



Solutions for low Indiana vote turnout

Atrophy in participation requires stewardship

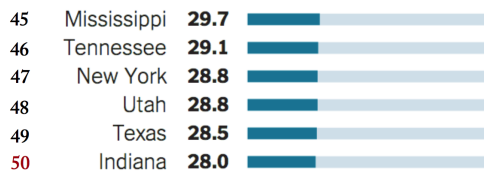
By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**
and **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – The concept of stewardship means leaving things in better shape than you found them. For many in the current generation of political and policy leadership in Indiana, they've witnessed a steep decline in voter participation. Over the past generation, voter turnout has plummeted to the point where the state has one of the worst rates in the United States. Hoosier policy makers need to explore and implement reforms.

When it comes to voter turnout, Indiana ranked 43rd according to the Election Assistance Commission in the 2014 elections with 27.7% of people in the state over age 18. The New York Times ranked Indiana 50th in voter turnout using a different criterion. This com-



"The Worst Voter Turnout in 72 Years"
Nov. 11, 2014



pares to 79.8% who voted in Alabama, 57.6% in Maine, 54.3% in Wisconsin and 49.5% in Oregon. In 2010, Indiana ranked 38th with 36.8% voting. "The last time voter turnout dipped below 36.4% in a U.S. general election was 1942, when 33.9% hit the polls,"

Continued on page 3

Gregg's lessons learned

By **CHRIS SAUTTER**

WASHINGTON – It's often said in politics that a candidate can learn more from losing than winning. Bill Clinton as the nation's youngest former governor learned enough from his 1980 loss to win it right back in a rematch. Barack Obama used lessons from his 2000 loss for a U.S. House seat to successfully win a seat in the U.S. Senate four years later.

John Gregg and Glenda Ritz are good examples of both sides of that adage. Former House Speaker Gregg, who started slowly in his 2012 race for governor before losing to Mike Pence in a surprisingly close election, is off to a fast start in



"The Club For Growth PAC strongly endorses Marlin Stutzman for U.S. Senate. Marlin has fought for economic liberty since he was elected to Congress in 2010."

*- Club For Growth President
David McIntosh*



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a possible re-match. On the other hand, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz thus far seems to have learned the wrong lessons from her stunning victory over incumbent Tony Bennett in 2012.

Gregg visited Washington recently, meeting with the Democratic Governors Association, raising some money, and basking a bit in second quarter fundraising totals that showed him outraising Gov. Pence by about \$125,000 this year, though Pence still has significantly more money in the bank. Gregg told a group of supporters at a downtown Washington gathering that last time he tended to opt for attending the small town bean supper over making fundraising calls. As a result of his poor fundraising, he failed to convince the DGA to invest more than nominally in his first race against Pence. Afterward, the DGA conceded, given the closeness of the race, that they might have missed an opportunity to "steal one" from the GOP.

Gregg also seems to have learned lessons in messaging. In his first run, Gregg over-relied on down-home Hoosier themes instead of emphasizing important professional strengths and explaining what he would do differently than Pence. He came across as "not gubernatorial" in his television commercials last time.

Gregg has a wealth of knowledge about how state government works from his days as Speaker of the Indiana House. And, as a former college president, he has an advantage over both Pence and Ritz on the issue of higher education. In 2012, those strengths were obscured by questionable TV ads designed to garner attention and raise his name recognition.

This time Gregg seems totally focused on the message that Indiana deserves better than the ideologically driven and divisive policies of Mike Pence. He is talking about his impressive resume and the policies he would implement to promote job creation, improve education, and bring Hoosiers together.

At the Washington event, Gregg shared some interesting results from focus groups his campaign commissioned just before the RFRA controversy broke. Voters who participated in the focus groups liked Pence personally. But not one of them could cite a single accomplishment of his administration. As the saying goes, Pence's support before RFRA was a mile wide but an inch deep. Now, as a result of RFRA, what likely sticks out in the minds of most voters is that Mike Pence was clueless about the hazards of RFRA and that he embarrassed Indiana nationally. That negative impression will be difficult to erase.

Indiana's governor race is on the radar screen of national Democrats this time. The major reason for the enthusiasm obviously stems from Pence's disastrous handling of RFRA. But Democrats are also clearly pleased with Gregg's much-improved approach to campaigning.

Campaigns matter. The last time Hoosier Democrats won a governor's race they were supposed to lose was in 1996. That year Lt. Gov. Frank O'Bannon defeated Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith, though overwhelmingly handicappers believed Goldsmith would prevail. O'Bannon won, in large part, because he ran one of the best statewide campaigns in recent memory. Tom New, who skillfully managed the 1996 O'Bannon race, is advising John Gregg this year and apparently Gregg is listening.

Meanwhile, the Ritz campaign is nothing if not puzzling. While it is true that she won her race in 2012 with very little money, she could not possibly believe she can be elected governor without strong fundraising. She apparently hit a roadblock with organized labor and some of the other major Democratic contributors. But it would seem that she could easily raise an amount in six figures or more from her much vaunted statewide grassroots network, if nothing else.

Ritz's various fundraising and other problems lead inescapably to the conclusion that no one is in

charge or in control of her campaign. She has time to turn it around, but the current negative buzz in Indiana political circles makes her task even more difficult.

If Gregg has learned important lessons from his last campaign, the question then is whether Mike Pence has learned the right lessons from both his narrow victory in 2012 and his disastrous handling of the RFRA crisis earlier this year. If he is able to put RFRA behind him and keep his party united, he will be the favorite again. Indiana is a Republican state. It takes unique circumstances or a special candidate for a Democrat to win statewide.

But does Pence understand why his last race was surprisingly close and why he missed signals that could

have prevented the RFRA crisis? If not, the Democratic nominee, whoever it is, has a good shot at an upset.

Winning is obviously better than losing. But win or lose, candidates need to understand why they won or lost and take corrective action to improve their chances of winning the next election.

John Gregg seems to be learning the right lessons from 2012. Whether either Glenda Ritz or Mike Pence will remain to be seen. ❖

Sautter is a Democratic consultant based in Washington.

Vote reform, from page 1

observed Terre Haute Tribune-Star columnist Mark Bennett.

Of the 435 U.S. House seats, 56 are considered competitive, but none is in Indiana. There were 54 seats in the Indiana General Assembly that were unopposed in 2014. And in 2012, while President Obama received 44% of the vote in Indiana, Hoosiers elected seven Republicans and two Democrats to the U.S. House, 40 Republicans to the Indiana Senate compared to 10 Democrats, and 71 Republicans to the Indiana House, compared to 29 Democrats.

Bennett quoted University of Florida political scientist Michael McDonald who cited Indiana election laws that tamp down voter turnout. One such law, dating back to 1913, sets the deadline for voters to register at 29 days before an election. "That is probably a contributing factor," McDonald said. States allowing voters to register on Election Day, or on-site during early voting, experience turnouts 5 to 7% larger than those that do not, on average, McDonald stated. The array of uncontested seats in the General Assembly creates the perception that many races are "pre-determined" and that turns off voters.

From the perspective of Tom Sugar, a former campaign manager, communications director and chief of staff to Gov./Sen. Evan Bayh, the percentage of Republican holding of various congressional and General Assembly seats is distorted from the number of voters who regularly identify as Democrats. In the April Howey Politics Indiana Poll conducted by Bellwether Research's Christine Matthews, 32% identified as Republican, 29% Democrats

(those numbers rose to 41% Republican with leaners and 36% Democrats with leaners), while 24% described themselves as independent. Republicans tend to respond that when Democrats drew the maps in 1991 and 2001, Democrats ended up with more House seats than the total vote.

"The outcomes are decided well in advance," said Sugar. "We need to take the politics away. People want to make choices between good candidates. You have too many districts that are noncompetitive. There are districts on both sides of the aisle that are like that. When you have unopposed candidates running, that removes that choice. That removes the motivation that someone has to get involved in the process. Some of the things involved there can be changed, some cannot."

Sugar has forged a "No Politics Plan" that is seeking an independent redistricting commission in Indiana. "We have to structurally reform the system," Sugar said in citing the litany of poor participation rankings and the Republican percentages of seats they hold

in the General Assembly and Congress. He also cites 2014 Rasmussen Reports polling that found that 56% of Americans believe that elections are rigged.

In a July 24 letter to State Rep. Jerry Torr and State Sen. Brandt Hershman, who chair the Special Interim Study Committee on Redistricting, Sugar advocated the Iowa system. "It is my view that this right has been compromised to an unprecedented degree by the confluence of three damaging developments: Nearly unlimited sums of money deployed by special interest groups, the balkanization of mass media and the hollowing out of news gathering, and the technological advancements in district design or map making. Simply put, this is not your grandfather's gerrymandering anymore," Sugar wrote.

"In 1980, Iowa state legislators fundamentally



Tom Sugar is pushing the Lead or Leave redistricting commission plan. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

changed the process for apportioning congressional and legislative districts. Since then Iowa has consistently produced some of the most competitive elections in the country and the partisan makeup of their legislature has closely mirrored the attitudes and values of Iowans. I encourage our committee to study in depth the details of the Iowa approach, but there is one key attribute that stands above all others: Politics has no place in it. Under Iowa law, it is illegal to use voter identification, past political performance or even the home addresses of incumbents when designing district boundaries. Instead districts are drawn using common sense criteria like population and compactness, and city, town, township and county lines are respected."

In Iowa in 2012, President Obama received 52% of the vote, while Democrats controlled the Iowa Senate 26-24, and Republicans controlled the Iowa House 53-47.

"The Supreme Court gave redistricting reform efforts like mine a big boost," Sugar said of the Arizona decision in June that cleared the way for states to proceed with independent redistricting commissions. "Now it's time to seize the momentum. The No Politics Plan will ensure the Indiana legislature and our congressional delegation reflect the true nature of our politics. It's the best path forward, and I intend to fight for it, including in my service as a newly appointed member of the Special Interim Study Committee on Redistricting."

Torr responded to Sugar, saying a schedule for the interim committee has not been set because several lay people have yet to be appointed.

