

Hoosier mayors on Buttigieg boom

His colleagues watched him become a policy force, see a vivid contrast with President Trump

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Earlier this decade, the “Young Guns” emerged in the Indiana mayoral class. There were LaPorte’s Blair Milo, Chris McBarnes in Frankfort, Ryan Daniel over at Columbia City, Joe McGuiness down in Franklin and joining these Republicans from up north was



Democrat Pete Buttigieg of South Bend. They won office at a nascent political age, some in their 20s, and did amazing work in what were often described as “Rust Belt cities.”

When you look at this class, Milo now heads Gov. Eric Holcomb’s Career Connections and Talent agency, McGuiness is commissioner of the Indiana Department of



South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg with Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight at an AIM event. Buttigieg’s colleagues see him as a considerable policy force. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

Transportation, McBarnes and Daniel are seeking reelection and are seen as rising stars with the latter taking an activist role in Indiana’s meth epidemic. And Buttigieg? As you know, he’s running for president of the United States.

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Super majorities & hate

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Super majorities have consequences.

If there is any lesson to be drawn from the headline news item of the 2019 General Assembly session – the hate crimes legislation without a specific list of the potentially afflicted, which reached Senate concurrence Tuesday and is headed to Gov. Eric Holcomb’s desk – it’s that.

The pipsqueak Democratic minorities protest with the voices of mice and the super majority Republicans just grin and do what they want, often in caucus, away from public view.

There is no presumptive



“I certainly hope we can get this Mexican border issue solved without closing the borders. That would be devastating to ... our dairy, pork and corn industries.”

- Agriculture Sec. Sonny Perdue speaking at Purdue on President Trump’s threat to close the U.S.-Mexican border



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Democratic gubernatorial standard-bearer in the wings who should be the focal and vocal point of resistance. And the true rising star of the Rooster Party, the openly gay South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg, is too busy running for president.

In February, when Mayor Pete conducted a book reading at IUPUI, there seemed to be a strange bedfellows alignment between Buttigieg and Gov. Holcomb on SB12, which had just cleared the Senate without a list. Holcomb declared it "unacceptable" and said there was plenty of time to forge a list. "I will continue to fight for the right ultimate outcome for our state and citizens this year so we're not right back here in the same place next year," Holcomb said.

HPI commented at the time: It is unclear how Holcomb will use his considerable popularity to bring his recalcitrant GOP into line.

Now we know. Buttigieg called this first Senate version a "crushing disappointment" and urged the overflow crowd to "summon courage" and make their voices heard, saying, "We have to have the protections. We have to have the civil rights protections. We have them in South Bend and we have to have them statewide." But the Democrat seemingly with the most political momentum in America has not weighed in again on SB12, nor did many of his followers. It was rhetoric sans action. Like Vice President Pence, Mayor Pete has gone nationwide. Indiana is in his rearview mirror.

Washington Examiner reporter Philip Wegmann recently called HPI about Buttigieg's resistance to Gov. Mike Pence's signing and

subsequent rescinding of the RFRA law in 2015 and I did a scan of our April 2015 editions which covered the controversy extensively. Mayor Buttigieg was conspicuous in his relative silence. To be fair, perhaps that's because it was the Indiana Chamber, Bill Oesterle, the NCAA and other economic Republicans who had raised the alarms, and Mayor Pete decided to let the GOP-aligned groups handle the self-inflicted fiasco. (It might also be a factor that the South Bend mayor was not yet "out" about his own sexual orientation at the time.)

Super majorities obscure other important things, like the influence of the Intolerance Wing of the Republican Party which, in the concealment provided by internal



Gov. Eric Holcomb greets State Sen. Ron Alting, who was co-author of the original SB12 hate crime bill that included a list, prior to his State of the State address in January when the governor declared he would help shape a new law. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

caucus debate, resisted what dozens of other states have done with hate crime laws, which is to explicitly list the afflicted classes. They carried the day; the "family advocacy" groups still wield outsized influence within the GOP. Speaker Brian Bosma and Senate President Pro Tem Rod Bray acquiesced in the name of internal order and fear of primary politics. Courage could be saved for another day.

And Gov. Holcomb?

He promised to be a vocal proponent of a hate crime law with a list. But after his return from Europe, he passed on using several Indiana Lincoln Day dinners to pressure recalcitrant members of his party. Nor did he barnstorm the state drumming up what we've come to know from another governor as the "white-hot heat of public opinion." At the Bartholomew County Lincoln Dinner Saturday, Holcomb didn't speak about the issue as Sen. Greg Walker and Sen. Ryan Lauer looked on. But he told the Columbus Republic, "I believe that covers it all. No one is left out."

With the Senate concurring on a 34-14 vote Tuesday, Holcomb insisted the compromise will protect every Hoosier. "Those targeted for crimes because of color, creed, disability, national origin, race, religion or sexual orientation are protected," Holcomb said.



Speaker Brian Bosma and Senate President Pro Tem Rod Bray presided over the evolution of SB198. Bosma believes the compromise that passed the House and was concurred with in the Senate on Tuesday will protect all Hoosiers. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

But State Sen. Ron Alting, who sponsored the original SB12 and ended up voting against SB198, said on the Senate floor, "I say to everybody, it's got to be everyone in it or I cannot support." He added that the final verdict will come from the courts, judges and prosecutors. "Time will tell," Alting said. "We won't know for awhile."

This is not Holcomb's finest hour. His messaging on hate crimes has been, and remains, mixed and conflicted. On the eve of Senate concurrence, the governor explained, "The No. 1 priority for me is to make sure that when we adjourn from this legislative session, that all 6.6 million-plus Hoosiers are protected, and from what I've seen (this version) would do it." But, he added that he will continue push for gender and gender identity in an explicit list. "I don't want to go back, I want to go forward," Holcomb said Monday. "And this will be a tremendous step in the right direction."

So which is it, governor?

If everyone is covered under the House-passed version of SB 198, why continue to push for a list? In Hoosier parlance, that's having it both ways. Holcomb is demonstrating an inability to lead his party on a high-profile issue.

But a super majority can do that to a governor. Out there in what I'll call "89% country" (where 89% of county commissioners are Republican), there might be general acceptance of a hate crime law that could help after churches in Jasper County and a synagogue in Hamilton County have been defiled. But we haven't seen leadership from legislative Republicans for an explicit list.

Why? Because super majorities don't feel the

political heat. They can do what they do because, as we often say about contortionist hounds, they can. Fearless of meaningful challenges from defanged Democrats, yet fearful of 2020 primary challenges organized by the state's active religious right, the GOP super-majorities caterwaul in caucus, but are guarded in public, paralyzed from taking meaningful action to erase a stigma from our state.

The South Bend Tribune editorialized on Sunday, "Last summer, in the wake of anti-Semitic graffiti painted at a Carmel synagogue, Gov. Eric Holcomb committed to "get something done" in the next legislative session "so that Indiana can be one of 46 states with hate crimes legislation — and not one of five states without it." But the Tribune deduced: "Indiana's governor has said all the right things about ending Indiana's failure to pass a

bias crimes law. But last week, he showed he was strong on talk, weak on action."

While that is a Democrat-leaning newspaper in the heart of Buttigieg country, there weren't many other such observations beyond Mary Beth Schneider and the Statehouse File.

From a practical and legal standpoint, should Johnny Chitwood Himmeler spray paint "Heil Hitler" on a synagogue or defile a home with a rainbow flag on the porch and a car with an equality sticker in the driveway, judges have the ability today to sentence while considering the aggravating circumstances at hand.

Speaker Bosma believed that to be the case before this session ever began, before Holcomb decided to prioritize a hate crime law at the behest of his IEDC wing in the wake of the Carmel synagogue assault. Many in his caucus and among Senate Republicans are just fine with the status quo.

