

Trumpublicans face impeach risks

President Trump will survive trial, but history shows GOP could face a brutal election

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – President Trump doesn't look to be in much danger of losing his office this winter. But if history teaches us anything from past 20th Century impeachment efforts, his reelection is on thin ice next November and his Trumpublicans may face harrowing losses outside of Indiana.

The latest polling comes for CNN and Monmouth that had 49% favoring impeachment, with 51% in CNN and Pew Research and 50% in Monmouth backing his removal from office. This doesn't appear to be enough to dislodge any of the 53 Senate Republicans from voting for his acquittal (Sen. Mike Braun predicted acquittal on Wednesday), but it bodes ill for his reelection and the party's prospects this November.

That 69% in the CNN/SRS Poll (including 48% of Republicans) want witnesses in the Senate trial is also fascinating and portends ominously for the GOP. And there



Chief Justice John G. Roberts, a native of Long Beach, Ind., heads to the Senate impeachment trial of President Trump, admonishing both sides on the first day.

is enough polling on this to establish a trend: Washington Post/ABC News: 71% supporting witnesses to 22% who

Continued on page 3

Notice is the basis

By **LINDA CHEZEM**

MARTINSVILLE – Yes, Indiana, better than believing in Santa Claus, we can trust some of our legislators. Last week, I had a casual conversation with an intellectually honest and smart legislator. We were discussing planning and zoning and local government.



He made this reassuring and remarkable statement in his typical low-key fashion: "Notice is the basis of everything."

I heard no sleigh bells or angels nor did I see stars in the sky. We wrapped the conversation because he has a lot of work to do and I try not to be overly tedious. The representative's words started to display on the screen in my head like a



"I thought our team did a very good job. But honestly, we have all the material. They don't have the material."

- President Trump, at a presser in Davos, bragging that he has withheld evidence sought by House Democrats for the impeachment trial.



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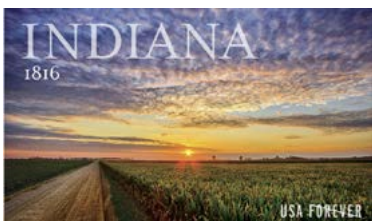
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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



skywriting airplane circling the track. As I have been in meetings and doing other fun stuff like writing contracts this week, questions about proper notice keep appearing.

This Hoosier representative was right. His words should be replayed at the start of every legislative session. We need strong and intellectually honest strategies to assure adequate notice. The usual political platitudes such as the nauseatingly overused word "transparency" are not adequate. Some days, I want to scream "hypocrite" at the officials who pontificate about saving money and then tout their transparency in the next sentence.

The past masters of the walnut shell game are in this notice game bigtime. "Let me give you a web site. Oh, you cannot find that consulting contract? Oh, we are moving things around." Notice by U.S. mail is nice; while certified mail is expensive, it may not always be effective. When the mail is not picked up, there is no actual notice but the local governments proceed as though the failure of notice was a refusal of notice.

No amount of convenience nor money is worth letting our constitutional rights slide away under the flag of fiscal stringency. We must be alert to the threats to property ownership and livelihood by government, quasi-government, and private entities. The single most important right that protects us from medieval serfdom is the right to own property. The Magna Carta started this ownership right but notice rights need more work.

The non-elected of us also should be engaged in the notice issues and must ask how might we protect the rights of ordinary people? The first answer is to assure adequate notice. If a person does not receive adequate notice of proposed actions that impinge on one's rights, then all rights are meaningless. We cannot defend our rights against threats of which we know nothing.

In the criminal justice world, Miranda warnings are given, and rights are better protected. Why then would we settle for less when our civil constitutional rights are at risk and we have committed no crime?

Hoosiers appear to accept opacity in lieu of transparency and accountability. We voters need to issue a wake-up call to all who would run for office this year, from courthouse to schoolhouse to statehouse. Voters should want to know what decisions our government is making and how taxpayer money is being spent. Public notice has to be public to be adequate notice.

The foregoing paragraphs could serve as an introduction to many topics of voter concern. Pas-

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS OF ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS

Notice is hereby given to the taxpayers of Knightstown, Henry County, Indiana, that the proper legal officers will consider the following additional appropriations in excess of the budget for 2017 at their regular meeting place at the Town Council Chambers, 28 S. Washington St., Knightstown, IN 46148, at 7:00 o'clock p.m., on the 19th day of January, 2017.

Fund Name:	AMOUNT
Major Budget Classification:	\$0
Personal Services	\$0
Supplies	\$0
Other Services & Charges	\$0
Township Assistance	\$0
Debt Service	\$0
Capital Outlays	\$38,000
TOTAL for CEMETERY FUND:	\$38,000

Taxpayers appearing at the meeting shall have a right to be heard. The additional appropriations as finally made will be referred to the Department of Local Government Finance (Department). The Department will make a written determination as to the sufficiency of funds to support the appropriations within fifteen (15) days of receipt of a Certified Copy of the action taken. Dated December 28, 2016: Beth A. Huffman, Knightstown Clerk-Treasurer (01/04)

sage of ordinances and planning and zoning matters are the most egregious local problems, but the state agencies do not deserve a pass on their lack of meaningful notice. Some good work is underway to devise a solution for the blending of electronic and print notice requirements. The need for a solution that supports the local gathering and reporting of the actions in the local communities is under-recognized, but imperative. More will be revealed after this legislative session.

But in the meantime, any legislator that wants to encourage better notice and information for voters should vote "No" on these two bills:

1. HOUSE BILL No. 1310:

Public notice requirements. Provides that a political subdivision may not pay more than \$300 for each insertion of a public notice. Provides that

if: (1) the cost of a public notice that is required to be published exceeds \$300; or (2) a public notice corrects a previous public notice that contains an error or omission; publication of the public notice on the political subdivision's Internet web site satisfies the requirements applicable to the publication of such notices.

2. HOUSE BILL No. 1003: Education matters.

Eliminates the requirement that an annual performance report for a school corporation must be published in a newspaper. Makes conforming amendments.

In contrast, the House Bill 1339 requiring the county legislative body's approval of purchasing property for redevelopment in an agricultural zone is a step in the right direction. In addition to the notice requirements in place for redevelopment purchases, a requirement should be added that the landowners and residents of the area must be given a binding description of what the proposed development entails and a neutral evaluation of

any adverse impact of the development on the agricultural nature of the neighborhood. That same information should be published electronically on web sites normally used by the community and in print media used by that governmental unit for legal notices as displayed advertising, just like a political campaign ad, not the fine print cheap section.

To protect our constitutional rights, voters will have to demand adequate and meaningful notice requirements for government and other actions. Without notice, rights become meaningless. If we cannot defend our rights, then we stand to lose them. The good news is that Indiana has a few legislators that understand rights are everything to a free people. And that "notice is the basis for everything." ❖

Chezem is a former Indiana appellate court judge. She practices law in Martinsville.

Impeachment, from page 1

don't; Quinnipiac: 66% to 17%; and Morning Consult/Politico: 57% to 24%

Political Wire's Taegan Goddard observed, "By repeatedly blocking Democratic amendments yesterday, Republicans are going against the clear will of the people.

"An even bigger risk for Republicans is that additional evidence will almost certainly come out about the president's wrongdoing. Late last night, new emails were released showing budget officials had already laid the groundwork to freeze military aid the day before the president's fateful phone call with Ukraine's president. There will be more. And the campaign ads will write themselves. Republicans are abetting a cover-up."

House Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff, one of the House managers, warned Tuesday, "The facts will come out in the end. The documents, which the president is hiding, will be released through the FOIA or through other means over time. Witnesses will tell their stories in book and film. The truth will come out. The question is, will it come out in time?"

The danger for Republicans is that Senate trial rules are supposed to keep them mute for the next couple of weeks and the trial duration, while Democratic House managers lay out their case in detail against the president. President Trump can be expected to weigh in via Twitter, which has already contributed to his low approval and national right/wrong track numbers.

The fact that nearly half of likely voters back impeachment and/or removal from office is new territory.



Little wonder that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is leery of allowing additional witnesses like former national security advisor John Bolton or Rudy Giuliani henchman Lev Parnas that could add sensational testimony into this stew.

