

Horse Race: House Dems eye modest gains

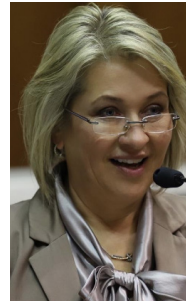
Suburban districts could be in play as candidates watch Kavanaugh/Ford showdown

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – During our first Indiana House forecasts in the weeks following the May primary, we listed President Trump, Special Counsel Robert Mueller and even Kim Jong Un as the “wild cards” in potential impacts on this super majority Republican chamber.

Well, move over Don, Bob and Kim. All eyes are on Judge Brett Kavanaugh and Dr. Christine Blasey Ford when it comes to outside impacts.

In the dual Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearings, the crazy political crosscurrents could end in a mesocyclone depending on how the judge and his accuser do. So much so that House Republicans aren’t even going into the field until the dust settles on Thursday. The political environment we’ve been in up until 10 a.m. today



Reps. Siegrist (from left), Schaibley, Kirchofer and Olthoff are suburban incumbents facing a possible wave.

could have a completely different feel next week.

At this writing, we’re hard-pressed to see Indiana Democrats picking up more than a handful of seats in what many believed would be a blue or pink wave environment. There’s still a record number of female nominees running

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Mexico Joe & China Mike

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – A modern-day Rip Van Winkle, who just woke up and started to watch ads on television for the Indiana Senate race, might fairly conclude that Hoosiers are obsessing over how to choose between a candidate who had stock in a company run by his brother that had a plant in Mexico and one whose auto supply company sold parts made in China.

While I know some of you may have been losing sleep over this dilemma, it is obviously somewhere between 98% and 100% irrelevant in this race. It was apparent from the day the media first reported about Mexico Joe’s stock



“They weren’t laughing at me. They were laughing with me. We were having a good time. The United States was respected again.”

- President Trump, at a presser in which he was asked about reaction to his United Nations speech



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and his sale of it, that the ads would be coming. It was also apparent – in fact, I predicted it during the primary campaign – that anyone owning any automobile parts business (actually any retail store) would be vulnerable to a “you sell parts made in China” slam.

But all choices of what ads to run are instructive – about the candidates, about their allies, and frankly about us, the voters.

First, the obvious: Race matters, just talk about it indirectly. John Mutz lost his close gubernatorial race largely because of an ad that attacked him for bringing in a Japanese plant to Tippecanoe County, back when such things were inflammatory. It was a winking reference, but it was effective. Had it been more direct, it could have led to backlash. Instead, it effectively raised the point. The Japanese were getting our money.

If you doubt similar hidden messages in the Indiana Senate race, let's address the actual substance of the debate briefly (I recognize that the substance is not very relevant). President Trump appears to have renegotiated NAFTA with Mexico. It is those Canadians who are the actual trade problem, at least according to the administration. So the whole Mexico Joe debate is pretty irrelevant.

As for China Mike, the China trade war could fix that problem. We all will just pay a lot more for auto parts, unless his business and others replace Chinese-made parts with slightly higher-priced parts from our new friends in Mexico. That should make everyone happy, if they actually are taking the ads seriously.

On the other hand, we don't have a deal with Canada yet. In the days immediately following 9/11, as the congressman representing the Fort Wayne area, we had a border

problem. Just in time, delivery schedules had jammed up our GM Silverado plant schedules because of parts supply problems. As one former plant manager told me, unofficially, each pick-up made had up to 100 Canadian border crossings involved in the thousands of parts that go into the truck because there were sister operations near Toronto. The plants were synchronized, for many logical business reasons. The American and Canadian auto belts are geographically meshed.

However, there are no ads attacking Canada Mike. They would seem a tad ridiculous. “Mike Braun drinks Tim Hortons coffee” just doesn't inspire many people to anger. In my decade as part of the U.S.-

Canada Parliamentary Exchange, I learned many things. Perhaps the most important can be illustrated by a joke. If you are in a room full of Canadians and Americans, you know the quickest way to identify who is from where? Loudly say: “Americans and Canadians are just alike.” Everyone who

objects will be a Canadian. I actually haven't even met a Canadian who laughed at the joke.

Furthermore, going even a bit deeper into the subject, the majority of Americans – and certainly in Indiana – disagree with the core of our government's dispute with Canada, imported timber. When we'd argue about this in our cross-border sessions, most of the American congressmen supported the Canadians. In the U.S. our wood supplies are limited for many reasons. A limited supply means dramatically higher prices if we are limited to American timber. Furthermore, as a furniture man (I was in our family's furniture business for years and on the boards of the Indiana and Midwest Home Furnishings Associations), there are limitations to soft



southern pine. And good luck trying to cut down more trees in Oregon, Washington and Northern California.

In other words, the direct threat to the housing industry (homebuilding, realtors, financial institutions) is this misguided fight over timber. Our prices could skyrocket. But I guess it is asking too much for our politicians, or even the media, to understand the debate. And the Canadians make for boring political debate.

The second part of the Mexico Joe-China Mike debate, beyond race, has to do with charges of hypocrisy. Sen. Donnelly knew the border debate was coming so he has morphed into a big defender of reasonably strong borders, though not necessarily of a "wall." He has always been conservative for a Democrat (easier these days as the party drifts left). But he has not regularly focused on the threat. Thus "Mexico Joe" was seen as a way to highlight the candidate's differences related to the border. It was also a way to raise DACA without raising DACA.

Raising the China Mike issue was partly defensive on the part of the Donnelly campaign just as Mexico Joe was by Braun. Braun's campaign knew his vulnerability for purchasing Chinese and Mexican-made parts in this business. But Donnelly's campaign and allies also mixed this attack into a "blue shirt" attack ad.

The problem with the "blue shirt" attack ad is a rather simple marketing principle which, apparently, they forgot. For example, the attacks on his business practices didn't work in the primary, and except for union activists (as opposed to the rank and file who voted for Trump) most just viewed them as political charges that roll off as if his blue shirt was Teflon.

But the larger forgotten principle is this: It is very

expensive, and usually useless, to try and undo an impression that has been burned into people's minds with millions of dollars. You must bury it, or all you will do is reinforce the original impression. They are not focusing on those ads enough to bury it, and it is not certain they could anyway. When they run Braun in a blue shirt, the Donnelly campaign might be reinforcing Braun's original message rather than undoing it. They are incredibly ineffective to anyone except gung-ho Donnelly boosters. It is one reason, in spite of a low visibility campaign with less firepower, Braun remains neck-and-neck with Donnelly. Donnelly is doing some of his advertising.

The real reason this remains a toss-up, though, is spelled with five letters, T-R-U-M-P. Donnelly has desperately tried to localize, Hoosierize, this race for the simple reason that if he can, he will win. People like Joe, I like Joe. People believe Joe has fought for Hoosiers; I believe, and know, that he has. But every day, every hour, nearly every minute, this president manages to dominate all news. Even sports (e.g. the NFL) and weather (e.g. hurricanes). If this race nationalizes, Braun wins.

The Kavanaugh debate has galvanized Republicans. They are now as angry and fired up as the Democrats. How our Senator votes on Kavanaugh may define November's vote, especially if Kavanaugh is not confirmed. If so, Braun wins.

On the other hand, that assumes that the president doesn't tweet or say anything else controversial before November. Does anyone think that won't happen?❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.

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in House races. On that front, we're watching challenges to State Reps. Julie Olthoff in the Crown Point area, Sally Siegrist in Lafayette and Cindy Kirchhofer in Indianapolis. Our Republican sources tell HPI that up until this point, all have out-performed the generic ballot.

But one GOP source told HPI, "There aren't a lot of places where Democrats are positioned to take a seat." Our Democratic campaign source explains, "We're not anywhere near a 13- to 14-seat pickup. We'd be comfortable if we can cut into the super majority."

That translates into a modest three to five seat gain for Democrats. Perhaps. Maybe.

Where is that blue/pink wave? Part of it might as well be in Joe Scarborough's Alabama with President Trump repeatedly talking about a "red wave" (Mr. President, try "crimson tide") and Democratic deacon blues. By accounts from both parties, while Trump's overall approve/disapprove in Indiana remains in the 48/49% range, that is driven in metro areas of Lake, St. Joseph, the Louisville metro and Indianapolis. In what we call "outer Indiana,"



Rep. Dale DeVon with Vice President Pence and Dr. Donald Westhausen in another suburban showdown in HD5.

even in soybean strongholds buffeted by Trump's tariffs, Hoosiers are sticking with the president.

With all eyes on college-educated, suburban women, no place would fit that description better than HD24, the seat held by Republican State Rep. Donna Schaibley, running in her first reelection bid. This is Zions-

ville, Westfield and Carmel, and it fits into State Sen. Mike Delph's SD29, a true tossup race in the upper chamber. It's a district with a GOP civil war between Carmel and Fishers. Our GOP source tells us that Schaibley's reelect is north of 50% and her head-to-head against Democrat Naomi Bechtold is in solid double digits.

The three seats we think Democrats have a real shot at are Siegrist, Olthoff and State Rep. Dale DeVon, who is facing a spirited challenge in Joe Donnelly's Granger/Mishawaka backyard against Dr. Donald Westerhausen, Jr., an Elkhart cardiologist. A fourth might be Karen Salzer's challenge to freshman Rep. Jim Pressel in the LaPorte County area.

Let's say for a moment that Judge Kavanaugh pulls a Richard Mourdock and Dr. Ford becomes Joan of Arc on Thursday. That could fuel that blue/pink wave, and in that case Reps. Kirchofer, Ed Soliday, Hal Slager and Mike Aylesworth come into play. If Democrats run this table, that's still only a seven-seat pickup. It solves the super majority woes, but does little to reposition the party to be much of an influence on the coming 2021 redistricting process.

