



## HPI Analysis: A historic election

Trump lost independents due to pandemic; Holcomb misses landside record; Spartz won nationalized race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – We’ve just experienced a historic election, with 66.4% turnout, the most since 1900. But with President-elect Joe Biden currently at a record 77.55 million votes and President Trump’s 72.34 million votes giving the former a 5.2 million lead as of this morning (and 279 to 217 in the Electoral College), America remains a sharply

divided nation. Gov. Eric Holcomb and President Trump won landslide victories in Indiana last week. But Holcomb appears to have missed Gov. Evan Bayh’s 25.1% plurality record, winning 56.6%-32% over Democrat Woody Myers, with Libertarian Donald Rainwater picking up 11.4%.

Holcomb’s 1,702,902, with 99% of the vote report-



Gov. Eric Holcomb just missed the landslide record with his 24.4% plurality, falling short of Gov. Evan Bayh’s 25.1% victory in 1992.

Continued on page 3

## Disjointedly deadly

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – On Sunday, the news we had waited almost 10 months to hear came true: Pfizer and German biotech firm BioNTech said their coronavirus vaccine was more than 90% effective in preventing Covid-19. Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla hailed the development as a “great day for science and humanity.”



But after a weekend when the Indiana State Department of Health reported almost 10,000 new COVID infections and nearly 100 deaths, Brian Tabor sounded the alarms, stating the obvious as Hoosiers moved from elections to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season.

“All Hoosiers should be alarmed at the COVID-19 trends



**“His deep, varied experience and capacity to work with people all across the political spectrum is precisely what I need in a White House chief of staff as we confront this moment of crisis.”**

- President-elect Joe Biden, in naming Indiana native Ron Klain as chief of staff.



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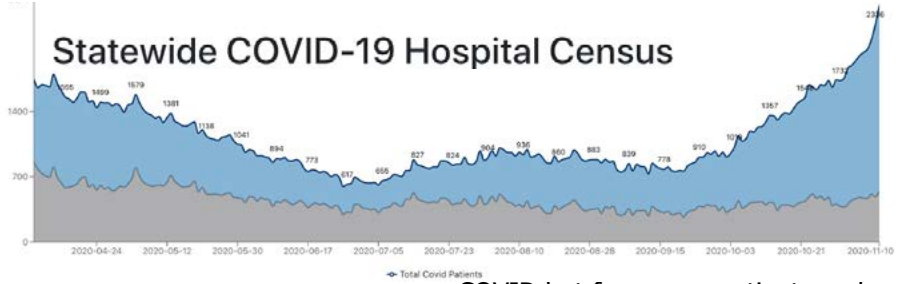
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**Jack E. Howey**  
 editor emeritus  
 1926-2019



we are seeing across the state,” said Tabor, president of the Indiana Hospital Association. “In recent weeks, new cases have reached the highest level to date and hospitalizations have increased by 143% since October 1. Many hospitals are reporting staff shortages as the pandemic takes its toll — Hoosier nurses, doctors, and other front-line hospital staff have been working non-stop since the early spring.

“Please give these courageous health care heroes some much-needed relief by wearing a face covering, practicing social distancing, washing your hands, and staying home when you are sick. We need everyone to take these steps to relieve the enormous strain on the system at this critical time,” Tabor concluded.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday that the U.S. set another single-day record for coronavirus cases, as the total number of new infections topped 136,000, while hospitalizations due to Covid-19 were at their highest level since the pandemic began. The New York Times reported that while this “winter wave” had been anticipated for months, the surging coronavirus was exploiting a “federal leadership vacuum.” The Strategic National Stockpile, the nation’s emergency reserve, has only 115 million N95 masks, far short of the 300 million the administration had hoped to amass by winter, Rear Adm. John Polowczyk said in a recent interview.

By Wednesday, Gov. Eric Holcomb announced a return to restrictions, noting when he put the state on Stage 5, the infection rate was under 5%, exploding to 11% this week.

“We must do all we can to protect our hospital capacity so they can protect patients and care for them — not only for those who have the

COVID but for cancer patients and heart patients who need care,” Holcomb said. “Unfortunately, too many of us have let our guards down. Stage 5 has been viewed by some as a reason to return to the days when we had never heard of the pandemic, rather than doing the things that had allowed us to reopen. Rather than doing the things that we had been doing that allowed us to open our restaurants and shops and museums and attractions to full capacity — while maintaining social distancing and wearing mask coverings — too many have said ‘We’ll just ride it out, and if I get it so be it.’ And that brings us to where we are today.”

Holcomb said beginning this weekend, orange counties will be limited to social gatherings of 50 people or fewer. Red counties will be limited to gatherings of 25 people or fewer. Most of the state’s counties are designated orange. Nine counties are red. Churches are exempt.

Indiana Health Commissioner Kristina Box added, “I understand that this is hard. This entire year has been hard but it is going to get even harder if we don’t recommit to those very basic mitigation procedures ... wearing a mask, socially distancing, staying home if you are sick and getting tested and washing your hands.”

**By Wednesday**, 74% of the state’s ICU beds were occupied.

Since the weekend, ISHD reported 5,156 cases on Wednesday, 4,879 on Tuesday and 4,213 on Monday. Included in the positive COVID statistics were U.S. Sen. Todd Young, Columbia City Mayor Ryan Daniel, and Crown Point Mayor David Uran. The Associated Press reported that new hospitalization numbers marked an 84% jump in Indiana’s COVID-19 patients during the past month, the

data show. With Monday's 4,213 new cases, Indiana's seven-day rolling average for newly confirmed coronavirus cases was 4,212, more than 214% from a month ago.

Testing that was supposed to be accessible and free on the north side of Indianapolis was hard to find, with Walgreen's charging \$139 per test.

**Gov. Holcomb and** President Trump had been silent this week by this pandemic onslaught. Trump has still not addressed the crisis. Vice President Pence postponed a vacation to Sanibel Island to chair the first White House Coronavirus Task Force meeting in weeks on Monday. Trump hasn't appeared at a task force meeting in months (nor has he taken a Presidential Daily Briefing in weeks).

"We're not seeing the appropriate response from our political leadership," said Dr. Richard Besser of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and a former CDC commissioner. "People are tired of doing the things that really work. Since we're not seeing our federal leaders standing up, we need the governors to step up."

Asked during his weekly webinar what medical experts are advising political leaders, Indiana University Dr. Aaron Carroll responded, "At an advisory level, we are pushing as hard as we can. We need to take strong action. I'm sure our governor is hearing from a different level they want businesses to remain open."

**Carroll added,** "If everyone was masking up, we'd see some very different outcomes in Indiana."

The problem on that front is that masks became a political wedge issue during the presidential campaign, while Holcomb has left his mask mandate without an enforcement mechanism. Local health officials have been forced to deal with city and county councils, who have been reluctant to act due to real and perceived opposi-

tion ranging from Trump supporters to those of Libertarian nominee Donald Rainwater, who won a historic high 11% of the gubernatorial vote last week.

Holcomb has said since last winter that he would follow the metrics and would act to keep the state medical systems from being swamped. But according to Tabor and hospital officials in Goshen, Richmond and South Bend, that is already happening.

Richmond's Reid Hospital set a new capacity record on Monday. Dr. Thomas Huth, Reid's vice president of medical affairs, is afraid those records won't last long, telling the Richmond Palladium-Item, "We are asking everyone to please, please not ignore masking, distancing and other safety measures."

**That was echoed** by President-elect Joe Biden, who said at a Monday press conference, "Please, I implore you, wear a mask. It is not a political statement. That is how we get our nation back up to speed. We see over and over how small acts add up to a great achievement. So let's wear a mask."

With the Pfizer announcement, the speculation is that state leaders are simply going to try and "manage" the crush of humanity and wait until the vaccine is widely available sometime between December and June. The rising dilemma is with Thanksgiving and Christmas just weeks away, the medical systems are going to be tested in a way not seen since the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 and 1919.

Biden is expected to lobby governors and, if unresponsive, mayors to implore mask usage. But with President Trump unwilling to concede the election, and if he voluntarily leaves office, is expected to continue his opposition to his successor, America is poised to ride out this historic pandemic in a disjointedly deadly fashion. ❖

## Election, from page 1

ing, did set a new record while winning 89 of Indiana's 92 counties. Holcomb carried St. Joseph County with 52.9%, despite local health officials' and South Bend Mayor James Mueller's criticism over his handling of the pandemic.