Why does this analysis portend to a GOP disaster, particularly when our June 2016 warning of a blue wave reversed its course when the final WTHR/Howey Politics Indiana Poll in November 2016 had Trump with an 11% lead in Indiana?

Because President Trump is in territory that President Nixon avoided until the very end when his GOP base support collapsed, and President Clinton never experienced.

In 1998-99, President Clinton enjoyed wide popular support. Gallup put his job approval at 60% in the summer of 1998 at a time of stained blue dresses, while the commander-in-chief schooled us in the definition of what the word "is" was. His approval

spiked to 73% after the December House impeachment vote.

In contrast, President Trump's approve/disapprove numbers were 43/52% in the Monmouth Poll while the national right/wrong track numbers are a dismal 37/56%, despite the red hot economy. CNN put his job approval at 45/51%.

According to Pew Research, only 30% favored Clinton's removal from office prior to his Senate acquittal, or 19% below where President Trump stands.

As for President Nixon, in the spring of 1974 Gallup had just 44% who thought he should be removed from

Polling Data						
Poll	Date	Sample	Yes/Remove	No	Spread	
RCP Average	1/2 - 1/20	--	47.3	47.5	No +0.2	
Monmouth	1/16 - 1/20	847 RV	49	48	Yes/Remove +1	
CNN	1/16 - 1/19	1051 RV	49	47	Yes/Remove +2	
Gallup	1/2 - 1/15	1014 A	46	51	No +5	
Economist/YouGov	1/11 - 1/14	1108 RV	45	46	No +1	
Politico/Morning Consult	1/10 - 1/12	1996 RV	49	43	Yes/Remove +6	
NPR/PBS/Marist	1/7 - 1/12	1064 RV	47	47	Tie	
Quinnipiac	1/8 - 1/12	651 RV	46	48	No +2	
IBD/TIPP	1/3 - 1/11	901 A	47	50	No +3	

office, while just 41% disagreed. After the Supreme Court ordered Nixon to surrender the so-called "smoking gun" audio tapes, 57% favored his removal.

Why do we believe this could be a dicey predicament for Republicans beyond Indiana (we do not believe Gov. Eric Holcomb, any of the congressional incumbents of the GOP's legislative majorities are in any danger)?

Because presidential approval and the right/wrong track numbers translate into potential down ballot races (right, Gov. Matt Bevin?).

In 1998, Democrats actually picked up five seats in the U.S. House, seven in the Indiana House, and did not pick up any Senate seats despite it being President Clinton's second mid-term election. It was the first time since 1934 that the non-presidential party failed to gain congressional seats in a mid-term election. It was also the first time since 1822 that the non-presidential party had failed to gain seats in the mid-term election of a president's second term.

In 1974, Democrats won net gains of four seats in the Senate, 49 seats in the House, and four seats in the gubernatorial elections. The Democrats won the nationwide House popular vote by 16.8%. There were other elements at play, including President Ford's pardon of Nixon, and Ford's WIN (Whip Inflation Now) program. But 1974 is known as the "Watergate election" and it resulted in far-reaching down ballot gains for Democrats, who won majorities in the Indiana House and Senate. In fact, 1974 was the last time for Democratic Indiana Senate control.

Pew Research observed: "Trump's approval ratings have been fairly stable since the early days of his presidency, but at a considerably lower level – around 40% in a summer 2019 Pew Research Center survey. A Pew Center survey taken shortly after Clinton's Jan. 26, 1998,

denial of the Lewinsky affair allegations found that 71% of Americans approved of how he was handling his job as president, 10 percentage points higher than a survey taken just before the scandal broke. Clinton benefited from widespread support for his policies and skepticism about the media's coverage of the allegations.

"While that initial boost faded over time, Clinton's approval rating in August 1998 was still a robust 62%, where it remained for months – throughout his admission of the affair, the release of the Starr report and the opening of impeachment proceedings.

Clinton's approval hit 71% again in mid-December, after the House vote to impeach him," Pew observed. "The Center's results were consistent with polling by other organizations, which typically found between a quarter and a third of Americans favoring Clinton's impeachment. That contrasted with the Watergate situation, which saw public support for Nixon's impeachment steadily rise as more and more was learned about the scandal."

Here's another difference between the Nixon and Clinton impeachments, according to Pew Research: "Unlike the Watergate hearings, which gripped much of the country in 1973, Americans largely tuned out the proceedings against Clinton."

The TV networks, along with the cable channels, carried the opening arguments on Wednesday, though viewership is unknown at this point.

If there's solace for Trump and his Republicans, it is that many Americans are not following his impeachment like they did Nixon's. But in their peripheral vision, about half of registered voters don't like what they are seeing and hearing. And unlike 2016, the loathed Hillary Clinton will not be on the ballot.

Who the Democrats nominate will certainly have an impact, but if you're a Republican on the ballot this November, best be prepared to batten down the hatches. ❖

VSK N7
Thursday, Sept. 19, 2019

The double dog impeachment dare

Impeachment is the *casu marzu* of legislating morality

By BRIAN A. HOWEY
INDIANAPOLIS – If the act of legislating is considered "sausage making," a reference to the often disgusting casing of meat into intestinal links, then the process of impeaching an American president is more like *casu marzu* (meat-in-cheese). Fifteen century eggs or Kogi kaniak.

Worst Race
Impeachment is an American tragedy with messy, unsatisfactory outcomes and an array of unintended consequences. Presidential defenders like Indiana U.S. Rep. David Dennis in 1974 can find themselves betrayed by President Nixon. Fierce loyalists like U.S. Rep. Earl Lardogbe and four of his colleagues would go down to defeat that year.

Our historic CD maps
By TREVOR FOUGHTY
INDIANAPOLIS – A large part of the appeal of Guinness World Records is the obscurity of the records they track. Indeed, obscurity has always been the point: Ireland's most famous brewery began publishing the book in 1955 as a way to help settle arcane pub bets.

I may not be very useful if you're interested in knowing where the largest collection of Beanie Babies is located, but I do feel a bit like the Guinness folks when I'm asked about some obscure piece of Indiana political history. Of course, I also relish the opportunity to dig in a little more and provide additional context.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"We are blessed that there were no Americans killed in this attack, but anytime you have an act of war of this nature, there's a risk that could happen. This is an attack of a scale we've not seen before."

- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, blaming Iran.

Vice President Pence's very bad week

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — When it became clear that he was a rare Republican of stature willing to ante up to Donald Trump's ticket in 2016, Mike and Karen Pence were warned by loving friends and allies of the risks being associated with a profane, unpredictable billionaire.

Some three years later, this past week was one of the worst for Vice President Pence's tenure as President Trump's loyal sidekick. He was implicated by an indicted creature named Lev Parnas, who has emerged from under Rudy Giuliani's inner circle, in the mush-

rooming Ukraine scandal that has resulted in Trump's impeachment. Pence was likened to a "wax museum guy" in the new book on Trump, "A Very Stable Genius." And he was rebuked by President John F. Kennedy's grandson when he referenced JFK's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "Profiles in Courage" in a Wall Street Journal op-ed in the context of Trump's Senate impeachment trial.

Former Vice President John Nance Garner once referred to his office as "not worth a bucket of warm piss." For Pence, it is a perceived path to his dream job of being president, though he now finds his boss's errant behavior, not to mention the aspirations of Donald Trump Jr., and the indignities of his perceived supplication and descriptions of toadyism as impediments as opposed to future attributes for advancement.

The Parnas implication came Tuesday on MSNBC's Rachel Maddow Show. Parnas, who faces campaign finance charges after traipsing around the country — including an October 2018 campaign stop for Hoosier Republicans in Warren County including Senate candidate Mike Braun — with Giuliani. Parnas worked his way from being a salesman for Trump's father to becoming a gener-

ous super PAC funder for the Trump campaign, to a prized station in Giuliani's inner circle. "President Trump knew exactly what was going on," Parnas said in the Maddow interview. "That's the secret that they were trying to keep," he added. "I was on the ground doing their work."

"Their work" included President Trump's shake-down of the new Ukrainian President Zelensky. In the spring of 2019, it was Parnas who demanded on behalf of Giuliani, Trump's personal attorney and shadow secretary of state, that Zelensky announce an investigation of Hunter Biden. When Zelensky refused, the following day it was announced Pence would not attend his inauguration.

