

Defining Hoosier wave elections, impacts

Less than 100 days from mid-term, is there a wave brewing?

By **TREVOR FOUGHTY**
 Capitolandwashington.com

INDIANAPOLIS – National chatter about a potential wave election has persisted since at least the spring of 2017, and conventional wisdom for the past 18 months or so has been that Democrats will take control of the U.S. House but struggle to take control of the U.S. Senate because they have to play too much defense.

As we're now within 100 days of the election, speculation will quickly crescendo as pundits attempt to discern what kind of wave, if any, might be approaching our electoral shores. In the midst of such an environment, "What constitutes a wave election?" is a question that rarely gets asked, as most settle for the ambiguous expectation of big gains for



U.S. Sen. Barack Obama came to Indianapolis in October 2006 to campaign for congressional candidates Brad Ellsworth (left), Baron Hill (right) and Joe Donnelly. All three won in that wave election.

the party out of power. Meanwhile, "What does this mean for down-ballot races in Indiana?" is a question that rarely

Continued on page 4

24 years of real news

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – With today's edition, Howey Politics Indiana begins its 24th year of publishing. We do so across four platforms, reaching more than a half million Hoosiers per week.



This benchmark comes in uncertain times. President Trump has labeled American news reporters, editors and photographers as "enemies of the people." This has become the era of "fake news" and "alternative facts" as Americans have fled the First Amendment Tower of Babel into ideological silos. The divisions among us go beyond gender, race and creed and into who we voted for and what cable channel



"This is a terrible situation and Attorney General Jeff Sessions should stop this Rigged Witch Hunt right now, before it continues to stain our country any further. Bob Mueller is totally conflicted."

- President Trump, suggesting the firing of Robert Mueller



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or social media platform we glean our information from.

It also comes as American media finds its fiscal platform splintering. According to Pew Research, newsroom employment declined 23% between 2008 and 2017. In 2008, about 114,000 newsroom employees – reporters, editors, photographers and videographers – worked in five industries that produce news: Newspaper, radio, broadcast television, cable and “other information services” (the best match for digital-native news publishers). By 2017, that number declined to about 88,000, a loss of about 27,000 jobs.

According to Pew and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, newspaper employees declined by 45% between 2008 and 2017, from about 71,000 workers in 2008 to 39,000 in 2017. The estimated total U.S. daily newspaper circulation (print and digital combined) in 2017 was 31 million for weekday and 34 million for Sunday, down 11% and 10%, respectively, from the previous year. Declines were highest in print circulation: Weekday print circulation decreased 11% and Sunday circulation decreased 10%. According to the independently produced reports from The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, however, both companies saw large gains in digital circulation in the past year: 42% for the Times and 26% for the Journal, on top of gains in 2016. If these independently produced figures were included in both 2016 and 2017, weekday digital circulation would have risen by 10%.

Steve Key of the Hoosier State Press Association says his group “has not collected most of that data” on the statewide level. But anecdotally, local newspapers employ only a fraction of reporters, editors and photographers than they did a decade or two ago. Press and composition crews have vanished, as have many

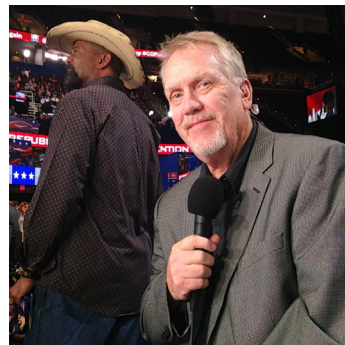
photographers. Medium sized newspapers which 20 years ago would count newsroom employees in the dozens can now count most of them on two hands.

According to Pew, of the five industries studied, notable job growth occurred only in the digital-native news sector. Since 2008, the number of digital-native newsroom employees (which would include HPI) increased by 79%, from about 7,400 workers to about 13,000 in 2017. This increase of about 6,000 total jobs, however, fell far short of offsetting the loss of about 32,000 newspaper newsroom jobs during the same period.

Howey Politics Indiana publishes via the Internet at www.howeypolitics.com, including the PDF format weekly HPI, on Facebook and Twitter social media platforms, the HPI Mobile App (which is included at no additional cost to HPI subscribers), and my weekly column which reaches more than 300,000 readers a week via more than 30 newspapers as well as WTHR-TV, the state’s largest news website. HPI has remained profitable with a combination of news coverage behind a paywall established in 1994, while we offer free content (such as HPI’s columnists) on the HPI web homepage.

The HPI Daily Wire goes out to close to 2,500 readers daily, with many more eyes reading this aggregation of political news and policy. And the HPI Daily Wire and weekly edition strives to reach across ideological silos, drawing aggregated content from the New York Times, Washington Post and CNN as well as the Wall Street Journal, Fox News and conservative journals such as the National Review, Weekly Standard and American Spectator. While President Trump complains about unfair coverage, HPI has added commentators such as Tony Samuel and Craig Dunn who often present the Trump/Pence viewpoint.

Pew notes: In the U.S., roughly nine in 10 adults (93%) get at



least some news online (either via mobile or desktop), and the online space has become a host for the digital homes of both legacy news outlets and new, "born on the web" news outlets. Digital advertising revenue across all digital entities (beyond just news) continues to grow, with technology companies playing a large role in the flow of both news and revenue.

Digital advertising continues to grow as a proportion of total advertising revenue, a trend driven in large part by growth in advertising on mobile devices, according to Pew. In 2017, according to eMarketer estimates, digital advertising grew to \$90 billion, an increase from \$72 billion in 2016. It was estimated to comprise 44% of all advertising revenue, up from 37% in 2016.

Newspapers are not the only media in decline. Pew notes that while television remains the most common place for Americans to get their news, with local TV outpacing cable and network TV, local TV news saw its audience decline across most time slots studied this past year.

In 2017, viewership for network local affiliate news stations (ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC) declined in key time slots – morning (6 a.m. to 9 a.m.), early evening (4 p.m. to 7 p.m.) and late night (11 p.m. to 2 a.m.), according to comScore StationView Essentials® data. The average audience (defined as the average number of TVs tuned to a program throughout a time period) for the morning news time slot decreased 15% in 2017. Local TV average audience for the late night and early evening news time slots also declined (7% for both). Audience for the midday news time slot (11 a.m. to 2 p.m.) declined 4%, while evening news remained relatively stable. In Indiana, we've seen local TV news mergers in the Indianapolis, South Bend and Fort Wayne markets, with broadcasts running on two stations, such as Fox59 and CBS4, both of

Cable TV viewership is also in decline. According to comScore TV Essentials® data, there were declines for the three major cable news channels (CNN, Fox News and MSNBC) in 2017. The average audience (defined as the average number of TVs tuned to a program throughout a time period) for the evening news time slot (8 p.m. to 11 p.m.) of these three networks declined 12%, to about 1.2 million. The average audience for the daytime time slot (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) remained relatively stable. Total revenue across the three channels increased by 10% in 2017 to a total of \$5 billion, according to SNL Kagan estimates.

All of this data presents questions to leaders and opinion shapers: What is the best way to communicate with the masses? Are

we losing the "free marketplace of ideas" when news consumers splinter off into ideological silos? We are watching the manifestation of the loss of that common place when Fox News viewers can have radically different perceptions than those watching CNN and MSNBC. Or if people only get news via Facebook, which has been manipulated by Russia bots and other international imposters seeking to create and exploit domestic positions.

Political candidates and campaigns are already veering away from broader media platforms and reaching supporters and undecideds via social media. Two Republican congressional candidates, Greg Pence in the 6th CD and Trey Hollingsworth in the 9th, aren't participating in public debates or holding town halls, and in the case of Pence, won't talk to reporters.

These divisions and silos help fuel a polarized



Political analysts Charlie Cook, Stu Rothenberg and Brian Howey at an HPI Forum in 2002.

America with fewer Americans finding common ground. It is our mission at Howey Politics Indiana to gather news and commentary across the spectrum, to write in a way that prompts broader public discourse, while serving our subscribers with reliable analysis and forecasting.

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Wave elections, from page 1

gets answered, at least not in a way that achieves consistent consensus. But by investigating the former question, we have a better chance of using historical data to attempt to answer the latter.

While political scientists have no widely accepted definition of a wave election at the national level, most of the focus tends to be on the net-change in seats in the U.S. House since all 435 seats are on the ballot each year (as opposed to the U.S. Senate, where only 1/3 of the seats are up in any given election; or the presidency, which is only on the ballot every other cycle). Additionally, smaller districts in U.S. House races (as opposed to state-level results in U.S. Senate and presidential races), provide a more nuanced view of national sentiment on current governing policies.

Stuart Rothenberg, arguably the most respected national handicapper, uses a 20-seat net gain in the U.S. House as his cutoff for a wave election; this number seems reasonable and despite disagreement probably comes closest to anything resembling consensus. But while the U.S. House number might be the most important factor, let's also stipulate (as do many political scientists) that the following conditions also be met: 1.) The party that gains 20+ seats in the U.S. House must also make some gains in the U.S. Senate; 2.) If there is a presidential race on the ballot, that same party must win the presidency.