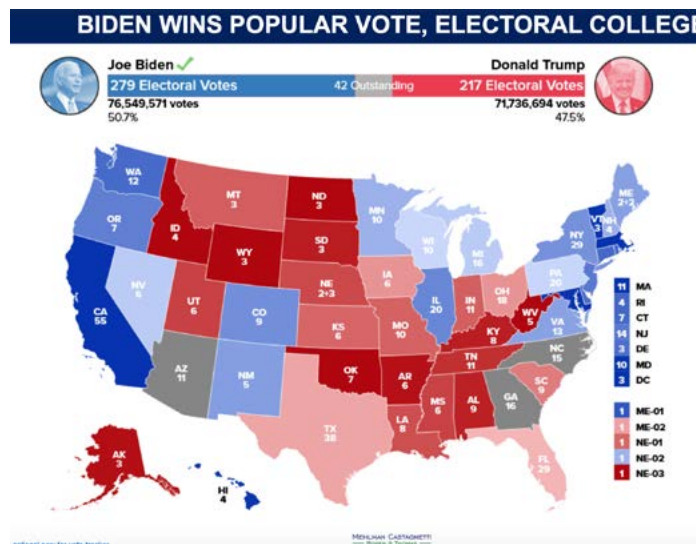
President Trump defeated Joe Biden in Indiana, 57% to 40.9% in winning 88 counties, compared to his 56.5% to 37.5% win over Hillary Clinton in 2016 (Libertarian Gary Johnson picked up 4.9%). Trump's 1.727 million votes eclipsed the 1.557 million votes four years ago, meaning that he was able to enlarge his totals after four years when critics said he was not focused on expanding his

base.

The long early voting lines in Indianapolis and the other few Democrat strongholds were offset by the Trump base spread out across the other 89 counties.

If there were a silver lining for the moribund

Indiana Democrats, it's that Joe Biden carried Carmel (51%) and Fishers (48.9%), while Trump carried Hamilton County with 52.2%, compared to 56% in 2016. This continues a long trend of Hamilton County turning "purple" after Mitt Romney carried the county with 66.2% in 2012, John McCain won it with 60.6% in 2008 in a year when Barack Obama actively sought Indiana's 11 Electoral College votes, and President George W. Bush won it in 2000 and 2004 with



74%.

Going into this election, Democrats were counting on the suburban female vote to turn the tide in the 5th CD and a handful of Indiana House races. But in other suburban counties, Trump easily won with 57.9% in Boone County, 65.8% in Johnson, 67.6% in Hancock, 58% in Clark, 56% in Floyd, and 52% in Porter.

While Trump called voting absentee a corrupt practice, the Indiana GOP successfully messaged that it was OK, and Trump carried the absentee vote 56% to 42.3% for Biden (412,624 to 311,621).

Nationally, Trump confounded the purple suburban vote that had been expected to propel Democrat Christina Hale in the 5th CD and set up Democratic House gains nationally. Republicans actually picked up five seats.

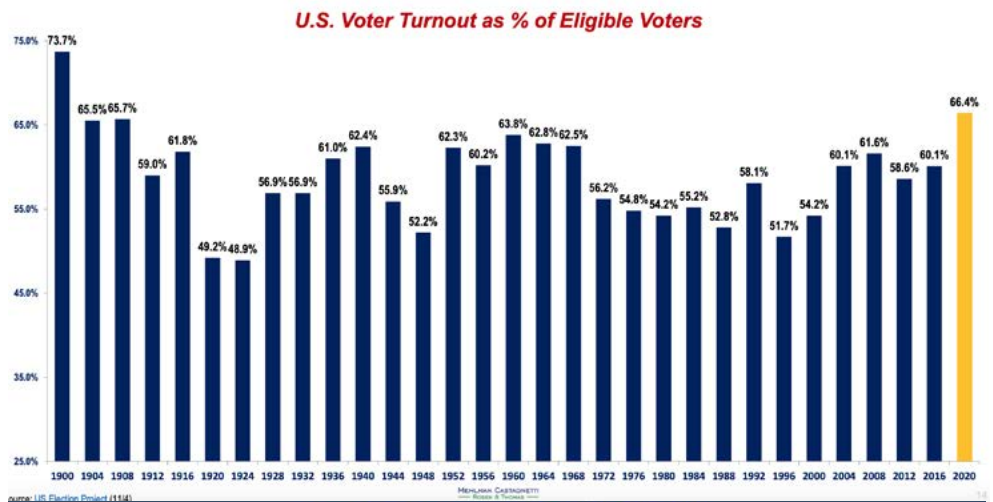
Exit polling by Edison Research revealed that Trump lost women by 13% in 2016, and by 15% this year. Trump lost white, college-educated women by 9% this year, compared to 7% in 2016. Trump actually lost more ground with college-educated men, winning that demographic by 3% this year, compared to his 14% edge in 2016.

Trump was expected to be punished for his handling of the pandemic, but Associated Press analysis revealed that in 376 counties with the highest number of new cases per capita, the overwhelming majority – 93% of those counties – went for Trump, a rate above other less severely hit areas. Most were rural counties in Montana, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Wisconsin – the kinds of areas that often have lower rates of adherence to social distancing, mask-wearing and other public health measures, and have been a focal point for much of the latest surge in cases. Personal freedom trumped personal responsibility for the greater public good in many areas.

In pandemic hard-hit Cass County, Trump polled 69.5%; won Fountain County with 77.1%; Warren County with 76%; Elkhart with 63.3%; Noble with 73.9%; and Wayne County with 65.5%. All of these counties had seen a spike in COVID cases heading into the election.

While the pandemic didn't hurt President Trump with his GOP base, it cost him the election with independents. According to Mehlman Castagnetti Group, exit polling showed 55% disapproved of President Trump's handling of the pandemic (47% strongly) while 83% said the federal government's response was an important factor, with 39% saying it was the single most important factor.

**HIGHEST VOTER TURNOUT SINCE 1900**



**THE RESULTS: A SPLIT DECISION**

**Democrats Capture the White House & Gain in the Senate  
Republicans Gain in the House & States**

	WHITE HOUSE	U.S. SENATE	U.S. HOUSE	STATE LEG. CHAMBERS	GOVS
LAST ELECTION	Republican	53R – 47D	236D – 199R	59R – 39D	26R – 24D
<b>AFTER (So Far)</b>	<b>Democratic</b>	<b>50R* – 48D</b>	<b>225D – 210R</b>	<b>61R – 37D</b>	<b>27R – 23D</b>
<b>NET GAIN</b>	<b>FLIP</b>	<b>D+1</b>	<b>R+11</b>	<b>R+2</b>	<b>R+1</b>

Mehlman Castagnetti notes that "Crisis defines leaders," both negatively and positively (i.e. President Carter's handling of the Iran hostage crisis; Bush43's conduct after the Sept. 11 attacks). Trump didn't rise to meet pandemic, which is spiraling out of control, and it cost him with independent voters.

James Hamblin writing in The Atlantic, observed, "At some basic level, Americans do seem to agree that the coronavirus is a major threat. Despite attempts to politicize and divide us on the pandemic, we are at least united in anxiety. In September, a survey of almost 4,000 Americans found that only 12% disagreed with requiring masks in public. Fully 70% wanted the government to do more to protect people, and only 8% wanted it to do less." Trump's lacking stewardship of the pandemic was reflected in dozens of polls.

"Yet no repudiation came," Hamblin writes. "Biden won decisively, but more than 70 million Americans still voted for Trump. That's more than those who voted for him in the 2016 election, and roughly seven people for every person who has been infected by the coronavirus that Trump has repeatedly said would disappear. Most Americans are undoubtedly aware of the pandemic. One exit poll found that the virus was the most important issue guiding 40% of voters.

Trump and Biden were able to emphatically carry

the bases on their parties. The difference came with independent voters, which Trump carried by 4% over Hillary Clinton in 2016, but lost by 13% to Biden last week. That 17% swing is why Biden is poised to be the 46th president.

Among evangelical voters, Trump won that group with 80% four years ago, and carried them with 76% last week.

Confounding Democrats is Trump's performance with Latino voters, despite commencing his first campaign in 2015 by castigating "Mexican rapists and murderers" following his long Trump Tower escalator ride. He increased his share of that demographic from 28% for years ago to 32% this year. It probably cost Biden Florida, as his support among Cuban-American men put a severe dent in Biden's totals in Miami/Dade County.