"The announcement was the key at that time because of the inauguration and I told him Pence would not show up, nobody would show up to his inauguration,"

Parnas said. Asked if Pence was aware of the quid pro quo, Parnas said, "I'm going to use a famous quote from [Ambassador Gordon] Sondland. Everybody was in the loop."

Parnas made the same point to CNN's Anderson Cooper, who asked if Pence was aware that the administration was withholding military assistance to enforce its demand on Ukraine. "Of course," he replied.

"I don't know the guy," Pence told reporters in Tampa, Fla., when asked about Parnas, echoing a similar sentiment from Trump. "These allegations are being made by a man who is currently out on bail for federal crimes and is desperate to reduce his exposure to prison," White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham added.

Should Democrats convince four Senate Republicans to allow witnesses at the impeachment trial, Parnas is poised as a potentially sensational one.

On Monday, Parnas's attorney Joseph Bondy released a video showing his client with Vice President Mike Pence and Second Lady Karen Pence, saying, "Mike Pence does indeed know the guy." The video shows Parnas seated at a table as the Pences approaching. The Vice President is seen talking to someone off-camera, while the Second Lady pats Parnas' back. Bondy also included the hashtags, "#LevRemembers," "#LetLevSpeak," and "#TheyAllKnew."



Both President Trump and Vice President Trump have disavowed knowing Lev Parnas, but a number of photos have surfaced showing otherwise. The center photo is Parnas and Trump's personal attorney Rudolph Giuliani with then Senate candidate Mike Braun in Warren County in October 2016.

In the book "A Very Stable Genius" by Washington Post reporters Philip Rucker and Carol Leonnig, Pence is depicted as a "deer-in-the-headlights" figure as they recount the July 20, 2017, meeting in the Pentagon's secure briefing room, The Tank. It was an effort by Defense Sec. Jim Mattis, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and economic advisor Gary Cohn to school the new president in the value of post World War II alliances. The resulting fiasco prompted Tillerson to characterize Trump as a "f---ing moron."

"What happened inside the Tank that day crystallized the commander-in-chief's berating, derisive and dismissive manner, foreshadowing decisions such as the one earlier this month that brought the United States to the brink of war with Iran," Rucker and Leonnig write. "The Tank meeting was a turning point in Trump's presidency. Rather than getting him to appreciate America's traditional role and alliances, Trump began to tune out and eventually push away the experts who believed their duty was to protect the country by restraining his more dangerous impulses. 'You're all losers,' Trump said. 'You don't know how to win anymore. I wouldn't go to war with you people,' Trump told the assembled brass. Addressing the room, the commander-in-chief barked, 'You're a bunch of dopes and babies.'

The account continues: "The more perplexing silence was from Pence, a leader who should have been able to stand up to Trump. Instead, one attendee thought, 'He's sitting there frozen like a statue. Why doesn't he stop the president?' Another recalled the vice president was 'a wax museum guy.' From the start of the meeting, Pence looked as if he wanted to escape and put an end to the president's torrent. But some surmised Pence feared getting crosswise with Trump. 'A total deer-in-the-headlights,'" recalled a third attendee.

As the week drew to a close, Pence quoted from JFK's "Profiles in Courage" on the need for the Senate to dismiss the impeachment case against President Trump resulting from the Ukraine scandal. Pence cited Kansas Sen. Edmund V. Ross for defying his fellow Republicans, preventing President Andrew Johnson's 1868 im-



Vice President Pence and Second Lady Karen Pence with Lev Parnas in a video the indicted friend of Rudy Giuliani's attorney posted on Monday.

peachment trial conviction by one vote.

"In his book, Kennedy borrows his definition of courage from Ernest Hemingway: 'Grace under pressure.' Edmund Ross showed such grace on that fateful day in 1868. Will we see it again?" Pence writes. "Now, as all eyes turn to the U.S. Senate and another partisan impeachment, the parallels between Ross's time and our own are striking."

While it wasn't quite Sen. Lloyd Bentsen's "You're no Jack Kennedy" rebuke of Vice President Dan Quayle in the 1988 vice presidential debate, JFK's grandson Jack Schlossberg said Saturday that Pence's recent op-ed is a "total perversion of JFK's legacy and the meaning of courage."

In a series of tweets, Schlossberg wrote that Pence "is right to celebrate Ross, a public servant who, foreseeing his own defeat, nonetheless summoned the courage to vote his conscience, and put the national interest above his own. But let's not be confused." Trump "was impeached because he did the exact opposite -- he put his own interests ahead of our country's national security and, in the process, broke federal law."

"Pence and congressional Republicans have also failed the test of courage," Schlossberg wrote. "Rather than risk their career or endure personal reprisal, they excuse the president's and others' admitted wrongdoing and disgraceful behavior." ❖



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Holcomb files; Myers, Owens say they are on signature pace

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — With a \$7 million money advantage, Gov. Eric Holcomb became the first candidate to file ballot signatures.

"Indiana is on a roll and we're not taking our foot off the gas," Holcomb said early Tuesday morning, when he was greeted by Secretary of State Connie Lawson. "While the names on the ballot will be Suzanne's and mine, we're representing a statewide team that is mobilized, energized and organized for victory in Indiana.

Teamwork will bring home the checkered flag on Election Day and teamwork will ensure we're putting people first for four more years."

The key question is how are the governor's potential challengers are doing on the signature front. WIBC reported that Noblesville Republican Brian Roth was "closing in" on getting the 4,500 signatures needed by Feb. 7 to qualify for the ballot.

The campaigns of Democrats Woody Myers and Josh Owens both told Howe Politics Indiana that they will qualify by the Feb. 7 deadline. "We are on pace to submit the petition signatures by the end of the month," said Kate Shepherd, spokeswoman for Dr. Myers.

Owens campaign spokeswoman Cheryl Reed told HPI that the campaign is working on filing its ballot signatures. "We're actively submitting to counties, excited by our progress and expect to have an announcement soon," Reed told HPI.

Owens reacted to Gov. Holcomb's filing, saying, "We got into this race because we believe Indiana needs bold leadership and fresh ideas. As we travel the state, we're hearing that Hoosiers agree with us that our teachers need and deserve support now, not later and that we need to do more than simply maintain a status quo when it comes to the environment and ensuring that Indiana is a state that welcomes all. We don't just need more jobs,

we need good-paying jobs and ways for Hoosiers to get the skills and training needed for them. We're in the final stages of qualifying for the ballot and will soon be turning our full energy to listening to Hoosiers everywhere and fundraising to support spreading our message to every corner of the state to win this election."

Holcomb's early filing came as the Morning Consult Poll put his approval at +28%. He is +57% among Republicans, +17% with independents and +3 with Democrats.

Congress

1st CD: Reardon picks up Latino backing

The Latino Victory Fund announced the endorsement of State Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon, who made history in 2006, when she became the first Latina elected to the Indiana General Assembly. If elected, Candelaria Reardon will make history once more and become the first Latino/a elected to Congress from Indiana. Latino Victory Fund Executive Director Mayra Macías said, "Mara Candelaria Reardon is a formidable legislator who has devoted her life to public service. Candelaria Reardon's family has a history of breaking barriers and serving their communities. Her father, Isabelino Candelaria, was the first Puerto Rican appointed to a city council in Indiana and her mother is Victoria Soto, the first Latina elected president of the Indiana Federation of Teachers. We are thrilled to stand by Candelaria Reardon's side as she continues to blaze the trail for future Latino leaders in Indiana."

Mrvan files

North Township Trustee Frank Mrvan filed for office, joining Scott Costello, Antonio (Tony) Daggett Sr., John Henry Hall, Hammond Mayor Thomas M. McDermott Jr. and Reardon. Two political novices are joining the increasingly crowded field of candidates seeking to succeed retiring U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Gary, in Congress (Carden, NWI Times). Costello is a behavioral health director at a local hospital. If elected, his agenda includes enacting a \$15 per hour minimum wage, Medicare for All, college debt forgiveness, free public education through college and sustainable energy policies. He describes himself as a working-class candidate fighting for the working class. As such, he's forgoing campaign donations from corporations or related interests.

