



HPI Interview: Holcomb rises to a crisis

Governor gears up to confront the story of our time: Indiana's opioid epidemic

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

GREENWOOD, Ind. – Nearly a half century ago, rock star Neil Young stood before a hushed and rapt crowd at UCLA, singing the fate-

ful words: "I've seen the needle and the damage done, a little part of it in

everyone, and every junkie's like a setting sun"

It was a cautionary tale for the Baby Boomers, many who would smoke pot, drop acid, snort coke but winced at the notion of striking a vein and injecting the smack. Where



Gov. Eric Holcomb emotionally reflects on the trials of Amy Rardon, the new face of Indiana's heroin epidemic, at Valle Vista in Greenwood last week. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howey)



we find ourselves today is an Indiana in pandemic, facing a 500% increase in overdose fatalities since 2000. Some 80 percent of Hoosiers entering the Department of Corrections have a drug problem, often beginning in the family medicine cabinet.

Part of it was cultural, with small town pill mill doctors keeping the RV

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Trump echoes of Jontz

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON – President Donald J. Trump's America First approach to international relations and world leadership probably would have resonated with the late Jim Jontz.



Jontz, a former Democratic Hoosier congressman, ran against then-Sen. Richard Lugar in the 1994 election. At the time, I was Lugar's deputy press secretary and often had to help respond to Jontz's favorite attack: Painting Lugar as someone who cared more about Peru, the country, than Peru, Ind. Or Brazil, the country, more than Brazil, Ind.

Jontz ran radio and TV commercials depicting him visit-



“Gone. Gone. It’s astonishing. We actually asked the governor, ‘Hey, how’s this going to affect us?’ The governor knows that without HIP 2.0, the funds will go away.”

- Sen. Joe Donnelly, on the Senate GOP health reforms, in HPI Interview, page 9



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ing such Hoosier small towns in a red pick-up truck and asking rhetorically when Lugar had last been there.

The ads turned out to be ineffective because Lugar was a regular presence in Indiana. But Jontz had the advantage of just being flip and trying to make people laugh.

The bigger challenge fell to Lugar, who explained how his leadership on foreign, security and agricultural policy led to a stronger and more prosperous United States in which Hoosier workers and farmers in Peru and Brazil – the Indiana versions – could thrive.

But 23 years after Hoosiers embraced Lugar's internationalist views and sent him back to Washington in a landslide, Jontz's rhetoric is being revived by Trump.

"It is time to put Youngstown, Ohio, Detroit, Michigan, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – along with many, many other locations within our great country – before Paris, France," Trump said on June 1 when he announced that the United States would abandon the Paris climate agreement.

Trump said that his decision to pull out of the Paris accord was motivated by his "love" for American workers. He returned to this kind of rhetoric in his weekly radio address on July 8, when he defined his "America First" agenda as one that "will not allow other nations to take advantage of us any longer."

"That's why I withdrew from the one-side Paris climate accord – and, believe me, it was one-sided," Trump said. "Not a good deal for our country. And the job-killing Trans Pacific Partnership, and that's why we are pursuing a total renegotiation of NAFTA, and if we don't get it, we will terminate – that is the end of NAFTA forever."

This way of expressing af-

fection for American workers, however, could end up hurting them. Evidence of this outcome was seen at last week's G20 meeting, where the European Union and Japan announced a trade agreement that bypasses the United States.

Instead of keeping the United States at the table, where it can negotiate agreements that open markets for U.S. goods and defend American workers, it is being kept out of the room.

For the most part, Mr. Trump wants to boost the American workforce by cloistering it from the rest of the world. The bottom line in trade and security agreements is: What's in it for America? The risk is that a defensive, insecure, confrontational United States undermines

the alliances and relationships that advance American interests – not just in economics but also in security matters, such as North Korea's nuclear threat. It would be easier to contain North Korea if the United States were a strong trade and security partner with Asia.

Developing thoughtful, nuanced policies that allow the United States to exert global leadership while also addressing those who might be left behind in globalization takes a lot of hard work. It can't be done through a series of executive orders, Trump's favorite governing approach so far.

But there doesn't seem to be a comprehensive alternative to Trump's world view among Republicans in Washington.

In a recent speech at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, Vice President Mike Pence advocated a "holistic approach" to relations with Central and South America, but he also dwelled on gangs, criminal



networks and illegal immigration and mentioned the wall that Trump wants to build between the U.S. and Mexico – tacking back to the insecurity trope that runs through Trump foreign policy.

No Indiana Republican is stepping up to become the next Lugar, with a comprehensive, coherent approach to foreign and trade policy. Instead, they are nudging Trump here and there.

Freshman Rep. Jim Banks, 3rd CD, who is on the House Armed Services Committee, advocated a skeptical and muscular approach to Russia in a July 10 series of Tweets, a contrast to the coziness that Trump demonstrated in his G20 meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Freshman Sen. Todd Young serves on the Foreign Relations Committee, which Lugar chaired twice. Using

that forum, he has joined Democrats in backing a plan to increase foreign aid funding and in opposing Trump's arms-sales agreement with Saudi Arabia.

Reps. Luke Messer, 6th CD, and Todd Rokita, 4th CD, both want to join Young in the Senate. In preparation for their likely GOP primary next year, they have not pushed back on the Trump worldview – or many Trump policies, for that matter.

For now, that may be a winning political position for an Indiana politician. But if Trump's America First policies put Americans behind because the United States no longer has leverage to shape the world to their benefit, Hoosier Republicans may want to dust off the Lugar playbook. ❖

Schoeff is HPI's Washington correspondent.

Holcomb Interview, from page 1

assembly lines humming with speed for the workforce. There were thousands of doctors prescribing opioids for back problems and other pains. At Soldier Field one Sunday afternoon, we watched Chicago Bears huddle around their punky QB on the sideline so he could take an injection to return to the gridiron. It's what we did to cure the pain.

Last Wednesday, with Gov. Eric Holcomb gazing a few feet away, a new face of the pandemic stood forward. Her name is Amy Rardon, a beautiful Hoosier woman from Indianapolis whose back pains commenced a harrowing decade-long journey into addiction. Her pain and pills "quickly became a huge problem," Amy said, noting that her condition "spiraled out of control so fast."

Then came the cheap heroin. She said she would go off the narcotics for three days, become "so incredibly sick," and return to the narcotics "so I could go back to just functioning."

Conventional wisdom conjures the junkie as the high school dropout, a greasy rocker conniving for a buzz. But it is now a little part of everyone. I've had friends ranging from key political figures to solidly middle class folks who have seen their beloved sons fall into the heroin trance. Some make it and some are gone far, far too early. It is a wrenching tide exploited by foreign cartels who run

the drug from Mexico and China, to Dayton and points west to Richmond, Connersville and Winchester. We now read of overdose spikes in places like Evansville, LaPorte and Bloomington.

Amy Rardon is now being treated with methadone in a drug detoxification and maintenance program. "We are normal people," Rardon said. "We just want to go back to work and do our job. We just want to be heard."

A few minutes later, Family and Social Services Commissioner Jennifer Walthall announced five new regional opioid treatment centers for Fort Wayne, Lafayette, Bloomington, Terre Haute and Greenwood. As of Aug. 1, there will be methadone treatment available via Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0 and Medicaid.

"Adding five opioid treatment programs to the 14 that currently serve Hoosiers will

add considerable capacity to a network of programs that treated more than 10,000 Hoosiers in 2016," Dr. Walthall said. "Adding Medicaid and HIP coverage of medication assisted treatment will remove a significant barrier to treatment for those seeking to improve their lives."

"There is extraordinary evidence that patients receiving medication-assisted treatment are more likely to remain in treatment and to reduce opioid use than those who do not," said Dr. Walthall. "Ensuring medication-assisted treatment is an available option to additional Hoosier communities is a significant tool to help attack Indiana's



Gov. Holcomb huddles with State Rep. Cindy Ziemke and State Sen. Jim Merritt prior to signing the opioid bill package at Richmond State Hospital in June. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

drug epidemic.”

The week before, Holcomb journeyed to Richmond to sign four bills dealing with the state’s heroin/opioid epidemic. “When businesses put signs up saying ‘we don’t drug test,’ we have a problem,” Holcomb said. “When parents love their drugs more than they love their children, we have a problem. We didn’t come this far just to come this far. We have a long way to go.”

