

## HPI Analysis: Rokita's Senate edge

While no one has GOP race locked up, Rokita is closer than many might think

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – Obviously, Congressman Todd Rokita has not locked up the Republican nomination for Senate yet, but he is closer than most think. It is no surprise that Rokita has a significant early lead. He has twice run and won statewide for secretary of state, as well as serving as a congressman. Rokita's district, like that of his fellow Wabash College graduate, Congressman Luke Messer, includes



important parts of the Indianapolis metro area (the heavily Republican donut). In a statewide Republican primary election, the Indianapolis metro area dominates.

As media fragments, the difficulty of establishing name identification exponentially increases. The fact that Rokita and Messer have purchased advertising and



U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita brandishing his "defeat the elite" campaign at the Statehouse last summer. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

received publicity in the Indianapolis market over multiple years is critical. Beyond that, in addition to Rokita's secretary of state advertising and statewide travels, he

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## Tax reform, Reagan style

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – Step aboard Howey's Way Back Machine to 1985 and 1986, when it was morning in America and President Ronald Reagan wielded moral authority and an ability for cutting deals to achieve great outcomes.



The Way Back Machine reveals that the Tax Reform Act of 1986, which simplified the income tax code, broadened the tax base and eliminated many tax shelters, was sponsored by Democrats Richard Gephardt in the House and Bill Bradley in the Senate. It passed the House on a voice vote and in the Senate 97-3. The joint conference committee report passed the House



**“We will use a healthy dialogue with the people of Indiana to form the basis for proposals we will be advancing during the 2018 General Assembly and beyond.”**

*- House Minority Leader  
Terry Goodin, elected to the post on Monday to succeed Rep. Scott Pelath*



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292-136 and the Senate 74-23.

So one of President Reagan's greatest achievements was a truly bipartisan effort that took three years to achieve, and lasted over three decades.

**Now I'm going** to turn off the Way Back Machine and look at the freak-and-creep show on Capitol Hill today. Republicans are trying to ram through tax reform in the most partisan fashion, in just a matter of weeks because President Trump and congressional Republicans really, really need a victory. Having abjectly failed on another set of partisan blunders, the repeal and replacement of Obamacare, their donor base is angry and threatening to stop writing campaign checks. So this is really the Republican Campaign Donor Tax Reform Act.

They are trying to woo three Senate Democrats, including Indiana's Joe Donnelly, after not attracting a single Democrat in the House. But there's a big poison pill for Donnelly, when the Senate version includes repealing the Obamacare individual mandate, a critical leg in the Affordable Care Act stool that could end coverage for 13 million Americans. "I've said from the beginning that I'm willing to partner with Republicans and Democrats as well as the administration on tax reform," Donnelly said. "This should not include making health care more expensive or taking it away from millions of Americans."

**So intent is** President Trump to get this win that he's willing to make a deal with the devil, or in this case Republican Alabama Senate nominee Roy Moore, who has been accused by nine women (including one who was age 14 at the time), of sexual harassment and/or assault. "He totally denies it," Trump said in justifying Moore's election and presumed subsequent vote on tax reform. Or as White House counselor Kellyanne Conway adds, "I'm telling you that we

want the votes in the Senate to get this tax bill through."

As of today, U.S. Sen. John McCain is undecided, citing "a lot of things" and Sens. Ron Johnson and Bob Corker aren't on board with leaders expressing "high concerns" about both (Axios).

If the political machinations aren't troubling enough, let's look at the actual legislation. It does some good things, like cutting the corporate tax rate from 35 to 20 percent. It allows U.S. companies to bring back off-shore profits tax free, or as Douglas Holtz-Eakin, who ran the Congressional Budget Office during the George W. Bush presidency, puts it, "That levels the tax playing field."



But there are problems, with economist Steve Rattner observing, "It helps the rich more than anyone else; it increases the debt and kicks a lot of people off of Obamacare." He notes that "50 percent of the benefits go to the top 5 percent. This administration is running around calling it a middle class tax cut." But the middle class cuts get phased out after a few years. Some 13 million would lose health coverage according to the CBO.

**Economist Jeffrey Sachs** of Columbia University adds, "What will happen is we will have bulging budget deficits, we will have a fiscal crisis, we will have a downturn in the housing market because they are cutting corporate taxes in part by raising the property taxes. So the Republicans want us to forget the fact that the starting point of all of this is \$1.5 trillion of deficits accumulated over the

coming decade." The CBO puts the deficit at \$1.4 trillion. Rattner notes that the Senate bill brings 99% of debt to gross domestic product, or "debt roughly equal to the size of our economy, the first time we've been in this position since World War II."

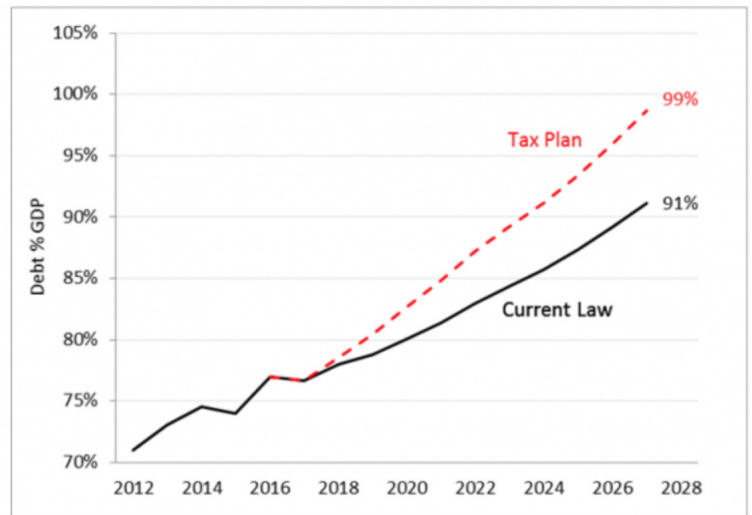
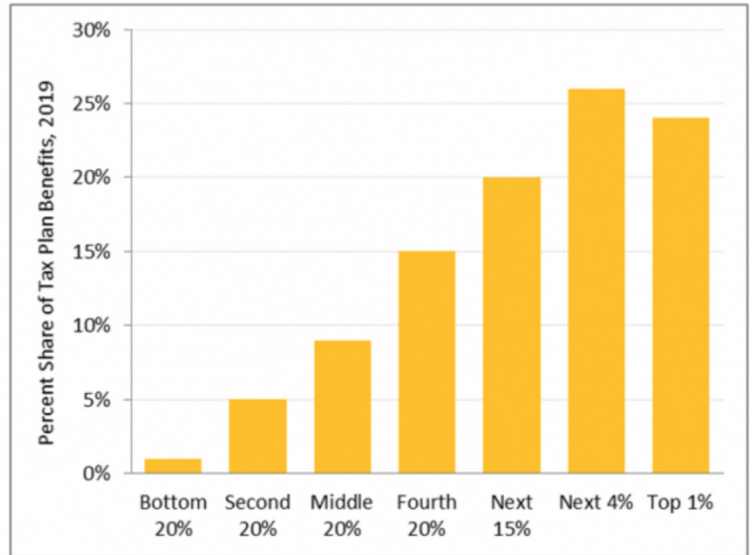
**White House economic** adviser Gary Cohn says that the corporate tax cuts will fuel the economy and cut deficits. But at a meeting of CEOs hosted by the Wall Street Journal, Cohn asked how many planned to increase their capital expenditures. CNBC reported: "Only a smattering raised their hands. 'Why aren't the other hands up?' an incredulous Cohn asked. Perhaps it's because a National Bureau of Economic Research study published in 2014 found little evidence that corporate tax cuts boost economic activity."

So Republicans are about to blow out the deficits and debt while completely ignoring the "red menace" as Purdue President Mitch Daniels called it in a 2011 speech to CPAC. I asked Daniels about the growing "red menace," last week and he quipped that "the can keeps getting bigger and the road keeps getting shorter."

I've turned the Way Back Machine back on, and we hear U.S. Reps. Todd Rokita and Luke Messer, both running for the Senate, talk about the evils of budget deficits. In 2012, Messer told WTHR-TV, "Today, the federal government is five times as big as it was 30 years ago, and the federal national debt has ballooned – growing from \$1.2 trillion in 1983 to almost \$16 trillion today. We have to do better." Rokita said in 2011, "The debt hole is too great now that you can't just grow your way out."

**Both voted for the House version**, so the deficit hawks no longer scream, they coo. Anything for a partisan victory, because President Trump needs one, even if our kids and grandchildren get struck with the credit card bill.

