Now as it relates to the exchanges, I think we ought to have our own exchange. I don't think we ought to have an exchange that's controlled by the federal government."

Mayoral

Fort Wayne: Harper cites 'crony capitalism'

Fort Wayne Republican mayoral candidate Mitch

Harper is vowing to stop "crony capitalism" on the economic development front. In an email fundraising appeal to potential supporters, Harper explained, "As our next mayor, I will get to work immediately on changing business as usual at city hall. We must stop the practice of taxpayer dollars being used to pick winners and losers in



our business community in the name of economic development. In short, I'm going to stop the crony capitalism. We must ensure that decisions are made for the benefit of all of Fort Wayne and not for the favored few." Harper added, "The city also spends too much money on paid lobbyists at the Statehouse. As a former member of the Indiana legislature, I will apply my real world experience and knowledge to work with our Statehouse delegation as a thoughtful and consistent advocate for Fort Wayne; we can get better results without the added expense to taxpayers. However, to make meaningful changes, we must first rise to the challenge of this campaign; it's time for Fort Wayne to run, not walk." Harper is challenging two-term Democratic Mayor Tom Henry, who is expected to easily win the Democratic primary against three opponents.

Portage: Snyder campaign in the red

Portage Mayor James Snyder raised more than \$138,000 in campaign funds last year, but ended 2014 more than \$18,000 in the red (Russell, NWI Times). It wasn't an election year for his office. The Portage mayor filed his 2014 campaign year-end financial report on Thursday, nearly a month after the deadline. Among his campaign's payments were nearly \$700 for child care. While Snyder raised what appears to be a significant amount of money in an off-election year, he spent more than \$140,000 and his committee, Citizens for Snyder, is more than \$18,000 in debt, according to the report filed by his treasurer, Kenard Taylor, of Valparaiso. Taylor said it is not unusual for candidates to raise large sums of money in an off year, especially if that candidate anticipates opposition in the following year's election. "In between elections, you try to raise money to try and do things to prepare for the next election," Taylor said. In a written statement Tuesday, Snyder said the reports were made by a professional with knowledge of reporting requirements, "not by a campaign volunteer." "The reports reflect the commitment the Snyder family has made to the city of Portage, as nearly \$20,000 dollars are owed to him by the campaign primarily for expenditures for the city," Snyder said in the written statement.

Carmel: Brainard erases Facebook posts

Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard is the latest politician to find that managing social media accounts is more chal-

lenging than simply posting messages for constituents (Sichich, IndyStar). Supporters and detractors alike can, and often do, answer back. Brainard has received blowback in the last couple weeks because his campaign staff has been systemically deleting comments they perceive as negative, and blocking some users, from his campaign page on Facebook. Scroll up and down his Facebook page "Jim Brainard for Carmel Mayor" and you'll find only positive posts and glowing responses from his supporters. Brainard said he wants the page to focus on his vision for Carmel and his success stories. "Some of the people posting are clearly very angry, upset people and it's not going to do any good to answer them," Brainard said. "There might be an occasional comment where I will contact someone individually, someone with a legitimate concern who is open-minded." Experts told The IndyStar that privately managed and clearly marked campaign pages such as Brainard's will not risk running afoul of the First Amendment if staffers remove comments. They're considered personal pages, not public forums. But political campaign managers say removing comments and stifling debate likely won't be a winning political strategy on social media, where users are accustomed to interaction. Kiel Kinnaman, who runs both a website and Facebook page called Carmel Chatter, was surprised last week when two comments he made were removed from Brainard's page. "It doesn't give people the opportunity to discuss the issues," Kinnamon said. "It deletes the purpose of having a campaign page."

