



Donnelly reelection bid begins Leans D

Democrat girds for tough race, but many mid-term challenges await GOP nominee

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

ANDERSON – On the day U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly kicked off his reelection bid, the highly respected Cook Political Report moved the Indiana Senate race from “Leans Democrat” to “Tossup.” It isn’t the only publication to enter the tossup zone. Inside Elections with Nathan Gonzales and Sabato’s Crystal Ball (See page 16) also lists the race there.

Cook’s Jennifer Duffy explains, “In 2016, President Donald Trump carried the state by 19 points while Republicans also won an open U.S. Senate seat, the governor’s office and six of eight congressional districts. This puts Donnelly high on Republicans’ target list this cycle. It is worth remembering that Republicans held a competitive race in 2016, but it had no impact on the general election. It is very hard to see how Donnelly does not get very



competitive race this cycle. The contest is in the ‘Toss Up’ column.”

This is in contrast to the HPI Horse Race, which lists this likely \$100 million Senate race as “Leans Democrat.” Normally we don’t venture into a general election

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Revising our history

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – In the two decades before and after the 20th Century commenced, there was a concerted effort to remember the Lost Cause or the War Between the States from the Southern perspective. The Daughters of the Confederacy funded, forged and erected more than a thousand statues honoring President Jefferson Davis, Gens. Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson, along with dozens of others.

It extends beyond monuments, with several U.S. Army bases (Benning, Bragg, Beauregard, Gordon, Hood, A.P. Hill, Pickett and Lee among them) named for Confederate generals. Another 12 Confederate



“I really question his ability to be, his fitness to be in this office. In a fit of pique he decides to do something about Kim Jong Un there’s actually very little to stop him ... which is pretty damn scary.”

*- Former national intel director
James R. Clapper Jr.*



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figures are in the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall, compared to just four civil rights leaders (Frederick Douglass, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., and Sojourner Truth). On the Gettysburg Battlefield in Pennsylvania, there are monuments to Lee, and Gens. James Longstreet and A.P. Hill, as well as those representing the 14 Confederate states.

During the push to legitimize the Lost Cause, America was overwhelmingly white, agrarian, Jim Crow laws were taking effect, with some people saying the monuments justified this encroachment of the tormented Reconstruction.

Here in Indiana, there are at least five: The Confederate Memorial in Corydon, the Confederate Mound at Crown Hill Cemetery, the Confederate Soldiers and Sailors Monument at Garfield Park in Indianapolis which honors some 1,000 prisoners who died there, the Woodlawn Monument Site in Terre Haute, and at the Oak Hill Cemetery in Evansville that honors 24 southern POWs who died in captivity. Evansville Courier & Press columnist Jon Webb observes of a statue of a Confederate soldier at Oak Hill: "He looms next to the office building, and thousands of people have probably passed him without much of a thought."

One of Gov. Frank O'Bannon's gleam-in-the-eye challenges was to name the two Civil War battlefields in northern states. Most remember Gettysburg, and the other was his hometown of Corydon. Antietam took place in Maryland, a border state.

In the wake of the KKK, neo-Nazi rally in Charlottesville, Va., earlier this month that centered on the removal of a statue of Gen. Lee, and resulted in the deaths of one demonstrator and two state troopers, with 19 others injured in an attack by a white supremacist, President Trump weighed in, saying, "Sad to see the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments. You can't change history, but you can learn from it. Robert E Lee, Stonewall Jackson – who's next,

Washington, Jefferson? So foolish! Also the beauty that is being taken out of our cities, towns and parks will be greatly missed and never able to be comparably replaced!"

Trump took a lot of incoming fire, equating Founding Fathers Washington and Jefferson with men like Jefferson Davis who led the insurrection and Gen. Lee who directed it on the battlefields.

Historian Jon Meacham writes in the New York Times: "To me, the answer to Mr. Trump's question begins with a straightforward test: Was the person to whom a monument is erected on public property devoted to the American experiment in liberty and self-government? Washington and



Jefferson and Andrew Jackson were. Each owned slaves; each was largely a creature of his time and place on matters of race. Yet each also believed in the transcendent significance of the nation, and each was committed to the journey toward 'a more perfect Union.'"

Meacham continues: "By definition, the Confederate hierarchy fails that test. Those who took up arms against the Union were explicitly attempting to stop the American odyssey. While we should judge each individual on the totality of their lives (defenders of Lee, for instance, point to his attempts to be a figure of reconciliation after the war), the forces of hate and of exclusion long ago made Confederate imagery their own. Monuments in public places of veneration to those who believed it their duty to

fight the Union have no place in the Union of the 21st Century – a view with which Lee himself might have agreed. 'I think it wiser,' he wrote in 1866, 'not to keep open the sores of war.'"

This should be one of those stop-and-think-for-a-minute moments. While Trump has expressed sympathies for the "fine people" among the Kluxers and Nazis, what is happening is a convulsion of revisionist history. Some is justified, as mostly African-American populations in places like Richmond, New Orleans and Baltimore lived for decades with symbols of the defenders of slavery in their parks. There are few monuments to Gen. Longstreet because as New Orleans police commissioner, he ordered an attack on a white supremacist mob in 1874, so he didn't fit turn-of-the-century southern revision.

This all has an Orwellian twinge, as one of the characters in "1984" observes that "Every book has been rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street and building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And that process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped."

The Garfield Park monument in Indianapolis serves a purpose: Marking the graves of more than 1,000 Confederate soldiers who died there. The memorial does not convey any moral notion. In the wake of the controversies, a man was arrested last weekend for vandalizing the memorial with a hammer. So hysteria has been unleashed.

Do these Confederate statues confer affirmation of the Lost Cause? Or do they prompt the viewer, the visitor, to recall the nuances of history, that kindly Gen. Lee actually broke up slave families and had his human chattel beaten and doused with brine water? Or as President Trump put it, "You can learn from it." It's an observation deserving further thought.

Our own historic figures can change before our eyes as history is revised. Former vice president, senator and governor Thomas Hendricks, whose statue resides on the southeastern corner of the Statehouse campus, voted against the 13th, 14th and 15 Amendments, which included abolishing slavery, with Sen. Hendricks believing the time wasn't right. Should we revisit his relevance through that prism? Or accept that he was a notable and respected statesman of his day simply reacting to issues?

Lee himself was against the statuary, according to Daniel Brown, writing for Business Insider: "In June 1866, he wrote that a monument of one of his best generals, Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson, wasn't 'feasible at this time.' In December of that year, he wrote of another proposed Confederate monument: 'As regards the erection of such a monument as is contemplated, my conviction is, that, however grateful it would be to the feelings of the South, the attempt, in the present condition of the country, would have the effect of retarding instead of accelerating its accomplishment, and of continuing if not adding to

the difficulties under which the Southern people labor.'"

Brown adds: "Not only did Lee oppose Confederate monuments, 'he favored erasing battlefields from the landscape altogether,' Lee biographer Jonathan Horn wrote."

Here's the other thing to keep in mind. In a century or two, America will be a very different country than it is today. It will be inhabited by browner people,



Confederate monuments at Corydon (left) and Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis.

more polysexual people, perhaps by a smaller percentage of Christians or any other religion. Imagine if misguided passion prompted the state to remove Martin Luther King monuments, or, those of white presidents?

These monuments are also art and they tell a story. Some are being moved out of city parks and into places where history can be contemplated and contextualized.

Now some may criticize this writing as an acquiescence to absolving the racism of Southern slaveholders. Slavery is sinful and a blot on our civilization, but one we overcame as we did what our Founding Fathers sought to forge that "more perfect union." That perfection cascaded over time and with the blood of tyrants and patriots, via sword and whip. There's still much work to do.

I'm about as Yankee as you get. My great great grandfather, Harvey Platt, fought with the 7th Indiana, lost part of his skull in the Battle of Laurel Hill during the Wilderness campaign, on May 14, 1864. Patched up with a metal plate by Union surgeons, when he returned to Napoleon, Ind., to farm, he had to wear a cork hat to keep his brain from frying out in the cornfields. In his memory, the notion of states seceding from the Union makes my blood boil. Of President Lincoln's passion for preserving the Union, there is no greater advocate than I.

