



Gov. Holcomb sticks to his 5 pillars

Governor heads into his legislative homestretch 'laser focused' on agenda

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

BLOOMINGTON – As Gov. Eric Holcomb headed toward his first 100-day milestone, as well as the homestretch of his first Indiana General Assembly session, Hoosiers have discovered a governor who is perceived to be off to a good start, acts as if he knows the terrain, is well-staffed and hasn't shied away from departures from his predecessors.

Holcomb presented the General Assembly and public with a "five pillar" policy strategy, much of which is centered on a 20-year road and infrastructure plan that is on course to pass later this month. In a political era where the obsession in Washington and



Gov. Eric Holcomb during his HPI Interview at Nick's English Hut in Bloomington. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

past General Assemblies was a two-year cycle, Holcomb borrowed from Gov. Mitch Daniels' epic Major Moves plan of 2006, which set in motion a fully-funded 10-year plan. Holcomb is on a course to double that, has pressed for gasoline and diesel tax increases after decades of reticence of even mentioning the phrase.

Howey Politics Indiana caught up with Gov. Holcomb at Indiana University last Thursday. He spent a half hour at the second annual America's Role in the World Conference at IU's School of Global and International Stud-

Continued on page 3

Millennials, votes & beer

By **CHRISTINA HALE**

INDIANAPOLIS – So I was cornered by a group of Millennials in my local Starbucks. Some very ticked off Millennials.



Indiana has some serious problems that need attention. Everybody gets that. We struggle with public health, addiction, educational attainment, infrastructure, violent crime, the list goes on.

This week the legislature has been working on the ISTEP replacement, changing the way the state superintendent of instruction is elected or selected, and a federal judge just blocked a controversial measure here to force Indiana women to get an



“It crossed a lot of lines for me. When you kill innocent children, innocent babies, babies, little babies, with a chemical gas . . . that crosses many, many lines, beyond a red line. Many, many lines.”

- President Trump, on the Syria chemical atrocity



**Howey Politics Indiana
WWHowey Media, LLC 405
Massachusetts Ave., Suite
300 Indianapolis, IN 46204
www.howeypolitics.com**

Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Jack E. Howey, Editor
Mary Lou Howey, Editor
Thomas Curry, Statehouse
Mark Curry, photography

Subscriptions

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

Contact HPI

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

© 2017, **Howey Politics Indiana**. All rights reserved.
Photocopying, Internet forwarding, faxing or reproducing in any form, whole or part, is a violation of federal law without permission from the publisher.



ultrasound at least 18 hours before having an abortion. I could only imagine what federal issues might hold their current attention.

Let me tell you, it wasn't just the coffee that was hot and bitter. These young adults were ticked off about two things, and both took me by surprise. At first, I braced myself to hear their thoughts about our president, equality, the environment, transit, any number of issues. What they were upset about caught me off guard, but it makes sense. Of course, they had bigger issues on their mind as well, but they wanted to talk about things that were practical, simple, and relevant to them; things that they in fact considered to be non-controversial and just obvious.

First, they were incensed that they cannot electronically participate in elections. These are smartphone generation people. They made the case to me very clearly that sooner rather than later, we had better account for the role of technology and the possibilities it brings for democracy, the operations of the elections process, and increased participation.

It blew their minds that in an election they must report in person to an assigned polling place on a certain day at certain times. Several of the group bypassed the long line at the counter till to order their coffee from their seats, clearly demonstrating their point and their expectation. This kind of technology is here, and consumers, that is voters, may demand this convenience in short order. We should be ready.

Their second frustration was the mess surrounding alcohol sales in our state. The cold beer debate this week seemed to strike a nerve. As they were only a shade more understanding that we had not already moved on to deal with the sale of medical and recreational marijuana, I tried to explain Indiana's

particular obsession with booze.

I described a passive-aggressive relationship with alcohol sales and the laws that govern them, kind of like a bad romance that neither involved party has the courage to admit is not working. Their friends know there is a problem. The kids are being driven to distraction by the bickering and bad behavior, but not much ever changes. Everyone knows this couple needs to get in counseling, but they never do. They live with it and each other, and each day they grow more dysfunctional.

We discussed the Ricker's beer sale issue as similar to discovering your spouse hired a very attractive new assistant. Everything might be cool, but was it? Do you ignore it and conduct business as usual, or do you look each other in the eye and ask the difficult questions? If you don't like the answers, then what?

Couples respond differently to such scenarios. I noted that it will be interesting to see how our General Assembly handles it. They got a good laugh, but these Millennials weren't buying it. They didn't care about meta-

phors or history. They wanted action.

If we can't get these little things right first, these issues that are just table stakes for young people, how do we expect to compete for the kind of talent we need to populate Indiana's workforce? They certainly care about bigger issues, and aren't afraid to make their opinions loudly known, at Starbucks, at the Statehouse or online.

It seems that more than ever before, our elected officials are going to have to work harder, be more nimble and certainly more assertive. The status quo won't hold for much longer. ❖

Hale was the 2016 Democratic lieutenant governor nominee.



Holcomb, from page 1

ies, where he took questions from IU President Michael McRobbie. There was then a rendezvous at Nick's English Hut, where over stromboli sandwiches Holcomb took questions from HPI.

On the immediate horizon was the road plan. Holcomb had his second press conference the following day and said he was leaning toward the Senate version of HB1001, which steered away from a cigarette tax increase and paved the way for potential interstate highway tolling.

"Cigarette taxes have more to do with public health, and that discussion," Holcomb explained. "I want to focus the discussion on infrastructure on how we're going to pay for our roads and bridges."

To HPI, Holcomb said, "I commend the leadership and membership of the House, who went first, and the Senate for proposals they put forward. They are credible, they will pay for our needs, which we've all agreed on, though we don't agree 100%. We are three weeks out tomorrow from the end of session, adjourning a week early, and we are very close."

"The most important thing for me is to have a robust, sustainable roads plan that absolutely takes care of our maintenance a decade-plus," Holcomb told HPI. Holcomb said a tolling plan could start in six years, but would not include I-465. "It is not my preference where the majority of traffic is the local commuters," he said.

A Senate committee made several significant changes in HB1002 the prior Tuesday, including the phase-in of a 10-cent -a-gallon tax hike at 5 cents over two years. There would be a similar phase-in on the sale of diesel fuel. The Senate changes would eliminate shifting gas tax revenue to road funding. And the Senate version would give the governor an option of imposing tolls on interstate highways.

Holcomb added, "I'm in a good mood about the whole agenda; first and foremost, it's been a very constructive, productive and collaborative effort every day. The House, Senate and governor, we've all been focused on how we're going to take the state to the next level. We are laser-focused on how we're going to improve our workforce, our infrastructure, diversify our economy."

Holcomb may face bigger changes on HB1001, the biennial budget. While the House raised cigarette taxes by \$1 a pack and shifts the gas tax to roads, the Senate budget doesn't. Asked about the revenue forecast expected on April 12, Holcomb said he didn't expect any major curve balls. "I'm confident we're going to get a good report. We want to make sure the hallmark of our state legislature and governor's office is living within our means. We want to make sure we live up to that; we don't want to write

checks we can't cash, but I don't think we're going to be in that situation."

On another big issue, HB1005 which would make the elected superintendent of public instruction a gubernatorial appointment, Holcomb said he has talked to three freshmen senators who flipped on SB179, which was defeated 26-23. The Senate Rules Committee revived HB1005, making changes on residency requirements and putting off the date until 2025.

"In the House, it received bipartisan support," Holcomb said. "Sen. Buck had his own bill which failed due to some confusion. Having said that, the bill is alive and



Gov. Holcomb and HPI Publisher Brian A. Howey.

moving forward. At the onset of the session, I told you, 'Look for every idea I have and if you can improve it, share it with me.' I don't have pride of authorship. We'll continue to work on all the details on this specific bill. All of the members I have talked to since that vote in the Senate have been very productive. I understand where they were coming from at the time."

Here is the rest of the HPI and McRobbie interviews:

HPI: Give us an overview of where you see your administration at this early point.

Holcomb: Besides improving the workforce, infrastructure and economy, another of my priorities is taking on the drug epidemic that is ripping us apart. A top priority for me is making sure our new executive director on substance abuse, Jim McClelland, emerges post-session in May with a strategic plan of action.

HPI: How much funding for opioids will there be?

Holcomb: There will be \$5 million in the budget.

HPI: Is HIP 2.0 on a stable footing? The RyanCare legislation was preparing to make deep cuts into Medicaid, potentially as early as 2018. Did HIP 2.0 get a reprieve?

Holcomb: We're in good shape. We've sought a waiver for an extension; I hope to hear more on that sooner rather than later. That waiver extension included giving us more flexibility to extend service to the overall Medicaid population in terms of substance abuse and mental illness. While things may be stalled out on the national front in terms of repealing and replacing the ACA, we are not stalled.

HPI: How much federal revenue comes to Indiana Medicaid annually, \$3 billion?