Bloomington: Party switching candidates

There's a Republican mayoral candidate with a recent history of voting in Democratic primaries, and a Democratic mayoral candidate who used to vote in Republican primaries (Erbody, Bloomington Herald-Times). Sounds backward, right? It doesn't mean they're running under the wrong party label, though. Andy Downs, director of the Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, said there are several reasons this happens — the person could have truly changed values, looked at which party they'd be most successful in as a candidate, or voted in the opposite primary for a strategic reason. Republican mayoral candidate John Turnbull, for example, said he voted in recent Democratic primaries because there haven't been contested races on the other side. The 2011 election only had three Republicans run for office, and none was contested in the

primary. Turnbull pulled a Democratic ballot in 2014, 2012, 2011, 2008 and 2006. He didn't vote in the 2010 or 2007 primary races. Prior to that, he voted Republican tickets, except for 1992. "I saw no need to vote on the Republican side for those," Turnbull said in an email. "Combine that with the fact that I have been a city employee for 26 years with a Democratic mayor and did not want to risk anyone looking at my record with little to contest on the Republican side." Democratic mayoral candidate Darryl Neher has a more recent history of voting under his associated party, but from 2002-07, he voted in Republican primaries. "I grew up in a Republican household in a small Indiana town," Neher said. He said as an adult he hasn't voted straight tickets and has mostly supported Democratic presidential candidates. "I could no longer vote in a Republican primary," Neher said.

Bloomington's three Democratic mayoral candidates are not happy with Indiana University Health's decision that it will no longer consider building a replacement Bloomington Hospital on its current downtown site (Bloomington Herald-Times). "I'm disappointed," said John Hamilton, one of three Democratic candidates for mayor in the May primary election. "I think it's premature and incorrect without public engagement." Democratic mayoral candidate and Bloomington City Council member Darryl Neher said that while he is disappointed with the decision, the community needs to move forward. "They've made a statement that's pretty clear," he said. "It's time to move forward into the accountability phase of that discussion."

Elkhart: Neese forms advisory committee

Tim Neese, candidate for mayor of Elkhart has formed a 12 member "Advance Elkhart Betterment Committee." The committee is a cross-section of Elkhart citizens and backgrounds. "These individuals have agreed to assist me on varied topics and interests in how to make Elkhart more competitive and to solve problems. Elkhart's challenges are not partisan, but rather city-wide concerns that detract from our community," said Neese. "I want to work with people who are not hesitant to disagree with me, in an effort to determine the best solution, thus keeping Elkhart moving forward." ❖



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The education mess in Indiana

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Education is in a mess in Indiana.

With schools poised to administer the important ISTEP+ exams to measure how kids, their teachers and their schools are doing, wrangling continues over the content, the length and the significance of the test and over blame for the mess.



It's not the fault of the teachers. They are victims as they struggle to find what they are supposed to do to prepare their students for standards that keep changing. It's certainly not the fault of the kids. They are victims, too, as those making the mess seem more interested in

measuring political gain or loss than in measuring what the students know or don't know.

Sorry, kids. Politics first.

The making of a mess began when Gov. Mike Pence, with an eye on winning favor with conservative voters in places like Iowa and New Hampshire, called during the 2014 legislative session for Indiana to abandon Common Core standards for schools. Those rigorous standards had been adopted by Indiana and 44 other states as part of education reform pushed by such Republican governors as Mitch Daniels of Indiana and Jeb Bush of Florida.

Alas, when a president named Obama proclaimed support for the effort, some Tea Party members and other conservatives who detest the president decided it must be some kind of left-wing plot. Bet you didn't know Mitch Daniels was a left-winger plotting with Obama to take control of Indiana schools.

Indiana in 2014 abandoned Common Core, the first state to do so.

Educators had been planning for Common Core standards. Local schools had spent a lot of money in preparation. No problem, said Pence, because Indiana wouldn't just dumb down the testing but would instead

set "uncommonly high" standards that would have other states looking in admiration at Indiana. Well, a lot of states no doubt are looking now at Indiana.

Controversy abounded as new standards were set. Some Common Core critics said the replacement was too close to the original. Others said new standards were rushed and inadequate.

Controversy in Indiana education rages way beyond test standards.

A key factor in all this is that a Democrat, Glenda Ritz, had the audacity to win election in 2012 as state superintendent of public instruction. That wasn't in the plans of Pence, who was elected governor that year, a big Republican year in Indiana. Most politicians and pundits thought Tony Bennett, the Republican incumbent, would win reelection and carry on with education reforms he was pushing.