There are other cross-currents. Gov. Eric Holcomb remains popular with his approval more than 20% above his negatives. In the Region, once a fertile ground for Democratic hopes and dreams, the party finds a governor who is spreading road funding at a frenetic pace, and is double-tracking the South Shore Line. His asset management decision to tax Indiana East/West Toll Road truckers has barely registered on voters' radar, sources in both parties tell us.

And Region folks hear nothing but bad, bad, baaaad news out of Chicago, where Mayor Rahm Emanuel is bailing, the murder spree continues, taxes are exorbitant, and corruption remains endemic. In contrast, Indiana looks pretty damn good.

Our Democratic sources tell us that "there is definitely an enthusiasm gap that favors us. We see suburban areas trending our way." But the key question is, will it happen?

Our GOP sources tell us, "It's obviously Democratic voters (who) are more fired up. We see that in every poll. We've seen generic ballots unlike anything we've seen before." But a recent NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll showed that while the congressional generic was 52-40% Democrat, the intensity is drawing even (61% for Republicans, and 65% for Democrats). That strongly suggests the GOP base will not be suppressed. Democrats may have overplayed the Kavanaugh allegations. Maybe. We'll see.



Rep. Ed Soliday with then-Lt. Gov. Eric Holcomb in LaPorte in August 2016 announcing road funding for the city. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

But, but, but ... the 2011 maps, a popular Gov. Holcomb, and Trump's crimson tide (see how easy that is, Mr. President) may hold sway.

We'll update our forecasts in mid-October, once we know how the Kavanaugh/Ford fallout and other residuals (we're looking at you, Rod Rosenstein) are going and how the environment resets the trending.

Several seats we included in our May forecast: those of Reps. Robert Behning, Ed Clere, the open Greg Beumer, Bill Friend, Milo Smith and Wes Culver are likely to make a last appearance on this list. We're including the open seats, but most of those are expected to stay in the GOP column, along with Ragen Hatcher in Gary and Patricia Boy in Michigan City for the Democrats.

Here is our second general election House forecast, with Horse Race statuses subject to change as the fall cycle begins to take definition. The other 71 districts not listed are considered "Safe" for incumbents.

HD3: Open (Rep. Charlie Brown (D) is retiring). **Democrat:** Gary Councilwoman Ragen Hatcher. **Republican:** Open. **2016 results:** Brown (D) 8,898. **Analysis:**

This is one of the most Democratic seats in the General Assembly and Hatcher, daughter of former Gary mayor Richard Hatcher, will keep this in the Democratic column.

Horse Race Status: Safe Hatcher.

HD4: Republican: Rep. Ed Soliday. **Democrat:** Frank Szczepanski. **2016 Results:** Soliday 17,272, Fish (D) 14,311. **Analysis:** This district, particularly in the Valparaiso area, is trending Democratic. Soliday is chairman of the House Transportation Committee and was one of the driving forces behind HEA1002 in 2017, the two-decade infrastructure plan that included new gas and diesel fuel taxes. With rising gas prices, that is becoming a hot-button issue for Democrats, both here in Indiana and nationally. But Soliday has high name ID, his early reelect poll numbers are healthy and he has prevailed in

competitive races before. Szczepanski graduated with a bachelor's degree in industrial management and master's degree in finance from Purdue. Szczepanski is the founder and CEO of an innovative biotech company called IVDiagnostics based in Indiana that is revolutionizing the way we diagnose cancer using virtually pain-free technology. We're keeping this seat on the list because it fits that "suburban" profile that could come in play if there is a national gyration that favors Democrats. Szczepanski is an active campaigner, but he's going to need a big wave to make this a real race. The toll road trucking fee increase hasn't surfaced much here. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Soliday.

HD5: Republican: Rep. Dale DeVon. **Democrat:** Donald R. Westerhausen. **2016 Results:** DeVon 19,177. **Analysis:** This is a seat that could be very suscep-



Sen. Donnelly with HD26 Democrat challenger Chris Campbell, HD19 Democrat Lisa Beck, HD9 Democrat Patricia Boy and HD24 Democrat challenger Naomi Bechtold. All are challenging incumbent Republicans in suburban districts that both GOP and Democrat operatives are monitoring closely.

tible to that blue/pink wave. Westerhausen is a well-known heart surgeon and is actively campaigning to the point that DeVon knows he has a potential race on his hands after running unopposed in 2016. DeVon has not had a highly contested election in several cycles and the GOP has a field manager in place. The Donnelly Senate campaign will be trying to squeeze every possible vote from the St. Joe County area. Westerhausen began his TV ads on Tuesday, while DeVon is out-performing the generic ballot and has begun direct mail. So, this will be one of those bellwether districts. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD9: Open (Rep. Scott Pelath (D) retiring). **Republican:** Dan Granquist. **Democrat:** Michigan City Councilwoman Patricia Boy. **2016 results:** Pelath (D) 19,302. **Analysis:** Granquist is the LaPorte County Republican Party secretary. Boy defeated former LaPorte County deputy coroner Sean Fitzpatrick in the primary. Democrats should retain this open seat. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Boy.

HD11: Republican: Rep. Michael Aylesworth. **Democrat:** Delano Scaife. **2016 results:** Aylesworth 18,163, Metro (D) 11,852. **Analysis:** This race doesn't appear to be a Democratic priority and is not on their radar at this point. Aylesworth easily dispatched James Metro two years ago in a race some thought might be competitive. He is popular in Porter County and works Lake County well. Scaife is a deputy with the Lake County Sheriff's Department, a Purdue graduate in business marketing and is in a graduate studies program at DePaul University. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Aylesworth.

HD15: Republican: Rep. Hal Slager. **Democrat:** Chris Chying. **2016 Results:** Slager 16,152, O'Donnell 13,581. **Analysis:** Chying is running an energetic campaign, has personal resources to invest, and is one of the more liberal Democrats running. Slager is working hard in a tough district for Democrats to crack. Both parties are watching the national environment and this could come into play if that blue/pink wave develops. Chying is a Munster HS graduate who lives in Dyer. He is a volunteer with Humanity Restore, the Welcome Network, and is a court-appointed child advocate. He opposes charter schools, is against the Lake County precinct closures, supports college tuition reform and seeks to expand telehealth

options for veterans. Chying looks to be a progressive Democrat and there are areas in this district that are very conservative. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Slager.

HD19: Republican: Rep. Julie Olthoff. **Democrat:** Lisa Beck. **2016 results:** Olthoff 15,236, VanDenburgh (D) 14,895, Demaree (L) 1,288. **Analysis:** Beck is waging an energetic campaign, knocking on 6,000 doors herself while her campaign has touched 16,000. Her husband, Vern, is president of the United Steelworkers Local 12775 and is investing funds (in the \$70,000 range) and manpower. Olthoff is dropping direct mail at this point. Republicans are closely monitoring what they see as one of the most competitive races. President Trump is still popular with many union members and this is a race where the Hoosier contrast with the Chicago we described above will help the incumbent. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD23: Open (Rep. Bill Friend (R) is retiring). **Republican:** Miami County Councilman Ethan Manning. **Democrat:** Terry Doran. **Libertarian:** Adam Werner. **2016 Results:** Friend 15,829, Rose (D) 6,642. **Analysis:** Manning of Peru is president of the county council and is a farmer and small businessman. He faces Doran, Logansport, a Chrysler employee in Kokomo. He was president of the Logansport Parks Foundation. Manning should keep this seat in the GOP column. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Manning.

HD24: Republican: State Rep. Donna Schaibley. **Democrat:** Naomi Bechtold. **Libertarian:** Donald Rainwater III. **2016 result:** Schaibley (R) 29,297, Cetinok (L) 6,450. **Analysis:** This seat fits inside SD29 where State Sen. Mike Delph is in a tossup race against Democrat J.D. Ford. Bechtold has raised some \$70,000, Democrat sources say, and they believe there could be a down ballot "Delph drag." Republican sources tell HPI that Schaibley is polling strongly. As noted above, this seat fits the "suburban" potential for a blue wave, so we'll be watching this one closely. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Schaibley.

HD26: Republican: Rep. Sally Siegrist. **Democrat:** Chris Campbell. **2016 Results:** Siegrist 11,067, Woeste (D) 9,980. **Analysis:** Campbell was slated at the primary in a district that Hillary Clinton carried in 2016. Purdue students will be able to use their student IDs to vote, and that could help the Democratic audiologist. She



Frontrunners include (from left) Democrat Tonya Pfaff in HD43, Rep. Bruce Borders in HD45, Beau Baird in HD44, Matt Hostettler in HD64 and Christy Stutzman in HD49.

began her TV ads on Wednesday. Siegrist has been the subject of reportage by Lafayette Journal & Courier columnist Dave Bangert after she withdrew some controversial twitter posts. She is running ads on WLFI-TV and will report a decent war chest. She is seeking a second term after winning the open seat when State Rep. Randy Truitt retired. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD29: Open (Rep. Kathy Kreag Richardson (R) running for county office). **Republican:** Chuck Goodrich. **Democrat:** Tracy Roberts. **2016 results:** Richardson 27,460. **Analysis:** We've included this race here because it is an open seat. Rep. Richardson won unopposed in 2016 and it is a reliable GOP district. Goodrich won in impressive fashion in a multiple candidate Republican primary, raising more than \$150,000 while running a broadcast TV campaign. The businessman should easily prevail over Roberts, a Ball State graduate from Noblesville who works at a local fabrication shop. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Goodrich.

HD33: Open (Rep. Greg Beumer (R) is retiring). **Republican:** John Prescott. **Democrat:** Winchester Mayor Shon Byrum. **Libertarian:** Dale Arnett. **2016 results:** Beumer (R) 21,446. **Analysis:** Democrats think this race is in play, saying that Joe Donnelly carried the district in 2012. Republicans don't believe this is a race at all, saying Mayor Byrum has "high negatives" and Prescott had a 20% poll lead. This is a district where President Trump remains exceptionally popular. Prescott describes himself as a "Christian farmer." He easily won the Republican primary. Byrum lost to Rep. Beumer in 2014 with the incumbent getting 60%. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Prescott.