He added, “One story I heard on the road I can’t shake is about a young lady who shot up in a hospital parking lot, went inside, had her baby and was found later that day shooting up again in a hospital bathroom.” On Monday, the Richmond Palladium-Item reported that 44 mothers birthed opioid addicted babies at Reid Hospital from January through May. There were 58 for all of 2016.

“I know how challenging this work is,” said Holcomb, who signed an executive order on his first day of office creating a state drug czar and resulted in the July 5 announcement. “This day is symbolic in ways far beyond what we realize by sunset today. This is going to lead to lives being brought back. The expansion of our opioid treatment programs with five new facilities that will be simultaneously brought on line in these five under-served areas are truly going to save lives and allow those battling substance abuse and substance use disorders get back to productive lives.”

When I pressed people like State Rep. Cindy Ziemke, who has battled heroin addiction with her two sons, and with Katrina Norris of the Fayette Regional Health System in Connersville, this became apparent: The state is going to have to make a serious investment if it wants to get the heroin/opioid crisis under control in a five-year time frame the governor laid out. Not only are county jails filling up with addicts, emergency rooms are getting swamped, and OD deaths are accumulating, Norris said that public schools are not equipped to deal with the coming wave of opioid-addicted babies. Ziemke said there aren’t enough treatment options nor is there the aftercare infrastructure.

Holcomb’s drug czar, Jim McClelland, was asked about the fiscal commitment the state will need. “In total, more money than we’ve got,” he responded. “It’s an enormous task. Fortunately for the substance abuse disorder waiver the state has applied for that would enable us to use Medicaid dollars for treatment and recovery services. That’s a billion dollars more for each state and that’s going to be very helpful in enabling us to sustain some of these programs. Most of these services with these changes in policy will be able to use Medicaid for more than what we



Indiana State Police Supt. Doug Carter with Drug Czar Jim McClelland at Valle Vista in Greenwood last week where Gov. Holcomb announced his new opioid strategy. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

have.”

Will it take billions?

“No, I don’t think billions,” McClelland answered. “We don’t even know how many people are addicted. Amy so artfully articulated, you can’t do this by yourself. You’ve got to have some help. Medicaid-assisted treatment along with assisted counseling is necessary.”

Should the state be doing a thorough study of what it needs? “We don’t know yet what the price tag is going to be. We have to come up with that. Our office is working with the governor. The whole team is working on this. We’ve really had great cooperation across the agencies. We will have a statistics by the time the General Assembly meets.”

In late June, as Holcomb drove from his bill signing in Richmond to Greenfield, HPI conducted this interview:

HPI: What is your point of orientation on the opioid crisis? I’m sure it came up a lot during the 2016 cam-

paign.

Holcomb: It did start in Delphi, Indiana, when an individual came up to me, stuck his hand out, introduced himself and said he would like to talk to me in six months. I didn’t know what he meant by that, but as the conversation unfolded, he meant that he hoped he was alive in six months. He said he had been clean and sober for the last six months and that he was hopeful to have another conversation with me. I don’t know if he knew I was a candidate for office, but I don’t know if he knew even what office. It was more about him wanting to express the importance of those who were on the road to recovery but knew they needed a lot of help to stay there. That’s when I talk about you either decide right here and now you’re going to do all you can if you’re concerned about life, or you’re going to look away. Everything else just pales in comparison. It’s a life and death issue. That day it was like a switch flipped on and that channel was one 24 hours a day and that is what I was seeing in community after community after community. It did not matter if I was in the most affluent community in the state of Indiana or if I was in the most desperate.

HPI: Do you know if he’s still alive?

Holcomb: No. I would like to.

HPI: Rep. Ziemke has this scourge touch her family in the most invasive way. Talk to me about the conversations you’ve had with her as this legislative package took shape?

Holcomb: She to me is an inspiration because she has not looked the other way and she has not been afforded the opportunity to allow this to be somebody else’s

problem. It has been in her household. She has been, thankfully, willing to share her story and let others know that this affects everyone and it's OK. You can't sweep it under the carpet and you can't act like it doesn't happen. It can happen to the high school star quarterback and it can happen to the high school dropout. It can happen to their parent, their grandparent and sometimes, all at the same time. I mentioned earlier I learned of a story earlier about a lady who went before a judge and in Lake County and she was having her ninth child taken from her. She looked at the judge and said, "Judge I'll have these babies as fast as you take them away." So we have people and their brains have been, in my opinion, highjacked by this drug or drugs and we just have to be honest with ourselves and address everything that factors into everything that is there, but once we're there we need to do all we can to get them - that's where the treatment comes in - get them on the road to recovery. It's not just "Here's another pill that's going to get you ready." These require life altering changes and decisions that need to be made, behavioral decisions that have to be made to make one physically well. It may be the hardest thing we're called to do but I do. I'm not fatalistic about this. There are too many lives

HPI: One of the things Rep. Ziemke emphasized to me is there must be more funding. I asked her and Katrina Norris from Fayette Regional Hospital how much funding is needed? Has there been any kind of fiscal impact to provide the right treatment network and responses. I don't think anybody knows. Should there be an extensive fiscal impact study?

Holcomb: Yes.

HPI: And then where do you go to find the funding, beyond the \$11 million that came in from the federal Cures Act?

Holcomb: There are a couple ways we have to approach those two questions which get right at the essence to the solution. One of the things I'm excited of the Department of Mental Health which is getting up and running, you should go check that out, and how we're taking information from multiple agencies whether it's State Police or FSSA or Department of Mental Health and Addiction and being able to see what is occurring where, the overdoses, death, meth, heroin, opioids, where it's occurring so we can deploy our resources efficiently. That's what I was referring, not wasting or spilling resources in areas as we step up to meet this need. What is the need financially

is a question. The answer to that question is whatever it costs. Now, how we meet that has to be done responsibly. We have to step things up. We have to have more treatment centers closer to where people need them. It won't just be a state borne cost, it will be in many cases local. You have to address it where it's happening. Up in Winchester they have a facility for women and children that is absolutely necessary and it took the mayor to take some arrows along the way because he refused to look the other way. He wanted to have the treatment closest. There are the not-for-profits, there is the state, there is



Gov. Holcomb talks with a Richmond Palladium-Item reporter at the Forest Hills County Club as press secretary Stephanie Wilson looks on. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

the federal government who want to be partners to fund success stories. We're real time learning not just in Indiana but across the country about what the different needs are and how they morph and evolve. Being in this state I like to brag about how infrastructure is great. It is great for commerce and it is also great for illegal commerce. You have to have an eye on both ends of the spectrum. You have to cut off the supply. It is a supply and demand issue, both from a personal perspective and globally speaking. You have to do everything. It's not an either/or proposition. So in answer to your question, I would say

whatever it costs is what we need to prepare to shoulder. We are figuring that out along the way as attack what is attacking us.

HPI: Does this have to wait for the next biennial budget or if you have the data sets next January are you prepared to go to the General Assembly and seek funding in 2018?

Holcomb: I wouldn't rule out anything. I won't wait another day if something needs to happen. Now we're standing up with Jim McClelland's effort and it is evolving nicely and we have the resources need right now to begin to coordinate and align. So many people right now are all going in different directions, all doing good in their backyard but there is real synergy when your efforts are well conducted and part of that means getting organized from a state perspective, being aligned. That's why what is coming out of Washington, D.C., is very important.

HPI: Well we have that \$11 million in Cures Act. Is that just a drop in the bucket?

Holcomb: That can be spent in one county.

HPI: Jim McClelland said in Muncie last (month) that there are 11 new treatment centers about to come on line. What can you tell me about that and do you want to see another 10 or 11 next year?

Holcomb: As these come on line and filling the

beds and measuring and not just who is entering treatment, but who is exiting treatment and entering the workforce, I don't want to just track deaths. I want to track people who are working. So you take it day by day but these 11 will teach us a lot about what's next. We don't want to get ahead of ourselves. We don't want to prop up 22 when we could be regionally accessible, where we need them most right now. That's a big deal. We know we're catching up with other states who have more treatment facilities than we do right now. That's why, sadly, people have left our state to save their lives. I want them to get well and get back to work and do it here.



Holcomb: That's the tide that is comin' ashore. That's why I want to make sure that's another big interest and investment that will have to be made in our schools so our guidance counselors can ... when I was in school my guidance counselor was very very helpful, very productive for the next step and stage of your life. Well, now our guidance counselors are being pulled in five different directions and dealing with more than we did in school.

