

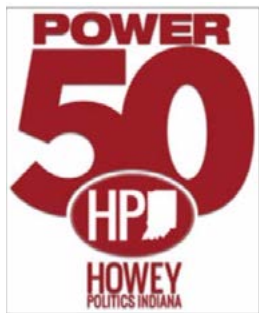
This Power 50 comes in time of crisis

Power struggle in DC, decline of Indiana delegation, pandemic and a powerful governor shape 2021 Power 50 list

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – After two decades of publishing Power 50 lists in the first week of January, this one comes in a true crisis atmosphere. As we watched in horror the U.S. Capitol being overrun by supporters of President Trump on Wednesday, the COVID-19 pandemic has killed more than 8,000 Hoosiers and 350,000 Americans, shutting down our state and nation for nearly two months last spring.

While vaccines are coming, there will be a distinct BC (Before COVID) and AC delineations as this epic story comes to a close. It gripped like a vise key figures, from Gov. Eric



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Banana States of America

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – When newly-elected Mike Pence showed up at the U.S. Capitol for his first joint session of Congress on Jan. 6, 2001, he watched Vice President Al Gore declare George W. Bush and Dick Cheney as the winning Electoral College ticket. He heard Gore, who lost a bitter election that was ultimately decided in the Bush v. Gore U.S. Supreme Court case, tell the assembly at its conclusion, “May God bless our new president and new vice president, and may God bless the United States of America.”

Nine months and five days later – on Sept. 11 – Rep. Pence stood in that Capitol as the doomed Flight 93 approached, only to be forced in the ground hundred miles



“I call on this mob to pull back and restore order. Words of a president matter. I call on President Trump to go on national television now to demand and end to this scene. The world is watching. I am genuinely shocked and saddened.”

- President-elect Joe Biden





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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



short of its mission of terror by patriot passengers.

On Wednesday, Vice President Pence presided over a joint session of Congress in what should have been a routine congressional imprimatur of state certification showing he and President Donald Trump had lost the Nov. 3 election to Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. This occurred as CBS News reported this cryptic message heard on restricted channels by multiple New York air traffic controllers: "We are flying a plane into the Capitol Wednesday. Soleimani will be avenged."

But the terror at the U.S. Capitol didn't come from pilots from Iran, but by supporters of President Trump who laid siege to the building after he goaded them to go to the Capitol. At a rally at the Ellipse, Trump made a lie-filled speech, telling his supporters that the election had been stolen, and that Joe Biden would be "illegitimate." Trump vowed he would "never concede" and urged the massive crowd to march to the Capitol where hundreds had already gathered under tight security. "We're going to walk to the Capitol," Trump said. "You'll never take back our country with weakness."

The Capitol was quickly overwhelmed, security perimeters were breached. Protesters could be seen breaking windows and entering the Senate chamber, sitting where Pence had been just an hour earlier. Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office had been entered. It is unclear how Pence himself was secured, but there were reports that he was going to be whisked away after the Proud Boys urged his execution. Members of Congress and staffers were advised to shelter in place. Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser issued a 6 p.m. curfew.

"This is what the president has caused today, this insurrection," said U.S. Sen. Mitt Romney, the Republican 2012 presidential nominee. NBC chief foreign correspondent Richard Engel, tweeted, "In other na-

tions, when demonstrators, urged by a cornered president, try to take over the capital building it's called a coup. Nothing else. In a classic coup, first protesters take state buildings, then it goes to the military to pick sides."



Former President George W. Bush compared the "insurrection" to those of a "banana republic."

President Trump tweeted around 2:20 p.m., "Mike Pence didn't have the courage to do what should have been done to protect our Country and our Constitution, giving States a chance to certify a corrected set of facts, not the fraudulent or inaccurate ones which they were asked to previously certify. USA demands the truth!"

During the proceedings, Pence had acknowledged a challenge to Arizona's certification, and adjourned for what had been expected to be others of Electoral College results from Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

In the ultimate split screen moment, Trump told his supporters, "Mike Pence, I hope you're going to stand up for the good of our Constitution and for the good of our country. And if you're not, I'm going to be very disappointed in you. I will tell you right now, I'm not hearing good stories. I hope Mike is going to do the right thing. I hope so. I hope so, because if Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election. ... All Vice President Pence has to do is send it back to the states to recertify, and we become president."

Trump had lunched with Pence on Tuesday, and there were photos of the vice president and his Chief of Staff Marc Short in the Oval Office. Trump said that participating

in the reversal of the election isn't what takes courage. "I said, 'Mike, that doesn't take courage.' What takes courage is to do nothing; that takes courage. And then we're stuck with a president who lost the election by a lot. And we have to live with that for four more years."

A few minutes later Trump told the Ellipse crowd, "And Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us. And if he doesn't, that will be a sad day for our country because you're sworn to uphold our Constitution. If they do the wrong thing, we should never, ever forget."

The loudspeakers at the "Overturn the Election" rally played the Celine Dion theme song "My Heart Will Go On" from the movie "Titanic."

That came after Pence issued a statement hours earlier: "My oath to support and defend the Constitution constrains me from claiming unilateral authority to determine which electoral votes should be counted and which should not. My role as presiding officer is largely ceremonial. Some believe that as Vice President, I should be able to accept or reject electoral votes unilaterally. Others believe that electoral votes should never be challenged in a Joint Session of Congress. After a careful study of our Constitution, our laws and our history I believe neither view is correct."