Little change in Indiana election law

Indiana has done little to change its voting systems in an era when voter participation has fallen. There was a retooling of its computer voting systems following the 2000 presidential debacle in Florida. In 2007, the General Assembly began a county voting center pilot program, which expanded to seven counties in 2012 and 16 in 2014.

But many facets of elections in Indiana have not changed as the lifestyles of the population have. Voting

INDIANA

Obama v. Romney (2012)



Indiana Members of the U.S. House (2014)



State Senate (2014)



State House of Representatives (2014)



IOWA*

*Utilizes Approach Like No Politics Plan

Obama v. Romney (2012)



State Senate (2012)



State House of Representatives (2012)



still takes place from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays which is the shortest in the nation. People can vote 29 days prior to an election. Mail-in voting occurs if a voter meets certain qualifications (absentee, disability, over age 65 or if you participate in the state's address confidentially program).

Democrats appear to be more motivated to seek structural changes to the system than Republicans, who hold a vast majority of elected offices in the state. Beyond the federal and state legislative bodies and constitutional offices, Republicans hold a majority of mayoral positions and about 80% of county offices.

Indiana Democratic Chairman John Zody told HPI, "We need to take the politics away. They want to make choices between good candidates. You have too many districts that are noncompetitive. Districts on both sides of the aisle are like that. Unopposed candidates running removes that choice; it removes the motivation someone has to get involved in the process. Some of the things involved there can be changed, some cannot."

Zody blames Statehouse Republicans for the decline in voter participation, citing a 2013 bill by State Sen. Scott Schneider that would end all early voting. "There are things you could change, but unfortunately Republicans at the Statehouse keep making worse our election laws," Zody said. "Look no further than this last legislative session when we had a bill to make the absentee voting process more cumbersome. Time after time after time, Indiana has blazed the modern trail of voter suppression with our voter ID law back in 2005, reducing the number of days people can go into the clerk's office to vote early. Most people don't even use our state voter registration form anymore, they use the federal one because the state form is so cumbersome. We have Republican majorities, now super majorities, that are intent on making voting harder and that is something that needs to change."

Kittle sought a redistricting commission

Multiple sources in both major political parties tell HPI that after Jim Kittle Jr. became Republican chair-

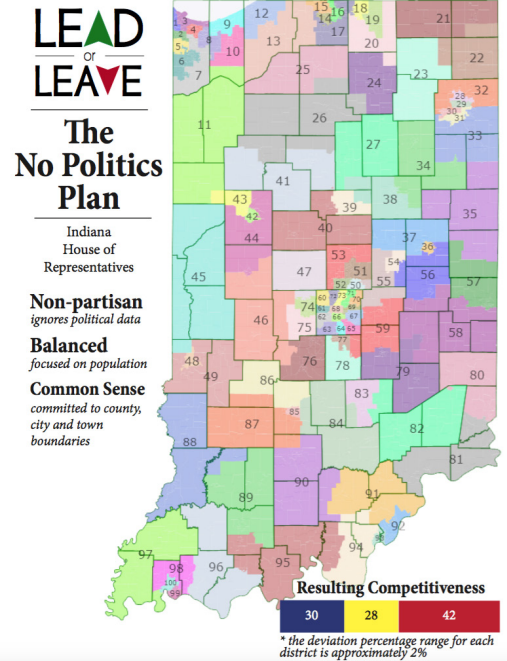
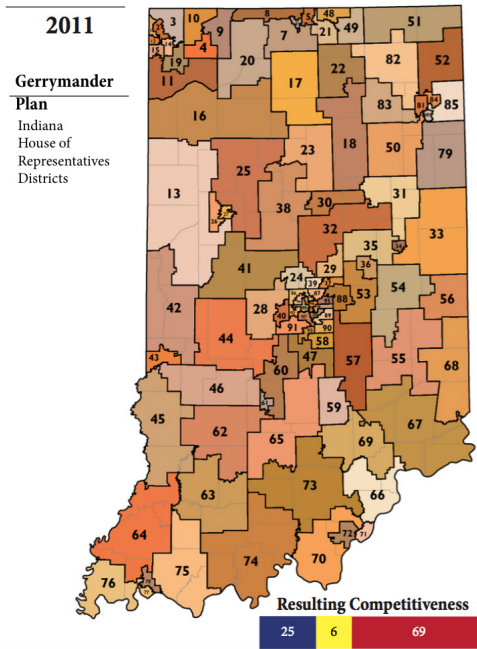
man in 2002, he approached Democratic Chairman Dan Parker about forging the independent redistricting commission. Parker told HPI that he was open to the concept, but it was ultimately scotched by powerful State Rep. B. Patrick Bauer. It was a fateful decision by the South Bend Democrat, who had watched his party redraw maps in 1991 and 2001 that kept House Democrats competitive.

In 2009 and 2010, as part of a national GOP effort aimed at taking control of legislatures, Gov. Mitch Daniels, Speaker Bosma and the House Republican Campaign Committee recruited a legion of candidates, financed their campaigns, and with U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh abruptly abandoning his reelection campaign, added the House to their control of the Senate and redrew the maps in 2011. The Washington Post recently analyzed Congressional maps across the nation and deemed Indiana's and Nevada's as the least gerrymandered, meeting the criteria of compactness, respecting existing county and school district boundaries, while keeping "communities of interest" whole.

While Indiana's current maps don't resemble lizards and adhere to the concepts laid out by then Secretary of State Todd Rokita, they did create maps that yielded GOP super majorities.

Part of the blame for the out-sized majorities must rest with Indiana Democrats, who lost much of their past legacy strongholds along the Ohio and Wabash rivers. Just a handful of Democrats represent rural areas and only a few represent districts in Southern Indiana, once the party's stronghold. In the General Assembly, Democrats have been mostly relegated to Lake, St. Joseph and Marion counties, and college towns.

The Indiana Democratic party spent much of the Bayh/O'Bannon era as a "conservative lite," pro-gun, pro-life and anti-same sex marriage in an attempt to compete with the GOP. With Bayh and his prolific coattails ditching the 2010 election, many Southern Hoosier voters simply



Indiana State House: District Comparison

Current Maps			New Maps	
D%	R%		D%	R%
100%	0%	District 1	73%	27%
90%	10%	District 2	55%	44%
100%	0%	District 3	85%	14%
45%	55%	District 4	97%	2%
0%	100%	District 5	47%	52%
100%	0%	District 6	48%	52%
76%	24%	District 7	63%	36%
100%	0%	District 8	57%	42%
100%	0%	District 9	58%	41%
57%	43%	District 10	51%	49%
43%	57%	District 11	42%	57%
49%	51%	District 12	64%	35%
0%	100%	District 13	54%	44%
100%	0%	District 14	69%	30%
41%	59%	District 15	69%	31%
36%	64%	District 16	53%	46%
0%	100%	District 17	44%	55%
0%	100%	District 18	56%	43%
49%	51%	District 19	43%	56%
0%	100%	District 20	32%	67%
33%	67%	District 21	42%	57%
24%	71%	District 22	43%	56%
0%	100%	District 23	39%	60%
0%	100%	District 24	30%	68%
29%	71%	District 25	45%	53%

Current Maps			New Maps	
D%	R%		D%	R%
0%	100%	District 26	42%	57%
52%	48%	District 27	40%	59%
17%	83%	District 28	43%	57%
26%	74%	District 29	49%	50%
42%	58%	District 30	54%	46%
0%	100%	District 31	70%	30%
37%	63%	District 32	32%	67%
36%	60%	District 33	38%	61%
66%	34%	District 34	35%	64%
51%	49%	District 35	43%	55%
61%	39%	District 36	67%	33%
0%	100%	District 37	49%	49%
0%	100%	District 38	43%	56%
27%	73%	District 39	49%	50%
0%	100%	District 40	41%	58%
0%	100%	District 41	44%	54%
44%	56%	District 42	59%	40%
100%	0%	District 43	59%	41%
0%	100%	District 44	45%	54%
43%	57%	District 45	47%	51%
38%	62%	District 46	39%	60%
23%	77%	District 47	35%	64%
0%	100%	District 48	62%	36%
-%	83%	District 49	49%	50%
0%	100%	District 50	41%	59%

Strong Republican Strong Democrat Competitive

aligned with Republicans due to social issues. Indiana Democrats have failed over the past several election cycles to articulate the pocketbook issues that could have helped them draw a sharper contrast, and one that would be understood at the kitchen tables where the decline of per capita income, and an explosion of credit card and college loan debt have hobbled the middle class that once fueled Democratic victories.

Indiana Republican Chairman Jeff Cardwell told HPI that his party is open to any way to improve partici-

pation. "Everybody is concerned about low voter turnout," Cardwell said. "It's not a political issue, it's an American issue. We have a great country and we need to increase voter turnout."

Cardwell said he has agreed to join a bipartisan group organized by former congressman Lee Hamilton, who heads Indiana University's Center on Congress. "All issues need to be discussed," Cardwell said. "We need to look at all opportunities to engage participation."

Cardwell said one reason for low turnout is that voter files need to be updated. "We haven't cleaned up our files," he said, noting that he's not confident in the current associated data points. "We need to embrace the best technology available to us."

There are Republicans who seem to understand that topical control of power does not translate into the kind of stewardship needed to keep democracy here vibrant. House Speaker Brian Bosma has advocated a move toward a non-partisan redistricting commission, as has State Sen. Mike Delph. Bosma co-authored the redistricting commission study committee bill with House Minority Leader Scott Pelath. Bosma told the NWI Times that, halfway through the decade, timing is getting tighter to make the structural reforms needed to foster a redistricting commission. "It probably requires at least some flexibility in our constitutional provision today," Bosma explained.