But a lot of teachers were upset over reforms they saw as hurting public education. They got behind Ritz, and she won, actually getting more votes than Pence did for governor.

A Democrat in state office? One with an education philosophy different than that of Pence? Unthinkable.

So, Pence, with appointments to the Indiana State Board of Education, and Republican legislators, with super majorities in House and Senate, set out to trim Ritz of traditional authority as superintendent.

The legislature is moving to take away the superintendent's role as chairman of the board of education. Initially, some Republicans warned that doing so would look too political. But hotter heads prevailed.



Whether Ritz is doing a good or bad job as superintendent is hard to evaluate. After all, she has been prevented from doing what she was elected to do. With all the political maneuvering to deplete her power and change test standards, Ritz can't be blamed for the mess, even if she has contributed to it. Pence took ownership with his promise of standards "written by Hoosiers, for Hoosiers" and "uncommonly high."

Instead of pushing Ritz into irrelevancy, Pence has pushed her into the spotlight, and favorably so in the view of Democrats who now talk of her as a candidate for governor.

Education is in a mess in Indiana because too many Hoosier politicians regard Rs and Ds as more important than the ABCs. ❖

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

ISIS won't be stopped with diplomacy

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – If anyone believes that Islamist terrorist organizations such as ISIS, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, etc. will be stopped by diplomacy, measured wordsmithing or de facto appeasement, they are living in a pure, unadulterated fairytale world. Welcome to the world of Nobel Peace Prize recipient Barack Obama.



Rarely, in the history of cruelty and barbarism has evil raised its ugly head in such a challenging manner. To be sure, history is littered with examples of atrocities committed in the name of religion, atrocities committed against subjected peoples and atrocities committed against enemies during time of war. There is no doubt that terrorist groups such as ISIS are faced with committing unoriginal acts of cruelty. Their predecessors over the centuries have largely tried and perfected virtually every form of torture and murder imaginable. What makes the current acts of evil perpetrated by the Islamic terrorists so shocking is that they are occurring in a digital age.

Let's face it, Stalin, Hitler, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Robespierre, Mao and Franco killed millions in pursuit of their sick twisted goals. They and their minions generally carried out the massacre of innocents beyond the glare of cameras. The current breed of Islamic tyrants recognize both the shock value and recruiting value of broadcasting unspeakable acts in an effort to draw the attention of the world. In the most recent atrocity, the burning alive of Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh, ISIS actually solicited suggestions on ways to murder the Jordanian pilot via a Twitter account.

Islamic terrorists who are congregants of mass beheadings, murder and mutilation of children, rape and desecration of women, suicide bombings and murderous assaults on anyone who challenges them are not likely to notice, let alone be persuaded by words raised in protest or righteous indignation. It matters not one iota when President Obama condemns an act of murder or barbarity. These Islamic terrorists don't have political aides who dial up their most recent poll numbers and make decisions based on their personal popularity numbers. Unfortunately, our temporary leader of the free world does and he is clueless as to what actions to take to stem the rising tide of Islamic terrorism.

If history has taught us anything, it is that words alone never stop evil from advancing like a rapidly growing cancer or plague. It has taken resolute action from an aroused people committed to seeing a fight through

to the bitter end to stop monstrous people in their tracks. The battle to end Islamic terrorism will end the same way, not by words, but with action. Can you imagine President Franklin D. Roosevelt rising from his wheelchair and rising to the podium in front of the United States Congress after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and saying?

"Whereas Japan poses a grave threat to the people and territorial integrity of the Far East and to the national security interests of the United States and its allies and partners; whereas Japan holds significant territory in the Far East and has stated that they intend to seize more territory; whereas Japan has attacked the United States, its citizens and its interests; whereas Japan has committed despicable acts of violence; whereas Japan has threatened genocide and committed vicious acts of violence; whereas Japan has targeted innocent women and girls with horrific acts of violence including abduction, enslavement, torture and rape; whereas Japan is responsible for an undeclared act of war by attacking Pearl Harbor and killing nearly 3,000 American servicemen; I hereby authorize the use of no ground forces except in situations where Special Forces might be helpful. I authorize no enduring ground combat operations. In fact, this authorization shall terminate three years from this date regardless of where we stand in our conflict. Oh, and by the way, I also would like to revoke the declaration of war that was declared against Spain in 1898. We have remembered the Maine enough already!"