Over the last 50 years those criteria leave us with seven wave elections: 1974, 1980, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2008, and 2010. So far, so good; even without our criteria, most observers would probably settle on those same elections.

So, did we see similar waves in Indiana in those years? Let's adapt our criteria a bit: 1.) The wave party must have a five-seat net gain in the Indiana House (20 out of 435 seats in the U.S. House is about 5%); 2.) The wave party must pick up at least one seat in the Indiana Senate; 3.) The wave party must win a majority of the

statewide executive offices on the ballot. Under these corresponding criteria, only 1974, 1980, 1994, and 2010 saw the wave wash upon our Hoosier shores.

In 1982, we saw Democrats pick up six seats in the Indiana House and three in the Indiana Senate, but they only won one of the three statewide executive races that year (additionally, the only partisan change in Indiana's congressional delegation was the loss of a seat through reapportionment, which meant the Democratic advantage declined from 6-5 to 5-5).

In 2006 and 2008 combined, we saw Democrats gain 52 seats in the U.S. House, but only three in the Indiana House (all in 2006, which was enough to give Democrats control of the chamber, but not in overwhelming fashion) and none in either cycle in the Indiana Senate. Meanwhile Republicans swept all statewide executive offices in those cycles. Even as Barack Obama became the first Democratic presidential candidate in a generation to carry the state in 2008, there was no gain for Democrats anywhere in the Statehouse.

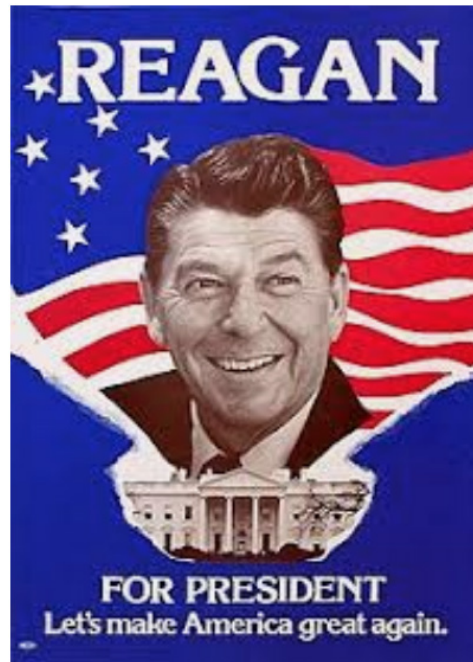
That's not to say state-level Democrats won't pick up seats in an environment that could produce a national-level wave, only that recent Democratic waves that upended Washington – with the exception of the Watergate-fueled wave in 1974 – haven't translated to Indianapolis.

But this isn't just a Democratic wave year phenomenon; if you look at all elections since 1970, there is very little statistical correlation in national and state legislative outcomes. On a scale of -1 (perfect negative correlation) to +1 (perfect positive correlation), comparing U.S. House to Indiana House outcomes yields a coefficient of 0.48. That indicates there may be some weak positive correlation,

but not much. Comparing the U.S. House to the Indiana Senate, or the U.S. Senate to either Indiana chamber, yields a result much closer to 0, which indicates virtually no correlation at all.

While this might seem counter-intuitive, it makes some sense on several levels. First, Indiana has long been a conservative, Republican state (even when it elects Democrats, they have typically been conservative Democrats). As much as anything, that probably explains why Republican wave years like 1980, 1994, and 2010 seem amplified at the Statehouse, while Democratic wave years like 1982, 2006, and 2008 have seem muted.

Second, the partisan lean also means that Repub-



The 1980 "Reagan Revolution" helped Dan Quayle upset Sen. Birch Bayh while John Hiler upset U.S. Rep. John Brademas.

licans have the upper-hand in drawing legislative maps; when Democrats have controlled the process for the Indiana House, the state's partisan demographics made it difficult to create a huge advantage. In fact, because Democrat-drawn maps tended to create a higher number of competitive districts rather than solidly Democratic districts, this also could explain why a Republican wave election would be amplified instead of muted.

Finally, it's worth noting that the dynamics that often create national waves just aren't present at the state level. Many times, for instance, the party out of power is aided by a high number of open seats in the U.S. House, such as the 36 open Republican-held seats this cycle caused by retiring members, many of which are competitive districts. Meanwhile, the Indiana House will see only six open Republican-held seats caused by retirements (Friend, Richardson, Beumer, Culver, Washburne, and Baird), most of which are fairly safe Republican seats.

Again, that's not to say state-level Democrats won't pick up seats. In 1974, the national environment bled over in a big way as Indiana Democrats netted 28 seats in the Indiana House (though it's worth noting that Republicans had picked up 19 seats in 1972 and held a 73-seat supermajority, so there was a bit of a perfect storm to flip so many seats in one election). With political polarization extremely high in 2018, it's not yet clear that the national environment would be enough to produce

a Watergate-level wave at the federal level, let alone the state level.

But history tells us that a 1982- or 2006-like outcome at the state level is more probable anyway. Even though it didn't resemble a wave, Democrats picked up three Indiana House seats in 2006, which was enough to take control of the chamber. So, while even a large national wave this year probably won't put control of the Indiana House in play, even a muted impact that leads to a small net gain of seats could be enough to break the Republican supermajority.

Meanwhile, the Indiana Senate is likely to be more immune to the national environment. If Democrats manage to win one Republican-held seat in the Indiana Senate, it would be the first time in 20 years they've done so; if they win more than one seat, it would be their first time since 1984. The same goes for the secretary of state, auditor and treasurer races on the ballot, which Democrats haven't managed to win since 1990, 1982, and 1970, respectively.

So, while the historical data may not give us a precise expectation for Indiana's state elections in 2018, it does provide guidance: If there is a national wave that favors Democrats, it's not unlikely we'll see some gains for Democrats at the Statehouse. But you should still bet against a state level wave. ❖

Foughty publishes at CapitolandWashington.com.

Holcomb makes hate crimes an issue

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Vandalism at a Carmel synagogue may have set off a new campaign issue after Gov. Eric Holcomb called for the passage of hate crime legislation in the upcoming 2019 session of the General Assembly.

His own Republican Party had been the obstacle in past years. On Monday, Holcomb said, "No law can stop evil, but we should be clear that our state stands with the victims and their voices will not be silenced," Holcomb said. "For that reason it is my intent that we get something done this next legislative session, so Indiana

can be one of 46 states with hate crimes legislation – and not one of five states without it."

Within hours, the issue cropped up in SD29, where Democrat J.D. Ford called on State Sen. Mike Delph to back hate crime legislation. "Talk is cheap, and we believe it is time for action - this heinous incident illustrates exactly why we must pass a hate crimes bill in Indiana,"

said Ford, who is in a rematch with Delph in one of the only districts represented by a Republican that Hillary Clinton carried in 2016. It was a statement co-authored by State Sen. Greg Taylor who had authored previous hate crime bills. "While Indiana remains one of five states in our country still without a hate crimes law, Mike Delph offers only his words in response. It is past time that we ensure that our laws protect all Hoosiers and reflect true Hoosier values. We are committed to working for a hate crimes bill, and we call on Mike Delph to put action behind his talk and join us."

Delph told Howey Politics Indiana on Tuesday that "anti-Semitism is a historic evil that demands immediate and absolute condemnation." Asked if he would support Holcomb's call for legislation, Delph told HPI, "I haven't seen his proposal." Told that it was "conceptual" at this point, Delph said, "The law must protect everyone equally." Late Tuesday afternoon, Delph tweeted, "If the Carmel Police Department or FBI are unable to identify the perpetrators in the Shaarey Tefillah security video tape, then I ask that they release the video to the public immediately so that we can quickly identify the individuals and bring them to justice."

It is the second time this summer that Holcomb has infused a social issue into the Hoosier body politick. In June, Holcomb and Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer attempted a more inclusive GOP convention marriage plat-



form plank, and not only was it soundly rejected by delegates, it incited talk of a 2020 primary challenge from Attorney General Curtis Hill by social conservatives before he faced allegations of sexual harassment.

Like Mitch Daniels, Holcomb is a governor willing to expend political capital on big items and concepts. The cross current comes from President Trump, who has embraced social outliers (read WaPo's Michael Gerson's column) of hate, intolerance and immorality, and has found a supplicant Republican Party embracing this cult of personality. In normal times, Holcomb's embrace for taking on hate would be a tipping point. But it might become an arduous lift.

House Speaker Brian Bosma, who emphatically stated at last fall's Chamber Legislation Preview luncheon that he believes current law suffices, is reevaluating. "The recent vandalism at the Congregation Shaarey Tefilla in Carmel is sickening, disheartening and unacceptable," Bosma said. "This summer, the Interim Study Committee on Corrections and Criminal Code will take another look at the issue of bias-motivated crimes and identify opportunities for legislative consensus. Indiana judges already have the ability to enhance sentences based on a criminal's motivation when presented with evidence of bias, but perhaps more needs to be done to clarify and highlight this existing provision."