In the eyes of Gov. Holcomb and his commerce officials, as well as supportive business groups, this was (and is) about fostering a promising business environment. In the eyes of many in the super majority, SB12 and now SB198 were (and are) about semantics ... about political correctness. And still to others, about "special protections" for classes of people they'd rather not think about and really aren't interested in protecting.

Until Indiana Democrats can muster a credible standard-bearer and spokesperson, and actually elect candidates across Mike Pence's amber waves of grain, this dynamic will not change. ❖

Mayor Pete, from page 1

In many states, mayors are more ceremonial, cutting ribbons and presiding over council meetings, while managers run the city. "In Indiana, you have a strong mayor state," said Matt Greller, president of Accelerating Indiana Municipalities (AIM). "They have vastly more power, they make more board appointments, they have more decision-making authority. They can wake up in the morning seeing a section of road that needs repair and by the time you go home, it's fixed.

"The mayor is hands-on every day, whether it's making infrastructure or public safety decisions. And that translates perfectly to the office of president," Greller said. "A lot of our mayors on both sides bring that unique skill set."

And they are not trapped by politics. "We just had a gathering of mayors last week and it never comes down to politics," Greller said. "I won't even say it rarely comes up – it never comes up. The mayors are only focused on politics every four years when they are up for reelection. The rest of the time it's about policy. They'll steal ideas from each other. If there's a Democratic mayor talking about a unique project, it's not going to stop a Republican mayor from taking it."

Not a far-fetched notion

So within AIM, the notion of Mayor Pete running for president isn't a far-fetched notion in a policy sense. Buttigieg is seen as a man with keen intellect and the ability to translate policy to the common man. What may have surprised some contemporaries is Buttigieg's adroit steering through the political minefield.

"What Pete is trying to do is completely unprecedented," said Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., noting only Presidents Andrew Johnson, Grover Cleveland and Calvin Coolidge served as mayors, and none of them made the jump directly from city hall to the White House. "I've known him for 10 years and he's very impressive. The thing about Pete is he's young, ambitious and incredibly intelligent."

"To be president, you have to make decisions," said McDermott, a Democrat whose father was a Republican mayor of Hammond. "Mayors are great at it. They analyze both sides and make a decision. The president has a cabinet, and the mayor has one, appointing the department heads. Mayors have to interact with the city council. That would be Pete's challenge. Congress isn't in it for the good of the country. There, if you're a Democrat (then) you can't work with Republicans. People who work as mayor are in it for the good of the city."

Former Fort Wayne mayor Paul Helmke told HPI, "After 2016, the rules have changed on all sorts of things. That may really benefit him. Mayors are hands-on, deal with problems, and deal with problems across the aisle.

They live with the people they are serving. There are no walls or staffs separating them from the people. They are out in the community and at the grocery store. If you're concerned about the trappings of the semi-imperial presidency, mayors are the antithesis of that. If we're concerned about people being all talk and no action, mayors have to get things done, and if they don't, people know it."

Kokomo Mayor Gregg Goodnight chaired Buttigieg's 2010 run for Indiana treasurer, and the two often travel together to Indianapolis and compare notes. He also believes the mayoral skill set positions Buttigieg well for the presidency. "I believe it's an asset, and with Buttigieg, specifically," said Goodnight, a three-term Democrat who is not seeking reelection. "It helps him because you have to solve the problem, whether it's flooding, tornadoes or an economic crisis. There is no buck-passing. You are the local government. Governors can pass it down to local



schools or counties, like we're seeing with local jail populations."

Goodnight finds Buttigieg extraordinarily pragmatic, saying that Buttigieg "uses his political influences on some of his decision-making, though most of those decisions are not political."

Howey Politics Indiana has often noted that the two toughest jobs in American politics are the presidency and being mayor. "I do think it's a tough job," Goodnight said. "It's not a fun job, but it is a very rewarding job. Sometimes you've got a finite amount of resources, and everything comes down to prioritizing those resources, whether it's monetary, prioritize any of the so many different factions from neighborhood associations, to chambers, to labor groups. It's trying to balance dozens of different things at once. Then you have to prioritize your individual time, so I'm not neglecting certain parts of the city or job."

Goodnight added, "To be a mayor, you have to have empathy. You have to talk to people. I've never been homeless, or unsure where my next meal would be from. I've never been the victim of a serious crime, never confined to a wheelchair. I've never been discriminated against because of race or my sex. But I have to be able to put myself in some of those people's shoes. That's what a mayor does."

McDermott adds, "As mayor, I get to hear about people's struggles. I get the direct pulse of the community." In doing so, mayors will do what they can to avoid divided government because things are so personal and if people have an issue, they'll show up at a mayor's doorstep. "My whole goal is I want both Republicans and

Democrats to vote for me," McDermott said. "I don't want just over 50% and a divided city. I tell them that I want Republicans to vote for me. Republicans are Hoosiers, Americans and quite frankly, half of my family is Republican. You have to market yourself differently. Pete will want everyone to vote for him."

Buttigieg navigates policy

Greller remembers a General Assembly proposal three or four years ago to eliminate the business personal property tax. "South Bend is a heavy manufacturing city and it would have had a very dire impact," Greller explained. "He sat down with Gov. Pence and the two of them had a very serious conversation. Politics was not an issue. It was two highly intellectual people having that conversation. Pete helped the legislature and governor come to the conclusion that if we're going to move in that direction, (then) there would have to be changes."



Greller continued, "It was put to the side and a

small business property tax bill passed. It was a status quo resolution. He and Pence were very different on political issues and ideology, so it was interesting to watch the two of them going back and forth when you knew their political ideologies were so different. It never got in the way and it never clouded any policy decision."

Greller said that Buttigieg was instrumental in AIM's rebranding transformation from its days as the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns. "It was an organizational transformation," Greller said. "He, along with Fishers Mayor Scott Fadness were very involved in the process. Pete's ability to understand how to carry our message through the General Assembly in a non-partisan fashion was remarkable. He understands the nuances of policy and the nuances of politics, and not everyone can navigate through that process."

Does Pete have a chance?

The sources for this story were all initially skeptical that Pete Buttigieg had a realistic chance of winning the Democratic nomination, let alone the presidency. They all agree that as this cycle has evolved, the mayor has an opening.

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separate yourself from the pack," Good-night observed. "Let's look at Pete. He's got the goofy name. He's got a weird story, mayor of a small city. He's had military service, he's a Rhodes Scholar, openly gay and he's young. We're starting to see that being a little odd helps. Bernie (Sanders) was able to use that. Ron Paul was able to use that, being quirky, being something different."



Helmke, who teaches Indiana University's Civics Leaders Program, knows from experience that Hoosier mayors haven't translated well to statewide office, beyond Sen. Vance Hartke who was mayor of Evansville and Sen. Richard Lugar from Indianapolis. Helmke lost a 1998 U.S. Senate race to Evan Bayh, and Indianapolis mayors Bill Hudnut and Stephen Goldsmith lost secretary of state and gubernatorial races. So, there is some logic in Buttigieg's decision to leapfrog statewide politics and go nationwide.

"Being mayor you are judged by your results, but you're going to be held responsible," Helmke said. "Any mayor is going to have some positives and negatives. There's always going to be crime, infrastructure, personnel issues and with responsibility comes criticism. You can duck it in the legislative branch, but not as an executive. What's occurred to me is that Pete Buttigieg coming from a smaller city probably helps him. If Rudy Giuliani runs, everyone has a view of New York, or LA or Chicago, but people don't have a view of South Bend. There's no preconceived negatives and more positives with Notre Dame."

Helmke believes Buttigieg may be the youngest presidential candidate since William Jennings Bryan. "A lot of politics is the contrast and this is a time to make that contrast. All of the contrasts seem to be working in his favor with President Trump and with the rest of the Democratic field, if you look at what's the opposite of what we have now."