### Trump's messaging

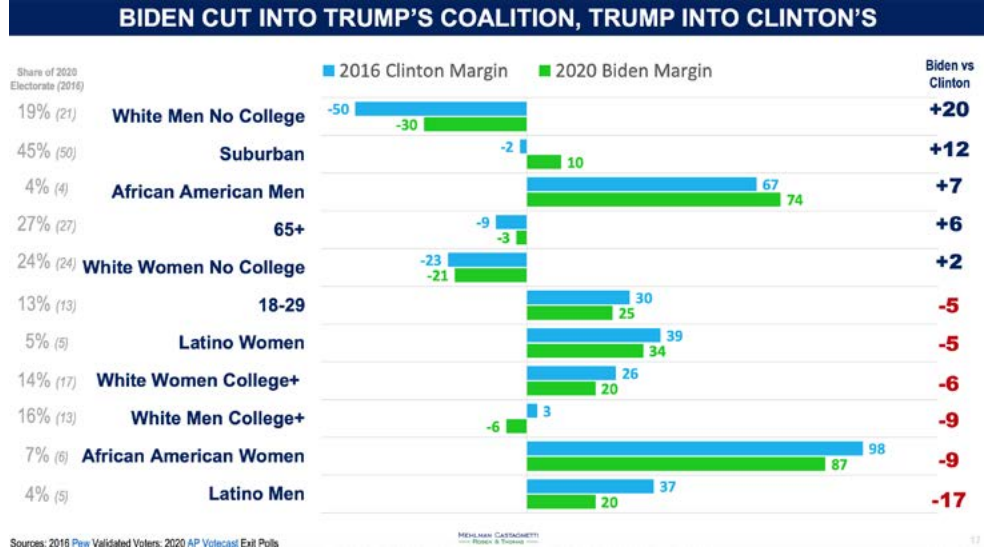
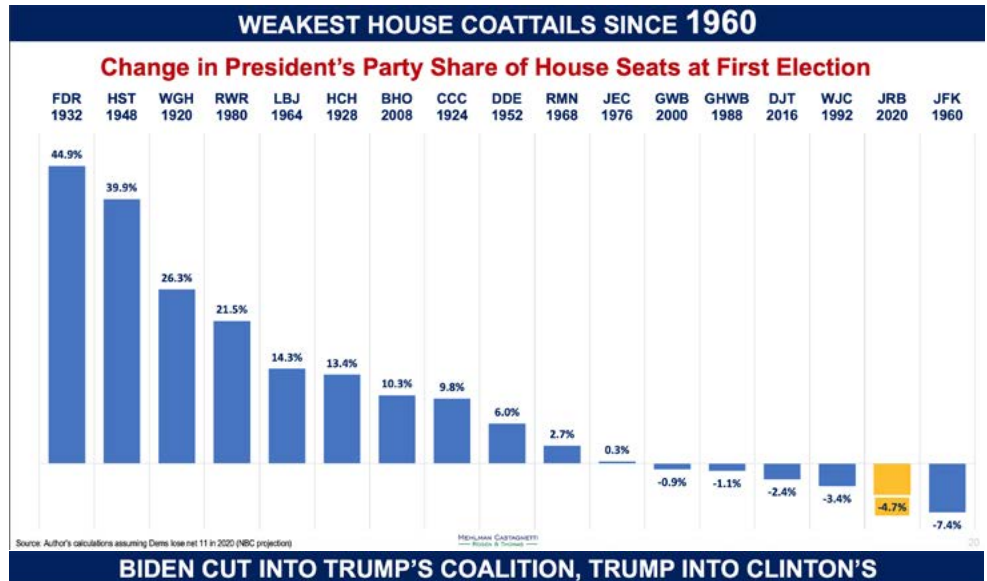
In poll after poll throughout 2020, Americans trusted Trump over Biden in handling the economy. In September, a Gallup Poll found that despite the pandemic, shutdown and economic crisis, 56% of Americans said they were better off than they were four years ago, which has become the standard wallet axiom coined by Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Trump made two costly mistakes. He consistently stepped on his own messaging; and he demonized absentee balloting during an unprecedented pandemic.

U.S. Rep. Jim Banks told HPI last Friday that Democrats "did everything to hand it to him. Biden was a poor candidate. The president's record is extraordinary, yet the campaign did a very poor job of defending that record. Every single day, there was an opportunity to talk about an extraordinary four-year record for any president, from the economy, to rebuilding the military to veterans, three supreme court choices, to putting hundreds of judges on the courts.

"Yet every single day the campaign, aside from the vice president's debate performance which was stellar, you heard very little about the president's record," Banks continued. "If the campaign had run on his record, he would have won handily."

Banks added, "His rhetoric about mail-in ballots was extremely damaging. Think about that. If he had encouraged his supporters to mail in their ballots, he would have won this race in a landslide. Instead he had Re-



publicans afraid to vote by mail. How much did that limit turnout of our voters? There will be books written about this election for the rest of our lifetime."

### Masks deprive Holcomb landslide

While the pandemic didn't cost Trump support among his base, Gov. Holcomb was deprived of a record landslide (by plurality, not total vote) over conservative critics of his mask mandate.

In Fulton County, Holcomb defeated second-place finisher Rainwater 59.5%-22.9%; in Cass County he won with 58%, with Rainwater polling 19.4%; in Owen County, Holcomb defeated Rainwater 59.5% to 21.7%; Martin County, Holcomb 63.1% to 23% for Rainwater; Rush County, Holcomb 62.8% to 21.8% for Rainwater; Montgomery County, Holcomb 61.6% to 22.4% for Rainwater; Kosciusko County, Holcomb 64.9% to 19.2% for Rainwater; Fountain County, 65.3% for Holcomb and 20.3% for Rainwater.

The Holcomb campaign will argue that Rainwater's support – including a dozen or so second-place finishes for the Libertarian – cut into Myers' totals. But with Myers

r running the worst gubernatorial campaign in modern Hoosier history, without the pandemic and mask mandate, Holcomb would have easily broken Evan Bayh's plurality record.

## Spartz defeats Hale in 5th CD

IndyStar columnist James Briggs boiled down Victoria Spartz's win in the 5th CD to this one issue: "Stop socialism."

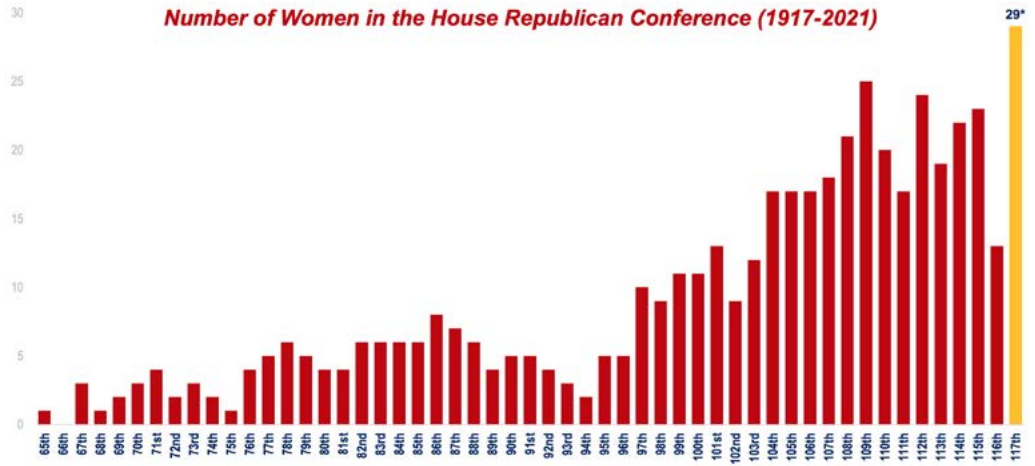
Hamilton County Democrat Chairman Joe Weingarten was asked by an IndyStar reporter what Christina Hale did wrong in her loss to Republican Victoria Spartz. Weingarten replied, "Christina did nothing wrong, none of our candidates did anything wrong. What happened is the local Republican Party got the crap scared out of them two years ago and last year, and no longer took for granted that they would automatically win elections just because they are Republicans."

In 2018, gay Democrat J.D. Ford defeated State Sen. Mike Delph and in 2019, Democrats were elected to the Carmel and Fishers city councils for the first time in history. In neighboring Boone County, Zionsville elected Emily Styron as mayor, another first.

"People who never campaigned before all of a sudden were knocking on doors," Weingarten said. "Todd Huston, the Republican speaker of the House, was for the first time in his life actually campaigning and running for office as were the others."

Hale was sold on taking a chance on the 5th CD as opposed to mounting an open-seat gubernatorial campaign in 2024 on the notion that the 5th was poised to turn purple. By most accounts, the problem wasn't the actions of the candidate. "Christina ran a stellar campaign," said John Zody, out-going Indiana Democratic chairman. "She had a great team, raised the money she needed to; she got her message out and I think most people had the race going her way. And then Election Day voting came out and changed things. She inched forward in Hamilton County and made some progress there, but wasn't able to make enough to offset the rest of the district."

## SOME GOOD NEWS: MOST EVER REPUBLICAN WOMEN IN THE U.S. HOUSE



The Cook Partisan Index in 2017 rated the 5th CD +9 Republican. Spartz defeated Hale 50% to 45.9%. So while the 5th CD is trending toward the Democrats, it's only halfway there. Hale picked up 66,800 votes in Indianapolis to win Marion County with 62.9%, but it was offset when she lost Hamilton County 53.8% to 42.9% (underperforming Biden's 88,367 votes with 82,490), also losing Madison County 55% to 38.6%, while Spartz easily won Grant County (64.3%), Tipton and Howard with 69%, and Blackford with 64%.

While Hale jumped out with about a month lead in TV advertising late last summer, Spartz was propped up by Club For Growth until she began her ads in late August.

Her final two ads beginning Oct. 28 featuring her two daughters and another featuring her father-in-law Charles Spartz who was battling cancer were adroit closers.

As she did in her primary win over 14 other candidates, Spartz's campaign appeared to be hitting on all cylinders during the homestretch, aided by \$5,497,368 in outside spending aimed at Hale, while \$6,048,827 in outside funds were aimed at Spartz. According to Open Secrets, that race drew \$12,221,789 in outside funding.