HPI: Rep. Ziemke's two sons ended up in treatment in California, but when they came back to Indiana there was no aftercare network. So is establishing that network as equally important?

Holcomb: That's right.

HPI: Katrina Norris mentioned to me that this is going to morph into a multi-generational dynamic. She said she's got five kids in her facility in Connersville who were born addicted. She said the public schools in these poorer rural counties like Fayette aren't going to have the resources to deal with these children.

So we have to have career guidance counselors but also counselors who are able to detect what young ones are dealing with and aren't expressing. That will take investment. That will take not-for-profits being ingrained in our schools, making sure we're engaged, but when you look at the percentages of babies being born who are addicted it is jaw dropping. It just speaks to we better throw everything we have at it right now and try to arrest it and turn it around now because everyday that you wait to intervene in someone's life who is addicted they are dating a drug that is harming them and today's potency of heroin today, drugs that are being laced intentionally, people who are being brought back with Narcan and when they come back to life, they'll say "You stole that high" from them, that death experience from them.

HPI: That's crazy.

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Holcomb: When you're dealing with elephant tranquilizers and dealing with drugs 5,000 times or more, 50,000, than heroin then this is a loaded gun that folks are playing Russian roulette and make sure we're doing everything we can to stop that behavior. Get them out of that environment, get them on the road to recovery and be with them just as Cindy's kids needed and need, for years to come. It might take months and years to get to that low and it will take time to dig out of that hole.



Gov. Holcomb leaving Richmond State Hospital after the opioid bill signing. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

HPI: You're obviously from the Mitch Daniels School of Political Capital.

Holcomb: You've gotta use it.

HPI: Yes, use it. So you've got the road funding program road funding tax increase and I heard nobody complaining about it. I listened to Garrison and just didn't hear an outcry. Are we facing a similar funding challenge where you'll have to go back to the citizens of Indiana and say, "Look, we have to get a handle on this." Are you prepared to do that?

Holcomb: I'll be prepared to do that. What needs to occur between now and then and why we said that Jim McClelland is going to give a direct report to the governor's office and oversee multiple agencies and put together a plan moving forward so we can say "This is the true need here." So you can look at the dashboard and go, "This is where the overdoses are, this is where the deaths are. What the causes are, what the needs are so it is crystal clear what the investment needs to be." That's why I believe the infrastructure program was easier to sell than most years because we had the facts to back up what the need was. I would go out on the road championing that program and if anyone had a counter opinion, I would ask them "OK, where do you want to cut \$1.2 billion out of the budget?" I've been to more counties than you have and I haven't seen the money tree. Do you want to quit maintaining the roads where you live? And no one could answer. Not one person had an answer for here's where I would go to get the money. Or, you can just cut your way out of it.

HPI: Cut where?

Holcomb: Those are decisions I have to make. If I'm armed with the facts and I can share the facts then let's have the discussion. I don't like having to pay taxes either.

HPI: Is this our generational challenge? We've got to get this one right. You've mentioned turning the corner in five years. So is this our cultural challenge of this generation?

Holcomb: Yes. I think what we have to

get right is the health and fairness of our workforce. The drug epidemic is the most evil anchor pulling on our workforce into a place where otherwise people would not go. Their brain has been hijacked. They are not making rational decisions.

HPI: We're seeing some real traction and progress and SEA380 that Gov. Pence signed last year restricting PSE sales. It appears to be working. Have you reached any conclusions on that with regards to the methamphetamine

epidemic?

Holcomb: I do. Yes, it needed to be done. It's interesting, it's kind of like a whack-a-mole. You push down the numbers of one type of drug and another will fill the void. That experience is teaching us a lot on how we clamp down, knowing where drugs are being purchased, how much are being purchased, the how they are being distributed, where they are being purchased from. That will create the MDH on how we address the problem. That was a first step on how we approached that problem. It was helpful.

HPI: Attorney General Curtis Hill has expressed skepticism about the needle exchange strategy, allowing local governments to make that decision, and he's also expressed skepticism that people can be rehabilitated. What I heard from Sen. Merritt today was just the opposite. Any reaction to those?

Holcomb: I can only speak for myself. I refuse to be fatalistic about this. I am optimistic because I have seen people turn their lives around who have been held in this death grip, so I know it can be done. There are people who have entered this dark period of their lives and emerged on the other side seeking to help others. If you spend time with them you can only be hopeful this could be true for everyone. Now that takes intervention. That takes investment. I am hopeful and encouraged that if we throw everything at it we can turn it around. I want communities to be able to respond and now wait on us. If they run amok, then the state can get involved. But I don't want folks to wait on the state of Indiana if it's happening in Richmond. We're there to be helpful. I trust the locals. I'll typically lean toward local control and those closest to the people because, by the way, they will carry the brunt and majority of the burden of their communities and families being split apart. We have to do all we can to provide the locals with not just control, but the burdens as well. ❖

Holcomb on HIP 2.0, cold beer, economy

RICHMOND – Here is where Gov. Eric Holcomb stands on other key issues:

On the Senate GOP health reforms

On governors influencing the health reforms: "I'm hopeful there would be a bipartisan solution, but if there's not one, we need to be able to lead and get the right answer.

Not just to get something done, but to get it right. This is not just an opportunity, it's an obligation. My message has been, let's get it right. With the Healthy Indiana Plan and HIP 2.0, we got

that right. That option has been attractive to many others around the country. I would hope that will be included in what's next; we know there has to be a what's next. I have been very supportive of reform, because what we have now is not working and not what was advertised. That is an indictment of the system and it has to change.

I want to be helpful as a governor, because I represent all the people. I welcome the additional responsibility for that needed state flexibility and control. We cannot continue with the mindset that Washington will pay for what we need. That money comes not from thin air, but from Indiana and Ohio and Michigan. We can't dial up a \$20 trillion debt and say, "You pay for this, son." We have to address this. I am hopeful that we will do something. My role is to obviously show Exhibit A, Indiana, the way we've been able to do it.

HIP 2.0 funding

"When you know the timeline and the flight path, when you look at the options, HIP 2.0 is an elegant arrangement that we can expand to fit what's next. HIP 2.0 is not designed to be health care for life, but move you to a better place. It has a transient nature. We have a 2% jobless rate in Kosciusko County and jobs that need to be filled. We have to have a real life discussion about health. It's going to cost an unhealthy state more."

East Chicago lead crisis

HPI asked Gov. Holcomb how he became so popular in Lake County, even drawing the praise of HPI colum-

nist Shaw Friedman: "I had to read that one twice. It was a good read. I don't think there's a secret sauce to it. I believe I am serving to help people, and therefore our state, advance. That's my mission. The person on your left is as important as the person on your right. If we are focused on people, this is a new opportunity and a new day to do a lot of good. In the Region, there is huge potential; it is already critically important to our economy and can punch above its weight class. People will think about coming to East Chicago rather than Chicago. We are on the right path (in East Chicago's lead crisis), moving in the right direction to improve the situation. I will be proud to be a part of that renaissance.

On cold beer

HPI asked Holcomb if he had guidance for alcohol reforms. "Not yet. I want to be respectful of the legislative process. We have to have modern, rational, understandable rules of the road, taking into consideration the safety of our citizens and their well-being, with the understanding we need some modern thinking. There needs to be a balance. We'll be involved; we oversee the ATC, the agency charged with managing controlled substances and ultimately our safety. We want to make sure they are doing their job responsibly. I hear a lot about this as I'm out and



Gov. Eric Holcomb greets a constituent at a Richmond McDonald's, his fast food pit stop of choice. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

about, and not just from my friends."

On his visit to Hungary

"They knew Indiana's story. They were catching up and doing things to dial in the right regulatory and tax climate. They knew we were investing in our infrastructure and workforce. We were able to share some insights. The trip couldn't have been more productive to formalize a memorandum on a working group looking for ways to

grow. We already have Eli Lilly, Cook and Allison Transmission there.”

On his visit to France

Regarding the Paris Air Show, Holcomb said, “Everyone who has anything to do with the aviation industry was there. I don’t want to say it was like shooting fish in a barrel, because there were too many missiles around. It was certainly a target-rich environment to make connections and talk to our partners who are already in Indiana. In the case of Rolls-Royce, we announced a partnership with Purdue University, Rolls-Royce and the state of Indiana. That’s what the future is all about, not just building relationships but building partnerships that can endure. Everyone, including Indiana, Purdue, Rolls-Royce, Raytheon . . . is thinking about what kind of company they want to be. The pace of change is stunning, you’re reminded when you talk to companies of that caliber.”