HD42: **Republican:** Rep. Alan Morrison. **Democrat:** Evelyn Brown. **2016 Results:** Morrison 14,901, Skinner (D) 11,434. **Analysis:** Morrison benefited from the Donald Trump wave, defeating former state senator Timothy Skinner in a race that many believed would go down to the wire. This is heavy Trump country and Morrison's early polling looks good for his reelection. Democrats say there could be a residency issue involving Morrison, who they say is living in Plainfield. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Morrison.

HD43: Open (Rep. Clyde Kersey (D) retiring). **Republican:** Darrell Felling. **Democrat:** Tonya Pfaff. **2016 results:** Kersey 16,454. **Analysis:** This is a Democratic-leaning open seat. Pfaff is the daughter of Fred Nation, former press secretary to Gov. Evan Bayh and a former Terre Haute mayor nominee. Pfaff easily won a

crowded primary while raising almost \$14,000. Felling is the long-time Terre Haute city attorney who easily won his primary. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Pfaff.

HD44: Open (Rep. Jim Baird (R) is running for the 4th CD). **Republican:** Beau Baird. **Democrat:** Putnam County Democratic Chairwoman Kimberly Anne Fidler. **2016 results:** Jim Baird Sr. 17,927, Fidler 8,073. **Analysis:** This is an exceedingly Republican district. Baird is the son of 4th CD nominee Jim Baird. This seat stays in the GOP column. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Baird.

HD45: **Republican:** Rep. Bruce Borders. **Democrat:** Jim Exline. **2016 results:** Borders 19,193. **Analysis:** This seat has flipped back and forth and could be competitive if Exline, who publishes the Sullivan Times, proves to be a strong first-time legislative candidate. Borders is the former Jasonville mayor who followed Speaker John Gregg into this seat in 2002. He lost a bid in 2012 after he was drawn into a district with State Rep. Kreg Battles, then came back to defeat Battles. Democrats say this seat has potential to come in play, Republicans seem confident that "Elvis" will hold the House in a district where President Trump is very popular. "They love the president," our GOP source said. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Borders.

HD49: Open (Rep. Wes Culver (R) retiring). **Republican:** Christy Stutzman. **Democrat:** Open. **2016 results:** Culver 16,525. **Analysis:** This is an extremely Republican district where Stutzman, wife of former congressman Marlin Stutzman, cruised to an easy primary win despite the Indiana Chamber funding her opponent. She is a businesswoman, is seen as very ambitious and played critical behind-the-scenes roles in her husband's congressional campaigns and office. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Stutzman.

HD56: Open (Rep. Dick Hamm (R) in the Republican primary). **Republican:** Bradford Barrett. **Democrat:** Richmond Councilman Jeffrey S. Locke. **2016 results:** Hamm 14,463, Chasteen (D) 9,125. **Analysis:** Dr. Barrett easily defeated Rep. Hamm in the GOP primary and is expected to hold this seat. Democrats originally believed it would be in play prior to Hamm's defeat. Locke is a policeman and has been elected to the Fayette County Council, Fayette County Commission, and Connersville City Council. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Barrett.

HD59: Open (Rep. Milo Smith (R) retiring). **Republican:** Ryan Lauer. **Democrat:** Dale Nowlin. **Liberal:**

tarian: Clyde Myers. **2016 results:** Smith 16,118, Pitman (D) 10,205. **Analysis:** Lauer is the former Bartholomew County Council president who challenged and lost to Rep. Smith in 2016. He won a six-way primary, topping Indiana Chamber-backed JoAnne Flohr, who raised a decent amount of late money. Nowlin is a Columbus North HS teacher who defeated community activist Mary Kohen. This is a Republican district, the home of Vice President Mike Pence, and should hold in the GOP column. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Lauer.

HD62: Republican: Rep. Jeff Ellington. **Democrat:** Amy Swain. **2016 Results:** Ellington 16,724, Lindsey (D) 11,589. **Analysis:** While John Gregg and Joe Donnelly have carried this district, Republicans believe that Ellington will keep it in the GOP column with strong support from western Monroe County and in Greene County where President Trump remains popular. Swain is a former Indian Creek Township official who voted to establish fire protection and EMT services and her husband is the Monroe County sheriff, but she doesn't have much name ID. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Ellington.

HD64: Open (Rep. Thomas Washburne (R) is retiring). **Republican:** Matt Hostettler. **Democrat:** Open. **2016 results:** Washburne 25,522. **Analysis:** Hostettler is the son of former congressman John Hostettler and should have no problem holding this seat for the Republican Party. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Hostettler.

HD66: Democrat: House Minority Leader Terry Goodin. **Republican:** Mike Bowling. **2016 Results:** Goodin 10,822, Shadday (R) 7,566. **Analysis:** This is a district that is trending Republican and President Trump won this district with 65%. Bowling is with the Clark County Sheriff Department and Republicans have placed a field manager in the district. The Goodin name is a popular political brand in this Scott and Jackson county district and Goodin's brother is running for Scott County sheriff, which should help him. Republicans might make a push for this seat with a re-evaluation in mid-October if they don't have to defend other incumbents. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Goodin.

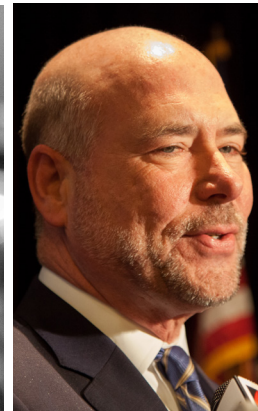
HD71: Open (Rep. Steve Stemler (D) is retiring). **Republican:** Matt Owen. **Democrat:** Dr. Rita Fleming. **Libertarian:** Thomas Keister. **2016 results:** Stemler 18,728, Keister (L) 4,578. **Analysis:** Republicans like State Chairman Kyle Hupfer believed this could be a pick up. Republicans had to invest \$50,000 in Owen to win the primary with Gov. Holcomb campaigning on his behalf, but GOP sources see Dr. Fleming as a strong candidate, an OBGYN who has delivered 7,000 babies in the area. She begins her TV ads in the Louisville market next week. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Fleming.

HD72: Republican: Rep. Ed Clere. **Democrat:** Sam Charbonneau. **2016 results:** Clere 18,092, Bonifer (D) 13,511. **Analysis:** This is a Democrat-leaning seat but

Clere has done a good job of getting support from Democrats and independents. Democrats don't appear to be making this a priority and Republicans don't seem worried. But it fits the suburban profile and is worth keeping an eye on for a potential wave. Charbonneau, New Albany, is a family case manager supervisor for the Department of Child Services. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Clere.

HD81: Republican: Rep. Martin Carbaugh. **Democrat:** Kyle R. Miller. **2016 results:** Carbaugh 13,925, Haddadd (D) 8,938. **Analysis:** Carbaugh was elected to the seat in 2012 and hasn't had a competitive race since 2014. But Republicans acknowledge this seat could come in play in a wave environment. Miller supports raising the minimum wage, funneling more incentives to small businesses, fully funding public education and legalizing medical marijuana. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Carbaugh.

HD88: Republican: Speaker Brian Bosma. **Democrat:** Poonam Gill. **2016 Results:** Bosma 24,550, Black (D) 13,059. **Analysis:** Democrats see a changing district and an impressive candidate in Gill, a Purdue grad with an electrical engineering degree, and told HPI to keep an eye on late developments. They say the Indiana GOP's traditional marriage plank isn't settling well with progressives in the district. Republicans acknowledge the Indianapolis portion of the district is changing demographically in Lawrence Township, but the 2011 maps added GOP



House leaders Terry Goodin and Speaker Brian Bosma are in the upset dreams of their rival parties, with Bosma facing Democrat Poonam Gill. But we're not sensing a Daley-Phillips style wave upset.

strongholds from Hancock County. So, we're very skeptical this is in play. Bosma has access to vast resources. From a historical perspective, Republican Speaker J. Roberts Daley lost in a nominal wave year of 1986 (but was really clipped on the lottery referendum issue) and Democrat Speaker Michael K. Phillips lost in the 1994 wave. There isn't a compelling issue that might cut the speaker off at the knees. Bosma has not forgotten his district and any scent of a problem would bring a massive money/TV ad response. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Bosma.

HD89: Republican: Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer.

Democrat: John F. Barnes. **2016 Results:** Kirchhofer 13,683, Burke (D) 11,367. **Analysis:** This is a rematch from 2010 when Kirchhofer upset Barnes, a social studies teacher. In 2012, Barnes unsuccessfully sought SD32. This Marion County district is competitive but is trending Democratic and Barnes has high name ID. Kirchhofer began running TV ads on network TV Wednesday (debuting on "Survivor"). This district could be a blue wave barometer. Democrats believe that the incumbent, who chairs the House Health Committee, is vulnerable in a state ranked 49th in health spending. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Kirchhofer

HD90: Republican: Rep. Mike Speedy. **Democrat:** Tim Jeffers. **2016 results:** Speedy 19,019, Hollings (D) 9,515, McNaughton (L) 1,348. **Analysis:** This seat is a Republican stronghold, and Jeffers, who was the 1994 Democratic nominee for secretary of state, is Speedy's first credible general election candidate. "I'm concerned about

the American system and the need for competitive elections," Jeffers told HPI after he filed in February. "Sadly, because we don't have districts where both a R and a D having a fighting chance and, in the end, voters don't have a choice. I just really wanted to give voters in HD90 a choice and to bring up this whole need for an independent redistricting process. I feel very, very strongly about that." **Horse Race Status:** Likely Speedy.