HPI analysis in its July 25, 2019, edition as well as that of Capitol&Washington's Trevor Foughty had both of us skeptical the 5th District could go Democrat. In our view, the assertion that the 5th CD is indeed 'purple' should be met with a healthy dose of skepti-

V24, N10 **HP** **HOWEY** POLITICS INDIANA Thursday, July 25, 2019

### 5th CD going 'D' would be historic

The old 6th CD morphed into the current 5th, revealing a tough road ahead for Hale, Democrats

**By BRIAN A. HOWEY**  
CARMEL — Ever since the current Indiana congressional district maps came into play in 2012, we have witnessed a decade where no district has changed parties. Thus, we have an historic anomaly given that the maps drawn in 1981, 1991 and 2001 all produced at least a handful of competitive seats that changed hands.

In the final election cycle for the current maps, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) and Indiana Democrats now say that the 5th CD is on the verge of "purple" status and will be competitive in 2020, despite



the Cook Partisan Index of 2017 listing the 5th CD as a +9 Republican district.

Continued on page 3

### The Mueller bookend

**By BRIAN A. HOWEY**  
BALTIMORE — There were no bombshells. There were no declarations of a "cancer on the presidency." If, some how, some way an impeachment of President Trump clears the U.S. House some time between now and the November 2020, there is zero chance for a conviction in the Republican-controlled Senate. The yield from Wednesday's long awaited testimony from former special counsel Robert Mueller was another venue for the political circus in Washington, and a startlingly shaky performance from the star witness. If you're a Democrat or someone who distrusts or loathes President Trump, the headline produced by



**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

"I've seen a number of challenges to our democracy. The Russian government's effort to interfere in our election is among the most serious. This deserves the attention of every American."  
- Former Special Counsel Robert Mueller, to the House Judiciary Committee



cism.

It had been three decades since the district was represented by a Democrat (Jim Jontz), with that district in a more northerly footprint. Foughty observed in July 2019, "Even though (Sen. Joe) Donnelly won the 5th in 2018, he didn't win any counties in the 5th except for Marion. Hamilton County may have been closer than normal, but (Mike) Braun still won it handily (52-44%)." Braun also won Tipton County 66-28%, Howard 57-38%, Grant 61-38%, and Madison 51.8-42%.

Foughty added, "Sen. Merritt and Delph's races are also pointed to as being key indicators, but they also won outside of Marion County. So while Democrats may win Marion County, and may do better than usual in Hamilton County, they still have a lot of district further north that is decidedly more Republican. Worth remembering is that Donnelly ran his reelection as a moderate Democrat who sometimes supported Trump's agenda in a midterm year. If he had been up in a presidential year when he also had to answer questions about the platform of a Democratic presidential candidate, then I'm not sure he would have won the 5th District."

As Weingarten observed, Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer had the latitude of pouring additional resources into the 5th CD as well as legislative districts within the CD's footprint. Hale was also at a distinct disadvantage because of Woody Myers' disastrous campaign. The top of her ticket was exceedingly weak.

But more significantly, President Trump and national Republicans seized on "socialism" and "defund the police" that wreaked havoc in down-ballot CDs like the 5th. As U.S. Rep. Abigail Spanberger, D-Va., put it last week, "The number one concern in things that people brought to me in my [district] that I barely re-won, was defunding the police. And I've heard from colleagues who have said, 'Oh, it's the language of the streets. We should respect that.' We're in Congress. We are professionals. We are supposed to talk about things in the way where we mean what we're talking about. If we don't mean we should defund the police, we shouldn't say that."

TV ads aimed at Hale used the "defund police" along with implied backing of Black Lives Matter (which was linked to the May downtown Indy riot following the George Floyd murder), as critical developments that had

her trailing Biden in Hamilton County.

Hale was the perfect fit for the Indianapolis portion of the district, which she represented for three terms in the Indiana House, but had to be careful in the northern third of the district. Her press releases and comments on issues seemed to have her outside her comfort zone.

### The McCormick effect

"Republican" Supt. Jennifer McCormick wins the Vidkun Quisling Award for the 2020 cycle. After she bolted from the GOP ticket citing her lack of appetite for "politics," she jumped into the 2020 fray, endorsing Democrats Hale and a handful of General Assembly Democrats. Only State Sen. Fady Qadoura won.



### Rokita's historic win

Attorney General-elect Todd Rokita set an all-time vote record with his 1,717,924 to 1,226,938 win (58.3% to 41.7%) over former Evansville mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel. Democrat Woody Myers' MIA campaign hurt Hale and legislative Democrats; it was a death knell for Weinzapfel, who just couldn't overcome the Trump/Pence and Holcomb top of the ticket.

The victory is a career revival for Rokita, who finished a distant third to Holcomb and U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks in the special Indiana Republican Central Committee caucus in July 2016 to nominate a successor to Gov. Mike Pence, who left the ticket to run with Donald Trump. In 2018, Rokita lost in the U.S. Senate GOP primary to U.S. Sen. Mike Braun.

The winner is expected to vault into the open seat 2024 gubernatorial race. But there will be no clear-cut favorite on either side.



### Gazing into the future

The attorney general's race was seen by insiders as a prelude to the 2024 gubernatorial race. Had Weinzapfel won, he would have become the frontrunner. That still might happen, with a possible field of McCormick, State Sen. Eddie Melton and businessman Josh Owens, who ran briefly this cycle before endorsing Myers. The field clearer would be former Sen. Joe Donnelly, who will be urged to take on Sen. Todd Young in 2022.

On the GOP side, Rokita will almost certainly take a long look at 2024, which is why his team is trumpeting his record vote total.

The field will also likely include Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch (pictured), Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer, and possibly U.S. Reps. Trey Hollingsworth, Greg Pence and Jim Banks. Trump administration officials likely to consider a run include Health & Human Services Sec. Alex Azar, CMS Director Seema Verma (we'd love to witness a primary race involving those two), and USDA Under Secretary Ted McKinney.



Another potential candidate would be Attorney General Curtis Hill, who was urged by social conservatives to consider a gubernatorial run this year. But a few weeks after the 2018 Republican Convention in Evansville, his political future was severely compromised by sexual harassment allegations stemming from a sine die party in March. Hill probably looks in the mirror and sees a future governor, but Rokita's virtual convention victory over Hill is telling.

A generation ago, Lt. Gov. Robert Orr, Lt. Gov. Frank O'Bannon and Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan used the LG's office as a gubernatorial staging ground. That took a pause in 2012 when the GOP kingmakers at Barnes & Thornburg opted for U.S. Rep. Mike Pence over Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman, who mounted a brief campaign.

Holcomb revived it with his historic GOP Central Committee victory in July 2016.

Banks told HPI, "I'm not at a point where I'm ready to rule it out. Running for governor, as a former state senator and now a congressman, is something that might very well be in the future. Right now I'm about ready to be elected to a leadership position, the chairman of the Republican Study Committee."

Banks added, "I'm 42 years old and have the luxury of time. I truly love what I'm doing in the House." As for Lt. Gov. Crouch, Banks said, "Obviously she'd be a strong candidate and would make a good governor for our state. But we have a deep bench and I think it will be a very competitive field in four years."

Crouch has been a prolific fundraiser (she has given Gov. Holcomb's campaign committee more than \$2.5 million) and posted \$624,419 in her preelection report. She has also kept an energetic

schedule over the past four years as LG. She also has deep relationships in both General Assembly chambers, as well as a regional base in the Evansville DMA.

Hollingsworth, one of the richest members in Congress, is self-term limited (by 2024) and he and his father could easily fund a gubernatorial campaign, just like they did when he came out of nowhere and won the 9th CD nomination. Of Rep. Pence, Banks said, "He's got the name, the brand, the experience to do it."

Banks added, "I don't think you could count out either senator." U.S. Sen. Todd Young just wrapped up a successful stint at the helm of the Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee which may have defended its majority and is known as a money-raising machine. Sen. Mike Braun self-funded his 2018 Senate primary win and upset Sen. Donnelly.

### Young sets off 'bat signal'

Sen. Young has turned on the "bat signal" for Hoosier Republicans to assist in the two Georgia U.S. Senate runoff elections "It all comes down to Georgia where BOTH Republican-held U.S. Senate seats are heading to a runoff in January and Indiana's senior senator, Todd Young, is leading the charge to keep Sens. David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler in the Senate," Chairman Hupfer said on Wednesday. "This is where you come in. Can you volunteer a weekend or two for Sens. David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler between now and the runoff on January 5?" ❖



# Blue wave? Not here in 'Trumpiana'

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Blue wave? Not in Indiana. It's still Trumpiana.

There was a purple tide, with just enough touch of blue, in the key Great Lakes states, the battlegrounds of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, to turn them away from President Donald Trump and to President-elect Joe Biden.



Indiana, with such a decisive outcome that it was the first state declared by TV networks for Trump, didn't matter. Well, except that it mattered for dispirited and far outnumbered Hoosier Democrats. They had talked about, dreamed about and looked for a blue wave, not seriously expecting the state to register Democratic in the Electoral College, but with hope at least to win some

other races and be relevant.