In a 2012 white paper authored with fellow Kroger Gardis attorney William Brock, Bosma dissected the legal points associated with redistricting. The paper's opening observation reads, "The primary goal of any redistricting effort is to avoid a successful legal challenge following the completion of the process. Most legal challenges to redistricting plans are based on the alleged failure to adequately address the key redistricting issues of population equality, minority vote dilution, reverse discrimination, traditional and statutory redistricting criteria and public access to the redistricting process. In short, the best and safest districting practice is to justify any significant population deviations in a redistricting plan with objective consistently applied criteria such as preserving or enhancing compactness, contiguity, communities of interest, the cores of prior districts, and/or geographic, municipal or

Indiana State Senate: District Comparison

Current Maps			New Maps	
D%	R%		D%	R%
60%	40%	District 1	63%	36%
100%	0%	District 2	92%	7%
100%	0%	District 3	57%	42%
100%	0%	District 4	49%	50%
45%	55%	District 5	55%	44%
32%	68%	District 6	59%	40%
36%	64%	District 7	69%	30%
58%	42%	District 8	49%	50%
0%	100%	District 9	46%	53%
69%	31%	District 10	40%	59%
0%	100%	District 11	38%	61%
31%	69%	District 12	45%	54%
0%	100%	District 13	61%	39%
0%	100%	District 14	34%	65%
41%	59%	District 15	37%	62%
35%	65%	District 16	41%	58%
0%	100%	District 17	43%	56%
0%	100%	District 18	45%	53%
0%	100%	District 19	45%	54%
0%	100%	District 20	42%	57%
0%	100%	District 21	56%	43%
0%	100%	District 22	58%	41%
33%	67%	District 23	53%	46%
32%	68%	District 24	39%	60%
74%	26%	District 25	38%	61%
0%	100%	District 26	38%	60%
25%	65%	District 27	57%	42%
38%	62%	District 28	40%	59%
46%	54%	District 29	42%	57%
48%	49%	District 30	39%	60%
0%	100%	District 31	66%	33%
41%	59%	District 32	70%	29%
90%	0%	District 33	58%	42%
100%	0%	District 34	70%	29%
43%	57%	District 35	83%	16%
47%	53%	District 36	69%	30%
29%	71%	District 37	49%	50%
48%	52%	District 38	44%	55%
39%	61%	District 39	40%	59%
60%	40%	District 40	37%	62%
24%	72%	District 41	46%	52%
0%	100%	District 42	42%	57%
28%	72%	District 43	39%	60%
0%	100%	District 44	56%	43%
46%	54%	District 45	45%	54%
44%	56%	District 46	42%	57%
42%	58%	District 47	47%	52%
34%	66%	District 48	48%	51%
0%	100%	District 49	34%	65%
40%	60%	District 50	44%	55%

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Indiana Congressional Districts Comparison

Current Maps			New Maps	
D%	R%		D%	R%
61%	36%	District 1	61%	38%
38%	59%	District 2	51%	48%
27%	69%	District 3	44%	55%
33%	67%	District 4	45%	54%
31%	65%	District 5	44%	55%
29%	66%	District 6	41%	58%
55%	42%	District 7	68%	31%
36%	60%	District 8	48%	51%
33%	63%	District 9	48%	51%

Strong Republican Strong Democrat Competitive

precinct boundaries."

But in the Indiana Senate, President David Long has been largely ambivalent about ceding control of the redistricting process even though Democrats have had majority control of that body for only two of the past 45 years. Those two years came after the GOP was washed out in the post-Watergate 1974 election.

Vote reform efforts often find the Indiana Senate as a graveyard. Long points to the 2011 maps that adhere to the perspectives offered by Bosma and Brock. "We are extremely proud of the maps we drew in the 2011 redistricting effort, where the process was fair, open, transparent and totally compatible with the recommended guidelines set out by the U.S. Supreme Court," Long said. As for the redistricting commission summer study, Long said, "We are a state that embraces positive, common-sense ideas, and we should be open to exploring the experiences and outcomes of states (that) handle redistricting differently than Indiana."

Cardwell said he has “no real thoughts” at this time on an independent, non-partisan redistricting commission, adding, “We need to learn more about it.”

“I’m absolutely committed to improving turnout,” Cardwell said, who served as an election observer in El Salvador last February. “I’m grateful to be from such a great nation.” He said he was moved that many rural El Salvadorans traveled great distances and waited in long lines to vote, noting that voter turnout there was high, much higher than here in Indiana. “I want to do everything I can to protect the process. I want to use my position to increase participation. We are always open to change and new ideas.”

Republican Secretary of State Connie Lawson is embarking on a voter outreach program for this year’s municipal elections, said spokeswoman Valerie Kroger, though she is not currently advocating any of the kind of structural changes that Sugar is advocating.

“To our knowledge this is the first-ever municipal election voter outreach campaign,” Kroger said. “The campaign starts the week after Labor Day, the traditional start of campaign season. It will feature TV, radio, print and online and social media advertising focused on encouraging Hoosiers to register to vote and to vote. We hope that this will increase awareness and turnout in this year’s elections.”

Democrats seek systemic changes

Howard County Democratic Chairman David Tharp says the state should retool its system to reflect the changing electorate. He advocates:

- **Same day voter registration:** “We currently shut off registration before the peak of the election,” Tharp explained. “Large segments of potential voters are not tapped into the cycle until just a few weeks or days before an election. By that time, the electorate is frozen. Create same day voter registration opportunities and you immediately remove a barrier to voting.”

- **Change the default setting:** Instead of having every 18-year-old seek out a registration form, change the default to where each 18-year-old is automatically registered to vote at their current address and mail them their registration. Citizens can opt out of registration for any reason, but they no longer have to “get” registered when they come of age. “This method of changing the default has a proven track record of increasing participation in other areas like organ donation,” Tharp said.

- **Reverse the changes made to the voter registration form:** The General Assembly made a host of changes to the form that are designed to limit registration drives; including the necessity of providing your personal information to the individuals with which you register.

- **End voter ID requirements:** Voter ID laws have no impact on deterring (non-existent) in-person voter fraud. They do have an impact on elderly, poor, and minority voter participation rates. It is another unnecessary barrier.

- **Increase poll times:** Make the polls open longer on Election Day, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. This makes it easier on working folks and particularly on moms and dads juggling work and child care pickup.

- **Increase satellite voting/early voting:** Most counties do not provide satellite voting locations. In the majority of our counties the only opportunity to vote early is by visiting the courthouse during its restrictive business hours and for a few hours on the two Saturdays prior to the election. Expand both the locations and the hours. For a county like Howard, that should involve having 6 to 8 early voting locations that are staffed beyond 4 p.m. The current system is designed to be easy on the clerk’s office staff and not designed with the voter in mind: this mindset needs to change. Put the voter first by providing more early voting locations, extended hours and Sunday early voting. This also has the benefit of eliminating instances of voter intimidation: In Howard County voters must walk through a metal detector and be wanded down prior to voting early. Not only is this process time intensive, it acts a deterrent to participation.

- **No fault absentee vote by mail:** Make voting by mail open to all voters.

Common Cause of Indiana also advocates great accessibility. “We support more early voting opportunities at satellite locations outside county courthouses, longer polling place hours (our 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. voting day is the shortest in the country), and less restrictive absentee voting laws,” the organization states on its website. “The best way to address administrative barriers to voting is Election Day voter registration, which is possible now that we have a statewide, electronic voter file.”

An array of states are seeking structural changes. Redistricting commission movements are underway in Ohio (where Issue 1 will be on the November ballot), Florida, Maryland, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota, North Carolina, Nebraska and Pennsylvania.

Changing society

As Howard County Republican Chairman Craig Dunn notes in his column on Page 10, voter turnout is not the only aspect of society to see disengagement. Attendance in church on Sunday and to high school basketball on Friday night is down. Services clubs are seeing declining enrollment.

Cardwell acknowledges that “many people don’t believe their own vote matters” but adds that despite Democratic complaints that too many districts aren’t competitive, says “everybody has the opportunity to seek office.”

The Republican chairman also believes that social media has changed everything associated with politics, including turnout. Policy makers, he said, need to study the impact of social media, and, perhaps, use such tools to create more interest in the process. ❖

Voter ID remains in the political crosshairs

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – Since last November, discussion of improving Indiana’s embarrassing voter turnout rate of 28%, the lowest in the nation, has touched on all the predictable topics: Voter apathy, the early voting window, easing absentee voting restrictions, whether district lines deter competition, etc. Though not as hot button as in previous years, Indiana’s voter ID law still remains in the crosshairs and talking points of Democrats. To them it’s unnecessarily restrictive and intentionally so.

“Time after time after time, Indiana has blazed the modern trail of voter suppression,” Indiana Democratic Chairman John Zody told HPI on the topic of improving voter participation. The state’s 2005 voter ID law was among the first two examples he mentioned. Hoosier Democrats’ efforts, however, would be better served focusing on other election law reforms and improving their candidates and campaigns.



To vote in person, a Hoosier must present an ID issued by either Indiana or the U.S. government. It must match their registration record and have a photo and expiration date. If a voter cannot or refuses to present such an ID, they are still allowed to cast a provisional ballot. However, in order for their ballot to be counted, the voter must present themselves to the election board by noon on the following Monday and either present a valid ID or sign an affidavit swearing they were unable to procure one because of indigence or religious objections to being photographed.

When the voter ID law was passed, Indiana created a free, six-year ID card specifically for voting if one does not have a driver’s license. To secure any Indiana-issued ID for the first time requires proving your identity, social security number, lawful status within the United States, and Indiana residency. Democrats argue voter fraud, especially voter impersonation, is extremely episodic and largely a myth. Given the sea change in how modern life is lived day to day, there is now the widely held (and reasonable) expectation that IDs should be required for important transactions, such as voting.

Indiana Republican Chairman Jeff Cardwell told HPI, “You can’t get on an airplane without photo ID. Why wouldn’t you want to protect the integrity of the system?” He spent time as an election observer in El Salvador last February. “That’s a third world country and they have voter ID,” Cardwell said.

Democrats challenged the legality of Indiana’s vot-

er ID law and failed. In 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court took up the case, *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board*. The resulting 6-3 decision held that ID requirements were in keeping with Indiana’s interest to prevent voter fraud and assure the sanctity of the election process. Associate Justice John Paul Stevens, more a moderate than conservative, wrote in the opinion of the court, “Because Indiana’s cards are free, the inconvenience of going to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, gathering required documents, and posing for a photograph does not qualify as a substantial burden on most voters’ right to vote, or represent a significant increase over the usual burdens of voting.”

The National Conference of State Legislatures classifies Indiana as one of seven states with “strict” voter identification laws. All told, however, 23 states now request an ID when voting.