Dave Bangert of the Lafayette Journal & Courier, quickly pressed area legislators on where they stood. State Sen. Ron Alting (R) would "absolutely" support a hate crime bill, as he did SB418. His Democratic opponent Sherry Shipley also supports. So would Rep. Sheila Klinker (D), who has sponsored past hate crime bills. Rep. Sally Siegrist (R) and Sen. Brian Buchanan (R) did not respond. Siegrist opponent Chris Campbell notes a "steady rise in hate-biased crimes" and would support. Reps. Don Lehe (R) and Sharon Negele (R) both noted that current Indiana code allows for tougher sentences for aggravating circumstances. Both are monitoring the summer study committee, with Negele suggesting Indiana should be "in sync" with the 45 states that have hate crime laws. Her opponent, Democrat Loretta Barnes, is "100% for" such a bill. And Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown (R), who possesses the most clout of this group, explained, "Those involved in the action, when charged, should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, which now includes aggravating factors. Additionally, I will listen to prosecutors, judges and advocates to support legislation allowing the courts for sentencing." Speaker Bosma and Brown are key voices as this progresses.

Democrats have lined up early. House Democratic Leader Terry Goodin said, "So we find ourselves in another situation where crimes are committed by cowards who



did not like the religion practiced by a group of people. In my field of education, this is what would be called a teaching moment. The natural starting point would be a discussion of the need for a hate crimes law in Indiana, which is one of only five states that doesn't have a law that

targets crimes committed because of race, color, national origin, gender, or sexual orientation. I am delighted to see that Gov. Holcomb recognizes the importance of acting, and has announced he will pursue hate crimes legislation in the 2019 session. I join him in that call. But this is Indiana, where we find it easier to talk about stopping hate crimes instead of actually doing something about it."

Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane added, "While we are encouraged by Gov. Holcomb's statement today to take a lead on hate crimes legislation, the fact of the matter is that Senate Democrats have led on this issue for many years. We have persistently pursued bias-motivated crime legislation in the Indiana Senate, and each year our legislation is ignored by the majority party with promises of future consideration. How long does Indiana have to remain one of only five states without increased penalties for a crime when it can be proven that the victim's race, religion, sexual orientation, or other real or perceived characteristic was the basis for the assault?"

"I hope Gov. Holcomb has better luck convincing the majority members of the House and Senate that the time for this law is long overdue," Lanane said.

That process begins in the prism of not only an election, but a potential wave for Democrats.

The lingering showdown with Attorney General Hill, who has rebuffed calls by Holcomb and Bosma to resign due to the sexual harassment allegations, has created a fissure within the GOP. Social conservatives like Jim Bopp Jr., have formed a defense fund for Hill. In an election where Republicans face voter suppression prospects, the entry of hate crime legislation becomes another potential wild card.

Hill's election impact

University of Indianapolis political scientist Laura Wilson told Indiana Public Media that Republicans up and down the ballot will face questions about Hill. "A number of people may say, 'Hey do you tolerate this behavior or do you truly believe in his innocence?' They're going to question what your motivation is," Wilson explained. The legislature could convene a special session to remove Hill from office and resolve the issue quickly. "This isn't dealing with the actual laws. This isn't dealing with the things, I think, Hoosiers really care about in terms of their elected leaders."

U.S. Senate

Obama, Kochs missing from race

Former President Obama endorsed 81 candidates for the mid-terms, but missing was U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly. But Obama's team said this is the "first wave" of endorsements. It comes after the Koch Brothers network passed on supporting Republican nominee Mike Braun.

Kavanaugh enters the race

Sen. Donnelly is scheduled to meet with Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh on Aug. 15. It comes as Politico reported that Minority Leader Chuck Schumer has called on moderate Democrats to "keep their powder dry" in order to put more pressure on potential Republican dissenters. That strategy had an early return when West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin met with Kavanaugh on Monday, refused to commit and asked for a second meeting. Republicans have been critical of Donnelly for not scheduling a meeting with Kavanaugh until mid-August. Braun said he has "no doubt Donnelly will wait until the liberal wing of his party gives him permission to support Judge Kavanaugh." Chairman Hupfer accuses of Donnelly of "following party boss Schumer's orders. That is deceptive, and an approach that Hoosiers have come to expect out of the Washington swamp, not from those who should be our voice. Judge Kavanaugh is a proven jurist with impeccable credentials, and he must be confirmed to the U.S. Supreme Court."

Walter sees Donnelly vulnerable

Election analyst Amy Walter said Tuesday that Sens. Donnelly and Heidi Heitkamp (N.D.) are the two most vulnerable Senate Democrats running for reelection in November's midterms. "Between Indiana and North Dakota, those two are really, really tough," Walter told 'Rising' co-hosts Krystal Ball and Buck Sexton on 'Rising.' Walter, the national editor of the Cook Political Report, points out that Donnelly isn't "brand name" famous like some other incumbents, such as West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin (D). "For Indiana, because Joe Donnelly...he's not a brand name the same way that Manchin is," Walter said. "It's a much bigger state and many more media markets than West Virginia."

Debate details set

The Indiana Debate Commission offered up 450 public tickets, all of which sold in under four hours, for one of two U.S. Senate debates scheduled for one of the most important mid-term races in the nation. The live debate – which will also be carried by C-SPAN and livestreamed online by the commission on its website

– is scheduled for 7 p.m. EDT Tuesday, Oct. 30, at Toby Theater at Newfields (Indianapolis Museum of Art). All three candidates on the ballot – incumbent Democrat Donnelly, Republican Braun and Libertarian Lucy Brenton – are participating. "Since our first debate in 2008, we have had debates in venues open to the public every election year," said commission President Gerry Lanosga. "We're committed to making sure voter interests are primary and that questions submitted by the public will be asked of the candidates." The Indy Chamber, which will hold a live watch party for its membership in an adjacent space at Newfields for its popular HobNob event, is underwriting the event. AARP-Indiana, one of the founding member groups of the commission, is providing financial support. WFYI-TV is managing the broadcast production. The candidates have also agreed to an Oct. 8 debate to be held in Northwest Indiana. The debate commission is finalizing details and will announce a location and ticketing details for the event soon.

Donnelly on short term ACA plans

Sen. Donnelly said short-term plans approved by the Trump administration continue efforts to undermine health insurance markets and are expected to raise health care costs for Hoosiers, while failing to offer essential coverage and protections for those with pre-existing conditions. Donnelly said, "These plans will allow insurance companies to deny coverage to those with pre-existing conditions, raise premiums for Hoosier families, and continue the Administration's efforts to undermine health care markets. I continue to believe that rather than taking harmful actions the Administration should work together in a bipartisan manner to make quality health care more affordable and accessible."

Donnelly campaign unhacked

National Intelligence Director Dan Coats has repeatedly warned that the Kremlin will assault the 2018 mid-term elections. The Daily Beast reported Friday that the Russian intelligence agency behind the 2016 election cyberattacks targeted Sen. Claire McCaskill's reelection campaign. Has Sen. Joe Donnelly's campaign been targeted? "As far as we know, no," said campaign spokesman



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Will Baskin-Gerwitz this morning. Does the Donnelly campaign have the ability to detect a hack? "We have cyber security safeguards in place," he said, adding the Donnelly campaign is working with the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee on that front. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

Congress

2nd CD: Hall cites pension decline

At a press conference held today in front of Honeywell Aerospace, Mel Hall joined UAW Local 9 retirees, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, State Rep. Joe Taylor, and local labor leaders to call on Honeywell to keep their promises. "In Indiana, we keep our promises. These are hardworking Hoosiers who dedicated their life to this company. A company that promised them the health care they earned, and now they need to keep that promise," said Hall. "Jackie Walorski has accepted tens of thousands of dollars from Honeywell to fund her campaigns. She's a career politician who has gone Washington, and left hardworking Hoosier families behind." **Horse Race Status:** Likely Walorski.

3rd CD: Tritch picks up endorsements

Democrat Courtney Tritch picked up endorsements from the United Auto Workers and the Network for Public Education Action. "One of her highest priorities is fully supporting our public schools," the public education advocacy organization said about Tritch. "Strong public schools are one of the bedrocks of American society, and providing adequate funding is essential to ensure that both our teachers and students have the resources they need to succeed," Tritch said in a statement. Tritch, a Fort Wayne marketing consultant, is challenging Republican Rep. Jim Banks of Columbia City in the Nov. 6 general election.

Horse Race Status: Safe Banks.

