

## Buttigieg has ‘traction’ for DNC vote

South Bend mayor is ‘everyone’s second choice’ as Ellison, Perez lack first ballot mojo

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – With both the Indiana and the U.S. Democratic parties in a state of crisis, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg will attempt to become the fourth Hoosier to take the helm of the national organization.

Buttigieg and a field of seven other candidates are vying for 224 votes in Atlanta on Saturday. The winner will replace interim Chair Donna Brazile, who stepped in last summer when U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz was forced to resign in the wake of Wikileaks hacks of the party’s computer servers, perhaps with the assistance of the Kremlin. At that point, Hillary Clinton was thought to be a clear frontrunner over Republican Donald Trump.

Buttigieg got a boost on Wednesday when for-



mer DNC Chair and Vermont Gov. Howard Dean endorsed him on MSNBC’s Morning Joe. “The most important thing is he’s the outside-the-beltway candidate,” Dean said. “Our leadership is old and creaky. He is really capable and smart. He’s what we need.” Dean cited Buttigieg’s two tours of duty in Afghanistan with the U.S. Naval Reserve. Viewed as a dark horse, Dean said, “I think Pete’s everybody’s second choice.”

The Hill and Politico reported on Wednesday and today that Rep. Keith Ellison “has the edge over former Labor secretary Tom Perez” in surveys of DNC members. But while both men claim they are close to securing commitments from the majority of the 447 voting members, neither candidate is assured victory. The

Hill has identified the stances of 240 DNC members, either

**Continued on page 3**

## Demise of the Democrats

By **TONY SAMUEL**

INDIANAPOLIS – Taking up from where I left off three weeks ago, the numbers have increased as far as protests, protestors and now rowdy town hall meetings. Also increasing are vandalism, violence, insults, and threats. I watched a news story the other night of a crowd of adults in Chicago encouraging kids to beat the crap out of a piñata in the image of our president and rip its limbs off, after knocking it to the ground. Bizarre, disgusting and unbelievable!



To the far left, this hatred looks like a “movement” that is getting stronger. I believe that we are actually witnessing the beginning of the end of the Democrat



**“There is no place in America for hatred or acts of prejudice, violence and anti-Semitism.”**

*- Vice President Mike Pence, visiting a vandalized Jewish cemetery in Missouri on Wednesday*



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Party on the national level as we have known it.

This demise has taken off at lightning speed since President Trump was inaugurated, because of a lack of leadership. While Democrats need new leadership with a new vision, they are paralyzed by the loss – I just heard of something ridiculous called post-election stress disorder – and because of the wave of anger masked as a “movement” taking place in pockets around the country.

**When you have** three out-of-work, really mad, former Democrat campaign staffers putting together a playbook to spread anger over the Internet, you don’t have a movement. You have a lack a strategy, goals, or the ability to engage in meaningful dialogue.

So what is happening and why so rapidly?

First of all, the radical far left would have you believe that President Trump is not the legitimate winner because he didn’t win the popular vote. They will never admit that if the race was determined by popular vote, we would have had a completely different campaign, with candidate Trump spending much more time and money in New York and California. While he would not have won those states, he would have ended up winning the popular vote in the nation by what he would have added in those and other more populous states that he did win like Texas and Florida. But this isn’t the best way to conduct our national election and this is why we have the Electoral College.

**Secondly, the far left** has taken over the Democrat Party because a new type of leadership has not emerged. Democrats that may have filled the void are now paralyzed by the media coverage given to the

far left. This phenomenon is getting so far out of hand so quickly that no reasonable member of the Democrat Party at the national level will be able to pull their party back to a relative middle ground.

**Finally, 90% of** the national media is also angry and assisting the misguided strategy of the far left. They would have the public believe that the anger from mostly recruited protestors yelling at their congressperson at town hall meetings is real news.

In the meantime, Trump loyalists and Republicans will stick with the



president and more independents and moderate and blue-collar traditional Democrats will be driven further to the middle ground that President Trump also inhabits. The independents and Democrats will resent the angry left and reward a president who started doing what he said he would to create jobs even before day one.

The new voters, the Trump loyalists, are folks we met on the road, that I’ve talked and written about from all around the state, and they are everywhere throughout the country. These are folks like Jerrald Hawkins, who mowed the names TRUMP and PENCE into his lawn in Cicero. And Gene Huber, who caught



President Trump's attention when being interviewed for being first in line for last Saturday's Florida rally. I loved seeing Mr. Huber invited up on stage by the president to thank him and give him a moment in the spotlight.

**The media doesn't realize** what these people mean, or that most Americans are able to see through their bias. When the media mistakes protection of our borders for discrimination, they only draw attention to the president's actions to protect us from attack, drugs and gangs. The more the media dwells on the tweets or the personality of the president while he is working hard on multiple fronts, the more people will recognize and applaud his results.

As the national media looks at every turn for controversy, the more Americans are reminded that this has been going on for two years now while this president continues to stand strong to make America great again. It would be different if he was starting slow from the gate, but Americans realize that he is working hard to bring

about significant change at a pace Washington has never before witnessed.

When the Russian story came up again last week, the national media again piled on and Democrats on Capitol Hill started calling for impeachment. Their true colors showed through brightly to the American public, while we also saw a president directly take on the media bias while fixing problems and also rallying his supporters.

**In short, the efforts** of the angry 90% of the national media and the angry radical far left that are taking over the Democrat Party will all backfire over the next two and four years. It's already started. They are letting the wrong type of emotions lead them. Anger and hatred will lead only further into an abyss and to the demise of the Democrat Party as we have known it at the national level. ❖

**Samuel is president of Samuel Solutions and was vice chairman of the Trump Indiana campaign.**

## Buttigieg, from page 1

through their private responses to a survey circulated over the past week or from public endorsements. Out of those who responded to The Hill survey, Ellison leads with 105 supporters to Perez's 57. The remaining major candidates have less than a dozen supporters each, while more than 50 DNC members remain undecided.

Politico reports today that many DNC members expect multiple ballots, adding: While he trailed far behind Ellison and Perez in the survey, Buttigieg has gotten traction recently in his own bid for the chairmanship.

The shock and awe of Trump's stunning upset last November has launched American Democrats into an existential search for a new path. It comes as an emerging issue centered on Kremlin contacts with the hierarchy of the Trump campaign threatens to ignite the biggest scandal since Watergate.

Buttigieg is positioning himself as a dark horse alternative, particularly if the vote goes to multiple ballots, as expected. The second-term mayor was always seen in the Indiana context as a rising star, perhaps a future nominee for governor or Congress. Instead, he has leapfrogged onto the national stage. If lightning strikes, and after 2016 just about anything in American politics is possible, Buttigieg would join Hoosiers Thomas Taggart, Frank McKinney and Joe Andrew in taking the helm of the national party.

**Buttigieg is cut from** an entirely different cloth than those chairs. He is the highest level Indiana politician to acknowledge he is gay, prompting New York Times columnist Frank Bruni to cast him in 2016 as the first po-

tential "gay president." He is a Rhodes Scholar and in 2014 he served in the Afghanistan war theater as an intelligence officer with the U.S. Naval Reserve.

In the age of Trump, Buttigieg has spent the last month trading shots with the president, while attempting to wake up his moribund party with a vastly different resume than the current field or any of his predecessors. He has positioned himself as building the Democratic Party up from the roots after Trump ramrodded through the "blue wall" upper Midwestern states by appealing to union members, Reagan Democrats and a waning middle class. In his own state, Buttigieg's Democrats have essentially receded to Lake, Porter, St. Joseph counties, Indianapolis, and the university towns.