2nd CD: Walorski posts \$360K

U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski filed for reelection on Tuesday. She also posted a personal record \$360,000 on her fourth quarter FEC report. "As a lifelong Hoosier, I'm grateful to be able to fight for the hardworking people of



Secretary of State Connie Lawson greets Gov. Eric Holcomb and First Lady Janet Holcomb as he filed his reelection ballot signatures on Tuesday.

Indiana's 2nd District," Walorski said. "Politicians in Washington are trying to divide the country with a radical agenda and a partisan impeachment charade, but I'm staying focused on what really matters. That's why I'm committed to working with President Trump to build on our nation's economic momentum, keep our country safe, fight for our veterans, and make sure working families have a chance to achieve the American Dream. Hoosiers know I'll always stand up for our shared values and fight for farmers, manufacturers, small businesses, workers, veterans, servicemembers, and families across northern Indiana. I look forward to talking with my fellow Hoosiers about how we can keep working together to build a brighter future and a stronger America." Walorski's campaign raised more than \$360,000 during the fourth quarter of 2019 – the most the campaign has ever raised in the final quarter of a non-election year – bringing total cash on hand to more than \$850,000.

3rd CD: Banks files

U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, a two-term incumbent, filed to run for reelection on Friday (WPTA-TV). During his time on Capitol Hill, he's served on the House Armed Services Committee, Veteran Affairs Committee, and Education and Labor Committee. He issued a statement Friday on the filing: "Our president is being dragged through a vindictive, groundless impeachment trial. Our military is facing down a murderous Iranian theocracy. Our economy is under assault by an exploitative Chinese regime that rejects the idea of fair trade. Our freedoms are under assault from a growing, radical left wing. I have no doubt that the next two years will be some of the most consequential years in recent history. I've spent over three years now fighting for Hoosier values and interests in a rambunctious Congress. I'm proud of my record, and I know what it takes to get things done. I hope northeast Indiana voters give me the opportunity to continue partnering with our president and working to deliver results to northeast Indiana's businesses, families, workers and service members."

5th CD: Mayor endorses Mitchell

The FEC has yet to post any of the fourth quarter reports from 2019 nor have any of the campaigns released totals. The Republican field that has filed with the secretary of state's office includes Andrew Bales, Micah Beckwith, Allen R. Davidson, Matthew Hook, Danny Niederberger and Mark Small. Democrats to file include Christina Hale, Dee Thornton and Jennifer Christie.

Republican Indiana Treasurer Kelly Mitchell announced that Lawrence Mayor Steve Collier has endorsed her campaign for Congress. Steve Collier commented, "Strong partnerships between city, state, and federal government is critical to ensuring we provide the best possible value to taxpayers. Local governments across Indiana have seen the benefit of having Kelly Mitchell as a partner in the treasurer's office. I'm thrilled to endorse Kelly's

campaign for Congress and know she'll be a huge asset as the City of Lawrence's next U.S. representative."

8th CD: No 'cakewalk' for Bucshon

Any Democrat nominee would seem destined to face the same uphill battle this year against U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon, a loyal Trump supporter, even as the president undergoes an impeachment trial in the Senate (Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). Bucshon voted against the two articles of impeachment approved in the Democratic House, which were submitted last week to



the Senate. Voters in the 8th favored Trump in 2016 by nearly the same margin as Bucshon's 2018 victory. Bucshon isn't presuming his 2020 race will be a cakewalk victory. "He doesn't want to take any election for granted," Andrew Hansen, Bucshon's campaign spokesman, said last week. "He doesn't automatically assume

he's going to be reelected." As for races beyond 2020, Hansen said Bucshon is "going to run for 2020 and work hard to earn the votes of the people of the 8th District, and we'll go from there." Thomasina Marsili has done a lot of that since October. That's when she began her campaign as a Democratic candidate for the 8th District seat. Marsili, a 44-year-old small business operator and registered EMT from Spencer, filed with the FEC as a candidate last fall, and intends to file with the state this Thursday. She'll also file current fundraising information with the FEC this week. "We've traveled nearly 13,500 miles since October," Marsili said Friday afternoon.

9th CD: Powell calls for Zody to resign

Rev. Mark J. Powell, who currently serves as a Johnson County Democratic precinct committee member and is a CD candidate, called upon Chairmen John Zody and 9th CD's Adam Dickey to resign their party offices. Powell stated, "My staff received an official letter today from Mr. Dickey and copied to Mr. Zody stating a Democrat District meeting was held Wednesday night, Jan. 15, 2020. This gathering was held without my knowledge or ability to share my perspective. The result was a unanimous vote which disavowed my candidacy. That means as a United States congressional candidate of a major political party, I will not be able to participate in party functions or forums, receive party resources or utilize party services." Powell continued, "'My behavior' is to tell you violent elements of the Socialist Anarchist Antifa movement are in the party and you disavow my congressional campaign? A select few party manipulators will not dissuade my gaining support

nor my efforts ahead.”

Statewides

Holcomb not backing AG candidate

Gov. Eric Holcomb isn't yet throwing his support behind a top official of his administration in challenging the state attorney general who is awaiting the outcome from an investigation into allegations of drunkenly groping four women (AP). Holcomb filed paperwork Tuesday for the Republican nomination seeking a second term in the 2020 election but said afterward it was “all premature” to say whether he would endorse a challenger to embattled Republican Attorney General Curtis Hill. Adam Krupp formally announced last week he would resign as state revenue commissioner to challenge Hill for the attorney general nomination.

General Assembly

3 more House rematches take shape

Three more General Assembly rematches have taken shape in primary filings with the Indiana secretary of state's office. In HD19, former Republican Julie Olthoff has filed. She was defeated by State Rep. Lisa Beck 50.5% to 49.5% in 2018. Democrat Aimee Rivera Cole has filed in HD37, seeking a rematch with Speaker-elect Todd Huston, who defeated her 54.5% to 45.5% in 2018. Democrat Mark Hinton has filed, seeking a rematch with State Rep. Gerald Torr. Hinton will face Ashley Klein in the HD39 Democratic primary. Torr defeated Hinton in 2018, 57% to 43%.

HD26: Rep. Campbell seeks reelection

State Rep. Chris Campbell launched her reelection campaign on Sunday at the Democrat Headquarters in Lafayette (WLFI-TV). In the past year Campbell has worked on 13 bills. Among many of those bills were issues like seat belts on school buses, exotic or dangerous wild animals and paid family medical leave. If reelected Campbell hopes to target mental illness, teacher wages and more. “I think it's so important that people vote. Your vote is your voice and I want to be their voice in the statehouse,” said Campbell. At this time no one has filed to run against Campbell.

HD35: Rowray to challenge Rep. Wright

Another Delaware County Republican running for a seat in the Legislature is making education a top priority (Slabaugh, Muncie Star Press). Elizabeth Rowray, a school board member in Yorktown, has filed her candidacy for the GOP nomination for state representative in House District 35. The incumbent, Melanie Wright, D-Yorktown, who is a school teacher, is seeking reelection. “As a state representative, I will focus on directing more education dollars into our classrooms like I have done while on the Yorktown

school board, and championing proposals that help bring more high-paying jobs to District 35,” Rowray said in a news release.

HD58: Rep. Burton to retire; Davis files

Educator and small business owner Michelle Davis announced her candidacy today to seek the Republican HD58 nomination. The seat is held by retiring State Rep. Woody Burton. “Citizens of House District 58 are deserving of an effective and conservative representative, someone who can build connections and strengthen the community. District 58 needs a leader who will listen, be responsive and work diligently to collaborate with various community partners to continue to make District 58 a great place to live, work and raise a family,” said Davis. She is a licensed Indiana teacher and the director of adult education at Central Nine Career Center, who works with employee partners to upskill existing employees as well as provide industry-recognized certifications for underemployed community members. Davis said she is committed to education and developing the workforce to meet the demands of Hoosier employers.