6th CD: Pence sends \$250k to House GOP

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy secured commitments for \$10 million from House Republicans this morning for Protect the House, his joint fundraising committee with Vice President Mike Pence, which is designed to support vulnerable Republicans (Politico). Two candidates who have not been elected gave. Greg Pence, Mike's brother, gave \$250,000. And Dan Crenshaw, a Texas Republican who leadership has high hopes for, gave \$100,000. Pence faces Democrat Jeanine Lake. **Horse**

Race Status: Safe Pence.

9th CD: Forbes interviews Hollingsworth

Erich Reimer interviewed U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth for an article posted on the Forbes website. The pair chatted about how the congressman's prior business career informs his current work in Congress and the kind of change he hopes to bring to DC. In reply to a question regarding the reason Hollingsworth decided to seek

public office, the congressman replied, "I feel like a lot of politicians have this inspiration story but mine was a frustration story, a deep frustration that America should be doing better than it was three to four years ago when the economy was growing at an anemic pace and when people were feeling unsafe from a world in which more and more threats were arising. That deep feeling that we can do better as a country, that we should be doing better, and frankly that Americans from sea to shining sea deserved better than what we were getting is what pushed me to run for Congress - that feeling that we should protect and enable more Americans to create a better future for themselves." Hollingsworth faces Democrat Liz Watson. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Hollingsworth.

General Assembly

Sen. Zay denied racism in tweet

State Sen. Andy Zay said "racism is not real" and lamented the plight of the white male in a three-year-old Facebook discussion that surfaced this week online (Kelly, [Fort Wayne Journal Gazette](#)). Zay was not a state senator when the private debate occurred, which has since become public. But he is running for reelection to the Senate District 17 seat in the fall, facing Democrat Gary Snyder. "Racism is not real. The biggest minority class in America is the white male," he said in the direct message conversation. "More white males are refused to college, medical schools and law schools than any other group. Yes there are more, but these so called minorities are given way more opportunity to succeed and be part of successful programs than the average white male." The other person in the conversation then said, "Are you serious right now? Do you realize that everything I'm telling you is getting tweeted and sent to every reporter I know. You are a horrible bigot." Zay sent a statement to The Journal Gazette Monday saying: "Racism is not a topic that should be taken lightly, and I should have been more careful with my words in the discussion that has been posted online by others. My remarks were part of a much broader discussion on the American Dream. I believe every Hoosier and every person should be treated equally regardless of race. I agree with the words of Martin Luther King Jr. that all people should be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin."

Statewides

Harper talks election security

Election security and oversight was the main focus of Jim Harper's appearance in Fort Wayne on Wednesday (Gong, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Harper, the Democratic candidate for Indiana's secretary of state, aims to implement a verified paper trail for each ballot cast, as well as a uniform auditing system. "Questions surrounding election security at the national level and most recently in

our own state should prompt immediate action to ensure each vote is secure," Harper said in a statement. "Voters expect the secretary of state to use all resources possible to verify that our democratic process is intact and that's exactly what I'm calling for." Harper is challenging incumbent Republican Secretary of State Connie Lawson. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Lawson.

National

Trump under water with key groups

Axios and SurveyMonkey will be tracking five key voter groups through the Nov. 6 midterms and into President Trump's reelection race. "Our opening data is a stark sign of the narrow path for the GOP in 2018 and for Trump in 2020. The most important group to watch will be #NeverHillary independents," Axios' Alexi McCammond writes: These swing voters (who supported both Barack Obama and Donald Trump) narrowly disapprove of Trump's performance, according in the Axios-SurveyMonkey poll.

It's also not a good sign for Republicans that Trump's disapproval ratings are high among suburban white women, a critical swing voter group. Nearly half strongly disapprove of Trump, but they're almost evenly divided between Democrats (44%) and Republicans (42%). They care a lot about health care and immigration — two of the biggest issues that are likely to drive Democrats to the polls: The other groups lean pretty much the way you'd expect: Rural Americans are overwhelmingly white (76%), and many love Trump (38% strongly approve).

Trump becoming 'major drag' for GOP

Fresh NBC-Marist polls published yesterday show that Trump has become a major drag on Republican candidates in three Midwestern states that are heavily dependent on agriculture and host marquee races this year (Washington Post). The president's job approval rating is 36% in both Michigan and Wisconsin, states he narrowly carried in 2016. It's 38% in Minnesota, which he came within two percentage points of winning. ❖

Watson finds funding traction in 9th CD

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – In the context of the mid-terms and congressional races, all eyes are on Indiana's 2nd and 9th CDs where Democrats Mel Hall and Liz Watson have raised significant money in their challenges to U.S. Reps. Jackie Walorski and Trey Hollingsworth.



Last week, Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball moved both the 2nd and 9th CDs from the "Safe Republican" column into the "Likely Republican" column. And a fresh spate of polling shows that President Trump has alienated suburban women over the tax reforms and the migrant family separations as well as his controversies with porn stars and Playmates. While the 9th CD is +13 Republican on the Cook Partisan Index, it is home to two pockets of suburban women, in Johnson County near Indianapolis and Floyd and Clark counties, north of Louisville.

Watson posted \$501,065 for the second quarter on her July 15 FEC report, raising \$1,072,696 for the cycle with an ending balance of \$471,347. Rep. Hollingsworth raised \$228,942 for the second quarter and \$1,150,272 for the cycle, and had \$608,575

cash on hand.

Democrats have held the 9th CD for 44 out of the last 53 years; current Indiana Senator Todd Young served three terms in the district, while Mike Sodrel and Hollingworth served one term each. While it has been reliably Republican over the last decade, a candidate like Watson, a former Democratic researcher on Capitol Hill who came back to Bloomington to teach at Indiana University, has a chance to pull off an upset in what could be a developing Democratic wave environment. It will be tough, since Rep. Hollingworth and his father pumped more than \$4 million of their personal fortune to win the nomination against Re-

publicans Greg Zoeller, Erin Houchin and Brent Waltz in 2016, then defeating Democrat Shelli Yoder in the general. A Watson victory would be considered a true upset.

She was endorsed by former Reps. Lee Hamilton and Baron Hill, and finds former 4th CD congresswoman Jill Long Thompson on the IU faculty, where she draws on their collective campaign experiences.

HPI sat down with Watson at the Hyatt Hotel in Indianapolis last Friday for this HPI Interview where she assailed Holling-



sworth as a “carpetbagger” who “bought” the 9th CD in 2016. She also called him a “coward” for remaining silent on Russian assaults on the U.S. election system.

HPI: Tell me where you think your campaign is at this point in the cycle?

Watson: We’re running a really strong campaign to win back Indiana’s 9th District, to stop the war on working families and have a representative who will fight for Hoosiers, and who is a Hoosier. I’m Liz Watson, running in the 9th and I’m taking on Trey Hollingsworth, the guy from Tennessee who carpetbaggered in, between him and his dad plunked down \$4.5 million in the last election and took advantage of the down-ticket Trump effect to buy themselves a seat in Congress. I think the race is going really strong for us. We’ve seen Sabato just moved our numbers, we’re now the only Red to Blue Race (by the DCCC) in Indiana. That’s a recognition of the incredible grassroots campaign we’re running. We were able to knock on 20,339 doors in our primary campaign. I taking door-knocking seriously. We’re going to surpass that in the general election. We have an army of volunteers of folks who know how much is at stake in November. It’s a time when people are doing everything they can to get out and talk to friends and neighbors about the importance of voting. They realize elections matter.

HPI: We’re seeing real financial traction with your campaign, along with Courtney Tritch in the 3rd and Mel Hall in the 2nd. Is raising money what you thought it was going to be like, or has it been easier?

Watson: As the only Red to Blue candidate, folks are pretty excited about my campaign. We raised a half million dollars in the last quarter. That was double what Trey raised. The most important thing about that was upwards of 80% of our donations were from individuals and the rest was from labor unions or grassroots organization. I don’t take any corporate PAC money. If you look at Hollingsworth’s donations, they were upwards of 80% corporate or PAC money and almost no individual support. We’ve had over 48,000 individual donations to our campaign. He’s completely financed by Wall Street, giant corporations and special interests, and it’s reflected in his votes in Congress. I am supported by hard-working Hoosiers who are coming together to take back a seat and get somebody who’s going to fight for us and not that 1% billionaire class.

HPI: Are you expecting dad to come in with another one or two million this cycle? I’m not talking about your dad, but his dad.

Watson: That’s funny. My dad is a pretty good babysitter for my children, so when we’re on the campaign trail it’s very helpful. Trey’s dad did plunk down a lot of

money into his Super PAC and Trey himself wrote himself a \$3 million check as well. We know he has the capacity to do that. That’s why we’re working so hard to raise the money to defeat him. It’s really important to get our message out to Hoosiers. It’s a tragedy that Hoosiers are being ripped off by a multi-millionaire from Tennessee who purchased his own seat in Congress and is using it as his own personal cash register. You think about what he’s done since he got there, he spent \$4.5 million on the seat. And \$4.5 million is exactly what he got in the tax cut from passing the tax scam in the dead of night in December. That’s the return on his investment he’s already recouped. That’s why he is going to go back and double his money. We’re not going to let him. And that was the single largest tax cut to any member of the House. It went to our representative, while bringing no money back to the district.