Reagan's voice echoes on the Way Back as he signed the 1986 act, saying, "We must also salute those courageous leaders in the Congress who've made this day



Source: Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget

possible," citing Democrats and Republicans alike, "who pioneered with their own versions of tax reform."

Yes, bipartisan reform. What a concept. ❖

## Senate race, from page 1

was raised in Munster, Ind. His nomination for that post, a tough, multi-candidate convention battle against strong candidates, was anchored by Lake County.

Rokita does not represent Lake in Congress, but his district borders the Region and includes the northwest Indianapolis donut, Lafayette, much of the Kokomo area, and Logansport. Messer's district includes the eastern Indy donut, Columbus, Richmond and Muncie. Both, in other words, start out with excellent geographical bases and some Indianapolis region name identification.

Messer, theoretically, more than offsets Rokita's Lake County ties with his wife Jennifer's ties as the Fishers

city attorney. Fishers is the fastest growing part of GOP powerhouse Hamilton County. It would have been a potentially huge advantage had she not continued to receive \$200,000/year-plus salary after moving to Washington, D.C. Whether that totally sinks Messer is unclear, but her employment is no longer an advantage, to say the least. Rokita supporters not only drew first blood, they may have hit the jugular vein.

**Messer also lost two** races for Congress before winning his current seat. He was defeated by Mike Pence in the 2nd CD Republican congressional primary in 2000 in a race that included State Rep. Jeff Linder. Messer also narrowly lost in a primary against incumbent Congressman Dan Burton in 2010. The 2000 race was a long time ago, but some voters have long memories, both for name ID

and rivalries. The year 2010 is more recent and was more intense, which is both good and bad politically.

Perhaps Congressman Messer's greatest skill is people-networking and personal relations. This likely has helped him overcome most lingering hostility from previous defeats. His tenure as executive director of the Indiana Republican Party has certainly proven that, for the most part, he had good relations with party leaders across the state.

**Messer's biggest asset** is that the Republican "establishment" – party chairmen, many top elected officials and major donors – support him. Given the fact that Rokita has been a statewide elected official and congressman for some time, the depth of Messer's support should at least cause some reflection. However, having the support of the "establishment" (a malleable term at best) is not what it once was. In fact, it can be a millstone around one's neck.

Congressman Messer's personal skills also propelled him to a House Republican leadership position as conference chairman. Vice President Pence, who Messer succeeded in Congress, also held the post. Pence won the position after challenging John Boehner for speaker. Messer won it by being a team player, which Pence became after winning the position. The conference chairman must, by definition, be an inside team player, not an outspoken conservative critic of the majority of the conference that elected him to peacefully coordinate them.

**The challenge for** Congressman Messer is simple: Being a consummate "insider-style" politician means that, generally, you are a more "likable" person. You probably pick your words more carefully, take fewer risks, and don't exaggerate as much for effect. Platitudes come more smoothly because they cater to the majoritarian viewpoint and don't earn enemies. Those are not typically the skills needed to defeat a popular, canny incumbent like Sen. Joe

Donnelly.

Rokita was elected by his 2010 classmates to the internally important steering committee, but is not as popular among his colleagues as Messer. He has been more demanding on staff, possibly exaggerated but obviously somewhat true. It is also obvious that he is not as popular among Republican state committee members since he was passed over for statewide nominations even though he probably had more statewide voter support because he was better known. The relevant point is that he has been previously snubbed by the establishment.

Former state representative Mike Braun's entry in



Candidate	Receipts	Disbursements	Cash on hand
Luke Messer	\$2,019,364	\$658,114	\$2,411,648
Todd Rokita	\$1,796,237	\$743,070	\$2,368,731
Mike Braun	\$1,057,265	\$26,370	\$1,030,894
Todd Young	\$350,778	\$350,193	\$65,977
Terry Henderson	\$272,090	\$222,814	\$100,116
Andrew Takami	\$143,116	\$68,546	\$74,570
Mark Hurt	\$100,484	\$97,418	\$3,067

the Senate race muddied the waters somewhat. He has already spent a lot of money and plans to spend lots more. In the Fort Wayne market, he has been seemingly a nightly presence. The rather traditional ad with a non-memorable message is not penetrating, though presumably can be built upon. It is important, to the degree people notice, that Braun will be seen as a businessman.

Among those who follow politics, the initial attack lines of the Rokita and Messer supporters on each other was predictable. While nasty primaries are uncomfortable, nothing revealed wasn't known by Donnelly, so better to get it out early. Braun, who is attacking while claiming to dislike attacks – trashing the congressmen as ambitious cogs in the Washington cesspool – is still an unknown variable.

With the recent financial disclosure reports showing that Braun is worth upwards of \$60 million, his stated \$2-million-dollar campaign could rise considerably. My guess is that it would take at least \$6 million in the primary for him to pull near Rokita and Messer, assuming that they don't just sit on their cash. Both have demonstrated some complacency in letting Braun pound the airwaves as they appear mired in Washington, throwing mud at each other.

However, Braun is completely untested. The statewide and national media will become focused on this race, especially if the Democrats win in Alabama. They are not the same as the Jasper, Indiana, media. Everything Braun has ever done, including in the state legislature and in business, is fair game. It will not be "fair" and Braun has no anchor of familiarity.

For example, the attacks on Sen. Donnelly's ties to his family's company that used Mexican labor will be pounded over and over. Braun owns a nationwide vehicle parts supply company, a true Hoosier success story. He has previously stated that, while his emphasis was on American companies, his firm had to accommodate the fact that not all vehicles sold (and certainly not parts) are American-made. Off the top of my head, I can think of at least six powerful ads featuring foreign parts sold by his firm. The simplest would be Donnelly standing in front of one of Braun's stores, surrounded by boxes of parts made in Japan and Mexico.

I know how skilled Joe Donnelly is, and I've been blistered by the manufactured exaggerations of the Democrat National Committee personally. This weakness is as strong as the Jennifer Messer's continuing to take a huge salary after moving to Washington. We have no idea what else is to be discovered about Braun. It is important to remember, however, that no person is perfect and all of us have multiple things that can be exaggerated in attack ads.

Rokita has the initial lead and other advantages so, unless the others act soon, he could have the nomination locked by the filing deadline. But in today's extra volatile political environment things can rapidly change. Here are some things to watch:

- Who makes a big mistake or is stunned by a revelation?
- Will Rex Early and other leaders from President Trump's organization back Todd Rokita, who also has a style more like the president's. Will Steve Bannon bring

Polls

U.S. Senate election in Indiana, Republican primary							[hide]
Poll	Todd Rokita	Luke Messer	Others	Undecided	Margin of Error	Sample Size	
GS Strategy Group for Rokita July 16-18, 2017	28%	20%	0%	51%	+/-4.4	500	
GS Strategy Group for Rokita July 16-18, 2017	21%	14%	11%	55%	+/-4.4	500	

U.S. Senate election in Indiana, Republican primary									[hide]
Poll	Todd Rokita	Luke Messer	Curtis Hill	Mike Braun	Terry Henderson	Mark Hurt	Andrew Takami	Undecided	Sample Size
OnMedia for Messer July 10-12, 2017	23%	23%	4%	2%	1%	1%	1%	45%	400

his allies behind Rokita, or decide that "outsider" Braun is more than a spoiler candidate?

■ If Braun takes 10-15%, which candidate will he take it from? His style thus far is milder toned, meaning his votes could come from Messer as an alternative to Rokita. On the other hand, if he goes almost solely after Trump voters, he is likely to damage Rokita. Unless Braun surprises, his relevance will be from whom he takes votes.

■ Will Messer move from acting like an incum-



bent?

It is less than six months until primary voting day. This is the fundamental fact: The issue positions of Rokita and Messer are virtually identical, and Braun has failed thus far to articulate any fundamental actual issue difference. In other words, this primary is likely to be about style and not substance. That tends to make races more personal and nastier.

It will be a fascinating race to watch. For Republican voters like me, who have not decided, it will be interesting in many ways. For Sen. Joe Donnelly, it will be nearly pure joy.

Until after the primary. ❖

**Souder is a former Republican congressman and a regular HPI columnist.**

# House Democrats turn to Rep. Goodin

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – At a time when Indiana Democrats have receded from most rural areas of the state, as well as from regions that are being ravaged by a heroin/opioid epidemic, the House caucus turned to State Rep. Terry Goodin of Austin to lead them into the two most critical election cycles they've faced in modern times.