During the 2008 Supreme Court case, Democrats and liberal groups said as many as 400,000 Hoosiers did not have an ID necessary to vote. Then-Secretary of State Todd Rokita’s office said the number was likely under 25,000. You don’t hear that scary figure of hundreds of the thousands anymore. When I asked Zody if the ID law really deters that many Hoosiers from voting today, he replied in generalities. “I think it can set up the conditions where it makes voting harder,” he said. “When you set up onerous laws that make certain people go through a certain effort to exercise a right, it will impact turnout.”

For the political party that claims to have championed and monitored the wellbeing of disadvantaged groups, we heard little to nothing from Democrats for decades regarding their constituents’ lack of government-issued IDs until the dawn of these voter laws. This newfound outrage is troubling because possession of a government-issued ID has long been mandatory to fully enjoy modern citizenship. It’s become cliché to rattle off all of the activities and transactions that require a government-issued ID, but it is quite real nonetheless. This explains why the ID requirement seems far from burdensome and just another bureaucratic, albeit common sense aspect of modern life. It’s quite conceivable that Indiana’s 2005 voter ID law provided the first avenue for some Hoosiers to obtain government-issued identification.

The Democratic answer to Indiana’s voter ID law should not be histrionics, repeal, nor further court challenges, but rather proactive efforts to provide government-issued IDs to those who have difficulty securing them. Perhaps the BMV could have several mobile vans tour both urban and rural areas of the state offering their usual services, but, most importantly, providing extra assistance for those who may not have access to transportation or all the necessary documentation required to procure an Indiana ID. Yes, it will be great if typically disadvantaged groups such as the elderly, homeless, and disabled will be able to present an ID to vote on Election Day. Perhaps even more importantly, they will possess an essential tool to greater consumer, financial, and legal freedom the other 364 days of the year.

Requiring Hoosiers (and Americans) to prove their identity in order to verify they can exercise a constitutional right, such as voting, is reasonable. However, it requires uniformity in application to other public policy topics and on this point some Republicans lapse, like Democrats, into selective obdurance.

"When you're looking at a right that is guaranteed by the constitution, then you have got to make sure that right is distributed equally," Zody told HPI. "We believe as Democrats that voting should be accessible and as easy as possible for everyone who is eligible to do it." Someone could have easily spoken those two sentences from the other side of the aisle if you replaced "Democrats" with "Republicans" and "voting" with "purchasing a firearm."

It's time for both parties to be intellectually consistent in rhetoric and practice. Republicans across the country should hold firm on voter ID laws, but those who

do not already, should acknowledge it's not an overly burdensome administrative step to verify background checks during firearm sales. If Democrats believe there should be background checks for a constitutional right such as firearm purchases, then they should acknowledge voter ID laws are part and parcel to the same line of argument.

The rights to vote and bear arms are cherished and extremely important constitutional assurances. Yet we, the commonweal, have come to a general consensus there should be systems in place to assure these rights are exercised correctly and honestly. IDs and data bases are the best mechanism to prove the identity of a person in order to verify whether they should be allowed to exercise a constitutional right, such as voting on that day, at that precinct, or purchasing a specific firearm given their personal history. Certainly more can be done to improve voter engagement and turnout in Indiana. But let's get serious; doing away with our voter ID law is not one of them. ❖

Redistricting reform brings a birthday cake

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – Two weeks ago was the birthday anniversary of Elbridge Gerry, whose namesake, gerrymandering, stands for drawing of election districts to suit the faction doing the drawing. Now a bipartisan coalition is using the opportunity to call for independent redistricting in Indiana.

At a rally on the Statehouse steps, complete with a birthday cake, the Indiana Coalition for Independent Redistricting called upon the newly created Special Study Committee on Redistricting to work toward serious reforms.

"We are on our way, we have our foot in the door," said Julia Vaughn, of Common Cause Indiana. "We know this is not going to come easy. Make no doubt about it, the ability to draw districts is one of the most powerful political tools that the legislative majority has and they are not going to give it up without a fight."

One aspect all redistricting proponents touched on was how uncompetitive races influence voter turnout. Paul Helmke, former three-term Republican mayor of Fort Wayne, told the crowd redistricting was an imperative, citing uncontested legislative contests in both partisan directions. He said he almost considered not voting last year. Tom Sugar, a former chief of staff of U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh, agrees. "The people are exasperated; national poll-

ing shows that 70 percent of Americans think elections are rigged," Sugar said. "To add insult to injury, Indiana had the worst voter turnout in America in 2014." Indiana's voter participation last November was 28 percent.

Sugar has been appointed a member of the redistricting study committee and has founded a pro-reform group called "Lead or Leave." "I know he's going to be a bulldog in the process," Vaughn said of Sugar. She also wants Helmke to serve on the panel. Sugar contends his plan would make 22 House seats and seven Senate

seats competitive as well as four congressional districts. Last year none of the state's nine congressional races were close once the ballots were counted.

"It's about politicians stacking the deck. It's one of those background issues, like election reform, voter registration. People only care about their polls opening, they don't

care about the mechanics of it," Vaughn said. "It is wonky, but people are starting to understand these are issues that affect everyday life."

Besides redistricting, Vaughn's group backs other reforms they believe will augment voter turnout. She said Minnesota, which has the nation's highest voter participation rate, has same-day voter registration. "There is no magic bullet, but if there is one, that's it," she told HPI.

Though Vaughn laments Indiana's voter ID law, she said the number one reason people are turned away at the polls is a registration error of some kind. She contends the technology is there to assure accurate registration in real time by equipping each polling location with electronic poll books connected to BMV databases. ❖



Uninformed voters at the polls? No way

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – As a Republican Party County chairman, I’ve come to learn a thing or two about voter turnout. Don’t count on me to be one of those who sees low voter turnout as a sign of the apocalypse or some nefarious plot by the vast right wing conspiracy to unjustly win elections through some sophisticated method of voter suppression. Low voter turnout occurs because of voter apathy, plain and simple.



The general malaise is not confined to polling places on Election Day. We can see evidence of this apathy in our churches, service clubs and

PTAs. You can see the apathy even in the hallowed shrines of Indiana high school basketball, where cavernous arenas remain partially filled on game nights. The public has become increasingly fickle and demanding with where and how they will allocate their time and energy.

I can remember running for delegate to the Indiana Republican State Convention in 1972 as an 18-year-old. The district I was running in had nine candidates chasing two delegate positions. As a county chairman I quickly learned that those days were dead and gone. I’ve now been moved to create two super districts for delegates to the convention, one for 4th Congressional District residents and one for 5th District residents. I’ve done this so that I may fill all delegate seats by election and not have to resort to filling delegate vacancies by appointment. The world has changed.

Voter turnout statistics have been used and misused for a variety of purposes. They’ve been massaged even more than global warming statistics and used as proof to promote whatever agenda the pundits are pursuing. To the breathless lights of the left, the statistics are proof positive of the evil effects of big money, talk radio, Fox News and institutional voter suppression. Conservative pundits don’t get nearly as worked up about low voter turnout statistics because they are quick to lament the woeful ignorance of the typical infrequent voter on key issues. Failure of people who spend their days glued to Twitter to live vicariously through Kim Kardashian and Kanye West does not alarm the average conservative when they don’t get out of bed and vote.

Voter turnout statistics are a fairly mixed bag. Turnout for presidential elections was fairly high until after World War I. Since then, voter turnout has ranged from a low of 48% to a high of 62%, with the average

turnout hovering in the mid-50% range. One might lament the presidential election turnout as low but it certainly is not in a statistically verifiable decline. So much for the big money, voter suppression baloney!

Midterm election turnouts have shown a steady decline since 1966. That year voter turnout was 48.4%. We’ve seen midterm turnout gradually decline to 36.3% in 2014. I believe that this statistic is what is really bugging journalists and liberal pundits. I can just imagine the angst of going from the exhilarating victory of the people by Barack Obama in 2008 to the crushing defeat of the voter-suppressed, Koch brothers-purchased 2010 off-year election which gave Republicans control of the House of Representatives and has served to block much of President Obama’s rush to Greece status. Can’t those noble voters who have twice elected the Chosen One just make it to the polls, vote absentee or do early voting and sustain the many wonderful programs of our socialist wunderkind?

This all begs the salient question of just what are you really upset about. Is it that people whose futures will be dramatically impacted by off-year elections don’t vote as frequently as they do in presidential cycles or are you really just upset with the outcome of the elections and assume that greater turnout will bring better results for Democrats and their liberal agendas? I’m just guessing that an extra 5% turnout by Republicans with no corresponding increase by Democrats would not be viewed as a triumph of democracy, but rather further proof of a failed system.

From where I sit as a county and congressional district Republican chairman, it appears to me that voters turn out to vote when they are motivated by campaigns that draw a significant distinction between candidates and offer a reasonable chance that either party may prevail. In Indiana, there is nothing better than a hotly contested sheriff election to get the voters to the polls.

As to legislative races, with Republicans holding super majorities in both the Indiana House and Senate, with huge financial advantages, the average potential voter sees these races decided before the elections are held. The same may be said for congressional elections. You could have bet the farm in 2014 that Republicans would win seven of the nine elections for United States representative in Indiana. There was no outcry of doom and dismay in 2006 when voter turnout was only .8% higher but voters gave Democrats majorities in Congress and in the Indiana House of Representatives. I guess it just depends on whose voter goes whose ox.

Will our country and society be enriched by an influx of uninformed voters making their way to the ballot box because they like the candidate’s jingle, appearance or mantra? I don’t think so. Give me informed voters or just let the apathetic stay in bed on Election Day! ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

When the dead voted in the 1970 Hartke-Roudebush showdown

By MARK SOUDER

FORT WAYNE – In 1970, Lake County was known for having high voter turnout when needed. As in Chicago, it wasn't even required that you were still alive in order



to cast your vote. Others voted early and often. It was a mess. Other major cities in Indiana, and tightly controlled rural counties, had been known to cheat as well, but nothing, even had all allegation totals been combined, approached the voter fraud in Lake.