But history is history, blood, warts and all. ❖

Donnelly, from page 1

forecast until the field is set, but because of the gravity of this race, we'll make an exception. Currently the Republican field includes U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita, State Rep. Mike Braun of Jasper, New Albany educator Andrew Takami and Atlanta, Ind., businessman Terry Henderson, with Attorney General Curtis Hill teasing a potential candidacy. So at this writing, the GOP field could still expand.

Without a Republican nominee, we don't have enough to gauge the relative strengths and weaknesses of either nominee in contrast with each other. Will Donnelly face an incumbent congressman coming from an institution with an approval below the 20th percentile, or Rep. Braun coming from the Indiana General Assembly with approval above 50%?

Donnelly has and will maintain a money advantage, reporting \$3.7 million on his second quarter FEC report, compared to Rokita and Messer reporting just over \$2 million each. Rokita and Messer will mow through much of their funds between now and the primary and will have to reload late next spring. Conservative super PACs will certainly make this race competitive, but expect Donnelly to have a persistent money edge.

According to a Morning Consult Poll released last week, 55% of Republicans approve Donnelly's job performance. It's not surprising. A constant phrase from Republicans is, "I like Joe Donnelly." They'll disagree with him on issues, but they respect him. It was once that way with former senator Evan Bayh, who always had a significant chunk of Republican support in his five statewide general election races, until last November when super PACs and the Young campaign destroyed his brand. The super PACs will take aim at Donnelly, but he doesn't carry the same baggage that Bayh ended up with (residency, the family's wealth tied with his Senate connections, and his lobbying career).

Both Messer and Rokita vow to take aim at Donnelly's 2010 vote for Obamacare. So did 2012 Republican nominee Richard Mourdock. But Donnelly won a close 2010 reelection bid against then-State Rep. Jackie Walorski, then defeated Mourdock in 2012, with the issue a consistent line of attack. Granted, Mourdock self-destructed in his final debate, but Donnelly was holding a 40-38% lead in the Sept. 8, 2012, Howey/DePauw Battleground Poll. In that poll, Donnelly's fav/unfavs stood at 24/21%, compared 26/32% for Mourdock.

It will be a safe bet that should Messer or Rokita

emerge with the nomination, both will have significantly driven up the other's negatives.

Finally, with Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0 expanding health coverage for more than 400,000 Hoosiers, Obamacare is not as toxic (outside of GOP primary voters) as Messer and Rokita would lead you to believe. Recent Kaiser Family Foundation Tracking Poll placed Obamacare as 52% favorable and 39% unfavorable nationally. Those numbers might not reflect Indiana, but neither is Obamacare under water as it had been in recent election cycles before congressional Republicans botched the repeal-and-replace this year.

Gallup puts President Trump's approve/disapprove numbers at 47/48% in Indiana in late July. That's a serious erosion from his 19% plurality in this state last November. Look no further than 2004 when President G.W. Bush won the state by a 20% plurality, only to find Republican Reps.



U.S. Joe Donnelly with State Rep. Teri Austin, Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane, and Anderson Mayor Thomas Broderick on Monday at the campaign kickoff. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Chris Chocola, Mike Sodrel and John Hostettler losing in the 2006 mid-terms to Donnelly, Baron Hill and Brad Ellsworth.

And, typically, first mid-terms for a sitting president are dangerous. Trump's approval is in the 35% range, which is terrible. FiveThirtyEight observed in February: Every new president since Harry Truman in 1945 has enjoyed an initial net approval rating of at least +32 percentage points – until Trump. On average, pre-Trump presidents kicked off their administrations with a 66% approval rating and just a 10% disapproval rating. Gallup's first survey on Trump put him at 45% approval and 45% disapproval.

Peter Lemieux, writing for Politics by the Numbers,

notes, "Democrats must win at least 53% of the national two-party vote for Congress in order to retake control of the House of Representatives. That higher hurdle to success reflects the combined effects of more extensive partisan gerrymandering by Republican state governments and the tendency of Democrats to live in densely populated urban districts. If the president's job approval rating falls below 32%, the model predicts the Democrats would win the 53.2% of the national House vote that we saw in the last article is required to obtain a majority of the seats in the chamber."

Lemieux adds, "An approval rating below 30% is historically very unlikely. Richard Nixon in 1974 and George W. Bush in 2008 had ratings in the mid-20s. Jimmy Carter in 1978, George H. W. Bush in 1992, and his son in 2006 received job approval scores in the mid-30s. Of course, all of these incumbents had much higher ratings when they took office than did Donald Trump. The average decline in presidential job approval between Inauguration Day and the first subsequent off-year election has been a bit under 9%. That would take Trump's score down toward the mid-30s. However, because he started at just 45% approval when inaugurated, he may not experience the same decline as did presidents who started from a higher rating."

Quinnipiac released a poll Wednesday showing Trump's approval rating slumping to 35% from 39% the week before. It found that a majority of respondents in every party, gender, education, age and racial group disapprove of the president's job performance, with the exception of Republicans, white men and white voters without a college education. Fifty-nine percent of voters said Trump's decisions and behavior have encouraged white supremacist groups, while 35 percent say he has had no impact on them. Some 62 percent of voters say he is doing more to divide the country, according to a Quinnipiac University poll released on Wednesday.

As we experienced in 2016, President Trump presents a complete wild card. In June 2016 HPI issued a "tsunami watch" with the potential of swamping down-ballot Republicans. By November, the tsunami actually reversed, dooming Democrats John Gregg, Evan Bayh and Shelli Yoder in the 9th CD.

At this writing, Trump looks like a potential heavy millstone for the Republican U.S. Senate nominee. But, as you know, anything can happen.

There is little doubt that this will turn into a very competitive race between Donnelly and the Republican nominee. But strange things can happen, like Todd Young defeating Evan Bayh 51.2 to 42.4% last November, a spread no one was predicting.

If Republicans can savage Donnelly's reputation as they did to Evan Bayh last year, there will be a broad path to victory. That process has already begun with Associated Press reports on Donnelly's ties to a family business that out-sourced jobs to Mexico.

But that cuts both ways. The AP has already written about Messer's wife, Jennifer, who earns a six-figure part-time salary with the city of Fishers. And informed and reliable GOP sources tell HPI that the AP is working on a story about Rokita's high staff turnover and a report that he broke a staffer's windshield when he hurled a cell phone in anger. That comes after Politico ran with what it described as an "agonizing eight-page memo on how to chauffeur a congressman" earlier this week. Rokita's campaign spokesman Tim Edson wrote in an email that "there is nothing embarrassing about always being prepared," but it did underscore what will be a consistent theme against Rokita, who has already been on the butt end of negative columns by IndyStar's Matt Tully, the South Bend Tribune's Jack Colwell (see the Aug. 17 edition of HPI), and the Lafayette Journal & Courier's Dave Bangert.

So not only will this race end up in the \$100 million range, it will be a knock-down, claws to the eye donnybrook on both sides. Heading to the race at this early point, Donnelly has more advantages.

Donnelly 'steals' RV idea

Sen. Donnelly is touring the state in an Indiana-



built RV, the first pol to do so since Gov. Mitch Daniels used RV1 during the 2004 and 2008 campaigns. On the last RV1 journey to Milan in the waning days of his administration, Daniels told HPI he was surprised more politicians didn't "steal the idea" given the state being in the heart of the RV belt. Now Donnelly has.