If you substitute the word ISIL for Japan and delete the part about Pearl Harbor and Spain, this was exactly the war powers authorization that President Obama presented to Congress.

Could you even remotely imagine 1944 rolling around and President Roosevelt saying, "Well, General Marshall, bring the boys home. You know I only asked for a three year declaration of war. Hell yes, I know the Japanese still hold Guadalcanal, the Philippines, Malaysia, Guam, China, Korea, Thailand and Burma, but we can be proud that we haven't sent in the Marines. That would be devastating to the cause of world peace."

Thankfully, President Roosevelt was a man of vision and action. After initially resisting the temptation to enter World War II at the urging of Winston Churchill after France fell to the advancing German Army, Roosevelt looked for ways to support the struggling British people. Just shy of a war declaration, Roosevelt supported the provisions of a Lend Lease agreement with Great Britain and provided some convoy protection for ships observing our right as a neutral nation to engage in trade with a belligerent country. Once Pearl Harbor was attacked and we were officially at war with both Japan and Germany, Roosevelt practiced all-out war on our enemies.

I can't conceive of President Roosevelt telling Eleanor in December, 1941, that before this war is over we will attempt to starve our enemies to death. We will launch 1,000 plane raids on cities in Germany and Japan against

targets, using calculations of wind velocities to cause massive incineration of civilian populations. We will devote our best minds in science to the pursuit and invention of an atomic bomb that will kill hundreds of thousands of people.

Nope, I sincerely doubt that Franklin Roosevelt ever had that conversation. But with his leadership we did those things and more. We fought World War II to win it, not to win any popularity contests. There was absolutely no way in 1941 for President Roosevelt to know what would need to be done to win the war. His declaration of war was short, simple and to the point. He ended it with these words:

"No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe that I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost but will make it very certain that this form of treachery shall never again endanger us.

"Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger. With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph, so help us God. I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire."

Wars led by Nobel Laureates, apologists and attorneys are doomed to failure. There is only one way to fight your enemy and that is by whatever means necessary and to the death or absolute capitulation. That is the only option that President Obama should give ISIS and Islamic terrorists, death or absolute capitulation. The only message he should give is, "We will go anywhere in the world, at any time with any means necessary and will kill our enemies!" ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

Why McDermott resigned as chairman

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – It would appear that Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. wasn't telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth when he announced his resignation as Lake County Democratic chairman last year.



At the time, McDermott said he was stepping down because he was considering a 2016 run for statewide office, possibly for governor. If he were to seek statewide office, McDermott said, it could be a negative if he carried the title of chairman, given the history of public corruption.

McDermott seemed to be suggesting that if he resigned as chairman that no one would remember that he once headed the Democratic party in the county. So, McDermott resigned and the precinct organization elected Sheriff John Buncich as chairman.

There has been little mention since of McDermott running for governor or another statewide office. But last week, it became clear why McDermott stepped down as county chairman, and it wasn't because of the county's less than stellar reputation. The truth came out the day after the sentencing hearing for former Lake County Surveyor George W. Van Til in U.S. District Court.

Van Til was sentenced to 18 months in prison and ordered to report on April 30. At Van Til's request, the judge recommended that he be assigned to the prison camp in Terre Haute. He pleaded guilty to having a couple of his employees do political work on county time, just as former Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett admitted to doing. Bennett was fined \$5,000 but not criminally charged.

Gregory Sanchez, who was Van Til's chief deputy, was called by the government to testify during the sentencing hearing. Sanchez sought to replace Van Til as surveyor but lost to William Emerson, who had McDermott's support.

A week prior to the replacement caucus, Sanchez delivered an envelope to McDermott. Sanchez said he was acting on Van Til's behalf. In the envelope was a copy of an FBI 302 form which contained confidential information.