HD91: Republican: Rep. Robert Behning. **Democrat:** Kevin Leineweber. **2016 results:** Behning 17,393. **Analysis:** Leineweber is a teacher and coach, but his campaign posted a digital ad that spelled "school" wrong. Republicans wondered whether they were being punked to gain some name ID for the challenger. This race likely will be off HPI's October forecast, but we wanted to tell that story. Behning chairs the House Education Committee and this is a very heavy GOP district. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Behning. ❖

Ipsos-Reuters Poll has Donnelly up 3%

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – A recent third poll lends further credence to the toss-up U.S. Senate race with Ipsos/Reuters showing U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly with a 46-43% lead over Republican Mike Braun. It comes after NBC/Marist had Donnelly leading 44-41% over Braun with Libertarian Lucy Brenton coming in with 8%. The Ipsos/Reuters Poll did not include Brenton. A Fox News Poll had Braun leading Donnelly 45-43%.

Fox and Ipsos/Reuters did not test the race with the Libertarian; Brenton is qualified for the ballot. Ipsos/Reuters pollster Chris Jackson told HPI, "We have an 'other' category on our ballot which is garnering 3% of the vote.



A lot of research has shown that explicitly naming third party candidates on surveys results in an overrepresentation of their vote share in the ultimate election. While not naming them, and having an 'other' category, underrepresents their vote share. We, along with Reuters and UVA, decided on this survey not to explicitly name Ms. Brenton on the ballot, but Marist's approach is equally valid."

President Trump's approval in Indiana stood at 48% approve and 51% disapprove in the Ipsos/Reuters Poll. In the five states tested in this round of surveys (Michigan (39%), Ohio (45%), Pennsylvania (44%) and Wisconsin (42%) were the others), Indiana gives Trump his highest approval. Vice President Mike Pence is probably a key influencer there. Trump carried all five states in

U.S. Senate

Joe Donnelly (D) *

Mike Braun (R)

*incumbent

Ipsos polling TOSSUP
UVA Crystal Ball TOSSUP
Social media TOSSUP

Social media trends	Joe Donnelly	Mike Braun	Past elections
Favorability ¹	40% ▼	60% ▲	Senate
Net sentiment ¹	42% ▼	48% ▲	2012: D+6
Bots ¹	7% ▼	10% ▼	
Influencers ¹	28% ▼	34% ▲	
Velocity ¹	370 ▼	497 ▼	
Fundraising			
Total raised	\$11,495,629	\$8,258,437	
Total spent	\$5,198,131	\$7,186,981	
Cash on hand	\$6,391,931	\$1,071,454	
Cash on hand advantage: D +\$5.32M			

2016.

Support for Trump with Hoosiers is a partisan proposition. Some 48% of likely voters say they are motivated to vote for a candidate who will support Trump while 47% say the exact opposite. "We live in a very polarized world," Jackson said, "and Donald Trump is an extremely polarizing figure."

Of the key issues in the Ipsos/Reuters poll, 35% said President Trump, 18% said Supreme Court (where Donnelly is undecided on Brett Kavanaugh), 11% said health care, 9% foreign policy, 9% economy, 5% racism, 4% immigration, 4% corruption, 4% taxes, and 3% environment.

Sabato's Crystal Ball, Reuters/Ipsos and Howey

Politics Indiana all rate this race a "tos-sup."

Donnelly calls for FBI probe

Sen. Donnelly called for an FBI investigation in the Supreme Court nomination of Brett Kavanaugh: "The allegations raised against Judge Kavanaugh are serious, merit further review, and I believe should be investigated by the FBI. I will continue to get as much information as I can, including by following Thursday's scheduled hearing."

Senate ad wars ramp up

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce endorsed Republican Mike Braun and will drop big bucks, while the Indiana Chamber has kept out of the fray after a history of endorsing Republicans, with ads beginning Wednesday. Senate Leadership Fund is launching a \$7 million ad blitz, a fifth of it aimed at U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly. The incumbent began running a pre-existing conditions TV ad this week, following a national trend by other Senate Democrats. It comes after Republicans are backing legal moves that end insurance coverage for people with pre-existing conditions covered under the Affordable Care Act. Donnelly's voice over says, "More than one million Hoosiers have a preexisting medical condition. Cancer, heart disease, diabetes. Some in Congress want to let insurance companies deny medical coverage, making health care unaffordable. My opponent will vote to let them do that. In Indiana, we don't turn our backs on people with cancer or heart disease just to line the pockets of insurance companies. That's not who we are." The ad airs as a Fox 59 investigation found 23% of Hoosiers, or 678,942, have medical debt in collection and collectively owe \$900 million. Braun's campaign launched an ad Wednesday that recounts how he dealt with pre-existing conditions at Meyer Distribution on his own and years ago.

America First Action spends \$2M on Braun

America First Action, the Trump-aligned super PAC, is planning to put \$2 million behind GOP candidate Mike Braun in Indiana's Senate race and an additional \$300,000 behind Carol Miller in the House race for West Virginia's 3rd District (Politico). Things don't look great for Republicans in these races. Democrats are leading recent polls in both of them. Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly has nearly six times as much cash on hand as Braun.

Lugar won't endorse

Former Republican Sen. Richard Lugar won't endorse either candidate in Indiana's U.S. Senate race, a seat he once held for more than three decades (Smith, WTTV).

Main issues on social media (statewide)

President Trump	35%	i
Supreme Court	18%	i
Health Care	11%	i
Foreign Policy	9%	i
Economy	9%	i
Racism	5%	i
Immigration	4%	i
Corruption	4%	i
Taxes	4%	i
Environment	3%	i

"I believe at this point they deserve to have their own campaign," Lugar said in an interview Tuesday. "I'm not part of the campaign. I'm not a candidate. I'm not trying to enforce points of view, and I'm afraid it would be misinterpreted. Two able candidates who are running pretty good campaigns." On the Kavanaugh confirmation, Lugar told WTHR-TV, "I believe everybody needs to be heard at this point. At the same time, we do need to get another Supreme Court justice and Justice Kavanaugh has great talents and the question will be what comes from this hearing."

A suburban polling snapshot

HPI was shown a recent poll from a suburban Indianapolis legislative district held by a Republican that shed light on

what is going on as we head into the final six weeks of the campaign. It shows the Indiana right/wrong track at 57/30%. Sen. Donnelly had a 48-34% lead over Braun. Gov. Eric Holcomb's job approval stood at 66/19%.

President Trump's approval was 41% and his disapproval was 55%. Among independents, Trump was 28/68% approve/disapprove; 22/71% with moderates, 84/13% with conservatives; 46/54% with non-college graduates and 39/56% with college grads. Vice President Mike Pence stood at 45% approve and 50% disapprove. Pence was 30/65% approve/disapprove with independents, 28/65% with moderates, 86/9% with conservatives, 48/46% with non-college grads and 43/53% with college grads. Democrats led the ballot generic 54-39%. Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett's approve/disapprove stood at 47/20%.

Our extremely informed and reliable source told HPI, "We're seeing numbers like these all across Marion County."

General Assembly

SD16: Busch gets endorsements

Allen County Councilman Justin Busch is piling up the endorsements in his quest to replace Sen. David Long, R-Fort Wayne (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). He is currently the northeast Indiana director for U.S. Sen. Todd Young. Not surprisingly, Young has come out in support of Busch's candidacy. Other supporters include U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, state Reps. Martin Carbaugh and Bob Morris, Allen County Sheriff Dave Gladieux, former Allen County Sheriff Ken Fries, Allen County Auditor Nick Jordan, and five former and current Allen County Council presidents: Paula Hughes, Paul Moss, Tom Harris, Larry Brown, and current President Joel Benz. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Busch.

General Assembly

SD46: Murray calls for living wage

State Senate candidate Anna Murray joined local activists Barbara Anderson of Haven House, Phil Ellis of Community Action of Southern Indiana, and residents of Clark and Floyd Counties to rally for a living wage in Lansden Park in Jeffersonville on Sunday. The Democrat is challenging State Sen. Ron Grooms. In Indiana, Hoosiers earn 88 cents on average for every dollar Americans earn. Between 2000 and 2016, Indiana wages grew by only 0.1%, while national inflation grew by 3.36%, Kentucky wages grew by 4.2%, and Illinois wages grew by 6.2%. "Hoosiers are some of the hardest-working people in the country, but as our cost of living has risen, our wages have stagnated across the state. While surrounding states have seen their residents' wages grow, many of Indiana's residents work multiple jobs just to put food on the table. That is why I'm announcing my Living Wages for Hoosiers proposal, which would help build a strong economy that works for business and for the working families of our state," said Murray. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Grooms.

Cities

Possible challengers to Mayor Hogsett

State Sen. Jim Merritt, the Marion County Republican Party chairman, who is considering a run for mayor, waved off the notion that Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett is safe, arguing that every elected official is vulnerable (Briggs, IndyStar). "I think everyone in politics today has to be concerned about being rehired at election time," Merritt said. "You just see too many examples (of incumbents losing)." Merritt is in the somewhat awkward position of being both a prospective opponent to Hogsett and the top Republican official in charge of recruiting candidates. As Merritt weighs his own bid for mayor, he's also meeting with others who are interested. "If we find a candidate that feels as though they have quality funding and they have a vision for the city of Indianapolis and its future, then we're going to take a very good look at any candidate," Merritt said. "I owe that to the Republican Party." So far, the only declared candidate is Christopher Moore, a dump truck driver, who issued a press release calling himself a political outsider and "average citizen of Indianapolis." Better known Republicans who might enter the race include Jamal Smith, a former Daniels adviser who has worked as president of the Indiana Civil Rights Commission and athletics director for Indianapolis Public Schools; state Rep. Cindy Kirchofer of Beech Grove; and Jose Evans, a former council member and

author of a new book called "Fear of a Black Republican."

Nation

Pence to keynote GOP Fall Dinner

Vice President Mike Pence will keynote the Oct. 12 Indiana Republican Fall Dinner, the party announced Saturday. The site of the venue was not announced. Pence will speak along with Gov. Eric Holcomb in an attempt to boost the campaign of U.S. Senate nominee Mike Braun, who is in a tossup race against U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly. Pence will follow May and August MAGA rallies by President Trump in Elkhart and Evansville designed to help Braun retake the Senate seat Richard Lugar held until 2012.