Rokita campaign reacts to kickoff

Hoosiers for Rokita released the following statement in response to Sen. Joe Donnelly kicking off his reelection campaign: "Hoosiers beware: Liberal Joe Donnelly isn't who he says he is. After months of attempting to fool people, liberal Joe Donnelly officially kicked off his reelection/deception effort on an RV tour trying to cast himself as a moderate and a champion of regular

Hoosiers. Of course, it's a giant lie," said Rokita campaign manager Bryan Reed. "Whether it's hypocritically railing against outsourcing while profiting from his own business's outsourcing operation in Mexico, or claiming to be independent while bragging about Washington liberals agreeing with nine out of 10 of his decisions, Joe Donnelly is no champion of regular Hoosiers, and he is no moderate. Whenever it matters, Joe Donnelly is with the liberal Washington elite, not us. The failed stimulus that created jobs in China, Obamacare, the dangerous Iran Deal, taxpayer-funded abortion, and even gun control. You name it. Liberal Joe Donnelly is with them, not regular Hoosiers."

Bopp endorses Messer

Jim Bopp, longtime National Right to Life general counsel and former Republican National Committee vice chairman, endorsed Messer this week, a move that will generate a lot of buzz at this weekend's Indiana Conservative Conference. "I know a conservative fighter when I see one, and Luke Messer is that fighter," Bopp said. "For decades, Luke and I have worked side by side in Indiana to advance the conservative cause. We need someone like Luke, with his proven record as a pro-life, pro-gun conservative, serving Indiana in the U.S. Senate. Luke would be an important partner with President Trump and Vice President Pence to preserve our constitutional republic."

DSCC targets Messer, Rokita

The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee launched new digital ads utilizing Google's innovative bumper flock format – highlighting how Congressmen Messer and Rokita's toxic health care plan will spike costs and strip coverage for hardworking families. The ad format features a set of six-second, non-skippable bumper video ads presented to a viewer sequentially across their internet searches and travels – in this case, three sequential six-second ads. The DSCC is the first campaign committee to utilize Google's bumper flock format this cycle. "The Republicans' health care plan is striking Americans families in their everyday lives and in their most challenging moments – spiking their costs and stripping away coverage they are depending on so that big insurance companies can get another tax break," said David Bergstein of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

Rokita, Messer vote together 96%

Indiana Republicans might have trouble telling Luke Messer and Todd Rokita apart if they are judging the U.S. Senate candidates by their congressional voting records (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Reps. Messer, R-6th, and Rokita, R-4th, have voted alike nearly 96% of the time both have been members of the U.S. House, according to data compiled by the news organization ProPublica. "I would tell you frankly, if you take a

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look at our voting records, they're pretty similar. We are both relatively mainstream conservatives," Messer said last week in Fort Wayne. Messer and Rokita have taken the same side all but 123 times out of 2,814 roll-call votes since Messer joined the House in 2013, two years after Rokita arrived, according to ProPublica.

Congress

4th CD: Braun to join Morales in race

A strange thing happened at State Sen. Jim Buck's annual garden party earlier this month. Once the 4th CD seat opened up with Rokita's entry into the Senate race, a confab like the Buck garden party would have been a magnet for potential candidates. Yet, only Diego Morales showed up. Morales, the former aide to then-Gov. Mike Pence, is the only declared candidate. Fourth CD sources tell HPI that Workforce Development Commission Steve Braun is contacting county chairs and will be "definitely in," according to one informed and reliable source. The IBJ is reporting that Braun is preparing to resign from DWD. Others pondering a run include State Sens. Rick Niemeyer and Jon Crane, along with State Rep. Sharon Negele. Morales appears to be off to a fast start on the money front, not only here in Indiana, but from Latino donors from states like Florida and Texas.



Diego Morales (from left) and Workforce Commissioner Steve Braun are launching 4th CD bids, while Greg Pence will wait to announce in the 6th CD. (HPI Photos by Mark Curry and Brian A. Howey)

6th CD: No Pence decision before October

The open 6th CD seat probably won't have a full field until October. That's when Greg Pence tells Howey Politics Indiana that he will make a decision to enter. With the vice president's brother on the fence, it could keep other potential candidates like State Sen. Jean Leising in standby mode. Pence told HPI, "I won't make a decision before October. I've got a lot of things going on personally. Helping Luke this third quarter; I've made that commitment. That's almost a full time job." Pence serves as U.S. Rep. Luke Messer's Senate campaign finance chair.

Pence is acting like a potential candidate, meeting personally with 6th CD county chairs. "I've been visiting with them. I've done three of them so far," he said.

Leising told HPI earlier this month she was waiting for Pence's decision. The field currently stands at State Sen. Mike Crider, Henry County Councilman Nate LaMar and Muncie businessman Jonathan Lamb. Sources are telling HPI that David Willkie, a former aide to U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar, is preparing a bid. Willkie hails from Rushville and is the grandson of 1940 presidential nominee Wendell

Willkie. Democrat Jim Pruett, a Greensburg attorney, joins Lane Siekman from Ohio County in the Democratic field, according to the Connersville News-Examiner.

General Assembly

HD64: Washburne won't seek reelection

Family – the reason so often cited by politicians abruptly leaving office – was Rep. Tom Washburne's rationale Tuesday for putting an expiration date on his tenure in the Indiana Legislature (Langhorne, Evansville Courier & Press). But Washburne, a Republican who represents House District 64, isn't leaving under a cloud of scandal or with enough smoke around him to stir the whiff of

it. The veteran lawmaker will depart office when his term expires next year, he said, because the last of his five children will soon leave the nest and there's a whole other life to live. And that life just doesn't have any more room for commutes from Washburne's Vanderburgh County home to Indianapolis, he said. "When I first started running in 2012, I think I had four of the five (children) still at home," said Washburne. "It was time for me to be spending more time with my wife and, you know, different when nobody's around," Washburne said. "That's what we were looking at."

HD64: Dr. Beckerman to run

Republican Dr. Ken Beckerman, a retired dentist from Hazelton, Ind., announced he would seek the HD 64 (Evansville Courier & Press). Washburne said Beckerman may have heard about his retirement announcement from GOP leaders he had told in advance. He said he will remain neutral in what is expected to be a crowded Republican field, unless something motivates him to get involved. "Sometimes we forget that there's a lot of benefits to a citizen legislature. Getting new ideas and new people circulating through our General Assembly is a good thing," Washburne said. ❖

Donnelly discusses his campaign, opioids, and Obamacare

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

ANDERSON – U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly kicked off his reelection bid on Monday, highlighting what he called “Hoosier common sense,” along with a call for bipartisanship to deal with the state and nation’s vexing problems.



“Back during the toughest of times, I was a congressman right next door, over in Kokomo,” Donnelly said before a packed Walter Reuther UAW Hall.

“We had transmission plants and we went from over 5,000 people to less than 100 that were working there at the time.

They said it couldn’t be done. It probably wasn’t politically popular in other parts of the state. It’s never been about what’s popular and what’s not popular. It’s about the people who make lives better.

“And when we stood together they said, ‘Joe, how is this going to work? How can we ever come back?’ And I said, ‘What you’re asking me is, am I willing to bet on Hoosier workers? Am I willing to bet on my friends at the UAW? Am I willing to bet we can make the best cars and the best production in the world,’” Donnelly said. “I’ll take that bet every single time and there are over 7,000 people working in those transmission plants just down the road.

“You know what we never did?” Donnelly asked. “We never complained. We hitched up our pants and went to work. That’s the Hoosier way. Trying to make sure we stay together. That’s how things are done in Indiana.”

His campaign comes as the Cook Political Report moved the Indiana Senate race from “Leans Democrat” into “Tossup,” though Howey Politics Indiana rates the race as “Leans Democrat.” It comes as more than \$5 million has already spilled into the race that many believe will cost a combined \$100 million by November 2018. But Hoosier Republicans face a donnybrook of a primary with U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita involved in a mudslinging match with the field of five, potentially including Attorney General Curtis Hill. Gallup polling in Indiana during July has showed President Trump’s approval/disap-

prove at 47/48% just nine months after he carried the state with a 20% plurality.

Donnelly cited working with Jeff Sexton, the father of Army Specialist Jacob Sexton, who committed suicide in a Muncie movie theater in 2009. Donnelly’s Jacob Sexton Military Suicide Prevention Act provides annual mental health examinations for all members of the U.S. military.