The form detailed a conversation between the FBI and Speros Batistatos, the president of the South Shore Convention and Visitors Authority. The conversation was in June 2012 as Batistatos was en route to a baseball game with friends, including a woman who worked for Van Til. According to the form, the woman told Batistatos she did a considerable amount of political work while on county time.

McDermott said that after reading the Form 302 that he had an uncomfortable feeling that helped lead to his resignation as chairman five months later. ❖

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.

Assessing local economic development

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Once upon a time, in a land where we now live, citizens sought to improve their communities through something called “economic development.” They formed committees of local business and government leaders to encourage transportation and other public works improvements, the attraction of new industries, and the expansion of existing firms.



The primary motive behind these efforts was to build the property tax base of the community so the services provided by the schools, the libraries, the cities and towns, as well as the county could be enhanced. At that long ago time, these services were financed through the local property tax.

As the town grew in population and provided more revenue for local businesses, it meant more students for the schools and more law enforcement. If more businesses were in town with more jobs, there would be more stress on the fire department and the streets would have to be kept in good condition.

All this takes money derived from the property tax. Growing and modernizing businesses would have larger facilities and more expensive equipment that could be taxed. Higher paying jobs would lead to higher rents and selling prices for houses; more people with more money in their pockets make the land and buildings of homes, stores and offices more valuable.

In that bygone time, economic development (ED) was easily understood as real estate development. The measure of economic development was the change in the gross assessed value (GAV) of property, the increase or decrease in the property tax base.

That was then, before the members of the Indiana General Assembly realized they were ordained to change the world. They gave away generous exemptions and deductions to property owners which reduced the GAV and consequently the property tax base. They capped property taxes and pushed through a constitutional amendment to that effect.

In addition, the legislature concluded businesses could not survive if they had to pay any local taxes and, therefore, set in motion a process to reduce and eliminate taxes on inventories, machinery, and other means of production. They also gave local governments the power to phase in or divert business property taxes through abatements and TIFs (tax increment financing districts). Now, firms expect these breaks as a natural right for almost

anything they do. Once, we expected GAV to tell us how we were doing with our ED efforts. Now, how to evaluate ED performance is a mystery. Politicians love the number of jobs promised as the primary measure of successful programs. More sophisticated analysis focuses on the changes in earnings realized in a community.

Yet changes in GAV should be the most telling indicator of how a community is doing. The prices households and firms are willing to pay for the land, plus the structures and equipment they bring to a community, may be the best measure we could have of economic development.

Next week, in this space, we’ll examine what has happened to GAV throughout Indiana in the past few years. Spoiler alert: It’s not a pretty story. ❖

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The strange politics of net metering

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Indiana faces a looming problem in electricity markets that many states have already tackled. It is not a specially complicated issue, but with more than the usual demagoguery surrounding it, a little explanation is in order. Electricity is sold to consumers under a form of price regulation. The reason for this is that consumers cannot



change the wires to their home any time they see a lower price. So, electricity production is what economists call a natural monopoly and everywhere power is sold there is some form of pricing regulation.

The way this works is that the electric company builds power plants, pays workers and buys fuel. Then the regulator (usually an appointed board) sets a price for consumers that covers the cost

of the fuel and the people and pays the companies a fair rate of return on their plant and equipment. In return, the company must provide service to everyone in their region.

This pricing regulation is not perfect. It cannot be. No price will meet the mutually exclusive goals of getting service to everyone at the lowest costs. So, regulators (or owners of rural co-ops) compromise by having some consumers subsidize others. Traditionally, it has been structured so wealthier households subsidize poorer ones, but that is changing.

A decade ago Congress passed legislation that re-

quired electric utilities to buy power from consumers (typically large farms) who installed solar and wind power on their land. As in many states, the requirement was that the power companies buy any excess power from this home-made electricity at the same price other retail customers pay for their electricity. Therein lies the problem.