Holcomb: Around that. Medicaid is an entitlement on the path to bankruptcy. It is unsustainable. It is hollowing out spending in every state. Rhode Island is an example of how to get more flexibility and more control as a state, to provide better service and rein in costs to the tune of hundreds of millions. Rhode Island has already achieved this. That's why governors are champing at the bit to get more control over costs and more flexibility. We can be more innovative. We can supply the services our citizens need, but we can't do it with a one size fits all. Truly the states are laboratories. That's why I'm encouraged by this new administration's general perspective to give power back to the states, whether it's block grants for health care or road funding or workforce programs.

HPI: I observed recently that powerful governors make sure that a mongrel bill never gets close to their desk. RFRA would never have made it close to Gov. Daniels' desk a year prior to reelection. Am I right on that?

Holcomb: I'll let him speak for himself.

HPI: So we have the abortion reversal bills and we have Chairman Rodric Bray in the Senate and Chairman Ben Smaltz in the House saying they don't have time to hear the bills. Any comment on that? I notice you have a wry smile on your face.

Holcomb: What I have tried to do in every conversation, I have stressed at how focused I am on our economy, on our workforce/education, on our infrastructure, on our getting control of this drug epidemic, and being able to provide good government service at a great taxpayer value. I have been laser-focused on those areas. I'm not going to be distracted. If we address successfully those five areas, we will lift all boats. There is synergy there. In answer to your question, I have been stressing my agenda; this is what I'm going to be focused on. I'm pleased where we are.

HPI: Attorney General Curtis Hill has reacted to your decision to allow local control on the needle exchange program by saying that drug addicts can't be saved.

What's your reaction to that?

Holcomb: The needle exchange program is two-fold. It's just one small part of the whole issue, but it's also about local control. It's about trusting the locals to respond first. We give local communities the ability to respond to all sorts of crises first. Why not on this front as well? If something goes awry, the state has the ability to come in and right the ship. I will continue to press for local control because they can respond first and fast.

HPI: Let's talk about East Chicago. The Pence administration really didn't engage on on the lead contamination crisis. Gov. Pence never went there and there was only \$100,000 in state funds to help. It was the ignored stepchild. Your engagement has been entirely different.

Talk about your approach to the East Chicago lead contamination crisis?

Holcomb: East Chicago to me has been the perfect example of making room at the table. After I declared the emergency, I went up there, which in my mind started the shot clock, to hold me and the State of Indiana accountable for doing our part, knowing that we had a new federal administration who would more than return my phone calls. So I wanted to strike while the iron was hot. In East Chicago, one lady said, "We have never all sat at this table together." You have to call the meeting and then develop collaboratively the plan of attack, and that's what we've done, partnering with the local community, Mayor Copeland, and the new federal administration. I look forward to the day when the new EPA administrator, Scott Pruitt, walks the streets of East Chicago with me.

HPI: Is he going to?

Holcomb: He has accepted the invitation and Dr. Ben Carson, too. These have been good partners. They have an interest in East Chicago as well.

HPI: HUD Secretary Carson has accepted as well?

Holcomb: He has received the invitation. He came on later than Pruitt. I actually met Scott Pruitt at the National Governors Association and talked to him personally. Now we've got a website up that lists the to-do list, what's occurred. We're in communication with some vendors about filters and we're moving forward. One day we're going to look back and say it was the power of collaboration and people coming together that got this moving in the right direction.

HPI: Did you gulp when you received Mayor Copeland's \$54 million wish list?

Holcomb: I'd rather deal with the facts on the table, and so we're going to solve it together. Communication is the key. So the more I get along with Mayor Copeland, the better. I like him and he's in this position at a unique time in their history. He's demanding and he's up to



Gov. Holcomb used a packet of sugar to show what six hits of heroin looks like. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

the job.

HPI: Is statewide, universal pre-K going to be a year-two or -three goal? I know you're concentrating on roads and infrastructure this session.

Holcomb: Never universal. But I do believe that we currently have a pilot program underway and what I want to do is continue to address the need being met by that pilot program. There is still more need to address the current 138% poverty level. What I most want to do is boil it down to one objective, to double the number of kids being served, continuing that forward momentum, continuing to address the need. We certainly have to address capacity and availability of pre-K service in Indiana. I don't want to pour good money into one or two quality facilities. But where there are threes and fours, and there is a need of kids, I want to continue to address those needs and make it a priority. This is a priority I've shared with the leaders.

HPI: You know I've advocated universal broadband, getting high-speed Internet to that last mile. I've been working with the Brown County Broadband Task Force and have gotten a grip on many of the issues. New York Gov. Cuomo has vowed to provide universal coverage in his state. Will that be a priority for you, knowing that it dovetails into the heroin/meth crisis, where rural communities are being left behind economically? Broadband could be a lifesaver for many of these rural communities. Will that be a priority for you down the road?

Holcomb: It is a priority. We just talked to the Indiana University president about connecting to the world. That takes massive investment. What I am stoked about is what's currently underway and what is on the horizon in terms of the private sector addressing this blinking neon light of need, especially in the rural areas. Indiana has hilly landscape in Southern Indiana especially, and that makes it more expensive. But I believe that it's not just the state's responsibility. I believe the private sector will be meeting a lot of needs that were once deserts of connectivity.

HPI: Do you enjoy being governor?

Holcomb: There is much more good that happens every day as opposed to the bad and ugly. Of course you have to deal with the good, the bad and the ugly. As governor you're really affected and impacted with every single experience you have with someone. It's therefore a very fulfilling job that you can't turn off, issues that have to be addressed. I said at the very beginning of this administration I was looking for three Hs and traits in people who were honest, humble and hungry. We've got it. We are focused unlike any administration I've seen. That's why I am typically smiling.

This is a two-part HPI Interview, with the IU conference and President McRobbie following:

McRobbie: Beginning with his State of the State address, Gov. Holcomb has gotten off to an excellent start. How have your travels abroad shaped your personal views and in particular how it may shape and influence your policies?

Holcomb: You quickly realize on a flight 13 hours non-stop, you get the sense it is a big world. Particularly when you land, whether it is the U.K. or China, the world gets smaller, and smaller and smaller. From an Indiana-centric perspective, we have an international brand here. In large part because of Indiana University and all the good work that you do, and we have the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the 500 with all the international drivers year after year. So many more corporations are here. We have established deep roots in the worldwide economy. The Indiana brand is powerful. I will seek every bit of leverage with that; I will go anywhere and everywhere leaving no stone unturned.

McRobbie: When you look at Indiana, you have manufacturing and agricultural which rely very much on exports. In that context, what are your thoughts about



globalization and trade?

Holcomb: Globalization is a fact of life. To think you can retreat from that, again, the world will continue to get smaller and smaller. So many of the partnerships we have established through the Indiana Economic Development Corporation over the years are relationships we must continue to cultivate. There are over 800 foreign-owned companies employing 152,000 Hoosiers. Every time we lure an international company, this an everyday world view. Companies will locate where the market and workforce exist. If you're not growing, you are dying. That's true in corporate America and it's true with our universities. In Indiana and every state, that leads to more opportunity for our citizens.

McRobbie: I was with Gov. Daniels when we visited China. What are your priorities?

Holcomb: We will continue to cultivate the relationships we have, not just visiting countries abroad to say thank you and working on those relationships to expand and strengthen, but to also seek to diversity. We'll make trips to China and Japan and we're going to France later this year and India. My research shows I'll be the first governor of Indiana to go to India. We will go where the prospects will be and we are receiving a lot of invitations. I wake up every morning trying to bring the world to Indiana and Indiana to the world. Good things can come from strengthening relationships.

McRobbie: When it comes to foreign investing, is it your view that you look overseas for new high tech opportunities?

Holcomb: I don't think it's an either or situation. We are an agricultural and manufacturing powerhouse. Every industry I know is ag, plus tech, medical device plus tech. So if you're not pursuing the plus tech, you're dying. You're not going to be around much longer. So absolutely anywhere else in the world, they're looking for that sweet spot in our state. They are looking local, and I see the mayors of Bloomington and LaPorte and South Bend here. It's up to us to partner as well. This world has become not just driven by demographics, but in large part by partnerships at every level of our government. We are establishing and firming up those relationships.

McRobbie: What do you think the state needs to

be doing to continue to attract some of these new areas? And, conversely, what do you see the opportunities for expanding and improving what we export?

Holcomb: What must look at where we want to be in 20 years and that will drive our investments. We are in the homestretch of discussion on our budget at the Statehouse. The talks are speeding up as the days go by. This is where we talk about our priorities. I usually say, "What kind of state do we want to be in 20 years?" We better be addressing those issues right now." That means we better be connecting to the world. It would be nice to have a direct flight to London, the launching point to the rest of Europe. With the investment we have cultivated with Rolls Royce ... we need to better connect to those markets. It works both ways. Direct flights domestically and internationally, investing in the Indiana Bio-sciences Institute, we need to expand this footprint. So it will require in this budget \$20 million additional dollars ... to make sure we have venture capital. Everyone needs to be connected to diversity in our economy. We are internationally known for our innovation and ingenuity and inventive nature. That's what that whole State of the State (address) was about. Our roots are with pioneers and that doesn't mean the pioneers you see on the movie screen, it means pioneering in the future, carving and forging your way through this thick forest.