Goodin edged out State Rep. Phil GiaQuinta of Fort Wayne 15-14 when the caucus met eight days after State Rep. Scott Pelath announced he would step away

from the leadership post. Pelath did not vote in the secret ballot, preferring not to influence who the next leader would be.

Facing a sustained super minority status since 2013, the 30-member House Democrats must begin to make inroads during the 2018 mid-terms and the 2020 election heading into the 2021 redistricting. A potential anti-Trump wave is a possibility in 2018, with Pelath telling HPI last week that Democrats need to field candidates in as many districts as possible and not rely on targeting districts, noting that in 2012 Supt. Glenda Ritz won 74 House districts and Sen. Joe Donnelly carried half of them that same cycle. Asked about a mid-term strategy, Goodin told the NWI Times, "If I told you all what it was today it wouldn't be considered a strategy."

Goodin signaled on Monday that he will joint Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane in the pursuit of redistricting reform. Lanane favors an independent commission.

After the caucus, Goodin said, "I pledge to use this post to encourage a lively debate on the issues that we feel are of greatest concern to the people who live and work in Indiana. We want all Hoosiers to feel like they have a voice and will be heard in the halls of state government.

"To my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, I want you to know that we will work with you when the cause is right, and respectfully disagree with you when we feel there is room for improvement in what you are proposing," he continued. "There is a place to get along, even when we have different points of view."

House Speaker Brian Bosma reacted to Goodin's election, saying, "Unlike Washington, D.C., here in Indiana, the vast majority of successful legislation passes the General Assembly with bipartisan authorship, sponsorship

and support. Hoosier legislators have a long track record of reaching across the aisle to find common ground on many issues and we look forward to continuing that work with the new minority leader, State Rep. Terry Goodin, as we head into another important legislative session."

Goodin was first elected to the House in 2000. He represents the citizens of HD66 centered in Austin, the epicenter of the 2015 HIV/heroin epidemic. He had urged then-Gov. Mike Pence to intervene and a needle exchange program was established. That year, Goodin proposed legislation that would drug-test welfare recipients, though that provision did not advance.

**Goodin is one of the** more conservative Democrats in the House, voting in 2011 for a same-sex marriage ban. When the issue resurfaced with HJR-3 that would have placed the issue on the ballot as a constitutional amendment, Goodin did not cast a vote.

"We will use a healthy dialogue with the people of Indiana to form the basis for the proposals we will be advancing during the 2018 session of the General Assembly and beyond," Goodin said. "We look forward to the challenges to come with great excitement and expectation."

Goodin serves as superintendent of Crothersville Community Schools and raises beef cattle on the family farm. Terry and his wife Darcie have three children, a daughter, Grace; and two sons, Berley and Brown.

He is a member of the Indiana Farm Bureau, the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, the National Association of Basketball Coaches and the National Rifle Association. He is also a member of the F. & A. M. Scott Lodge #120, the Indiana Beef Cattle Association, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, and the Austin Church of God.

Goodin is a graduate of Austin HS, earned his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Eastern Kentucky University, and received his Doctor of Education degree from Indiana University.

**Senate President** Pro Tem David Long reacted, saying, "I have known Dr. Goodin for a number of years and have great respect for his work ethic and abilities. I look forward to working with him and his caucus in the upcoming legislative session as we seek to continue to build upon our strong record of creating opportunities and successes for all Hoosier citizens."

Lanane said, "Rep. Goodin is a strong leader and veteran in the House. His experience and knowledge will make him a great leader and I look forward to working with him to improve the middle class and create a stronger Indiana." ❖



**House Minority Leader Terry Goodin with then-Gov. Mike Pence during the HIV/heroin epidemic in Scott County in 2015.**

# Alabama Senate race casting shadow over Indiana politics

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – The Alabama U.S. Senate race is casting a big shadow over Indiana, sometimes called the “middle finger of the South.” Republican nominee Roy Moore has been accused by at least nine women of either sexually assaulting or harassing them, and yet has earned the support of President Trump and the Alabama GOP.

The race has seeped into the Republican Indiana Senate race, with the three main candidates – U.S. Reps. Todd Rokita and Luke Messer, and former legislator Mike Braun – all saying Moore should step aside. Messer said, “That would be the best thing for the state of Alabama and our country.”

Rokita has not issued a statement denouncing Moore, with Roll Call reporting that he wouldn’t comment on Moore or his message. “That’s all I have to say,” Rokita told Roll Call. “I don’t know either of those gentlemen, so I can’t really comment on it.”

In addition to the three Senate candidates, U.S. Sen. Todd Young has also called on Moore to step aside, saying, “After giving Roy Moore ample time to unequivocally deny the disturbing allegations against him, those allegations remain far more persuasive than the denials. Roy Moore should immediately drop out of the race. The appearance of grossly reprehensible behavior disqualifies him from service in the United States Senate. If he does not step aside, we need to act to protect the integrity of the Senate.” Vice President Mike Pence’s Great America Committee PAC began making contributions to three gubernatorial and U.S. Senate candidates last week, but not to Moore.

**Rokita’s campaign** put out a memo identifying its own “defeat the elite” slogan with Moore’s battle with establishment Republicans, fueled by Trump ally and former adviser Steve Bannon. The memo reads: “The outsider candidate in Alabama tapped into the same anti-

elite message that elevated President Trump in the 2016 Republican primary. Looking ahead to 2018, the dynamic is going to be alive and well among Indiana’s primary electorate too.”

Rokita and Braun are reportedly trying to woo Bannon’s support. This comes in contrast with congressional Republican leaders from Speaker Paul Ryan and Sen. Mitch McConnell, who have said they not only want him to resign the nomination, but if he wins, won’t allow him to be seated.

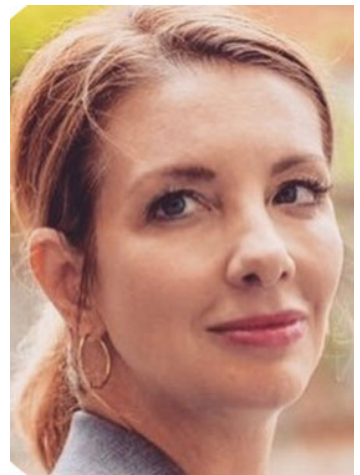
**And Moore could win.** The Real Clear Politics polling composite has Democrat Doug Jones leading 46.8 to 46%. While Fox News had Moore up 8% Nov. 13-15, a WBRC-TV/Strategy Research Poll conducted on Nov. 20 had Moore leading 47-45%.

President Trump has tweeted support for Moore by bashing Jones, on Monday the White House said he would not travel to Alabama to campaign with the Republican. Over the weekend, Trump said on Twitter that electing Jones “would be a disaster,” adding, “The last thing we need in Alabama and the U.S. Senate is a Schumer/Pelosi puppet who is WEAK on Crime, WEAK on the Border, Bad for our Military and our great Vets, Bad for our 2nd Amendment, AND WANTS TO RAISES TAXES TO THE SKY.”

Prior to Thanksgiving, Trump said before departing for Mar-A-Lago, “We don’t need a liberal person in there,



Senate race, with the three main candidates – U.S. Reps. Todd Rokita and Luke Messer, and former legislator Mike Braun – all saying Moore should step aside. Messer said, “That would be the best thing for the state of Alabama and



Judge Roy Moore with Steve Bannon (left photo) and Shannon Watts of Moms Demand Action (right).

a Democrat Jones – I’ve looked at his record,” Trump said. “It’s terrible on crime. It’s terrible on the border. It’s terrible on the military.”

**The media asked him** about whether this was a “pivotal moment in sexual assault” on American women, with a PBS/NPR/Marist Poll showing that 35% have been sexually harassed in the workplace. President Trump responded, “Women are very special. I think it’s a very special time, a lot of things are coming out, and I think that’s good for our society and I think it’s very very good for women, and I’m very happy these things are coming out.”

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway adds,

"I'm telling you that we want the votes in the Senate to get this tax bill through."

The Republican optics against women have been breathtaking this past week. In addition to the Trump and Conway comments, Moore campaign spokesman Dean Young said, "We believe Judge Moore. We don't believe these women. It's just that simple. And y'all can keep trotting them out if you want to."

**If you want to keep tabs** on someone prepared to "trot 'em out," watch Shannon Watts of Zionsville. She created the Moms Demand Action group seeking gun law reform which has attracted a million members. Factor that in with the huge female march in Washington a day after President Trump was inaugurated, and you get more than a whiff of a movement assembling. Watts been active on Twitter, noting this week, "I am thankful for badass women who refuse to go backwards. Especially thankful for women who are running for office and women who are helping other women run." Or this: "Bye everyone!!! Bye! You've been an especially ineffective and craptastic Congress! We won't miss you or your misogyny and harassment. Bye!"