McDermott said Buttigieg could present a nightmare matchup for President Trump. "He's the anti-Trump," McDermott said. "Pete would tear Trump up."

That's a common thread among the Hoosier municipal class. Or as Greller puts it, "I know a number of Republicans in the state who are super-glad he's not running for governor or something else here. Seeing Pete on a debate stage with Donald Trump, I'd pay to see that."

Exhibit A on this front would be Elkhart Republican Kyle Hannon, who observed on Facebook Messenger Tuesday after reading the story about Buttigieg performing nuptials for a South Bend couple just before she was going in for a C-Section: "This guy has a good chance. There is something about this campaign that resonates. As you may know, I'm a Republican."

As for winning the Democratic nomination, McDermott believes that key contrasts are already emerging between Buttigieg and the septuagenarian frontrunners Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders. "I think Pete has way more courage than Joe Biden. He's been thinking about running

for four years. Pete thought about it for four weeks and got in. If Joe Biden hasn't made up his mind, he's not going to be a good president."

McDermott also believes Buttigieg is rising to the moment. "When he talked about Trump and the 'porn star presidency,' that's what I'm talking about, coming up with a line like that."

Greller sees Buttigieg's early traction in the Democratic race as good for the state, particularly if he ends up on a collision course with Vice President Pence. "It says a lot about Indiana that we can produce leaders on an array of things. I think it's a really interesting dynamic that Indiana is becoming a focal point to the nation of where we're headed politically." ❖



Buttigieg's boomlet fueled by \$7M report, social media surge

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — It was another eye-popping week for Pete Buttigieg's presidential exploration effort. He posted \$7 million on his first Federal Election Commission report, coming from 158,000 donors. There has been a surge in his social media. And he's opening up his South Bend headquarters and staffing up.

"This is just a preliminary analysis, but our team's initial report shows we raised over \$7 million in Q1 of this year," Buttigieg announced Monday. "We (you) are outperforming expectations at every turn. I'll have a more complete analysis later, but until then, a big thank you to all our supporters," Buttigieg tweeted. Last month Buttigieg announced that his committee had crested the 65,000 individual-donor threshold to make the DNC debates that begin in June.



Buttigieg [took to Facebook](#) to walk his growing league of supporters through how he raised his funds. "This is a big deal. This was way ahead of our initial goals and it is definitely ahead of what people thought we could do. We cannot thank you enough for all you've done so far. We have a lot of work to do, and we're glad to be doing it with you." In the video, he explained, "As promised, we took a closer look at our Q1 fundraising metrics, including number of donors (158,550), average donation (\$36.35), and the percent of our total amount raised that came in through contributions under \$200 (64%)."

"He's disrupting the entire 2020 race," Jon Soltz, president of VoteVets said to Politico. "The more and more

people hear from him, the more they think he's the fresh face that they've been waiting for."

Buttigieg's haul appears modest when compared to Sen. Kamala Harris who is posting \$12 million and Sen. Bernie Sanders who reported \$18 million. The big difference is both of those candidates have declared and have staffed up, while Buttigieg is still in exploratory mode and is just now hiring.

But there are signs that Buttigieg is resonating in other ways. The Hollywood Reporter said that Buttigieg spoke to 40 employees at Brillstein Entertainment Partners. Manager George Heller is credited with bringing Buttigieg into the building, and he told THR: "We are all craving politicians who can bring us together. A lot of Dems seem to speak to only their own party and I think Pete is more transformative and reflects a part of the country that most other Dems cannot access."

After Brillstein, Buttigieg headed to the home of former CAA agent Michael Kives (who now runs K5 Global) and attorney wife Lydia Kives (of the Bail Project) for a meet-and-greet with about 25 industry players (including CAA's Richard Lovett, Untitled Entertainment's Jason Weinberg, MGM's Jon Glickman and wife Christy Callahan, and attorney Marcy Morris) before finishing the day taping a segment on Bill Maher's HBO show. "Everyone was blown away," a source says of that event, which the mayor attended with husband Chasten Glezman.

The Pete for America exploratory committee says the mayor has found office space in downtown South Bend. "A couple of us are focused on something entirely different, moving to a new office!" the campaign said in a fundraising email on Saturday. "We've mentioned this a few times, but we need more space here at headquarters in South Bend. We're preparing for several new hires, and we need different types of space to be able to effectively collaborate across teams. Our staff will be reporting to work tomorrow in our new space."

Buttigieg's social media exposure is also skyrocketing. According to Axios, Buttigieg generated more engagement with his tweets (2.1 million likes, retweets, comments) in that span than any other candidate's main account except O'Rourke (2.17 million) — and Mayor Pete has half as many followers (600,000 vs. 1.4 million). Since his breakout performance at a CNN Town Hall on March 10, he has added 447,000 followers on Twitter. His next closest 2020 competitor, Beto O'Rourke, picked up 137,000 in that period, per CrowdTangle. Buttigieg added more followers on Instagram (90,000) and Facebook (75,000) during the period than any Democratic candidate except O'Rourke (92,000/82,000), per CrowdTangle. CNN's Harry Enten points out that has "correlated with jumps in the

	AVERAGE INTERACTIONS	ARTICLE COUNT
Buttigieg	981	3,017
Abrams	782	1,898
Warren	716	5,397
Sanders	689	6,322
Biden	583	8,468
O'Rourke	560	21,680
Booker	528	2,393
Yang	501	566
Harris	387	4,048
Gabbard	349	533
Gillibrand	281	3,520

polls this primary season." Buttigieg is also drawing attention from other Democrats.

A Hillary Clinton spokesman slammed Buttigieg on Friday for comments he made in January about Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign (CNN). Buttigieg said in an interview with The Washington Post Magazine published in January, "Donald Trump got elected because, in his twisted way, he pointed out the huge troubles in our economy and our democracy." He added, "At least he didn't go around saying that America was already great, like Hillary did." Nick

Merrill, a Clinton adviser and spokesman, called Buttigieg's months-old comments "indefensible." "This is indefensible. @HillaryClinton ran on a belief in this country & the most progressive platform in modern political history. Trump ran on pessimism, racism, false promises, & vitriol. Interpret that how you want, but there are 66,000,000 people who disagree. Good luck," Merrill posted on Twitter.

Buttigieg will speak at Northeastern University in Boston today on the importance of millennial participation and representation in national politics. On Thursday, Buttigieg will deliver remarks at the National Action Network in New York. He'll campaign in New Hampshire on Friday and Saturday. Next Monday he makes his first trip to Nevada.

All this comes as former vice president Joe Biden faced allegations of two unwanted advances toward women, one a Nevada legislator, and a second woman in Connecticut and other incidents are now surfacing. Both happened years ago. Biden is undeclared, but has led in national and Iowa polling. Axios reports that while Biden appears to be floundering, former New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg is reassessing whether he should enter the race.

"Honestly this is the most interesting, unfathomable and formidable field that I can remember," said David Axelrod, the longtime Democratic strategist. "Really, really substantial candidates. Different profiles and approaches. And no clear indication yet which will prevail. It makes for a great campaign."

Publisher's note on Buttigieg campaign

We've heard some grouching about HPI's "ob-session" with the Buttigieg campaign. Since HPI began publishing in 1994, we've covered presidential campaigns by Hoosier politicians ranging from Sen. Richard Lugar in 1995-96, Dan Quayle in 1999, Sen. Evan Bayh briefly in 2006, and prospective campaigns of Govs. Mitch Daniels and Mike Pence in 2011 and the Trump/Pence campaign in 2016. It's what our subscribers expect. When Pete Buttigieg stops making news, we'll stop covering him. Until then, we'll be on the campaign trail. ❖

Holcomb endorses Jensen in Noblesville

Howey Politics Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric Holcomb endorsed Councilman Chris Jensen for the Republican Noblesville mayoral nomination. "Having known and worked with Chris for years, I'm proud to endorse his campaign for Noblesville mayor," Holcomb said. "Chris' vision and agenda will keep Noblesville on the right track for a better future, while we work to take all of Indiana to the Next Level."