**"It's time for the DNC** to view itself as a resource for state and local parties and allied movements, not the other way around," Buttigieg said this week via Twitter. "The solutions our party needs won't begin with Washington, they'll come from communities across our country. The DNC will spin its wheels if we continue to treat the presidency like it's the only office that matters. The GOP didn't make this mistake."

His stance earned him the support of former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland, who said, "I'm supporting Mayor Pete Buttigieg because he knows that the Democratic comeback won't start in Washington. It will start in communities like Youngstown, Dayton and Zanesville. He has shown through his work turning around South Bend and electing Democrats in Indiana that he is up to the task."

Buttigieg adds, "We like to think of Democrats as the party of youth, but RNC put an estimated \$6 million



into young and college organizing last year. We're behind. Lots of us are protesting. But actually fixing it? That will require a political strategy. Democrats must get organized. We will learn from 2016, but not relive it."

And Buttigieg has taken a series of jabs at President Trump, whose primary means of communication is to more than 20 million Twitter followers.

Last night during a forum in Atlanta, Buttigieg called Trump a "computer virus in the American political system. Yes, we've got to take the fight to him. But we can't let him dominate our imagination, because it's our values and our candidates that matter," he said.

When Trump declared the news media last Friday as an "enemy of the American people," Buttigieg responded, "Critical stories from local reporters do not make us enemies. They make me better at my job. That's how free press works. Facing tough questions from the press is part of the job, even if we don't love it. An executive with a victim mentality limits himself."

**He responded to** the uptick in immigration raids, saying, "Our community was put on edge by the (false) rumors of ICE raids yesterday. Peaceful families should not be ripped apart by the government." And on the "alternative news" and emerging Trump/Russia scandal fronts, the mayor noted, "But amusing as it is, every minute we discuss #SwedishIncident or #BowlingGreenMasacre is one we're not scrutinizing the Russia/Flynn affair."

Buttigieg's primary competition appears to be



former Labor secretary Perez, backed by both President Obama and the Hillary Clinton wing, and Rep. Ellison, a Muslim who is backed by U.S. Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

At a recent forum, Buttigieg positioned himself as a multi-ballot compromise. "If we're all saying we've got to fight in red and purple states, put in somebody from Indiana. If we're saying we've got to pay attention from the top of the ticket on down, put in a mayor, someone whose bread and butter is local office," Buttigieg explained. "And if we're all saying that the solutions for our party are not going to come from Washington, put in somebody that does not get up in the morning and go to work in Washington every day."

"**The DNC is looking for** a real change," Dean told USA Today. "I was speaking at a Yale Young Democrats meeting (the other) night and that's all they wanted to talk about – Pete."

As for the direction of the party, Buttigieg told NPR, "One thing that I've noticed about the other side of the aisle is they are very patient in building their majorities. You know, you had organizations that started by running people for school board in the '80s and are seeing dividends on that now. And we've got to have the same patience. We, as a party, can't treat the next cycle like it's the only one that matters. For example, you know, 2020 is a year that will have huge implications for redistricting. And so we've got to be looking at the statehouses, not treating the presidency like it's the only office that matters."

While the 2016 Clinton campaign focused primar-

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ily on Trump's temperament, it glossed over values and a sagging middle class. "There have been a lot of outrages coming from Washington in the last few weeks, and they rightly inspire a level of anger, but we can't have that be the only thing anybody hears from us," Buttigieg explained.

**"We've got to be talking** about what our values actually are and what the policies are that flow from them. When we're talking about things like the deportation rates, we should also be talking about the importance of family, why we believe it's important to keep families intact and allow families to stay together. Every time we're saying no to something, we've got to be saying yes to something else. And I do think that we can have an energy that is at or above the level of what you saw with the Tea Party."

As mayor, Buttigieg worked with then Indiana Gov. Mike Pence on issues like Regional Cities. The two were friendly in public. But Buttigieg wants to draw a contrast with Vice President Pence. "If we're saying we want to compete and win in red and purple states, find somebody who's been competing and winning in as red a state as it gets, Mike Pence's Indiana. And if we're recognizing that the solutions are not going to come from Washington, D.C., put in somebody who doesn't get up in the morning and go to an office in Washington, D.C., every day."

**Buttigieg has been** endorsed by Joe Andrew, former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, and former DNC Chair David Wilhelm, and former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, a 2016 Democratic presidential candidate. ❖

## Why no Lugar Series for Democrats?

By **CHRISTINA HALE**

INDIANAPOLIS – Democrats may not like what I am about to say, but we need to hear it.

Clearly women have woken up and donned their pussy hats, protesting, meeting, marching and learning how to more effectively influence good public policy in our state. Invigorated participation in politics is a very good thing, particularly here in Indiana where we have such traditionally low voter turnout.



That said, although the Democrat Party is supposed to be the party of inclusion, I have to express sincere appreciation for our Indiana Republicans in this regard. They just get it better than we do. Even though most members of my party (and others) may

hold issue with the opposition's approach to a number of issues that resonate mostly with females, we all have to admire the opportunity that the Indiana Republican Party has afforded women in our state.

This does not happen by accident.

**Yes, women Democrats** may have invigorated interest and participation, but we have no organized program to help women learn how to channel their interest and energy in this regard as effectively as possible. We do not have a place to send our upcoming women leaders for training; however our Republican friends do.

In 1990 several Hoosier women, including Judy Singleton, then-State Sen. Teresa Lubbers, former Secretary of State Sue Anne Gilroy, and others founded a political leadership development program designed for fast-

tracking and mainstreaming outstanding Hoosier women into positions of influence in the public arena.

And it has been working. Currently, Republicans have five women elected to statewide office, two women serving in Congress, several mayors serving in chief executive municipal roles, and a number of city councillors and other office holders. Yes, all Republicans.

**In fact, the success** of the Lugar Series led to the implementation of 19 similar programs across the country. To date, there are 469 alumnae of the Lugar Series just here in Indiana, and more than 2000 graduates nationwide. That is remarkable.

Yet where are our Democrats? Where is our series for women? Clearly in this political climate it is beyond obvious why we may not have as many women currently serving, but this climate won't last forever. How are we preparing our pipeline now?

The answer is simple. We are not.

The Lugar Series is in its 27th year of providing quality programming and networking opportunities to women that have already demonstrated a commitment to community service. Many of their graduates I both admire and call friends. We have so many Democrat women who deserve such a high value opportunity, and soon.

**Democrats have been** caught flat-footed, and we are now several generations behind. It is time to get organized and offer this kind of aspirational, educational programming to the women who have now emerged, interested and fired-up about participating in the political process.

We can and must get started, and I invite all interested parties to help me get this done. It is time to act on our responsibility as Democrats to help cultivate the women leaders of tomorrow. There is no time to waste. After all, we are more than 27 years late to the party. ❖

**Hale is the 2016 Democratic lieutenant governor nominee and a former member of the Indiana House.** ❖



# Buttigieg may not win, but he can't lose

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg doesn't have the votes to be selected Democratic national chairman. But right now it appears that nobody does.

The two chairmanship contenders regarded as frontrunners are in a way still fighting the fight from the Democratic presidential primaries of 2016. They are Minnesota Congressman Keith Ellison, who was a zealot for Bernie Sanders, and Tom Perez, labor secretary in the Obama administration, who is favored by long-time supporters of Hillary Clinton.