The Washington Post notes that during the 1991 Clarence Thomas Supreme Court confirmation hearings in Congress, there were only two female senators. In 1992, four were elected, along with a record 24 elected to the House. "It stands to reason that this could lead to bigger backlash at the polls in 2018 and 2020 than we saw during what's known as the Year of the Woman," the Post report-

ed.

Scott Jennings, a Republican strategist close to McConnell, told Axios, "Either we're saddled with a Democrat in a seat that ought to be Republican, ... or we're saddled with a brand anvil that's going to drag down the president, drag down the Senate, drag down the party and plunge the Senate into immediate turmoil when he gets there." And U.S. Sen. Jeff Flake said in a hot mic moment, "If we become the party of Roy Moore and Donald Trump, we are toast."

A key question is whether Hoosier Republicans will want eggs and bacon with their toast.

### U.S. Senate

#### Donnelly comments on Franken

There should be an investigation into the sexual misconduct allegations and "let the chips fall where they may", said Sen. Joe Donnelly, about his Democrat colleague, Sen. Al Franken, of Minnesota, accused of groping women both before and after he was elected to the Senate (Davis, WIBC). "I think the conduct is shameful, of the people who have been involved. I think it's an awful thing," said Donnelly... "I believe Sen. McConnell called for an ethics committee for Sen. Franken, and I support that 100 percent. And let the chips fall where they may on those situations." Donnelly said he believes the situations

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that have come out are unfair to the women involved. He promised he would look at all the evidence. When asked about the possibility of having to expel Roy Moore, should he be elected to the Senate, Donnelly made the same promise.

### **Messer introduces sex harassment bill**

U.S. Rep. Luke Messer (R-IN) says he will introduce legislation to prevent taxpayer dollars from being used to settle sexual harassment claims with members of Congress and to protect the victims of that harassment (Fischer, WRTV). Messer's announcement comes amid a wave of public scrutiny over the alleged actions of high-profile men like Rep. John Conyers (D-Michigan) and former Alabama Supreme Court justice and current Republican senate nominee Roy Moore. It also follows a report by the Associated Press earlier this month that the federal government has paid out more than \$17 million in taxpayer money over the past 20 years to resolve claims of sexual harassment, overtime pay disputes and other workplace violations filed by employees of Congress. Messer, who was elected for his third term in 2016, said in a statement that his bill would "ensure victims aren't silenced by non-disclosure agreements."

### **Braun wealthiest candidate**

Braun is by far the wealthiest of six Senate hopefuls in next year's election, according to the candidates' financial disclosure reports (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Braun's estimated average net worth is nearly \$66 million. The combined net worth of the other five candidates, including Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly, is about \$1.8 million, dragged down in large part by mortgage liabilities on several houses. Braun is founder and chief executive officer of Meyer Distributing and owner of a related trucking and warehousing company, Meyer Logistics. His net worth was exceeded by that of only four senators in 2015, according to rankings compiled by the nonpartisan Center for Responsive Politics and based on financial disclosure reports required by Congress. Braun's report is for calendar year 2016. "I started my business over 35 years ago in my hometown with fewer than a dozen employees. As the result of hard work and God's blessing, my company expanded nationwide and helped thousands of families put food on their tables," Braun said in an email to The Journal Gazette. "The American people need more businessmen and fewer career politicians serving them in Washington."

### **Madison County chair backs Rokita**

The chairman of the Madison County Republican Party has endorsed Todd Rokita for the party's nomination to oppose incumbent Democrat Joe Donnelly (de la Bastide, Anderson Herald Bulletin). Russ Willis announced Wednesday that he is endorsing Rokita for the nomination. Rokita, Luke Messer, Mike Braun and Mark Hurt are all de-

clared candidates for the May primary election. "I believe Rokita is the best candidate," Willis said. "He has won two statewide races and did an excellent job as secretary of state."

### **Braun vows to speak for change**

Southern Indiana businessman Mike Braun said he is seeking the Republican Party nomination to oppose incumbent Democratic Senator Joe Donnelly in 2018 to bring change (de la Bastide, Anderson Herald-Bulletin). Braun, 53, the owner of a Jasper company, has served in the Indiana House since 2014 and has already signed a pledge to serve only two terms in the U.S. Senate. During a campaign stop in Anderson on Thursday, Braun met with about 40 people at a Madison County Tea Party meeting. Braun said he is running because career politicians are just as bad as the federal government when it comes to over-regulation of small businesses.

### **Donnelly speaks about opioid crisis**

Sen. Donnelly, already well into his campaign for 2018 reelection, made his second stop in Kokomo in recent months Monday, speaking to a crowd of local officials and business leaders about topics ranging from synthetic drugs to the placement of North Korea on America's terrorism blacklist (Myers, Kokomo Tribune). Donnelly, the featured speaker at the Kokomo Chamber of Commerce's Business Matters Luncheon at Bel Air Events, hit on those issues, most notably the drug epidemic currently ravaging Howard County, during a 20-minute speech that followed a brief award presentation.

## **Congress**

### **6th CD: Lamb up on radio**

Muncie businessman and entrepreneur Jonathan Lamb launched a Thanksgiving-related radio broadcast ad this week in which he emphasizes family, community and shared values. The spot, titled "Gratitude," is airing on radio stations based in Indianapolis, Louisville and eastern Indiana. Conservative, Hoosier, outsider Jonathan Lamb is an entrepreneur and author on economics. He is the owner of a business consulting firm, and also owns and runs an agriculture technology company with a U.S. patent-pending technology for power grid storage and management.

### **9th CD: Canan begins airing TV ads**

Democrat Dan Canan became the first 9th CD candidate in this nationally targeted race to begin airing video ads. The campaign describes it as a "five figure social media buy."

"Without saying a word, people tell me they've never had someone to fight for them. So I do. That's why I became a lawyer; to be the voice for the people who do right every day, work their whole lives and still get screwed

– by a health insurance company, by bureaucracy that doesn't care, by a government that doesn't listen," Canan says in the ad. "I fight to make things right for people." Canan adds, "We're the wealthiest country this world has ever known and on too many streets in Indiana you'd never know it. I believe we can afford to start doing better for real people, jobs you can live on, real opportunities, and health care that's a right, not a privilege. My work has always been face to face and eye to eye. And that's how I see this campaign. We're gonna build a movement, one Indiana small town, one diner, one front porch at a time. If you're ready for change, I'm ready to fight for it." Canan's main primary opponent is Bloomington attorney Liz Watson.



lican Doug Eckerty. Reports about McShurley's possible candidacy reached W/R from an elected official in Delaware County who attended a Madison County political event, and McShurley was cited in a recent story by veteran political reporter Ken de la Bastide about possible candidates for Eckerty's seat.

**General Assembly**

**SD26: Former mayor may run**

A former Muncie mayor might be on the ballot for some local voters next year (Walker and Roysdon, Muncie Star Press). Sharon McShurley, Republican mayor for a term before losing the 2011 general election to Democrat Dennis Tyler, is considering a run for the Indiana Senate District 26 seat that's being vacated by outgoing Repub-

**HD24: Dem to challenge Rep. Schaibley**

There were no elections in November in Indiana, but Naomi Bechtold watched with excitement from her Hamilton County home as returns rolled in from Virginia (Colombo, IBJ). Bechtold is mounting a first-time and long-shot bid for the Legislature in 2018, taking on incumbent Rep. Donna Schaibley in a district that hasn't had a Democratic challenger in several cycles. On Nov. 7, Virginia gave Bechtold, and other Democrats across Indiana, reason to hope. Democrats there outperformed expectations, picking up at least a dozen seats in the Virginia House of Delegates and grabbing the attention of political observers nationwide. Bechtold, who said she's been "building the plane as I've been flying it," found the results encouraging. "There's a tremendous amount of opportunity to eliminate the [GOP] super majority in our Statehouse," said Bechtold, a Purdue Extension educator. ❖

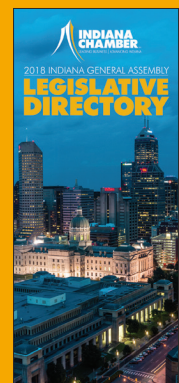


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# Voting for a pedophile, or a Democrat?

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – They would rather vote for a pedophile than a Democrat for the U.S. Senate.

That’s what some Alabama Republicans say about the race between Republican Roy Moore, accused of sexual exploitation with a 14-year-old girl and other indiscretions in pursuing teens, and Doug Jones, who confesses to being a Democrat, a moderate one, but still a Democrat.