"Having a leader and partner like Eric Holcomb in the governor's office is a game changer for Noblesville," Jensen said. "Taxes are low, budgets are balanced, and we're investing in the future. That's the leadership Noblesville needs to be able to succeed here at home, and I'm honored to have his support as we work to build Noblesville's next chapter."

Jensen is facing Vince Baker, Mike Corbett and former Noblesville School Board member Julia Kozicki in a race to replace Mayor John Ditslear.

Terre Haute Dems talk issues at forum

Democrats seeking their party's nomination for Terre Haute mayor addressed voters Tuesday night at the Vigo County Public Library (Taylor, [Terre Haute Tribune-Star](#)). Retired businessman David E. "Dots" Conder said he is running to bring more diversity to public office. Robert E. "Superman" Hamilton said he's running to make sure "Terre Haute is the best place you can be." Calling himself a "handicapped specialist," Hamilton said he is running to ensure good jobs and proper facilities for everyone. City Councilman Karrum Nasser touted a "team effort" that, during his one term on the council, has enabled the city to reduce short-term borrowing by half and reduce its deficit. "We need to focus on our families, we need to focus on jobs, we need to make it so that everyone is able to succeed regardless of their background," Nasser said.

South Bend: Critchlow endorsed by FOP

Democrat Jason Critchlow's campaign announced it has been endorsed by the South Bend Fraternal Order of Police. The endorsement adds to a growing list of individuals and or-

ganizations that have declared their support for Critchlow's candidacy for mayor of South Bend, a list that includes current and former elected officials, as well as organized labor. "It's rare that the FOP endorses a mayoral candidate, but Jason offers a refreshing view on how the police department and the city can work together to help reduce crime and create a better relationship with the community. We also like his vision for the future of South Bend," said Harvey Mills, President of the FOP #36. "I am honored to have the support of the South Bend Fraternal Order of Police," Critchlow said. "I believe it is essential that we build and maintain a close and supportive relationship between the citizens of South Bend and our police department."

Indianapolis: Merritt cites claim rejections

State Sen. Jim Merritt criticized Mayor Joe Hogsett and his administration for forgetting the needs of citizens while funding non-essential mandates. "Last year, 1,305 Indianapolis pothole claims were denied payment. Those citizens were forgotten by the incompetency of the Hogsett administration and were forced to pay for tire and wheel repairs out of their own pockets," said Merritt. "In fact, only 16 claims were paid last year by Mayor Hogsett and his administration. That amounted to a measly \$3,000 worth of repairs for pothole-related damage." In recent days, according to Merritt, Mayor Hogsett has bragged about every pothole that gets filled. "And while we're all grateful for the hard-working men and women who are trying to resolve this crisis, the work being done today is a temporary fix to a long-term problem. Because prep work was not done ahead of time to prepare for the winter, many of the potholes filled in recent weeks are opening up again," Merritt said.

The Hogsett campaign responded with spokeswoman Heather K. Sager saying, "Road infrastructure and city budgets are serious issues. That's why over the last three years, Mayor Joe Hogsett has worked with bipartisan Council majorities to tackle chronically underfunded city services and produce the first back-to-back balanced budgets that our city has seen in more than a decade. At the same time, Mayor Joe dramatically increased road and infrastructure funding, including more than \$400 million



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that will be spent over the next four years, all without a local tax increase. It is disappointing that rather than use his candidacy to add productive ideas to this bipartisan dialogue, Sen. Jim Merritt wants to inject DC-style partisan politics back into Indianapolis. Rather than use his time inside the Statehouse this session helping our city, Sen. Merritt is more focused on spending time outside of the Statehouse pointing fingers at partisan press conferences.”

Merritt defends hate bill

Today’s passage of the bias-crimes bill by the State Senate is “a substantial first step forward for Indiana to demonstrate our commitment to protecting all citizens from hate and bigotry,” said Sen. Merritt following the passage of SB198. Merritt added that next year, in his role as the newly elected Mayor of Indianapolis, he will work with Governor Holcomb to reinstate the listing of protected categories that was removed during this year’s legislative process, a listing that Merritt supported as the bill moved through the General Assembly. In voting for the bill, Merritt acknowledged that it was imperfect in scope. “As leaders and representatives of Hoosier citizens, our foremost goal must be to improve our communities. Sometimes, those improvements need to take place as a series of steps in or-

der to build consensus,” he said. “While I may be criticized for voting for this less-than- perfect legislation, I believe in choosing progress over total inaction. This is an important and meaningful step toward crafting long-term laws that definitively protect all Hoosiers from crimes committed on the wholly unacceptable basis of hate and intolerance.”

Carmel: Dems call for investigation

The Hamilton County Democratic Party is requesting an investigation into claims of bribery involving Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard’s reelection campaign (WTHR-TV). Democratic Party Chairman Joe Weingarten says he submitted a letter to the county’s election board requesting that they investigate the allegations that Brainard’s campaign tried to pay to keep a challenger out of the Republican primary. “Those kinds of shady things show our elections should be held to a much higher standard and we shouldn’t allow any party or any candidate to offer a bribe if that actually happened,” said Weingarten. Brainard’s opponent, Fred Glynn, says he rejected the offer that was brought to him by a political consultant that he believes was working on behalf of the Brainard campaign. “Afterward he came to me and said their campaign was offering \$140,000 in campaign cash for me not to run. I said



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no,” said Glynn. Mayor Jim Brainard’s campaign released a statement denying the allegation: “Despite the accusations coming from the mayor’s political opponents, neither him or myself, were in the meeting. Unfortunately this is politics at its worst but fortunately Carmel’s voters are smart enough to see right through it.”

Abdul noted in Tuesday’s Cheat Sheet: “To be frank, it doesn’t make sense for Brainard to try and convince an opponent to drop out of the race when you would think he would want more candidates to run because that would divide the opposition, especially since he reportedly is polling at about 55%.”

Bloomington: Arena to run as independent

Bloomington native Nile Arena plans to run as an independent candidate for mayor (Indiana Public Media). The announcement comes after Monroe County Commissioner Amanda Barge suspended her campaign after an independent contractor accused her of sexual harassment. She was the only challenger facing off against incumbent John Hamilton in the Democratic primary. Arena says he decided to run when he learned the mayoral race could be uncontested, despite being inexperienced in politics. “I am a political novice. But I am not a novice at being a citizen

and especially an engaged citizen of Bloomington, Indiana,” he says. “I love Bloomington. I love what it is. I also love what I think it could be,” Arena says.

Monroe County election officials say Amanda Barge could still win the Democratic primary election, despite suspending her campaign to unseat Mayor John Hamilton (Costello, Indiana Public Media). Election officials previously said Hamilton was effectively guaranteed to win the election even though her name would remain on the ballot on election day. Monroe County Election Supervisor Karen Wheeler says Barge’s announcement took them by surprise. “We were scrambling to figure out all the legalities and everything,” Wheeler says. “And we’re very glad that the Indiana Election Division is there to help us out, too.” The deadline for Barge to officially withdraw from the race was Feb. 11. After the deadline, a candidate can only be removed from a primary ballot if the candidate dies, moves out of the district, or is convicted of a felony. If Barge does win the primary election in May, she would have until July 15 to file paperwork officially withdrawing from the general election. At that point the Democratic Party would caucus to choose a new candidate for the general election ballot. ❖

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Mayor Pete's Iowa surprise

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND — We've got an Iowa surprise. And it's nothing to do with a forecast on when corn will be knee-high. Too early to measure the corn crop. A lot to do, though, with measuring the crop of presidential candidates.