According to the New York Times analysis of the contest after the final regional faceoff of the contenders in Baltimore last weekend, neither of the frontrunners "has secured the support of anywhere close to a majority" of the 447 Democratic National Committee members who will pick a winner in Atlanta later this week.

For an upset win in a crowded field of 10 candidates for chairman, Buttigieg needs to be a widespread second choice, or to come up through the middle, a compromise choice between the Sanders and Clinton primary combatants.

Being a second choice could be decisive if neither of the frontrunners wins with the needed majority on a first ballot. If the contest goes to a second ballot or more, the committee members could then look for a compromise choice to break the deadlock. If Buttigieg is viewed by a lot of the Ellison and Perez backers as their second choice, as a good compromise, he could eventually win.

**Long shot?** Yes. Possible? Yes, in view of the favorable national news coverage and some key endorsements that the mayor has received. His strategy is to come up through the middle, convincing the DNC members that they should stop fighting the Bernie vs. Hillary fight and pick somebody occupying middle ground, able to work with

both sides and bring party unity to oppose the agenda of President Donald Trump.

"Why not go with somebody who isn't a product of one faction or another faction, but somebody who is here to deliver the fresh start our party needs," Buttigieg said in Baltimore. "I don't know why we'd want to live through it a second time."

Also at that forum, Buttigieg called Trump "a draft-dodging chickenhawk" who could be "ordering people I served with (on active duty in Afghanistan) back into another conflict because he can't be bothered to do his job properly."

**That remark, referring** to reports of Trump receiving five deferments from the draft during the Vietnam War, took some of the mayor's South Bend constituents by surprise. He has not been known for such strong rhetoric. But Buttigieg wasn't talking to the South Bend Rotary. He was appealing to highly partisan members of the DNC who want a leader who will take on Trump forcefully.

It was helpful to Buttigieg that former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley endorsed him on the eve of the Baltimore meeting. Perez is from Maryland. Also, last weekend in Chicago, Buttigieg was a guest at a meeting of some influential Illinois Democrats, including former Commerce Secretary Bill Daley of the powerful Daley family. The Chicago Sun-Times reported that Daley endorsed Buttigieg. Craine's Chicago Business reported that Illinois Senate President John Cullerton "effectively endorsed" him as well.

**Even more significant** was that, as Craine's reported, the meeting of "about 60 people including former White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs, was hosted by Susan and Michel Axelrod, the wife and son of David Axelrod, the political guru behind the successful presidential campaigns of Barack Obama. Axelrod has had nice things to say about Buttigieg, but for various reasons he has refrained from making a formal endorsement. The activity of his wife and son sent a very effective message."

Four former Democratic national chairmen have endorsed Buttigieg.

He may not win. But he can't lose. As a key backer of the mayor observed, Buttigieg already has won enhanced national attention and prestige and has expanded his donor base for whatever he seeks in the future. ❖



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

# Appointed school chief a Holcomb priority

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**  
and **THOMAS CURRY**

INDIANAPOLIS – During the winter of 2005, new Gov. Mitch Daniels listened to Senate President Pro Tempore Robert Garton on why he didn't want to pursue legislation that would turn the elect superintendent of public instruction into a gubernatorially appointed office.



"He didn't want to do the superintendent," an inside source related of Garton. He said that Republican Supt. Suellen Reed didn't support the legislation. Listening to the discussion was a young governor staffer named Eric Holcomb.

Daniels tried to convince Garton that he would appoint Reed and let her serve out her term. But Garton insisted that the issue could be dealt with over the next two years. In 2006, Garton was upset in the Republican primary by Greg Walker. And, as our source observed, "Here we are 12 years later and there's still an elected superintendent."

It was a lesson not lost on now Gov. Holcomb, who is moving in his first legislative session to make the change. It is part of his legislative agenda. When Holcomb was state chairman, both he and Democratic counterpart Dan Parker agreed with the move. In 2012, both Republican and Democratic platforms advocated the change.

On Monday, with the Statehouse halls filled with educators on ISTA Day, Holcomb absorbed his first legislative setback when the Senate voted 26-23 to defeat SB 179, with 17 Republicans defecting. It was a stinging vote for Senate President David Long, who is a co-author of the bill. Senate sources tell Howey Politics Indiana that three senators shifted their votes after the majority caucus. Four senators - freshmen John Crane, Mike Boheck, Jon Ford and veteran Ron Grooms changed their votes from yay in committee to nay on the floor.

Holcomb sources tell HPI that the change is "still a priority" and that he will work to shift some of the GOP votes who sided with the nine Senate Democrats.

It is HB 1005 that the administration is prioritizing. It breezed through the House on a 68-29 about an hour

after the Senate rejection.

The key takeaway here is that this legislation is not dead.

## Four Republicans changed vote

In the aftermath of Monday's Senate surprise 'nay' vote on the superintendent appointment issue, the question that remains is why did this happen. How it failed is simple, SB 179 got voted down 23-26 with 17 Republicans joining the nine Democrats in shooting down one of Governor Holcomb's legislative priorities. But that doesn't explain why Senate leadership just needed a few more Republican votes to carry out an executive wish and signal a unified, focused statehouse and couldn't pull through. Perhaps then the first culprits Sen. Long and Gov. Holcomb need to contact are four Republican Senators who supported the bill in committee but not on the floor; Sens. Grooms, Bohacek, Ford and Crane.

In an effort to find out why these four in particular switched their vote, HPI managed to reach one of the defectors in Sen. Grooms, who explained that he "voted 'yea' in committee in order to hear discussion on the floor. "I wasn't sure how I thought about it at the time," Grooms said. "After I met with constituents and heard their concerns on the issue, I now believe that this power should stay with the people."



State Sens. Bohacek, Doriot, Crane and Grooms were four of 17 Republicans who defected on SB 179.

Asked if he had felt any pressure to vote yes from Senate leadership or the governor, Grooms simply shook his head and replied "there was none of that."

Obviously, this pressure from constituents worked on other Senators as well, but what is clear is that Senate leadership didn't expect this pres-

sure to force a switch from the committee vote. If the four they were counting on had stayed in support of SB 179, it would have passed through to the House.

Still, there remains a strong chance for the issue to return due to the House passing HB 1005, a similarly worded bill to SB 179. If HB 1005 got a chance on a vote in the Senate, minds would have to be changed in order to get a different result. Grooms said that he "wouldn't support" the bill if it were to comeback a second time. Grooms stated that "I would listen to my constituents thoughts on the issue" if the superintendent bill found a new pair of legs this session.

Even if Grooms remained a no vote, there are still 16 other Senators that leadership could sway, meaning that Monday's shoot down of the bill is more of a mild inconvenience than an early loss for Statehouse leader-

ship. That doesn't change the fact, though, that the issue continues to energize the public to contact their representatives.

Long's office provided "no comment" when questioned on the issue but Long is due to address the issue during a Thursday press conference. Senators Bohacek, Ford and Crane were unable to be reached for comment.

## Redistricting reform punted to 2018

While advocates for redistricting reform were disappointed when HB1014 died in committee this session, they remain hopeful 2018 is the year for the issue. At a press conference Wednesday, Indiana Common Cause leader Julia Vaughn stated that the group "is not deterred" by the HB1014 vote being dodged by House Elections Committee Chair Milo Smith.

HB1014 was co-sponsored by Speaker Brian Bosma and was expected by Common Cause to pass the House, according to Vaughn. The bill would have created an independent committee which would draw district lines for the legislature's approval.