Indiana as an aviation/aerospace state

“We’re climbing and we’re already the sixth largest in the country in aviation and aerospace. I say we’re a Triple A state, autos, agriculture and aviation/aerospace. We just keep knocking it out of the park. We’ve got the university network with Purdue and Rose-Hulman and Trine with engineering, and Indiana University. We are an international player, with Indiana in the middle of our national economy. That’s what is so attractive. We’ve got the trifecta, a strong economy, the right regulatory and tax climate, and we are becoming ever more diversified. We’ve got the right infrastructure. I want to be the crossroads of the universe, not just America. We’re doing that with a program of how to pay for our infrastructure, not just our roads and bridges, but rail and high-speed broadband. Third is making sure we have a strong workforce. That’s what all these companies are looking at and that will separate the leaders from the laggards.”

On Indiana’s workforce needs

“We’re moving in the right direction. We are accepting reality that we need the skilled trades to flourish. That will be a

separator between us and the competition. It isn’t strong backs that we need anymore; a lot of work is being done with the hands, even the heavy lifting jobs. The key is that very first step, I’m very proud we took that first step on pre-K this year, but there have to be more steps. Someone graduating from high school has to have that ticket to success, whether it’s the trades or going on to be an engineer. We have to produce more engineers to compete in a future economy, that’s why we have to get the STEM subjects taught, and make sure the businesses are connected to the schools. One hundred percent graduating from high school has to be the goal. We can’t waste a day, so by the end of 2024, Indiana should be known as a place of innovation, invention and ingenuity, and that will require the workforce to be skilled and equipped to deliver. We’re on track not just to grow and make, but to create and innovate.”

On Bloomington’s nixed annexation

HPI asked Holcomb about the biennial budget that terminated Bloomington’s annexation. “Right now I don’t have a comment because there is litigation underway. The legislative process was being followed correctly. I want to work with every mayor to understand that local control and responsibility . . . I’ve been insistent that Mayor Hamilton is kept up to date on every step we take with I-69 and ultimately where we’ve arrived. We’ll continue to do that. We won’t agree on everything but we do agree that Bloomington is a special place. I want to make sure that with all that Indiana University and Bloomington, the Cook (Group) mean to our economy and the world that we’re clicking on all issues.” ❖



Gov. Eric Holcomb with Qing Han, deputy general manager of the Chinese corporation ShouGang, parent company of BWI which is building a plant in Greenfield that will employ 450 Hoosiers. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

Sen. Donnelly talks of 2018 reelection, opioids and President Trump

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly is poised to compete in a \$100 million reelection bid next year, described by many as the top race of the coming 2018 cycle.

When Howey Politics Indiana sat down with him for this interview at LePeep in downtown Indianapolis last Friday, an epic parade of events marched before us on a virtual minute-by-minute basis, from President Trump's two-hour meeting with Russia's Vladimir Putin, to the health care reforms teetering in the Senate, to the opioid pandemic blistering Indiana's cities and prairies and plunging families into crisis and despair.

We began this interview by talking about his emerging Senate campaign, five years after the Granger Democrat won a first term by defeating Republican Richard Mourdock. He voted for the Affordable Care Act in 2010, yet has won two campaigns since then. The issues and leaders have shifted in improbable ways, and our hour-long conversation ran a course from politics to pandemic, to a potential nuclear war.

Here is our interview with Sen. Donnelly:

HPI: We've seen the \$50 million Senate race in 2012, the \$75 million race in 2016 and now observers on both sides say your 2018 race could crest \$100 million. Is that what you're anticipating?

Donnelly: I remember in 2012 when we talked, I said, "These folks want to buy Indiana's Senate seat." It's still the same thing. They try to take it out of the hands of the people of Indiana: "We can probably afford this one." So you have people like the Koch brothers who try and buy Indiana's Senate seat. My job is to make sure it's there for the people of Indiana.

HPI: So will it be \$100 million?

Donnelly: I don't know what it will be.

HPI: There's already been over \$3 million spent more than 18 months before the election. That's more than Evan Bayh used to spend in a cycle.

Donnelly: We've already seen \$4 million spent by July 7, 2017, a year and four months away. I turn on the TV and see an ad and say, "Hey, that's me!" Because I'm on the road a lot times around the state, I don't watch a lot of TV anymore, but I sat down at a friend's house during the Gorsuch vote. I had heard there were commercials but I hadn't seen them, and was watching and about 15 seconds in, I realized this was the Gorsuch commercial. Hmmmm. And they said, "That's not you, Joe" and I said, "Yes, it is." They said, "They're not using your best pictures." It's part of the territory.

HPI: Will you have the resources you need?

Donnelly: We'll have the resources we'll need.

The other part is, doing the work. We will never be out-hustled, we will never be out-worked. We've got extraordinary terrific people in Peter Hanscom and the campaign team. They're going to work non-stop because No. 1, we're all great friends. We've become a great team over the years and really, really like being with each other, and No. 2, they're not doing the job so much for me but for the people of Indiana. They want this country to continue to be a place where people can succeed. They all want to have families. They want America's best days ahead of them and I believe they are.

HPI: The FEC second quarter reports are coming soon. Anything you want to report?

Donnelly: We've worked real hard.

HPI: Will you be in the \$2 million range for the quarter?

Donnelly: We worked real hard.

HPI: I calculated there was \$49 million dropped into the 2016 Senate race by the super PACs and 501s. You don't control that. Todd Young didn't control that messaging; Evan Bayh didn't. As a candidate, how do you prepare a campaign when there's a gusher of money for you and against you that you have no control over?

Donnelly: You do everything you can within your campaign to run the very best campaign possible. I try to meet and talk with people that have the party organization ready to go, to have a good campaign in place, to raise the funds necessary. There are things you don't control. My job is the things I can control, to do the very best job possible and put them into proper place.

HPI: I had an interview with Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer a couple of weeks ago and he laid out what the RNC has done since Reince Priebus addressed the state convention in 2014. They spent \$35 million on data. Most thought Hillary Clinton would win because they believed the



2008 and 2012 Obama campaigns' data edge would carry over to her. It clearly didn't. Donald Trump was able to tweet and flit and yet they won the election with the RNC's data advantage. Are you confident that the Indiana Democratic Party and the DNC are going to make up the ground there and how it might impact your race?

Donnelly: I'm confident that on the technology side we'll be as good as anybody on this race.

HPI: Has the DNC closed the gap?

Donnelly: The IDP is working on it. We have some incredible technology minds. It's something I'm focused on; I'm excited about it. I'm a big believer in data, in making sure that nobody is better than you on the data side. I think it's critical, so we focus on the data a lot.

HPI: Did you have the same assumption that Hillary would have the data edge because many of the Obama techies migrated to her campaign and the 2008 and 2012 Obama campaigns were so good? But it appears there was a tech gap there. Did that catch you off guard?

Donnelly: No.

HPI: That goes to leadership. You've got John Zody back in at IDP and this is an utterly crucial election cycle for the party. Are you confident that the party is doing what it needs to be doing on candidate recruitment, money, data messaging and rural outreach? There is an historic opportunity for the party to regain relevance here.

Donnelly: I do. John Zody has worked non-stop.

He's a hard worker, he's a smart guy, he's had to deal with a lot of things that are not always in his control. The things that are under his control, he's always done well. I have great confidence in him and look forward to this election. I really do. We have to work hard to recruit candidates all over the state, in the Statehouse races, the county races and congressional races and we're going to put our best game on the field.

HPI: Are you playing a role in candidate recruitment? You're all over the state all the time.

Donnelly: I make calls.

HPI: On the issue front, there are two major issues: Health care and what they call the "impeachment" election. Have you seen any polling in Indiana on Obamacare?