The Iowa survey released last week by Emerson College, showing South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg in third place among likely Democratic caucus goers, was a big surprise.

It's another indication that Buttigieg has become a candidate to be taken seriously on the national political stage, even before he is officially a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Q: What's next?

A: Buttigieg plans on

campaigning in New Hampshire next weekend.

Q: So, he's already looking beyond that first-in-the-nation test in the Iowa caucuses next year?

A: Sure. A good Iowa showing loses significance if he falls flat in the New Hampshire primary and other early tests. Buttigieg also is lining up coordinators and staff in Nevada and South Carolina.

Q: But he's not really a candidate?

A: Of course he is. He really is. He just hasn't officially announced yet. Neither have some others, including Joe Biden. It's all about planning for maximum value in announcement timing. Buttigieg formed what is called an exploratory committee for organizing and fundraising purposes. If he had failed to reach funding and polling levels to qualify for the first debate in June, Buttigieg could have decided not to run. But he has far surpassed those requirements.

Q: What's so great about third place in a poll?

A: If Biden or Bernie Sanders came in third it would be a bad showing. But Biden, with 25%, was first, followed by Sanders at 24%. The presumed frontrunners came in where expected. Buttigieg, with 0% in Emerson's January survey, shot past other better-known contenders to finish third, with 11%. That far exceeds expectations for him.

Q: Does his New Hampshire travel mean he thinks he's all set in Iowa?

A: Not at all. It's still very early. He will campaign extensively in Iowa. But New Hampshire is important too, even if Sanders is regarded as a likely winner

there. New Hampshire could test the support of millennials. Will they mostly stick with Sanders, 77, or shift significantly to the first viable millennial candidate in Buttigieg, 37?

Q: How did Buttigieg go from so little known to showing up in a bunch of polls and topping his fundraising goals?

A: Buttigieg has planned his nationwide media tour well. Two events that brought him attention from Democrats nationwide were a CNN Town Hall and a lengthy appearance on "Morning Joe" on MSNBC. Mike Schmuhl, Buttigieg's campaign manager (well, committee manager, since there is no official campaign yet) confirmed that donations and interest in the candidate shot up noticeably after those appearances.

Q: Was Buttigieg impressive in ripping President Trump?

A: No. He avoided taking repeated shots at the president or calling for impeachment. Instead he concentrated on issues such as health care, jobs and individual freedoms. He actually answered the questions directly, rather than constantly repeating talking points as so many candidates do. He was just like the Mayor Pete I've seen answering questions from students in my Notre Dame journalism class. His style impressed viewers. At least for now.


Q: Any other reason for his surprisingly fast start?

A: Yes, it involves comparison with a slow or even stumbling start for some of those better-known contenders. For example, a story in the New York Times last week featured a four-column photo of Buttigieg with an enthusiastic crowd in Manhattan. The headline: "City Gushes Over Mayor Mulling a 2020 Bid: Not Its Own de Blasio, But Mayor Buttigieg Of South Bend, Ind." Mayor Bill de Blasio does have a few more constituents in his city of 8.6 million population. ❖

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

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

Buttigieg ready to invest in renewables

By ANNE LAKER

AUSTIN, Tex. — While half the field of Democratic presidential candidates are busy arousing socialist passions, the other half seems ready to take an ideological chill pill in favor of practicalities. Pete Buttigieg is mostly in the latter camp.



Notwithstanding his “porn star presidency” sound bite — a Molotov cocktail of a meme that sent our Twitter feeds spinning — Buttigieg most often comes off as the affable, studious problem-solver we’re starving for, as he did at last month’s CNN Town Hall at South by Southwest.

Columnist David Brooks, writing about Mayor Pete in

this week’s New York Times, notes that we like Buttigieg because he “deftly detaches progressive policy positions from the culture war” and “eschews grand ideological conflict.”

Case in point: Mayor Pete’s statement at the CNN Town Hall about one particular policy will, I predict, emerge as a credible tool for bipartisan movement on the 800-pound gorilla called climate change. That policy is the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (EICDA), and it’s already a bill in the U.S. Congress.

In Buttigieg’s words: “More investments in renewables are going to be needed... We’re going to have to contemplate a carbon tax, and by the way, there are ways to do that so that most Americans would be better off fiscally, because we could return funds right back to the American people. But in so doing, we would help to capture the true cost of things that are happening right now, because it’s in your and my lifetime that (that) cost is going to be paid, one way or the other.”

EICDA, a.k.a. H.R. 763, should be seen as the most effective way to turn the climate change crisis into an opportunity. This legislation creates 2.1 million jobs across the American economy, reduces carbon emissions by 40% over the first 12 years, and prevents air pollution-related deaths (a serious problem in Indiana).

Here’s how EICDA works. A steadily rising fee

is placed on carbon pollution and the resulting revenue is returned to households as a dividend. The dividend comes from pricing carbon at its source, whether from the ground, below the sea, or imported from abroad. The first year it’s \$15 per ton and increases every year by another \$10. This equates to about nine cents per gallon of gas. The fees are returned monthly to households in total, sort of like a tax refund, minus minor administrative costs, to pay for the added cost at the pump or on your light bill.

Most households would get back at least as much as they pay in, with medium- and lower-income levels seeing more benefit since their fossil fuel consumption is lower than higher-income households.

The transition to clean energy is already an economic mandate, if not a political one (to wit, NIPSCO’s announcement last fall that they’re ditching coal for solar and wind within 10 years). Like your mother told you when you didn’t want to eat your spinach: “We can make this hard, or we can make this easy.”

While the Green New Deal overall has predictably become a partisan punching bag, EICDA could be the best first step on climate that proves palatable to candidates on the opposite end of the rainbow from Buttigieg, in part because it’s revenue-neutral.

Even Indiana mayors who aren’t running for president have probably seen Purdue’s Climate Change Research Center’s plethora of reports detailing the effects of climate change on Indiana’s agriculture, infrastructure, public health, forests, and water quality. Every Indiana mayor, senator or representative ought to want the green jobs that would spread like kudzu if EICDA were adopted.

Bottom line: 70% of Americans, and 64% of Hoosiers, want action on climate. Voters - and any politician half as brainy as Buttigieg - should be supporting the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act to make a straightforward, achievable and economy-boosting leap to the post-carbon era. ❖

Laker is a freelance grant writer, former director of communications at the Indiana Forest Alliance, and a member of the Citizens Climate Lobby. She also hosts a movie review show, Flick Fix, on WQRT 99.1.





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Skills needed to win translate to policy

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON — Here's a surprise: The skills that can be used to win in politics are increasingly the skills needed to produce good policy.



I know. You look at the policy stalemates in Washington and wonder how this could be. The people who arrived there by winning elections haven't shown much in the way of policy-making prowess. But let me explain.

Politicians running for office have a choice. They can appeal to their base and count on it pushing them over the top, or they can try to build a coalition of voters.

The former approach gives us more of what we already see, politicians who don't show much interest in crafting broadly acceptable policy. But if they choose instead to run their campaigns by reaching out to a broader swath of the electorate, and if we as voters reward them for this at the polls, then they come to Washington with exactly the skills needed to make our representative democracy work.

We live in a time of great polarization and declining trust in politicians, in institutions, in one another. Sometimes I think our politics have become warfare. Our representative democracy is under stress, if not in peril.

We need to return to our traditional approach, coalition-building across diverse groups of people. We succeed in politics and in governing the country by building a broad base of support that appeals to a wide sector of American society. Building coalitions of the similar-minded is what democracy is all about.

This means finding commonalities among different groups. The country may be chockablock with different constituencies — labor, business, racial groups, economic groups, religious and secular groups. Fortunately, there are some basics most of us agree on — the need for economic dynamism and growth, respect for the rule of law, a desire for a robust national defense.