Pence warns evangelicals

Two years after Mike Pence helped convince evangelical Christians to back Donald Trump's presidential bid, the vice president warned faith voters that complacency is the greatest threat to Republicans keeping control of Congress (Groppe, IndyStar). "The other side is mobilized, and some say they're motivated as never before," Pence said Saturday at the Family Research Council's Voter Values Summit. "But I say we must match – in fact, I say we must surpass – the energy of the American left and their enthusiasm and passion."

Obama PAC reaches out to black Hoosiers

Political committees with ties to Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer and former President Barack Obama are aiming digital messages to black voters in five states with pivotal U.S. senate races ([Associated Press](#)). The Senate Majority PAC and Priorities USA Action plan to spend "seven figures" in Missouri, Florida, Indiana, North Dakota and Arizona. In Indiana, Braun is challenging Sen. Donnelly. Democrats behind the targeted digital messages say they are making sure that their voters will be enthused to vote in 2018, even though it's not a presidential election year. They point to the precedent of Alabama, where Democrat Doug Jones won a special Senate race last year with the help of black voters. ❖



CONTENT BY CARTER
strategic content creation and deployment

Ads begin to populate 2nd and 9th CD races

By JACOB CURRY

INDIANAPOLIS – We’ve crossed the 50-day milestone before Election Day, and we’ve got the ads to prove it. Candidates, their campaigns and (when applicable) their supporting PACs, have not shied away from dialing up the



aggressive ads this month. In the 9th District, [one ad](#) from Democratic challenger Liz Watson cuts right to the chase: “Trey promised real change. But it was all a lie.”

Watson uses one of Rep. Hollingsworth’s own ads from 2016 against him, countering the claim that he didn’t take money from lobbyists and special interests for funding. In [another ad featuring her father](#), Watson draws on her family’s experience with Medicare to disparage Hollingsworth for his vote to roll back the program and potentially “deny lifesaving treatment for hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers.”

These ads send a clear signal that the Watson campaign is looking to call attention to Hollingsworth’s promises and his record. The language couldn’t be much more direct or accusatory, unless Watson simply called the congressman a liar. Despite that, the Hollingsworth campaign doesn’t seem overly concerned about a response. Hollingsworth has not released any TV ads, though the Indianapolis Business Journal reported that he has bought more than 30 ads on Facebook and Google since May. The incumbent’s campaign has also not responded to questions from Howey Politics about their thoughts on Watson’s message and what direction their own ads might take in the coming weeks. Whether or not there will be a response that shows up in Hoosier living rooms remains to be seen.

The exchange isn’t much softer in the 2nd District. When HPI spoke to Democratic candidate Mel Hall two weeks ago, he stated that healthcare – specifically the question of coverage for those with pre-existing conditions – was “the number one issue in this district.” The ads from his campaign certainly reflect that sentiment. Hall’s latest ad criticizes incumbent Jackie Walorski for having “gone Washington” by “letting insurance companies raise rates and deny care to Hoosiers.” Walorski’s campaign has responded quickly, dubbing Hall as a D.C. insider himself

in one ad, and in another promoting the congresswoman’s record on a range of issues as evidence of her support for the middle class and Hoosier families.

We can expect to see more of the healthcare focus from Hall’s campaign in the coming weeks. They have reiterated to Howey Politics that they’re highlighting affordable healthcare as an issue and seek to hold the congresswoman accountable on the pre-existing conditions issue. Meanwhile, Walorski’s campaign indicated that they intend to respond with a clarifying message: “Jackie has always supported protecting patients with pre-existing conditions” and that she favors the AHCA, “a better system that would give patients more control over their health care, maintain protections for patients with preexisting conditions, and allow young people to stay on their parents’ health insurance plans until age 26.” As for the “gone Washington” back-and-forth, it seems likely that it too will be a fixture of these final weeks. Both campaigns are committed to their message on that front.

Chamber endorses Hollingsworth

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce endorsed Hollingsworth. The decision to endorse was made after a volunteer committee made up of members and Chamber staff reviewed the records and public policy positions of both candidates. **2nd and 9th CD Horse Race Status:** Likely Walorski and Hollingsworth.



3rd CD: Tritch high on in-district \$

Democrat Courtney Tritch is ranked third among all congressional candidates in the country for in-district itemized individual donations, with 90% of contributions coming from inside the 3rd District, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. She is challenging U.S. Rep, Jim Banks. “I want to thank the voters of the 3rd District for their immense support over the last 14 months,” said Tritch. “With less than six weeks until Election Day, Hoosiers continue to make historic investments in our campaign” **Horse Race Status:** Safe Banks.

Dem generic lead, but GOP intensity up

The Democratic Party’s political advantage has grown in the home stretch of the midterm campaign, powered by strong support among women and a majority looking for a change from President Trump’s course, a new Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll has found. Less than two months before Election Day, 52% of registered voters said they would prefer Democrats to control Congress, while 40% preferred Republican control. That 12-point lead expanded from an 8-point Democratic edge in August. Republicans are closing an enthusiasm gap, with 61% of GOP voters now expressing high interest in the election, nearly matching the 65% of Democrats. President Trump’s approve/disapprove stood at 44/52%. ❖

Polls are showing a tossup Senate race

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Very close. That’s what the polls tell us about the race for the U.S. Senate in Indiana: Republican challenger Mike Braun vs. Sen. Joe Donnelly, the Democratic incumbent.



Very important. That’s how the race is viewed nationally, as the once seemingly impossible chance for Democrats to win control of the Senate as well as the House seems at least possible.

Very expensive. That’s obvious to anyone seeing myriad ads bought by the candidates and groups seeking to support or to destroy one or the other.

Polls showing a close race aren’t surprising. They just confirm what long was expected, that Donnelly, popular in the state even with many Republicans because of his moderate approach, would have a fighting chance to win, even though President Trump carried Indiana by 19 percentage points.

Here are results of two recent polls by major news organizations, both using professional pollsters and sampling likely voters.

An NBC News/Marist poll showed race at Donnelly, 49%; Braun, 4%.

A Fox News poll showed Braun, 45%; Donnelly, 43%.

OK, some readers looking at the poll sponsors will say: “Well, of course, Fox puts the Republican ahead and NBC has the Democrat winning.”

I don’t think that’s the case here. Each has professional pollsters concerned about their reputation for accuracy.

And the polls say about the same thing. That it’s close.

Any poll, no matter how professional the pollster, has what is called a margin for error. Without getting into a discussion of probability and statistics, that means that results from a sampling can’t be perfect. Taking the size of the sampling into consideration, pollsters estimate the possible variation statistically, plus or minus for any number, that could reasonably be expected.

Fox News, with a bigger sampling, listed a 3.5% margin for error. The total for either candidate could be off statistically by 3.5%. Thus, Donnelly actually could be ahead.

NBC, with a smaller sampling, listed a 5% margin for error. So, even with Donnelly

up by 6 points, he actually could be trailing if both his and Braun’s totals were off by 5 points.

Real Clear Politics, which figures averages of all the recognized polls, found last week that they added up to Donnelly, 47.3; Braun, 43.5. That put the race in the “toss up” category.

Especially this far before the election, it’s too close to call. But the indication from the combination of polls that Donnelly could be at least a bit ahead is very good news for him.

It means that President Trump, in coming to Indiana to denounce Donnelly and appear with Braun, hasn’t mobilized all of those Hoosiers who voted for him in a landslide to slide the land from under Donnelly as well.

Actually, the poll numbers that could mean the most are those about support for the president. Since Trump seeks to make the race a referendum on himself, how Hoosiers view the president will be an important factor.

The Fox poll found Trump with a 54% approval rating in Indiana, much higher than in the rest of the nation. But on the question of whether support or opposition to Trump would serve as a reason for their Senate vote, it was a virtual tie; 33% of Hoosiers say support of Trump would be a reason, 31% say opposition to the president would be a reason.

The NBC poll showed Trump with a 48% favorability rating, also higher than nationally.

Always remember that any poll is only a snapshot for the time when taken, not a prediction of how things will be next week or on Election Day.

But it does seem certain that the Senate race will continue to be very close, very important, and very expensive. ❖

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



Donnelly, Braun race focuses on business

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. — In past U.S. Senate races in Indiana, the emphasis in the campaign homestretch is mostly concentrated on domestic or foreign policy. We've watched the debate in races going back to 2010 center



on issues like deficits and debt, Obamacare, our alliance with Israel, military strength or tax reform.

The battle between U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly and Republican Mike Braun this time has

strangely focused on their personal business interests with most of the dirty work coming from super PACs which operate independently and are cloaked from the actual campaigns. If you've watched any broadcast or cable TV lately, you've heard about "Mexico Joe" shipping jobs south of the border and Braun, whose company is selling auto parts imported from China.

Here's how this works: The campaigns and special interests do thorough opposition research. This extends to everything from personal taxes and financial disclosures, to legal items like divorce, domestic confrontations, DUIs, personal or business bankruptcies, personal resumes like college degrees, congressional and General Assembly voting records, political contributions, residency and business practices.

In 2010, the residency issue was used unsuccessfully against Republican Dan Coats who moved back to Indiana to run and quickly bought a home here. And in 2012, it played a crucial role in the Republican primary defeat of U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar, who lived in Virginia, though he owned a tree farm in Indianapolis.

Campaigns and PACs comb through the research, find their silver bullets, and will often approach reporters. For instance, in the 2016 Senate primary between Republican Reps. Todd Young and Marlin Stutzman, I was approached about family vacations Stutzman took allegedly on the taxpayer dime. In the primary race between Braun and Reps. Todd Rokita and Luke Messer, youthful alcohol transgressions with the latter two surfaced in news reports. Once published, the campaigns use the controversies in TV ads, citing the news source. It's supposed to lend credibility, as opposed to an outright mudball foisted by a campaign with little or no veracity.