However, Vaughn speculated that "there were other priorities for the Speaker this session," and that it wasn't the right year for reform. "In a conversation with Speaker Bosma, he told me that he was 100% focused on road-funding this session," continued Vaughn.

Indiana Common Cause also remains pessimistic toward redistricting's chances in the Senate, citing opposition by Senate Pro-Temp David Long. Vaughn said that while they feel they have support of leadership in the House, "It hasn't translated to Senate leadership yet."

Vaughn urged state lawmakers to consider that "this issue affects all Hoosiers and is a fundamental part of our democracy. Many citizens are passionate about this issue."

Ultimately, redistricting advocates believe that the 2018 session "has to be about redistricting reform" and vow to increase their grassroots efforts for next year. Also, 2018 is an election year, which Vaughn believes will be beneficial to their cause.

Other groups represented at the event included the League of Woman Voters, the Hoosier Environmental Council and the Citizens Action Commission.

## Juvenile abortion bill advances

When a pregnant minor seeks an abortion in Indiana without her parents' consent, she has one option: a hearing involving her attorney and a juvenile court judge who decides whether she is mature enough to make the decision for herself (King, IndyStar). A bill that advanced in the Indiana Senate on Wednesday would give her parents the right to enter the courtroom and even testify on whether she is competent to make the decision. Supporters of Senate Bill 404 say parents should have a role in deciding their daughter's well-being and whether she can undergo a surgical procedure such as an abortion.

Opponents say requiring parent involvement could push pregnant minors into dangerous situations because their greatest fear is often being disowned by their families. The bill also would give parents the right to sue adults who help their child get an abortion without their consent. And it opens up abortion doctors to potentially losing their medical licenses if they fail to properly inform the state when they provide an abortion to a girl younger than 16. The bill was approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee on a 6-4 vote.

## House approves voting registration bill

Hoosiers soon may be provided more opportunities to register to vote and more convenient locations at which to cast their ballots under legislation approved Wednesday by the Indiana House (Carden, NWI Times). House Bill 1178 mandates Bureau of Motor Vehicles employees ask customers transacting any business at a license branch whether they want to register to vote or update their registration. Voting itself might become more convenient if additional counties choose to replace their precinct polling places with vote centers using the provisions of House Bill 1472, co-sponsored by state Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso. Finally, House Bill 1521, co-sponsored by Soliday and state Rep. Chuck Moseley, D-Portage, obligates Indiana's presidential electors to vote for the candidate who wins the most votes in the state, regardless of an elector's personal preference.

## Opioid prescription limit bill

Some patients who need Oxycodone or Vicodin may find that their doctor can only prescribe the medication for a week if bill continues to advance through the General Assembly (Mullis, Statehouse File). Minors and first-time users would be limited under Senate Bill 226 with the hopes of preventing opioid addiction. With only a week's worth of medication, a patient is less likely to have leftover pills. But Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, said seven days is too short. The bill's author, Indianapolis Republican Sen. Jim Merritt, said there are exceptions to the seven-day limit, such as prescriptions for cancer and hospice care, as well as for patients who must travel a long distance to their doctor. Documentation would be required before the exceptions could be made.

## Vaping overhaul passes committee

A state Senate panel has advanced a bill to drastically overhaul the Indiana vaping industry law that granted a monopoly to one company and sparked an FBI probe last summer (Associated Press). The measure from state Sen. Randy Head, R-Logansport, was approved Wednesday on an 8-1 vote, clearing the way for the bill to be taken up by the full Senate. Lawmakers passed the vaping law ostensibly to ensure consumer safety. It imposed strict safety standards for manufacturers of the nicotine-laced "e-liquid" used in vaping. But Lafayette-



based Mulhaupt's Inc. was the only company that was qualified to handle security permitting for producers under the law. And Mulhaupt's approved only six companies to produce. Head's bill removes provisions from the law that created a monopoly for Mulhaupt's.

### **Protest bill heads to study**

A bill filed by a Southwestern Indiana lawmaker that initially allowed for the removal of protesters by "any means necessary" will instead create a summer study committee on the topic, lawmakers said (Lange, Evansville Courier & Press). Before the Senate Local Government committee heard Senate Bill 285 about a month ago, committee chair Sen. James Buck said they had received many phone calls and emails in opposition of the bill and none in support. The bill, written by state Sen. Jim Tomes (R-Wadesville), initially required public officials to clear blocked roadways of protesters within 15 minutes. Tomes' reasoning for the bill was to help limit traffic obstructions, which can delay emergency vehicles. The language most in opposition took issue with was the by "any means necessary" phrase. "There is nothing in this language by any means necessary, that includes the word reasonable," Sen. Karen Tallian, D-Portage, had said during the previous committee hearing. "That's normally the standard for a police force. This does not include excessive or deadly, and I think that's a real problem with this." Lawmakers took out that language in an amendment Wednesday, and instead added that it was local police officers' duties to keep streets unobstructed. Those who obstruct traffic would still be committing "mass traffic obstruction" - a class C infraction - if they don't clear the streets when ordered to.

### **Bill requires licenses for home dealers**

The Indiana House of Representatives Tuesday voted unanimously in support of State Rep. Doug Miller's (R-Elkhart) bill that would require manufactured home dealers to be licensed through the Secretary of State, the House Republican Caucus reported (Howey Politics Indiana). Miller said manufactured homes, also known as mobile homes, are prefabricated housing that are largely assembled in factories and then transported to home sites.

### **Amendment on riverboard earnings**

The Indiana House approved an amendment authored by State Rep. Randy Frye (R-Greensburg) that would help protect the revenue local communities receive from riverboat earnings, a news release stated (Howey Politics Indiana). House Bill 1350 would have reduced the amount of supplemental distribution funds, commonly referred to as hold harmless funds, that are distributed to local units within counties where riverboats are located. Frye said the bill, as originally written, would have lowered the hold harmless fund from \$48 million to \$40 million. Frye's amendment keeps the \$48 million in the hold harmless fund instead of decreasing it as the bill originally had

been written.

### **House approves \$20 for record searches**

The cost to access public records could rise sharply under a bill the Indiana House has approved (South Bend Tribune). House Bill 1523 would allow state and local governments to charge up to \$20 an hour for public record searches, the Indianapolis Star reported. Those fees would apply when government officials spend more than two hours searching for a record requested by members of the public or journalists. The measure would prohibit, with certain exceptions, an agency from charging a fee for providing a public record by electronic mail. Lawmakers passed a similar measure in 2015, but then-Gov. Mike Pence vetoed it.

### **Senate promotes jobs for disabled people**

According to information provided by the Senate Republican Caucus, a bill authored by State Sen. John Ruckelshaus (R-Indianapolis) passed the full Senate yesterday by a vote of 48-0. Senate Bill 390 would increase the number of people on the Commission on Rehabilitation Services in addition to increasing its duties. The bill would also state that Indiana's policy is to promote employment as the first and preferred option when providing services to individuals with disabilities who are of working age.

### **Stormwater bill would cost utilities**

Legislation currently pending in the Indiana General Assembly could cost the Chesterton Stormwater Utility more than \$25,000 in annual revenues from the stormwater fee which it currently charges certain categories of customers (Nevers, Chesterton Tribune). Under Senate Bill 502- - authored by State Sens. Aaron Freeman, R-32nd, and Blake Doriot, R-12th - church, school, and agricultural property all would be exempted from paying stormwater fees, as Associate Town Attorney Connor Nolan told the Stormwater Management Board at its meeting Tuesday night. As matters stand now, the Stormwater Utility collects an annual total of \$26,341.20 from the 12 churches and five Duneland School properties located in the Town of Chesterton. The Stormwater Management Board voted unanimously to voice its opposition to SB 502 and to instruct its attorney to draft a letter against the legislation.