McRobbie: Looking around this room, I know

**HOOSIERS SMOKING =
\$6 BILLION IN
HEALTH CARE COSTS
AND LOST PRODUCTIVITY**

**INDIANA
CHAMBER**
LEADING BUSINESS | ADVANCING INDIANA

It's time to change that. | www.indianachamber.com/grassroots

there are people who would enormously value a direct flight to London. How close are we to that?

Holcomb: When do you have to buy your ticket? I feel better with each day that passes. We don't want to be the next Silicon Valley, but we want to invest with Silicon Valley on a minute-by-minute basis. We know that one flight investment leads to potentially two or three more flights, additional West Coast flights. If the state is willing to invest, then we'll get some forward momentum. It's not just London, but London is the most obvious, and Frankfurt next. Indianapolis is the best American airport five years running. And, by the way, connecting the dots, the network of universities including this flagship and the network of airports in South Bend, Evansville, Fort Wayne, Terre Haute and Bloomington takes some of that heavy lift away when we strengthen outside our international airport.

McRobbie: At Indiana University, we take seriously our students studying abroad. Now over a third of the graduating class on the campus has traveled abroad. Employers really welcome students who have studied abroad. What are your thoughts of the importance of that?

Holcomb: It can do nothing but help and many times it can be the difference maker. I spent three years abroad and it was an incredible experience, in the sense that what you learn is how to peacefully co-exist. You don't just learn a new language, you learn a new way of

life and all sorts of wonderful and different customs and local traditions. Most important to me, when folks study abroad for extended periods of time, you tend not to fear the unknown. It proves to employers that you can parachute into almost any kind of environment when you put yourself abroad and venture out. My living in Lisbon (with the U.S. Navy) led to me taking trips into Spain and further and further. I worked in a NATO headquarters where 16 nations were represented and you learn from all these different perspectives. It was just fascinating, listening to a Spanish admiral talking to a Portuguese admiral about the good old days 400 years ago; talking about the events unfolding that day. Whatever the issue, you can learn from having many different perspectives at the table.

McRobbie: When it comes to the international standing of the state, do you have any thoughts on how Indiana University can assist?

Holcomb: As you mention, you've been on an overseas trip with the state and that will be encouraged in the future. I would love for folks to make the journey abroad, experience new things in life, but I also have thought about how do we bring that expertise back to the state? How do we encourage people who learn and listen? One of the great strengths here are the 5,000 students who come from somewhere else. That cross-pollination occurs. How do we work to get them to drop anchor here and stay? ❖

Running for office?



PoliticalBank is the **only resource candidates and elected officials need** to move their campaigns forward.

PoliticalBank is a **simple, interactive platform** and a powerful, cost-effective alternative to the "old way" of online campaigning, without the hassle of designing your own campaign website or the expense of hiring web developers or consultants.

"Great job on a useful and innovative website. Your site empowers candidates and helps equip voters in a new & comprehensive way."

- **Mayor Blair Milo, LaPorte, Indiana**

- ✓ **Raise money online**
- ✓ **Increase your Name ID**
- ✓ **Connect with voters**
- ✓ **Define your own campaign**
- ✓ **Clearly convey your stance on important issues**

*Get started in **less than 10 minutes** on a computer, tablet, or smartphone.*

Campaigns start here. Visit **www.PoliticalBank.com**

As Trump tanks in polls, 2018 Indiana cycle begins to form

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – With President Trump circling the drain, with the Obamacare repeal/replace in shambles, with Republicans divided on everything from tax reform to building The Wall, and with a debt ceiling showdown poised for the administration’s 100th day, there are ominous signs for a 2018 election disaster for Republicans.



Despite all this, a number of Hoosier Republicans are preparing to ante up for the cycle, including U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita for the U.S. Senate race, which is beginning to produce a chain reaction on who might replace them in the 6th and 4th CDs. On the Democratic side, HPI is hearing that Lynn Coleman is preparing for a rematch with U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski in the 2nd CD, Indiana’s potentially most competitive, and Glen Miller, a Bernie Sanders Democrat, has announced in the 8th CD for the right to take on U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon.

With President Trump’s approval rating 35% in the latest Quinnipiac Poll and 39% in the Gallup Tracking, the 2018 cycle is shaping up as a potential disaster, perhaps joining other mid-term wave years like 1966, 1974, 1994, 2006 and 2010.

Amy Walter of the Cook Political Report observed on Monday: “If you look back at the last four midterm elections where the party in the White House lost control of one or both houses of Congress, you see that they share the following traits in common:

The president has approval ratings among his own partisans under 85%, and approval ratings among independents in the 30’s or low 40’s. For example, in November 2006, President George W. Bush’s job approval ratings among his own party were 81%. Just 31% of independents gave him a positive job rating. His party lost 30 House seats, and control of the House. Four years earlier, in the 2002 midterms, Bush’s job approval ratings among

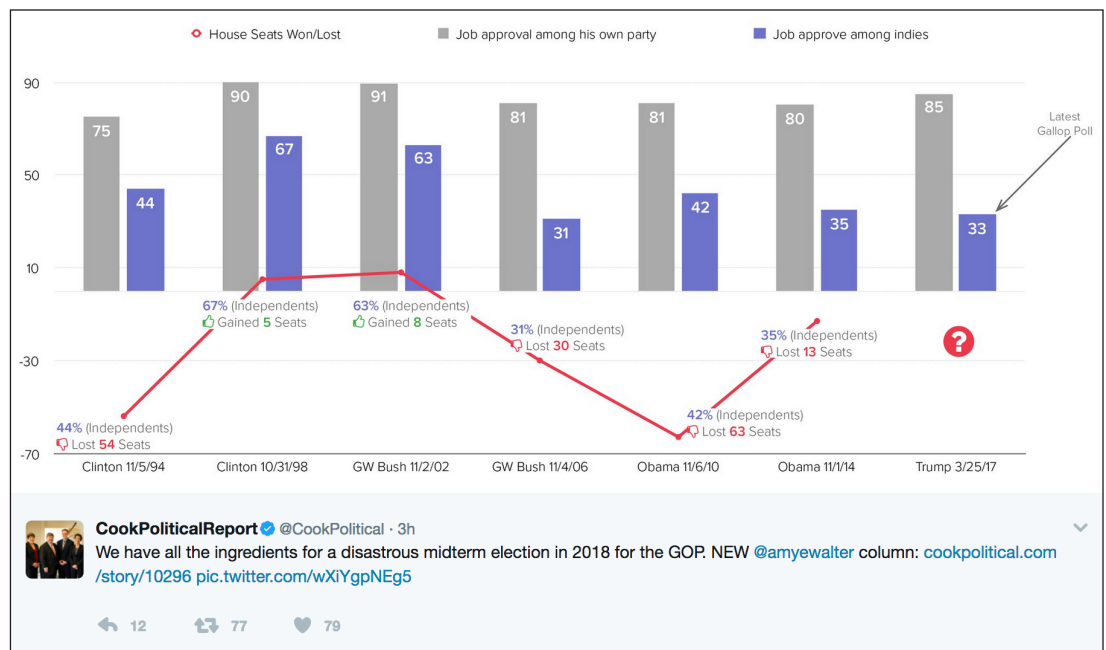
Republicans were a robust 91% and among independents they were at 63%. His party picked up eight seats in the House that year.”

Walter continues, “We are less than 75 days into the Trump Administration and the president is flirting very close to the danger zone territory. The most recent Gallup survey put his approval ratings with Republicans at 85%, but he’s sitting at just 33% with independents. If he drops a few points among GOPers, Trump’s ratings today would look exactly like those of President Bush right before his party was routed in 2006.”

In 2006, Democrats Joe Donnelly and Brad Ellsworth upset U.S. Reps. Chris Chocola and John Hostettler and Baron Hill reclaimed the 9th CD, defeating U.S. Rep. Mike Sodrel in a rematch.

Democrats need to gain just 24 seats in 2018 to regain a majority, with 23 Republicans representing districts carried by Hillary Clinton in 2016. The Senate represents a more arduous task from Democrats, having to defend 25 of the 33 seats, including 10 in states carried by President Trump, including Sen. Donnelly’s Indiana.

Walter adds, “The very public intra-party fight between President Trump and the Freedom Caucus is just the latest twist in the ongoing fight over the philosophical, strategic and ideological direction of the Republican Party. As has been his mode of operation since his candidate



days, Trump has taken to Twitter to shame/intimidate/cajole members of his own party. In this case, it was to get rebellious GOPers to ‘take one for the team’ and support a flawed, but nonetheless GOP-authored Obamacare replacement bill. But, in the end, it’s not the Freedom Caucus that gets hurt by this infighting. They sit in safe Republican seats and know their voters better than anyone in D.C. Instead, it’s the vulnerable GOP incumbents who lose this fight.”

Why? Walter asks. "The more the GOP gets bogged down in process instead of progress, the more likely it is that their voters become disillusioned and that independent voters abandon them. Combine these ingredients with an energized Democratic base and you have all the ingredients for a disastrous midterm election in 2018 for the GOP."

But Inside Elections with Nathan Gonzales writes of the Senate: "The bottom line is that Republicans are likely to gain Senate seats in 2018, it's just far from clear how many." In his tossup ratings, Donnelly is joined by Sens. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Clare McCaskill of Missouri. Two seats in Ohio and Pennsylvania lean Democrat.