In July 2017, the story about LaPorte-based Stewart Superior surfaced. It came after Sen. Donnelly had been critical of Carrier shipping jobs from Indianapolis to Mexico despite intervention from President-elect Donald Trump and then Gov. Mike Pence. Stewart Superior is

owned by Donnelly's brother, but the senator had about \$50,000 in stock in the company, though he hadn't been involved in day-to-day management for decades.

But here was the catch by Associated Press reporter Brian Slodysko: The company over the previous year had "been shipping thousands of pounds of raw materials to Mexico, where the company has a factory that produces ink pads. The finished products are then transported back to a company facility in California." There was this line: Donnelly and his family had been "capitalizing on some of the very trade policies — and low-paid foreign labor — the senator has denounced."

What appeared to be a blip of a story has since become a point of emphasis. Within weeks, the National Republican Senatorial Committee and super PACs linked to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell had come up with this campaign hook: Sen. Donnelly was transformed into "Mexico Joe." When he kicked off his reelection bid at a UAW hall in Anderson a month later, a mariachi band was outside playing tunes. For the last year, we've seen "Mexico Joe" in attack ads on TV as well as digital formats. There was our senator, wearing a festive sombrero (which has become an affront to Hoosier Latinos). Donnelly quickly divested his financial stake in the company.

Now this is where the proverbial "goes around" ...



well ... "comes around." Sitting before Donnelly and Democratic super PACs were Braun's companies, the auto parts firm Meyer Distributing and Meyer Logistics, a trucking firm. Talk to anyone in the Jasper area and they'll tell you that these firms are community economic cornerstones, employing hundreds of Hoosiers and some 850 people nationwide.

But once the campaign and PACs churned through the records, we learn from AP's Slodysko three essential bullet points parlayed into campaign assaults: Braun's trucking company and distribution companies "overworked and underpaid employees." They imported goods from Mexico and China "while pretending to care about American jobs." And Braun used his state legislature seat to "enrich himself and his lumber companies."

The Donnelly campaign and the Democratic super PAC American Bridge has been running those "blue shirt" TV ads proclaiming Braun's companies had violated the

federal Fair Labor Standards Act 26 times on overtime pay between 2013 and 2015, and that Braun companies had 55 unsafe driving and 41 "hours of service" violations.

As for the distribution of auto parts made in China or Mexico, well, you can't find an American or foreign car without them. That's what the integrated global supply chain is all about. Politifact, the Pulitzer Prize-winning independent fact-checker, quotes Edward Alden, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, who notes that 40% of parts come from outside the U.S.

So while our deficits explode (with the federal credit card bill to be paid by our kids and grandkids), medical costs rise as Obamacare has been severely crimped with no functional replacement, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid steadily hurtling toward insolvency, and climate change resulting in an array of rain-drenching superstorms and drought-induced firestorms, the U.S. Senate race is boiling down to "Mexico Joe" and "China Mike."
❖

Do we believe the kids when they're grown up?

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – So this is where we are. A year into the #MeToo movement, we find the proverbial nexus. We've watched the unveiling of sexually predatory priests decades after their assaults, and a U.S. Supreme Court nominee face allegations of sexual misconduct as a self-proclaimed virgin teenager.



Weeks after the damning Pennsylvania grand jury report detailing some 1,000 sexually abusive Catholic priests there, at least two Indiana dioceses have or will reveal the abuses here. In the South Bend/Fort Wayne diocese, there were 18 "credibly

accused" priests. In the wake of that report, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades (who was named in the Harrisburg grand jury report) stated the importance for victims to see the names of their abusers made public "for all to see. For everyone to know the pain caused by these priests." Bishop Rhoades added, "It is my hope that by releasing these names, the innocent victims of these horrific and heartbreaking crimes can finally begin the process of healing."

The Pennsylvania grand jury pointedly noted that "there are likely thousands more victims whose records were lost or who were too afraid to come forward." It adds: "Despite some institutional reform, individual leaders of the church have largely escaped public accountability. Priests were raping little boys and girls, and the men of God who were responsible for them not only did nothing; they hid it all. For decades."

Many of these raped little boys and girls came forward decades after the assaults, without specific dates, though the places for many are seared into mind. Many were believed.

And then there is Judge Kavanaugh, who now fac-

es allegations from two Democratically connected women alleging incidents at Georgetown Prep in Maryland and at Yale going back 35 years. He has categorically denied all accusations.

I acknowledge my first reaction to these 11th hour accusations was one of skepticism. Could these alleged acts be, as former House Speaker Dennis Hastert once said, "youthful indiscretions?" (Hastert has since been convicted of mail fraud connected to sexual assaults when he was a high school wrestling coach). It seemed like the political bookend to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's abuse of the process when he wouldn't give President Obama's final Supreme Court nominee, Merrick Garland, a hearing in 2016, let alone a vote. It was blatant politics with the stakes – which ideology controls the Supreme Court – as high as this august body.

Since Dr. Ford came forward, we've learned of her angst at stepping into this searing and oppressive limelight. USA Today reported Wednesday that she had confided in a therapist, her husband and friends years ago about Judge Kavanaugh as his career coursed from Yale, to the White House, and then to the D.C. circuit.

But as this story has evolved, I've listened to some of my female friends describe similar incidents and the trepidation they've faced from family or at their workplace. They feared their credibility would be compromised, their jobs endangered, or their family standing



diminished. And in the wake of the Pennsylvania grand jury report, I've had several Catholic friends tell me they would never let their young children be alone with priests in their parishes. These were astounding assertions. In my United Methodist background, the pastor was someone we all held with the utmost trust.

In her declaration, Adela Gildo-Mazzon said Ford told her about the alleged assault during a June 2013 meal at a California restaurant and contacted Ford's attorneys on Sept. 16 to tell them Ford had confided in her five years ago. "During our meal, Christine was visibly upset, so I asked her what was going on," Gildo-Mazzon says in her declaration. "Christine told me she had been having a hard day because she was thinking about an assault she experienced when she was much younger. She said she had been almost raped by someone who was now a federal judge. She told me she had been trapped in a room with two drunken guys, and that she had escaped, ran away and hid."

We've watched President Trump at first say the alleged victims should "be heard," before describing the second accuser,



Deborah Ramirez, as an "inebriated" woman, perpetrating a "con-job," — that quote coming at a presser at the United Nations of all places. "I think it's horrible what the Democrats have done," said Trump, himself accused by at least two dozen women of similar allegations. "It's a con game they're playing; they're really con artists. They don't believe it themselves. They know he's a high-quality person. They don't believe it. It's just resist and obstruct. They're playing a con game and they play it very well. They play it actually much better than the Republicans." At one point, Trump regaled the media by spelling it out "C-O-N. A con game. They wink at each other, they're winking."

McConnell has vowed to "plow through" the Kavanaugh nomination with a Judiciary Committee vote on Friday, less than 24 hours after Dr. Ford and the judge testify. In his mind, it doesn't seem to matter what transpires later today in what will become the 21st Century's "O.J. Moment." The nation will be transfixed, just as we were during O.J. Simpson's slo-mo Bronco chase or his jury acquittal. Truth didn't seem to matter then either. In this case, ultimate truth is likely elusive.

McConnell has lined up a female sex crimes prosecutor, Rachel Mitchell from Maricopa County in Arizona, to question Dr. Ford instead of the 11 male Republican members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Prosecutors attack the credibility of opposing witnesses. Calls for the FBI to investigate the diametrically opposed Kavanaugh and Ford versions have been shunned. Someone is lying. The

process we'll watch later today is not designed to discover where the truth lies. It was designed to plow Kavanaugh through, no matter what.

So, the Catholic victims are deemed credible, but Kavanaugh's accusers are "con women" before they utter a single word under oath.

The political stakes are gargantuan. U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly insists he'll keep an open mind. "I just want to hear all the facts, hear what everybody has to say," Donnelly said Tuesday. U.S. Sen. Todd Young seems to be leaning toward a confirmation vote for Judge Kavanaugh, though he is one of a handful of Republicans not to announce an emphatic decision. Sen. Young is a former prosecutor, has seen the contours of sexual assault crimes from the inside, and goes home to young daughters.

Two women - Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Susan Collins - could determine Kavanaugh's fate. "We are now in a place where it's not about whether or not Judge Kava-

naugh is qualified," Sen. Murkowski said Tuesday. "It is about whether or not a woman who has been a victim at some point in her life is to be believed." She warned fellow Republicans not to rush to judgment.

Sen. Lindsey Graham has suggested he will vote to confirm, no matter what. And then there's the quotable Republican Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana. He said on MSNBC's Morning Joe Wednesday, "I've asked him point blank. He's resolute. He told me categorically that this did not happen."

Kennedy was asked if today's testimony could change his mind. "Well, of course," he said. "This is the purpose of the hearing. I look forward to hearing Dr. Ford. I will listen to Dr. Ford as if she were my daughter. I look at Judge Kavanaugh as if he could be my son." But Kennedy recognized the dilemma facing all reasonable Americans who simply want the right people in places of power. "I don't know if this will be a discussion of the truth, or more as an analysis of memory," Kennedy said. "My stroll down memory lane, there are gaps. I can't be 100% certain of the truth with something that happened 35 or 40 years ago. I think we have to take that into account with Dr. Ford and Judge Kavanaugh."

McConnell is under intense pressure to bring this to a vote, no matter what happens today. Indeed, the Judiciary Committee vote has already been scheduled for Friday. The legal and political implications are immense.

Do we believe the children? Even when they've grown up? ❖

The Golden Rule and modern politics

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – The Golden Rule of Politics, “Do unto others before they do unto you,” has been generally observed in this country for hundreds of years. Since the first Congress was gavelled into session, the cutthroat nature of politics has only grown more intense. However, this rule flies in the face of another axiom that Mother Dunn generously dispensed to her seven children as they grew up in Central Indiana: “What goes around comes around.”