On the opioid epidemic, Donnelly said he worked with former Republican U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire to restrict prescription procedures, and he said he pressured the Federal Drug Administration to limit the flood of Opana into illegal markets. “We told them if you don’t take it off the market, we’ll take it off the market for you,” Donnelly said.

After his announcement, Donnelly conducted a press conference and took questions from Howey Politics Indiana, the Anderson Herald-Bulletin’s Ken de la Bastide, WTHR-TV and the Statehouse File.

Anderson Herald-Bulletin: You mention the opioid problem here in Indiana. Recently Madison County Council voted to end the needle exchange program. What do you think of that?

Donnelly: I will tell you our experience in Scott County, where we worked with the administration. One needle used 300 times caused HIV; it could be spread very widely. What we did in Scott County was a needle exchange program where they were exchanged, they were brought back. We had 96% brought back. We would all prefer nobody be using these drugs, but at the same time we have an obligation that when you have a public health scourge going on to stop it. That’s what we did down there.

Herald-Bulletin: Would you encourage Madison County to restart their program?

Donnelly: I’m going to leave it up to the people of Madison County, but I can tell you that in Scott County it has stopped the spread of HIV and we have saved lives.

HPI: We had Republican Sens. Bob Corker and Tim Scott question President Trump’s competence, stability and moral authority. Some even question his mental fitness. Can you give us an opinion on what you’re perceiving here?

Donnelly: The comments the president made in regard to Charlottesville and race were way off the mark. I had an uncle who was wounded fighting the Nazis. That’s the American story for everybody. We have family stories of people who went off to protect the nation. You have the KKK, and I happen to be Catholic and they were coming after us, coming after Jewish people, after African-Americans. I would hope he might choose his words more wisely on those issues. There’s a lot of things we want to try work together with the president on. We want to work



together on the opioid challenges we have, on the our Endowed Systems Act which the president says he supports. On making sure we stand up with veterans together. I would hope they can reset in this area, get on the right page which is that every American counts. It doesn't matter what race you are, what gender you are, what religion you are. We're all in this together. We are so much stronger. Nobody ever, ever asks in a foxhole what religion you are or what color you are. We have our guns loaded and ready to go and we have each other's backs. Americans need to have each other's backs.

WTHR: The president carried Indiana by a wide margin. How much in 2018 is your race going to be a referendum on him?

Donnelly: I don't know. This should be a referendum on Indiana. This is our Senate seat. It's not a national item up for grabs. It's Indiana's Senate seat. We work for farmers, small business, we work for the single mom in Marion County. I go to all 92 counties every single year because there is so much more wisdom here than in Washington. My focus is here, trying to make sure we're taking care of constituent services, that families can get Social Security and veteran services they need, and then at the same time we're handling national issues in a way that reflects Hoosier common sense.

Herald-Bulletin: Tonight the president is making a speech on Afghanistan and Southeast Asia. What do you hope he'll say?

Donnelly: We need stability. My expectation is he'll talk about more troops coming in. What we need is stability and clearly what we have right now isn't working.

WTHR: Would you support more troops in Afghanistan?

Donnelly: If it improves stability and if there's a solid plan that allows the Afghanistan government to function and is not just an on-going situation forever; there has to be a back end.

HPI: Do you think a preemptive strike in North Korea can be conducted without incurring hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of casualties?

Donnelly: I think that would be very difficult. I happen to be the ranking member on the Strategic Forces Subcommittee ... that's responsible for all missile defense, nuclear submarines, nuclear carriers, all related nuclear weapons; we're dealing with South Korea and North Korea on a constant basis. I was there two years ago. The second something happens, we could have up to 100,000 casualties in South Korea almost immediately. We have over 150,000 Americans in South Korea, over 28,000 troops there. The motto is "fight tonight" and it's fight tonight for a reason. That's how they're trained and that's how they are focused, because it could happen at any moment. I serve on the Banking Committee for International Trade on terrorism issues. It all ties into this and Ben. Sasse and I

just had a hearing on secondary sanctions because here's what we know about the North Korean missile program: We've recovered parts and they're made in China. We know the companies that make them. We know the banks that fund those companies. We know the larger Chinese banks that fund the smaller Chinese banks. We have a line of the secondary sanctions that are ready to go that could have an effect. What we're looking at is, we also have 60 destroyers that have Aegis defense systems. They are located in appropriate places to deal with this threat, same with the nuclear submarines. Same with our attack submarines. We have sent a message to Kim Jong-Un. That's why he hasn't taken further action. The message is very, very clear. We will protect our country, we will protect our people. A citizen of Guam is every much a citizen as one from Anderson, Indiana. We will protect every single one and do what is appropriate.

HPI: Does the president have the temperament to



make the kind of decision he's facing?

Donnelly: I certainly hope so. He's surrounded by Gen. Mattis and Gen. McMaster and Gen. Dunford, who's chairman of the Joint Chiefs. These are extraordinary individuals who are seasoned and who are providing him with good advice.

HPI: You've got five Republicans lined up for this race. How tough a race will this be?

Donnelly: It's going to be tough. It's going to be a scrap every day. We're hitting all 92 counties this year and again next year. I don't worry about that. The best politics is to do the best job you can. I remember sitting with Mayor Goodnight of Kokomo and almost seeing the implosion of our auto industry at the time. Talking together, there is no magic bullet. You just keep your head down and keep talking and try to make the best decisions.

WTHR: You say it will be a tough race. Why?

Donnelly: Indiana tends to lean Republican.

The other part about that though, is it may lean a little bit Republican, but it also our folks are focused on the issues. We are not a state that chases the next trend or the next fancy thing. We try to focus on making lives better, jobs are created, opportunities created. Look, I've never yet run in a Democrat district. I wouldn't know what to do if I did. So my blessing and my opportunity is to work with the people of this state again, and the harder we work the luckier we'll get.

HPI: What's your pitch to Trump voters?

Donnelly: Trump voters are Joe Donnelly voters. In Oakland City near Evansville, about a month or two ago when we were able to pass legislation to protect health benefits for our mine retirees, we had over 300 people come together, miners, retired miners. My guess is over 80% of them voted for Donald Trump. I would hope and consider myself blessed that over 80% of them would work for me, because we work together on this. I met them all in Washington numerous times. One of our mine retirees came up to me and said, "My wife is terminal right now. But the prescriptions she gets help make it manageable painwise. Help make it a good day for her." My main concern is if she ran out of health care, she would be in tremendous pain for the rest of her life. We're so happy we have this, because I know she'll be comfortable and she'll be happy. Trump voters want the same thing. Trump voters are just Hoosiers, just Americans. They want a good job, their kids get a good education. They want to know the deck isn't stacked. They want to know their voice counts. That's what I've always tried to do in Washington, to make sure the voices of Starke County and Vigo County and Wayne County are all heard. Our economy is getting stronger but it's not perfect. I want to see wages go up. We are a country with incredible blessings but it can always get better. We're just in the same place in a lot of things.

WTHR: Over the past week we've seen a lot of Republicans distance themselves from him. You say you still want to work with him.

Donnelly: That's my job. I'm the senator from Indiana who is obligated to make their lives the best I can. If President Trump wants to work with me, to end outsourcing and keep our jobs here, I'm with him 100%. We got together to talk about opioids and his travels around the country are what showed him how bad it was. He said he wanted to help. Why wouldn't I take help from him? On veterans' issues, the Veterans Choice Act, where veterans can get coverage in local private doctors when the wait gets too long, I pushed real hard to get that done. It always seems to me to work together as opposed to spend your time tearing each other apart.

HPI: The Republican candidates all mention your votes on Obamacare. How are you going to defend that?