### **Water utilities bill passes**

Information provided by the House Republican Caucus stated the Indiana House of Representatives unanimously passed State Rep. Heath VanNatter's (R-Kokomo) bill Wednesday that would provide for the responsible, accountable expansion of clean water sources by utilities (Howey Politics Indiana). House Bill 1519 would allow a utility, such as a municipality or company, to build sewers, water mains and service lines into a new infrastructure development zone. ❖

# Fall of HB 1014 is a legislative failure

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – In the past week, the Committee on Elections and Apportionment failed to move HB1014 along to the full House. That anti-gerrymandering bill calls for establishing a commission to oversee redistricting. Unless bold action has been taken since this writing, the bill is dead for this session.



There is no other bill of greater importance before the Indiana General Assembly. A redistricting commission would help correct the corrupt practice of providing safe seats for Indiana's congressional representatives and those holding positions in the State Senate and House.

However, our self-serving, one-party legislature has no interest in promoting democracy. Even those in the minority party have little concern for fair primaries and elections.

Indiana will continue to have a legislature that is not representative of the people and not focused on the future of our economy. Instead, the General Assembly will persist as an instrument of the powerful and the privileged. The priorities of slumbering and backward industries will prevail, subjecting Hoosier communities and workers to a spiral of weak and mediocre economic performance.

Let's look at just one example of how it works. In January 2011, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce issued "Right to Work and Indiana's Economic Future." The report suggested a grim future for the state, if RTW did not pass. It was as impressive as the performance of a stage magician, a masterpiece of misdirection.

**At that time right** to work (RTW) was in place in 22 of the 50 states. With the U.S. and Indiana in the massive Great Recession, the General Assembly, grasping at anything which promised more jobs, passed RTW in 2012. The law did not clear the Indiana Supreme Court until November 2014.

The Chamber's 2011 report showed the growth of Indiana's Gross State Product (GSP) and Per Capita Personal Income (PCPI) lagged well behind both the 22 RTW states and the 28 Non-RTW states from 1977 to 2008. Clearly, the Hoosier experience was due to more than the presence or absence of RTW. This may have come as a surprise to legislators who had been dozing for the past three decades.

What then happened without RTW during the period 2008 to 2015? In terms of Gross State Product, Indiana had the 24th best growth, ahead of 12 of the RTW states.

In terms of Per Capita Personal Income, Indiana had the 25th best growth rate, ahead of 11 of the RTW states.

**In effect, Indiana's** economic performance 2008 to 2015 without RTW was very average, traditionally mediocre, but better than the 1977-to-2008 period. The legislature had been bulldozed again by special interests and their specious, ideological onslaught. Redistricting should bring about more careful consideration of facts by improving the quality of representation, removing the deadwood, and reducing the impact of special interests. But can it be done with the current low quality of representation, the accumulated deadwood, and the dominance of special interests? ❖

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

# Why is road funding wedded to user fee?

By **LARRY DeBOER**

WEST LAFAYETTE – The General Assembly is in session, and the big issue this year looks to be road funding. How will we raise the additional \$1 billion or more that we need to maintain our roads?

Funny thing, we seem to be wedded to the idea that those who use the roads should pay for them. We don't always think this way for other expenditures. We don't for K-12 education. The Constitution doesn't allow tuition for public schools. The authors must have thought that an educated public benefitted everyone, not just the kids and their parents. You could make the same argument for roads. We all benefit whether we drive or not. Even if you walk to the grocery store, the food on the shelves has arrived in trucks, driven on roads.

**But, for whatever reason,** we want drivers to pay for roads. That's why we accept excise taxes on motor fuel as a way to fund road maintenance. Cars and trucks wear down the roads. Cars and trucks need fuel. Taxes on fuel pay for roads. So owners of cars and trucks pay for maintaining the roads. Neat.

Lately the revenue from the excise taxes has not been enough to maintain the roads. The excise taxes are levied as cents per gallon. Inflation has driven up the price of maintaining roads, but the excise tax rates are fixed. In



the 20th Century, fixed tax rates delivered ever-higher revenue because Indiana fuel sales were rising. Since 2000, though, gasoline sales have stagnated. That's partly due to slow economic growth. A growing economy gets more people driving to and from work and delivering goods and services.

**Stagnant sales are partly** due to the high price of fuel in most years between 2005 and 2014. Fuel sales began to increase some when prices dropped in 2015. And, of course, stagnant sales are partly due to more efficient vehicles. If cars put wear and tear on roads but don't use much gasoline, that neat link between driving and road maintenance is broken.

What can we do? We could increase the excise taxes. The gasoline excise tax is 18 cents per gallon, and it was last increased in 2003. There are two special fuel excise taxes that add up to 27 cents per gallon, mostly paid by drivers of big trucks. Those taxes were last increased in 1988. A penny on the gasoline tax raises about \$31 million, and a penny on each of the two excise taxes raises about \$21 million combined. We could index the tax rates to consumer prices, so they'd keep up with inflation. We could raise registration fees at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, or put tolls on the interstate highways (with permission from the feds).

But here we are talking about tax increases, when we're in the midst of cutting taxes. The inheritance tax was eliminated after 2012. The individual income tax was

cut from 3.4 percent in 2014 to 3.23 percent this year. The corporate income tax was 8.5 percent in 2011, is 6.25 percent now, and is heading toward 4.9 percent by 2022. In fiscal 2017 these tax cuts have reduced revenue by about \$800 million.

Those taxes don't have much to do with wear and tear on roads. We've seldom devoted general revenue sources to road maintenance, because there's no neat connection between the people who pay those taxes and the people who drive on the roads. If those taxes had not been cut, would we be using that revenue for roads? Probably not.

**Then there's the sales tax.** Indiana is one of only seven states that applies its general sales tax to motor fuel. At \$2.25 a gallon, our 7 percent sales tax yields about 15 cents. Multiply by the 3.1 billion gallons of gasoline and 1.2 billion gallons of diesel fuel, and you get \$645 million. That's a tax on fuel sales paid by drivers. Devote that to roads, though, and you leave a hole in the state's general fund. That means you either cut growth in education and health spending, or cancel those income tax cuts.

House Bill 1002 covers road funding. It relies mostly on excise taxes and fees. But the session has a long way to go. ❖

**DeBoer is a professor of agriculture economics at Purdue University.**





# Pondering FDR on way to Trump Memorial

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – Some good news for my liberal and Democrat friends suffering from DTIBS (Donald Trump Irritable Bowel Syndrome.) Someday, maybe just someday, your grandchildren and great grandchildren will take a trip to Washington, D.C., to see the newly constructed President Donald Trump Monument. While I was in our nation's capital for the inauguration, I began the process of scouting locations for the Trump Monument.



There's a yuuuuuuge green space between the Roosevelt Memorial and the Jefferson Memorial that would be a perfect location for a bigly monument to the accomplishments of Donald J. Trump. When I say bigly, I mean bigly. I'm talking at least two tons of monumental bronze hair!

For those of you who have spent the time since Nov. 8 wailing, moaning and living in a perpetual purple haze of melancholy funk, I say, "Take heart. If historians can make Franklin Delano Roosevelt worthy of his own memorial, there may be an equal opportunity for President Donald J. Trump."