Perhaps it was my mother's Baptist upbringing, but she had a keen understanding of what the Bible meant when it said, “As you sow, so shall you reap.” Mom would employ these sayings and their many variations to address a wide variety of situations, from failure to study for tests to squabbles with a sibling.

Growing up, I had endless conflicts with my sister Becky. She was six years older and just about the only one around for me to torment. I had this great big orange Fred Flintstone whiffle ball bat that I would frequently use to knee cap my sister, à la Tonya Harding. I kept my sister in a constant state of anxiety over my random attacks.

Once, Becky brought home a bottle that looked like a champagne. I bugged her to tell me what it was. She told me that it was Champale, a new alcoholic drink. I told her that if she didn't let me try some that I would rat her out to mom. Reluctantly, she opened the bottle and told me it was best if I took a big gulp. I took a big old Slurpee sip and immediately gagged. The Champale bubbly was actually bubble bath. When I finally found my mother so that I could reveal the foul deed perpetrated by my sister, my words were accompanied by bubbles flowing from my mouth. All mom would say was, “What goes around comes around!”

As we look to the current political turmoil fomenting in this country, it would do politicians of all political stripes some good to remember Mother Dunn's reminder, “What goes around comes around.”

Politicos of all persuasions, at every level of government, have become increasingly Machiavellian. While this strategy of using the ends to justify the means may work very well in the short run, few of the perpetrators ask the question, “How is this going to come back to us?” And ladies and gentlemen of the political establishment, let me reiterate, “What goes around comes around.” Sometimes it comes around in spades.

Yes, Virginia, political karma is most certainly a bitch!

It may seem perfectly reasonable for the Democrats in the Senate to try and derail the Supreme Court confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh by a thinly veiled ruse of using a #MeToo attack on the nominee. At its most base strategy, it works very well. Have a woman accuse the nominee of sexual assault at an unnamed location, at an unknown date, with unknown participants over 35 years earlier. It is a scenario that cannot be proven nor disproven. It is the perfect cloud to hang above the head of a good man who the political left fears.

Of course, I would be remiss to point out that the Republican-led Senate failed to give a good man, Merrick Garland, a vote on his appointment to the Supreme Court.

Of course, prior to Garland's failure, George W. Bush's appointment to the Supreme Court, Harriet Miers, got bounced because Democrats and their friends in the media sold a story that she wasn't qualified to be a justice since she once allowed her law license to lapse.

Ronald Reagan had two appointments fail. One of his appointments, Robert Bork, has now entered the lexicon of politics for all eternity in the form of the verb “to Bork.” According to the dictionary, to Bork means “to obstruct (someone, especially a candidate for public office) through systematic defamation or vilification.” Please note that the definition does not say to “justifiably” obstruct through systematic defamation or vilification.

Using unreasonable, dishonest, misleading and questionable strategies to reach a political end is nothing new, and dates all the way back to George Washington's Administration. However, just because these strategies have frequently been successful does not mean that they should continue.

No, we have not seen the end of the use of unfair political smears to take down candidates for public office or appointees for key government positions. We will not see the end of this strategy until it no longer works. The key to putting an end to this type of politics rests with the voters. When they demonstrate that they are fed up it, only then will it stop. Dirty politics work!

The next time that a Democrat is elected president, or when Democrats win the Senate or the House, we will see the same strategies used to resist President Donald Trump and the Republican agenda put to use to block the Democrats. Conservative civil service employees, State Department officials, intelligence services and FBI agents will act to resist a Democrat agenda. Republican leaders in the House and Senate, along with like-minded internet bloggers will coordinate messages and attacks to get their way. In short, it will be the political version of “monkey see, monkey do.” But to what good end?

Now I don't suffer from amnesia, nor do I fail to acknowledge that as a Republican county and district chairman I played extreme hardball. My job was to get Republicans elected and I did a pretty good job of it. There are things that I did as a party chairman that I would not

do again. That's why, after 11 years as a chairman, I threw in the towel. There were just some strategies and some people that I could no longer team with in the name of Republican victories. I either had to stop shaving or get rid of the mirror.

Our nation has many problems that are extremely difficult to fix in a moderate political environment and impossible to fix in the current white-hot crucible.

The United States has an existential threat of the national debt. Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are broken and will soon be unsustainable. We have global threats to our country abroad and domestic threats in our own backyard. Opioids are killing our young people. Our young people are killing our young people. Income inequality festers, and eats away at our economy like a

cancer. Public education is failing to prepare our children for the uber-competitive world they will face. We have lost much of our moral compass as a nation.

Unless the good men and women in our government stand up and act for the best interests of our country, we will never accomplish anything. The Bible balances the verse that proclaims "As you sow, so shall you reap" with the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Let's hope that the Golden Rule of Politics changes for the better and soon. If not, the personal destruction of Brett Kavanaugh will one day read like a quaint anecdote. ❖

Dunn is the former 4th CD and Howard County Republican chairman.

This isn't the Griffith I used to know

By **RICH JAMES**

GRIFFITH – This isn't the Griffith I used to know. This isn't the Griffith where I grew up, played baseball and graduated from high school.

No, this is a very different town from when there was nothing between our backyard on Cline Avenue and Kennedy Avenue but woods and a lake. Griffith residents voted Tuesday to cut ties with Calumet Township and hook up with St. John, North or Ross Township.



Griffith residents said they were tired of subsidizing poor relief for the people of Gary, who make up the bulk of Calumet Township. The Republican-controlled Legislature passed a law in

2013 to allow the town to secede from Calumet Township if the township's assistance tax rate was more than 12 times the state average.

But, it is about more than just the \$2 million Griffith residents are paying annually for Calumet Township poor relief. No, it also is a political and racist thing.

Republicans, who control the Griffith Town Council, pushed for the law allowing the town to secede. Republicans, who controlled the Legislature, gave the town the go-ahead.

I don't think this would have happened with Democrats controlling the town. No, Democrats traditionally seek a solution when there is a problem. On the other hand, Republicans cut and run, particularly when race is involved. And yes, Griffith, which is largely white, got tired of paying for the poor relief for Gary, which is virtually all

black.

Did some Griffith Democrats vote to pull out of Calumet Township? Sure. But voting to do so and initiating the referendum are two vastly different things.

What's really unfortunate is that the Legislature knew what it was doing when it authorized the referendum. And legislators knew it was wrong.

The state should take over the payment of poor relief assistance, just as it did welfare payments several years ago. It wasn't the fault of Griffith residents that Gary fell on hard times. And it wasn't the fault of Gary residents that jobs at U.S. Steel, the city's leading employer, dried up because of modernization.

It is an ugly situation that just got uglier with Griffith pulling out of the township. The Legislature could have prevented it all from happening if it had taken over the payment of poor relief statewide just as it did for welfare. Pulling out of a township wasn't the answer. ❖

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

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

Holcomb's broadband push needed & bold

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Gov. Holcomb recently announced a new program allocating \$100 million to promote broadband access in rural places. This is a bold and thoughtful policy experiment that will yield significant benefits.



Nevertheless, it is important to understand what the problem with broadband really is, and what this policy can, and cannot address and where the benefits actually accrue.

There can be little doubt that many Hoosiers, maybe 100,000 or so, lack any landline wireless and maybe one million lack the sort of reliable service that most urban dwellers expect and pay for. The reason for this is straightforward. Wireline tele-

communications access to a home is what economists call a natural monopoly. In this case, nearly all the costs come in the form of laying the wire or fiber optics to a home, not in the actual service provision.

For a natural monopoly service to be profitable, it must have sufficient local demand to justify the initial investment. The lack of service is due to the simple fact that doing so is not profitable, and the extra \$100 million cannot fix that fact. The government can subsidize service or alarm telecom companies into extending service to unprofitable areas to prevent unwanted competition. In reality, it'll probably do a bit of both.

There can also be little doubt that the lack of broadband already makes things worse in many rural and poor places across Indiana. My colleagues and I at Ball State completed a study last year that found that measures of regional inequality were worse due to the absence of this technology. A remedy to this will make many rural dwellers better off, but this is a complex issue, with several dimensions. Let me explain them in turn.

The commercial economic development effects of this proposal will be near zero, and certainly far less than \$100 million. The factors that make places unprofitable for broadband make them unprofitable for most other types of commerce as well. Whatever anecdotal evidence arises from new businesses benefitting from this program will be overwhelmed by continued economic and population decline in rural areas. The benefits accruing to this program are to be found outside traditional economic development, and that is good news, otherwise the program would not be justifiable.

It's important to admit that urban households heavily subsidize rural households in Indiana. On a per

capita basis, the spending gap between the most rural and urban places is more than \$2,500 per year. This is true despite much lower costs of rural living. Urban dwellers pay much higher land and rental costs, pay for more local services and are big losers when it comes to the transfer of wealth between city and country. Any call upon urban taxpayers to subsidize rural taxpayers for economic development is dubious public policy. Fortunately, that is not the real justification for this service.

The real benefits to expanded broadband access come in several forms. In maybe one third of Hoosier schools, students lack basic broadband internet service in their classrooms or at home. This reduces both access to information, and places students at a disadvantage in higher education. While part of this is a consequence of poor decisions by communities, it is in all our interests to insure that these students have better opportunities. I believe the \$100 million is justified by these benefits alone.

Today, nearly all public services are accessed through the internet, as are a growing suite of private services. The absence of broadband access limits household ability to apply for or receive public services across the entire domain from applying for retirement benefits to scheduling a BMV visit. Today private activities ranging from banking to retail purchases are performed online through broadband connections.

Healthcare services, including those delivered to homes increasingly need broadband access to enable diagnostic services, medical records and other services. While health care professionals transport much of these services on their own equipment, the demand for in-home services will grow over time. Places without broadband will be at a healthcare disadvantage.