Throw in a government shutdown with Trump and congressional Republicans can't figure a resolution by April 29, and disaster could morph into catastrophe. The "unambiguous message for Washington" in Tuesday's Politico/Morning Consult Poll is "take all necessary steps to avoid a government shutdown." Just 17% of registered voters say they could stomach a shutdown (rematching the 17% who favored RyanCare). That's a sobering message for members of Congress, who leave town Friday for two weeks, having done absolutely nothing to avoid a shutdown when the money to fund government operations runs out at the end of the month.

How awful are Trump's numbers? Quinnipiac reports that American voters' opinions of some of Trump's personal qualities are mostly negative:

- 61–34% that he is not honest;
- 55–40% that he does not have good leadership skills;
- 57–39% that he does not care about average Americans;
- 66–29% that he is not level-headed;
- 64–33% that he is a strong person;
- 60–35% that he is intelligent;
- 61–34% that he does not share their values.

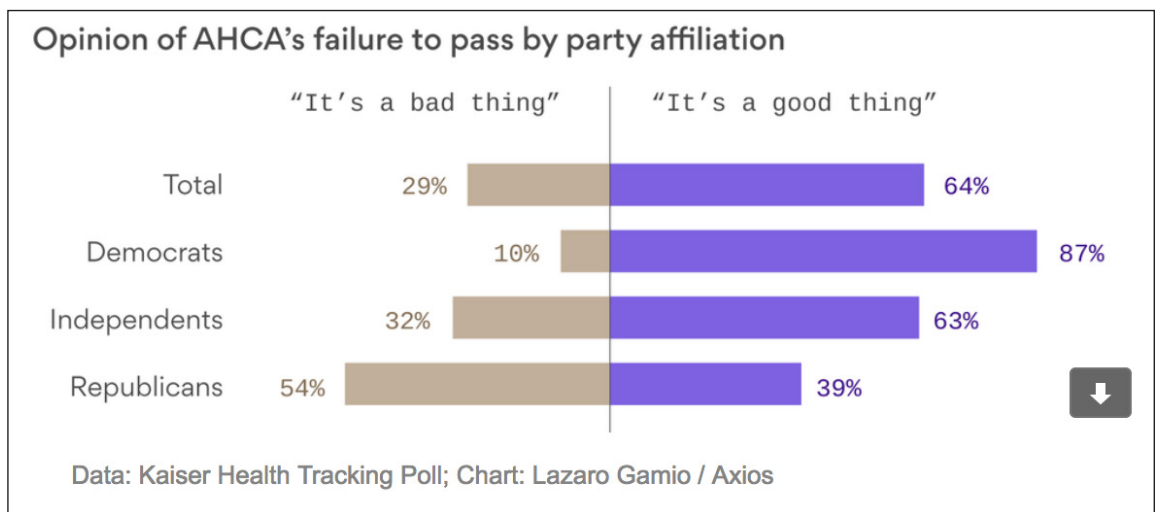
American voters say 55-39% that President Trump is keeping his campaign promises. But 52% of voters say they are embarrassed to have Trump as president, while 27% are proud and 19% don't feel either emotion. "President Donald Trump continues to struggle, even among his most loyal supporters. Many of them would be hard-pressed to see even a sliver of a silver lining in this troubling downward spiral," said Tim Malloy, assistant director

of the Quinnipiac University Poll. "President George W. Bush, who hit a negative 28-67% on May 14, 2008, had less support, but it took eight years, two unpopular wars and a staggering economy to get there."

Trump gets a negative 28-64% approval rating for the way he is handling health care.

Opinions on other issues are:

- Disapprove 61–29% of the way he is handling the environment;
- Disapprove 48–41% of the way he is handling the economy;
- Disapprove 58–33% of the way he is handling foreign policy;
- Disapprove 49–42% of the way he is handling terrorism;



- Disapprove 57–39% of the way he is handling immigration issues.

Given Trump's ominous numbers, the real danger could come if he decides to take decisive military action against North Korea or Syria following this week's chemical assaults on civilians. In the classic "Wag the Dog" movie scenario, a scandalous and unpopular president decides to launch a military adventure to divert attention and revive poll numbers. That is exactly Trump's modus operandi. But such a move is fraught with danger, particularly in North Korea, where a U.S. attack could spark a bloody retaliation throughout the peninsula.

In this environment, HPI watches these congressional races take shape:

U.S. Senate: Donnelly moves to center

Reps. Messer and Rokita are both preparing for what looks to be the second consecutive member vs. member



Republican Senate primary battle. In 2014, U.S. Rep. Todd Young defeated Rep. Marlin Stutzman in the Senate race. In 2010, former U.S. Sen. Dan Coats defeated former congressman John Hostettler for that Senate nomination.

Messer has the early advantage with a who's who finance team and his station as the fifth-ranking House Republican. He announced raising \$700,000 for the quarter and has \$1.6 million on hand. He has the support of financier Bob Grand, who was an early backer of Rokita in his 2002 secretary of state campaign. Rokita has run and won statewide in two secretary of state races, but the last time was in 2006 when he won a relatively narrow victory with just 51.1% of the vote.

Also running are Kokomo attorney Mark Hurt; Atlanta, Ind., businessman Terry Henderson; possibly State Sen. Mike Delph; and former Indianapolis mayor Greg Ballard. Movement social conservatives are said to be encouraging Delph to run.

The National Journal is calling Donnelly the most endangered incumbent Senate Democrat in 2018, and Inside Elections' Gonzales rates this race a "tossup."

This week, Donnelly announced he would vote to confirm Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch.

Inside Elections describes Donnelly as "an affable senator with less baggage than (Evan) Bayh and he may end up with some key moderate credentials." Donnelly was recently honored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, who played a key role against Democrats in 2012 and 2016. Without a known Republican nominee and how the political environment will shape up, it's too early to give a Horse Race rating at this point, though HPI believes that Donnelly is vulnerable. But this is a race he can win, just as he beat the odds in 2012 when he upset Treasurer Richard Mourdock, who self-destructed in the homestretch.

As for the Republican primary, Messer emerges as an early favorite. But if there is a crowded field, his path could be complicated, particularly if Delph enters.

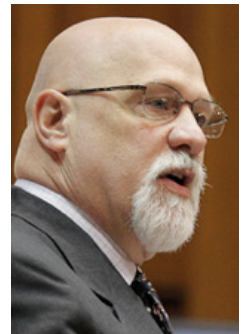
Primary Horse Race Status: Leans Messer.

2nd CD: Coleman/Walorski rematch?

This is the most competitive Indiana CD at +6 Republican on the Cook Partisan Index. Walorski lost to Rep. Donnelly 48-47% in 2010, then defeated Democrat Brendan Mullen 49-48% in the newly drawn 2nd in 2012. Walorski won her last two races decisively, defeating Joe Bock 59-38% in the final Obama era mid-term, then shel- laced former South Bend cop Lynn Coleman 59-37% in

the 2016 Trump wave election.

South Bend Mayor Peter Buttigieg has all but ruled out a challenge to Walorski. He would be her biggest threat. South Bend Tribune columnist Jack Colwell tells HPI that Coleman is preparing for a rematch. "He was clobbered, but party leaders believe he had become a pretty good candidate by the close of the campaign and that nobody could have come close in a Republican-drawn district amid a Trump tsunami," Colwell said. "I've heard that a couple of others are thinking of going to talk to the DCCC. But they don't want word out because they don't want employers to know and they might not run. (St. Joseph Democratic Chairman) Jason Critchlow said seven people have expressed interest to him. I get the impression that none looks now like a new Tim Roemer or Joe Donnelly."



Democrat Lynn Coleman in the 2nd CD and State Sens. Brandt Hershman, Phil Boots and Randy Head along with Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown are on 4th CD lists.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee is reaching out to veterans, so Mullen, an Iraq War veteran, may be asked to consider a rematch.

Of all Indiana incumbents, Donnelly is the most vulnerable, though the cycle dynamic could give him a tailwind if Trump free-falls into the 20% approval range and congressional Republicans confirm they can't govern. If that happens, Walorski could replace him on the vulnerability list.

4th CD: Who's not running?

If Rep. Rokita opts into the Senate race, the question won't be "who's running," it will be "who isn't running?"

Names 4th CD Republicans are signaling to HPI include State Sen. Brandt Hershman, State Sen. Randy Head, State Sen. Phil Boots, House Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown, State Rep. Heath VanNatter, State Rep. Sharon Negele, former state representative Matt Whetstone, Howard County Commissioner Paul Wyman, Frankfort Mayor Chris McBarnes and Indiana AT&T President Bill Soards.

Hershman has been under consideration for the Republican seat on the Federal Communications Commission and if he lands that spot, he probably wouldn't run, though he did not make the last Politico speculation list on

that post. Sen. Head ran an unsuccessful attorney general bid in 2016 and has aspects of that campaign still in place. Chairman Brown, running as a medical doctor in the aftermath of the RyanCare/TrumpCare fiasco, would be an interesting candidate. The wildcard could be Soards, who served on the Indianapolis City-County Council as well as the Boone County Council, so he has an appetite for public service and would be an intriguing congressional candidate in a potentially crowded field.