Not all Alabama Republicans are saying that. Some say they don’t believe the accusations by the women who accuse Moore. Some denounce Moore and call for him to get out of the race. Some are unsure, saying they couldn’t support him if he did those things, but maybe he didn’t. Then there are those

who say flatly that even if Moore is guilty of the sleazy conduct the women describe, they still would vote for him before they would vote for a Democrat. How many fall into each category will determine the outcome of the special election in Alabama on Dec. 12.

It’s not shocking that members of a political party are unwilling immediately to believe charges about one of their candidates. But it is shocking to hear the quotes of so many, including some Republican officials in Alabama, that even if they knew the charges were true about sexual abuse of a 14-year-old girl by Moore when he was 32 and a district attorney, they would vote for a pedophile rather than the Democrat.

**Would some** Democrats react in a similar fashion if the situation were reversed? Would they rather vote for a pedophile than a Republican for the U.S. Senate? Has partisanship come to this in deeply divided America? Two political tribes, each loathing the other?

Not yet. But a study by Pew Research Center finds we are

moving in that direction. Republicans are moving farther to the right. Democrats are moving farther to the left. And fewer Americans are in the middle, willing to consider a mix of conservative and liberal positions and to look for the best candidates, not just look for those swearing uncompromising allegiance to tribal dogma.

**Pew found that** only a third of Americans now have a mix of conservative and liberal positions. A study in 2004 found that nearly half had mixed political values. In other words, there has been a major swing away from the middle ground, from a moderate center. We see the results of this in party primaries, where moderates in each party often are defeated by more partisan advocates. And then the more partisan advocates on both sides go on to Congress, where they refuse to compromise to get anything done. If someone dares to compromise, that can lead to defeat in the next primary in a district gerrymandered for partisanship.

The extent of polarization is shown by these Pew survey findings: 95% of Republicans are more conservative than the median Democrat. 97% of Democrats are more liberal than the median Republican. Pew says the divide between Republicans and Democrats on fundamental values relating to the role of government, the environment, race, immigration and other key issues has grown from a gap of only 15 percentage points in 1994 to 36 points now.

**An important reason** for the extent of support for Moore in Alabama is the refusal to accept news stories about the accusations because the story broke in the Washington Post. The accusations came from Alabama women. Their accusations and much more have been reported now in the Alabama news media. But many Americans have been programmed to regard anything in the news media as fake news and to believe fake news as the truth. Some wouldn’t believe anything they hear on NBC. Others wouldn’t believe a thing reported on Fox News.

When there is no agreement on facts and instead willingness to accept alternate facts, why wouldn’t it be reasonable for some voters to say they would rather vote for a pedophile than somebody from that other tribe?



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

## The 2017 political typology: Anchored by Core Conservatives, Solid Liberals

Typology groups as a percentage of ... (%)

	General public	Registered voters	Politically engaged
Core Conservatives	13	15	20
Country First Conservs	6	7	6
Market Skeptic Reps	12	12	10
New Era Enterprisers	11	11	9
Bystanders	8		
Devout and Diverse	9	9	6
Disaffected Democrats	14	14	11
Opportunity Democrats	12	13	13
Solid Liberals	16	19	25

Source: Survey conducted June 8-18 and June 27-July 9, 2017.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# Explaining Trump to Le Figaro

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – In 2016, as part of a United States State Department program to give foreign journalists an up-close-and-personal experience with the American political process, I had the great fortune to host 30 journalists from around the world when they visited Howard County for our annual Lincoln/Reagan Day Dinner.



Later that summer, at the Cleveland Republican National Convention, I was invited by the State Department to speak to 200 international journalists about the presidential election process. There I met Maurin Picard, a senior writer for Le Figaro, the Paris morning daily. Recently, Picard contacted me to interview me regarding President Donald Trump's first year. Below is that interview which was published in Le Figaro on Nov 8:

**Picard:** What do you think of one year with POTUS Donald Trump and what are the achievements you would emphasize?

**Dunn:** Although we're not quite done with one year, I would say that President Trump has had mixed results. For a variety of reasons, some of his own making, he has not been able to successfully move his legislative agenda. My hopes were that we would see either significant improvements made to the Affordable Care Act or that Congress would scrap it altogether. Of course, we have seen no success on either of these. In addition, major tax reform, including a large reduction in the corporate tax rate, would have been on my early wish list. We may now get tax reform before Christmas. I believe that both sides of the aisle in Congress wanted to see some sort of infrastructure legislation passed. We have seen nothing. I believe this will be used as a future carrot to incentivize Democrats to support other Trump legislation.

I believe that Trump's major accomplishments have been done with his presidential

pen. He has issued several executive orders that have been very positive from my viewpoint. The most important of these are:

- Withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords
- Approval of the Keystone Pipeline
- Eliminating onerous provisions of the Affordable

Care Act

- Reducing costs of government regulation
- Addressing trade agreement violations
- Postponing for further review certain Department of Labor regulations

Finally, President Trump has strengthened our national defense and communicated to our enemies that they cannot strike at the United States or our people without severe consequences. In addition, unemployment is at record low levels, personal incomes are on the rise and the stock markets are at record highs. He is well on the way to restoring America to its previous status.

Some things President Trump has done could have been moderated or improved; some of his rhetoric and bluster could have been toned down. There is rarely anything good that comes from publicly attacking a United States senator. The Republicans don't have a large enough majority to lose any votes because of ill will caused by the president.

**Picard:** What are the challenges and promises yet to fulfill?

**Dunn:** The president's biggest campaign promises have yet to be fulfilled. He has yet to find a way to pay for a border wall with Mexico, and the Affordable Care Act is still in place. These two issues will be difficult to explain away if they are not accomplished.

**Picard:** How do you assess the difficulties Trump faces along the way?

**Dunn:** President Trump's challenges come from two main sources, U.S. Senate rules and his failure to get all of the Republican senators on board with his legislative program. The arcane U.S. Senate rules exist to intentionally slow down legislation so that it may receive an exhaustingly thorough review. Each senator retains massive personal power over the success or failure of legislation. A few Republican senators have placed their own personal agendas ahead of what is best for the nation. In addition, because of continued hard feelings over the presidential primaries and other Trump Twitter attacks, some senators seem fixated on causing the president to fail. The president bears much of the responsibility for this poisonous atmosphere. If President Trump cannot bolster his



President Trump with French President Macron last summer in Paris.

popularity numbers, it will inevitably lead more Republican senators to leave the fold. As I see it, Trump has less than six months to chalk up some big legislative wins. Unless he is able to do so, he will be forced to resort to his executive orders in order to maintain any semblance of viability.

**Picard:** What are your predictions for foreseeable future?

**Dunn:** I believe that we will see passage of a tax reform bill. In addition to some needed tax simplification, the potential repatriation of as much as \$6 trillion should give a massive shot in the arm to the United States economy. The success of this legislation should allow for much easier passage of an infrastructure bill. I believe that Trump will tie funding for the border wall to the infrastructure bill. In addition, I believe that we will see the permanent continuance of the Dreamers Act.

**Picard:** Will he overcome the challenges?

**Dunn:** Whether President Trump is ultimately successful as president over the long term will hinge on both the outcome of the special prosecutor investigations and on his continued popularity with his rock solid political base. Trump has about 30% of the American voters solidly in his camp and they are a potent political force. No Republican congressman or senator can resist their will without significant damage at the polls. Only a deterioration in Trump's poll numbers below 30% approval would allow internal opposition in the Republican Party to emerge. I personally believe that President Trump will be more successful than the pundit class expects and somewhat less successful than his most fervent supporters hope.

President Trump needs to stop tweeting immediately or run his tweets past his political director. He also needs to declare a truce with all Republican senators, and if he can't say something nice, not say anything at all. President Trump should also stay completely out of any contested primary. On an international front, President Trump needs to pay particular attention to cultivating closer relationships with President Macron of France and President Merkel of Germany. As a country, we will achieve far more working as an alliance than taking unilateral action. Over the long haul, President Trump needs to fill all existing governmental vacancies with competent personnel. The current job vacancies have caused much inertia and lack of focus.

**Picard:** How do you see the U.S. in the world, and the biggest challenges it faces?

**Dunn:** There is no denial that the United States is the only country that has both the fiscal resources and military resources to deal with a multitude of geopolitical challenges around the world. That being said, we have no right to take unilateral action except where our people have been directly attacked or threatened. Although organizations such as the United Nations have been corrupted and remain largely ineffective at dealing with major crises, the concept of multilateral action remains significant. We must work closely with our friends in NATO and the G-8 to present a united front against rogue nations and re-

gimes. We must also incentivize both China and Russia to join with us when we have common interests.