In 1970 U.S. Sen. Vance Hartke was running for reelection, opposed by Congressman Richard Roudebush. Former mayor Hartke had proven to be

a feisty and scrappy competitor, as well as lucky. Hartke was the kind of candidate the Region liked, a gritty, old-style, campaigner who delivered. Democrat Boss John Krupa was the strong-arm political man who corralled the disparate parts of the machine, East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, etc., and hammered them into the essential foundation of Indiana Democrat and union power.

A court had ordered that a certified Republican observer could go into a polling place and check the vote count on the machine at any point during the day. The Democrats, of course, could do the same. They usually did anyway.

The Republicans created precinct groupings. Each had an assigned car that included an attorney with the appropriate legal certification, a steelworker to drive, and two college students. There was also a phone in each car, which was connected to the media because the police were not trusted. One student was to stay in the car with the phone should trouble arise. The other student and the volunteer driver would accompany the attorney up to the poll, and wait outside within visual distance of the student back in the car.

I was Indiana College Republican chairman at the time, so felt I should be one of the volunteers. My friend Maurice Emery and I drove over the night before and then got up early to meet the others gathered for assignments in the gray pre-dawn morning. Most of the students were very nervous. At least I was. Maurice was less so, and waved his hand to volunteer us for the first assignment, the precincts in Gary that were considered to be highest risk of fraud.

Our first goal was to visit as many of the precinct posts prior to the 6 a.m. scheduled openings to scout out the most suspicious. Using a newspaper public listing of polling places that morning – what the voters had for reference – one of the first ones turned out to be a private home. That, of course, is illegal. Furthermore, not seeing any sign of activity, we walked around and found on the back a notice posted with a new polling place location. Upside down. And, as you probably know, you can't switch a polling place on day of the election.

We went to the new location and watched for a while when the polls opened. There were some barrels with some sort of fire going to provide warmth for a few Hartke volunteers holding signs. Our attorney went in. Amazingly, something like a hundred or so people had already voted. We had seen six or eight. We watched for more minutes – no voters – and made a swing through the other 20 or so precincts. We felt we should go back to the suspect polling place and observe some more. No activity. Then our attorney went in to check the numbers (around mid-morning). Amazingly, it had the highest turnout in the city of Gary with some 400 mostly phantom voters.

But we had other problems. At least one polling place had a bar open across the street (illegal) and was a mess. Around noon we received an emergency call to "rescue" Mike Organ, another college volunteer. Because there were no Republicans in his precinct, he decided that he could better serve justice by helping as the Republican poll book assistant. But there had been a shootout in the alley behind the table where he was working. Rattled, he wanted out. It turned out to be just an everyday shooting, not election related, but he was already on the road back to Indy when we arrived.

I had decided holding my camera was the best defense that day. As I checked for roaming buses of voters going from polling place to polling place, I was tracked by a Democrat ward chairman who kept asking which newspaper I worked for. After I denied several, he finally congratulated me on trying to disguise my cover but he already knew that I worked for the Hammond Times. I didn't deny it because it demonstrated some caution on the machine's part.

It was clear chaos was reigning, but for me, my last time out of the car was most memorable. It was late afternoon. Dozens and dozens of people were milling around outside a polling place. The steelworker and I were waiting outside the polling place for our attorney. I was holding my camera. Suddenly our attorney appeared, being carried out by four men or so. I snapped my last picture. Suddenly a strong well-dressed man was in front of me, grabbing me by the shoulder. He told me to stop taking pictures. I argued that as a free citizen, I could do what I wanted.

He said that either my camera or my face was going to be broken. At that point, I was willing to run away but was in his grip. The steelworker, emboldened, proceeded to lift my camera back up and told me to shoot a

picture. The man pushed it down. The steelworker pushed it up. The man pushed it down. Then he told me he was a police officer, and opened his jacket which displayed his badge. He was Gary Mayor Hatcher's brother. And he still had a hold on me.

Some press was beginning to arrive (Maurice had used the phone). Suddenly there was a hatchet chop from an arm that broke his grip. The legendary John Krupa had freed me. He said it would be probably best if I left. I needed no convincing. I ran, then stayed in the car for the rest of the day.

The extremely close election was won by Hartke, with Lake County providing the key votes needed and Gary votes remaining unreported long after most results were in. The results were appealed. It went to the Supreme Court. Most of the Lake County precincts were in our

group. The Republicans lost the appeal mostly because we could not prove that all those voters hadn't voted during the times we were not present at each precinct, which was true.

When I hear about turnout being too low, it always brings back 1970 to me. We once had higher turnout, but across America it was not legit. Elections have become more honest. Today if people are too lazy, or cannot comprehend that the large differences between the parties determine what kind of nation we will be, then I hope they stay home. The last thing we need is more uninformed voters. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Fort Wayne.

Voters need to press on gerrymandering

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – The U.S. Supreme Court recently decided an independent commission in Arizona may determine election district boundaries for congressional and legislative seats. This puts Arizona among the few states limiting the power of legislators to control the election process.



Despite this critical decision, we did not feel the earth move in Indiana.

Although the 2015 General Assembly created an Interim Study Committee on Redistricting, the prevailing Hoosier view is legislators will not give up their power to decide where boundaries are drawn. While a study committee gives opponents of the current corrupt system a chance to vent, one of the best ways to bury an issue is to assign it to such a committee. No meetings of the Study Committee are scheduled at this time.

Indiana's Republican-dominated General Assembly drew the lines of our congressional and legislative seats to maximize the number of Republicans elected. If they were in the majority, Democrats would do the same. It's the way the parties play the game. But it is no game. Hoosiers depend on their elected representatives to shape tax, expenditure and social policies. These in turn determine the nature and quality of public services which drive our economy.

The 2014 election of Indiana's delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives shows how the playing field

lies today. Although each congressional seat is supposed to represent approximately the same number of persons, 60 percent more persons voted in the Mr. Stutzman's 3rd district (Northeast Indiana) than Mr. Carson's 7th District (Indianapolis). Indiana has nine seats in the House. Seven are held by Republicans and two by Democrats. Thus the dominant party in the state legislature (the Republicans) got 77 percent of Indiana's delegation. They achieved this with just 58 percent of the vote.

Many practitioners of politics believe a victory by more than 55 percent of the vote cast is a landslide. By that definition only Mr. Carson failed to make the earth move; he won by a measly 54.7 percent. All the other victors exceeded 55 percent; five of them topped 60 percent, led by Mr. Rokita's 67 percent in the 4th district. Such major landslides are the evidence of non-competitive elections. It is easy to say Hoosiers preferred Republicans to Democrats in 2014. But to win 77 percent of the seats with 58 percent of the vote shows the field is slanted toward Republicans and our elections are not competitive.

Perhaps the Democrats, seeing how the district boundaries are drawn against them, meekly failed to put up strong candidates or gave them inadequate support to make a sincere winning effort. Similarly, in the 1st and 7th districts, Republicans, anticipating defeat, responded with flaccid campaigns.

What's to be done? Aroused citizens need to make candidates for public office aware of their discontent with the current gerrymandering system. They must inform themselves about how other states handle this problem and then get bills passed for an independent commission to redraw our congressional and legislative districts after the next census in 2020. That's just tomorrow in legislative time. ❖

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

Buncich, Lake Dems coalesce around Gregg

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – If Glenda Ritz wants to win the Democratic nomination for governor, she'll have to do it without the heart of the Lake County precinct organization. Ritz, who is the superintendent of public instruction, entered the governor sweepstakes considerably after former House Speaker John Gregg announced that he would take another run at Republican Gov. Mike Pence.



With a series of attacks on Ritz, Pence and legislative Republicans have made a martyr of the head of education in Indiana. Ritz expects to have the state's teachers on her side during the 2016 primary election. And that, of course, is a pretty strong lobby.

But the Lake County Democratic precinct organization isn't buying into the Ritz candidacy. Last week, at a fundraiser for Lake County Sheriff John Buncich, who doubles as county chairman, Gregg was front and center before a crowd of some 800 Democrats.

Buncich introduced Gregg as "the next governor of Indiana." Gregg received a standing ovation from the crowd. During his brief speech, Gregg talked about the middle class and raising the minimum wage. And he talked about trying to restore the rights that have been taken away from teachers and other labor unions. And, unlike four years ago when he narrowly lost to Pence, Gregg said the governor is very beatable this time around.

Gregg wasn't the only 2016 statewide candidate in attendance. Former U.S. Rep. Baron Hill also took part in the proceedings. Hill, who like Gregg, is from southern Indiana, is the favorite to win the Democratic nomination for the U.S. Senate to replace retiring Republican Dan Coats.

Hill ran against Coats in 1990 to fill the last two years of Dan Quayle's Senate seat. Hill walked the state of Indiana that year and dove into Lake Michigan off the Marquette Park beach in Gary. Nevertheless, Coats won the race.

Hill told the crowd at the Buncich event that he could win the Senate seat because he has a history of being elected to the House several times from a district that leans Republican.

Hill said he was in awe at the Buncich event because of the size of the crowd for a man who wasn't seeking reelection and in fact cannot run again as sheriff because of term limits. ❖

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.

Sugar, McDermott keeping gov options

By BRIAN A. HOWEY and MATTHEW BUTLER

INDIANAPOLIS – In the past week Glenda Ritz's gubernatorial campaign was described in the IndyStar as "minor league" with three strikes against it. State Sen. Karen Tallian drew 10 people to a Richmond meet-and-greet. John Gregg, Ritz and Tallian have yet to unveil the so-called "big idea" to fuel popular support of a campaign other than defeating the socially divisive Gov. Mike Pence. And former Evan Bayh staffer Tom Sugar and Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. are both exploring potential candidacies.

It's nine months out from the 2016 Democratic primary and the field isn't set.

Quite frankly, when I look at our candidates, I'm not sensing a lot of enthusiasm for the ticket," said McDermott, who is running for reelection in November and is heavily favored. He sees himself as a potential late entry into the race. "I think if I ran I would be very, very dangerous in the primary. I think I could win the primary. I know John Gregg and Baron Hill want me to endorse them. Why would I endorse them if I am contemplating the race? There's no city person on the ballot, and cities and towns need help."

McDermott identified Gregg as the "man to beat" due his \$1.7 million financial report earlier this month, but added, "I'm afraid he's a one-trick pony. We're deeper than that. I worry about becoming the party of labor. I support labor and union jobs, but I think we're more than that. With Glenda, with all due respect to her, I think John's safely in the lead with the three current candidates."