6th CD: State Senators preparing to run

Rep. Messer is almost certain to launch a Senate bid, and that leaves an emerging field that includes freshman State Sen. Jeff Raatz, State Sen. Jean Leising, State Sen. Mike Crider, State Rep. Randy Frye, and Henry County Councilman Nate LaMar.



Leising ran two unsuccessful races against U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton in 1994 (losing 52-48%) and 1996 (56-42%), and lost to Baron Hill in the open 9th CD in 1998 (losing 50.8 to 47.9%).

State Rep. Randy Frye and State Sens. Mike Crider, Jeff Raatz and Jean Leising are on lists for the 6th CD.

Of this emerging field, Sens. Raatz and Crider would appear to have an early advantage, though a good campaign by others could prevail in a crowded field. The 6th CD would almost certainly remain the GOP column unless there is a 1974 electoral disaster for the incumbent party.

8th CD: Glen Miller declares

Glen Miller of Evansville has filed and declared his candidacy. David Orentlicher, who lost a recounted 2016 primary battle to Ron Drake, told HPI on Wednesday he will not run in 2018. U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon easily defeated Drake. Democratic sources say that a potential self-funding attorney is also considering a race.



Miller, a Kokomo native who attended the University

8th CD Democrat Glen Miller (left) and Monroe County Councilwoman Shelli Yoder in the 9th are worth watching.

of Evansville and describes himself as studying creative writing and law, kicked off his campaign on Tuesday. The Evansville Courier & Press reported he spoke about education and election reform. Miller said he's in favor of holding charter and public schools to the same standard and directing more funds to public schools. He cited the "electoral machine" as the "greatest threat to democracy" because of gerrymandering and a lack of term limits for members of Congress. "We hold our president to that standard where he can only serve eight total years," Miller said, asking why Congress shouldn't be held to the same standard. "I think putting in term limits will open the doors for new ideas in

the House and Senate." Miller and campaign manager Jordan Seib said they were inspired by Sen. Bernie Sanders' campaign for president in 2016.

9th CD: Yoder rematch with Trey?

U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth won a mostly self-funded Republican primary, defeating Attorney General Greg Zoeller and State Sens. Erin Houchin and Brent Waltz among others, then defeated Monroe County Councilwoman Shelli Yoder 54.1-40.5% in the general. That margin was attributed, in part, to the Trump tsunami. Hollingsworth out-raised Yoder \$3.5 million to \$1.43 million.



Democratic sources tell HPI that Yoder is pondering a rematch, but is also being encouraged to run for Indiana secretary of state. Hollingsworth could face a primary challenge. "Tennessee Trey" is still considered to be an outsider, even in Republican circles.



A town hall is planned for Rep. Walorski

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – A group of people most likely to vote for a Democrat for Congress will sponsor a town hall meeting for 2nd District Republican Congresswoman Jackie Walorski next Sunday, 3 to 5 p.m., at Century Center in downtown South Bend.



Let's consider some questions about this unusual event.

Q. Is this a nice bipartisan gesture, what with some Democrats paying for a site for Jackie to meet with her constituents?

A. Oh, sure. About as nice a gesture as it would be for President Trump to invite MSNBC's Rachel Maddow on stage at one of his rallies.

Q. Well, why would Democrats pay for a town hall

for Jackie?

A. Wait. The sponsoring group calls itself Northern Indiana Community Coalition for Health Care (NICCHC.) No letters D or E or M or O. So, it is not an official Demo function. That technicality aside, the purpose is to shame Walorski for not holding any town hall meeting for her constituents since 2013.

Q. Who cares if Walorski doesn't hold town hall meetings or news conferences and doesn't agree to debates?

A. Her supporters don't. Her detractors do.

Q. So is this just a silly issue with no political effect on her reelection bid next year?

A. Maybe. Maybe not. Nobody knows for sure what the political climate will be in the 2018 fall campaign. The sponsors know that nothing will budge her solid supporters, but they see a lot more voters in the middle who aren't really fans of Jackie. Polls showed significant voter displeasure with her refusal to engage in a real debate last time, even though the Trump tsunami in Indiana helped her win big, very big. They also are concentrating now on the health care issue, the listed topic for the event next Sunday.



Q. Well, Walorski has always campaigned against Obamacare and voted a whole bunch of times to repeal it. And she wins elections. So isn't health care a good issue for her?

A. Not so much now. Republicans now control Washington and need to keep their promise to repeal Obamacare but still retain a lot of the popular features of the Affordable Care Act. Most voters now understand that Obamacare, something so often denounced as a disaster, is the same as the Affordable Care Act, something that has gained in popularity.

Q. So she wouldn't want to answer questions about the Republican health care alternative, Trumpcare or Ryncare or whatever it's called?

A. No Republican, except maybe Speaker Paul Ryan, wants to talk about that plan after the criticism of all the millions of people it would knock off health insurance and the way it was shot down without sufficient support for passage in the Republican-controlled House.

Q. Does that mean Obamacare is so successful that it's safe from further attacks?

A. No. It has problems. Its supporters as well as those who hate it know that it needs some changes to sustain it. But those who don't like it don't want to fix it. They agree with President Trump that if nothing is done it will just fall apart on its own.

Q. But would just letting health care fall apart be popular?

A. Of course not. But with no agreement on a remedy, it's a tough topic for members of Congress, especially those who promised to repeal and replace Obamacare with something to make health care great.

Q. So the sponsors of that meeting want Walorski to face a barrage of questions about what to do if the Affordable Care Act is repealed?

A. Yep. They urge Walorski's constituents to come to "share your stories, concerns and questions." It's a barrage she would not welcome.

Q. Will Walorski attend?

A. Will Bobby Knight win the Nobel Peace Prize?

Q. Would they hold "her" town hall meeting without her?

A. Yes, with her name and her absence mentioned quite frequently. ❖

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

Conferee showdowns on roads, budget

By THOMAS CURRY

INDIANAPOLIS – State lawmakers crammed a number of key issues into a busy week at the Statehouse, but just how many changes can be expected at the last minute remains unknown. Conference committees loom large over Indiana government as differences on the state budget and road infrastructure bills need hammered out among all sides despite their advancement in the Senate. Adding into the drama this week was the born-again superintendent bill, all with a little alcohol sales language brewed into discussions as well.

After Senate Appropriations Chairman Luke Kenley released the changes to the budget last week, the bill finally got its second reading on Wednesday. The budget, HB1001, was altered in some significant ways by the Senate after it was passed by the House. HB1001 originally called for increasing the cigarette tax to allow the transfer of the gasoline sales tax revenue to road funding, but Senate budget gurus scrapped the idea.

Sen. Kenley questioned the need for the tax, saying the state should only “raise taxes that it needs to” and that “the cigarette tax is not needed at this time.” Not transferring the sales tax means Indiana’s 20-year road infrastructure plan will get off to a slower start, and continues the state Senate’s time honored distaste for an increase in cigarette taxes. Lawmakers assure that the state will be able to reach the \$1.2 billion needed over average annually by the end of the deal.

Debate on the gas tax transfer as well as pre-K funding will be the main focus when it comes to the budget in joint Conference Committee. Gov. Eric Holcomb had called for a \$10 million increase into the pre-K pilot program that currently exists in four of the state’s counties. The House had originally increased that investment, but the Senate slashed the increase to only \$6 million. Speaker Brian Bosma, however, has been a large proponent of the pre-K pilot program, citing its effectiveness and calling for a doubling of the state’s investment. With pre-K funding being small in the Senate budget, Gov. Holcomb and the speaker may push the issue during last-minute negotiations.

Senate President David Long, meanwhile, has championed discussions on decreased funding for traditional pre-K, instead favoring funding the more cost-effective online services. Long has said previously that program is being looked at due to its effectiveness in Utah and its

ability to reach more rural areas.

Sen. Kenley challenged these ideas saying, “They’ve looked all over the place,” and summarized his view as “suspicious.” In final apportionments for the budget, Kenley, who has questioned the effectiveness of pre-K, gave only \$1 million for online schools, but did extend the pilot program to all Indiana counties. Whether or not the issue will be brought up by Long at joint conference committee is unknown. The budget is set for a third reading and final passage vote today and is expected to pass on party lines.

In lock step with the budget lies the HB1002 road infrastructure bill. A major milestone was reached in the state Senate Tuesday as the bill passed 34-13; but changes in joint conference committee seem inevitable. HB1002 has dominated discussions at the Statehouse and next to the budget is the most important bill of the session. An initiative supported by Gov. Holcomb, HB1002 calls for increasing the gas tax and creates a number of fees to pay for infrastructure investments over the coming decades. Experts estimated late last year that Indiana will need to invest an average of \$1.2 billion in roads each year over the next 20 years to tackle the state’s crippling



Your weekday pre- power lunch briefing. Look for The Atomic around 11 a.m. weekdays at howeypolitics.com

infrastructure.

But the complexity of the issue and differences between the Senate and House versions mean the issue will be debated down to the wire in the waning days of session. The debate on the gasoline sales tax transfer directly affects the bill, as well as unforeseen debate on tolling.