The wave swept through Indiana. It was red. Bright red. President Trump won Indiana again by a landslide, rivaling his 2016 blowout victory. So, '16 was no fluke, no aberration. A decisive majority of Hoosiers showed they had no regrets about the Trump presidency, that they wanted to send a vote of confidence for four more years of Trump's style of leadership.

**The tide** that changed abruptly at the Indiana-Michigan state line – from purple to red as it headed south – was Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb sweeping to an even bigger percentage margin than Trump's, a record percentage for a candidate for governor in modern times. An important reason was the pitiful campaign by the Democratic nominee. Quick! What's the name of the Democratic nominee? Don't feel bad if you can't quickly come up with the name of Woody Myers. He never gained widespread name recognition. Never got an ad on television until the last weekend of the campaign. Never had support for an effective campaign. Never had a chance.

Another reason Myers had no chance is that Holcomb has been a good governor, a popular governor.

Still, enough differences on issues could have been taken to voters in an effective campaign to help save other party candidates on the ballot.

Jonathan Weinzapfel, a credible Democratic nominee for attorney general, was trounced, also with no chance, losing to Republican Todd Rokita. And the Republican super majority in the Indiana House grew even more super.

The Democratic debacle brought this suggestion by Brian Howe of Howe Politics Indiana: "The entire Indiana Democratic Central Committee should resign. The Democratic Party is no longer a credible, major party in this state."

**In the 2nd CD**, U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski breezed to victory for a fifth term. Pat Hackett, the Democratic nominee, had no chance despite an extensive TV ad effort. Walorski, who has become popular and entrenched in the 10-county district, wasn't going to be seriously challenged unless there was a powerful blue wave. When the wave had a different color, neither Hackett nor any other challenger was going to come close.

Usually, even in times of strong Republican tides in the nation and state, St. Joseph County Democrats held on to most county offices. The supposed bastion of Democratic strength lacked strength this time. Republican County Commissioner Deb Fleming, though facing a well-funded, determined Democratic challenger, won reelection. Republican Derek Dieter, who had served as a Democrat on South Bend's city council, waged a skillful campaign to convince voters in a Democratic-tending area to split tickets, and he won the other commissioner race.

Result: The two Republican winners will join with a holdover Republican member on the Board of Commissioners. That means Republicans will hold all three seats on the board, the county government administrative branch. Let me repeat: Republicans will hold all three commissioner posts in "Democratic" St. Joseph County.

A Republican also defeated the incumbent Democratic coroner. A grave situation.

While Democrats in the county can rejoice about neighboring Michigan voting blue, they can only feel blue about what has happened in Trumpiana. ❖



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

# Biden striking right bipartisan chords

By KELLY HAWES

ANDERSON – Joe Biden campaigned as the candidate who could bring America together, and it's looking more and more as if he'll get a chance to try. Not that the current occupant of the White House will make it easy.



President Donald J. Trump is on record saying the Democrats are trying to steal the election, and there's every indication he won't leave without a fight.

The odds seem good, though, that Biden will take the oath of office in January as the 46th president of the United States. I had hoped for a different outcome. I wanted to see the landslide many of the pollsters had been projecting.

Instead, Biden will be faced with the challenge of leading a polarized nation, a nation the columnist George Will describes as "evenly divided by mutual incomprehension." Biden won the votes of a record number of Americans, but his opponent had the support of nearly as many.

So far, at least, Biden is striking the right chord. Speaking a day after the election, Biden noted that only three candidates in history had defeated an incumbent president. "When it's finished, God willing, we'll be the fourth," he said. "This is a major achievement. .... And it's been a long and difficult campaign, but it's been a more difficult time for our country, a hard time."

**He turned** immediately to the task ahead. "Once the selection is finalized and behind us," he said, "it'll be time for us to do what we've always done as Americans, to put the harsh rhetoric of the campaign behind us, to lower the temperature, to see each other again, to listen to one another, to hear each other again, and respect and care for one another, to unite, to heal, to come together as a nation."

He insisted he was not as naïve as he might sound. "I know how deep and hard the opposing views are in our country on so many things," Biden said, "but I also know this as well. To make progress, we have to stop treating our opponents as enemies. We are not

enemies. What brings us together as Americans is so much stronger than anything that can tear us apart."

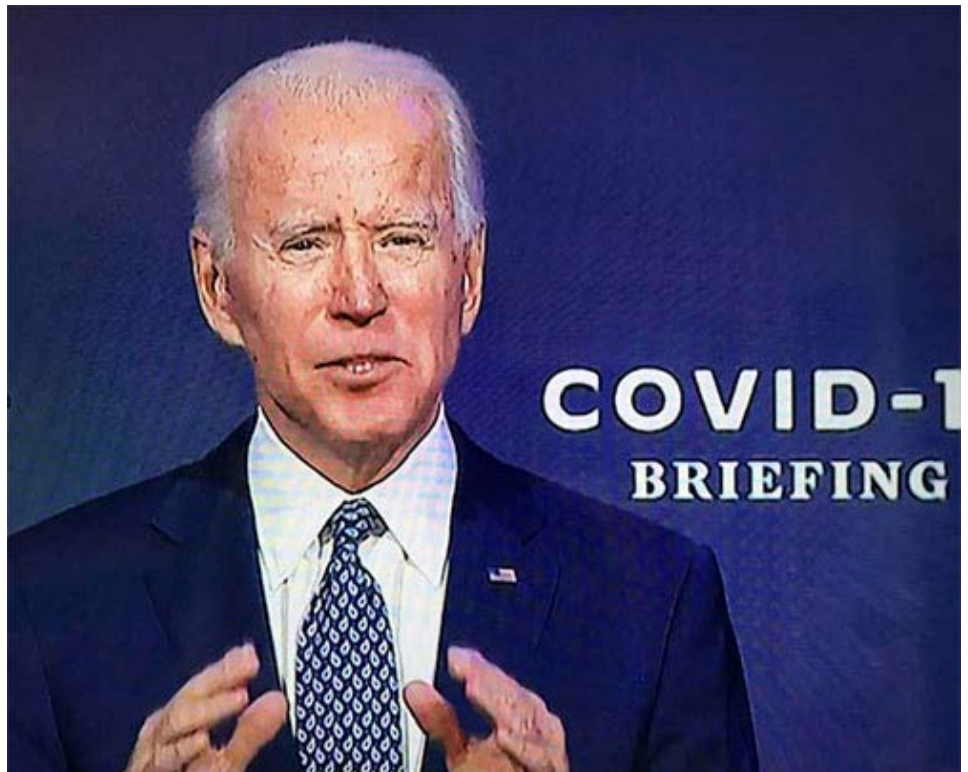
He pledged again to be a president for all Americans. "The presidency itself is not a partisan institution," he said. "It's the one office in this nation that represents everyone and it demands a duty of care for all Americans. That is precisely what I will do. I will work as hard for those who didn't vote for me as I will for those who did vote for me."

**Maybe Biden really** is the right man at the right time. Americans on both sides of the political divide are fed up with the partisan bickering that has for so long crippled our nation's capital. This talk of finding common ground is not a new message for Biden. It's the same thing he's been saying since the early days of the campaign. Standing on stage with other presidential hopefuls during the Democratic Primary, Biden spoke fondly of the old days when he managed to get things done by reaching across the aisle.

It's hard not to be skeptical, of course. Anyone who has seen Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell at work over the past dozen years has to entertain at least some doubts that bipartisan cooperation is really possible. Still, if Biden hopes to accomplish anything during his time in office, he'll have to work with members of both political parties.

He's been insisting he can do that. He'll have no choice but to try. ❖

**Kelly Hawes is a columnist for CNHI News Indiana. He can be reached at [kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com](mailto:kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com). Find him on Twitter @Kelly\_Hawes.**



# Reps. Lucas, Jacobs face GOP caucus removal

## Howey Politics Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS – Informed and reliable Statehouse sources tell Howey Politics Indiana that after a stormy two and a half hour caucus Tuesday, House Republicans are on the verge of booting out State Reps. Jim Lucas and John Jacobs from their majority caucus.

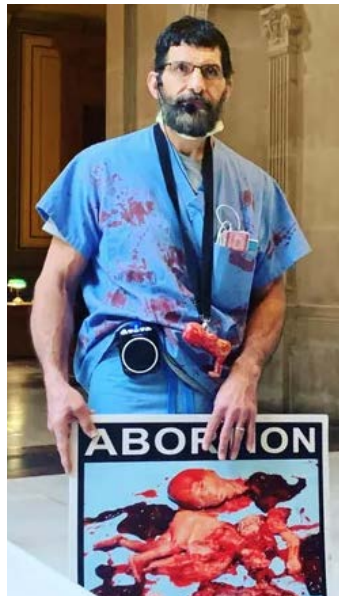


The source said that number could grow to three members.

It appears to be Speaker Todd Huston's attempt to gain control of the fringe of the caucus, which expanded to 71 members after last week's election. He can afford to lose three votes on critical caucus issues due to the super majority status.

Lucas (R-Seymour) has been a font of controversy with racist tweets and Facebook postings. He also endorsed Libertarian gubernatorial nominee Donald Rainwater, who finished third to Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb.