"There's definitely an opening," McDermott said. "I'm constantly thinking about this. Every single day for the past year this has been on my mind. I've been torturing myself with this decision for a long time. I thought I could run for mayor and have options for 2016. I'm not saying I am or I'm not running. I have options."



Sugar, who is pushing the "Lead or Leave" campaign advocating election reforms, has been reaching out to potential supporters in the gubernatorial race, multiple Democratic sources are telling Howe Politics Indiana. In an interview with HPI about those election reforms, Sugar observed that the current Democratic field is lacking the big idea.

Of the existing field, Gregg clearly had the best month with his finance report where he actually out-raised Gov. Mike Pence. The money haul dwarfed the combined totals of Ritz and Tallian. Gregg spent time in Washington earlier this month, meeting with the Democratic Governors Association (see Chris Sautter's column on Page 1). He is also relying on Tom New, a key figure in Gov. Frank O'Bannon's 1996 upset victory, as a key consultant.

Informed and reliable sources tell HPI that Ritz has just added a campaign treasurer and is preparing to staff up. Her campaign really hasn't existed beyond a website and her early June campaign kickoff. Since then, she's been on vacation, traveled to Europe on state business, and successfully won a three-year No Child Left Behind waiver from the Obama administration. Her problem appears to be that her top advisers are also Department of Education employees. As a group they are well aware of the campaign violations former Supt. Tony Bennett and his staff incurred in 2011 and 2012. There is also the dilemma of dispensing political advice to the boss.

The Ritz campaign is not weighing in on topical issues surrounding the Pence administration. There has been no campaign spokesman and no campaign phone number. Without a finance director, the campaign has been unable to compete with 2012 nominee John Gregg on the money front.

Former Indiana Democratic chairman Robin Winston, who is volunteering time with the Ritz campaign, sees an "unorthodox" campaign developing, based on the groundswell of support she was able to mine via social media in 2012. Winston said she won't need as much money as the other candidates. "There's a lot of time between now and next May," Winston said. "This process is evolving. This is an Etch-a-Sketch campaign and it will continue to evolve."

As for Gov. Pence, he trumpeted the state's jobless rate slipping below 5% for the first time since 2008. "Indiana's economy is on the move thanks to hard-working Hoosiers and businesses both large and small," Pence said last week. "With each passing day, it becomes more apparent that Indiana is strong and growing stronger, and now, for the first time in more than seven years, Indiana's unemployment rate is below five percent. Our administration is committed to implementing the kinds of pro-growth policies that allow businesses to succeed and families to thrive, and Hoosiers can be assured that we will not relent in these efforts in the months to come."

It's on that strong economy that Pence is pinning hopes of steering clear of the biggest obstacle to his reelection, the coming move to amend the state's civil

rights code to include sexual orientation. He hinted to reporters last week, "I think our economy speaks for itself. Our economy is strong and growing stronger, and that's a testament to the resilience of the people of Indiana and to the great reputation our state enjoys. We're going to move forward on the policies that are making that a reality, and we'll leave debates about the future for the future. We found a way through that difficult period last spring to calm the waters, and the facts speak for themselves. Indiana's economy is strong and growing stronger."

The family-focus groups are combating expansion of local civil rights expansion ordinances in a half dozen or so city councils. But Democrats and some Republicans are expected to push for the civil rights expansion in the 2016 General Assembly session, leaving Pence in a precarious political position of either alienating his socially conservative base, or the business and corporate community that rebelled against the Religious Freedom Restoration Act last March and April.

Second complaint filed v. Ritz campaign

Glenda Ritz's campaign for governor is facing a new election complaint tied to allegations the Democrat violated a state law barring campaign fundraising by statewide officeholders during legislative sessions when a new state budget is crafted (IndyStar). The complaint filed late Wednesday by a Whitestown man comes a day after a complaint that made similar allegations against the Ritz campaign was withdrawn. The complaint takes issue with an initial campaign finance report submitted July 14 that showed Ritz received \$8,150 during this year's legislative session, as well as donations that campaign finance records show were accepted in 2013. An Indianapolis Star review of the 2013 records found that Ritz, the state schools chief, received more than \$82,000 in contributions during that year's legislative session, when lawmakers also decided on a two-year state budget. Ritz addressed the amended campaign finance report, which reflects fundraising efforts for the first half of the year, with The Star earlier Wednesday before the new complaint was filed. Her campaign has said the initial report contained "clerical errors." "There were errors made," Ritz said of this year's report, "and the (campaign treasurer) has amended the report, and that's pretty much it." Her campaign couldn't be reached late Wednesday for comment on the new complaint.

Senate: Club endorses Stutzman

"The Club For Growth PAC strongly endorses Marlin Stutzman for U.S. Senate," said Club For Growth President David McIntosh of the Howe Republican. "Marlin has fought for economic liberty since he was elected to Congress in 2010. He has repeatedly voted to cut bloated federal programs and has voted for conservative budgets that would cut taxes and reduce the size of the federal government. He voted to block a half-trillion-dollar debt

ceiling increase in 2013, and just this year, Rep. Stutzman opposed creating a new line of more than \$9 billion in mandatory spending. Marlin Stutzman has a proven record of opposition to wasteful Washington spending, and the Club for Growth PAC is proud to give him our full support."

"Marlin Stutzman is the constitutional conservative in this race," said Club For Growth Board Member and former Club President Chris Chocola. "His principled pro-growth voting record in the House makes Marlin the clear choice of Hoosiers to represent Indiana in the U.S. Senate." Stutzman has a lifetime Club for Growth rating of 93%.

U.S. Rep. Todd Young's campaign reacted with campaign manager Trevor Foughty saying, "Todd Young's sole focus is reversing President Obama's agenda by advancing conservative solutions. That's what Hoosiers want in their next U.S. Senator. This week's passage of Todd's REINS Act shows that conservatives can not only fight, but win, in Washington."

In 2011, Club For Growth openly backed Richard Mourdock, who upset U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar in the primary, but then blundered his way to a loss to Democrat Joe Donnelly that November, kicking away a Senate seat the GOP had held for 36 years.

The Club For Growth shows up on Stutzman's latest campaign finance report as having directed \$4,200 to his Senate campaign. (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The club's political action committee has directed \$4,200 to Stutzman's Senate campaign at the request of three club contributors from California, Pennsylvania and Texas. This practice for collecting and earmarking money is known as "bundling" contributions. "Were always happy to serve our members in that way. We are still watching the race and have not made an endorsement though we certainly consider Congressman Stutzman a strong pro-growth candidate," Doug Sachtleben, communications director for the Club For Growth, said in an email.

The Club For Growth in 2012 supported Richard Mourdock, the Indiana state treasurer who unseated 36-year Sen. Richard Lugar in the Republican primary election and was defeated by Democratic Rep. Joe Donnelly in the general election. The club's three PACs combined to spend nearly \$4 million that year trying to influence Hoosier voters. The Senate Conservatives Fund, which endorsed Stutzman in May, bundled \$44,000 in individual contributions to his campaign in the second quarter of this year, according to the campaign finance report he filed with the Federal Election Commission. The PAC spent more than \$700,000 in support of Mourdock in 2012. Stutzman's own joint fundraising committee has delivered money to his Senate campaign. The Stutzman Victory Fund transferred \$10,800 in contributions from Forrest Lucas and his wife, Charlotte, both of Corydon. Forrest Lucas is chief executive officer of Lucas Oil Products Inc. The contributions come to \$2,700 from each Lucas for the 2016 primary and general elections, the most an individual is allowed by law to give to a federal candidate. Not counting that transfer, Stutzman

reported raising more than \$596,000 in campaign contributions during the second quarter. Young raised more than \$1 million in the quarter, Holcomb collected \$207,000 and Hill received nearly \$151,000. Young's campaign reported \$2 million in cash on hand, compared with about \$849,000 for Stutzman, about \$277,000 for Holcomb and \$143,000 for Hill. The sums for Young and Stutzman, who were elected to the House in 2010, include money left over from their previous congressional campaigns.

U.S. Rep. Todd Young picked up a significant policy victory on Tuesday when the U.S. House voted 243-165 to pass the Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act in a bid to roll back the executive branch's rulemaking authority. "Our rulemaking process is out of control," said Young, who introduced the bill. "It needs to be reined in." President Obama has threatened to veto the bill, which from the standpoint of the Young Senate campaign, would bring about earned media that will play well to the Republican primary voters. "We'll keep focusing on the issue," said campaign manager Trevor Foughty, adding that Young's August schedule will have the Bloomington Republican making an array of appearances around the state.

The Rothenberg/Gonzalez Political Report's take on the Indiana Senate race: The GOP race is just beginning, but looks like it will come down to a choice between Young and Stutzman. Young will try and line up establishment support, particularly from Republicans who fear Stutzman would be a general election liability and Coats allies who didn't like how Stutzman attacked the senator in the 2010 primary. Democrats are hoping that Republicans nominate another Richard Mourdock, whose comments about rape and abortion helped Democrat Joe Donnelly win the state's other Senate seat in 2012. But Stutzman's early moves, including his new campaign team, show that he isn't automatically in the mold of Todd Akin.

Former Rep. Baron Hill is running on the Democratic side and hoping to take advantage of a Republican implosion. But he raised just \$151,000 before the end of June. Some Democratic strategists are still holding out a glimmer of hope that popular former Sen./former Gov. Evan Bayh will run because they believe he would walk into the seat. But there is no indication that Bayh is interested in running for Senate this cycle. And Republicans would not give him a free ride. They would likely talk about his post-office lobbying efforts and the amount of time he spends outside of Indiana. **HPI Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

3rd CD: Brown targets PP

State Sen. Liz Brown, a candidate for the 3rd CD spoke at the Fort Wayne Women Betrayed Rally. The rally, organized in response to the undercover video exposing Planned Parenthood's practices, called for defunding and investigating the organization. "Planned Parenthood is a business and its business is abortion," Brown said. "They abort more than 170 babies for every baby they refer to

adoption. Planned Parenthood's claim of providing women access to health care is a farce; it is about providing a profitable service, and now they have finally been exposed. Providing an abortion, carefully cutting up a baby in order to preserve its organs for research, is not giving women access to health care. We need to continue to press all our elected officials in Washington, D.C., to stop funding this profit center of death."