To prove my point, I have prepared a suitably one-sided argument slanted to illustrate my case. Helping me in this effort are three of the best mainstream media headline writers in existence today: Phil O. Dendrun of the New York Times, Seymour Butts of the Washington Post and Gertrude A. Pacolypse of the Huffington Post. I've asked these masters of disasters to craft headlines to go with true stories from the great Franklin Roosevelt's tenure in the Oval Office, written as if it was Donald Trump they were writing about. I will provide you with the stories to match the headlines.

For those Millennials who might wonder where information like the following is found, I would direct your attention to these amazing low tech inventions called books.

**Roosevelt campaigns using trite slogan that appeals to populist voters:** Franklin Roosevelt campaigned using the theme of "Happy Days Are Here Again." It went with a melody and was the centerpiece of his election strategy. It would have looked good on a red baseball cap and a t-shirt.

**Roosevelt bypasses media by using new technology:** FDR used a relatively new technological development, the radio, to carry his message directly to the American people. He believed that he could communicate

his thoughts better directly through his Fireside Chats than by trusting his message to the print media. Trump has Twitter, but Roosevelt had the fireside sitter.

**Roosevelt cabinet comprises mainly white males:** Despite pandering to both women and minorities for their votes, Roosevelt had little diversity in his cabinet, the only woman being Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins.

**Experts shocked that Roosevelt wants to pay people not to work and farmers not to farm:** Various New Deal programs involved providing workers with income for little or no work. Farmers paid to let fields lie idle in effort to stabilize farm prices.

**Thousands of poor citizens forced to leave homes for FDR dam project:** The Tennessee Valley Authority uprooted thousands of citizens from their homes to make way for massive flood-control and power-generating dam projects.

**Roosevelt appoints KKK supporter Hugo Black to U.S. Supreme Court:** FDR appointed former KKK member Hugo Black to the Supreme Court despite the fact that he did not believe in a Constitutional right of privacy and fashioned himself a "tectualist" when it came to interpreting the Constitution.

**FDR joins Hitler in snubbing Olympic champion Jesse Owens:** Roosevelt invited white Olympic champions to the White House in 1936, but refused to invite Jesse Owens, the hero of the games, because it would anger Southern Democrats. As Owens put it, "Hitler didn't snub me; it was our president who snubbed me. The president didn't even send a telegram."

**Roosevelt seeks to trash constitution by packing Supreme Court:** Frustrated with his inability to get many of his legislative initiatives past the Supreme Court, Roosevelt proposed the Judicial Procedures Reform Bill of 1937. The main provision of the legislation would have granted the president power to appoint an additional justice to the U.S. Supreme Court, up to a maximum of six, for every member of the court over the age of 70 years and six months.

**Roosevelt joins racist Democrats in opposition to Republican anti-lynching legislation:** Yes, it's true. FDR opposed Republican legislation against lynching of blacks. Roosevelt feared it would anger much of his political base.

**FDR condemns Jewish immigrants to clutches of Nazis:** In 1939, Roosevelt turned away over 900 German Jewish immigrants who were trying to escape Adolph Hitler. They were passengers on the S.S. St. Louis. It sailed up and down the Florida coast hoping for permission to save its human cargo. Roosevelt refused entry and ordered the Coast Guard to repel the ship. It has been estimated that as many as a third of the passengers eventually died in death camps during the Holocaust.

**Roosevelt sits idly by while France is conquered and England brought to her knees:** Wishing to remain neutral, a politically popular position, FDR failed to offer any support or assistance to either France or Great

Britain. Roosevelt initially turned down Churchill's plea for the lending of surplus American naval vessels.

**FDR refuses help to Jewish immigrants by allowing 1941 immigration quotas to go unused:** Chuck Schumer and Lady Liberty will really cry about this one. FDR turned away Jewish immigration requests even though current immigration quotas were unfilled.

**Roosevelt sleeps while Pacific fleet is sunk by surprise at Pearl Harbor:** Even though Roosevelt knew that war with Japan was imminent, he failed to adequately inform his Pacific forces of known intelligence.

**Helpless Japanese-American women and children forced into concentration camps:** Amid fear over issues of national security following the attack on Pearl Harbor, FDR ordered lawful Japanese-American citizens interned in concentration camps.

**FDR renegs on 1940 election promise to civil rights leader:** In an effort to gain support from black political leaders, FDR promised to fully integrate the American armed forces. He failed to do so and left the task to Truman.

**Disarray in the White House as Roosevelt sacks his second vice president:** FDR first dumped Vice President John Nance Garner in 1940 over philosophical differences. Garner's replacement, Henry Wallace, was sacked in 1944 for similar reasons. Wallace had distinct Communist sympathies and he was replaced with the relatively unknown and lightly regarded Harry Truman.

**FDR refuses to bomb Auschwitz death camp and save Jewish lives:** Even though intelligence reports informed FDR about the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz, Roosevelt refused to allow the Army Air Corps to bomb the camps or the rail lines leading to the camps.

**Doomsday clock turned up to one second before midnight as FDR prepares for the big one:** Although Roosevelt left it to Truman to make the ultimate decision on the use of the atomic bomb, it was FDR's willingness and determination to create a nuclear bomb that made the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki possible.

On May 2, 1997, the Roosevelt Memorial was dedicated. Despite many actions or inactions on FDR's part, a grateful American people

wanted to remember the man who led them through the Great Depression and World War II.

It takes the wisdom of time to divorce ourselves from the here-and-now daily evaluations of our president made by hysterical media elites and Hollywood celebrities and give the passage of time coupled with an examination of his collective body of work to make an accurate judgment as to his ultimate success or failure. Only time will tell whether Donald Trump ranks with Millard Fillmore or Ronald Reagan. Until then, can't we just all get along?

**As my wife and I were** driving to the Reagan National Airport to return to Indiana, we passed numerous female protestors holding signs referencing our president and a part of the female anatomy. I wanted to direct the ladies to the Roosevelt Memorial where they might contemplate FDR and his five mistresses, including a distant cousin. I'm pretty sure that even though ole FDR wasn't caught on tape discussing grabbing anything, with a stable of fawning mistresses, he was most likely grabbing something. In the long run, it just didn't matter.

I certainly believe that Donald Trump will be a controversial president. Someone as bombastic as The Donald just won't be able to escape the inevitable dust-up with both his friends and enemies. That being said, I also see the real potential for presidential greatness. Let's just hope that the sideshow doesn't deter us from making it into the big tent. For the sake of every American man, woman, child or gender neutral personhood, I sure hope that a monument to President Trump is built someday.

The bigger, the better! ❖

**Dunn is the chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.**

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# An 'enemy' retort to Our President

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Last Friday night on the Twitter Machine, our president, Donald J. Trump, branded me and other journalists as the “enemy of the American people.”



People who know and love me watched as I grappled with the designation over the weekend, trying to come up with an apt response that did not match Trump’s hysterics. Our president goads his citizens, seeking anger which he can exploit to his base.

I wrote on Sunday that, “Over the past four decades, I have been a committed journalist, motivated as a career, but also as a steward of our community, state and nation, serving readers with fact, analysis and commentary. My career goal has been to leave a better Indiana and America than when I found it.”

I reminded my readers of Purdue President Mitch Daniels’ book, “Keeping the Republic,” echoing a fork-in-the-road assessment of Founding Father Benjamin Franklin, who was asked what kind of nation will we be? He responded, “A republic, if you can keep it.” And I imparted: “We now find ourselves at a similar junction. The stewards of the press, three branches of government, an array of civic institutions and our citizens are faced with the arduous task of defending more than two centuries of tradition, now under assault from what appears to be a president who either lacks a fundamental grasp of our guiding concepts, or who seeks to pervert them.”