**Picard:** Where is this Russia investigation going?

**Dunn:** I believe that the special prosecutor will find that the world of international finance and trade is much murkier than it used to be. He will find that there are dirty hands among both Republican and Democrat business people and lobbyists. He will also discover, if he pursues all potential criminal activity, that the desire to pay as little income tax as possible ignores party affiliation. Billionaires and large corporations want to make as much money as possible and pay as little taxes. This is true the world over. National boundaries mean little when business alliances are formed between oligarchs. If people think that President Trump will be ensnared in some sort of election-rigging collusion with the Russians, I believe that they will be sorely disappointed. I have believed from the very beginning, even before the special prosecutor, that Donald Trump's personal income tax returns could be problematic. How President Trump complied with tax laws on his various real estate ventures might be his Achilles heel.

**Picard:** What do you think of Bob Mueller?

**Dunn:** I believe Robert Mueller to be an honest man. I would expect him to conduct his duties in an ethical and impartial manner. That being said, special prosecutors prosecute. They don't like to spend millions investigating without displaying a few scalps for their efforts. Mueller will do the same.

**Picard:** How do you rate the Republican Congress?

**Dunn:** I would rate our current Congress somewhat lower than a snake's belly. The problem with a representative form of government is that it distributes legislative power broadly. With narrow political majorities in the House and Senate, little room is allowed for error when crafting legislation. Each representative and senator is going to serve their constituents first as a matter of political necessity and the greater good will generally take a back seat. When you throw in some political hard feelings, along with a Democratic Party that is focused on total obstructionism, you end up accomplishing nothing. This is both the strength and weakness of democracy. Our Congress reflects the current status of our society as a whole, which is divided on many key social issues. It is only reasonable to expect these divisions to manifest themselves in Congress. President Obama learned this and turned to executive orders to try and accomplish his agenda. President Trump will do the same. I believe that what many countries and despots around the world fail to understand is that when our nation is threatened, our country is united and will act swiftly and strongly to protect its interests. ❖

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

# Sikhs PAC emerging as Indiana political force

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Sikhs have been immigrating to the United States from India's Punjab region since the 1890s, with almost 1 million in the U.S. gradually assimilating into American culture, but Hoosier Sikhs are among the first to flex their political muscle.

Gurinder Singh Khalsa and a group of businessmen have formed the Sikhs PAC, the only such organization in the United States, home to between 500,000 and 700,000 Sikhs, including about 10,000 Hoosiers. This group includes about 3,500 businessmen and women, generating what Gurinder says is \$15 billion in revenue over the past 15 years. They own hotels, gas and convenience stores and trucking firms. Its goals are to promote Sikh values that he describes as "three pillars" that include "selfless service to humanity, truthful living and sharing, and devotion to the almighty."

On the political spectrum, the political action committee seeks to:

1. Raise awareness of the Sikh culture, identity and values;
2. Pave the way for Sikh involvement in American and Indiana politics, including positioning members into elected and bureaucratic positions;
3. Create awareness of the values of Sikh tradition;
4. Prepare Sikh youth for public service;
5. Insure Sikh culture evolves;
6. Bring diversity in interfaith dialogue.

To the ends of the last point, Sikhs PAC was a co-sponsor of the "Festival of Faith" last October in downtown Indianapolis that included 80 different Central Indiana cultures and faith groups.

"I've been doing this for five years," Gurinder explained to Howey Politics Indiana. "Going to churches and religions. I'm a regular speaker on diversity of faith."

For more than 500 years the non-theistic religion founded by Guru Nanak has defined its adherents, according to Article I of the Sikh Rehat Maryada (the Sikh code of conduct) as "any human being who faithfully believes in One Immortal Being; 10 Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru

Gobind Singh; Guru Granth Sahib; the teachings of the 10 Gurus and the baptism bequeathed by the tenth Guru." It formed after the radical Islamic regime forced Indians to convert, forming armies to fight for what Gurinder calls "freedom of faith."

Part of Gurinder's motivation for the PAC occurred after the Sept. 11 terror attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania in 2001. "We were victims of mistaken identity," Gurinder explained. "Things have not changed because there has been no sustained effort to raise awareness. Sikhs have been in the United States for over 100 years. We've been part of the American endeavor for a century. But we were quickly confused with other groups."

He said there was almost immediate fear, simply because they wear the traditional Sikh turban and beard. But Sikhs believe in equality of gender, against the caste system that discriminated against creed and race, and promotes freedom of faith. "Sikhism believes in one God, an omnipresent almighty God," Gurinder explained. "Sikhism does not claim to be the best way to God, or the only way. We believe many ways to God, but neither the best or only way. We do not believe in converting people because we don't believe we are the best or only way."

Sikhs PAC, which sponsors the HPI Daily Wire, is part of Sikh USA that is active in eight states and includes five components: The political action committee, aid, media, chamber and foundation. "Sikh Media will take it to the next level, taking our message to our community and into mainstream media," Gurinder explained.

The PAC has built relationships with Govs. Mike Pence and Eric Holcomb over the past five years. "We have a very good relationship with the governor," Gurinder said. "He's a good guy." Gurinder did express "sadness" that during Holcomb's recent trip to India, he didn't include a trip to the Sikh holy

site, the Golden Temple."

The PAC is also forging relationships in the General Assembly, with Gurinder meeting with Senate President Pro Tem David Long, which led to the Senate passing a resolution last session recognizing Hoosier Sikhs. "This year, we hope the Indiana House passes this resolution," he said.

As for the PAC's political beliefs, Gurinder explained, "I'm a pragmatist, not an ideologue. I am a modern, fiscal conservative. I believe in less government. The most important things are Sikhs want to live a dignified



**Gurinder Singh Khalsa explains what the Sikhs PAC wants to accomplish in Indiana.**

life, be financially successful and provide good educational opportunities."

**Between 1889** and 1914, thousands of Sikhs immigrated to California, finding work in the agriculture, lumber and railroad sectors. But American culture discriminated based on looks. Early 20th Century laws forbade Sikh immigrants from owning land. Many married Mexican or Hispanic women and they began buying land in the names of their children. According to a NDTV documentary, some 80% of Sikh men married Mexican or Hispanic women. Many were busy on farms and had no problem with raising their children in the Catholic



**Gurinder Singh Kalsa meets with Hamilton County Republicans last week to talk about the heroin epidemic ravaging Indiana.**

church.

Sikhs fought with the American military in World War I and II and have a proud military tradition both in the U.S. and in the Punjab.

While the largest Sikh community resides in the Indianapolis area, there are other enclaves in Evansville, Crown Point and South Bend. "Living a purposeful, meaningful life is more important than financial success," Gurinder explained. "If you're living a selfless life with love and compassion and with out expectation, that is a big component of success."

"If you ask me who I am, I'm an American by choice," he added. ❖

## Explaining county income disparities

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – "I can't listen to more complaints about Trump," says Hector Huevos. "There's so much to be done locally and statewide, yet all we hear about is Trump and the adventures of his team."



"Hmm?" I say. "Yes, but what are the priorities?"

"Redistricting our legislature, our congressional seats, our city and county councils," Hector says. "And the distribution of income in our state is as cockeyed as the alignment of election districts."

"I don't hear any complaints about income distribution in Indiana," I tell him. "Hoosiers seem pretty satisfied."

"Right," he sneers. "Satisfied like hogs preening for Easter. Don't Hoosiers realize that 64% of Indiana's federal income tax filers report less than \$50,000 of income? And have only 23% of the income."

"Hmm," I say once more.

"**You know what that** means?" he asks. "It means those with \$50,000 or more in adjusted gross income have 76% of the income even though they're just 36% of tax filers."

"Well," I offer, "\$50,000 is not that much."

"Then look deeper," Hector says. "Hoosiers with incomes of \$100,000 or more reported 48% of the income, but they were only 13% of all filing for 2015. Doesn't that cry out 'inequity' to you?"

Hector was heating. "Not necessarily," I reply.

"Have you no conscience?" he demands. "Doesn't it trouble you that in Jay County (Portland) 73% of the tax returns report only 35% of the income? Only 6% of filers in Jay County have incomes of \$100,000 or more, and they account for 29% of the income."