Jacobs (pictured), who upset appointed State Rep. Dollyne Sherman in the HD93 June primary, posted Facebook comments saying the Islamic faith cannot coexist in the United States, Muslims are traitors who should be deported, and the Roman Catholic Church is a cult and of Satan, its parishioners should repent and leave the church, and the pope is an anti-Christ.



House Republicans reelected Huston (R-Fishers) to serve as House Speaker. Huston is expected to be confirmed by the full House on Organization Day (Nov. 17) and the formal start to the 2021 legislative session.

Huston was first elected to the key leadership post in March to fill the remaining term of retiring House Speaker Brian C. Bosma.

This would be Huston's first full term serving as House Speaker. "I am honored and excited about this opportunity to once again lead our talented team as we all work to maintain our momentum and ensure that Indiana gets back to operating at full speed," Huston said. "We will continue to promote and encourage an atmosphere of civility and bipartisanship, especially as we navigate the challenges of this pandemic together."

House Republicans also re-elected State Rep. Greg Steuerwald (R-Avon) as Majority Caucus Chair, State Rep. Matt Lehman (R-Berne) as Majority Floor Leader and Caro-

line Spotts as House Clerk.

## House Dems reelect GiaQuinta

Indiana House Democrats re-elected Rep. Phil GiaQuinta, D-Fort Wayne, as the leader of their caucus. Rep. Cherrish Pryor, D-Indianapolis, is floor leader, and Rep. Terri Austin, D-Anderson, caucus chair.

## Taylor to head Senate Democrats

State Sen. Tim Lanane lost a bid to continue as the Democratic Party's minority floor leader in the Indiana Senate, with the tiny caucus selecting Sen. Greg Taylor of Indianapolis (de la Bastide, Anderson Herald-Bulletin).

Lanane was elected minority floor leader in 2013 after Sen. Vi Simpson left the Senate to run for lieutenant governor. Four of the five previous leaders were replaced in a vote of the 11-member caucus. "It's been an honor and privilege to serve as minority leader," Lanane said.

"During that time, Senate Democrats have fought for public education, the rights of workers, equality and progress in Indiana. "While I was willing to continue in leadership, the caucus went in a different direction," he said. "I look forward to continuing to work just as hard as I can to make District 25 and all of Indiana healthy, prosperous and more just."

Joining Taylor in leadership roles are Sen. Eddie Melton, Gary, as assistant minority floor leader; J.D. Ford, Indianapolis, as caucus chairman; Lonnie Randolph, East Chicago, retained his position as minority whip; and Shelli Yoder, Bloomington, as assistant caucus chairman. No longer serving in a leadership role are Sen. Jean Breaux, Indianapolis, assistant minority leader; Karen Tallian, Portage, caucus chairwoman; and Frank Mrvan, Hammond, as assistant caucus chairman.

## Bray, Messmer to head Senate GOP

The Indiana Senate Majority Caucus voted to reelect State Sen. Rodric Bray (R-Martinsville) as their choice for Senate president pro tempore. State Sen. Mark Messmer (R-Jasper) will continue to serve in his role as majority floor leader. In accordance with Senate rules, the Democrat caucus will also weigh in on Bray's selection during the legislature's official Organization Day.

"This job would not be possible without the support of each of our talented caucus members, and it's an honor to serve in this role," Bray said. "The 2021 session is going to be full of challenges as it relates to the budget, redistricting and all of the issues that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, but I have no doubt that Senate Republicans will rise to the occasion and serve the Hoosiers of our state well." Caucus members also elected State Sen. Travis Holdman (R-Markle) as Majority Caucus Chairman. Holdman replaces long-time caucus chair Jim Merritt of Indianapolis, who retired from the Senate earlier this month. ❖

# It's disease wrecking economy, not the government response

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – I start this column by admitting that I just don't know what the right policy recommendation is for state leaders concerning this pandemic. That is a change from the early days of January through April, when



we knew much less about the disease. Uncertainty is an input to decisions, and so many months ago, vigorous efforts to contain the disease's spread were clearly warranted. Every serious benefit-cost analysis came to this conclusion.

While many epidemiologists still believe we can control the disease, I am less sanguine. This is not because I know more about the disease than they, I do not. Rather, it is because I think

the politicization of basic public health measures leaves too many Americans scoffing at masks, social distancing and other steps to contain this global pandemic.

Quite simply, the amoral buffoonery that animated the anti-mask crowd makes effective policies untenable.

This is reminiscent of the early days of World War II. It took more than six months after Pearl Harbor to convince all East Coast mayors to enforce blackouts. The last holdouts came around only after the flotsam of U-boat attacks cluttered their ports. We Americans are stubborn people, for both good and ill.

Even with vaccine availability, much more vigilance, sacrifice and heartbreak remain before us. Of course, whatever actions our government takes balance the risks of the disease with the cost of government restrictions on businesses. Today, many Americans claim that government 'shutdowns' are the cause of our deep economic downturn. Others believe it is the disease itself, not government action that has suppressed our economy to Great Depression levels. A bit of rigorous thinking is in order.

**A number of groups** maintain records of government actions during COVID, and at least two have produced measures of restrictions across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This lends itself well to a statistical test on these data. Here's what that reveals.

It is true that more restrictive government shutdowns are correlated with an increase in unemployment rates since the start of the pandemic. One might be tempted to conclude that shutdowns did the economic damage, but that's not quite sufficient to assert causation.

It turns out that the share of a state's economy in at-risk sectors like tourism are also correlated with increases in the unemployment rate. For example, a place like South Dakota, which has largely ignored COVID, has much lower unemployment than Hawaii, which has taken the most aggressive actions to prevent the spread of the disease.

Fortunately, it is simple to tease out which of these factors matter most. One need only include both government restrictions and the share of the tourism economy in the same statistical test. It is even more useful to add other factors that might influence the disease and economy. So, including the share of urban population and average annual temperature capture some elements of both.

**This was informative**, and it turned out that the statistical test clearly removed the correlation between unemployment rate changes and government actions. What remained was simply how urban the state was, and how much of their economy was in tourism-related sectors.

The conclusion from this analysis clear. Government restrictions appeared to have no statistically meaningful effect on unemployment rate changes since late last year. Instead, it was the disease effects on restaurants, bars, hotels and similar businesses. But, you don't have to believe my work.

Harvard's Opportunity Insight project has a superb website that tracks daily expenditure data by state across the economic sectors most likely impacted by COVID. There are three obvious lessons to be learned from these data. The first is that every state experienced very large shifts in consumer spending prior to any state actions. So, here in Indiana, grocery stores saw a 60% spike in sales. Restaurants, accommodations and retail stores all began a rapid and deep descent in sales before schools shut down or Governor Holcomb took any executive actions.

The second lesson is that this pattern played out everywhere, at the same time, in every state. So, places with heavy restrictions saw the same pattern as those with no real restrictions. Not surprisingly, no matter where they live, many folks prefer to avoid contracting a potentially fatal disease.

**The third lesson is** that spending in all these sectors started to recover long before any government eased their restrictions. In other words, businesses figured out how to safely provide goods or services, so consumers went back to buying.

There are other studies of the early government actions. The best paper to look at this issue estimated restaurant, bar and non-essential business closures last March explaining between about 12.5% of all unemployment claims. So, even in the very early days, close to 90% of unemployment was caused by the disease effects on household spending, not government action.

In the end, the belief that government restrictions are responsible for the current economic crisis are easily

debunked, and many economists have done so.

**But, we live in a time** when many folks proudly avoid wearing masks and believe Mr. Trump lost the election due to fraud. We should not expect the tools of mid-20th Century economic analysis to make much of an impact on rational thinking. ❖

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

## Housing people in Great Lakes states

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Now that America is once again singing, “Don’t Stop Thinking About Tomorrow,” it’s appropriate to think about how we think. Typically, we think about people as people, which is all well and good. Sometimes we should think about people as they live in households. Often, households are a better unit of analysis. They are the social and buying units for appliances, newspapers, magazines, and turkeys.



Yes, the number and characteristics of persons in a household, and their wealth, make a difference. But just increasing a household’s size doesn’t automatically increase the number of bathtubs, avocados or chess sets bought and used.

Periodically, the U.S. Census Bureau issues an American Housing Survey (AHS). It’s smaller than other surveys done by the bureau. Indiana has too few people to have a report of its own. Our data are combined with those from Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin. Census calls that five-state area the East North Central Division. Others know it as the Great Lakes Region.

**The 2019 report** shows a nation with 124.1 million households of which 15% (18.6 million) are in the Great Lakes Region (GLR). In our region, 30.3% of households are home to just one person. We may not think of it as we drive down a street, but we should be aware of the fact.

Who is living in these one-person GLR households? The largest group (26%) are women 65 and older. Men, by contrast,

at 12% are scarce in that age range (45 men per 100 women). Next are men 45 to 64 (18%) and women of the same age (17%). The genders in this age group are more equal at 104 men per 100 women. Men under 45 outnumber women 144 to 100.

**In the GLR, 35.3% of housing** units contain but two persons. Combined with the one-person households, this adds up to 65.6%. Thus, nearly two out of three dwellings are occupied by fewer than three persons. Nationwide, the figure is 62.4% and rising almost every year.