Donnelly: I saw a really good poll, when the Indiana Republican Party said, "Hey, send us your Obamacare horror stories." And it turned out that 95% of them said, "Hey, this helped save my sister Maggie who has diabetes and she now has coverage for the first time." "This helped my mom who had a bad heart condition and we had to make certain decisions because she wasn't going to get coverage." That's what the ACA has done. I will tell you a story that really cuts to the chase on a lot of this. One of the fellows who worked with me on the ACA is Al Guittierez, the former CEO of St. Joe Med Center in Mishawaka. Al had this crazy concept that he wanted it to

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work so his patients could get better care. He said, "I don't care about it politically, but I'd like to see it work." He was real helpful. I'd get a call from him and he'd say, "This part's not working right, this part's not working right." He was real on-the-ground, constant information for me. But they had a meeting a month after the ACA went into effect because so many significant heart cases had come in over that month. They said, "We've had this upsurge." They all got around a table to figure out what had happened, what in the community that made all these people sick? A guy raised his hand and said, "I know what happened. The ACA went into effect a month ago. They've all had these conditions. They just couldn't afford to pay." In our state, everybody is devoted to their kids and families, and they were making these decisions: "We have this much money and that money will either provide my daughter with an education at Ball State or go to my doctor for my heart condition. I'm 64 and my daughter's going to go to Ball State." That's what the ACA did. It gave those people health care coverage for the first time.

HPI: You said from the very beginning in 2010 that the ACA would need to evolve and be tweaked. But everybody dug in and nothing happened. Sen. Young described those opportunities as water under the bridge. Any comments on that?

Donnelly: It's like anything you make in manufacturing and policy. In conflict, a battle plan only lasts until you hit the beach and then, "OK, we need a new plan." You look at the ACA and you find here's what worked, this is good, this is not so good. We tried to make those tweaks but there was nothing. On the opportunity to improve it, we knew what it needed, but we couldn't get the additional votes.

HPI: What's going to happen in the Senate later this month?

Donnelly: Here's what I see right now. This isn't a health care bill. This is a wealth transfer bill. This is about taking money from working families in Indiana and giving it to the richest families in the country. Over \$700 billion. The other interesting part is I have offices in Hammond, South Bend, Fort Wayne, Indy, Evansville and Jeffersonville and one in Washington. I have yet to have one person come and tell me, "I really need this tax cut." I have had a lot of folks come up to me and say, "Hey Joe, I'm doing pretty well financially. I'm going to get this tax cut. I don't want it. I'd rather have my neighbors have the chance to get care." They have decided without a constituency demanding it to take money out of health care to give to rich people.

HPI: The Journal Gazette reported that the Hol-

comb administration is sitting on data about the impacts of the Senate Republican health care bill. Would you like to see that?

Donnelly: Absolutely. I sent them a letter saying, "Hey what do you think?" I was at Oaklawn Thursday . . . and the CEO took me aside and said, "I have been terrified as to what this will do." In the neighborhood of payments they get . . . 75% or 80% is Medicaid. They said, "This will put everything up for grabs here. We have no idea what the impacts will be."

HPI: And the impacts on HIP 2.0?

Donnelly: Gone. Gone. It's astonishing. We actually asked the governor, "Hey, How is this going to affect us?" And so hopefully they'll share it with us. The governor



knows that without HIP 2.0, the funds will go away. For pre-existing conditions put into high-risk pool, that will be unaffordable. For people my age, rates go staggeringly high, quadrupling. If you're in your 60s making \$50k, you're going to be paying \$20,000 a year for health care when you were paying \$5,000 to \$6,000 before. At every turn, this doesn't work for working families. I was part of a group that met with Susan Collins and Bill Cassidy, with Lindsey Graham, with Dean Heller. I said, "Let's work on this." We met for two and a half to three hours. We had a great discussion and started to see ideas coming together. The next day Mitch McConnell came out and said, "We're not going to do this." Sir, there are 100 senators and we all want to contribute.

HPI: Any way McConnell can get the votes?

Donnelly: I hope not for this legislation. I don't know the final answer; I know he doesn't have them right now. There's an effort: "What do you need to vote yes?" What I'm very hopeful is, if you don't get to 50 on this terrible bill, we then sit down and start working together.

HPI: McConnell is now talking about bolstering the market place if repeal/replace fails.

Donnelly: That's because they sabotaged them. What happened was he went home to Kentucky and folks said, "What's going on here? These markets have been sabotaged." They realize that's been a critical element.

HPI: Health care is going to be a huge campaign issue. So will the conduct and temperament of President Trump. What is your assessment of him?

Donnelly: I want to work with the president when he wants to work with issues that are important to Indiana, I'll be with him every time. We talked together about my End Out-sourcing Act. He said, "This is right up our alley, 100%." So I asked for his support on that. On opioids, coming from New York I don't think he knew how bad this opioid situation was, but when he was campaigning, he saw it. He said, "Joe, I see what's going on out there." He wants to move the ball on that. Those are two areas where I said "I'll work with you. We're in." It was the same with President Obama and President Bush. I remember President Obama giving me hell in Wakarusa because I wouldn't vote for cap and trade. I said, "Mr. President, I work for the people of Indiana."

HPI: Let's talk about opioids. Gov. Holcomb is expanding services, but I've asked him and Jim McClelland, "What's the need" fiscally? What can you tell me from your perspective?

Donnelly: We have those five new spots opening up because they are desperately needed. I was Oaklawn yesterday. Since 2015, it has quadrupled. In Fulton County, the former coroner turned money back to the county council every year. In 2016, his last year, he ran out of money in August. When I went to see him, he said over the years when we'd lose somebody, it would be Aunt Polly, age 88. This past weekend, I lost two, age 26 and 32. That's what's going on. That's why I worked with Kelly Ayotte on the Comprehensive Addictions Act that changed prescribing practices, to say to doctors and pharmacists, you have to look at this from a completely different window.

HPI: We've had \$11 million coming through the Cures Act, and I asked the governor about that. He said that could be spent in one county. The administration will have some kind of cost analysis by next January. He's willing to spend some capital on this.

Donnelly: He's been a good partner on this effort.

HPI: Do you know what kind of financial commitment it's going to take? And will the federal government step up?

Donnelly: It will cost a staggering amount of money. Just to give you an idea, in Austin, Indiana, we have over 200 people with HIV and Hep C. The cost per person over a lifetime is estimated to be \$750,000 per person, so 200 people in Austin are going to cost \$150 million. That's Austin in Scott County and we have 92

counties. Obviously they all don't have the situation we have there.

HPI: But we're close in Fayette and other counties.

Donnelly: Connersville has incredible challenges.

HPI: Will there be federal money coming if President Trump understands this?

Donnelly: Actually the health care bill we have now strips out opioid assistance. The Medicaid funds we have now for substance abuse treatment are all stripped out of the health care bill. Stunning. At the time of greatest need, they are trying to get votes for a health care bill that is not a health care bill, and as part of it, strips out all the funds for one of the greatest health care crises we've seen in decades.

HPI: Will you look at sponsoring an act that would bring federal funding to Indiana and other states?

Donnelly: Absolutely. The 21st Century Cures Act had money for Indiana and other states. With Lisa Murkowski, I'm sponsoring legislation for people in these fields, substance abuse and mental health counselors; if you go in these fields, you can get a student loan repayment for working X-number of years. We need more people in these fields. It's really tough to find enough people.

HPI: Switching to international affairs, the war



drums are beating in Korea. President Trump said to expect a "severe response." I've never seen an administration put "all options" on the table. That includes a preemptive strike that the experts are saying will lead to hundreds of thousands of casualties. What do Hoosiers need to know about this threat and what you would deem to be a rational response?

Donnelly: No. 1, my first obligation is the defense of this country, our citizens. The leader of North Korea has said he plans to put a nuclear warhead on top of an ICBM and send it here. I have to take him at his word. The subcommittee I am the ranking member of, the Strategic Forces, is the subcommittee responsible for our missile defense. It's responsible for nuclear warheads, nuclear weaponry, all of our submarines. This is exactly what we're working on. I'm working with Sen. Ben Sasse on trade and money laundering – we've seen this for awhile – on what will work against North Korea. We've had some phenomenal folks with us, talking about real sanctions on Chinese

banks, real sanctions and real banks, and on Chinese companies that make parts for these missiles. So what can we do on the sanctions front that actually has an effect? North Korea has increased trade with China over the past year. Secondly, on the strategic forces side, we have to work with the Chinese, but we don't farm out our national defense. We're responsible for it. I expect to see a continued understanding how important it is, that as we move forward, we have all our tools on the table. What I mean by that is nuclear submarines. North Korea knows we have attack submarines ready to go.

HPI: President Trump told them where they were last Spring.