Donnelly: I'll start by saying there are 400,000 more Hoosiers that have health care today than the day before that vote took place. The fact that premiums and deductibles have gone up at the lowest rate in decades, that when we can get cost-sharing in place, and reinsurance in place, we need to stabilize those premiums. My hometown is South Bend. At St. Joe Med Center in Mishawaka, the CEO said to me ... after the ACA went into place, they had this huge rush of heart cases. What was going on? Did something go wrong in the community? Somebody just looked up and said, "These people have gotten insurance for the first time in their lives. These cases aren't new. They've been living with this." As Hoosiers, the character of our state is those people with heart cases, a lot of them, but there's more than one need. If parent could send their daughter to Ball State or get treatment for a heart condition, every parent I know sends their kid to Ball State. Now they have an option to actually get treatment. I'm more than happy to have that discussion and also about how they wanted to take \$700 billion out of health care for tax cuts for multi-millionaires. That doesn't seem like a good idea to me.

WTHR: The NRSC just sent out a press release calling you Mexico Joe for your family business that exported jobs to Mexico. How do you deal with Republicans who will paint you as doing one thing and then going to Washington and doing something else.

Donnelly: They can't talk about the issues, that's why that do that kind of thing. This is a family business that I haven't had any active role in for about 20 years. I've had no role, I don't know what they're doing and as soon as I heard, I'm in the process of selling. You try to do the very best you can every single day. When you can't talk about health care, talk about jobs – I have an outsourcing act none of them has signed on – when you can't talk about those things, that's what you have to do. I would rather focus on the country.

Statehouse File: Anything on the farm bill?

Donnelly: We've had listening tours. I just finished one at the State Fair, talking to dairy farmers, hog farmers and organic farmers, the whole group. The most important thing that comes up time after time is crop insurance. It provides stability and security to family farmers. If things get tough, as in 2012 when temperatures were 105 every day and there was no rain, yields went down to five bushels an acre, they're not going to lose the farm that's been in their family for generations. Crop insurance is a large part of what we're trying to do. It's their voice that's going to be heard on the ag committee. I have a passion for them, and this farm bill will reflect the needs, hopes of Indiana farmers. ❖



DNC views Pence as potential 2020 nominee

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – When Vice President Mike Pence returned to Indiana for the unveiling of his official portrait as governor, the Democratic National Committee fired off a statement criticizing Pence for pushing health care changes that would be “devastating for Indiana.”



No surprise that the DNC criticizes Pence. But the title the Democratic organization gave to Pence was a surprise. The statement began: “The presumptive 2020 presidential candidate Mike Pence returns today to his home state . . .”

For Pence, that’s the unkindest cut of all. The last thing Pence wants right now is to be viewed openly as a presumed candidate for president in 2020.

It’s not that Pence wouldn’t love to be the 2020 Republican presidential nominee. It’s not that he isn’t raising funds and organizing to be ready for that possibility. It’s not that a majority of Republicans in Congress wouldn’t prefer Pence over Trump as their 2020 nominee – or as their president right now. It’s that Pence must avoid being presumed openly and widespread as a candidate for president rather than again being the loyal, supportive vice-presidential running mate as Trump seeks a second term.

Trump, furious at anyone in his administration who challenges him or seems to be getting more attention than he, would throw Pence under the limousine in an instant if he thought Pence was angling to replace him as the 2020 Republican nominee. That’s why the usually mild-mannered Pence exploded in indignation over a New York Times report about his courting of influential donors, hosting events at his Naval Observatory residence and positioning for “a shadow campaign for a 2020.”

Pence ripped the article as “disgraceful and offensive to me, my family and our entire team.” He repeated his usual full-throated support of Trump: “The American people know that I could not be more honored to be working side by side with a president who is making America great again.”

Despite the facts about his robust fundraising and hiring of staff with national political campaign credentials, Pence called the story “absurd.” Actually, it would be absurd if he weren’t looking toward the possibility of being a presidential candidate in 2020 or even of being president before then.

When Trump issued his initial statement on the Charlottesville tragedy, failing to mention specifically the KKK, neo-Nazis or white supremacists and citing violence “on many sides,” Pence jumped to defend the president against criticism that the statement was not strong and clear. Pence said the president had spoken out “clearly and unambiguously” against the hate groups.

As often before, Trump then undercut his vice president’s unwavering backing by wavering on what had seemed finally to be a clarifying denunciation of the hate groups. In a furious outburst, Trump made clear he did not intend unambiguously to blame the hate groups for Charlottesville – the death, the injuries, the violence. He doubled down on the initial blame for “many sides.” He drew a blame equivalency between the Nazi-Klan-supremacists side and those protesting against the views of that side.

“I think there is blame on both sides,” Trump said. “You had a group on one side that was bad. You had a group on the other side that was also very violent.” He gladdened the heart of David Duke by saying there were “good people” as well on Duke’s side in the confrontation.

Said Pence: “I stand with the president.” He has no choice. Pence set sail on Trump’s ship. As the ship moves through stormy seas, he can’t jump overboard. Nor can he criticize the captain for the ship’s bizarre course without being thrown overboard. He hopes to plan quietly, without drawing the attention and wrath of the super-sensitive captain, for a 2020 presidential run or for impeach-



Vice President Pence and family at his governor portrait unveiling at the Indiana Statehouse earlier this month. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

ment before then.

Pence doesn’t want the captain to hear, even if from the Democratic National Committee, that he already is the presumptive candidate to be the new captain. ❖

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



Perspectives on nine U.S. presidents

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – One reason I consider myself fortunate to have led a life in politics is that, over time, I’ve had a chance to work with nine presidents. From Lyndon Johnson through Barack Obama, I’ve talked policy, politics and, sometimes, the trivial details of daily life, with them. I met JFK twice for brief conversations. I don’t know



our current president, but I’ve gained valuable perspective from his predecessors.

Johnson was a deal-maker, always trying to figure out how to get your vote. He came into office with a clear vision of what he wanted to do, and on the domestic side notched accomplishments unmatched in recent decades. Yet he was brought down by the Vietnam War, a war he could neither win

nor quit.

Richard Nixon, one of the more complex personalities to inhabit the office, often spoke to me about his mother and her home in Indiana. Highly intelligent, brimming with energy, extremely ambitious, he was also uneasy in social settings and could be vindictive. He focused intently on policy, especially foreign policy, and yet had a flawed moral compass.

Few people were nicer in politics than Gerald Ford. His great contribution was to help the country heal after Watergate and Nixon’s resignation. His was not an

especially productive presidency, but that wasn’t what the country wanted. Instead, people wanted the stability and reassurance that Ford provided in turbulent times.

Jimmy Carter was a marvelous, down-to-earth campaigner, whose engineer’s mind led him to seek comprehensive solutions to the problems of the day. But his outsider approach led to difficulties, even with a Democratic Congress. Carter served in extraordinarily complex times, through the Iran hostage crisis and rampaging inflation. Yet no American soldier died in combat while he was in office, a remarkable achievement, and Carter has set the gold standard for the post-presidency.

Ronald Reagan’s sunny optimism contrasted sharply with Carter’s “malaise.” Reagan may be identified as the great conservative ideologue, but he was pragmatic. He talked about government being the problem – but signed the appropriations bills that came to his desk. He denounced Medicare – but made no effort to repeal it. He reduced some taxes – then supported a large tax hike. His chief interest was not so much policy, but how to use his acting skills to communicate to the American people.

George H.W. Bush came from the aristocracy, yet devoted his life to public service with decency, honor, and modesty. He deserves praise for his skill in handling the transition from the Cold War, yet he had modest legislative accomplishments. During Bush’s presidency, Newt Gingrich, who criticized Bush for his bipartisan attitude, ushered in the mean-spirited, confrontational political warfare that still bedevils us.

Bill Clinton arrived as president facing high expectations because of his mastery of policy detail and superb political skills. But he couldn’t get his major health care bill through, and the Monica Lewinsky scandal and his impeachment took a toll on the country. I often wonder how much more could have been accomplished had he not been distracted by personal problems.

George W. Bush was affable and likable. He was not a detail man, but right after the 9/11 attacks he effectively led the country in response. The course of his presidency, however, was downhill: He came into office with a strong budget surplus and the nation at peace; when he left we were at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, were running large budget deficits, and the economy was plunging into the Great Recession.