One quarter of the households in our region have either three or four persons. Just a mere 8.7% have more than four residents. If you are a data denier, check out the ads on TV. They are pitched to people as they actually live, not to our fantasies about the people we don’t know.

Cut another way, nearly 70% in our region are two or more person households and two-thirds of those are married couples. If you’re still with me, in our Great Lakes Region, there are 8.8 million married couples with spouses present. Of these, 98,000 (1.1%) are same-sex marriages. In addition, there are 1.4 million unmarried couples of whom 51,000 (3.7%) are same-sex relationships.

Having a virtual Thanksgiving dinner with data miners? Tell them about census.gov and the AHS; they’ll never forget you. ❖

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



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# Presidential race was both not close, and extremely close

By **KYLE KONDIK, LARRY J. SABATO and J. MILES COLEMAN**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — Votes continue to be counted in the presidential race, and all indications are that Joe Biden’s lead in the national popular vote will continue to grow. Among those states that still appear to have a significant number of votes to count are California, Illinois, and New York. These big blue states will pad Biden’s national edge, which currently sits at 50.7%-47.4% in the national popular vote as of Wednesday morning. Biden’s national popular vote edge appears likely to exceed Barack Obama’s from 2012 (about four points), though it will fall short of Obama’s seven-point edge in 2008. Assuming Biden clears Obama’s 3.9-point 2012 margin, his will be the second-biggest popular vote win in the six elections this century (yes, we know, 2000 technically isn’t in this century, but we’re including it anyway).

Of course, the popular vote does not determine who wins the presidency.

We (and others) frequently noted the past four years that Donald Trump’s 2016 victory was built on the strength of a roughly 78,000-vote edge in three key states (Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin). Flipping those states, which were Trump’s three-closest victories, to Hillary Clinton would have given her an Electoral College majority.

This time, Biden’s fate was in the hands of four states, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Arizona, and Georgia, that were collectively decided by about 97,000 votes (that number will change, and Biden’s edge at least in Pennsylvania should continue to expand while Arizona has gotten closer in later-counted returns). Give these four states to Trump, and Trump wins.

However, it’s actually more complicated than that, and Biden’s actual edge in the decisive states is really even narrower.



If one gave Biden all but his three closest states (Arizona, Georgia, and Wisconsin), he would have been stuck in a 269-269 Electoral College tie with Trump. That would be all of Clinton’s 2016 states – 232 electoral votes – plus Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Nebraska’s Second Congressional District.

As we noted several times before the election, a 269-269 tie broken by the House would likely have been broken in Trump’s favor because of GOP control of individual U.S. House delegations: In a House tiebreaker, each of the 50 states gets a single vote, and the Republicans went into the election controlling a bare majority of delegations, 26 of 50. They continue to hold 26, but Democrats fell from 23 to 20 after Republicans forged ties in Minnesota, Michigan, and Iowa (and Iowa may flip depending on what happens in the uncalled IA-2 race). So we can say with a bit more confidence that a 269-269 tie would have gone to Trump.

Biden’s victory therefore belongs to his narrow margins in just Arizona, Georgia, and Wisconsin – a combined 47,000 votes or so as of Wednesday morning. Flip these states to Trump, and there is a 269-269 tie that Trump likely wins in the House.

By that token, Biden’s victory in 2020 was even smaller than Trump’s in 2016, even though Biden will easily win the popular vote after Trump lost it by two points.

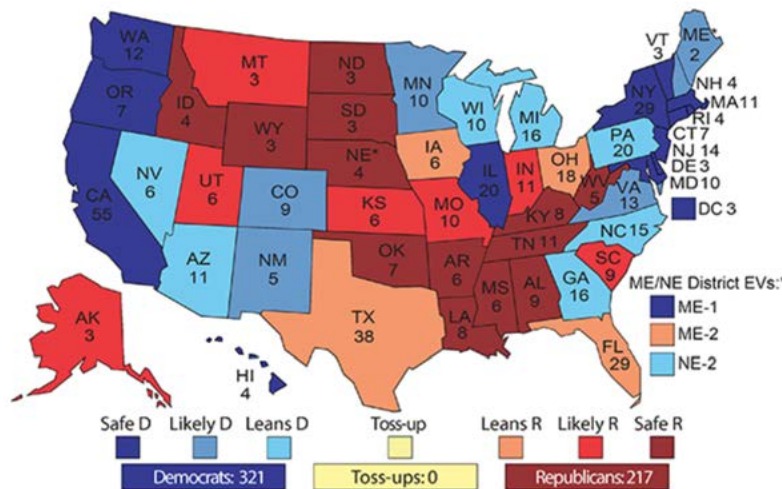
The situation is reminiscent of Harry Truman’s surprise victory over Thomas Dewey in 1948. In that election,

Truman ended up winning the national popular vote by about 4.5 points over Dewey in a four-way race that also featured conservative Dixiecrat Strom Thurmond and progressive Henry Wallace (more on notable third party candidacies below).

Truman’s victory in the Electoral College was markedly tighter than his popular vote margin would indicate: He won California by a shade under half a point, and Ohio by just a

quarter of a point. Had Dewey won both of those states, the election would have been thrown to the House – and if Dewey had won those two plus Illinois, decided by a little less than a point, Dewey would have won.

**Map 1: Final Crystal Ball Electoral College ratings**



## Voters focus on the major parties

We suggested several months ago that third party candidates did not seem likely to attract as much support as they did in 2016. Donald Trump, as an incumbent

president, seemed to focus the minds of both his supporters and his opponents. As it stands now, Trump and Joe Biden are attracting 98.2% of all votes cast, with just the remaining 1.8% going to other candidates and write-ins. That is up markedly from 2016, when Trump and Hillary Clinton split 94% of all the votes cast, with a larger 6% going to other candidates and write-ins.

Jo Jorgensen, the Libertarian nominee, currently is winning close to 1.2% of the vote – so about two-thirds of the total non-major party vote. This is the second-best Libertarian share ever, though well behind Gary Johnson’s 3.3% in 2016. The Libertarian tally is bigger than Biden’s margin of victory in Arizona, Georgia, Pennsylvania (at least for now), and Wisconsin. So, in a reversal of 2016, Republicans are the ones wondering “what if” about conservative third party defectors (just as Democrats were about Jill Stein Green Party voters four years ago).

As it stands now, 2020 appears likely to feature a relatively low share of third party votes compared to the 38 other post-Civil War presidential elections. Table 1 shows the third party vote in this timeframe – both the combined vote share in each election and the top third-party vote-getter in each election (we only included the top non-major party performer each year in the table for space reasons, so the table omits some notable third party candidacies, such as Eugene Debs in 1912 and the aforementioned Wallace in 1948).

Note that 2016 is in the top 10 for third party performance, while 2020 is currently in the lower half. We bolded 2016 and 2020 so you can see for yourselves.

### Crossover state senators decline

Heading into the election, 11 senators represented states won by the other party’s presidential candidate in 2016. The results of both this year’s Senate and presidential contests have thinned that group.

There are now only six senators, three from each party, who represent states that their party did not win in the 2020 presidential race. (This classifies the two independents who caucus with the Democrats, Angus King of Maine and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, as Democrats for the purposes of this analysis.)

Let’s go through what happened and why the number of crossover state senators declined.

First of all, Sens. Doug Jones (D-AL) and Cory Gardner (R-CO) lost in their states, both of which voted Republican (Alabama) and Democratic (Colorado) for president by double-digit margins. They were always the most vulnerable senators this election cycle and, in the end, their races didn’t feature much drama.

Michigan flipped from Trump to Biden, and Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) won a narrow victory. Michigan’s other senator, Debbie Stabenow, is also a Democrat, so that’s two more senators (Peters and Stabenow) whose party is aligned with the presidential winner in their state.

Arizona flipping from Trump to Biden also meant that Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) no longer represents crossover turf, nor does Sen.-elect Mark Kelly (D-AZ). Kelly will have to defend his narrowly-won new seat in 2022 as he seeks a full term in what has become a very competitive state. Biden’s margin in the state was of course narrow.

Georgia, which it appears voted for Biden, could add to the crossover group if one or both of Sens. David Perdue (R) and Kelly Loeffler (R) hold their seats in the looming Jan. 5, 2021 Senate runoffs that will determine control of the Senate. But let’s set them aside for now.

Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), who won an impressive victory last week with a great deal of crossover support, is joined as a Biden-state Republican by Sens. Pat Toomey (R-PA) and Ron Johnson (R-WI). Both of those seats are on the ballot in 2022: Toomey is not running for a third term, and Johnson may or may not.


Meanwhile, three Trump-state Democratic senators remain: Sens. Jon Tester (D-MT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and Joe Manchin (D-WV). Those senators are next up in 2024, when the Republican presidential tilt of those states will make all three attractive GOP targets.