Donnelly: That's true. That was a bad move. That is classified. I work with these folks and the people who know where they are is about as small a group as you can possibly think of. Their families have no idea. They are out there somewhere. The critical advantage they give us is, anyone thinking about taking action against us understands they are out there somewhere. They'll be out there when they are needed and no one will ever find them. Except when you tell them where they are.

HPI: Was that a serious security breach?

Donnelly: Yes. It was.

HPI: I'm sure the Russians and Chinese put all sorts of assets out there to begin tracking them.

Donnelly: It was an extraordinarily serious breach.

HPI: Is there a scenario where a preemptive strike would be a wise move?

Donnelly: I can't get into that.

HPI: What are your thoughts on the Russian collusion probe?

Donnelly: I think it's serious. I think Robert Mueller is as solid as it gets. He will go where the facts take him and if there's nothing there, then there will be nothing there, and if there is something, then it will be followed to a logical conclusion.

HPI: President Trump has talked of removing Robert Mueller. What would your reaction be to that?

Donnelly: That would be about as bad an idea as anyone could ever have, because Robert Mueller has never been anything but a standup FBI director and individual in every way, shape or form. I think you'd find almost everyone in the Senate has confidence in him and want him left alone to do his work.

HPI: President Trump's temperament was a campaign issue and he's done little to calm nerves on that front. What's your reaction to what we've witnessed?

Donnelly: My hope was he'd grow into the job. As you look at him, the president is the leader of our nation and should set an inspirational tone, a tone of positive ideas: Ronald Reagan's shining city on a hill, John F. Ken-

ned's no burden is too great to bear for your country. Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country. That's what I hope he'll do in this job.

HPI: There he was in Poland, slamming the U.S. intelligence services. He may need to go to the American people and the world to make a case for extraordinary action in Korea based on intelligence, yet there he was, undermining his own services.

Donnelly: Our intelligence assets are the best in the world. They cooperate with other nations' intelligence services around the world. Our relationships with Mossad have never been stronger, never been better. What hap-



pens with the president is one thing, but what happens between nations is something else.

HPI: The 2018 election has been described as a potential impeachment election. Yet any student of history knows impeachments are national tragedies. They don't end well.

Donnelly: If you remember Gerald Ford's words, "Our long national nightmare has ended." That's what it is when that happens.

HPI: So what is your reaction when some say 2018 will be the impeachment election?

Donnelly: Here's what 2018 can be about. I made promises to the people of Indiana and I've kept them. I said I would work on meat-and-potato issues and not worry about politics. I will focus on making people's lives better; I will work like a dog to bring more jobs to the state. We've done all of those. The Lugar Center – and Richard Lugar is a statesman almost unparalleled – said I'm the most bipartisan Democrat in the House or the Senate, second only to Susan Collins. I've said I'd do my job focused on making people's lives better, and that's what I've tried to do. I've got legislation in every defense bill every year that has helped with mental health assistance. I'm working with Orrin Hatch on a bill that will provide better suicide-prevention assistance to veterans. On jobs, we've dealt with people who for years said no to just about everything; no to helping Chrysler, no to helping anybody. No to the Export/Import Bank. And on every one we got paid back. My focus is how mom and dad can get a bigger paycheck and have a greater chance for success. It really comes down to: Trump voters are my voters.



Sen. Young warns of North Korean strike

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – U.S. Sen. Todd Young believes that a day of reckoning may be just months off with North Korea's burgeoning nuclear program, and that most Americans aren't prepared to such a reality.

"We're not being passive," Young told HPI when we met for an HPI Interview in mid-June. "The time for strategic patience has passed, as Sec. Tillerson has stated. I think we needed to change course. Simply standing by and hoping Kim Jung Un will be welcomed into the community of nations is not going to work."

Young explained, "I know contingency planning has taken place in respect to all options. The last thing we want is to have to resort to a military option. I think it's appropriate for this administration to keep all options on the table, but here are still economic tools we can use, diplomatic tools that remain on the table. Sequentially we can tighten the thumb screws on the North Korean regime, but there aren't many good moves left on the chess board.

"This is an issue that in the coming months could come to a head and the American people need to understand that," Young said.

HPI pressed Young on President Trump's truthfulness, noting that at some point he may need to level with the American people on a controversial course of action. We noted that Gov. Eric Holcomb, Speaker Brian Bosma and Senate President David Long wouldn't purposely lie.

Young responded, "Part of the appeal of the president is that he says what's on his mind. Like so many Americans he's not somebody who puts forward nuanced positions on issues. He's a pretty direct guy at a time when people want to shake up Washington and get things done. That style of communication is what people find appealing. That's why he did so well here in Indiana. But in terms of the truth, all I can focus on is whether I'm honest with Hoosiers and honest with the American people. I don't need to be offering commentary on others."

Young added, "I think he's leveled with people. Look at health care. President Obama knew that the Affordable Care Act wasn't sustainable. It is the first thing Hillary Clinton would have had to tend to, and she probably would have preferred a single-payer system, which is what a lot of Democrats would like. President Trump has been candid about that and our foreign policy failures over the years, and candid about the need to control our

borders. Sometimes the way he expresses things are unsavory to the media and Americans, but it resonates with a lot of people. I actually think he's been quite candid on a number of things."

On the Russian collusion probe with the Trump campaign, Young explained, "I'm trying not to jump to conclusions. There have been countless leaks coming out of the federal government. That's disturbing. As a former intelligence officer, seeing this number of leaks from our intelligence agencies makes me skeptical of motives of those who have leaked things. It also concerns me about the broader culture of leaking. So much of the reporting cites unidentified sources from unidentified agencies. That's not enough for this senator to come up with any conclusions.

Young added, "The Senate Intelligence Committee is going to gather more specific information though hearings, to connect the dots, to perform what we call in the intelligence community fusion and analysis. I'll accept conclusions they present to me. Yes, I do have concerns because the allegations have been quite serious. The level of specificity doesn't allow me to come to conclusions."

As for President Trump's stated and tweeted threats to fire Special Counsel Robert Mueller, Young said, "I haven't even given due consideration to the matter. If that were to happen I'd study the facts and respond accordingly. We're dealing with hypotheticals.

Young said he opposed the arms deal to Saudi Arabia because of the developing humanitarian crisis in Yemen. "There was a hearing on the Foreign Relations Committee related to four famines – South Sudan, Northeast Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen, where a civil war is going on. The executive director of the international committee of the Red Cross, in response to my question what we can do to help mitigate or address this challenge, indicated we need a diplomatic surge. Resources are not the challenge. These are political issues. I put together with other senators a letter, hand-delivered it to Rex Tillerson the next day, calling for a diplomatic surge. I've been in touch with our national security adviser (H.R.) McMaster."

Young said that 20 million Yemenis are on the verge of starvation. "Right now or by the end of the summer, my belief is if food and medical aid isn't delivered, those who aren't radicalized, most of the population, are going to become radicalized with al Qaeda on the Arabian peninsula. They are the most capable of carrying out attacks. I put forward this concern to very wise national security people, to the Saudis: We think you should stop blocking food and aid. I said, 'If you could offer me a strategic reason as to how this will lead to a political settlement, I'm all ears.' The Saudis have been unresponsive to my concerns. They don't need smart weapons. So I voted against the arms sale. I'll continue to push this front." ❖



U.S. Sen. Todd Young speaks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Indianapolis last June. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

Kenley caps his Senate career

By **SCOTT L. MILEY**
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – The common Hoosier political train of thought wouldn't find friendship between a Republican state senator and a Democrat House member. Particularly when they duelled over funding bills.

But Sen. Luke Kenley, a Noblesville Republican, has nothing but praise for Rep. B. Patrick Bauer, a South Bend Democrat, despite the fact that they sparred numerous times in the past 25 years.

"I'm not a rural person, but I come from a small-town background in a heavily Republican area and I would say my relationship and ability and reach agreements with Pat Bauer was one of the most interesting experiences I've ever had," Kenley said. "I have a lot of respect for Pat.

"We had some pretty titanic debates, struggles but we always came up with a good answer in the end."

Last week, Kenley, 72, announced his retirement from the Senate effective Sept. 30. A caucus of precinct committeemen in his District 20 will meet to name a replacement.

As he reflected on his announcement, Kenley recalled that Bauer and former Sen. Larry Borst, who died in 2016, were among the legislators he admired during his 25 years in the Senate.

Bauer recalled legislative debates in 2005 when the Indianapolis Colts sought funding to help build what would become Lucas Oil Stadium. Lobbyists and stadium backers would often try to seek support from then-Gov. Mitch Daniels. "They were all going to the governor," Bauer said. "They weren't going to the people that could put it together beginning with the chairman.