**U.S. Sen. John McCain**, the 2008 Republican presidential nominee, observed, “Attacks on the press are how dictators get started.” U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff, the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said attacks on the press are “something that you hear tin-pot dictators say when they want to control all of the information.” Fox News Sunday host Chris Wallace said Trump “crossed an important line.”

The modus operandi of our president has been to take roundhouse rhetorical swings at American institutions that helped create the greatest nation this planet has ever seen. The truth is disposable. He has blasted our judiciary, calling out “so-called judges” who had the temerity to

rule against his sloppy executive orders. His aide, Stephen Miller, suggested earlier this month that the president “will not be questioned.”

Trump has compared our intelligence services to “Nazi Germany.” Our president went to the CIA lobby in Langley, stood in front of 117 stars of fallen agents and spewed a series of lies the day after he was inaugurated. It prompted former deputy CIA Director Michael Morrell to note that on another wall in that same lobby, the agency’s ethos are described from the Gospel of John, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

**Morrell notes, “The ethos** is a key tenet of both the operational and analytic sides of the organization. It is a deeply embedded part of the culture. Any perception of someone trying to alter the truth, as the officers see it, creates immediate antibodies. It is an irony because, as has become clear, the president seems to shun the truth and he alters it with alarming frequency. In speaking to the American people, he misrepresents the facts almost daily.”

The Washington Post on Tuesday reported that in Trump’s first 33 days in office, he uttered 132 false or mostly false statements, or “alternative facts” in Conwaylian parlance.

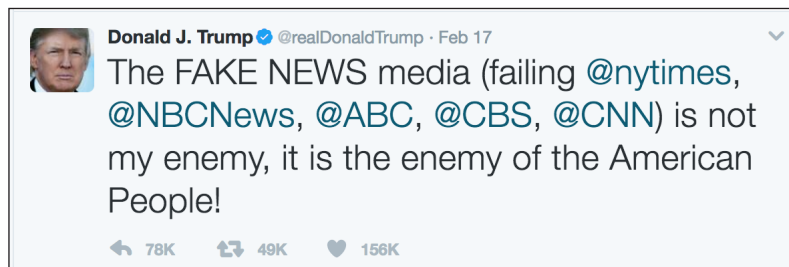
Our president has been reckless in conveying context. On Saturday our president talked about a terror incident in Sweden that didn’t happen, baffling the Swedes and just about everyone else. He reacted to that consternation with this tweet: “Give the public a break – The FAKE NEWS media is trying to say that large scale immigration in Sweden is working out just beautifully. NOT!”

On Monday, this all became a self-fulfilling prophecy as Swedish immigrants rioted. Our president created a riot.

And on Wednesday, Amnesty International weighed in, comparing the rise of Trump to the authoritarian fascism of the 1930s.

“Donald Trump’s poisonous campaign rhetoric exemplifies a global trend toward angrier and more divisive politics,” said the introduction of the report. “Across the world, leaders and politicians wagered their future power on narratives of fear and disunity, pinning blame on the ‘other’ for the real or manufactured grievances of the electorate. The limits of what is acceptable have shifted. Politicians are shamelessly and actively legitimizing all sorts of hateful rhetoric and policies based on people’s identity: Misogyny, racism and homophobia.” So 2016 became “the year when the cynical use of ‘us vs. them’ narratives of blame, hate and fear took on a global prominence to a level not seen since the 1930s.”

**Since the election**, we’ve seen the hate rise in Indiana, with a church defaced in Bean Blossom, Latino students harassed in Vice President Pence’s hometown





of Columbus, and swastikas defacing public spaces in Bloomington. Back then, I suggested to the vice president-elect that he use this intolerance to set a new tone. Mike Pence took a pass until Wednesday when he showed up at the vandalized Jewish cemetery in Missouri. There have been dozens of threats to Jewish Community Centers, a St. Louis cemetery vandalized. The Washington Post reported that 54 Jewish community centers have faced 69 threats, including three waves of bomb threats, since January. Finally on Tuesday our president described it as "horrible" and "painful."

**The Anne Frank**

Center for Mutual Respect was not impressed. "The president's sudden acknowledgment is a Band-Aid on the cancer of anti-Semitism that has infected his own administration," the group's executive director, Steven Goldstein, said in a social media post. "(Trump's) statement today is a pathetic asterisk of condescension after weeks in which he and his staff have committed grotesque acts and omissions reflecting anti-Semitism, yet day after day have refused to apologize and correct the record."

Conservative New York Times columnist David Brooks predicts, "We're going to have an administration that has morally and politically collapsed, without actually going away. What does that look like? First, it means an administration that is passive, full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing. To get anything done, a president depends on the vast machinery of the U.S. government. But Trump doesn't mesh with that machinery. He is personality-based while it is rule-based. Furthermore, he's declared war on it. And when you declare war on the establishment, it declares war on you."

**Brooks continues:** "The Civil Service has a thousand ways to ignore or sit on any presidential order. The court system has given itself carte blanche to overturn any Trump initiative, even on the flimsiest legal grounds. The intelligence community has only just begun to undermine this



president. President Trump can push all the pretty buttons on the command deck of the Starship Enterprise, but don't expect anything to actually happen, because they are not attached."

Trump is attached to his base.

**So we watch** this unfold on an authoritarian bent, while news filters out of Trump campaign ties to the Kremlin. These are surreal times in America.

Author William L. Shirer, writing in his book, "20th Century Journey," observed Adolph Hitler's "uncanny" communications with his audiences. "He established a rapport almost immediately and deepened and intensified it as he went on speaking, holding them completely in his spell. In such a state, it seemed to

me, they easily believed anything he said, even the most foolish nonsense. Over the years as I listened to scores of Hitler's major speeches, I would pause in my own mind to exclaim, 'What utter rubbish! What brazen lies!'

"Then I would look around at the audience. His German listeners were lapping up every word as the utter truth." ❖

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**YOUR FRIENDS ALL HANG OUT HERE... DO YOU?**

**Matt Tully, IndyStar:** So, I asked Sen. Todd Young, is Washington, D.C., as dysfunctional up close as it seems from afar? Sitting over a cup of coffee at a breakfast joint near Downtown, the state's junior senator offered this response: "That's a complicated question." Hey, these are complicated times. Young told me that Capitol Hill "is certainly dysfunctional if you benchmark the rate at which Congress has approved this administration's nominees." Or some of the rhetoric. Still, time and again Young argued that he sees the potential for positive movement on big issues in the coming months and years. Young is a conservative Republican, obviously. But he's not a bomb-thrower and he keeps partisanship at arm's length in his speeches and conversations. You get the sense that he'd prefer not talk about the current craziness in Washington because — well, because he tells you very clearly that he'd rather not talk about it. He's among those lawmakers who routinely dodge questions from the Capitol Hill press corps about the latest political uproar. But he did offer an insider's perspective on the political show we're all watching from several hundred miles away. About Trump, Young argued "he has overperformed" when it comes to the caliber of his cabinet nominees. Beyond that, he said, "it's too early to judge his performance." But, he added, "There is a responsibility as president to choose your words carefully, especially on foreign policy, and to speak as clearly as possible. He has sent mixed signals at times with respect to our nation's foreign policy." I asked Young about the lack of outrage from within Republican ranks, with the exception of a few members, such as Sens. John McCain and Lindsay Graham, to reports of Russian interference in our elections. He calmly said that he supports an investigation by the Intelligence Committee but doesn't see the need to yell about it." ❖