One other note: Only six states have a split Senate delegation; that number could increase with the Georgia runoffs if voters render a split verdict in those races (typically, though, when two Senate races are on the ballot at the same time, the same party sweeps both races). ❖

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

**James Briggs, IndyStar:** Victoria Spartz is barely audible. Her mouth is moving, but the words don't flow right away. "Never thought that I'm going to be the one who has to be speaking," Spartz finally says. She's sitting at a table in a small room in the Hamilton County Republican Party headquarters in Westfield. All eyes are on Spartz. She's going to Congress — and she's in total awe of this moment. Wait, she won? She hasn't finished processing it yet. A lot of other people haven't either, least of all Democrats who thought they finally were going to turn Indiana's 5th Congressional District blue. Spartz, a Republican, triumphed in one of the most contested races in America despite running a puzzling campaign in Indianapolis' tilting-left northern suburbs against an outstanding Democratic candidate, Christina Hale. How bad was Spartz's campaign? Here was her main message: Stop socialism. It's been a tough election year," Spartz says, a fact she knows better than almost anyone after spending months in the trenches of a nasty, expensive campaign. "But it's getting to closure. And whether we like or dislike the outcome of some races, we'll have to live with them and make our best of it." That's a strange message coming from a winner. But Spartz isn't sounding much like a winner. Did she ever get discouraged when people said she couldn't win? Just days ago, all the money and momentum seemed to be flowing to Hale. "No, because I always trust in God and people and ... it will be decided in whichever way it's decided, you know, I have to make my case," Spartz said. "I believe I can deliver great things for this district. But if people decide otherwise, I have other things I can do in life. I still plan to be a Ph.D. some day." She just won a seat in Congress and now she's talking about getting a doctorate. She laughs at the thought. "Maybe, I don't know, we'll see," she adds. "Every time I try to decide to do it, something else comes up, you know." Someone asked Spartz whether she plans to stick with her newly won House seat. She responded with more self-awareness. "I'll stay there for some time. But, you know, I always said I'd never be an accounting or finance person (and) became a (certified public accountant) and said I'm never going to be a politician, and then I become a politician," Spartz said. "I don't want to promise anything." You will never hear a more honest answer than that. You also might never see Spartz so unguarded again. ❖



them. Theodore Roosevelt vowed that he was battling for the lord at the gates of Armageddon. FDR pledged that we had "nothing to fear but fear itself" as monstrous suffering stalked the land. Reagan summoned Americans to do battle with "an evil empire" intent on laying waste to the world. And Joe Biden said he was fighting for the imperiled soul of America. But, where Donald Trump focused on the "American carnage" and enemies and misfortunes that in his view assailed us on all sides, Joe Biden spoke to the unity and security at the end of facing trials. It was fitting, even foreshadowing, that Trump's entry into presidential politics was a slow descent. It was just as fitting that Biden marked Election Day by visiting the graves of two of his children and his first wife, as if to remind himself of who he was and what he had overcome. And what can await a leader and a nation on the other side of even the most immense hardship. ❖

**Andrew Sullivan, The Dish:** The "wisdom of the American people" is a horrifying cliché, routinely hauled out every four years as pious pabulum by those whose candidate just won. But the complicated and close election results of 2020, in so far as we can understand them at this point in time, really do seem to capture where America now is, for good and ill, defying the caricatures and wishful thinking of both Republicans and Democrats, revealing a sanity that has helped keep me rather serene in this chaotic week. The key fact is that Donald J Trump has been decisively defeated. He will be a one-term president. This was by no means inevitable. But in a massive turnout, where both sides mobilized unprecedented hordes of voters, and when the GOP actually made gains in the House, and did much better than expected, Trump lost. A critical mass of swing voters and moderate Republicans picked Biden over him. Our nightmare of four years — an unstable, malignant, delusional maniac at the center of our national life — is over. Take a moment to feel that relief. Breathe. Rejoice. He's done. He will not concede. He cannot concede — because he would suffer a psychic break if he did. Donald Trump, in other words, is now showing exactly why he had to be defeated. Policy is irrelevant in his singular case. No serious democracy can have a delusional, utterly incompetent, psychologically disturbed madman as president and survive. But Trumpism? It did far better than anyone expected. Down-ballot, many Republicans out-performed their nominal leader. The GOP made real gains in the House — during a health crisis and a recession — and will probably hold the Senate, effectively checkmating any truly progressive ambitions Biden might have had. The rural turnout was spectacular, responding perhaps to Trump's incredibly boisterous series of big rallies as the campaign came to a close. This was far from the Biden landslide I had been dreaming about a few weeks back. It was rather the moment that the American people surgically removed an unhinged leader and re-endorsed the gist of his politics. ❖

**John Krull, Statehouse File:** We Americans always have responded best to the national leaders who are happy warriors. We followed Roosevelts, be they Republican or Democrat, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama because they allowed us to bask in the belief that no challenge is beyond us. We rejected Herbert Hoover, Jimmy Carter, and now Donald Trump because they shook our faith that we can overcome the forces confronting us. This involves more than a sunny disposition, although a winning smile does help. The visions of the happy warriors often have great elements of darkness in



## Biden chooses Klain as CoS

WILMINGTON, Del. — President-elect Joe Biden has chosen his longtime adviser Ron Klain—an Indianapolis native and a 1979 graduate of North Central High School—to reprise his role as his chief of staff, installing an aide with decades of experience in the top role in his White House ([IBJ](#)). Klain, 59, will lead a White House likely to be consumed by the response to the coronavirus pandemic, which continues to spread unchecked across the nation, and he'll face the challenge of working with a divided Congress that could include a Republican-led Senate. Klain served as the coordinator to the Ebola response during the 2014 outbreak. In a statement Wednesday night, Biden suggested he chose Klain for the position because his longtime experience in Washington had prepared him for such challenges. "His deep, varied experience and capacity to work with people all across the political spectrum is precisely what I need in a White House chief of staff as we confront this moment of crisis and bring our country together again," Biden said. Klain served as chief of staff for Biden during Barack Obama's first term, was chief of staff to Vice President Al Gore in the mid-1990s and was a key adviser on the Biden campaign, guiding Biden's debate preparations and coronavirus response. He's known and worked with Biden since the Democrat's 1987 presidential campaign.



## Trump has no endgame; eyes '24

WASHINGTON — President Trump declared Wednesday on Twitter, "WE WILL WIN!" But, in fact, the president has no clear endgame to actually win the election — and, in an indication he may be starting to come to terms with his loss, he is talking privately about running again in 2024

([Washington Post](#)). Trump aides, advisers and allies said there is no grand strategy to reverse the election results, which show President-elect Joe Biden with a majority of electoral college votes, as well as a 5 million-vote lead in the national popular vote. Asked about Trump's ultimate plan, one senior administration official chuckled and said, "You're giving everybody way too much credit right now."

## Pence planning to move to Indiana

WASHINGTON — In the final weeks of Mr. Pence's term, his relationship with President Trump is facing what may be the vice president's toughest challenge yet ([New York Times](#)). Mr. Pence must now balance his loyalty to an enraged president making baseless claims of voter fraud against his own political future and reputation. He also has to deal with how Mr. Trump's talk of running for president again in 2024 could leave him with no lane to run in. It also makes it difficult for Mr. Pence to even start raising money if the president is floating his own name. In reality, Mr. Pence's allies expect him to return to Indiana and make a living giving paid speeches and potentially writing a book. He currently does not own a house. The president will have lunch with Pence at 2:30 p.m. in the private dining room.

## Johnsen named to Biden transition

BLOOMINGTON — Indiana University Maurer School of Law Professor Dawn Johnsen has been named to one of President-elect Joe Biden's agency review teams as part of his transition to the White House ([Indiana Public Media](#)). Johnsen will serve on the Department of Justice team. According to a document prepared by the Biden-Harris Transition, members of the agency review teams are responsible for understanding the

operations of the agency they are reviewing to ensure a smooth transfer of power.

## COVID spike with St. Joe poll workers

SOUTH BEND — A "small spike" of COVID-19 cases has been seen among election workers in the county and one county office may have closed because of coronavirus ([South Bend Tribune](#)). St. Joseph County Health Officer Dr. Robert Einterz said Wednesday he was aware of six people who had worked on the election who have tested positive for COVID-19. He did not know if any were hospitalized.

## Mayor Daniel tests positive

COLUMBIA CITY — Columbia City Mayor Ryan Daniel says he has tested positive for COVID-19. He made the announcement on his official Facebook page (WANE-TV).

## Hospitals are 'busting at seams'

TERRE HAUTE — As Indiana and Vigo County reported new single-day high COVID-19 numbers, Union Hospital in Terre Haute on Wednesday reported it was full ([Terre Haute Tribune-Star](#)). Union has no available beds, as COVID-19 cases have soared in the past week from an average of 30 inpatient cases for several weeks to 57 as of this morning. "Our hospital is full," said Marc Keilman, director of quality and infection control at Union Hospital. "We have 280 patients in house. We're not to the point of diverting patients, but we are busting at the seams." Elkhart General Hospital is struggling to provide extra space for COVID-19 patients ([South Bend Tribune](#)). Memorial Hospital in South Bend may have space for now, with a surgical area that recently was converted to an ICU unit, but its toughest challenge is securing the staff.