HD75: Rep. Bacon to retire; Martin enters

Newburgh attorney Rick Martin announced Tuesday that he will run for HD75, which encompasses most of Warrick, southern Pike, and southwestern Spencer counties. While Martin is no stranger to politics, having served as GOP chair for the 8th Congressional District and Warrick County, this is the first time that he has run for elected office. Martin's announcement comes on the heels of current Rep. Ron Bacon's announcement on Jan. 10 that he would not seek reelection. “Ron has done an excellent job representing the citizens of District 75 for the past 10 years. He has been thoughtful in the legislation that he has proposed and voted for and has always been responsive to the needs of his constituents. I am excited about the upcoming campaign and, if elected, look forward to serving the people of Warrick, Pike and Spencer counties at the Statehouse next year,” Martin said.



Pfidential 2020

NH senator endorses Buttigieg

State Senator Martha Hennessey (Hanover) announced her endorsement of Pete Buttigieg, citing his ability to defeat Donald Trump and heal a divided nation. Sen. Hennessey is the first New Hampshire state senator to endorse Buttigieg. She had previously endorsed Sen. Cory Booker. “Pete Buttigieg's values, honesty, temperament, and intelligence make him the best candidate to turn the page on the Trump era and restore dignity and respect to the White House,” said Sen. Hennessey. ❖

Medical transparency bills advance

Howey Politics Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana lawmakers on Wednesday moved forward several pieces of legislation aimed at lowering health care costs and providing more price transparency for patients (Erdody, [IBJ](#)). The measures are largely focused on ending surprise billing for patients,



creating an all-payer claims database and requiring health care providers to give patients costs estimates in advance.

House Bill 1004, authored by Rep. Ben Smaltz, R-Auburn, would prohibit a medical provider from

charging a patient more than his or her in-network rate if the facility where the procedure took place was in-network. The goal of the bill is to prevent a patient from receiving a surprise bill for an out-of-network provider who practices at an in-network facility, but it might not apply to individuals covered by self-funded plans because those are regulated by the federal government. Health insurance experts estimate 43% of Hoosiers are on self-funded plans. The legislation also offers an exception, allowing health care providers to charge the out-of-network rate if the patient is notified of the potential cost at least five days in advance of the procedure and agrees to it in writing. The House Insurance Committee passed the bill 12-0. It heads to the full House for consideration. Similar legislation passed out of the Senate Health and Provider Services Committee on Wednesday by an 11-0 vote.

Coal-fired power plant bill advances

A bill that would prevent Indiana utilities from shutting down coal-fired power plants without state permission was approved by a House panel on Wednesday, despite widespread opposition from business, environmental, utility, ratepayer and social justice groups (Russell, [IBJ](#)). The Republican-controlled House Utilities Committee voted 9-4, along party lines, in favor of House Bill 1414, which would prohibit utilities from shutting down plants without approval from state regulators. Coal accounts for more than 60% of the state's electricity generation, but several large Indiana utilities are planning to shut down thousands of megawatts of coal-fired generating capacity in favor of cleaner or cheaper fuel sources in coming years. The bill's sponsor Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, said coal mines around the nation are closing at an alarming rate, putting the reliability and stability of the electricity sector in question. In 2010, Indiana had 26 active coal-burning power units. By 2016, it had just 13. U.S. coal consumption is now at its lowest point in 40 years, and at least six major coal companies have gone bankrupt since

2015. That is happening as utilities are shifting to cleaner, cheaper sources of fuel to generate electricity, including natural gas and renewables such as wind and power.

Panel passes hands free driving bill

Legislation that would prohibit individuals from holding a cell phone while driving has passed its first hurdle in the Indiana General Assembly (Erdody, [IBJ](#)). The House Roads and Transportation Committee passed House Bill 1070, authored by Rep. Holli Sullivan, R-Evansville, unanimously Wednesday morning. The committee listened to about two hours of testimony, with many of the speakers telling personal stories of car crashes that involved a driver being distracted by a mobile device. No one spoke against the hands-free driving measure, which is a legislative priority for Gov. Eric Holcomb. Rep. Jim Pressel, R-Rolling Prairie, who is a co-author of the bill, said the intent is to stop drivers from holding their phones in their hands. "Your cell phone cannot be in your hand as long as the vehicle is in motion and you are the driver of that vehicle," Pressel said. "And that's really all it does."

'In God We Trust' bill advances

Public schools across Indiana apparently will not be forced to emblazon the phrase "In God We Trust" on the walls of every classroom and library (Carden, [NWI Times](#)). The Republican-controlled Senate Education Committee on Wednesday replaced the proposed unfunded mandate in Senate Bill 131 with language giving schools the option to display in classrooms a poster with "In God We Trust" and representations of the U.S. and Indiana flags. Existing state law already authorizes a principal or teacher to post the national motto in school buildings and classrooms. Schools receiving state funds also already are required to fly the Indiana flag in a prominent place. Nevertheless, state Sen. Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn, the sponsor of the measure, asked the committee to approve the revised proposal, signaling that he may try to restore the mandate at another step in the legislative process. The panel ultimately voted 9-2 to send the legislation to the full Senate.

Bill would give RDA non-profit ability

The Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority will have the power to create a subsidiary agency that it hopes will enhance its ability to encourage development around commuter rail stations, if a bill approved Wednesday in Indianapolis by the Government and Regulatory Reform Committee becomes law ([NWI Times](#)). House Bill 1279, authored by state Rep. Ed Soliday, R-Valparaiso, would give the RDA authority to create a "nonprofit entity" that could "solicit and accept private or public funding" to help carry out the RDA's mission to spur projects in the Transit Development Districts being created in anticipation of the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District's Double Track and West Lake Corridor. ❖

In Iowa, a percentage point means a lot

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND — What a difference a point makes, even when it shouldn't. In football, a last-second field goal by a team that was trailing by two points makes a difference — from defeat to a one-point victory. That one point does and should make a difference. But let's



look at another type of contest, the one for president of the United States.

A recent poll in Iowa on support for Democratic presidential candidates in that state's Feb. 3 caucuses, first test with voters in the nomination process, showed interesting but not precise standings. Bernie Sanders "won" in the poll, a respected poll conducted for the Des Moines Register and CNN. Sanders, with 20%, was

three points ahead of Elizabeth Warren, at 17%. She was one point ahead of Pete Buttigieg, at 16%. Pete was one point ahead of Joe Biden, who had 15%.

What does it mean? Well, a New York Times headline proclaimed: "In New Poll, Sanders Surges Ahead of Democratic Rivals in Iowa." Analysts on cable TV excitedly analyzed the one-point differences between the other top contenders.

But what does it really mean? The poll, though a good one, has a statistical margin for error of plus or minus 3.7 percentage points. So, one point doesn't mean that much when any total could be 3.7 points too high or too low. The poll really shows that the race is too close to call. A close race also was shown in a CBS poll in which Biden, Buttigieg and Sanders were tied for first, each with the exact same percentage.

Polls mean a lot. Candidates once thought to be top-tier prospects have dropped out after failing to

reach even 4 or 5 percentage points in polls. Well and good. The field was too big, including some with no chance and others who blew any chance with miserable campaign performances. But a one-point difference in a poll or even a three-point lead in a poll with a 3.7 margin for error is not a solid indication of where the candidates will be when Iowa Democratic caucus goers finally have their say.

Polling for the caucuses also is more difficult than it is for a traditional election in which voters go to polls to cast their ballots. Voters go to the caucuses with awareness that they may need to negotiate, may need to vote more than once and that there is nothing secret about their choices.

If a candidate doesn't get 15% in a head count at one of the caucuses, that candidate is out and the candidate's supporters then can go over to one of the front-runners in a next round. There then is negotiating. For example, if Amy Klobuchar gets only 10% at a caucus site, her supporters then would be wooed by backers of those reaching or exceeding the 15% threshold. They would hear pleas like:

- "Come over to Pete's side. You agree more with him than with Bernie or Elizabeth."
- "Get over here to count for Joe. He's got the best chance to beat Trump."
- "Hey, you know you should now support Elizabeth."
- "Just look at us in Bernie's group. We're young. We're the future."

There's no accurate way to poll how persuasive negotiators would be or to find what last-minute deals will be made among candidates for second-choice or third-choice selections in additional rounds.