The power company loses money on the deal, and growth in solar and wind power means that soon it will be big money. Many of us might be tempted to say, "Who cares??" But remember that the electrical company is regulated, so it cannot lose money overall. That means someone else is paying wealthy landowners to have wind and solar power. That someone else just might be all those customers who do not have solar cells on their roof.

It gets worse. The folks who have the solar cells and wind turbines are going to be a good bit more affluent than the typical electric utility customer. These systems are expensive. So, this pricing scheme acts much like a regres-

sive tax that most ratepayers pay to wealthier owners of the home solar cells and wind turbines.

Now, there are solid arguments for subsidizing renewable energy, but implementing a regressive tax that hits low- and middle-income electricity customers is close to the dumbest thing I've ever heard of in years.

Many groups including the National Black Caucus of State Legislators are calling on states to change the rules. Indiana should do so. It is funny though, that Indiana's Community Action Coalition is fighting against change even though this rule might honestly be called a CAFO subsidy. Wow. Pigs may not fly, but they have subsidized electricity. ❖

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The thud of a budget

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – It may not be obvious from the news coverage, but a good bit of Congress's 2015 agenda just landed on Capitol Hill with a thud. I mean this literally. The federal budget that President Obama recently submitted runs to 2,000 pages.

This is the most important government document produced each year, so its heft is more than physical. The budget is how we decide what share of this country's economic resources we should devote to government, and how we should spend them. It's where we set out our national priorities, sorting out how to allocate money among defense, the environment, education, medical research, food safety, public works. You get the idea.



Which is why you saw the political maneuvering begin the moment it arrived. In a press conference after President Obama submitted his budget, House Speaker John Boehner dismissed it out of hand. "The president gave the American people a good laugh yesterday," he said. Every year, politicians play some variation on this theme. I've lost count of the times I've heard a budget declared "dead on arrival."

Yet here's what you need to remember: Congress changes only a small portion of the budget. Well over half is mandated spending, interest on the debt, entitlements, contractual obligations of the government. And even when it comes to the roughly 40 percent of the

budget that is discretionary spending, Congress never rewrites it wholesale; in general, all but 5 or 10 percent of the White House's spending blueprint will make it through intact. The President's budget, in other words, is never "dead on arrival." This is not to say that what Congress does will be unimportant. The debate from here on out will be specifically about taxing and spending priorities; About how much money should go to defense, or homeland security, or social welfare, and more generally about who has the best ideas for addressing the country's needs.

There will be times in upcoming months when it sounds as though our country's health depends on what our lawmakers do. The budget, after all, is where the President and Congress can have an impact on the economy. I'm not persuaded, however, that it's as large as they'd have us believe. For one thing, the Federal Reserve, through its control over the money supply, has its hands on an immensely important economic lever. So do the big banks, major corporations and, most importantly, millions of consumers.

Congress used to reign supreme in budget-making. George Washington didn't even think it was his job to send a budget to Congress, and the president wasn't legally required to submit one until the budget act of 1921 codified the practice. Now, of course, the President has become the chief budget-maker, and the Congress reacts to, and largely accepts, his proposals. The maneuvering on Capitol Hill over the next few months will, indeed, nudge the country in one direction or another. But our basic course was already set by the time those 2,000 pages hit lawmakers' desks. ❖