We are, after all, part of a shared enterprise that depends on common values — civility, freedom, opportunity for all. And we all want to address the bread-and-butter issues that are on most Americans' minds— economic opportunity, health care, retirement.

Successfully addressing both specific challenges and the values that underlie our democracy means a number of things. It means rejecting partisan hostility, and being willing to work across the aisle. It means rejecting

obstructionism and overcoming the attitude that the most important thing is for my tribe to win.

It means including all people in the public dialogue and treating with them with respect. It means rejecting authoritarianism and assaults on our fundamental institutions — the courts, Congress, law enforcement, the media — that our democracy depends upon. Our aim is to strengthen them, not tear them down. After all, what is the alternative?

If you take as your starting point a desire to address the concerns of the broadest possible group of people, not a given these days, the American people prove to be demanding, but also understanding. They do not expect miracles, but they do expect progress.

So when politicians try to build broad coalitions, whether to win a campaign or to govern the country, they have to pay attention to public opinion, especially on quality-of-life issues. And they have to be able to convince people that some goals are tough to make progress on, and that step-by-step approaches are usually the surest route to moving forward.

But by working within the framework where majorities of Americans find themselves — in support of fair taxation, free markets, and free trade, providing opportunity for all, preventing the rise of inequality, in support of limited immigration, in support of mainstream views on freedom of choice, in support of policies to address climate change, in support of the social safety net, protecting the poor, and addressing gross inequalities of wealth and income — there's plenty of ground for agreement.

The good news is that you can put together both a winning political campaign and a successful policy drive by speaking straightforwardly to the issues Americans care about, and by understanding where people's points of commonality lie.

This requires the most basic of political skills, building consensus behind a solution to a problem. Only then can we fix the many problems the country faces. ❖

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

Senate concurs, hate bill heads to Gov. Holcomb

By JACOB CURRY

INDIANAPOLIS — After a Carmel synagogue was defaced with anti-Semitic imagery in late July last year, passing meaningful hate crime legislation was quickly keyed in as one of the hot button issues for 2019's General Assembly session. With the Senate concurring on the House's changes to Senate Bill 198, that months-long resurgence of a debate that's reappeared in the legislature for multiple decades now appears to have drawn to its conclusion. All that awaits is the bill's all-but-guaranteed signature into law.



The Indiana Senate pushed the issue over the hill with a 34-14 vote after an hour and a half or so of floor time Tuesday. Most of that time was taken up by the nine Democratic Senators present, all of whom, of course, spoke against the bill.

Sens. Jean Breaux and Lonnie Randolph both labelled the bill as a "pretend" hate crime bill and an insult for its exclusion of age, gender, and gender identity from the specific protections list.

Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane lamented the process that House GOP leadership chose for dealing with the issue, which was to disregard the amended SB12 entirely and add the hate crime language to SB198 during second hearing rather than in committee. "This bill has been shaped and formulated by super majorities somewhere – I don't know where, but I know where it didn't happen, not in the public" he said. Lanane was joined by Sen. Karen Tallian, who called that process "obnoxious, cowardly, a disrespectful misuse of the entire system" and a "shirking of [House leadership's] duty." Multiple Democrats also criticized Gov. Eric Holcomb for his support of 198, which they saw as 'leadership from behind' and flip-flopping after he had come out and sustained, until last week, strong support for a comprehensive list.

Sen. Mike Bohacek, author of SB198 and co-author to the original bias crime law in SB12, was the lone Republican who spoke in favor of concurring Tuesday. Bohacek briefly defended the bill in his closing remarks. "This is not a racist bill, this is not a homophobic bill, this is a bill to get bias crimes protection for every person in the State of Indiana," he said. "It's phrased in a way that, quite frankly, we should never have to touch this again because it's dynamic enough language to ensure that whatever future issue there is, there's a remedy for it."

But is this really the end? Republicans, particularly Republican leadership, have given repeated commitments to "getting Indiana off the list" throughout this session, and have said one of their goals is to avoid having to come

back next year and grapple with the issue all over again. So, do the new sentencing guidelines from SB198 do that?

Not necessarily.

The Anti-Defamation League, one of the groups who keeps a list of American states without a hate crime law, has said SB198 won't get Indiana off its list because "the bill's over-breadth/vagueness and failure to explicitly list gender identity, sex or gender are fatal flaws." Moreover, the ACLU of Indiana also released a statement opposing the bill for the same reasons, saying this will "undoubtedly lead to legal battles." If, by next year's session, Indiana is still on the list (or at least, a list), or the state is caught up in the courts over this law, will the legislature have to confront this issue again? It doesn't sound impossible, even if it is improbable.

Sen. Ron Alting, who authored SB12 and voted against its amended version in February, spoke again in opposition to SB198. Alting also acknowledged that the passage of the bill wasn't necessarily an end or a final solution. "The true judge on the success of this bill will be time," he said, "the courts will tell us, our judiciary system will tell us, our prosecutors will tell us, our judges will tell us."

Republican leaders are fully behind the bill and are confident it will settle the issue. Holcomb said Senate Bill 198 will accomplish his goal of passing meaningful bias crime legislation because it enhances current protections. "It also will cover bias crimes committed because of other traits and characteristics, such as gender, or gender identity, or sex, or age, and other commonly targeted groups," he said.

House Speaker Brian Bosma offered glowing remarks, saying "we believe this is the most comprehensive and inclusive bias crimes statute in the nation. The reference to our current bias crime definition meets or exceeds that of 21 other states' bias crime statutes, and all of those states are off the list of states without a bias crimes law."

Finally, Senate President Pro Tempore Rod Bray said the bill hits the right mark between inclusion and exclusion. "By referencing a specific list of characteristics, Senate Bill 198 provides guidance for judges, while still giving them the flexibility to increase the sentence for any bias-motivated crime as they see fit. I'm pleased to see this bill advance to the governor's desk. It's truly inclusive and will provide protections for all Hoosiers."

It's fair to say there are mixed signals coming from all sides on this debate – but once Indiana's first hate crimes law is officially signed, we'll have more than arguments to go on. Maybe the Democrats who spoke on Tuesday will be vindicated and the new law will be hollow and ineffective. Maybe Republicans will be right, and this will lead to the end of a long debate in Indiana politics. Either way Senator Alting is right – time will tell. For now, the General Assembly will move on to the remaining issues of this session.

Senate passes abortion procedure bill

The Indiana Senate has approved legislation that would largely ban a commonly used second-trimester abortion procedure (AP). The Republican-dominated chamber voted 38-10 Tuesday in favor of the bill, which heads to Gov. Eric Holcomb. The measure would ban dilation and evacuation abortions that the legislation calls "dismemberment abortion." It would make it illegal for doctors to use instruments such as clamps, forceps and scissors to remove a fetus from the womb unless there's "serious risk of substantial and irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function" to the woman. Doing so would become a felony punishable by one to six years in prison.

Senate passes medical religious bill

The Indiana Senate overwhelmingly agreed Monday

that the religious freedom of nurses, pharmacists and physician assistants should trump the right of Hoosier women to receive abortion-related health care (Carden, [NWI Times](#)). The Republican-controlled chamber voted 38-8 to advance Senate Enrolled Act 201 to Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb, who is expected to sign it into law. The legislation expands the state's conscience-protection statute for medical professionals who do not want to perform an abortion or participate in any procedure that results in an abortion, including prescribing, administering or dispensing an abortion-inducing drug. Indiana law already authorizes physicians, hospital employees and health clinic staffers to opt out of providing abortion care. State Sen. Liz Brown, R-Fort Wayne, the sponsor, said nurses, pharmacists and physician assistants who aren't directly employed by a hospital or health clinic deserve the same freedom to abide by an ethical, moral or religious objection. ❖

Our mid-sized metros

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – You probably are familiar with Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), groups of counties around cities of 50,000 or more persons. Sometimes an

MSA is only one county, but often an MSA includes nearby counties because there is considerable commuting between the core county and the outlying counties.