Barack Obama was deliberative, rational, smart, and took a conciliatory, compromise-ready approach. He learned quickly and mastered complex issues. He inherited a tough economy and got it moving again. But he changed in the face of implacable Republican opposition and his own reluctance to engage fully with Congress, arriving with great optimism and expansive goals and leaving with a far shorter, more incremental



horizon.

These men were not demigods. Presidents are human, with qualities both fine and troubling. Each was different, and at least one tested our democracy. Yet our system of government showed considerable resilience, in part because Congress often played a crucial role as counterbalance, a role much needed with our current president. ❖

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar, IU School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice, IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

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Sanders returns to find high voter energy

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – During the spring of 2016, Hoosiers from both major political parties watched two outsiders – billionaire Donald Trump and independent socialist U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders – barnstorm the state.

Their candidacies were fueled by the same concerns, that the middle class was getting left behind, the economic and political systems were rigged, and American was losing its greatness. Trump and Sanders campaigns both registered thousands of new voters and they fed off the same dynamic, though perhaps 180 degrees apart.

They had virtually no establishment support. Gov. Mike Pence and many Republican leaders were backing U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz or Ohio Gov. John Kasich. Sen. Joe Donnelly, Evan Bayh and all of the Democratic super delegates were backing Hillary Clinton.

When the primary dust settled, Trump and Sanders won their primaries, both with 53% of the vote. The GOP establishment would migrate to Trump with the selection of Pence for the ticket in July. Today, nine months after Trump carried the state with a 19% plurality, the GOP establishment is still on board, particularly with Pence, Seema Verma, Dr. Jerome Adams and Dan Coats holding cabinet or senior posts.

Only a few members of the Democratic Central Committee are considered Sanders supporters.

Trump has returned to Indiana once since the election, appearing with Pence and Carrier in Indianapolis to claim they had saved hundreds of jobs from outsourcing to Mexico.

On Monday, Sanders returned to Monument Circle. He had competition with a near total solar eclipse less than an hour earlier and intermittent rain. On the eve of the 2016 primary, he had drawn about 10,000 supporters to the circle. On Monday, about 2,000 showed up, a de-

cent and vocal crowd given the timing and circumstances.

The energy was similar to 2016. When Trump returns, despite his many controversies, the same type of fervor would almost certainly manifest.

Sanders, who is reportedly preparing to run in 2020, was ready to engage Trump, particularly over the Carrier jobs.

“Donald Trump told the workers here in Indiana that none of their jobs would move to Mexico, not a single job,” Sanders said of Trump and Pence’s appearance at Carrier last December. “Unfortunately, as the American people are becoming accustomed to, Donald Trump was lying.”

The independent senator called for a \$15 minimum wage, saying, “What Good Jobs Nation has reminded us is you can’t survive on a \$7 minimum wage. You can’t make it on nine bucks an hour or 12 bucks an hour. In America, if you work 40 hours a week, you should not be living in poverty. We need a minimum wage which is a livable wage — 15 bucks an hour.”

Sanders as-sailed President Trump’s violence on “many sides” statements regarding Charlottesville. “I’m thinking about the 400,000 men and women who gave their lives fighting Nazism and fighting fascism. I am thinking and I know I reflect the views of the vast majority of the American people, whether they are Republican, Democrat or independent,” Sanders said, “that what an embarrassment it is that we have a president who cannot condemn in unequivocal terms that racism and the Nazism and the white supremacy we saw marching in Charlottesville.”

Sanders urged supporters to back U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly in his reelection bid next year. Donnelly was in the midst of a six-day RV tour on Monday and did not attend the rally. ❖



U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders amid a solar eclipse, rain and fervent supporters. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howey)

Gary gets some good news on jobs

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – An out-of-towner asked me the other day how things were going in Gary. I told him the murder rate was down, but that was only because the population of the city had dwindled to fewer than 80,000 residents, not because of a drastic reduction in homicides.

And, while crime continues to be a problem in Gary, so too is justice. It was unveiled a few months back that the Gary city court has a backlog of more than 200,000 cases and no plan in place to speed up justice. And just as the state named a special monitor to take control of the city's struggling school system, a group in the Miller Beach section of the city announced it may try to form a new school district with the three schools in that section of the city.



But it's not all negative when it comes to Gary. Every few months there is an announcement about something positive for the city. Virtually every time, it involves the creation of jobs – something sorely needed. Despite the optimism, it's rare that jobs are created.

There is one notable exception of late that ought to produce a number of jobs. The Gary/Chicago International Airport will become a destination for international flights next year with the federal government's approval of its design for a Customs and Border Patrol facility. "Construction of a new customs facility will improve the airport's ability to compete and attract new fliers while enhancing our marketability to the corporate, cargo and general aviation flying communities," said Dan Vicari, the airport's executive director.

But more often than not, the news isn't good for Gary. The Miller section of the city is about to lose its last pharmacy.

There was plenty of optimism a week ago when it was announced that the Meridian Hospitality Group LLC was approved by the Gary Redevelopment Commission to develop what is known as the East Lakefront area near Marquette Park. The plan includes "a nationally recognized, full-service, branded hotel" and a commitment from a hotel operator approved by the nationally recognized brand. Also part of the plan is the construction of 250 housing units.

Mention of a hotel in Gary brings back memories of the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Gary that barely got off the ground before closing. But there was a bit of good news of late that likely will be brought to fruition. Gov. Eric

Holcomb was in Gary recently to take part in the groundbreaking for HMD Trucking, which could result in the creation of 500 jobs. The question is how many of those jobs will go to Gary residents. But, heck, there is hope and that is what the city needs. ❖

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.

Where did they come from? Where did they go?

By MORTON MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS – We used to be able to say that on Census Day (April 1) in 2010 a certain number of persons with certain characteristics lived in a given place. Now, however, you must accommodate the idea that over a one- or five-year period there was an estimated number

of persons of given characteristics who lived in certain places. This is not really a new idea.

We're familiar with thinking that the August number of jobs describes a month. If we were honest with ourselves, there could be a different number for each week and, if it mattered, for each day. That's true for much of the data we use. In reality, the number of jobs is reported for the week in which the 12th of the month occurs.



Each month, the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) chooses approximately 295,000 residential addresses and sends questionnaires to the people who live there. That's about 3.5 million households annually from which one-year data are available for places with 65,000 or more persons. With 60 months (five years) worth of data for nearly 18 million households, the Census Bureau estimates how many people, with what characteristics, live in every town, city, county and state of the nation.

Those estimates are not a snapshot of a point in time; they are a blend of 12 months for each year, 60 months for five years. Hence, using the monthly data from 2011 through 2015, the Census Bureau serves up the 2015 ACS "vintage," not a sip from the juice of a single grape, but a taste from a cup filled the juice of 60 grapes.

The data that follow are from that 2015 ACS vintage for Indiana.

Of the 6.5 million estimated Hoosier residents

one year or older, 85% were living in the same dwelling (house, apartment, condo, trailer) as they did a year earlier. Another 9% changed residence, but moved only within their initial counties. That's staying put; only 6% were newcomers to their counties of residence.

Thus Indiana had 365,200 "strangers" moving into their counties. But 229,000 (63%) of these migrants were Hoosiers moving from other Indiana counties. They may have been seeking to live closer to work or further away, but with more lawn to mow. Actual inter-state migrants numbered only 136,200. Add to this 23,800 who moved from abroad, just 0.4% of our 6.5 million persons, many of whom may be students.

But where did Hoosiers go? Of those living here a year earlier, over 94% were still in the same county; another 3.5% changed counties, but stayed in Indiana. That left only 140,600 Hoosiers who moved out of state, a net loss of just 4,400 persons. (We have no data on Hoosiers who moved to foreign lands.)

The crisis of out-migration from Indiana may be over-blown. ❖

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

Republican Senate edge runs up against Trump

By **KYLE KONDIK**
Sabato's Crystal Ball

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Ever since Donald Trump won the presidency, 2018's race for the Senate seemed to pit two powerful, competing forces against one another: the Republicans' long and enticing list of Democratic targets, several of which are in some of Trump's best states, versus the long-standing tendency of the president's party to struggle to make gains in midterm elections.