HPI: Do you hear the carpetbagger sentiment a lot when you talk to voters? From Republican voters?

Watson: Oh, yeah. I was at a very large meeting today at a union hall and I got up and talked and was talking about the importance of having candidates who are going to fight for working people and working families. Someone said as I sat down, “Go get that carpetbagger.” So, yeah.

HPI: Are you micro targeting your base and independents? Or are you going to Republican households?

Watson: We have a message that resonates across the electorate, with voters who want health care, to make sure they can fill their prescriptions, who want to solve the opioid crisis, who want to make sure labor unions, the backbone of the middle class, can survive in

this country. We want to make sure our public schools are strong for our kids. So that’s a message we share with voters and that’s how voters who have never voted before have responded. They show up to my town halls. I have hosted town halls across the district on issues that matter to Hoosiers in their kitchen table struggles, in their daily lives, and folks show up who are not necessarily political. They are showing up to talk about their problems and we need to work together to solve them. Now my opponent hasn’t held a single town hall and, in fact, cancelled the one and only town hall he was supposed to hold when I announced I was going. That was the town hall before the vote to give 83% of the benefits of tax bill to the top 1%, to go after Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security and drive a \$1.5 trillion hole in our deficit. He voted for that, and he refused to meet with us first.

HPI: Rep. Hollingsworth cited a “security” concern with that town hall. Was there a security threat?

Watson: I worked very hard to run that down. I certainly wasn’t going to show up with my supporters if



that was the case because I wouldn't want to put anyone in harm's way. I could find no evidence.

HPI: You have touted your union backing, and yet in 2016 we saw a lot of union members who voted for Donald Trump here in Indiana. Are you sensing any erosion in the union support for President Trump?

Watson: I'm sensing a lot of support for me, no matter who people voted for at the presidential level. When I talk with men and women in labor unions to fight back against right-to-work legislation that Trey Hollingsworth supports, when I talk about the need to maintain safety and health protections on the job, when I talk about registered union membership which is a path to the middle class in Southern Indiana, those are things people want to fight for. Those are things I have been fighting for.

HPI: What kind of bumps in pay checks are people saying they're getting due to the tax reforms? I am asking that question to all sorts of different folks around the state this year?

Watson: One guy I heard, who was filling up his tank of gas, "There went my tax cut." While Trey Hollingsworth got \$4.5 million. We want fair tax cuts for working and middle class families. What we're seeing from this tax law is that wages have taken a nose dive. In the second quarter hourly workers' pay took a 9.5% dive overnight, according to Bloomberg. Since the tax law we're seeing hourly workers pay go down. This trickle down economic

idea has never worked. This idea that working people were going to get a raise, they haven't seen a big bump in their paycheck. The truth is hourly workers' wages haven't gone up for a very long time. Most people are living paycheck to paycheck. A lot of people haven't seen a raise. This tax cut is about the 1% and there was this illusion this was about the middle class. This was about making sure that Trey Hollingsworth and his millionaire and billionaire friends could buy another yacht. Plain and simple. I think we ought to be about restoring the middle class in this country.

HPI: What are voters telling you about Obamacare?

Watson: Guess what? I have some bad news for you. In Southern Indiana next year, premiums are set to rise to \$2,200 for the average family of four. What that is about is the actions this Congress has taken by repealing the individual coverage mandate and trying to break the ACA in various ways, it's resulted in premiums skyrocketing. We know there's a big need to improve on the ACA, but instead of trying to improve, they're sabotaging it and breaking it. We need to cover the 48,000 uninsured in our district. We need to bring down the health care costs, we need to bring down the cost of prescriptions. We need to do those things but instead of doing that they're trying to yank our health care away. Trey Hollingsworth took a vote to take health care away from 300,000 Hoosiers without

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HPI: Getting rid of the death tax and the Obamacare individual mandate are big applause lines for even middle-class Republicans. Is it starting to sink in that those on the health exchanges, because Congress didn't do anything to evolve the ACA, is that hitting pocketbooks now?

Watson: People are very worried about having Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security stripped away from them. They know this Congress is doing everything they can to line their pockets and they're going to take away benefits for middle-class families that we earned in order to hand over giant gifts to the 1%, in order to line their warchests, to satisfy K Street lobbyists. Trey Hollingsworth is in bed with K Street. It's clear. He will introduce any bill they bring to him. He introduced the payday loan bill to allow big banks to issue payday loans at exorbitant rates. How is that helping middle-class families? It doesn't. It helps the big banks. Who are Trey Hollingsworth's constituents? Who is he answering to? He answers to Wall Street, the big banks, insurance companies. Just look at who writes his campaign checks and then you'll understand why these are the votes he takes. He fights against everything that would help working class families.

HPI: Has Rep. Hollingsworth agreed to debate?

Watson: No, he has refused. We asked him to debate in all 13 counties in the district and he has refused. We are starting to answer invitations and what I'm hearing is he hasn't responded to any of these invitations.

HPI: Is he doing any joint appearances with you?

Watson: I have invited Trey Hollingsworth to join me. I think it's important for people to hear a clear choice. They deserve to hear from their representative. He hasn't held any. He has not responded to a single invitation. There is a public outcry. The Herald-Times just wrote a piece calling for him to debate. He's afraid. He's afraid of his constituents. He does not want to have an open meeting with the public because he knows he's going to be held accountable. He thinks he can buy a second term to Congress.

HPI: What is your Capitol Hill experience?

Watson: I'm very proud of the work I've done for Hoosier families. I worked as a senior staffer on jobs policies for the Education and Labor Committee for Democrats. I fought for the people to come together to bargain for their fair share. I fought to get more Americans overtime pay. I wrote the Working Families Agenda for the U.S. Congress. I led the development of legislation to make the minimum wage a living wage again. I was fighting for working families to get ahead. I was fighting for clean water and clean air protections.

HPI: Do you teach at IU?

Watson: I taught public law. I taught a course in lawmaking and how Congress works. I also taught discrimination law at the law school. Bloomington is my home. I'm a fifth-generation Hoosier. What generation Tennessean is Trey Hollingsworth? Have you found out?

HPI: I have not asked that. Do you know?

Watson: I don't. My roots in Indiana go back to the Civil War when my great-great grandfather fought for the Union. My dad was the first in his family to go to college. He went to Indiana University on the GI Bill. That idea that we ought to invest in creating opportunity is really important to me. That investment in my family propelled us into the middle class. I got to grow up in a middle-class



Former congressmen Lee Hamilton (left) and Baron Hill endorsed Liz Watson earlier this summer.

life. After my dad served in the Navy, he ended up teaching at IU for many, many years.

HPI: I know you're trying to localize this race. I wrote last week that this is going to be a referendum on President Trump. He dominates things. He dominates the HPI Daily Wire more than any other politician since we began publishing that in 2000. He dominates network coverage and cable news. Talk about the perceptions of Donald Trump.

Watson: Some of the things we're seeing, about the Russian interference in our elections, these are not partisan issues. This is about the integrity of our democracy. It takes all of us standing up and saying, "We need to investigate this. We need to stop that interference." We need to ensure we are having free, open and fair elections and that process has integrity. Trey Hollingsworth won't stand up. Dan Coats has stood up. Lots of Republicans have stood up and said that. Trey Hollingsworth is silent. If you're silent when your democracy is under attack by a foreign power, you don't deserve to be in office.

HPI: A good part of my career has been covering Hoosier internationalists like Lee Hamilton, Tim Roemer, Richard Lugar, Robert Orr, and Dan Coats. I'm stunned at what I'm seeing from the Republican Party on the various Russian issues.

Watson: These are things that anyone who believes in the integrity of our democracy, anyone who believes in government of the people, for the people and by the people are going to stand up and say, "We need to make sure this is fully investigated." Trey Hollingsworth is a coward. He has said nothing.

HPI: Does the Mueller probe come up when you go door to door? Do people describe it as a "witch hunt" or do you sense open minds, even with Republicans?

Watson: People are very concerned. But the number one issue I hear about in the district is, "How am I going to fill my prescriptions? What am I going to do for my kids who are struggling with drug abuse? Who is going to help create a strong economy in Martinsville, in Marengo, so my kids don't have to move away? Or go to

Louisville for work because there's nothing to do here? That's what people are worried about. They want to make sure their kids can go to college and not be trapped in a lifetime of debt. They want to know if the next generation is going to be able to buy a home and have a secure retirement so they can have a dignified life. That's what they're worried about.

HPI: What can we expect from your campaign over the next three months?

Watson: You can expect to see me and an army of volunteers at your door. I believe that when we get out there, when we communicate, when we talk about having an Indiana in which no one is left behind, about having a representative who understands that the House of Representatives is the people's house, that's when we win. ❖

Mayor Buttigieg should run for president

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg should run for president. Here's why: He would have nothing to lose. He potentially would have a lot to gain.