To reiterate the absence of local economic development benefits to broadband, I note that access to more private services through the internet will shift local consumption away from local firms. So, it is imperative that communities focus on ensuring broadband adoption is high where it becomes available. There is no panacea here, as households in a wired community will find themselves even less able to access important goods and services if they aren't also connected.

My final words on this are to commend again the state's leadership on this issue. Since the enormously successful 2007 deregulation of telecommunication, it has been difficult to garner support for more innovation in this area. I have largely agreed with this policy hiatus, but the world has changed enough that this policy experiment is now needed. It will not be popular with everyone, and probably will not pay off politically. But, it is surely the right thing to do. ❖

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.

Mike Allen, Axios: Brett Kavanaugh is hopping mad about the late wave of allegations against him and will be charged up for this morning's hearing, sources close to him tell Jonathan Swan: Team Kavanaugh sources last night ranged from nervous and unsure to modestly confident. All agreed that Kavanaugh's Supreme Court confirmation hinges on how compelling he and Christine Blasey Ford are at the 10 a.m. Senate Judiciary Committee hearing. "It'll be a snapshot of the state of the union," as AP puts it. "With the wall-to-wall coverage starting at 10 a.m. EDT [including on the broadcast networks], the hearing promises to be a national drama along the lines of Clarence Thomas' confirmation hearing in 1991, when Anita Hill testified that he had sexually harassed her." e smart: The view from inside is that if Kavanaugh comes across as awkward, stiff, and evasive — as he has in previous public appearances — he's toast. President Trump has been all-in to back Kavanaugh. But he equivocated yesterday, saying he'll only know after hearing Ford: Trump's disdain for the #MeToo movement, and instinct to double down, is in tension with the fact that Kavanaugh hasn't played well on TV. Senator Susan Collins, Republican of Maine and a key swing vote, told colleagues in a private meeting that she was troubled by the latest accusations. Collins joined two other Republican senators, Jeff Flake of Arizona and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, in expressing reservations about the Kavanaugh nomination, more than enough to sink it. ❖



Morton Marcus, Howey Politics Indiana: Last week the Census Bureau tried to shock Americans by reporting that "three-fourths of the nation's businesses don't have paid employees." It's a headline appropriate for Halloween. That was the 2016 reality of nearly 25 million firms in this country. How can that be? It's easy to understand, if you just look around. Think about all those trucks on the nation's highways driven by owner-operators. These are independent entrepreneurs who carry goods for one or more shippers. Often they bid for loads, stopping for coffee and to pray for falling fuel prices. However, before we celebrate these highway heroes of the competitive market place, let's understand they face conglomerate trucking empires and shippers who press constantly for lower trucking fees. It can be a hard life, not only due to the ordeals of extensive travel, but as a result of the grinding nature of commercial independence. From 2011 to 2016, transportation and warehousing was fastest growing business sector of non-employee firms nationally, up by just less than 80 percent. That growth overshadows the 32 percent increase in similar Indiana firms. Across all business sectors in America, non-employee firms grew by 10.3 percent, while Indiana managed only a 5.2 percent increase. Part of those increases are related to continuing outsourcing of labor. Where payroll would be an internal function of a big firm, now an accountant may be contracted to direct a team which will perform the payroll functions, but be

employed by a third party that manages contract workers. Where a large manufacturing firm had carpenters, painters and plumbers on the payroll in previous decades, now it may contract with firms that supply skilled workers who no longer receive the benefits once enjoyed by those craftsmen. Even if they are unionized, those workers do not negotiate with the manufacturing firm, but with the labor aggregator. Many people work out of their homes as independent contractors on a project basis. Nationally, of these non-employee entrepreneurs, 11 percent had sales or receipts in 2016 of \$100,000 or more. In contrast, 79 percent had income from their "businesses" of less than \$50,000. How much of this revenue was retained after expenses, is not reported in the Census data. Among the 16 million firms where revenues were less than \$25,000 per year, we may be looking at hobbies for retired persons, restless full-time workers, or necessary, supplemental income for desperate minimum wage employees. Of non-employee firms in transportation and warehousing, 58 percent (1.1 million) earned less than \$25,000 in 2016. Do you think many of these were hobbyists, retired, or just restless? These data, available for all states and counties in the U.S., are evidence of growing fragmentation in our economy. Some applaud this restructured distribution of economic power. Others lament an erosion of collective influence in economic affairs as power is concentrated in fewer firms dealing with more diffused labor markets. ❖

Stuart Rothenberg, Roll Call: I'm tired of all the noise and hype. I'm tired of the daily crises. I'm tired of the drama that is produced by President Donald Trump. I'm tired of the suffocating coverage by the national media of the chaos that swirls around the administration. I'm tired of the obvious partisanship on Capitol Hill. I wish it would all stop, but I know it won't. I'm tired of the stupid tweets from the president of the United States that wouldn't be appropriate for a 12-year-old school yard bully, let alone someone who is supposed to be a world leader. I'm tired of the lies and efforts to misdirect that come from Sarah Huckabee Sanders and other members of the White House and friends of the president. I'm tired of Trump's ridiculous rallies — his attacks on the media and the "deep state," his misstatements about the economy, and his efforts to undermine important institutions such as the Department of Justice and the FBI. I'm tired of all of those people standing behind him, wearing their MAGA hats and waving signs, and cheering mindlessly when he mocks his adversaries, attacks America's allies and brags about his alleged accomplishments. I'm tired of much of the media coverage. While I agree with most critics of the president and Republicans on Capitol Hill, I wonder why the major cable networks can't take a break once in a while from talking Trump (or more recently, Judge Brett Kavanaugh) and instead give me some other news. Something else MUST be going on around the world. ❖

RV shipments decline by 12.5%

ELKHART – For the third time in four months, the recreational vehicle industry has posted a decline in units shipped to retailers (Schneider, [Goshen News](#)). Tuesday, the RV Industry Association released its August survey of manufacturers, which found RV wholesale shipments finished at 39,417 units, a decrease of 12.5 percent from the 45,031 units shipped last August. All towable RVs, led by conventional travel trailers, totaled 34,458 units for the month, a decrease of 12.7 percent compared to last August's towable RV shipment total of 39,479. The trade group reported motorhomes ended August with 4,959 shipments to retailers, down 10.7 percent, compared to last August's total of 5,552. Year-to-date wholesale shipments are currently at 347,530, up 3.9 percent compared to this point last year, according to the RVIA. Towable RVs are up 4.7 percent to 305,795 units. Motorhome shipments are down 1.3 percent to 41,735 units.



Trump vows to avoid shutdown

NEW YORK – President Trump pledged Wednesday that he would not allow the government to partially shut down next week, backing down from his demand that Congress appropriate billions of dollars for new construction of a wall along the Mexico border ([Washington Post](#)). Keeping the government open after Sunday would require Trump to sign a bipartisan spending bill from Congress, something he had resisted committing to for weeks. But Wednesday, with anxiety building on Capitol Hill, he suggested that he planned to acquiesce. The bill would fund the military and some other government programs through September 2019 and other government operations through Dec. 7. The House passed the legislation TK-TK Wednesday and sent it to Trump. "We'll keep the government open. We're going to keep

the government open," the president told reporters during a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in New York.

Holcomb ordered to provide Pence email

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb's administration has 30 days to turn over emails that passed between former Gov. Mike Pence, the Trump administration and Carrier Corp. related to the negotiations by then-President-elect Donald Trump to prevent Carrier's Indianapolis plant from moving most of its operations to Mexico ([IBJ](#)). Marion Superior Judge Heather Welch issued an order this week forcing Holcomb's office to disclose any communications, including meeting minutes and documents about meetings, sent from Nov. 14-29, 2016, between Pence, Trump and Carrier. Also, the court found the governor violated the Access to Public Records Act by failing to provide updates on the status of the request for the documents. Citizens Action Coalition filed the complaint in June 2017, alleging the governor's office was violating Indiana's open records law.

Dec. 6 trial for Supt. Tanoos

TERRE HAUTE – A Dec. 6 trial date has been set for former Vigo County Schools Supt. Danny Tanoos, charged this week with bribery in connection to school energy saving projects (Trigg, [Terre Haute Tribune-Star](#)). Tanoos is accused of accepting items of value from vendor Energy Systems Group in return for his influence in securing contracts. Those items include meals, concert tickets, professional sports tickets and liquor, according to a probable-cause affidavit. Tanoos appeared in Marion Superior Court 4 with his attorneys for the 9 a.m. hearing with Judge Lisa Borges. During the 10-minute hearing, Borges told Tanoos he faces one count of bribery

as a Class C felony. The penalty range is 2 to 8 years in prison and an advisory sentence of 4 years. Tanoos also faces two counts of bribery as a Level 5 felony. The penalty range is 1 to 6 years in prison with an advisory sentence of 3 years.

Support for Kavanaugh falls

WASHINGTON – Public support for Judge Brett Kavanaugh to fill the vacant Supreme Court seat has dropped to its lowest point since President Donald Trump nominated him in July, driven in large part by a sector of the president's base: Republican women. A new [Morning Consult/Politico poll](#), conducted Sept. 20-23, found support for Kavanaugh's confirmation is underwater among registered voters for the first time since his nomination, with 37 percent opposing the Senate confirming him and 34 percent supporting it. The new finding marks a 5-percentage-point drop in net support since a poll conducted last week, after Christine Blasey Ford detailed her allegation that Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her while the two were in high school.

Trump backs Rosenstein

NEW YORK -- President Trump sought Wednesday to defuse the confusion surrounding the future of his deputy attorney general, [saying he would prefer](#) to keep Rod J. Rosenstein in the job and might even delay a scheduled meeting between the two on Thursday that some had feared could lead to his ouster. Answering questions at a lengthy news conference, Trump said he liked Rosenstein and hoped he would remain in the position. "I'm talking to him; we've had a good talk," said the president.