That second point, on midterm struggles, is not only amplified by the president's poor approval ratings, but also by some history that is daunting for the president's party: It's uncommon for an incumbent in the presidential out party to lose reelection in a midterm.

My Crystal Ball colleague Geoffrey Skelley looked at all of the Senate midterm elections in the popular election era, which dates back a century and includes 26 midterms from 1914 to 2014. He found that Senate incumbents who did not belong to the president's party have a sterling reelection record: 91% (287 of 314) of non-presidential party incumbents won reelection in midterms.

If anything, out-party incumbents losing in a midterm is becoming less common: In six of the last eight midterms, including the last three (2006, 2010, and

2014), no such incumbent lost reelection.[1] The last three midterms were all conducted under presidents with weak popularity (George W. Bush in 2006, and Barack Obama in 2010 and 2014).

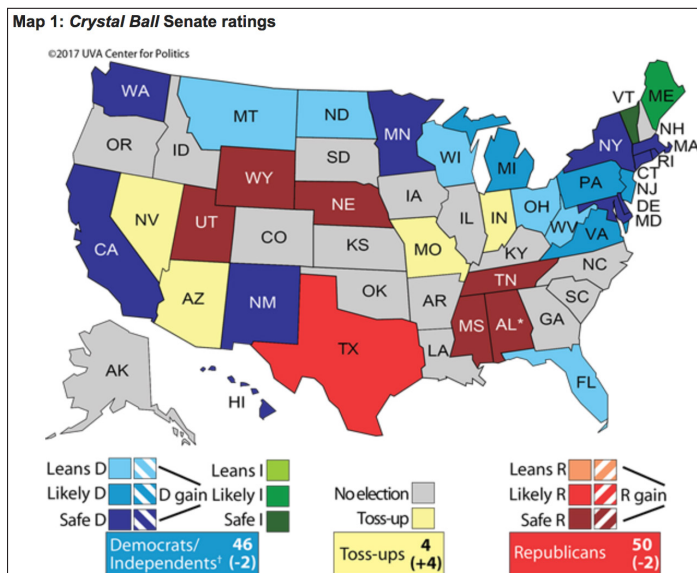
Over the last century, there's only one midterm where the reelection rate for non-presidential party senators was less than 80%: in 1934, during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's very successful first midterm, less than half of the GOP incumbents running for reelection (47%) won another term, and that is one of only three midterms since the Civil War where the president's party also netted seats in the House during a midterm. While we cannot

know what the precise circumstances of next year's election will be, Trump generating a national mandate akin to FDR in the midst of the New Deal seems almost unimaginable, though we must admit our imaginations have been tested in recent years.

As one might expect, the reelection rate of presidential party senators in a midterm year is a still robust but far weaker 75% (291 of 389).

All of the 33 Senate incumbents up for reelection next year are running for another term, at least at the moment. Of those 33, 25 are Democrats (including,

for the purposes of this argument, Democratic-caucusing independents Angus King of Maine and Bernie Sanders of Vermont) and eight are Republicans. Applying the historical averages to next year's Senate elections would result -- drumroll please -- in a net party change of...zero seats. If 91% of the Democrats/Democratic-caucusing independents are reelected, that would be 23 out of 25, and if 75% of the Republicans are reelected, that would be six of



eight, leading to no net change.

Without making any predictions, such a scenario is plausible: Democrats could lose two of the incumbents defending dark red states, in states such as Indiana, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, and West Virginia, but otherwise hold everything else, while Republicans could lose the only two seemingly vulnerable seats among their much smaller stable of incumbent-held states: Arizona and Nevada.

These historic averages make clear the presidential party midterm penalty, and make it easy to imagine what could've happened had the presidential election turned out differently last year. If Hillary Clinton was president, history and the Democratic overextension on the Senate map, not to mention her likely weak approval ratings owing to her negative pre-election favorability, would argue for significant GOP gains. Indeed, just going by the averages, we'd expect the Democrats to lose a half-dozen seats and the GOP to lose one or even zero incumbents. And the net Democratic losses probably would have been even bigger because it's easy to imagine one or more red state Democrats seeing the writing on the wall and retiring in advance of a tough midterm, giving the Republicans an easy open-seat pickup or two. Instead, the electoral burden of holding the White House now falls on the Republicans.

The map suggests big Republican gains are possible, but history argues against that possibility. One counterargument to the history is that the country may be more polarized now than in the late 20th century, and therefore Democratic incumbents in deep red states are more vulnerable than they were in previous decades. However, the country was deeply polarized by party in the pre-New Deal era, too, and we saw high midterm reelection rates for non-presidential party senators in that era as well.

For Democrats, there's no indication that the following incumbents are in any trouble: Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Tom Carper (D-DE), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Maria Cantwell (D-WA). The same goes for Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). Several of these safe senators could be presidential candidates in 2020, and Republicans may have some impetus to try to rough them up in 2018 before the presidential derby gets underway in earnest. As of now, Warren seems the likeliest to have a credible challenger.

The other independent, Sen. Angus King of Maine, also seems to be in decent shape, but his race could become harder if term-limited outgoing Gov. Paul LePage (R-ME) follows through on his occasional threats to challenge the first-term incumbent.

The remaining five Senate races all feature

Democratic incumbents running in states where Trump ran at least 20 points or more ahead of his national margin. These are hypothetically the best GOP targets, although it may be that by the time next fall rolls around, Republican odds may be better in states like Florida or Wisconsin than in one or more of these states. Still, these are all viable targets, though we see subtle differences among them.

Ask any Senate observer or campaign participant which Democratic senator is most vulnerable and you're likely to get one of two responses: either Sens. Joe Donnelly (D-IN) or Claire McCaskill (D-MO). The reason these two stand out is that arguably both should have lost in 2012, but they benefited from weak, gaffe-prone opponents. Republicans feel confident they will have better challengers this time: state Attorney General Josh Hawley (R) seems likely to enter in Missouri and will be the primary favorite, and either Reps. Luke Messer (R, IN-6) or Todd Rokita (R, IN-4) should advance to challenge Donnelly in Indiana.

No one will outwork Donnelly and McCaskill, but there may be a lowering ceiling on potential support for Democrats in both of these states: Democrats fielded strong Senate and gubernatorial candidates in each state last year, and the highest percentage any of them got was former Missouri Secretary of State Jason Kander (D), who won 46%, losing by less than three points to Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO). Then again, that was with Obama in the White House, and Trump being president helps Democrats all across the country, even in states that strongly backed him, just because of the usual out-party advantage in midterms. One potential new vulnerability for Donnelly is a recent Associated Press report that his family's company benefited from low-cost Mexican labor even as Donnelly has argued against outsourcing. Republicans have started calling Donnelly "Mexico Joe," and we can imagine the attack resonating. ❖

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

Jennifer Ruben, Washington Post: Vice President Pence is in an unusual position. He must try to remain a confidante of the president, but he cannot for his own sake — and, if he might have to assume the presidency, for the sake of the country — be seen as adopting President Trump’s noxious views on race, misleading the American people on any issue or generally appearing as a disingenuous sycophant. Unfortunately, he regularly fails to steer clear of the latter. At times his gushing over Trump is downright embarrassing. Pence’s unctuous comments tend to mystify listeners rather than convince them, as when he defended Trump’s attacks on his own attorney general. (“I know the Washington way is to talk behind people’s backs. But that’s not President Donald Trump’s approach. One of the great things about this president is you always know where you stand.”) Likewise when Pence on a foreign trip blatantly misstates Trump’s words, Pence comes off as dishonest and spineless: Responding to a question about criticism of Trump’s statement, Pence both selectively quoted Trump and then added his own condemnation of neo-Nazis and others. “[On Tuesday], President Trump clearly and unambiguously condemned the bigotry, violence and hatred which took place on the streets of Charlottesville,” Pence said. His speeches ladle on the praise to such an extent one wonders if he’s serious (and has horrendous political judgment) or is so insecure that he feels it necessary to genuflect before the delusional leader for fear of losing favor. Aside from making himself look less credible and impressive, Pence’s excessive praise will come back to haunt him, and undermine his stature, if he is forced to take over for the president before 2020 or pursues the presidency on his own down the road. He surely cannot align himself ever again with Trump’s lies (e.g., the false cover story about the reasons for firing FBI director James B. Comey), nor does he want to be seen as making excuses for Trump’s racist, white supremacist sympathies. For his sake and the sake of the country he’d do well to be more restrained, fawn less. ❖