Buttigieg, I think, will run for president. And will not win. Nothing to lose? But won't win? Is there a conflict in that analysis? No. Buttigieg twice before has won by losing. He could again.

In 2010, Buttigieg, then just 28 years old, was the Democratic nominee for state treasurer. He had little name recognition initially even in hometown South

Bend. He had scant financing for a statewide race and no chance, losing amid a Republican landslide to Richard Mourdock. Yes, that Richard Mourdock, the guy who went on to self-destruct in a U.S. Senate race against Joe Donnelly.

For state treasurer, Mourdock couldn't lose and Buttigieg couldn't win in a Republican year in which no Democrat running statewide even came close

Except, Buttigieg won by losing. In running a race that more prominent and experienced Democrats wouldn't risk, Buttigieg impressed party officials with his intellect and ability to articulate issues.

He especially impressed important St. Joseph County Democrats who were looking for a nominee for mayor of South Bend in 2011. Steve Luecke, longest serving mayor in South Bend history, wasn't going to run again. Who would be a good Democratic candidate? A good mayor? Maybe Buttigieg? After all, he was a

Rhodes Scholar with an impressive resume from valedictorian at South Bend's St. Joseph High School to consultant with McKinsey & Co., a prestigious global consulting firm.

Buttigieg won the Democratic nomination for mayor in a race with formidable opponents. He won big that fall with 74% of the vote, and even bigger in his 2015 reelection, 80.4%.

Then he lost again, early in 2017 in seeking to be Democratic national chairman. And again, he won by losing. On the day of the selection by members of the Democratic National Committee, Buttigieg clearly lacked the votes to win, as the members were splitting along commitments from the old Bernie vs. Hillary fight. Buttigieg dropped out. Tom Perez won.

But Buttigieg again had been impressive, making a name nationally. He had won endorsement from three former national chairmen and from key figures in the winning campaigns of President Barack Obama. One national political analyst, Chris Cillizza, wrote that Buttigieg also was a winner with the "buzz he clearly built in the race."



If Buttigieg sought a third term as mayor next year, he would again win big. He has a formidable reelection campaign fund and remains popular as South Bend's image finally turns positive after decades-long doldrums from Studebaker's automotive demise.

Another term as mayor? He likes the job, but what else does he have to prove as mayor? Is it time to seek national challenges?

If Buttigieg runs for the Democratic presidential nomination, he would be impressive in debates before the Iowa and New Hampshire contests. Maybe beyond. Think of the many horrible performances in past presidential nomination debates. Get the point? Buttigieg might not win in Iowa or New Hampshire or anywhere. Yet, he could again win by losing. He could attract more favorable national attention and impress Democratic leaders, including the eventual party nominee for president.

Leading to what? Who knows? Certainly, however, something challenging and rewarding. No unemployment.

If a Democrat wins the presidency in 2020, could Buttigieg be named to a powerful cabinet position? Or something else challenging on the national scene? If President Trump wins reelection, could Buttigieg emerge as a leading Democratic spokesman and stronger prospect for a future presidential race?

Nobody knows.

But Buttigieg should give it a try. He should run for president. He would have nothing to lose. Potentially, he would have a lot to gain and a lot to offer. ❖

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

Indiana manufacturing is far from dead

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – It was commonplace for Hoosier boosters and politicians in the 20th century to proclaim, "Farming is the backbone of the Indiana economy." I loved to hear that statement. It opened the door for me to say sweetly, "Every corpse has a backbone."



For about 100 years, the beating heart of Indiana's economy was manufacturing. Today, our state and national economies are more diversified and therefore depend less on manufacturing than in the past. The same is true for farming.

In 1929, manufacturing accounted for 35% of all earnings by individuals in Indiana; farming was just 12% of total earning in the state. Nationwide, manufacturing was 26% of all earnings

while farming was only 11%. That's not the way our folklore would have it and folklore still has considerable sway in political circles.

Manufacturing's 35% of Indiana's earnings was the 9th highest in the nation. By 2017, manufacturing had "fallen" to 21% of the state's earnings, but that made Indiana first among the states. First! They give blue ribbons for first place; it's the badge of honor for the victorious.

Nationally, manufacturing declined from more than a quarter of all earnings to less than a tenth. That's the story we've all heard and repeated. The decline of manufacturing has been wept over and the industry has been

given a splendid wake.

While many bemoaned and others decried the fate of manufacturing in Indiana, that sector outperformed its national counterpart. Gross Domestic Product for U.S. manufacturing advanced by 21% in the past 10 years but by 28% in Indiana. Nationally, the contribution to the growth of GDP made by manufacturing was just 8%. In the Hoosier state, manufacturing accounted for 25% of total GDP growth. In no other state did manufacturing do better.

What's good for the industry, however, may not be as good for the workers. The number of jobs in manufacturing nationally declined from 2007 to 2017. It was a very small 0.3% reduction (only 18,300 jobs). However, the average weekly earnings of production workers grew by a tepid 0.7% per year. Simultaneously, earnings for all employees advanced at twice that rate. Inflation, averaging 1.7% per year, ate those minor gains.

Wasn't improved technology to mean job losses accompanied by higher wages for those prepared for the new world order? The share of GDP paid as earnings to workers, across all sectors in all states, was 61% in 2017. In Indiana, it was 59%. Perhaps that's a small sacrifice willingly made by those who delight in pierogis and per-simmon pudding.

Yet, in manufacturing, the share of GDP allocated for earnings was 48% in the U.S. and a surprising 42% in Indiana, the eighth lowest in the nation.

We may be "A State That Works," but what do we get for it? ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. His views can be followed on "Who gets what?" wherever podcasts are available. Or reach him at atmortonjmarcus@yahoo.com

It's time for Indiana to ban fireworks

By RICH JAMES

SOUTH BEND – Way back when, if you knew someone driving to Florida for part of the winter, you asked them to stop in Tennessee and bring back some fireworks. That was the only way to get your hands on fireworks back then.

Neither Indiana nor its neighbors allowed the sale of fireworks. Illinois still bans the sale and use of fireworks. That ended in the 1980s when Indiana Republicans got cute – and very greedy – and legalized the sale of fireworks.



To get the naysayers to go along with the sale of fireworks, the new law prohibited the use of fireworks in Indiana even though they were sold in the Hoosier state.

The new law also stipulated that fireworks outlets had to be open year-round. That didn't work because fireworks companies didn't want to spend the money to keep their stores open all year since sales were pretty much limited to the days around the Fourth of July. And, the law wasn't enforced.

The charade ended in 2006 when Gov. Mitch Daniels signed a bill legalizing the use of fireworks in the state. Daniels got the job done by tacking a 5% tax on the sale of fireworks with the proceeds going to a firefighters training academy. The tax brought in \$2.7 million during the fiscal year that ended June 30.

The anti-fireworks people are once again energized for a number of reasons. Scott McKee, a 37-year-old Hebron man was killed this year when a fireworks exploded prematurely. In all of 2017, 238 Hoosiers were injured while using fireworks.

Just a few days ago in Portage, police told complaining residents that they could do little to enforce the law specifying the days and hours fireworks can be used.

With the arrival of August, the illegal discharge of fireworks has slowed. Statute indicates that July 9 is the last day to legally shoot off fireworks until New Year's Eve. Isn't it about time that Indiana did the right thing and made the sale of fireworks illegal?

The storefronts along U.S. 30 in Lake County and Interstate 94 in Porter County are closed and are little more than eyesores except for the month leading up to the Fourth of July.

Surely, Indiana – with a surplus of almost \$2 billion – can afford to lose the tax money it makes off the sale of fireworks. And the state also can afford to fund its own firefighters training academy.

Rich James has been writing about politics and government for almost 40 years. He is retired from the Post-Tribune, a newspaper born in Gary. ❖

If your city isn't thriving, big problems

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – The economic expansion is now a full nine years old, and we are less than a year from the longest period of uninterrupted economic growth in US history. This moment of good economic news holds some insight for many cities and towns in Indiana. It is, quite simply, if your community isn't thriving, your problems are far deeper than you suppose. Let me explain.



Across the Midwest, few metropolitan areas of more than a half million residents have lost population in this century. In contrast, a full 24 out of 56 Midwestern metropolitan areas with less than a half million residents have lost population. Since 2000, the big cities with more than half million residents grew by 9.8%, while smaller cities grew by an

average of less than 2%.

The list of distressed places is a roll call of Indiana cities. Anderson, Evansville, Muncie, Michigan City, Hammond, Gary, LaPorte, Terre Haute and Kokomo are all losing population. The situation is even more dire in smaller cities and towns across the state. The challenge of population loss is pushing us ever closer to a reckoning about priorities in the urban places of the Midwest. One of the chief issues in this reckoning will be the prioritization of communities within cities. Housing is an issue that ties much of this together.