When the statewide results are in, as with the final score of a football game, one point then can make a difference, between winning or losing or between going on with a strong second place or being written off as a poor third. A victory by even less than a point could propel a candidate on to a better chance in New Hampshire and on to the nomination. ❖



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How presidents get their information

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON — Here’s a basic truth about people who make decisions on public policy: they rarely have all the facts they want. Over the years, I’ve sat in countless meetings in which, after we’d reached a sticking point, someone said in exasperation, “Well, what are the facts?” We’d all look around the room because, no matter how much information was already on the table, a key fact that would help us move forward was missing. Yet policy has to get made anyway.



No one is confronted more often with this conundrum than the president of the United States, though members of Congress can come close. The challenge is that purported facts are dynamic — they keep changing. Additional facts come to light. Others are found to be wrong. Some are clearly reliable, others dubious. Some plain facts are highly controversial, while other “settled” facts are overturned by time. And regardless, they come at high-level policy makers quickly, relentlessly, from all directions, and from all kinds of sources.

So how do presidents and others sort through all this? They get a lot of information, of course, by consulting with experts. Every president forms a cadre of men and women he relies on — sometimes limited in number, sometimes quite extensive. In the chances I’ve had to observe these people at work, I’ve been impressed by how thoughtful, well-articulated, and solid the advice presidents receive usually is. Then, of course, there are the more formal sources of information, such as the Joint Chiefs, members of the Cabinet, and the President’s Daily Brief, which reviews the information, data, and intelligence rounded up by the CIA from all of the American security and surveillance agencies.

Presidents have a lot of memos prepared for them, though not all read them. To be sure, they need the information to be condensed. They don’t have the time, patience, or inclination to delve deeply into a topic. Most policy makers are good listeners, able to absorb information quickly. We’ve had

some remarkable intellects among our presidents, people like Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama, who were able to take in vast amounts of information and advice, understand it quickly, and sort through it effectively.

Presidents and other policy makers pay attention to the news, of course. Many of them have several television sets in their offices, so that they can keep track both of the news of the day and how it’s covered. They follow the media pundits, who articulate the facts and present them from their own slant, because many of these men and women have vast audiences and it’s important to know what they’re telling their followers. Social media and online commentary are at a more bewildering and less developed stage, but there’s no question they can affect the thinking of millions of Americans. Not surprisingly, presidents differ on how systematically and thoroughly they do this fact-gathering, but generally they seek out sources of information with different perspectives and biases.

Presidents and members of Congress also rely on academics and think tanks: Places like the Brookings Institution, the Rand Corporation, the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation — though which they listen to depends on their ideology. All, however, are in the game and strive hard to be presidential advisers. Most presidents, at least since the economist Walter Heller became a confidant of John F. Kennedy, have paid especially close attention to economists they trust.

Faith leaders are also an important source of information and advice. Like well-known pundits, many of them have significant influence among Americans on questions of values, and presidents will often call several together, often privately, to gather their insights.


This whole process, of course, has immense value — you don’t want a president to make decisions based on false information. It goes on constantly behind the scenes, often for weeks before we ordinary citizens hear the first presidential peep on a given subject. But I’d argue it’s also getting more difficult as sources of reliable and unreliable information multiply. That’s why, in the end, it is

so vital for a president to be able to rely on advisers and professionals who can help the president sort out what’s true and what’s not. ❖

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

Enjoying the Indiana sales tax

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — One night recently, in a moment of unusual calm, I sat down to read the 2019 Annual Report of the Indiana Department of Revenue. It's handsomely produced. Lots of pictures with employees saying "cheese." Far too short on meaningful data, as far as



I'm concerned, but loaded with numbers only administrators could love.

However, I was able to figure out that Indiana personal income taxes (state and local) amounted to \$8.9 billion and accounted for 42% of the state's \$21 billion in revenue in fiscal 2019 (July 2018 to June 2019). Add to that sum \$8.1 billion in sales taxes collected and you have

households paying 81% of the Revenue Department's collections.

This, of course, doesn't count gambling, motor fuel, and other taxes passed along to customers by the businesses building taxes into their prices. The direct tax on corporate income is a spectacular 4.7% of total tax collections.

Stimulated by all these jolly numbers, I licked my chops and dove into the exciting tales of sales taxes. Did you know, I didn't, Indiana is tied for second place behind only California's 7.25% state sales tax? That's correct, we're at 7%, right in there with Mississippi, Rhode Island and Tennessee.

But wait. That California 7.25% figure includes a 1% statewide tax collected by the state and distributed to local governments. Utah and Virginia also have these add-on state/local sales taxes. That makes Indiana's 7% the highest exclusively state sales tax in the nation.

Please note many states allow localities to add their own sales taxes. Illinois, that nexus of fiscal follies, has a maximum local sales tax of 4.75% and, therefore, a potential for a total sales tax of 11%. Tennessee has an average local add-on sales tax of 2.469%, which puts its average sales tax up to nearly 9.5%, currently the highest in the nation.

Indiana does not have local add-on sales taxes, except where it deems Marion County as sufficiently mature to impose such taxes for sports facilities. And we do have accommodation and rental car taxes, but those are only to fleece visitors.

However, state sales taxes offer more fun than just their rates. What is and what is not taxed? Indiana exempts sales of gold and silver bullion from the sales tax.

We also tax most candy, but not candy that has flour in it. There's a bill in the Indiana House to exempt feminine hygiene products from the sales tax. It's a swell idea that has been rejected by legislators in the past. But, what about male hygiene? Are males so blessed by Mother Nature, that our hygiene should be neglected? It's time for old men wearing diapers to rally at the Statehouse and demand a sales tax exemption for our Depends! ❖

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Hospital monopolies are urgent concern

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

INDIANAPOLIS — Since the end of the Great Recession, more than a quarter of economic growth in Indiana has been swallowed by ballooning healthcare cost growth. Our healthcare spending is a clear national outlier, ranking only behind Alaska. Since the end of the Great



Recession, increased healthcare costs absorbed a stunning one-third of growth in Hoosier family incomes. For about half of Indiana families, just the extra cost of healthcare monopoly prices is more than their combined property and income taxes.

One effect of this is that for a decade, Indiana's economy grew at only half the pace of the nation as a whole. Healthcare cost growth is a top three leading cause of our dismal economic recovery, and a drag on Hoosier families and businesses.

Of course, higher healthcare costs have helped one part of our economy. The most profitable industry in Indiana is the not-for-profit healthcare sector. For example, one well-known not-for-profit network in the state earned \$25,000 in profit per employee in 2019. That'll be about a billion dollars in 2019, even after their generous \$500 per worker year-end bonus.

The healthcare lobby wants you to believe that they are so profitable because Hoosiers are much less healthy than other Americans. That is condescending and pompous nonsense. While there's plenty of need for better health among our state's population, the cost problem in Indiana healthcare is due primarily to monopoly pricing among our state's large not-for-profit networks.

Thankfully, the General Assembly is taking action

and there are several bills designed to weaken the monopoly power of hospitals. While these bills are nowhere near enough to remedy the problem, the most promising is a bill requiring broad healthcare price transparency. This legislation would require every transaction, from every medical facility to be reported to an independent contractor who will report prices online for all the world to see. The law would also end gag rules that prevent price information from making it to consumers, businesses, insurance companies and competitors.

Monopoly hospital systems tremble at the prospect of this. The very basis of their ability to create and sustain their monopolies comes from withholding competitive pricing information from the people who pay medical bills: Insurers, businesses and families. They are also worried about another part of this bill that would require non-profit hospital boards to hold semi-annual public meetings to discuss rising cost.

This bill is not a panacea. Few of us consumers will be able to pick and choose our healthcare according to price. What the price transparency bill will accomplish, is to pull back the veil of ignorance about pricing that Indiana's hospital monopolies have exploited over the past two decades. The bill also helps remind somnolent not-for-profit hospital board members about their obligations under the state's non-profit law. It will also force them to answer questions in the communities in which they live.

Of course, this bill has not passed, and hospital lobbyists are busy trying to weaken it to the point of irrelevancy. It remains to be seen if this much first step will

come to pass this year. Still, that won't be enough to shield Indiana from painful national scrutiny over the monopolization of its healthcare markets. As one political consultant told me, it would be political malpractice to ignore Indiana's healthcare cost crisis in the midst of a national election. To put this in context, the New York Times has been far more aggressive about reporting Indiana hospital monopolies than any media outlet in the state.