The increased ability of the governor to toll be a main topic of debate in joint session. Some Senate opponents of the bill, like Sen. Mike Delph, argue that the language in HB1002 is too loose and allows tolling on critical roads such as I-465. Indiana lawmakers say reports from Washington are that states will have to rely on tolling to pay for infrastructure investments in the near future, but the idea has remained unpopular among many lawmakers. Gov. Holcomb has been largely quiet on the specifics of the roads debate, but could throw his weight in now that the bill has taken shape.

Long acknowledged that while the passage of House Bill1002 is an “important step in our effort to estab-

lish a sustainable, long-term road funding plan for Indiana...House Bill 1002 will head to a conference committee, where differences between the House and Senate versions of the legislation will be ironed out."

All sides are looking to avoid a nitty-gritty details-focused discussion on tolls, but it seems destined as the road funding formula remains in question.

Rising up from the dead Tuesday was a bill making the superintendent an appointed position starting in 2025. The measure initially failed in dramatic fashion in the Senate, to the surprise of many Senate leaders, in the form of SB179 by a vote of 23-26. On Tuesday, HB1005 passed out of the Senate 28-20 after assurances from sponsor Sen. Jim Buck that there wouldn't be a repeat.

Sens. Becker, Bohacek, Crider, Glick, Grooms, Head, Kenley, Koch, Niezgodski, Tallian, and Tomes all switched from nays to yeas. Of particular note are Sens. Mike Bohacek and Ron Grooms, who originally supported the measure in committee only to surprise everyone on the Senate floor by voting no on the original SB179. Sen. Grooms told HPI after that vote that he talked to his constituents who said they weren't in favor of the bill, and that he wouldn't consider supporting it again. Perhaps Statehouse leadership visited Sen. Grooms' office between votes.

Senate rules stipulate that an issue cannot return without "significant changes" made from the original failure. Initially, SB179 called for the position to be appointed in 2021 and there was little in the form of restrictions or requirements placed on the governor's choice. HB1005 underwent a number of changes to meet Senate rules and now has a two-year Indiana residency requirement, as well as specific requirements for work experience while pushing the start date back.

Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane attempted to stop the vote Tuesday, citing his belief that the changes didn't satisfy Senate rules, but was quickly shot down by Long.

The issue was a priority for Gov. Holcomb and passed the House easily with bipartisan support, making the initial Senate failure a head scratcher. Senate leadership stated that SB179 wasn't properly prepared and didn't have a headcount by sponsor Sen. Buck, leading to the initial flub.

Other bills passed this week included a bill amending the state constitution to require a balanced budget, something Indiana has reached in recent history. A bill created by Sen. Head to fix Indiana's disastrous e-liquids law also passed the House this week.

Ricker's cold beer sales was a headline grabber as well. On Tuesday, Ricker's gave out free burritos to Indiana lawmakers, after many of them questioned

how selling frozen burritos qualifies them as a restaurant, thus avoiding the Sunday sales law. Speaker Bosma was particularly harsh but did enjoy his free lunch on Tuesday. Long said that while Ricker's is "currently operating within the law to sell alcohol" it didn't make much sense to him. Long went further to say that this is "one of those issues that just comes out of nowhere" and it will likely be debated in the closing days of session.

Legislation authored by State Sen. Brandt Hershman (R-Buck Creek) that will give Hoosiers the opportunity to vote on a balanced budget amendment to Indiana's Constitution passed the General Assembly this week, Senate Republicans announced (Howey Politics Indiana). Senate Joint Resolution 7, a proposed balanced budget amendment to the Indiana Constitution, would prohibit state spending from exceeding state revenue unless two-thirds of the General Assembly deems it necessary to use emergency spending measures. The resolution also requires Indiana's public pension funds to be actuarially funded, which protects teachers and prevents court-ordered tax increases without approval from the General Assembly. SJR 7 will be considered by Hoosier voters as a ballot issue in the 2018 General Election. If approved by voters, the language in SJR 7 will become an official amendment to Indiana's Constitution. ❖

House votes for Muncie school takeover

The Indiana House on Wednesday night voted 64-30 in defense of an amended bill that would place deficit-ridden Muncie Community Schools under state control (Slabaugh, Muncie Star Press). The Republican majority ignored arguments from Democratic representatives Sue Errington, Muncie, who said "the citizens of Muncie feel blind-sided" by the last-minute bill; Ed Delaney, Indianapolis, who called it a "morale blow" to the city of Muncie; and Melanie Wright, who complained the bill would allow the state to take over MCS finances and academics without warning and without any standards to justify such a takeover. The bill originally pertained only to a state takeover of Gary Community School Corp.

Senate won't forgive Gary School loans

A proposal to significantly reduce the \$100 million debt burden of the Gary Community School Corp. overwhelmingly was rejected Wednesday by the Republican-controlled Indiana Senate (Carden, NWI Times). State Sen. Eddie Melton, D-Merrillville, offered an amendment to House Bill 1001 — the two-year state budget — that would have authorized Indiana officials to cancel repayment of all or part of the \$30 million in loans provided over the years to Gary schools. ❖

ANTELOPE CLUB

615 N. DELAWARE ST. - DOWNTOWN INDY
antelopeclub@hotmail.com



>> Lunch & dinner 6 days a week

>> Cigar lounge

>> Beautiful view of Downtown from our 2nd floor patio

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

Differences between Senate and House

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – Way back in 1974, when I was working in Washington, D.C., as an intern for an Indiana congressman, it didn't take long for this Hoosier to figure out that there was no such thing as equality of the two houses of Congress. A cursory look told you that the U. S. Senate had nicer offices, a better dining room, neater chambers and a host of other perks not available to their



House brethren. Heck, the senators generally dressed better, talked smoother and carried themselves with an air that was reminiscent of their ancient Roman role models.

As an intern who took every available opportunity to sit in both chambers and observe the proceedings, it readily became apparent to me that there was another huge difference between the House and

the Senate. The Senate possessed an air of decorum that was strikingly different from that of the House. The senators always referred to each other as "The gentleman from Such and Such." House members might refer to each other as only slightly more polite than, "Hey, dipstick."

The most noticeable difference between the two houses was it appeared that senators liked to hear themselves speak. Whereas representatives were held to a pretty tight schedule of debate that left little time for the ordinary representative to demonstrate everything they knew and then some, senators could and did blaviate until the cows came home.

The old hands on the Hill attributed this difference to the environment of the Senate that fostered a thorough discussion and debate of the key issues of the day, as opposed to the rough and tumble "Let's call a vote" mentality of the House of Representatives. The pure fact of the matter was that the Senate was forced to go down the excruciating path of endless debate due to urging of former vice president and murderer of Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr.

In 1789, the first U. S. Senate adopted rules which allowed its members to move the previous question. This meant that Sen. Elvis Fudd could end debate on a piece of legislation and the Senate could proceed to voting if the motion was passed by a simple majority.

However, in 1806, fresh off his dueling victory over Alexander Hamilton, Burr determined as Senate president that moving the previous question was unnecessary and redundant and asked the Senate to modify its rules, eliminating the rule. The Senate agreed on a simple majority vote and now we have the best Congress in all of the

world.

Well, not so fast.

The key point of this column, if you don't take away anything else, is that nowhere in the United States Constitution is there a provision for filibusters, cloture or carving your name in a Senate desk. The Founding Fathers were pretty smart in that regard. They left the details of the conduct of the United States Senate to future intellectual lights, duly elected by an equally enlightened, educated and well-informed electorate. Therefore, with no mechanism in place for terminating debate, filibusters became possible.

Until late in the 1830s, the filibuster was just a whispered-about possibility somewhat akin to unicorns and moderate Democrats. It was only a matter of time before the theoretical became reality. In 1837, the first filibuster was launched. It was used in earnest in 1841 when Sen. Henry Clay tried to end debate via majority vote on a bill to charter the Second Bank of the United States. Sen. William King threatened a filibuster with a suggestion to Clay that he make hotel arrangements for the winter. For much of the remainder of the 19th Century, filibusters were threatened more than used.

This forbearance came screeching to a halt in 1917. Twelve anti-war senators killed a piece of legislation that would have allowed Democrat President Woodrow Wilson the ability to arm merchant vessels. Wilson called on the Democrat-controlled Senate to pass a bill that allowed termination of debate or cloture with the vote of two-thirds of the senators voting.

Needless to say, this let Pandora out of the box and allowed the 20th Century to be the century of the filibuster and the threatened filibuster. Democrat senators used the filibuster and its threat on repeated occasions in an effort to derail civil rights legislation. One of the most notable filibusters was that of the 1964 Civil Rights Act by Democrat senators. Led by former Ku Klux Klan member, Democrat Sen. Robert Byrd, the filibuster continued for 75 hours. Byrd himself talked for over 14 hours. With Republicans supporting the Civil Rights Act, the Senate invoked cloture for only the second time since 1927.

In the seventies, leadership in the Democrat-controlled Senate put two rules into place by simple majority vote. First, a two-track legislative process was installed. This allowed two pieces of legislation to be considered simultaneously. This way Sen. Martin Sledgehead could bring the Senate to its knees with a filibuster on some piece of legislation while the Senate could still consider other necessary legislation granting pay increases, improved health insurance for members and big fat pensions. In addition, the Senate revised its rules, once again by simple majority vote, to reduce cloture to only 60 votes needed to end debate.