I will address housing issues in several columns in the coming months. In every shrinking city there is an excess supply of housing. In every city mentioned above, at least one in seven homes is vacant or abandoned. In some neighborhoods, nearly half of homes are vacant. These places collect few tax dollars but consume vast amounts of municipal spending.

These excess properties crush housing values across a county and can push a town into a downward spiral of property valuations from which there is no observable bottom. Five decades of decline offers residents of many of these communities nothing but "cheap rent."

Unfortunately, almost all housing support for distressed cities targets the very worst neighborhoods. For

most of them, it is too late. It is almost a certainty that no one will ever again inhabit most of the surplus housing in Midwestern cities. It is time for a more cost-effective triage of public spending. For declining cities, the emphasis must turn to saving middle class communities.

Across the Midwest, the 1940s through 1970s saw the emergence of many middle class neighborhoods that were rich in private amenities like sidewalks, parks and pools. Local schools often served as a critical public amenity, providing playgrounds and open greenspace. These places are not always popular with urbanists, but they generate much of the tax revenue for cities, placing few demands on public services.

Today, many of these middle class communities are beginning to fray with population decline. While the homes themselves remain quite viable, declining school-age population has cost many of them their local elementary schools. In many places, private infrastructure, such as sidewalks, parks and pools are in disrepair, and public infrastructure like parks and trails is scarce. These places risk precipitous decline without some infrastructure assistance.

The political environment for supporting middle class communities is tough. Poor places have significant needs, and newer, more affluent communities often

capture the attention of local elected officials. Therefore, it takes some political courage to invest public dollars in places where the decline is not always yet visible. Yet, these are the places where small investments yield big rewards.

Older middle class neighborhoods pay huge taxes and consume few public services. Even small investments in trails, parks, pools and the like can sustain or increase the net tax revenue from these places by increasing home value. There is an abundance of high-quality studies reporting large (5-15%) increases in home values from key local amenities of these types.

Viable middle class communities are the source of tax dollars and population across the Midwest. As voters, we should help our elected officials better appreciate these places, and help them take the risk of sustaining our middle class neighborhoods through the 21st Century. For cities that neglect these places, the future prospects are nothing but dismal.

Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University.

Democrats still face a difficult map

By **GEOFFREY SKELLEY**
Sabato's Crystal Ball

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – As the Crystal Ball has noted repeatedly since early 2017, the Senate elections in the 2018 cycle feature two contrasting forces: highly polarized, partisan voting in elections running up against a tendency for non-presidential party incumbents to do well in midterms, even in states that backed the other party in the most recent presidential election. With 10 Democratic Senate incumbents running for reelection in states that President Donald Trump carried in 2016, the force that proves to be more unstoppable or immovable will be key to determining the majority in Congress' upper chamber in November. After all, if voters hypothetically were to align their states' Senate seats with their 2016 presidential party winner this fall, Democrats would lose 10 seats they currently hold while Republicans would lose just one, handing the GOP a net gain of nine seats. That theoretical result would give Republicans a 60-40 filibuster-proof edge.

Yet we know that such an outcome is highly unlikely at this point. While Republicans are favored to retain control of the chamber, and possibly gain seats in the

process, Democrats do have a chance of winning a slim majority this November. To win 51 or 52 seats, Democrats would have to hold most or all of those 10 seats in Trump-won states while also adding one or two other seats in states the president carried -- Arizona and Tennessee -- while also winning the lone Clinton-won state the GOP is defending this cycle -- Nevada. Although this is not a likely outcome, the fact we can credibly discuss it as a possible result is evidence that the historical trend of non-presidential party incumbents winning most midterm races may prove to be the stronger force once again in 2018. It is also evidence of the historical tendency for competitive open-seat contests (e.g. Arizona and Tennessee) and races in seats held by presidential party incumbents in states that lean toward the non-presidential party (e.g. Nevada) to sometimes swing to the out-party in midterm cycles. This article will dig into some of these trends and will place 2018 in the context of past contests, from the first midterm cycle in 1914 on.

Midterms usually feature more split-ticket outcomes than previous presidential cycle

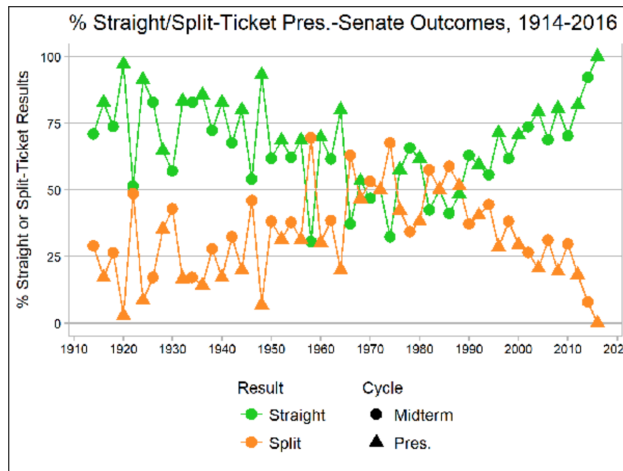
The 2016 election cycle was highly partisan. Even with two unpopular presidential nominees, around 90% of voters in each party backed their respective standard-bearers. Just as telling, the 2016 election marked the first time in the history of popular elections that 100% of the Senate outcomes matched the presidential party winner

in each state with a Senate race. That is, the same party won the Senate and presidential races in the 34 states that held elections for Senate. The previous record had been the 1920 cycle, when 97% (33 of 34) of presidential-Senate party winners matched.

Chart 1 displays the percentage of straight- and split-ticket presidential-Senate results for every federal election cycle from 1914 to 2016. For midterm cycles, I compared the party winner in a Senate race to the party that won the state in the previous presidential election. The data include special elections held at irregular times during a cycle to give a more complete accounting of Senate results. For example, the 2014 cycle includes Democratic special election wins in Massachusetts and New Jersey in 2013, and 2018 data in this piece will include Alabama's special election result from 2017. Additionally, Sens. Angus King (I-ME) and Bernie Sanders' (I-VT) election victories in 2006 (just Sanders) and 2012 (both senators) are included as Democratic wins because they caucus with the Democrats in the Senate and are both up in 2018 as de facto Democrats.

From 1913 -- when the 17th Amendment established popular voting for Senate elections -- through 2016, there were 1,881 elections for the U.S. Senate. After excluding concurrent elections for expiring terms and cases where a third-party or independent candidate won a state's Senate race or presidential contest, there were 1,801 major-party presidential-Senate results to examine (i.e. a Democrat or Republican won the presidential and Senate races in question). In total, 67% (1,210) had straight-ticket winners while 33% (591) had split-ticket results. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the potential power of presidential coattails, presidential cycles featured a higher rate of straight-ticket outcomes, with 74% of presidential-Senate results going for the same party in each. Midterm election outcomes showed more splits, with just 61% of presidential-Senate results won by the same party. This makes sense: The president's party tends to lose ground in midterm elections -- practically always in the U.S. House and often in the Senate as well. Causes of this "presidential penalty," such as disproportionately high turnout among the non-presidential party's supporters and the electorate's desire to check the president and his party, can open up opportunities for a party to succeed in a state where the president's party may have recently been stronger. These factors can also boost Senate incumbents from the non-presidential party who are battling to win reelection in states that are tough for their party at the presidential level.

In 21 of 25 midterm cycles that followed a presidential election in the 1913-2016 period -- excluding the



1914 midterm because the 1912 presidential election falls outside that range -- the share of split-ticket results increased compared to the share in the previous presidential cycle. So, in most midterm cycles the percentage of split-ticket outcomes relative to a state's last presidential party winner increased. The only exceptions were the cycles in 1978, 1990, 2002, and 2014. Since 1990, there has been a relatively steady trend toward greater straight-ticket voting outcomes, culminating in

the 2016 presidential cycles' 100% straight-ticket result. The 2014 result might suggest that potential Republican gains in Trump states could be numerous in 2018, but as things stand, we currently rate four Trump-state seats held by Democrats as Toss-ups while the other six are rated as Leans Democratic or better for the Democrats. For the sake of argument, assume that the Democrats hold the seats we lean toward them. That would result in at least six split-ticket results out of 35 elections held this coming November, and seven out of 36 overall in the 2018 cycle when including Alabama's special election, which works out to an 81% straight-ticket share of outcomes.