Dave Bangert, Lafayette Courier & Journal: As Sen. Joe Donnelly worked the room of Democratic-friendly faces Wednesday morning at The Downtowner, he spotted a blown-up picture on the restaurant wall of a 1967 Chevy Nova. “My first car,” Donnelly said. “Mine wasn’t as nice as that one, though.” Donnelly, a Democrat from Granger in northern Indiana, spent a second or two reminiscing about what it took to keep the Nova — with its leaky gas tank and roughed-up tires — rolling. “It took work,” Donnelly said. “It took a lot of work.” It’s not the perfect analogy, maybe, but it fit in with Donnelly’s Lafayette stop on a statewide tour to announce his re-election plans for 2018. In a race that promises to be rugged and anything but guaranteed — the Cook Political Report just moved the seat from “leans Democrat” to “toss up” — the first-term senator repeated

similar themes as he visited tables: It’s going to be a lot of work. Wednesday, he talked about hopes for jobs, the fight against opioid addiction and promises to preserve health care. (Absent was the mariachi band the National Republican Senatorial Committee had waiting for him Monday in Anderson, in a jab at Donnelly being called out for having investments in a family business with production in Mexico. It’s going to be that kind of campaign, don’t you think?) Earlier in the week, Donnelly ruffled some GOP feathers by claiming, “Trump supporters were originally Joe Donnelly supporters and still are.” (Kyle Hupfer, Indiana Republican Party chairman, had this reaction: “That’s about as far from the truth as Democrats claiming if we liked our doctors, we could keep our doctors.”) Rokita told crowds on his campaign announcement tour a week ago that Donnelly was an obstructionist, prone to say one thing while in Indiana before voting a party line in Washington, D.C. “They know that’s not true,” Donnelly said. “I mean, it’s something I presume they have to say for their campaign. But they know a lot better than that.” ❖

Nate Silver, FiveThirtyEight: What if upon taking office in January, President Trump had carefully balanced the insurgent influence of Steve Bannon, his chief strategist (now gone), with the establishment-friendly approach of Reince Priebus, his chief of staff (now gone) — and governed as a kinder, gentler, more media-savvy populist? It wasn’t so long ago that such an outcome seemed possible. In January, The Atlantic’s David Frum envisioned a scenario in which Trump passed a truly populist program of “big tax cuts, big spending, and big deficits,” along with “restrictive immigration policies.” Such an agenda would prove fairly popular, Frum imagined, leading to Trump’s easy reelection in 2020. Trump would continue to push everyone’s boundaries but would also pick his battles somewhat carefully; there might be a border wall, for instance, but there would be no mass deportations of illegal immigrants. Instead, almost the exact opposite has occurred. Trump has maintained most of populism’s rough edges — including its tendency to inflame racial resentment, as was evidenced by his comments on the Charlottesville white supremacist rally earlier this week. But he’s adopted few of the policies that actually make populism popular. This isn’t Bannon’s fault — it’s Trump’s. Take the various iterations of the Republican health care bill, which Bannon was reportedly lukewarm about. It proposed massive cuts to Medicaid spending and would greatly have reduced subsidies for older, poorer Americans — exactly the people who helped propel Trump to victory in November. And it would have done all of this partly to finance tax cuts that primarily benefited the wealthy. It was one of the least populist bills that one can imagine. And it cost Trump politically; his approval rating fell significantly while the bill was first being debated in March and then again after it finally failed to pass the Senate last month. ❖

Suit filed to end Indiana voter cull

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana NAACP and League of Women Voters want to stop the secretary of state from purging people from voter rolls in what the groups call “flagrant violations of federal law.” In a lawsuit filed Wednesday in federal court, the groups say the state’s new way to cross-check names on voter rolls violates federal law and is discriminatory (IndyStar). “No Hoosier should be silenced on Election Day,” said Barbara Bolling-Williams, president of the Indiana State Conference of the NAACP. “Yet, under this new law, that will happen.” At issue in the latest federal lawsuit filed against Secretary of State Connie Lawson is the new “Interstate Voter Registration Cross-check” system that allows election officials to immediately remove voters identified as having registered to vote in another state. The process finds a match based on first name, last name and date of birth. The law, introduced as SB 442, went into effect in July. Gov. Eric Holcomb signed the measure in April.



Buncich jury deliberations begin

HAMMOND — Jurors deliberated for four hours Wednesday in the public corruption trial of Lake County Sheriff John Buncich before going home (Dolan, NWI Times). The eight-man, four-woman jury retired to their jury room about 5:20 p.m. after hearing two hours of testimony from the final witnesses and three hours of closing arguments by Assistant U.S. Attorney Philip Benson and the defense team of Bryan Truitt and Larry Rogers. The jury will resume deliberations at 9 a.m. Thursday. Buncich was in financial difficulty between 2003 and 2008 when he was out of office and was forced to spend his retirement nest egg of more than \$500,000

and borrow heavily from friends and former employees to make ends meet. Benson reminded jurors they heard Buncich on an FBI surveillance audio tape complain he had been forced to loan \$85,000 to his re-election campaign and he wanted that money back in his personal bank account before he left office.

Trump to issue transgender order

WASHINGTON — The White House is expected to send guidance to the Pentagon in coming days on how to implement a new administration ban on transgender people in the military, issuing a policy that will allow Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to consider a service member’s ability to deploy in deciding whether to kick them out of the military (Wall Street Journal). The White House memo also directs the Pentagon to deny admittance to transgender individuals.

McConnell, Trump in regular contact

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell says that he and President Trump are in regular contact and are working together on their shared agenda, according to a statement he released Wednesday afternoon (CBS News). “[W]e are committed to advancing our shared agenda together and anyone who suggests otherwise is clearly not part of the conversation,” McConnell said. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders released a similar statement Wednesday evening saying “remain united on many shared priorities .”

Trump threatens shutdown over wall

WASHINGTON — President Trump has widened an extraordinary rift with his own party, as he threat-

ened a government shutdown over his long-promised border wall and attacked key lawmakers whose votes he needs heading into a crucial legislative period (Washington Post). In a challenge to Republicans late Tuesday, Mr. Trump said, “If we have to close down our government, we’re building that wall,” Mr. Trump said.

Pence joins war on news media

PHOENIX — Vice President Mike Pence, once an outspoken advocate for press freedom, has become one of the rare senior Republicans to join President Donald Trump’s full-throated war on the press (Politico). Pence thrust a finger at the media pen Tuesday night, coaxing a Phoenix crowd to rain boos on the press, which Pence accused of “ignoring and distorting the facts.” Pence then yielded the stage to Trump — whose leadership, he said, “inspires me every single day” — after which the president spent nearly an hour and a half veering off script in a series of rollicking attacks. Most were aimed at the press. “These are really, really dishonest people, and they’re bad people,” Trump said. “And I really think they don’t like our country. I really believe that. These are sick people.”

Carson says statues should come down

INDIANAPOLIS — Rep. Andre Carson voiced his opinion on the debate over Confederate monuments in the United States (WTHR-TV). Carson (D-Indiana) told Eyewitness News Wednesday he believes all of the statues should be taken down. “I think so. I mean, you can’t go to Germany - and I’ve been to Germany three times - and see a statue of Hitler. I think there should be a context and that’s where museums come into play, or our civil rights, or our battlefields come into play, but to have those things posted, absolutely not. They should have been taken down years ago,” Carson said.