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Steve Kornacki, MSNBC: The model for Jeb Bush's campaign for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination is obvious: His brother. Sixteen years ago, George W. Bush joined an unusually cluttered and formless Republican field in a race considered more wide open than any the party had ever seen. Within months, though, Bush had imposed order on the process by raking in previously unimaginable sums of cash and racking up an all-star roster of endorsements. By the end of 1999, before a single primary or caucus vote had been cast, Bush had intimidated six separate rivals out of the race, with one poll putting him 48 points ahead of his nearest remaining rival. This rapid trajectory — from untested legacy candidate to overpowering front-runner — is exactly what Jeb Bush and his team are aiming for now with their "shock-and-awe" strategy, a belief that a massive cash haul will produce a self-fulfilling narrative of inevitability. George W. Bush's grip on the GOP faithful remained firm the whole way. In the end, there was no math that could have vaulted McCain or anyone else to victory over Bush. Now compare all of this to what Jeb Bush is facing today, starting with the mood of the Republican Party. The "Just win, baby!" spirit that prevailed in the late '90s has been replaced by a grassroots yearning for ideological purity and distance from anything or anyone connected with the party establishment. This is the product of a conservative movement that interprets Barack Obama's presidency far differently than it interpreted Clinton's. And that interpretation of the Obama-era is directly related to how the right has chosen to reckon with George W.'s presidency. This is the story of the Tea Party, which came to life around Obama's inauguration. In part, it reflected the predictable reaction of one party's base to the election of a candidate from the other party. But it was also, crucially, a response to the Bush presidency, to the idea that in accepting "compassionate conservatism" in the name of victory in 2000, the GOP had corrupted itself; the idea that the Bush administration had expanded government irresponsibly and given conservatism a bad name, and created the conditions that hastened Obama's rise. This is the real story of the Tea Party: It's not just an effort to fight Obama. It's a mission to keep the Republican Party from selling out again. ❖



John Dodge, CBS Chicago: The halls of the Indiana Statehouse filled with angry parents and teachers this week, the Republicans retreated deeper into their political bubble, wrapping themselves tightly in their super-majority security blanket. "Let your voices be heard, you own this place!" Sen. Tim Lanane, a Democrat, told the crowd. At least for a few hours they did. A scheduled vote on bill that would strip State Education Supt. Glenda Ritz of her role as chair of the state school board was shelved. Officially, there is a rule that allows for a vote to be delayed to allow for "technical corrections" in a bill. In this case, a semico-

lon needed to be added to page 4, line 13. At the rally on Monday, Ritz looked like she was a candidate for public office. Oh, wait, she did run for office, and quite successfully. In 2012, about 1.3 million Hoosier voters made their choice: Ritz, not incumbent Tony Bennett, should lead the state's education apparatus, which includes the State Board of Education. Midway through Ritz's ELECTED term, the foot soldiers of Emperor Mike Pence changed her role. This is the politics you get in the world of the supreme leader and his gutless foot soldiers cloaked within that aforementioned super majority bubble in the Statehouse. ❖

Dana Milbank, Washington Post: Jeb Bush was mere seconds into his speech Wednesday informing the world that he's his "own man," and not his brother or his dad, when he did something reminiscent of both. He flubbed his line. "We definitely no longer inspire fear in our enemies," the nominal front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination said at the start of his ballyhooed address. "The problem is perhaps best demonstrated by this administration's approach to Iraq." Whoa! He's going there — right into the failure that pretty much destroyed his brother's presidency? Bush continued reading from his text, as if for the first time. "We've had 35 years of experience with Iran," he went on, then realized his earlier mistake. "Excuse me, Iran. Thirty-five years' experience with Iran's rulers." Dr. Freud would have been amused. ❖

Tim Swarens, IndyStar: How do you solve a problem like Glenda? If that were a question on the ISTEP, it's clear that Indiana Republicans would be destined for summer school. No matter how many hours were spent teaching to the test. But in fairness, there's not a simple solution to the dilemma of how to smartly balance the political challenges posed by Indiana's educator in chief and the essential need to ensure that student achievement continues to improve in a state that's fallen below the curve for far too long. Acquiescence to Ritz's repeated demands to shelve on-the-job accountability for teachers isn't a viable option. We can't afford to go back to an era when the state essentially said that results in the classroom don't really matter in relation to job security or rewards. But continuing the current cycle of confusion and disarray on the State Board of Education and beyond isn't a responsible choice either. As House Speaker Brian Bosma told me this week: "It's clear that it's gone from dysfunctional operations (on the State Board) to being really detrimental to kids." So, faced with that choice, Gov. Mike Pence and his allies in the General Assembly landed on a decidedly less than perfect answer to the Ritz puzzle: Change the law to let the State Board elect its own chair in hopes of finding enough unity to build a workable body. To which Ritz's supporters have loudly and repeatedly cried foul. Understandably so. ❖