The political action committee for the conservative advocacy group FreedomWorks has endorsed the U.S. House candidacy of state Sen. Jim Banks, R-Columbia City (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Banks seeks to replace Republican Rep. Marlin Stutzman in the northeast Indiana 3rd District. Stutzman is running for an open U.S. Senate seat in next year's elections. FreedomWorks PAC Chairman Adam Brandon said in a statement: "Our activists in Indiana's third district want a candidate who is truly committed to the principles of individual liberty and limited government. That guy is Jim Banks. As a state senator, he has a proven record of championing freedom." **HPI Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

9th CD: A three-way race takes shape

Two weeks ago the 9th CD's Republican field officially became a three-way race among State Sen. Erin Houchin, of Salem, State Sen. Brent Waltz, of Greenwood, and New Albany native and Attorney General Greg Zoeller. The flurry of announcements followed the much-anticipated announcement that incumbent Todd Young is running for U.S. Senate. The three hopefuls' early campaign statements have touched on different themes. Zoeller's campaign kickoff stressed defending states' rights, reining in "federal overreach," and tackling dysfunction in Washington. Houchin, however, focused on a strong foreign policy and border security. Waltz has been touting his record in the State Senate and record for grassroots activity.

Though Zoeller has never faced a true Republican primary, he did secure the party's nomination after an upset of Jon Costas at the 2008 state convention. Zoeller easily secured his party's re-nomination and cruised to victory in November 2012. His 1.45 million votes were the most for any statewide office, exceeding the individual totals of U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly, Superintendent Glenda Ritz, and Gov. Mike Pence. It's safe to assume he is the best known of the three at this point. Floyd County will be depended upon in the coming months, but two terms in statewide office has likely provided ample opportunities to develop connections throughout the south-central district.



State Sen. Brent Waltz courts the gun vote has his criss-crossed the 9th CD..

His record in federal courts has drawn praise from social conservative groups, such as the Indiana Family Institute. Moreover, the concentration of the legal profession in Central Indiana will help Zoeller compete in Waltz's backyard, the southern Indianapolis suburbs.

Waltz is confident in his powerbase, however. He told HPI earlier this month that his strategy will lean heavily on Johnson County. With a population of 145,000, the county contains over a fifth of the 9th CD electorate. Before election to the Senate, Waltz was Johnson County Council president. He also cites strong ties in Morgan and

Lawrence counties. Doing well in those three populous counties and simply making a decent showing in the district's others would be enough, Waltz reckons.

If Houchin's hometown and county lack population, she certainly leads in endorsement category, some of which suggest political inroads in the powerbases of both Waltz and Zoeller. First, Waltz's hometown mayor, Mark Myers, is co-chairing Houchin's campaign. Myers will serve alongside senior State Sen. Brent Steele, of Bedford. They should help Houchin in both Johnson and Lawrence counties, respectively. Among Republican county chairpersons, Houchin has secured Floyd, Monroe, and Crawford counties. She also has the backing of eight legislators. In addition to Sen. Steele, the list includes Republican Senate Caucus Chairman Jim Merritt, Sen. Mark Messmer, and Sen. Jon Ford. From the other chamber, Houchin has endorsements from State Reps. Lloyd Arnold, Randy Frye, Todd Huston, and Matt Ubelhor.

The campaigns have enlisted consultants. Cam Savage of Limestone Strategies is assisting Houchin. He is also serving as a general consultant to Young's U.S. Senate bid. Zoeller has enlisted Hathaway Strategies, which is assisting Eric Holcomb's U.S. Senate campaign. Waltz's has hired veteran campaign consultant Mark Collins. Zoeller has a campaign splash page up taking email information and campaign contributions. Both Houchin and Waltz have more developed websites. Unlike the others, Zoeller's Twitter account has been silent and still refers to his last attorney general bid.

All three candidates' kickoffs involved multiple stops, but Waltz was certainly the most impressive. He came out of the gate with a barnstorming tour of the district billed "9 days in the 9th." He visited 61 cities and towns. Starting the first day in places like Bloomington, Oolitic, and Ellettsville, Waltz wrapped up the tour in hamlets like Heltonville and Norman Station. Along the way he toured several county fairs, visited VFW and American Legion posts, spoke to the Corydon Tea Party, chatted at several gun store counters, and met with first responders.

Most of the stops were documented with photographs on Twitter. This sort of ground game is reinforced in Waltz's message: "Our elected representatives in Washington should be as accessible and responsive as local officials at home. I'm convinced that solutions to America's problems will be found around dinner tables, at town halls, and in the streets of Indiana," he said on the campaign trail.

HPI Horse Race Status: Tossup.

Mayors

Fort Wayne: Harper, Henry spar over jobs

Fort Wayne City Councilman Mitch Harper, R-4th, last week released a statement expressing his disappointment about the loss of 360 jobs with the exit of Harris Corp. from the community (Gong, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). "Working to sustain and create jobs must be a strategic focus for Fort Wayne. The loss of 360 Harris Corp. jobs is a body blow to our local economy," Harper



said. "Our next mayor needs a real plan to grow good paying jobs and work to maintain our current base of employers." Harper, the Republican Party mayoral nominee, took aim at incumbent Mayor Tom Henry, a Democrat, for what Harper

described as "faux economic development in the form of pay-to-play projects" and criticized the city administration's focus on downtown. "Mayor Henry and his team have also focused almost exclusively on downtown development often to the exclusion of other areas in need of improvement and growth," Harper said. "As our next mayor I will work proactively to sustain and create jobs in Fort Wayne by doing the work it takes to attract quality employers and ensure we are working with current employers to make Fort Wayne a permanent home." In an email, Robert Dible, Henry's campaign manager, responded by stating that Henry "has added thousands of jobs in his current tenure." Dible also noted that Harris Corp. is not entirely leaving the city. "Nearly 540 employees will remain in good-paying jobs here in Fort Wayne," he said. Dible also leveled his own criticisms of Harper. "Mitch Harper seems to think he can lead by just pasting random talking points into a press release. When you're the mayor, you have to show up to work, make a plan and work collaboratively to make things happen," he said. "Mayor Henry has a proven record as an effective leader, while Mitch Harper has been noticeably absent from the conversation about how to keep Fort Wayne's momentum going." **Horse Race Status:** Likely Henry

Evansville: Riecken backs METS route

Democratic Mayoral candidate Gail Riecken rode the METS Howell Route #12 today with Perry Township

Trustee Rick Riney to show support for one of the routes that is in danger of being consolidated. "Easy and convenient access to public transportation is important to so many people in Evansville," said Riecken. "Not everyone can afford to own a car, but everyone needs a way to get to work or shop. Riecken is challenging incumbent first-term Republican Mayor Lloyd Winnecke. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Winnecke.

Richmond: Candidates promise issues

Voters have yet to hear specifics about what Libertarian Kamara Gard, Republican Kyle Ingram and Democrat Dave Snow would do if elected. Republican Kyle Ingram said he has been in a "perpetual state of campaigning" since winning the primary in May. "Right now, I'm doing a lot more listening than talking," he said. Democrat nominee Dave Snow said he will propose to have five "issues-oriented" debates with Ingram and Gard. As of this week, he had not approached his opponents with the idea. "I really want to get down to the brass tacks of what's going on in the city. That's what the people deserve," he said. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Ingram

Presidential

Trump leads in national, Florida polls

Donald Trump leads the GOP presidential field by a significant margin, according to a new Quinnipiac University national poll released Thursday. The poll also indicates that Ohio Gov. John Kasich could ride a post-announcement bump onto the stage for next week's debate in Cleveland, despite fears that Trump's wall-to-wall media coverage had overshadowed his late entry into the race (Politico). Fully 20 percent of Republican and Republican-leaning voters said they would vote for Trump if the primary were held today — the largest share any single candidate has received in Quinnipiac's seven surveys over the past two years. That puts the brash real-estate magnate ahead of the two other candidates who earn double-digit support: Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker at 13 percent and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush at 10 percent. It's a four-way tie for fourth place — with pediatric neurosurgeon Ben Carson, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio all at 6 percent. Kasich, at 5 percent, is tied for eighth place with Texas Sen. Ted Cruz.

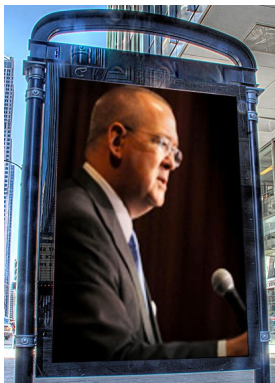
Trump would beat both former Gov. Jeb Bush and Sen. Marco Rubio by wide margins if the Republican primary were held today in Florida, according to a new survey. Twenty-six percent of 1,902 Republicans surveyed for St. Pete Polls said they would vote for Trump, vs. 20 percent for Bush and 10 percent for Rubio, based on results released Wednesday. ❖

What's impacting the demand for teachers?

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE — Changes in the unemployment rate and student enrollment levels affect the true supply and demand for teachers.

With Indiana's unemployment rate back near pre-recession lows, we are sure to hear a lot about a labor shortage. For businesses, the issue is all about adjusting their business model. In government, the problem is not as clear because most public sector occupations have



fewer well-functioning labor markets. Here we should be very careful about judging claims of worker shortages and the brouhaha about teachers is a classic example.

From 2010 to 2014, total public and private school enrollment in Indiana declined 6.2 percent from 1.16 million to 1.047 million students. The loss of full-time school staff was about 12 percent, almost all of which occurred in 2010.

Since 2011, the staff-to-student ratio actually increased. Moreover, during the last year as student enrollment dropped there were increases in almost all types of teachers. This was likely a consequence of improvements to the funding formula that previously penalized growing schools.

From 2013 to 2014, secondary teachers saw 12 percent growth, career and technical teachers saw 11 percent growth, special education for kindergartners saw 6 percent growth, and secondary special education and enrichment teachers saw growth of 20 percent and 18 percent respectively. Shockingly, education administrators saw a 10 percent increase in 2014, even as overall student enrollment declined. With fewer students, the demand for teachers statewide should drop, leaving an excess supply of teachers.