Perhaps the most interesting legislation of the session involves "surprise billing." For those of you who don't know, surprise billing is what often happens on vacation. Many of you have experienced taking a kid to a local clinic away from your local hospital for something routine, like an ear infection only to be billed the equivalent of a year of car payments. Two proposed bills would cap the price a provider can charge in such "out of network" cases.

This bill offers plain, old-fashioned price controls. This is a stunning, if unwitting, admission that the current efforts to deliver reasonable market-based healthcare in Indiana have failed miserably. Of course, the hospital lobby opposes the heart of this bill. That is a cynical and myopic view of a very real healthcare problem that will worsen in the years to come. ❖

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The White House's down ballot blues

By **LOUIS JACOBSON**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – On Monday, President Donald Trump began his fourth year in office. His presidency has been unique in many ways, but he's been like other presidents in at least one respect: His party has generally lost ground down the ballot since he took office.

In recent decades, presidents have typically seen an erosion of their party's seats in the U.S. Senate, U.S. House, the governorships, and the state legislatures. In fact, to one degree or another, every post-

World War II two-term president has bled seats in these categories, and so have the two-term, same-party combinations of John F. Kennedy-Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon-Gerald Ford. One-term president Jimmy Carter also

presided over steep losses, while fellow one-termer George H.W. Bush saw only small gains in the House and in state legislatures.

"The surest price the winning party will pay is defeat of hundreds of their most promising candidates and officeholders for Senate, House, governorships, and state legislative posts," this newsletter's editor, Larry J. Sabato, wrote in 2014. "Every eight-year presidency has emptied the benches for the triumphant party, and recently it has gotten even worse."

The Crystal Ball last looked at this phenomenon after the 2016 election, when we noted the massive scale of down-ballot losses under President Barack Obama. Here, we update the figures to reflect Trump, using the same methodology.



The pattern under Trump is clear: In just three years, Trump is presiding over down-ballot seat erosion for Republicans that, in some categories, is approaching the scale of what his recent predecessors experienced over a full eight years.

Let's take a look at the numbers.

In the Senate, Trump was fortunate in 2018 to have a highly favorable map for Republicans -- this enabled him to survive his first midterm election with a net gain of one Senate seat.

Beyond that, though, Trump's down-ballot losses have mirrored those of his predecessors, especially his most recent ones. Here's a comparison of Trump's down-ballot losses to those under President Bill Clinton, President George W. Bush, and President Barack Obama:

Beyond the unusual results in the Senate -- where Trump's party is actually up a seat so far -- Trump's three-year losses for the other offices are quite close to those experienced over eight years by the younger Bush, the only other Republican in this chart.

Losses under the recent Democrats -- Clinton, and especially Obama -- have mostly been larger than those under Bush.

One explanation could be that the Democrats experienced a wholesale loss of seats in an entire region -- the South -- that is unlikely to swing back any time soon. By contrast, suburban losses for Republicans, a comparable seismic event for the GOP, only really accelerated beginning in 2016, meaning they could snowball the same way in the years ahead.

Another explanation could be that voters in midterm elections tend to be older, whiter, and more conservative, which would give Republicans some protection from midterm headwinds.

Why do presidents suffer down-ballot losses so consistently? The biggest factor is likely the public's fatigue with the president's party and the policy decisions it has made. With only a small number of exceptions, voters have regularly punished the president's party in midterm elections, seemingly registering their displeasure with the status quo. Indeed, staying comfortably in power is

(FDR)/Truman (D)	1944	1952	Change
Governors	25	18	-7
Senate	57	47	-10
House	244	213	-31
State legislative seats	3,820	3,629	-191
State leg. chambers controlled (tied)	42	36	-6
Eisenhower (R)	1952	1960	Change
Governors	30	16	-14
Senate	48	36	-12
House	221	173	-48
State legislative seats	3,647	2,804	-843
State leg. chambers controlled (tied)	56	35	-21
JFK/LBJ (D)	1960	1968	Change
Governors	34	19	-15
Senate	64	57	-7
House	264	243	-21
State legislative seats	4,638	4,201	-437
State leg. chambers controlled (tied)	60	48	-12
Nixon/Ford (R)	1968	1976	Change
Governors	31	12	-19
Senate	43	38	-5
House	192	143	-49
State legislative seats	3,156	2,356	-800
State leg. chambers controlled (tied)	48	17 (3)	-31
Carter (D)	1976	1980	Change
Governors	37	27	-10
Senate	62	47	-15
House	292	243	-49
State legislative seats	5,078	4,481	-597
State legislative chambers controlled	77	63	-14
Reagan (R)	1980	1988	Change
Governors	24	22	-2
Senate	53	45	-8
House	192	173	-19
State legislative seats	2,921	2,927	6
State leg. chambers controlled (tied)	35	28 (1)	-7
G. H.W. Bush (R)	1988	1992	Change
Governors	22	18	-4
Senate	45	43	-2
House	173	176	3
State legislative seats	NA	NA	121
State legislative chambers controlled	28	30	2
Clinton (D)	1992	2000	Change
Governors	30	19	-11
Senate	57	50	-7
House	258	213	-45
State legislative seats	4,344	3,820	-524
State leg. chambers controlled (tied)	64 (4)	46 (3)	-18
G.W. Bush (R)	2000	2008	Change
Governors	29	22	-7
Senate	50	41	-9
House	220	178	-42
State legislative seats	3,541	3,217	-324
State leg. chambers controlled (tied)	49 (3)	36 (2)	-13
Obama (D)	2008	2016	Change
Governors	29	16	-13
Senate	57	46	-11
House	257	194	-63
State legislative seats	4,086	3,137	-949
State leg. chambers controlled (tied)	60 (2)	31	-29
Trump (R)	2016	2019	Change
Governors	33	26	-7
Senate	52	53	1
House	241	197*	-44
State legislative seats	4,134	3,838	-296
State legislative chambers controlled	67	59	-8

hard: Only once since World War II has one party won three consecutive presidential elections -- the Republicans from 1980 to 1988, when Ronald Reagan won twice and his vice president, George H.W. Bush, succeeded him.

As I speculated in *Governing* in 2014, "Presidents try to accomplish things, but not everyone likes what they do. Even if they have support from the majority of voters, it's always easier for critics -- even if they're in the minority -- to block major initiatives than it is for supporters to pass them. Once a president's agenda has been blocked, their supporters grow disappointed, joining critics in their unhappiness. The president's overall approval ratings sag, and voters take out their anger on whichever party that controls the White House."

Exacerbating this is the tendency for presidents to accumulate popularity-sapping scandals the longer they stay in office, from Nixon's Watergate to Reagan's Iran-Contra to Clinton's Monica Lewinsky. Not only do such scandals sour voters on the president's party, but presidents who are fighting for their own political standing don't have a lot of political capital to share with those from their party who serve at lower levels. By becoming the first postwar president to face impeachment in his first term, Trump has reached this stage at hyper speed.

It's important to note that it's premature to say how punishing Trump's down-ballot losses will be by the time he leaves office. For starters, Trump may not win reelection, which would keep him from reaching the two-term threshold, and the usual presidential down-ballot penalty would transfer to the Democrats. In addition, it's unclear how much of a positive coattail effect Trump will have on fellow Republican candidates in 2020; a president's party typically fares better in down-ballot races when the president is on the ballot themselves.