219,000 Hoosiers sign up for ACA

WASHINGTON — Nearly 219,000 Hoosiers obtained health insurance offered through the Affordable Care Act during the 3-month open enrollment period that ended Sunday (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The number, which includes new sign-ups and existing customers who re-enrolled in insurance plans, is a 65 percent increase over the first enrollment period in 2013-14, when more than 132,000 people bought coverage over a 6-month period. "If you look at that growth in Indiana and you look at that total enrollment of 219,000, we're pleased by the results," Kevin Counihan, chief executive officer of the Affordable Care Act Marketplace, said Wednesday in a media conference call. Counihan said there was "a tremendous amount of demand over the weekend" in Indiana. According to figures released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the health care law, more than 20,000 Indiana residents chose insurance plans over the final few days of the latest enrollment period. HHS said 88 percent of Hoosiers who signed up through January had qualified for tax credits that averaged \$325 a month. Nearly 80 percent of enrollees who qualified for subsidies were paying less than \$100 a month for insurance, the agency said. Indiana's latest enrollment figure was similar to numbers for Arizona and Tennessee. The three states have roughly the same number of residents.

Lilly gives \$40M

to Purdue

WEST LAFAYETTE — Lilly Endowment Inc. announced Wednesday a \$40 million grant to support



five projects in the Purdue University Colleges of Engineering and Technology and Purdue Libraries (Lafayette Journal & Courier). "It's now our duty to turn it into a significant event in Indiana history by delivering even more world-class engineers, technologists and leaders of all kinds, along with the discoveries, innovations and new jobs that great research produces," Purdue

President Mitch Daniels said. The grant is the largest cash donation in Purdue history. "These projects hold great promise to be real game-changers," said Sara B. Cobb, vice president of education for Lilly Endowment. "With its considerable strengths in engineering and technology, Purdue is poised for significant impact in research, education and economic development."

Teacher union ranks decline

LAFAYETTE — In 2011, teacher union leaders were neck deep in a losing battle against state lawmakers pushing a bill to curtail collective bargaining rights for teachers (Lafayette Journal & Courier). The bill passed easily, limiting negotiations for teaching contracts to just wages and wage-related benefits. The fear was that the law would weaken teachers unions and erode teacher protection against vindictive or incompetent administrators. Four years later, did that bargaining law — one piece of a coordinated, Republican-driven education reform agenda that included private school vouchers and teacher merit pay — enact the damage union leaders predicted at the time? Local union leaders say their relationships with local school officials remain collaborative despite the law. But they acknowledge that in most cases — just as it is in teacher unions across the county — their membership numbers are dropping. The Lafayette Education Association saw a 17 percent drop in the past four school years; membership decreased from 400 members, or

67 percent of Lafayette School Corp. teachers, in September 2011 to 332 members, or 56 percent of teachers, in September 2014. The Tippecanoe Education Association saw a 26 percent drop during that same time period — dropping from 420 members, or 67 percent of Tippecanoe School Corp. teachers, to 310 members, or 46 percent."

Clerical error costs Elkhart Co.

ELKHART — Elkhart County officials have learned they'll have \$1.5 million less in property tax revenue than expected because of a clerical error, but they expressed confidence that public services won't be affected (Parrott, Elkhart Truth). Elkhart County Council adopted a \$36.2 million budget in fall 2014. However, the state of Indiana recently told county officials that it can't collect more than \$34.7 million in property taxes for this year's general fund, leaving a roughly \$1.5 million budget shortfall for this year. County Auditor Pauline Graff says she used the wrong levy figure last fall. "None of us caught that when we were going through the budget," Graff said. "We would have had more cuts or they would have had to come up with more income."

Millennials cutting cable TV

INDIANAPOLIS — A new survey says more young adults are cutting the cable cord. They're still watching TV, but not in the traditional ways (WISH-TV). The Nielsen survey said millennial viewers, ages 18-34, dropped 10.6% from September to January. That's double what researchers have been seeing from season-to-season before. That means millennials are cancelling cable, throwing out the bunny ears, and using different services to watch TV. Cost seems to be a driving issue. Cable can run about 65-dollars a month on average, which adds up to nearly 800-dollars a year.