Therefore, it seems likely that split-ticket results will make something of a comeback in 2018, at least compared to the past couple of cycles. Should Democrats manage to retain all the seats they hold -- possible but probably unlikely -- and pick up Arizona and Nevada to win a 51-49 Senate majority, that would result in 11 split-ticket outcomes relative to the 2016 presidential election (10 Democratic-held Trump states and Arizona, a state Trump carried). Once we account for the Alabama special election, that would add up to 12 split-ticket outcomes out of 36 races in the 2018 cycle as a whole, or one-third. Such a result would be similar to the 2006 cycle, which featured the same class of senators (Class I) and a 31% split-ticket rate. ❖

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

Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier:

More than a month after she restricted open access to her social media feed – specifically blocking a pair of Greater Lafayette journalists in the process – Sally Siegrist finally checked in Wednesday afternoon. The Republican state representative from West Lafayette said she meant no harm and didn't want to offend constituents who felt shut out when she closed access to the @siegrist4INrep account on Twitter. "This whole Twitter thing," Siegrist said, "honestly, I think probably the biggest part of it is just my lack of expertise at it – and lack of time to devote to doing it better." The confession came a few minutes after Luke Britt, Indiana's public access counselor appointed by Gov. Eric Holcomb, issued an informal opinion that said if state government officials, including General Assembly members, are going to have social media accounts that cover state business, they must keep their accounts open to all who want to partake. ❖



Andrew Egger, Weekly Standard: So that's it, then: After 15 months of special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian election meddling, 15 months of swelling resentment and conspiratorial muttering from President Donald Trump that grew to a roar in the past few weeks, the president has finally pulled the trigger. On Wednesday morning, Trump called for Attorney General Jeff Sessions to end Mueller's Russia investigation "right now," setting the stage for a potential showdown with Republicans and Democrats in Congress who have—until now—insisted almost in unison that Mueller should finish the job he started. Or maybe he didn't! Trump's call for Sessions to take action came as a Twitter aside, snuggled into a multi-part rant about the various supposed calumnies of Mueller and his former flunky Peter Strzok. The Justice Department spent Wednesday morning declining to comment on the tweets, leaving it an open question whether the harsh new posture signals a real strategic change for the president or was simply a sign of him blowing off steam. The fact that the apparent command was directed at Sessions, who long ago recused himself from the Russia investigation, rather than actual shot-caller Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, would seem to indicate the latter. But who can ever say with Trump? ❖

Frank Bruni, New York Times: There are problems with impeaching Donald Trump. A big one is the holy terror waiting in the wings. That would be Mike Pence, who mirrors the boss more than you realize. He's also self-infatuated. Also a bigot. Also a liar. Also cruel. To that brimming potpourri he adds two ingredients that Trump doesn't genuinely possess: The conviction that he's on a mission from God and a determination to mold the entire nation in the shape of his own faith, a regressive, repressive version of Christianity. Trade Trump for Pence and you go from kleptocracy to theocracy. That's

the takeaway from a forthcoming book by the journalists Michael D'Antonio, who previously wrote "The Truth About Trump," and Peter Eisner. It's titled "The Shadow President: The Truth About Mike Pence," it will be published on Aug. 28 and it's the most thorough examination of the vice president's background to date. I got an advance look at it, along with a first interview about it with D'Antonio, and while it has a mostly measured tone, it presents an entirely damning portrait of Pence. You've seen his colors before, but not so vividly and in this detail. The book persuasively illustrates what an ineffectual congressman he was, apart from cozying up to the Koch brothers, Betsy DeVos and other rich Republican donors; the clumsiness and vanity of his one term as governor of Indiana, for which he did something that predecessors hadn't and "ordered up a collection of custom-embroidered clothes — dress shirts, polo shirts, and vests and jackets — decorated with his name and the words Governor of Indiana"; the strong possibility that he wouldn't have won reelection; his luck in being spared that humiliation by the summons from Trump, who needed an outwardly bland, intensely religious character witness to muffle his madness and launder his sins; and the alacrity with which he says whatever Trump needs him to regardless of the truth. In Pence's view, any bite marks in his tongue are divinely ordained. Trump wouldn't be president if God didn't want that; Pence wouldn't be vice president if he weren't supposed to sanctify Trump. And his obsequiousness is his own best route to the Oval Office, which may very well be God's grand plan. "People don't understand what Pence is," D'Antonio told me. Which is? "A religious zealot." ❖

Hugh Hewitt, Washington Post: We are just under 100 days from the Nov. 6 midterms, and Republicans are in much better shape than most prognosticators would have imagined even six months ago, much less than at the 100-day mark of President Trump's tenure. The traditional post-Reagan GOP is not what it usually is. Currently it is the minority partner in a coalition government with the president — a "party of one" with a fervent following in the tens of millions. But that "party of one" has a number of significant accomplishments while also acting as a giant wrecking ball on assumptions, standards, unwritten rules and codes of conduct. Many of those unwritten rules are better off demolished — or at least left naked in the public square — including, especially, the overwhelming liberal bias in legacy media, save for Fox News. Twitter feeds have become the best indicator of what the members of the media actually think. The collective mask hasn't just slipped, it's been ripped off. The president's brand of political hardball upsets many in the GOP, even unbalancing more than a few. "Trump Derangement Syndrome" is real. The economy is cooking, and while deficits have risen, the stimulus of deep and broad tax cuts is just now kicking in, with a promise of a long stretch of economic growth. ❖

Holcomb receives school safety report

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Eric Holcomb received a new school safety report Wednesday filled with recommendations to improve safety in schools statewide (Smith, [CBS4 Indy](#)). The analysis was first ordered after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida. The collaboration included numerous state agencies like the Department of Education, Indiana State Police, Family and Social Services Administration and Homeland Security. Holcomb said Wednesday he will first review the report and meet with stakeholders before releasing the findings and recommendations to the public. The goal, state officials have said, is to create a framework for both short-term and long-term goals. “It may inform us to take some immediate steps that we can and we will,” Holcomb said. “And then it will have a longer-term perspective to it as well. We’ve done a lot right on this front.” Holcomb stressed the goal is not to create a new sweeping set of statewide standards but rather embolden local school corporations to make their own safety decisions with the help and resources of the state government. Holcomb didn’t give a specific timeline as to when he will publicly release the report.



Pence greets remains from North Korea

HONOLULU — The U.S. military is beginning the painstaking process of analyzing remains from the Korean War now that they are back on American soil after having been handed over by North Korea last week ([Associated Press](#)). Vice President Mike Pence and the top commander of U.S. forces in Asia, Adm. Phil Davidson, formally received the remains contained in 55 caskets during an emotional and solemn ceremony Wednesday after they arrived by military cargo jets from South Korea. “They were husbands and fathers, brothers and neighbors — long gone, but never lost to the memory of their loved ones,” Pence said during

the ceremony at a military base in Hawaii. Each container was covered in an American flag and carried off the aircraft by one Marine, one sailor, one soldier and one airman.

Lawson eliminates 170 Lake precincts

CROWN POINT — Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson wiped 170 primarily Democratic party-controlled precincts off of Lake County’s political map in a consolidation plans made public Wednesday morning (Dolan, [NWI Times](#)). The deepest cuts came in Lake County’s predominantly Democratic north communities. East Chicago will lose 14 precincts, Hammond 33 and Gary 54. There are reductions in central and southern suburban communities as well, including eight precincts in Crown Point and seven in Hobart. James Wieser, Lake’s Democratic Party chairman denounced the plan as an effort by the Republican-dominated legislature and state government to suppress the vote in Democratic strongholds. “With a stroke of a pen they have unelected as many as 170 precinct committee members, who are elected officials. Lake County Clerk Mike Brown, a Democratic member of the county elections board added, “This hurts the north end of Lake County. This is unacceptable. Brandon Clifton, chief of staff for Lawson, who delivered the consolidation plan early Wednesday from Indianapolis, responded, “I and Secretary Lawson respectfully disagree.” He said the new arrangement puts polling places little more than a mile from active voters and a quarter mile from public transportation..

Daniels backs use of I.G. in Hill case

WEST LAFAYETTE – The state’s office of inspector general has been at the center of some of Indiana’s most high-profile scandals since

its creation by former Gov. Mitch Daniels in 2005 (Sentel, [WTHR-TV](#)). “I really thought we were just simply catching up,” Daniels said of why he created the watchdog agency. “We were out to have a government people could really trust.” Daniels said his experience in federal government taught him the value of having an inspector general whose job is to police the ethical behavior of government officials. “To me, Indiana’s laws were way behind, our ethics standards were way too low and we wanted to elevate them,” Daniels said. “And when you do that you need a watchdog and an enforcement mechanism, so that was the idea.” “I hope by now it has been well imbedded in the Indiana system and everybody understands the importance of the job and why it’s there,” Daniels said. “I’m sure they are taking ethics and justice in government just as seriously as we did.”

U.S. does little to protect election

WASHINGTON – Two years after Russia interfered in the American presidential campaign, the nation has done little to protect itself against a renewed effort to influence voters in the coming congressional midterm elections, according to lawmakers and independent analysts ([Washington Post](#)). They say that voting systems are more secure against hackers, thanks to action at the federal and state levels — and that the Russians have not targeted those systems to the degree they did in 2016. But Russian efforts to manipulate U.S. voters through misleading social media postings are likely to have grown more sophisticated and harder to detect, and there is not a sufficiently strong government strategy to combat information warfare against the United States, outside experts said.