Bartholomew is the only county in the Columbus MSA. However, the Evansville MSA includes four counties, one of which is in Kentucky. In all, 43 of Indiana's 92 counties are part of 14 metro areas, some extending into each of our four neighboring states.

But do you know Indiana also has 26 Micropolitan Statistical Areas involving 27 counties? The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) says "Micropolitan Statistical Areas have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000, but less than 50,000 population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties."

In our case, only one core or principal city (Jasper in Dubois Co.) has another county (Pike) associated with it.

You'll know more about our metro areas than our micro areas because the former account for 77% of Indiana's population, while the micro areas have but 19%. Yet the future of the Hoosier State may depend on what happens in Warsaw, Marion, Wabash, and Seymour.

From 2010 to 2017, Indiana's population grew by 2.7%, but the cities of Warsaw and Seymour advanced by 8.6 and 7.4% respectively with growing business activity. By contrast, Marion and Wabash each lost 5.1% of their citizens. While 11 of the 26 principal cities of these micro areas gained population, the other 15 declined.

These principal cities are established communities with institutions and facilities for urban living. Richmond is the largest of these, but its numbers are now down to 34,500.

In the past, both the cities and the balance of their counties increased in population. Cities grew until state legislatures denied them any ease of annexation.

Between 2010 and 2017 that pattern applied to only eight of the 26 Indiana micropolitan cities. Washington and the balance of Daviess Co. growing together gave the total county a 4.4% increase. By contrast, with the population in Marion and the balance of Grant County both declining, the county's total population fell by 4.9%.

How large does a community need to be in today's world to offer residents and businesses reasonable expectations of long-term success?

The answer will depend on the costs of technology and the desire for community. Clearly, internet access and low-cost surface transportation services enable many households and businesses to function efficiently in or near small cities.

Economies of scale favored big and densely populated communities in the 19th and 20th centuries, and had an unfavorable impact on micro cities. They might thrive if we enter an era of more dispersed population and economic activity. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at mortonj-marcus@yahoo.com. Follow his views and those of John Guy on "Who gets what?" wherever podcasts are available or at mortonjohn.libsyn.com.



Gauging the wake of the Mueller report

By **LARRY J. SABATO** and **KYLE KONDIK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Following the conclusion of the Mueller probe, President Trump being forced from office or the ballot because of legal troubles is even less likely than before. Trump remains an overwhelming favorite for renomination by Republicans as their presidential nominee. The fate of the Trump administration is in the hands of the voters in November 2020.

There is still so much we do not know about Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference into the 2016 election. For one thing, none of us, including commentators, has actually seen the report; all we have is a summary from Attorney General William Barr, an appointee of President Trump who quite likely has an interest in presenting the Mueller report's findings in the best possible light. Given that there has been a bipartisan consensus about releasing the report – the president himself called for it less than a week ago – we hope the full report, or as much of it as legally possible, comes out quickly.

With this caveat in mind, that we're trying to make judgments about the substance of a document that we haven't seen, we still think there are a few thoughts worth offering:

1. Trump being forced from office or banned from the ballot because of legal troubles is even less likely than before. As the Mueller investigation went on, and key figures close to the president found themselves in legal jeopardy (such as Paul Manafort, Michael Cohen, and Michael Flynn), it seemed reasonable to at least hold open the possibility that the Mueller probe could eventually lead to Trump having to resign because of its findings. But with the president now apparently out of legal jeopardy, at least with respect to the Mueller inquiry, the president appears nearly certain to remain in office and to run for reelection.

That's not to say Trump is guaranteed to be free and clear on any and all legal questions. Let's not forget all those other investigations of Trump that are ongoing. He's lived on the legal edge for decades. Something big could happen on this front between now and the election, and Democrats will of course continue to exercise their oversight powers in the House of Representatives to investigate Trump and his family. But our best guess is that any new findings, or new details from the actual Mueller report, would provide political fodder against the president, as opposed to legal fodder.

Even then, previous bombshells from the Mueller probe have not caused sizable changes in the president's approval rating, which has been very steady over time (his approval is generally in the low-to-mid 40s and disapproval

is generally in the low 50s). While there might be a temporary bump, we doubt that the Barr summary will cause some sort of major, enduring change in the president's approval. We just don't think there is a significant bloc of Trump disapprovers who disapproved of him mainly based on the Mueller probe and will now consistently approve of him.

Additionally, it will be very surprising if a majority of House Democrats pursue impeachment in the wake of the Mueller report. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi threw cold water on the idea even before the Mueller inquiry concluded, and any impeachment proceeding is deadlier than dead in the GOP-controlled Senate, barring some massive new bombshell that significantly changes Republican opinion of the president.

2. Trump remains an overwhelming favorite for renomination by Republicans as their presidential nominee. We've long noted that Trump's strong approval ratings among Republicans would make it very difficult for any Republican to challenge Trump successfully. One thing that could have potentially hurt Trump's odds, and emboldened a GOP opponent, could have been a clear conclusion of illegal behavior by Trump about Russian interference in the 2016 election. Whatever the full Mueller report says, that apparently is not a conclusion Mueller reached.

While Trump may have at least one primary challenger – former Massachusetts Gov. William Weld, who also was Gary Johnson's running mate on the Libertarian ticket in 2016 – no one would consider Weld a top-tier challenger. This is good for the president as he seeks a second term: A significant primary challenge can be a sign of weakness even if a president is otherwise re-nominated, as Presidents Ford (1976), Carter (1980), and Bush-41 (1992) discovered.

3. The fate of the Trump administration is in the hands of the voters in November 2020. As usual, the presidential outcome will depend heavily on factors beyond the full control of anyone, such as the state of the economy. Democrats only control who they nominate and what they emphasize in the campaign. The long campaign can give them the opportunity to size up the contenders and (they hope) choose the one with the best chance against Trump. Or they could pick another George McGovern, Walter Mondale, or Michael Dukakis, weak nominees, all. The message and the messenger will be critical. The Democrats did not really run on the Mueller probe in the 2018 campaign, and for the most part, the 2020 candidates haven't really been doing that either. Now the Democratic contenders will certainly not do so, though other investigations of Trump may bear fruit and become campaign fodder.

The election year 2020 should be a close, competitive, high-turnout election with both sides energized, given what we know today. But lots of factors can tilt the result one way or another. What's not going to change is Donald Trump. ❖

Michael Gerson, Washington Post: There are times when President Trump manages to be so wrong — so empirically groundless, so logically fallacious, so stridently uninformed — that it seems like a form of parody. But more often than not, this reflects an authentic and alarming ignorance. The mask of a barroom political crank turns out to be the face of the president of the United States. Such appears to be the case in Trump's recent threat to cut off hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign assistance to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras — countries known as the Northern Triangle of Central America — as punishment for their failure to stem migrant flows to the United States. To make this action a rational one, Trump must imagine that foreign aid is nothing more than cash loaded onto cargo planes and dropped on the presidential compounds of corrupt rulers as reward for subservience to U.S. interests. So he wants to cancel the deliveries until they do what we wish. The reality of foreign assistance is very different. It is seldom given directly to foreign governments. The work is often contracted to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that work in partnership with locals. And it is generally designed to improve conditions within foreign countries that can give rise to global threats. This role is obvious, say, in fighting infectious diseases. It is better to deal with an Ebola outbreak as close as possible to the source, rather than waiting for the threat to arrive in Georgia or Kansas. But this is equally true when it comes to a flow of refugees. ❖