Still, it's fair to say that while Trump took an unconventional path to the White House, he's looking very much like his predecessors in presiding over difficulties down the ballot. The White House is very much worth winning, but generally speaking, there are consequences for holding it. ❖

Peggy Noonan, Wall Street Journal: Impeachment is moving forward and going nowhere. There is new information but it doesn't really tell those who've paid attention anything they didn't know. Putative administration operative Lev Parnas said on "The Rachel Maddow Show" Wednesday that the president knew everything about efforts to lean on Ukraine. But this was clear in testimony throughout the impeachment hearings. His own ambassador to the European Union said it! The ambassador to Ukraine knew she was being schemed against, lost her job because of it, and spelled it out under oath. It's icing on a cake that's already sagging. The president will be acquitted for a host of reasons, from partisanship to a prudential judgment that his actions don't warrant removal with a presidential election 10 months away. What did Speaker Nancy Pelosi gain by playing her monthlong game of peekaboo, waiting to send the charges to the Senate? She withheld from Majority Leader Mitch McConnell papers he didn't wish to receive and she saw that as leverage? It appears she was playing for time as investigators tried to develop more evidence. But again, for what? The president couldn't look more guilty. ❖



of his political action committee, Team Holcomb, by the Indiana Republican Party Businessman Josh Owens raised less than \$84,000, and spent about \$68,000, leaving him only about \$16,000. At least he doesn't owe any money. Democrats have pulled out some surprise victories before, but never against such steep odds in a high profile race like that for governor. And, yes, they likely will make some gains in legislative seats, especially in the House where they just need one more district to be out of the purgatory of super-minority status. But they will need a national blue wave to help them, and right now that shows no signs of even getting Holcomb's shoes wet, much less submerging him. ❖

Mary Beth Schneider, Statehouse File: One of my favorite songs by Mary Chapin Carpenter notes: "The stars might lie, but the numbers never do." Democrats hoping to win back the governor's office after having been shut out since 2004 may tell themselves that somehow, some way, the stars will align and voters will decide they're ready for a change. But the numbers tell me that, at least so far, they're dreaming. In campaign finance reports filed Wednesday, Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb — this time seeking election not as an unknown but with a record of accomplishments — reported raising nearly \$2 million between July 1 and Dec. 31 of last year. He spent about \$770,000 and, combined with funds he had raised earlier, starts this election year with about \$7.25 million in campaign funds. In the last six months alone, he's pulled in about \$150,000 from corporations and — unusual for a Republican — \$20,000 from labor unions. The three Democrats who have been seeking to challenge Holcomb have, by comparison, pocket change. Dr. Woody Myers, the former state health commissioner, reported raising \$180,000, but spent about \$178,000. His cash-on-hand? \$1,886.15. Most of us have more than that in our checking accounts. Myers' numbers look even worse when you see that his campaign owes him about \$62,400 to repay loans he's made to himself. And much of his money came from people who can't even vote for him. About two of every three checks that came in for Myers came from out-of-state residents. Myers said he made a "conscious decision not to solicit donations from larger Indiana donors" until after the November 2019 elections. In contrast, about 80% of Holcomb's individual contributors live in Indiana, according to a tally of Holcomb's campaign report and that

Robert Zoelnick, Wall Street Journal: Historians will puzzle over this turn of events: A Republican U.S. president endorses central planning for trade, while a communist government in China cautions, in its trade deal with the U.S., that international commerce must reflect "market conditions." The American president boasts about raising import taxes on Americans and restricting immigration, while the Chinese lower trade barriers, encourage foreign investment and rely more on open-source software. The administration's "phase one" deal with China commits the government in Beijing to prescribe amounts of purchases of U.S. agricultural and manufacturing goods, which only magnifies the Communist Party's role in the economy. The deal permits each side to use its own statistics, so China will likely "meet" some quotas by reclassifying U.S. exports to Hong Kong that middlemen sell to the mainland. Beijing will redirect commodity purchases—fuels, food, chemicals—but other importers will shift from U.S. producers to third countries. Mr. Trump is paying a price to manipulate the bilateral trade balance, and it won't affect America's overall trade deficit. The numbers will likely conflict, leading to more fights — after the election. Mr. Trump's protectionism is certainly expensive. His new tariffs will cover almost two-thirds of U.S. imports from China, with an average tax of almost 20%, compared with 3% before. China's retaliatory tariffs hit almost 60% of U.S. exports, with an average rate of 20.5%, up from 8% before the current administration. And remember Mr. Trump has had to pay about \$25 billion to compensate farmers hurt by his trade war. Farmers suffered a 24% surge in bankruptcies in 2019, and the U.S. lost about a percentage point of growth (another \$200 billion), according to a Federal Reserve study. The president's China tally is part of his belief in command economics for trade and investment. New administration directives are also adding controls on exports, supply chains and foreign investment. Mr. Trump personally badgers companies not to invest abroad when he is displeased. The U.S. needs security checks, but he has wielded national security indiscriminately as a club to bludgeon allies. Companies will have to pay political favors to placate regulators. ❖

Braun says Trump will be acquitted

WASHINGTON — The president will be acquitted, said Sen. Mike Braun (R-Ind.), joining senators Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), and Steve Daines (R-Montana), for a brief news conference during a lunch break in the impeachment trial of President Trump (Davis, [WIBC](#)). "I didn't realize the vitriol that we've got in this country. Now being here I year, I wonder how we're gonna get through it," said Braun. "We're polarized and we should be sinking on things like the cots of health care, infrastructure, stabilizing entitlements." "It was full of visual aids. It was full of regurgitation of information we've already heard because a lot of times when your case is weak, you try to repeat it over and over and wear the opposition out." Braun said he will pay attention to all of the testimony and that his hope is for the trial to be fair and end with a verdict, one which he believes will mean an acquittal for Trump. "I hope when we're all through this...that we come back together and unite on the common elements," he said. When a reporter asked Braun if he was ok with the president asking a foreign leader to investigate a rival and to withhold foreign aid to coerce him, Braun responded, "No, I'm not saying it's okay. I'm not saying it's appropriate. I'm saying it didn't happen."



Hill calls for end of impeachment

WASHINGTON — Urging the Senate to reject the impeachment case against President Trump is the goal of 21 attorneys general who were in Washington Wednesday to state their case ([WIBC](#)). One of them was Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill, who said the impeachment trial was essentially pre-meditated. "The process itself has demonstrated it's been partisan from the beginning," Hill told

WISH-TV. "The impeachment process began with Democrats took control of the House of Representatives and began talking about impeachment before there any articulable impeachable offenses." The attorneys general all signed a 14-page document stating why the Senate must end the impeachment trial. They include AGs from South Carolina, Louisiana, Utah, Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia.

Senators dig in as testimony begins

WASHINGTON — As House Democrats prepared for a second day of opening arguments in the impeachment trial of President Trump, some senators were readying for the long haul. "We've still got a long way to go," said Sen. Doug Jones (D., Ala.), who is up for re-election this year in a state Mr. Trump won by almost 30 percentage points ([Wall Street Journal](#)). "I don't want anybody to think that this is over because you hear one side. There's gonna be another side of this. While most Republicans and Democrats have quickly settled into familiar partisan crouches, Sen. John Kennedy (R., La.) said some members of the upper chamber are finding the presentations edifying. "We're listening, and we're learning," he said. "Those of you who have sat through a trial before know that there are peaks and valleys, and a trial is a narrative, it's a story. And you've got to really evaluate the consequences of the story." Invoking the nation's founders and their fears that a self-interested leader might subvert democracy for his own personal gain, House Manager Schiff argued that the president's conduct was precisely what the framers of the Constitution had in mind when they devised the remedy of impeachment, one he said was "as powerful as the evil it was meant to combat" ([New York Times](#)). "If not remedied

by his conviction in the Senate, and removal from office, President Trump's abuse of his office and obstruction of Congress will permanently alter the balance of power among the branches of government," Mr. Schiff said in his opening remarks. "The president has shown that he believes that he's above the law and scornful of constraint."

Lake coroner probed over email

CROWN POINT — The Lake County coroner may have sent a political campaign announcement on the county's email network in violation of government policy (NWI Times). Coroner Merrilee Frey said she inadvertently used her office's email system Jan. 17 to publicize her son's entry into the Lake County Democratic primary as a candidate for coroner himself. Lake County Prosecutor Bernard Carter confirmed Wednesday his office is reviewing the matter. Democrats Clayton Frey, Terri McNary and David Pastrick are running in the May 5 primary to succeed Merrilee Frey, who cannot run for re-election as coroner because of the state's term limits.

Terre Haute may end PD show

TERRE HAUTE — Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett says he was surprised to learn from media reports last week the NAACP is asking the city to stop the city's contract with A&E's 'Live PD' TV show (Indiana Public Media). The show has been recording episodes following the Terre Haute police department. A letter from the Terre Haute branch of the NAACP says the show exploits residents at their most vulnerable time while conveying guilt prematurely. Bennett says he's heard mostly all positive feedback from the show. "We hope that helps with recruiting, it also helps with transparency so people can see who watch the show can say, wow I didn't realize these are the things they deal with."