The point is this. The rule to decide whether to allow cloture, how many votes are required for cloture, and many other uniquely fuzzy rules in the U.S. Senate are decided by simple majority votes. Changes are made over

time and generally by using the might-makes-right principle. I'm pretty sure that Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield would not have called for a rule change in the '70s if he thought it would be to the detriment of his Democratic majority. Rules are rules until they are not. Don't mention Senate rules and the U.S. Constitution in the same breath.

That brings us to our current budding fiasco in the Senate, the nomination of Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch. You all know that this is the nomination that those dunderheaded evil obstructionists are plotting to block using the filibuster as their weapon of choice. The will of the people be damned. If Charlie Schumer doesn't want Gorsuch as a Supreme Court justice, then by golly the Democrats will deny Republicans the 60 votes necessary under current Senate rules to allow a straight up-or-down vote.

Please note, and this is very important, this strategy should not be confused with Senate Leader Mitch McConnell's enlightened deliberation on Obama Supreme Court nominee Merrick Garland last year. That was way different and in no way near as dastardly a brazen political act as Schumer's wanton strategy is at this time.

Why didn't Charlie Schumer change the Senate rules last year and allow a vote on the certainly qualified Garland? He didn't because Democrats are in the minority. They could not force a change in rules nor a vote, because the right to vote on a bill or an appointee is not protected by the United States Constitution. It is covered by the rules of the Senate. Don't like the rules as they are? Get an elected majority and change them!

Arguing about Senate rules is just as fruitful as arguing with Roger Goodell about how many pounds of pressure a football should have. Ask Tom Brady how that argument went.

So here we are. Democrats look like they have the votes to keep supporters of Neil Gorsuch from getting the 60 votes needed to end debate and bring his nomination to an up or down vote. Republicans will soon have to decide whether they will eat another doggie poo sandwich or whether they will exercise their political muscle and change the Senate rules to allow a simple majority vote.

Both sides refer to any change in the rules as a "nuclear option." Well, both sides would do well to remember that the rules have been changed several times to deal with the political realities of the day. Those rules were last changed in 2013 by Harry Reid so that Obama judicial nominees below the Supreme Court level could be rammed through.

As my mother would say as she bounced her little budding politico on her knee, "Craigy, what is sauce for the goose is most assuredly sauce for the gander."

When you are waging a political and cultural war, you use the tools at your disposal, including the nuclear ones. ❖

Dunn is former Howard County Republican Party chairman



Trump budget forces value judgments

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Through his budget proposals, President Trump is forcing all of us to be more explicit about our values. Take his desire to eliminate federal funding for the National Endowments for the Arts (NEA), the Humanities (NEH), plus programs for libraries, museums and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).



These federal organizations will lose \$971 million in Trump's budget. Indiana's Arts Commission and its Humanities counterpart together get about \$1.6 million. The CPB pumps \$8.8

million into the state for public radio and TV. Museum and library support comes to \$3.2 million. That totals to \$13.6 million for Indiana from the feds.

Weigh that against the Indianapolis subsidy for the Pacers (a presumably private, professional basketball team) to the tune of \$16 million per year. What is the annual subsidy for the Colts? Is there a public subsidy for the baseball team in South Bend? For the hockey team in Fort Wayne? For the Evansville Otters?

Let's be clear, I'm a sports fan. This weekend I watched IU lose a (7-3) baseball game to Nebraska. Need I do more to prove my devotion (addiction) to sports? Our love for sports was impressed on my mind in the early 1970s at a Little League baseball game in a public park in Grand Island, Neb. The modern playing field and stands were brilliantly lit for a night game. The players wore attractive uniforms and had new-looking equipment. It was an impactful testimonial to what we value.

I see the attraction of sports activities to potential businesses and residents. I believe it is good for a community to have teams to rally around, be they professional, college or high school. Americans love competition and eagerly identify with "their" teams, but do professional teams require perpetual government subsidies?

Americans also value the arts, the humanities, public radio and TV, our museums and our libraries. Arts and sports have many similarities. Both reward individual discipline and team performance. Both involve intensive learning and skill development. Both are practiced by a very limited number of professionals. Sports are focused primarily on youth; arts, humanities, etc. are lifetime involvements. However, the imbalance in public funding of sports and "cultural" institutions is horrific.

I endorse my friend Fred McCarthy's blog (www.indytaxdollars.typepad.com) suggesting each Hoosier com-

munity take a serious, open and comprehensive look at how it spends its public funds on sports and other beneficial activities.

In addition to the budget cuts mentioned above, the president wants to eliminate the Legal Services Corporation which provides 12 percent of the budget for Indiana Legal Services. Annually, the nine Indiana offices of this vital organization help 11,000 low-income Hoosiers in civil actions to protect their rights against overbearing government agencies and private businesses.

The federal government is poised to step away from activities that define civilized society. Individuals, communities and states, by public and private contributions, can protect themselves against the forces of disintegration now gathering strength in our nation. ❖

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

Why does Lake County keep embarrassing?

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – Why does Lake County keep embarrassing itself smack dab in the middle of the General Assembly? No wonder downstate Republicans are often unwilling to give Lake County money when folks come hat in hand.

I and others have sometimes criticized the state



for giving Lake County the cold shoulder. But, alas, I can't criticize the state for what it is about to do. Some Lake County towns and cities are about to mess up the work U.S. Rep. Peter Visclosky, D-Merrillville, has done for the last three years to bring South Shore Railroad's West Lake Corridor to reality.

Visclosky has worked doggedly to get 20 Lake County municipalities to commit at least a third of their County Economic

Development Income Tax over the next 30 years to building the nine-mile rail line.

Now, Merrillville has voted to reduce its pledge from 22% of its CEDIT to 8%. Gary, too, is considering reducing its commitment and Lake Station Mayor Christopher Anderson has said the city can't afford to honor its pledge. Five other communities, including Hammond, have yet to make a pledge.

Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott has yet to sign the interlocal agreement and hasn't pledged any money, even though his city, the county's largest, is awash with cash from its casino. McDermott went so far as to say the County Council should repeal the tax and starve the planned new rail line.

State government will contribute \$6 million annually for the next 30 years, the NWI Regional Development Authority will kick in \$10.5 million annually for the next 30 years, and the RDA is making a one-time \$20 million contribution for engineering. The federal government, thanks to Visclosky's efforts, will pay half of the projected \$1 billion cost.

State Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, has legislation pending to have the state intercept money that would go to the municipalities to ensure the rail project got paid. God bless Ed Soliday. Some of those balking argue that the new line would be of little benefit to their communities. The new line, however, would enhance the quality of life across the county and benefit all.

Lake County for too long has been parochial in its vision. It's time to stop. ❖

Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years.

A war atrocity, and an empathetic Trump

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – After two years of President Trump and Vice President Pence demonizing and vilifying Syrian refugees, seeking to ban them from Indiana and the nation, trying to thwart their resettlement here in a state that boasts its "Hoosier hospitality," Wednesday was a watershed day.



It came a day after the Syrian Assad regime gassed its citizens – again – killing dozens. The world was treated of visions of gasping, foaming children being sprayed down with water from garden hoses on the beds of pickup trucks, stripped of their chemically soaked clothing. And the world recoiled.

This occurred four years after the Kremlin had said it had removed all chemical weapons from the Assad regime, prompting President Obama to back off his "red line."

And it came a week after Hanover College faculty and alums chastised fellow graduate Pence, saying in a letter signed by some 400, "We write to you to ask how, as an obviously devout Christian, and after four years of the enlightening liberal arts education we all received at Hanover College, you can participate in the discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and antipathy toward the poor that we see in the actions of the Trump administration."

Last week, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson seemed to give the Syrian despot a reprieve, saying the "longer-term status of President Assad will be decided by the Syrian people," as if this tyrant could be turned out in a primary election.

After the gassing, President Trump's initial assessment was to blame President Obama, but not fellow Russian strongman Vladimir Putin, who has propped up the war criminal Assad.

On Wednesday, ironically appearing with Jordan King King Abdullah II (a military veteran, a diplomat, and a leader who shields more Syrian refugees than anyone else), we saw a different Trump.

"**It crossed a lot of lines** for me," Trump told reporters. "When you kill innocent children, innocent babies, babies, little babies, with a chemical gas that is so lethal ... that crosses many, many lines, beyond a red line. Many, many lines.

"I will tell you, that attack on children yesterday had a big impact on me. Big impact," Trump said. "It's very, very possible – and I will tell you, it's already happened – that my attitude toward Syria and Assad has changed very much."

Trump described himself as a "very flexible person," suggesting that his perspectives on Syria have shifted. Perhaps they will on the criminals Assad and Putin, who have enabled the most appalling atrocities of the still young 21st Century.

What do all these "crossed many, many lines" actually mean for President Trump? We can only guess. He winged it as a candidate, and he's doing the same as president. There is no "Trump doctrine," just as there were no emphatic Trump policy markers on the Obamacare repeal/replace that crashed and burned last month.