**Before I'm able to respond**, Hector continues, "Boone County (Lebanon) has the greatest imbalance with 28% having 76% of the income, an imbalance of 48 percentage points. And Boone we know is just an outgrowth of Hamilton County where 32% enjoy 77% of income. Then we have Warrick (Boonville), Dubois (Jasper) and Floyd (New Albany) following with imbalances of 40 points or more at the \$100,000-plus level."

"And you think we can correct these imbalances?" I ask.

"Yes," he says. "It's not the people with incomes above \$100,000 that trouble me. It's the counties showing up well on the \$100,000-plus list, that are also among the leaders on the under-\$50,000 list. It's Dubois County where 62% of filers account for only 19% of income. Or Boone County, so much income, but half of all filers have only 8% of the income. There's serious poverty in counties that have the greatest affluence."

"And tell me how we can balance things out?" I ask again.

"You'll laugh," Hector says. "But with a graduated income tax, we could increase subsidies for workers' transportation. Likewise, we could increase subsidies for housing that encourage landlords and occupants to conserve energy."

"Wow," I say, "you are out of touch with today's America." ❖

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

# Worries about the lobbying industry

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – I worry about the growth of the lobbying industry and its outsized weight compared to that of the ordinary American.

One of the quirks of life in Washington, D.C., is that pretty much the only people who don't refer to lobbyists by that name are, well, lobbyists. They're "policy advisors," or "strategic counsel," or "public relations advisors," or lawyers, or even just "consultants." Whatever they're called, though, they play a huge role in making policy.



For the most part, they are able, well-informed, and skillful at what they do. Their aim is to develop a cordial relationship with policy-makers, whether elected to Congress or serving in some federal agency, so that they can advance their points of

view. And policy-makers rely on them for information, for research and writing, for persuasive arguments, and, of course, for political support.

Though there are members of the influence industry who aren't especially well-heeled, there are plenty who are. As a whole, they spend a lot of money: \$3.15 billion in 2016, according to the Center on Responsive Politics, which tracks lobbying and lobbyists.

Some industries – among them pharmaceuticals, communications, insurance, and oil and gas – employ hundreds of people whose sole mission is to influence federal policy-making. They write checks to politicians for speeches, dole out campaign contributions, pay for travel. They work hard to get their favored politicians elected and to rally their members at important moments. They are extremely sophisticated in the use of media, including social media. They pursue public education campaigns, grassroots organizing, and other means of getting members of the public to back them.

**There's a reason** for all of this; the stakes are high. When I was in Congress, I used to wonder why I'd see CEOs walking around Capitol Hill or stopping by my office for a visit. These are important men and women who have major responsibilities that have nothing to do with politicians, and yet

there they are. Why? Because if they can get a few words added to or eliminated from regulations or legislation, their companies can benefit by millions and sometimes billions of dollars. It's that simple. And it's why, no matter how much politicians like to talk about "draining the swamp," they never do. The swamp keeps growing because what's at stake for the influence industry and the interests that fund it does, too.

**I should say that** I've known a lot of lobbyists over the years, and respected them as hard-working, well-informed participants in the process. I've been helped by many of them, and misled by only a few. But I worry about the growth of the industry and its outsized weight compared to that of the ordinary American. As the impact of well-resourced interests grows, I think the voice of ordinary citizens has been diminished. The voter may have a vote every few years, and that should not be discounted, but it cannot possibly match the effect of people who are there day in and day out, wielding the resources many of them can bring to bear.

So what do we do about this? I do not think it's enough to say, as some politicians do, that in the scheme of things there are so many countervailing voices that they cancel each other out. That's simplistic.

Part of the answer lies with robust disclosure and transparency laws and enforcement. But as important, I believe that Congress ought to increase its capacity to do its own research, analysis, oversight, and fact-finding. It has some capabilities in this regard, through the Congressional Research Service, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Government Accountability Office. But as the Brookings Institution pointed out earlier this year, those three agencies, through budget cuts, lost 45 percent of their combined staffs over the last 40 years, even as members' workloads grew. Lacking the independently provided information they need to make informed decisions, Brookings noted, "Congress members will fall back on documents provided by interest groups and lobbying efforts."


**The problem is, members** of Congress don't seem especially concerned about the outsized role the influence industry plays in their deliberations, nor do they seem especially interested in building their own independent capacity to analyze issues and legislation. But if you

care about representative democracy, you ought to be. ❖

**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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# Winners, losers in the 20 alcohol proposals

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

INDIANAPOLIS – Nearly 20 recommendations for alcohol-related legislation floated through a three-hour meeting recently of the Indiana General Assembly-created Alcohol Code Revision Commission.



Here is a breakdown of some preliminary drafts facing the panel that meets again on Dec. 1. Included are suggestions of winners and losers if legislation

passes the General Assembly.

■ **Cold beer and Sunday sales:** One preliminary draft of legislation allows a package liquor store, grocery store, convenience store or drug store to sell alcohol for carryout on Sundays. Beginning July 1, 2019, convenience stores, drug stores and groceries could sell cold beer.

**Who loses:** Package liquor stores, though they could be open Sundays, won't be the only outlets selling cold beer, as they are now.

**Who wins:** Hoosiers who forgot to buy a six-pack for a Sunday Colts game.

**In between:** In a unique partnership, the Indiana Retail Council (big box groceries) and the Indiana Association of Beverage Retailers (package liquor shops) support Sunday sales but not the expansion of cold beer sales.

■ **Sunday carryout sales:** One proposal would allow a package liquor store, grocery store, convenience store or drug store to sell alcoholic beverages — not cold beer — for carryout on Sunday. Initially, the hours were from noon until 8 p.m. in an attempt to not conflict with church service hours.

**Who loses:** Strong church-goers — though church may be out by noon — who see values eroding. State Sen. Lonnie Randolph, D-East Chicago, said, "There's something about Sunday and church, Sunday and religion that doesn't sit well with me. ... Beer and religion doesn't equate." Added Lisa Hutcheson, director of the Indiana Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking, "Research shows that an increase in the days and hours of the sale of alcohol will increase youth access."

**Who wins:** Licensed convenience stores, groceries, drug stores and any outlet willing to hire 21-and-over Sunday staff. Another winner, the free market; Keith Byers, a Fort Wayne businessman serving on the alcohol committee, said, "I've heard nothing that convinces me that Sunday sales is going to add any more to alcohol abuse or underage drinking."

■ **Areas to sell alcoholic beverages:** The proposal would require a dealer, not including a package liquor store, to display alcoholic beverages in a separate

area or in the line of sight of an employee. It also requires video surveillance of the area.

**Who loses:** Stores would need to spend extra cash on creating new minor-free zones.

**Who wins:** Package liquor stores because they are exempt. Hoosiers fighting access by minors to alcohol could claim a small victory.

■ **Mandatory carding:** A clerk could face a Class B misdemeanor if they fail to ask for ID so the buyer proves they're of legal age. But there's a provision that the clerk can decide not to card if the consumer appears to be 50 years of age or older (currently it's 40). In October, a Bartholomew County liquor store was fined \$500 for furnishing alcohol to a minor and for not carding someone who appeared to be under 40. State Rep. Ben Smaltz, R-Auburn, has suggested tripling such fines in lieu of mandatory carding.

**Who loses:** Some legislators who will undoubtedly hear complaints from middle-aged adults like they did when mandatory carding was broached before. State Sen. Ron Alting, R-Lafayette, said, "Twenty years I've been in the Senate I have never, even on the religious freedom bill, I have never received more emails, more hate emails, on any subject."

**Who wins:** A partial victory for those who support carding everyone. "If we're going to say 21, we need to mean 21 and there's only one way to do it," said State Rep. Terri Austin, D-Anderson. "Either everybody cards or nobody cards, but it's about curtailing underage access."

■ **Minors in package liquor stores:** The proposal allows a minor to be on the licensed premises of a package liquor store if the minor is less than 14 and accompanied by a parent or guardian who is at least 21.

**Who loses:** Youth, being exposed to alcohol. According to Jerri Leach, executive director of the Allen County Drug and Alcohol Consortium, 33 percent of high school seniors report using alcohol on at least a monthly basis. "We are not doing well enough at keeping youth from the dangerous ... substance of alcohol."