David Brooks, New York Times: Why are people so in love with the mayor of South Bend, Ind., who almost nobody had heard of until he did a CNN Town Hall on March 10? It's important to remember that when Democrats vote next year, they'll not only be choosing a policy alternative to Donald Trump, they'll also be making a statement about what kind of country they want America to be. The Trump era has been all about dissolving moral norms and waging vicious attacks. This has been an era of culture war, class warfare and identity politics. It's been an era in which call-out culture, reality TV melodrama and tribal grandstanding have overshadowed policymaking and the challenges of actually governing. The Buttigieg surge suggests that there are a lot of Democrats who want to say goodbye to all that. They don't want to fight fire and divisiveness with more fire and divisiveness. They don't want to fight white identity politics with another kind of identity politics. They are sick of the moral melodrama altogether. They just want a person who is more about governing than virtue-signaling, more about friendliness and basic decency than media circus and rhetorical war. Buttigieg's secret is that he transcends many of the tensions that run through our society in a way that makes people on all sides feel comfortable. First, he is young and represents the rising generation, but he is also an older person's idea of what a young person should be. He'd be

the first millennial president, but Buttigieg doesn't fit any of the stereotypes that have been affixed to America's young people. Second, he is gay and personifies the progress made by the LGBTQ movement, but he doesn't do so in a way that feels threatening or transgressive to social conservatives. He has conservative family values; it's just that his spouse is a husband, not a wife. He speaks comfortably about his faith and says that when he goes to church he prefers a conservative liturgy to anything experimental. Third, he is a localist and a Washington outsider, but he carries no populist resentment and can easily speak the language of the coastal elite. Buttigieg has spent his political career in Indiana. He wasn't alive when the Studebaker plant shut down in South Bend, but he has the trauma of Midwestern deindustrialization in his bones. On the other hand, he was friends with Mark Zuckerberg at Harvard, earned a first at Oxford and thrived as a corporate consultant. Finally, he's a progressive on policy issues, but he doesn't sound like an angry revolutionary. Buttigieg's policy positions are not all that different from the more identifiable leftist candidates. But he eschews grand ideological conflict. ❖

William McGurn, Wall Street Journal: Thanks to two lucky breaks, Hillary Clinton got away with political murder in 2016. The biggest break came when opposition research produced by one of her hired hands ended up being used by the FBI to spy on her Republican rival's campaign and feed accusations of Russia collusion. But she'd also lucked out in early July when the FBI director himself, even though he lacked the authority to do so, publicly and personally cleared her of any charges for having taken her emails as secretary of state off-grid. This weekend Sen. Lindsey Graham told Fox News that the two cases point to a glaring double standard between how the Clinton and Trump investigations went down. Mr. Graham added that he's not alone. Attorney General William Barr, he said, is "pretty upset" by the way the Justice Department dealt with the Clinton investigation. "I want a prosecutor to look at this, not a politician," said Sen. Graham, hinting there may yet be criminal consequences. But not for Mrs. Clinton. And as disappointing as this may be for the lock-her-up crowd, that's a good thing. In practical terms, the challenges to prosecuting Mrs. Clinton and her associates are formidable. The statute of limitations on lying and the immunity agreements her associates received are only some of the obstacles. Even more dispositive, criminally prosecuting an election loser isn't going to help a nation that needs to move beyond 2016. But Mr. Graham isn't calling for Mrs. Clinton in prison stripes. He's after something more fundamental. What he wants is for the American people to appreciate that men and women at the top of the nation's intelligence and law-enforcement agencies abused the power of their respective offices by putting their fingers on the election scales. ❖

Sec. Perdue against closing Mex border

WEST LAFAYETTE — U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue fielded several trade questions while visiting Purdue University Tuesday morning including numerous inquiries about the potential economic impacts of the southern border crisis ([Indiana Public Media](#)). Mexico is one of the U.S.'s closest trading partners, with more than \$1 billion worth of goods passing across the border each day. Perdue says while immigration reform is needed, shutting down the border, as President Donald Trump has threatened, would hurt American farmers. "I certainly hope we can get this Mexican border issues solved without closing the borders," says Perdue. "That would be devastating to both of our dairy, pork and corn industries in that way." He also addressed the nation's trade dispute with China and its effect on Hoosier farmers during the visit. Perdue says farmers are anxious as they try to keep their businesses afloat. "The farmers have been very resilient and very loyal to the long game that the president has called us to, but there is economic duress and stress out there," he says. "No doubt about it." Perdue notes the tariffs President Trump has enacted come after five years of low commodity prices, making farming less profitable and making the industry a tougher sell for younger people. "You've got parents there that have children here at Purdue or other universities that are not sure they want their children to come back because of the rigors of economic stress that we're going through right now," he says.

Lightfoot wins Chicago mayor

CHICAGO — Lori Lightfoot won a resounding victory Tuesday night to become both the first African-

American woman and openly gay person elected mayor of Chicago, dealing a stinging defeat to a political establishment that has reigned over City Hall for decades (Ruthart, [Chicago Tribune](#)). After waging a campaign focused on upending the vaunted Chicago political machine, Lightfoot dismantled one of its major cogs by dispatching Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, whose candidacy had been hobbled in part by an anti-incumbent mood among voters and an ongoing federal corruption investigation at City Hall. "Today, you did more than make history," Lightfoot told hundreds of supporters at the Hilton Chicago on Tuesday night. "You created a movement for change." With



roughly 97 percent of the city's precincts reporting, Lightfoot had swept all 50 of Chicago's wards, winning 74 percent of the unofficial vote to 26 percent for Preckwinkle.

Winnecke says his city is changing

EVANSVILLE — Mayor Lloyd Winnecke said Tuesday during his State of the City address that Evansville is stronger than ever and growing in terms of infrastructure, partnerships and quality of life initiatives ([Evansville Courier & Press](#)). The nearly hour-long address was spent touting project completions, new job opportunities, tourism and housing opportunities and referencing a few city-wide challenges. "Our city is changing," Winnecke said.

House panel passes extraterritorial bill

INDIANAPOLIS — A bill limiting the regulatory powers of small towns and cities passed out of an Indiana House committee Tuesday. The legislation would prevent boards from halting developments within four miles of their city limits due to health and safety concerns ([Indiana Public Media](#)). Debate has centered on wind farms, particularly proposals

in Montgomery and Henry counties. Wind companies argue the four-mile radius limits the amount of land they can develop, while opponents say the so-called extraterritorial powers help mitigate concerns about perceived health risks caused by turbines. Sen. Phil Boots (R-Crawfordsville) is one of the bill's authors. He says the primary goal is to allow for a more representative and simpler government. "That's all I'm trying to accomplish," Boots says. "To make sure we understand who has the authority and who doesn't."

Ignatius recalls Khashoggi courage

TERRE HAUTE — David Ignatius knew Jamal Khashoggi, not just as a colleague at the Washington Post, but as a friend. They first met in 2003, and Ignatius loved talking Mideast politics with Khashoggi (Loughlin, [Terre Haute Tribune-Star](#)). On Tuesday, exactly six months after Khashoggi was killed, apparently at the hands of a Saudi strike team inside the Saudi consulate in Turkey on Oct. 2, Ignatius delivered the inaugural Jamal Khashoggi annual address on Journalism and the Media at Indiana State University. "Jamal was a courageous man who just couldn't stop telling the truth as he saw it. He knew that he was in danger," Ignatius said. Khashoggi knew the Saudi government regarded him as a threat and even conducted a campaign on social media attacking him. Sometimes, like any human being, Khashoggi wondered "if he should pull back and whether the risk he was taking was just too great," Ignatius said. No matter the risk, "He was not a man who could suppress what he believed was true." Ignatius said he was "thrilled" to deliver the inaugural address. "It meant a lot for me to be here," he said. "I can't think of a better way to honor him," especially since Khashoggi graduated from Indiana State in 1983. For President Trump to describe the press as "the enemy of the people, I find deeply disturbing," Ignatius said.