Trump is in it for himself. He was willing to sell out his base on health care, just as Pence was willing to scuttle HIP 2.0, his greatest policy achievement as governor, for a political win. Who knows what moral scruples this pair has for the tormented Syrian people.

This atrocity brings some moral relief and bearing on the Trump/Pence world view of Syrian refugees, who were their political props of fear. Perhaps something has changed. Perhaps they can become our huddled masses, yearning to breathe free.

Perhaps. ❖

David Nather, Axios: Looks like Trumpcare isn't going to make a pre-recess comeback after all. The White House would have loved to at least get a new health care agreement before the congressional recess, and a lot of Republicans would have liked it too. Instead, they're going to head into the two-week break with nothing more than the knowledge that at least they didn't murder each other.

The root of the problem: House Republicans, as a group, can't reconcile their promise to cover people with pre-existing conditions — one of the most popular parts of Obamacare — with the fact that it makes individual health insurance more expensive. Conservatives think it's OK to let states put all of the sick people in high-risk pools. The rest of the Republicans don't. Hard to see how that changes after a two-week break. Here's how nasty it got yesterday as everything fell apart: Heritage Foundation CEO Michael Needham blamed moderate Republicans for the collapse of the talks, and called out three by name for allegedly breaking their promises to repeal Obamacare. One of the ones he called out, Rep. Leonard Lance, later told reporters that he has "repeatedly campaigned" on the promise of protecting people with pre-existing conditions when Congress repeals and replaces Obamacare: "I have never campaigned on pure repeal, ever." States could have gotten waivers if they could convince HHS that they could provide "better coverage," Needham said — which the states would have to define. By the end of the day, the effort fizzled, and the expected next round of meetings with Vice President Mike Pence didn't happen. Instead, Pence got an update from House Speaker Paul Ryan and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy on "the next steps toward keeping our promise." ❖

Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier:

The first step in dealing with this state's alcohol laws is to admit Indiana has a problem. Backed into a corner by a convenience store owner who figured out how to work Indiana's byzantine laws to get cold, carry-out six-packs into two of his places, the General Assembly tied itself in knots in the past few weeks trying to figure out how to tamp down a clever way around what lawmakers claim was the "will of the legislature." On Monday morning, the House Public Policy Committee signed off on a provision that would allow two Ricker's Convenience Store locations to keep selling cold beer for the time being while closing the door on similar runs through a liquor law loophole the company found this year. But the lawmakers were chasing their tails. And they knew it. If the General Assembly could get this wound up over the sale of cold six-packs at two convenience stores — Ricker's figured out how to fashion its Columbus and Sheridan locations with in-store, Tex-Mex dining and qualifying for a restaurant alcohol permit — what sort of loophole-breach of the legislative will would the committee face a year from now? And the next? And the next? "If anything," said Rep. Jim Lucas, R-Seymour,



"(Ricker's has) highlighted the absurdity of our liquor laws." The conclusion from Rep. Matt Lehman, R-Berne: "There's 100 percent agreement it's broken." Face it, other states have figured it out. ❖

Bob Zaltsberg, Bloomington Herald-Times:

Eric Holcomb seemed to be in his comfort zone. The Indiana governor was at a table in the back room at Nick's last Thursday afternoon, having a one-on-one conversation about issues facing the state and a few other topics. He's relaxed in this format, in this place, in this kind of give-and-take about the job he's had for just three months. He likes to get out and talk with people, he said, adding he doesn't plan to change because he's governor. He won't stay isolated in Indianapolis, which should be no surprise; he's a basketball-loving Hoosier who's proud of hitting a basket in all 92 counties in the state. He was "feeling good" about how the Indiana General Assembly was going and sees collaboration between leadership and membership, the Senate and the House, Republicans and Democrats. He said he's talking to a lot of people, and that talking to everybody leads to progress. He wants everyone to feel comfortable offering ideas and suggestions. "Too often, ideas are dismissed if they come from an R or a D," he said. "That isn't the case in this administration, and it won't be." He referred to the five priorities he set out in his State of the State speech. "Pillars," he calls them: to cultivate a strong and diverse economy; fund a long-term roads and bridges plan; develop a 21st century skilled and ready workforce; attack the drug epidemic; and provide great government service at a great value to taxpayers. He said he may add a sixth pillar: a healthy dose of civility. He answered questions that he must have known he would get in Bloomington, like why he was so outspoken in favor of rolling back tougher environmental rules from the Obama administration. "Where do you want the control to rest?" he asked, noting Indiana has made significant strides on solar, wind and other forms of alternative energy. But he said he believes clean coal can and must be part of the state's energy mix. "We are a state that does sit on a lot of coal," he said. ❖

Michael Gerson, Washington Post:

In the aftermath of the GOP health-care debacle came a revealing act of candor. House Speaker Paul D. Ryan admitted that his party, which controls the House, Senate and White House, is not yet a "governing party" because it could not "get 216 people to agree with each other on how we do things." Since the rise of the Tea Party, there have been perhaps 30 members of the House, the Freedom Caucus, who have been consistently unwilling to vote for center-right policy because their anti-government convictions are unappeasable. So a party at the peak of its political fortunes is utterly paralyzed. A caucus in control of everything is itself uncontrollable. ❖

Steve Bannon removed from NSC

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Wednesday removed controversial White House chief strategist Stephen Bannon from the National Security Council, part of a sweeping staff reshuffling that elevated key military and intelligence officials to greater roles on the council and left Bannon far less involved in shaping the administration's day-to-day national security policy (Washington Post). Two senior White House officials said Bannon's departure was in no way a demotion and that he had rarely attended meetings since being placed on the council. They and others interviewed for this story asked for anonymity because they are not authorized to speak publicly on the issue.



Trump defends Bill O'Reilly

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump called Bill O'Reilly a "good person" who did nothing wrong in an interview Wednesday with The New York Times, jumping to the defense of one of his most vocal media supporters despite revelations that Fox News and the host have reached settlements with five women who accused him of harassment (Politico). Trump said O'Reilly should not have settled with the women who accused him. Details of the incidents were published last weekend by the Times. "He's a person I know well — he is a good person," Trump told a pair of Times reporters in an Oval Office interview. "I think he shouldn't have settled; personally, I think he shouldn't have settled... Because you should have taken it all the way. I don't think Bill did anything wrong." More than 20 advertisers, including Eli Lilly, have pulled out of O'Reilly's top-rated Fox News show, where praise for Trump is frequent, as a result of

the report.

Sheriff pleads guilty for intimidation

WARSAW — A northern Indiana sheriff pleaded guilty to an intimidation charge as his trial on bribery and other counts was about to begin (Associated Press). Kosciusko County Sheriff Aaron Rovenstine accepted a plea agreement Wednesday with prosecutors under which nine other charges will be dropped. The judge scheduled a May 23 sentencing hearing. Rovenstine pleaded guilty to a level 6 felony charge that's punishable by up to 2-1/2 years in prison, but the judge could reduce it to a misdemeanor conviction. Rovenstine was indicted last year on charges of accepting \$40,000 to allow special privileges for a jail inmate and a visitor, including permitting unrecorded phone calls meant to hinder punishment of the inmate. The Republican sheriff was accused of intimidating a Warsaw police detective who became suspicious of Rovenstine's activities.

Senate barrels to Gorsuch showdown

WASHINGTON — The Senate barreled toward an institution-rattling confrontation on Thursday over the Supreme Court nomination of Judge Neil M. Gorsuch, with Democrats preparing to filibuster the selection and Republicans vowing to change long-standing rules to bypass the blockade (New York Times). Lawmakers are expected to convene in the late morning to decide whether to end debate and advance to a final vote on Judge Gorsuch. If the Democratic filibuster holds — meaning fewer than 60 senators agree to proceed — Republicans have pledged to pursue the so-called nuclear option: abandoning long-held practice by lifting President Trump's nominee with a simple majority vote. His final confirmation is expected on Friday. Deploying the nuclear option

would fundamentally alter the way the Senate operates — a sign of the body's creeping rancor in recent years after decades of at least relative bipartisanship on Supreme Court matters.

U.S. adds 245,000 jobs in February

WASHINGTON — U.S. private businesses added the most jobs in more than two years last month, a private survey found, a third straight month of robust gains (Associated Press). Payroll processor ADP said Wednesday that businesses added 263,000 jobs in March, the most since December 2014. That is up from 245,000 in February, which was revised lower. The figure is much higher than economists' forecasts for the government's jobs report, to be released Friday.

Ayers ponders run for Georgia gov

WASHINGTON — One of Vice President Mike Pence's top political advisers, Nick Ayers, is considering running for governor of Georgia next year, according to two people familiar with the matter (Politico). Ayers is 34 but already a veteran Republican strategist who burst onto the political scene a decade ago as the wunderkind executive director of the Republican Governors Association. In 2016, he served as a senior adviser to Pence after Donald Trump tapped him as his running mate, and Ayers served on the executive committee of Trump's presidential transition team. He has not previously run for office.

Pence Secret Service agent arrested

WASHINGTON — A U.S. Secret Service agent who guards Vice President Mike Pence has been suspended after allegedly consorting with a prostitute at a Maryland hotel, CNN and ABC report.