**Paul Waldman, Washington Post:** Over the weekend, the president of the United States declared the news media "the enemy of the American People" and publicly decried a terrorist attack in Sweden that happened as a result of the inflow of immigrants to that country, except that there was no such terrorist attack; he apparently got the idea from a segment he saw on the Fox News program "Tucker Carlson Tonight." The former assertion with its fascist undertones led to widespread condemnation, even from "Fox News Sunday" host Chris Wallace, who said the attack "crosses an important line." The latter led to widespread mockery, including many, many Ikea jokes. Just an average couple of days in the Trump era? Certainly. But it demonstrates something important: We've never had a president who was this obsessed with the news media, and that obsession is going to continue to shape his presidency. Cable news in particular seems to be a far more important influence on Trump's thinking than any intelligence briefing or government economic data. And that

means we'd better get used to the chaos of Trump's first month in office, because it's going to last for four years. Cable news is ruling Trump's attention. As various reports from inside the White House have documented, it's a fixture of his day from morning until night. He starts off the day with "Morning Joe" and the festival of nincompoopery that is "Fox & Friends" (which he even praised in his last news conference, saying, "Fox & Friends in the morning, they're very honorable people ... they have the most honest morning show"). After suffering through some of the day's drudgery, he returns to cable; as the New York Times reported, "he recently upgraded the flat-screen TV in his private dining room so he can watch the news while eating lunch." When the day is done, he retreats to the empty residence — his wife and young son remain in New York — to end the day with more cable news. Which means that cable, and Fox News in particular, is setting the president's mental agenda. So the erratic nature of cable news makes Trump's focus more erratic. ❖

**Jeff Rea, South Bend Tribune:** I've sat through a lot of zoning hearings during my career, including several in recent weeks. I've seen them change over the years and each time I get more concerned about the tone, tenor and emotionally charged debate that can dominate the discussions. Signs of protest, disruptive crowds, angry complaints and name calling have become more prevalent. And we've seen that both from those petitioning for a project as well as those opposing a new development. ❖

**Maureen Dowd, New York Times:** Donald Trump is stuck in his own skull. He's unreachable. "He lives inside his head, where he runs the same continuous loop of conflict with people he turns into enemies for the purposes of his psychodrama," says Trump biographer Michael D'Antonio. Because Trump holds Thor's hammer, with its notably short handle, we must keep trying to figure out his strange, perverse, aggrieved style of reasoning. So we're stuck in Trump's head with him. It's a very cluttered place to be, a fine-tuned machine spewing a torrent of chaos, cruelty, confusion, farce and transfixing craziness. Of course, this is merely the observation of someone who is "the enemy of the American people," according to our president. Like all narcissists, he doesn't like to be told if he's screwing up, so he surrounds himself with people who don't tell him. The more he defends the odd duck Michael Flynn, saying he fired him only because Flynn misled Mike Pence about talking sanctions with the Russian ambassador before Pence went on "Face the Nation," the more it raises the question: Why didn't Trump himself tell Pence when the White House counsel told him? Trump got into another megalomaniacal "Me the People" swivet Friday, tweeting the "FAKE NEWS media" was "the enemy of the American people!" So Trump is even using the rhetoric of Lenin? Putin is lovely and the press is the Evil Empire? ❖

## No town halls for Trey, Luke & Jackie

JEFFERSONVILLE — U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R-IN) is one of several members of Congress who isn't holding a town hall with constituents during this week's recess, despite several requests for one (Beilman, News & Tribune). The Republican freshman said he prefers speaking with residents of Indiana's 9th District through individual meetings, where he believes better discussions can occur. "The focus is on having meaningful, individual dialogue with Hoosiers rather than ramping up the volume, because I think what a lot of people don't like about D.C. is the screaming and talking at each other instead of the talking collectively about how we get a better outcome," Hollingsworth said during an interview at the News and Tribune's Jeffersonville office Tuesday. Hollingsworth would rather go "narrower but deeper" when answering to Southern Indiana residents because complex policy issues can't be properly explored through 30-second answers, he said.

U.S. Rep. Luke Messer will not have any town halls either, according to the Muncie Star Press.

While protesters have convened outside recent closed events that Indiana 2nd District GOP Congresswoman Jackie Walorski has held in Goshen and Mishawaka, heated town hall encounters haven't yet transpired here (Parrott, South Bend Tribune). That's because Walorski doesn't do town halls, a fact that predates Trump's presidency. Since first winning election to office in 2012, she has held just one, in the small Fulton County city of Rochester in 2013, a fact that is increasingly angering critics. They fear the dramatic changes proposed for everything from health care to immigration and the environment, and they want congressional Republicans to serve as a check on

Trump. The Tribune called Walorski's office Wednesday and requested a phone interview with her, or at least her communications director, Jack Morrisey. Morrisey replied that Walorski wouldn't be available for an interview, but he offered a written statement.

## Coats confirmation hearing Tuesday

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee will have a confirmation hearing next week for President Donald Trump's nominee for director of national intelligence, former Indiana senator Dan Coats (Francisco, Fort Wayne

Journal Gazette). Committee Chairman Richard Burr, R-N.C., and Vice Chairman Mark Warner announced Wednesday that the open hearing will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday in the Dirksen Senate Office Building. Coats had been a member of the Intelligence Committee until he left the Senate early this year after not seeking reelection to the Senate in 2016.

## Poll puts Trump approval at 38%

WASHINGTON — A majority of voters disapprove of Donald Trump's handling of the presidency, according to a Quinnipiac University poll released Wednesday. Less than five weeks into his presidency, Trump has an approval rating of 38 percent and a disapproval rating of 55 percent. Trump's approval is a slight uptick from where he stood in Quinnipiac's Jan. 26 survey but 4 points lower than just two weeks ago. Meantime, his disapproval rating has steadily climbed, from 44 percent days after he took office to 51 percent on Feb. 7 and 55 percent Wednesday.

## Donnelly awaits new order

WASHINGTON — Indiana

Senator Joe Donnelly is reserving judgment on the Trump administration's second try at cracking down on illegal immigration (Berman, WIBC). Donnelly says he hasn't read the order yet and doesn't want to judge it until he does. He does say it's misleading for the White House to suggest immigrants weren't being adequately reviewed before. He notes the old vetting process sometimes took more than three years, as the State Department reviewed backgrounds down to biometric screenings. Last month, Donnelly joined protesters of the administration's first order, which was blocked by a federal court.

## 2nd audit finds fault in Muncie

MUNCIE — The state's latest audit of Muncie government found more deficiencies in how the city controls its financial practices (Roysdon, Muncie Star Press). The second half of the state's first audit of Muncie city government in three years appears to show no large-scale problems and does not make recommendations for further action by other agencies. Like the first audit, the new audit shows a lack of internal controls and practices governing city spending. Besides controls over expenditures, also missing, according to the state, were internal controls over payroll disbursements. That lack of controls was also cited in the report on 2014. In their answer to the state, city officials said that when they became aware of the audit findings, a process was put into place that means that Mayor Dennis Tyler will sign the time sheets of department heads.

## Henry County trustee arrested

NEW CASTLE — The trustee in Henry County's Liberty Township was arrested Wednesday on allegations she stole public funds (Walker, Muncie Star Press). Phyllis J. Shafer, 61, is accused of overpaying herself about \$9,000 in 2013-2015.