"I had to remind people that Luke Kenley was chairman of the finance committee," Bauer said, laughing. The two hammered out an agreement that would lead to legislative approval.

"He was the voice of wisdom for that whole budget operation of the Senate and basically once the Republicans took over, he was the voice of wisdom for the entire Legislature," Bauer said.

"He was one of the greatest legislators of all time and right up there with one of the great budget people. He was right near the top, no, he was at the top."

State Rep. Kathy Richardson, R-Noblesville, also had praise for Kenley and how he worked with Bauer. "They got along quite well," said Richardson, who became a member of the General Assembly in 1992, the same year as Kenley. "To be successful and to get things passed ... you have to work with people whether it's Republican or

Democrat. He works hard at it."

Born in Texas, Kenley's family moved to Noblesville when he was 1. He spent summers going back to see his grandparents while his father ran a grocery business. He was raised and schooled in Noblesville before going to law school at Miami. An Army veteran, he served as Noblesville City Court judge from 1974 to 1989.

During the 2016 primary, Kenley had a challenger but won with 60% of the Republican vote. In November, Kenley garnered 48,651 votes compared to 19,043 for a Democrat and 3,392 for a Libertarian.

During forums, Kenley hinted it could be his last race. But he still had an agenda to pursue. One item was seeking a budget with an eye toward K-12 and higher education.

"The other thing was I thought maybe an old guy could help push through a needed road funding bill, which was going to require some courage on our part to vote for a gas tax increase and things like that," he said. "I pushed really hard on that.

"The legislators responded tremendously. They understand that this is a huge benefit to the state and an important priority and one that has to be paid for so I feel that I accomplished the major things and thought maybe it was time to move on and give somebody else a chance."

When Kenley made his announcement on Wednesday, Gov. Eric Holcomb released a statement calling Kenley "an essential state-budget architect for years and years."

The governor added, "Even though he won't be in the Senate chamber come January, and he'll have a little more time to spend at his ranch in Texas, he will continue to contribute to our state's success in countless ways."

But Kenley responded, "I'm pretty much a Noblesville boy. I like to go to Texas and I'll probably go a little bit more, but I'll probably be in Noblesville most of the time." ❖

Wiles, Willis eye Kenley's seat

The race to replace retiring state Sen. Luke Kenley is beginning to take shape (Colombo, Indianapolis Business Journal). Noblesville Common Council President Megan Wiles on Monday announced she plans to run in the upcoming Republican caucus for the Hamilton County seat. Megan Wiles and businessman Scott Willis, who unsuccessfully battled Kenley for the District 20 seat in 2016, said he is considering running as well. Wiles, who joined the Noblesville Council in 2016, said in a press release that "Hamilton County has been very fortunate to have Senator Kenley's leadership at the Statehouse for many years." Wiles said she was "incredibly flattered" to be approached by Kenley about running. Willis, meanwhile, is "exploring" running and plans to make a decision at the end of the week," he told IBJ on Monday. ❖



Mayor Pete and the Twitter wars

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Mayor Pete Buttigieg seeks a stronger voice in national politics with the launch of a PAC to help local and state candidates around the nation to deliver a winning Democratic message.



The mayor gained favorable recognition with his impressive bid for Democratic national chairman. He appears on network TV and is called on for major speeches. One is in Iowa, that first-in-the-nation caucus state.

But Pete needs a different approach if he is to have real national impact.

He needs a modern Twitter approach.

Look what that has done for President Trump.

Oh, sure, Pete has a Twitter account. But it's not like Trump's. Mayor Pete tweets politely about nice things in South Bend, promoting the city. Too nice.

Pete needs to create conflict to get attention. He must tweet personal insults that bring heated controversy, attack segments of the population about which he can raise suspicions and threaten the hated news media. That's how you deliver a winning message.

So here are 15 suggestions for wording of messages in a Pete tweetstorm sure to get attention here and nationally, too.

1. Fake News Tribune runs complaints about my "Smart Streets." Fake letters. Tribune rigged study about slowing traffic. Traffic faster now.

2. Low rated TV stations run false stories about South Bend shootings. Don't say shooters all blacks, Mexicans, Muslims. Not Americans.

3. Will build that wall. Keep Mishawaka rapists, drug dealers, murderers and Mayor Wood from our city. And Mishawaka will pay for the wall.

4. Last Republican mayor lost Studebaker. I will make Studebaker GREAT again. Will make Larks again. And Avanti. Jobs back. Truly amazing.

5. Low energy Andrew Berlin a disaster. Didn't bring Cubs here as he claims. Just their minor league team. Loser.

6. Proud I was winning war in Afghanistan when serving there. Was making Afghanistan GREAT again. Republicans now losing there.

7. Critics say I haven't ended all crime and unemployment. Almost there. Takes time after mess left by last Republican city administration.

8. So-called sources say I left Demo chair contest because not enough votes to win. Had enough. But wanted to get back to "Smart Streets."

9. National TV losers mispronounce my name. Try to make it sound like I'm Russian. Conspiracy to link me to Putin. So unfair.

10. Closed deal for College Football Hall of Fame. City sold it to me for a new Mayor Pete Hotel. Private deal. No conflict of interest.

11. Cutting costly, unneeded regulation. No more red on traffic lights. More freedom for drivers.

12. Need investigation of South Bend voting. Suspicious totals. Got only 80.4 percent of vote. So 19.6 percent could have voted illegally.

13. Ordering police to question any ND students in city. Many from foreign countries. Terrorists? Could be some very bad dudes.

14. Covfefe!

15. My supporters would stick with me even if I shot somebody in middle of downtown. Won't shoot. Probably. Just punch back HARD.

Let it be clear that I offer this advice without any expectation of the compensation that a high-priced political consultant would receive for such sound, valuable guidance. I do not expect and would not accept any compensation, even though

the advice, if followed, could lead Pete someday to the White House. If it did . . . well . . . I would like to be in the Cabinet. I am of course totally unqualified for any Cabinet post. But that doesn't seem to matter these days. ❖



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

Trump and Pence's vote fraud commission

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – I really had to chuckle when President Donald Trump's vote fraud commission asked Indiana to expose just about everything there is to know about those who vote in this state.



First of all, anytime I hear Trump talking about vote fraud, it makes me laugh. Because Trump is such an egomaniac, he just can't accept the fact that he lost the popular vote to Democrat Hillary Clinton. Trump has said several times that if the votes illegally cast for Clinton were thrown out, he would have won the popular vote.

Trump is talking about up to 5 million illegal votes having been cast for Clinton. Trump, of course, hasn't provided the first shred of evidence.

So, Trump has launched an illegal voter witch hunt and put – of all people – former Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, the vice president, in charge. So, what happened when the national vote commission turned its attention to Indiana? I guess you could say Pence and company got a rude reception. And Pence should have known what was coming. Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson, a fellow Republican, pretty much told the vote commission to

take a hike.

All that information the commission wanted, including the Social Security numbers of voters, was off limits, Lawson said.

Lawson went on to say the only publicly available information is the name, address and congressional district of the voter.

In other words, according to Lawson, the Trump/Pence commission was over-reaching in its request for Hoosier voting information. And, rightly so.

What I find hilarious about all this is that Indiana is the state where it was first made more difficult for some people to vote. It was back when Todd Rokita, a Munster native in Northwest Indiana, was secretary of state. He's now a member of Congress.

Rokita successfully pushed for the voter identification law requiring voters to show a government-issued photo ID to be able to vote. Many, largely Democrats, thought Rokita was simply making it more difficult for some to vote – largely the poor and minorities.

Rokita said his law was intended to root out voter fraud, which was a joke of sorts since virtually all fraud occurs through absentee voting where a photo ID isn't required.

So the national commission on voting in the 2016 presidential election isn't going to get much out of Indiana.

I wonder how Pence is going to explain that to his boss. ❖

Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for The Times of Northwest Indiana.



Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier: As Ron Alting drove to a favorite beach in Florida, on vacation about the time his name was drawn as part of a 17-member legislative panel asked to come up with ways to unknot Indiana's antiquated tangle of retail alcohol laws, the Republican state senator from Lafayette made his first prediction. The General Assembly would vote on Sunday sales during the 2018 session. Low-hanging fruit, he called it. "I'll carry that bill," Alting said. "As long as we can come to some consensus. And I think we will." Question: What do you think will come out of this study commission? Let's start with Sunday sales. Is that going to happen? Alting: "I do think you will see Sunday sales. I mean, I think it is time." ❖



Michael Chertoff, Washington Post: The Trump administration's Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity is asking states for voter-registration data from as far back as 2006. This would include names, dates of birth, voting histories, party registrations and the last four digits of voters' Social Security numbers. As data-security experts will tell you, widespread distribution of individual data elements in multiple separate repositories is one way to reduce the vulnerability of the overall database. That's why the commission's call to assemble all this voter data in federal hands raises the question: What is the plan to protect it? We know that a database of personal information from all voting Americans would be attractive not only to adversaries seeking to affect voting but to criminals who could use the identifying information as a wedge into identity theft. We also know that foreign intelligence agencies seek large databases on Americans for intelligence and counterintelligence purposes. That is why the theft of more than 20 million personnel files from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the hacking of more than half a billion Yahoo accounts were such troubling incidents. ❖

Bret Stephens, New York Times: On the subject of cycles, Warren Buffett likes to talk about "the natural progression, the three I's." As he put it to Charlie Rose in 2008, those I's are "the innovators, the imitators and the idiots." One creates, one enhances — and one screws it all up. Then, presumably, the cycle starts afresh. Buffett was describing the process that led to the 2008 housing and financial crises. But he might as well have been talking about the decline of the conservative movement in America. I was reminded of this again last week, on news that the Fox News host Sean Hannity will receive the William F. Buckley Jr. Award for Media Excellence later this year at a gala dinner in Washington, D.C. As honors go, neither the award nor the organization bestowing it — the Media Research Center — are particularly noteworthy. But sometimes symbolism is more potent than fact. If we have reached the point where rank-and-file conservatives see

nothing amiss with giving Hannity an award named for Buckley, then surely there's a Milton Friedman Prize awaiting Steve Bannon for his insights on free trade. And maybe Sean Spicer can receive the Vaclav Havel International Prize for Creative Dissent for his role in exposing "fake news." The floor's the limit. Or, in Hannity's case, the crawl space beneath it. In 1950, Lionel Trilling wrote that there were no conservative ideas "in general circulation," only "irritable mental gestures which seek to resemble ideas." By the time Trilling died 25 years later the opposite was true: The only consequential ideas at the time were conservative, while it was liberalism that had been reduced to an irritable mental gesture. This was largely Buckley's doing. Through *National Review*, his magazine, he gave a hidden American intelligentsia a platform to develop conservative ideas. Through "Firing Line," his TV show, he gave an unsuspecting American public a chance to sample conservative wit. Not all of the ideas were right, but they were usually smart. And as they evolved, they went in the right direction. Buckley shed isolationism, segregationism and anti-Semitism, and insisted the conservative movement do likewise. Over 50 years as the gatekeeper of conservative ideas, he denounced the inverted Marxism of Ayn Rand, the conspiracy theories of Robert Welch (founder of the John Birch Society) and the white populism of George Wallace and Pat Buchanan. In March 2000, he trained his sights on "the narcissist" and "demagogue" Donald Trump. "When he looks at a glass, he is mesmerized by its reflection," he wrote in a prophetic short essay in *Cigar Aficionado*. "The resistance to a corrupting demagogy," he warned, "should take first priority" for Americans. ❖

Mike Allen, Axios: There's no denial in the West Wing: Top aides acknowledge that the three consecutive days of baffling, brutal disclosures about Don Jr.'s Russia meeting during the campaign is a story that will stick, with potentially momentous political and legal consequences. If *The New York Times* knows all this, imagine what Bob Mueller knows. Last night's detonation, leading the paper with a 2-column headline, "Trump's Son Heard of Link To Moscow Before Meeting": "Before arranging a meeting with a Kremlin-connected Russian lawyer he believed would offer him compromising information about Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump Jr. was informed in an email that the material was part of a Russian government effort to aid his father's candidacy." "The email to the younger Mr. Trump was sent by Rob Goldstone, a publicist and former British tabloid reporter who helped broker the June 2016 meeting. Goldstone's message ... indicates that the Russian government was the source of the potentially damaging information." The internal mood, per *The Times*: "News of the meeting involving the younger Mr. Trump, Mr. Kushner and Mr. Manafort blunted whatever good feeling the president's team had after his trip to Europe for the Group of 20 economic summit meeting." ❖

Elections officials worry about 2018

INDIANAPOLIS — Election officials from across the U.S. voiced doubt Saturday that adequate security measures can be adopted before 2018 elections to safeguard against the possibility of a foreign government interfering in U.S. elections (Associated Press). That's according to attendees at a weekend gathering of the National Association of Secretaries of State, whose conference was held amid an uproar over a White House commission investigating President Donald Trump's allegations of voter fraud and heightened concern about Russian attempts to interfere in U.S. elections. The Department of Homeland Security said last fall that hackers believed to be Russian agents targeted voter registration systems in more than 20 states. And a leaked National Security Agency document from May said Russian military intelligence had attempted to hack into voter registration software used in eight states. But both Republican and Democratic Secretaries of State, who are responsible for carrying out elections in many states, said they have been frustrated in recent months by a lack of information from federal intelligence officials on allegations of Russian meddling with the vote. They say that despite the best efforts by federal officials, it may be too late in to make substantive changes.

Lawson to head secretary of states

INDIANAPOLIS — The future of voting rights and election administration across the United States could be determined, in large part, by two Hoosier Republicans (Carden, NWI Times). Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson was sworn in Monday as president of the National Association of Secretaries of State for a one-year term. In that role, Law-

son will speak about ballot security and other voting issues on behalf of an organization composed of the chief election officers for most states. "These folks need to be represented fairly and bipartisanly, and I'm going to do my best to do that," Lawson said. Her voice may resonate unusually loud this year, since Lawson also is a member of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, led by former Indiana Gov. Mike Pence — now vice president of the United States.



Pence hosting high end donors

WASHINGTON — Vice President Mike Pence has been courting scores of the country's most influential donors, corporate executives and conservative political leaders over the past several months in a series of private gatherings and one-on-one conversations (New York Times). The centerpiece of the effort is a string of dinners held every few weeks at the vice president's official residence on the grounds of the Naval Observatory in Washington. Mr. Pence and his wife, Karen, have presided over at least four such soirées, and more are in the works. Each has drawn roughly 30 to 40 guests, including a mix of wealthy donors such as the Chicago hedge fund manager Kenneth C. Griffin and the brokerage firm founder Charles Schwab, as well as Republican fundraisers and executives from companies like Dow Chemical and the military contractor United Technologies. Mr. Pence's aides point out that he also has dinners at the residence for groups other than donors, including members of Congress, world leaders, military families, civic leaders and friends. They cast the donor dinners as an effort to build support for the administration's agenda, not for Mr. Pence personally. "Mike Pence is the ultimate team player and works every day to help the president succeed," said Robert T. Grand, an Indianapolis lawyer who helped raise money for

Mr. Pence's campaigns in Indiana for Congress and for governor.

'Hit of Hell' is film by prosecutor

CORYDON — When he was elected Harrison County Prosecutor in 2011, Otto Schalk hadn't seen a lot of heroin cases (Rickert, News & Tribune). But a huge uptick in the number of people being prosecuted for — or dying from — heroin and opiates in the past two to three years in the county prompted Schalk to go beyond his traditional work as prosecutor to help his community. Tuesday night in Jeffersonville, 'Hit of Hell,' a documentary on the reality of heroin and opiate use created by Schalk and local firm Digital IT, will be screened with discussion afterward.

Pence advocates repeal only

WASHINGTON — Vice President Mike Pence yesterday reiterated the administration's position that if the Senate's repeal-and-replace bill fails, the next step should be a standalone repeal bill (Axios). "We believe if they can't pass this carefully crafted repeal and replace bill — do those two things simultaneously — we ought to just repeal only," Pence said in an interview with Rush Limbaugh.

Council to vote to end needle exchange

ANDERSON — An ordinance to be considered by the Madison County Council could spell the end of the county's 2-year-old syringe exchange program (de la Bastide, Anderson Herald Bulletin). There is already opposition among council members to the proposed ordinance as currently written. The Madison County Council meets at 6 p.m. Tuesday in the council chambers of the Madison County Government Center. If approved by a unanimous vote, the ordinance could be given a final reading for adoption.