**Who wins:** Moms or dads who run into a liquor store as their kids sit alone in the car. ❖



**Jon Webb, Evansville Courier & Press:** Marijuana's gonna be legal in Illinois. It's just a matter of when. That's according to state Sen. Heather Steans, who's been pushing a recreational weed bill at least since earlier this year. She hoped to get it passed by 2018, but said on Thursday that her timetable has shifted. "I don't think it'll be this session. It'll be 2019, is what our hope is," she said. "(2018) is an election year, which makes it more challenging to get it passed." Couple that with Kentucky. On Wednesday, Secretary of State and Mitch McConnell Mortal Enemy Alison Lundergan Grimes announced that she's forming a task force to push for the legalization of medical marijuana. If she's looking for a zippy slogan, here's one for free: Choose Grass, Bluegrass. "Too many Kentuckians are suffering from debilitating physical and mental illnesses," Grimes told the Lexington Herald-Leader. "Most have lived with the effects of these illnesses for years. We must do more to relieve their pain and suffering, and there is significant evidence that cannabis is beneficial for these individuals, especially veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress." Michigan passed a medical marijuana bill in 2016. Ohio did, too, and Illinois has had medicinal weed since 2013. That leaves one state in our area mired in the past. It's shaped like a Christmas stocking and contains a suspicious amount of pork tenderloin. Indiana is likely still years away from any kind of marijuana legislation. We barely tolerate CBD oil – a non-THC extract that can treat everything from pain to epilepsy. Even after state legislators legalized the stuff in April, excise police continued to sweep into stores and confiscate it. That's a lot of wasted effort to keep a non-psychoactive substance out of the hands of parents hoping to treat their children's seizures.

Indiana Sen. Karen Tallian told me this spring that she's introduced medical marijuana bills for the last seven years, only to see them crumble each time. She remains optimistic, even calling it "destiny" that our state will one day adopt some kind of medical pot operation. It has its supporters. Tallian is a Democrat, but plenty of powerful Republicans stand behind it. Sen. Jim Merritt, an avowed fighter of the opioid epidemic, thinks medical marijuana would be an effective way to treat pain. And Rep. Jim Lucas already pledged to offer his own medical weed bill in the next session. But Lucas told the IndyStar the state is a "minefield" for marijuana legislation. And Tallian had an even more colorful way to put it. "There are a lot of people here in the Senate who are just either very afraid of the idea or truly believe that, you know, it's the gateway to Hell," she told me this spring. With proper oversight and regulations, the benefits would far outweigh the dangers.

If we stripped away our pre-loaded fears and looked at the issue with clear eyes, we'd legalize medical marijuana next year. Then, once a system is in place, we would sign off on recreational use as well. It would improve state health, finances and tourism. We won't, of course. We won't even legalize Sunday sales of alcohol.



Trapped in the amber of 1980s drug attitudes, Indiana is doomed to drag its feet on any progressive measures. It's time to snap out of it. It's fine to be old-fashioned. But it's not OK to be stubborn. ❖

**Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier:**

Could all the voices calling for the end to Tippecanoe County's syringe exchange get what they want, just one year in? David Byers says he's listening. And he's struggling, a week away from a vote that could pull the plug on Gateway to Hope, the county health department's year-old program that offers free syringes in the name of harm reduction – in the form of enticing a growing number of heroin addicts into treatment and keeping a secondary outbreak of hepatitis C and HIV caused by shared needles from leaving Tippecanoe County with two crises on its hands. "I'm still in the middle," said Byers, one of three Republican county commissioners. The state asks counties that declare health emergencies, needed to establish needle exchanges, to review the decision every two years. In Tippecanoe County, one of nine Indiana counties that have set up syringe exchanges since 2015, commissioners agreed to look at things year by year. Tom Murtaugh, a county commissioner, says he's still a definite no. He voted in November 2016 against the health department's request to join a handful of other Indiana counties with needle exchanges, saying he didn't believe Tippecanoe County had a hepatitis C epidemic on its hands. Tracy Brown, who was Tippecanoe County sheriff for eight years before being elected as a commissioner, remains an undaunted supporter of the program as critics pile on and other counties junk their exchanges. And as for Byers, who a year ago cited the number of needles he found in ditches near his farm in western Tippecanoe County when he cast the pivotal vote? "Right now, I'm being open-minded," Byers said. ❖

**Peggy Noonan, Wall Street Journal:**

This Thanksgiving I find myself thankful for something that is roiling our country. I am glad at what has happened with the recent, much-discussed and continuing sexual-harassment revelations and responses. To repeat the obvious, it is a watershed event, which is something you can lose sight of when you're in the middle of it. To repeat the obvious again, journalists broke the back of the scandal when they broke the code on how to report it. For a quarter century we had been stuck in the He Said/She Said. Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas gave their testimonies, each offered witnesses, and the fair minded did their best with the evidence at hand while sorting through all the swirling political agendas. In the end I believed Mr. Thomas. But nobody knows, or rather only two people do. What happened during the past two years, and very much in the past few months, is that reporters and news organizations committed serious resources to unearthing numbers and patterns. ❖

## VA reports 136 state veteran suicides

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs reports that 136 Indiana veterans committed suicide in 2014 (Tristatehomepage). Monday, US Senator Joe Donnelly (D-IN) spoke about a law that's helping save more lives.

Signed into law in 2014, the Jacob Sexton Military Suicide Prevention Act requires an annual health assessment for every military service member. Over the last two years, the Indiana National Guard has worked to implement the law. Now that it's fully in effect, more than 1,300 members will be screened every year. Major Scott Edwards with the Indiana National Guard said, "When the service member reports some sort of mental health trouble, we are on the ground at each event. Trained mental health service providers come right alongside those service members and (are) able to help. Then, we watch and follow them all the way through the recovery process."

## Do or die time for GOP on tax reform

WASHINGTON — It's do-or-die time for Senate Republicans on tax reform (Kim & Becker, Politico). Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) doesn't appear to have locked down 50 votes for his party's tax overhaul, with at least half a dozen GOP senators showing varying levels of concern about the legislation released earlier this month. Yet the GOP leadership has a narrow window to push through its tax bill in the Senate before lawmakers become consumed with spending fights that could trigger a shutdown, not to mention a special election in Alabama that could flip a reliable Republican vote to a not-so-reliable one — or even a Democrat. "I think in the end, we'll get the votes. But it's a process," South Dakota Sen.

John Thune, the third-ranking Senate Republican, said on "Fox News Sunday." As the Senate prepares to vote on their version of the bill, a growing number of Republican senators are expressing reservations about the bill before them (TIME).

Both Sens. Steve Daines of Montana and Ron Johnson of Wisconsin have said unequivocally that they oppose the current legislation, saying it unduly favors large corporations over small businesses. An aide to Daines told The Hill that he "remains optimistic" that satisfactory changes to the bill are possible.

## Banks wants action on sex harassment

WASHINGTON — U.S. Jim Banks called on Congress to take several steps to prevent and respond to sexual harassment on Capitol Hill, his office announced in a news release. The release stated Banks is supporting bipartisan legislation — the Member and Employee Training and Oversight On (ME TOO) Congress Act — that would require Congress to update its protocol for reporting sexual harassment, to mandate anti-harassment training for members and staff, and to provide better support for victims and whistleblowers.

## IU suspends fraternity activities

BLOOMINGTON — The interfraternity council at Indiana University has voted to suspend activities, the school announced late Monday (WTHR-TV). Dr. Lori Reesor, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students announced the decision of the IU Interfraternity Council to temporarily suspend "fraternity social and new member activities." "I commend these student leaders for their efforts and look forward to working with them to create a safer environment for all IU students," Reesor tweeted. Dan Niersbach, president of the IU Student Association noted that new

member activities would be restricted, while social functions were temporarily suspended. "Now is the time to create real change in our Greek system and address the culture it creates," Niersbach wrote. "The IU Greek community will be safer and stronger."

## Winchester drug rehab advances

WINCHESTER — Plans for a proposed drug treatment facility moved forward during a special common council meeting Monday night that was at times contentious between members of the public and their elected leaders (Richmond Palladium-Item). Winchester council members spent much of the evening asking questions of Volunteers of America Indiana representatives about the organization's planned 23-bed drug rehabilitation center for women and children, which was initially announced in February.

## Trump raises 'Pocahontas' again

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump returned to his own kind of code talking Monday by deriding Sen. Elizabeth Warren as "Pocahontas" at a White House event honoring Native American war heroes (Associated Press). "You were here long before any of us were here," Trump said as he honored three Navajo code talkers from World War II. And then he added, without naming Warren: "We have a representative in Congress who they say was here a long time ago. They call her Pocahontas. But you know what, I like you." Native American leaders have called Trump's past attacks on Warren offensive and distasteful. "It was uncalled for," said Marty Thompson, whose great uncle was a Navajo Code Talker. "He can say what he wants when he's out doing his presidential business among his people, but when it comes to honoring veterans or any kind of people, he needs to grow up and quit saying things like that."