This is, of course, bad news for teachers colleges that claim their historic enrollment declines are a looming catastrophe for schools. Hogwash. Nationwide, only 59 percent of teacher college graduates currently working have jobs in education. With 15 percent of education school graduates currently working in office support, sales, agriculture and construction, there remains no shortage of folks with a teaching degree. The reports of shortages are mostly in fields better taught at colleges of science and liberal arts. Folks, we have an excess supply of teacher college

graduates. That explains current enrollment declines.

So, are low salaries keeping teachers out of the classroom? Starting teachers and army lieutenants earn about the same annual salary. I'll let the reader draw their own comparison of the rigors and hours of each job, but unlike soldiers, teachers in Indiana have seen their salaries stagnate in recent years. This surely offers less inducement into the profession. As I have previously argued, better teacher pay should be a policy goal for quality reasons, but it cannot be implicated in a widespread shortage.

No, the problem is that in Indiana, only about one-third of school corporations are growing. The rest see shrinking student enrollment, with one in five experiencing double digit declines since 2010. Almost all of this is due to falling local population or parents fleeing broken schools. In these places, hiring new teachers will be difficult. After all, who wants to enter a school system facing the inevitability of long-term cuts?

The truth is that there is more evidence of a teacher glut in Indiana than a shortage. But in shrinking schools, specious claims of shortages will be in endless supply. ❖

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



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Carl Bernstein, Washington Post: Is it possible, four decades after the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon, to report and write a great narrative biography of the man and his presidency? Not quite yet, judging from two ambitious new works published this summer: Tim Weiner's "One Man Against the World" and Evan Thomas's "Being Nixon." Weiner, attempting a more limited task, comes much closer to realizing his goal than Thomas does in his uber-biographical portrait. But Weiner ultimately misses the opportunity for a masterwork on the Nixon presidency, especially given the breadth of his research. Perhaps most disappointing, neither of these books comes to adequate analytical grips with recent scholarship and historiography. Newly released Nixon tapes, recently declassified oral histories of his aides (especially those of the mysterious Thomas Charles Huston) and previously withheld portions of H.R. Haldeman's diaries illuminate as never before that Vietnam and Watergate are inextricably linked in the Nixon presidency.

One of the strengths of Weiner's account is his focus on Vietnam and Watergate, and he briefly cites the Huston oral histories as source material. But he comes nowhere near availing himself fully of their richness in further illuminating the Nixon presidency. Huston — his title was associate counsel to the president — can be seen in many remarkable ways as a kind of epoxy that binds momentous episodes of the Watergate tale. He represents a connective tissue holding key elements of the underside of Nixon's presidency together. Huston is best known as the author of the infamous Huston Plan, approved by Nixon in 1970, to authorize break-ins and other illegal surveillance — not only of left-wing radicals such as the Weathermen, who were building bombs, but also of nonviolent leaders and prominent figures in the antiwar movement. As Nixon acknowledged on tape when the coverup was unraveling: "I ordered that they use any means necessary, including illegal means, to accomplish this goal. . . . The president of the United States can never admit that." Though Huston personally had nothing to do with the burglary at the Watergate or the cover-up, he shows up repeatedly, Zelig-like, in the Nixonian deliberations that made Watergate possible. A very special assistant with unusually broad security clearances, he was chosen to conduct private research projects for the president — especially to provide him with secret information about what Nixon's enemies might know about him. Huston's presence, and the invocation of his name, are conspicuous at crucial moments. ("Follow Huston" is a fruitful notion.) He's there early, undertaking an investigation of the bombing halt for the new president to determine, in part, exactly what Johnson and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover knew about Nixon's complicity in undermining the Paris peace talks. Around the same time, he conducted another investigation for Nixon that, infuriating the president in its conclusion, failed to find evidence that the North Vietnamese or other foreign powers were giving financial support to the antiwar movement in America.



When the president decided he needed a special unit, the Plumbers — who later broke into Watergate — to investigate his political opponents and enemies, he said, "I really need a son of a bitch like Huston who will work his butt off and do it dishonorably." ❖

Tim Swarens, IndyStar: To say that Glenda Ritz's campaign for governor is operating on a minor league level is to insult the professionalism of the Indianapolis Indians. And the Fort Wayne TinCaps. And the Evansville Otters. Team Ritz hasn't been able to get to first base so far without tripping over the foul line. Repeatedly. Strike one was the botched launch of her bid for governor, which included photoshopped models posing as supporters and sparse crowds of actual supporters. Strike two was the paltry fund-raising total for the first half of the year. Ritz brought in less than 2 percent of what her chief rival for the Democratic nomination, John Gregg, collected. Money isn't everything in politics, but it does buy a few essentials — such as a full-time, experienced campaign staff and the ability to carry her message (whatever that may be) to all corners of a state with the size and diversity of Indiana. Strike three was her campaign's inability to properly handle what little money it does have. It was revealed last week that Ritz appeared to have accepted campaign donations while the General Assembly was in session, a violation of state law. Ritz blamed those apparent transgressions on a clerical error, and I'm willing to give her the benefit of the doubt. But it does raise even more concerns about whether she's ready to compete in the big leagues. So has Glenda Ritz struck out already? Not yet. We're still nine months away from the Democratic primary, and the state's top education officer has a bit more time to learn the fundamentals of running for higher office. But the margin of error has narrowed greatly. ❖

Lesley Weidenbener, Statehouse File: Twenty years ago when I arrived at the Indiana Statehouse to begin covering the General Assembly, the beat was among the most respected in the newsroom. Covering the legislature meant you were doing something that mattered — writing stories about taxes, highways, education and social issues, stories that helped people make decisions about their lives and at the polls. Editors and the public saw it that way too. But over the decades — as I moved from covering state government for The Journal Gazette in Fort Wayne to The Courier-Journal in Louisville to TheStatehouseFile.com where I've been the editor — the position has diminished in stature inside and outside the media industry. The public's increasing distaste and skepticism for government and politics, a changing news business that focuses on the sensational, and elected officials who've been slow to eliminate perks their constituents loathe have contributed to the overall decline in the respect for even the reporters who cover the beat. ❖

Schellinger to head IEDC

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Mike Pence named Jim Schellinger as president of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC). He currently serves as the chairman and chief executive officer of CSO Architects and is a member of the IEDC Board of Directors. Schellinger was an unsuccessful 2008 Democratic gubernatorial nominee and had been participating in current Democratic Party talks to find a nominee to challenge Gov. Pence. "Since day one, our administration has prioritized establishing Indiana as the best state in the nation for job creation. To do this, we need a top-notch team at the Indiana Economic Development Corporation, and Jim Schellinger is the right man at the right time to lead the organization," said Gov. Pence. "Already this year, Hoosier companies have committed to creating more than 15,000 new jobs in the coming years with salaries well above the state's current average. I am confident that Jim, with his unmatched business leadership experience, will continue to build on this progress and attract both national and international recognition and investment in the Hoosier State." "I greatly appreciate this opportunity to positively impact the economic progress in Indiana for years to come," said Schellinger.



IPL to convert plant from coal

INDIANAPOLIS— The Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission has approved Indianapolis Power and Light's request for a \$70 million investment into their Harding Street plant to transition another unit from coal to natural gas. IPL said in a release the investment would go to eliminate coal burning and revamp the Harding Street Plant unit so it will be

capable of burning natural gas. The process will help IPL comply with EPA standards limiting coal-fired power plant emissions. Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor spokesman Anthony Swinger says the OUCC, which is a state agency that acts as a consumer advocate, has been supportive of phasing out coal at this plant and is still reviewing the case. "We were generally supportive of the utilities request when it came to the conversion of Harding 7 and the other aspects of this particular case," Swinger says. Last year IPL converted two other units to natural gas. IPL says it plans to reduce its dependence on coal by 44 percent by 2017.

Nashville first town 'broadband ready'

NASHVILLE — Nashville recently earned the first "Broadband Ready Community" designation in the state from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. The Brown County town earned the honor by streamlining local policies and ordinances to quickly facilitate broadband deployment, a process established by state law this year. Local and state officials, as well as business and school district representatives, praised the move as a forward-thinking step that will benefit the entire community and visitors, as well as improve the business climate. "This designation sends a strong message to the telecommunications industry that Nashville's regulatory climate is welcoming to infrastructure investment, to the business community that it can meet its technology needs, and to tourists that they can enjoy a high-quality digital experience while visiting, all while providing local residents with high quality, affordable service," said state Rep. Eric Koch (R-Bedford). Koch, authored House Enrolled Act 1101, which set up the process. The IEDC informed Nashville on July 17. Town officials already

are taking advantage of the designation. "Conversations with multiple broadband providers are underway," said Scott Rudd, Nashville's Town Manager and Economic Development Director. "Nashville is taking the designation one step further by preparing to offer broadband providers access to town properties, public works facilities and right of ways. We want broadband access for every visitor, resident and business in town," Rudd said.

Moore pulls Elkhart LGBT ordinance

ELKHART — Amid a strong outpouring of opposition, Elkhart Mayor Dick Moore has asked that his proposed ordinance extending civil rights protections to the LGBT community be withdrawn from formal consideration (Elkhart Truth). That doesn't necessarily mean the issue is dead. The Democrat said in a letter sent Monday, July 27, to Elkhart City Council members that he's asked city staff to pursue a more comprehensive overhaul of the city's human relations ordinance instead. As with the original proposal, he wants the overhaul to incorporate civil protections for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Still, some council members expressed skepticism. "I guess I would ask what time frame can we expect it in," Councilman Brian Dickerson, a Republican, said. "I don't believe he had the support for the ordinance."

Errington seeks reservoir study

INDIANAPOLIS — State Rep. Sue Errington, D-Muncie, has requested the interim study committee on environmental affairs look at the proposed Mounds Lake reservoir this summer (Anderson Herald-Bulletin). Errington sent her request to the committee chair Sen. Ed Charbonneau, R-Valparaiso, and the vice chair, Rep. Dave Wolkins, R-Warsaw last week, asking for a hearing.