Pence ended the three-page letter saying, "So Help Me God."

Trump's hellbent decision to use the normally ceremonial congressional acceptance of state Electoral College results not only puts Pence's future presidential campaigns in a precarious position, it roiled the Republican Party as well as an unnerved nation, which was used to seeing coup d'états in Third World capitals of Tehran, Bogata, Guatemala City and Saigon, but not in Washington.

Outside the Senate Russell Office Building, U.S. Sen. Todd Young was confronted by a crowd of his Hoosier constituents. Asked why he didn't join Indiana colleague Mike Braun in contested the Electoral College results, an emotional and masked Young said, "My opinion doesn't matter. And you know what, when it comes to the law, our opinions don't matter, the law matters. The law matters. I share that conviction that President Trump should remain president. I share that conviction, but the law matters. I took an oath under God, under God!"

In a statement, Young said, "As Congress meets to formally receive the votes of the Electoral College, I will uphold my Constitutional duty and certify the will of the states as presented. The people voted and the Electoral College voted. Congress must fulfill its role in turn. Like so many of my patriotic constituents and colleagues, I too wish the results of this election were different. I strongly supported President Trump and his agenda the last four years. I campaigned hard for him. But upon assuming this office, I took a solemn, inviolable oath to support and

defend our Constitution, just as I did as a United States Marine. I will not violate that oath."

Hours after Georgia Republicans lost two U.S. Senate races, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell spent his last hours in the majority citing the dangers of the moment. "If this election were overturned by mere allegations from the losing side, our democracy would enter a death spiral. We'd never see the whole nation accept the election again," McConnell said. "I believe protecting our constitutional order requires respecting the limits of our own power. It would be unfair and wrong to disenfranchise American voters and overrule the courts and states on this extraordinary thin basis. I will vote to respect the people's decision and defend our system of government as we know it.

"I supported the president's right to use the legal system dozens of lawsuits But over and over the courts rejected these claims including all-star judges whom the president himself has nominated," McConnell said.

Within an hour after Pence commenced the joint session began, a mob of Trump supporters breached a U.S. Capitol security perimeter and tear gas was fired around 2:15 p.m. The Capitol and congressional office buildings were under lockdown. A woman was killed.

Pence was whisked to a secure location. "The violence and destruction taking place at the US Capitol Must Stop and it Must Stop Now," Pence later tweeted. "Anyone involved must respect Law Enforcement officers and immediately leave the building."

McConnell and Pelosi reconvened the joint session at 8 p.m. and the Electoral College process was confirmed early this morning. Pence said at 3:41 a.m. today, "The announcement of the state of the vote by the president of the Senate shall be deemed a sufficient declaration as persons elected president and vice president of the United States."

The three Hoosier Members who had joined this cabal – U.S. Mike Braun, U.S. Reps. Jackie Walorski and Jim Banks – were mostly mute, though Banks tweeted a prayer emoji, saying, "Please pray for our country." Braun reversed himself yet again, voting "no" on the challenge from Arizona around 9:30 p.m.

By late afternoon, as talk turned to Pence invoking the 25th Amendment to spare America the two final weeks of Trump rule, the president tweeted, "These are the things and events that happen when a sacred landslide election victory is so unceremoniously & viciously stripped away from great patriots who have been badly & unfairly treated for so long. Go home with love & in peace. Remember this day forever!"

Axios reported this morning that Trump banned Pence chief of staff Marc Short, among the last loyalists, from the White House yesterday.

President Trump, this day will be remembered, as the 21st Century's version of a day that will live in infamy.

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Power 50, from page 1

Holcomb to Vice President Pence. It delayed an election, closed schools and restaurants, reordered the way we do business and buy things, and will set in motion ramifications that we can't truly understand (like the virus itself) at this point in time.

There's another crisis at hand. It's our society's civics deficit, fueled by apathy that transcends our schools and societal engagement, and allowed to fester by a news media in atrophy. That three members of the Indiana congressional delegation – U.S. Sen. Mike Braun and Reps. Jim Banks and Jackie Walorski – signed on to a protest this week, induced by losing President Donald Trump to "investigate" widespread vote fraud that doesn't exist, is another indicator of the risks a polarized and undisciplined political spectrum brings to the fragile American democratic experience.

Most of us learned about how a president is elected by middle school. But there isn't a textbook that exists detailing how Congress can thwart the will of 150 million voting Americans by casting doubt over the Electoral College.

During the 2017 Indiana Civics Health Index, former congressman Lee Hamilton observed, "In a democracy, it is not enough just to let politicians set the rules of engagement. As citizens, we need to know how to cultivate our own skills; to stay informed, volunteer, speak out, ask questions, make discriminating judgments about politicians and policies, and improve our neighborhoods and communities."

The 2021 Howey Politics Indiana Power 50 list is shaped primarily by four dynamics: The COVID pandemic fallout, the biennial budget session of the Indiana General Assembly, an unprecedented consolidation of power under Gov. Eric Holcomb, and a decline of coherence of the Indiana congressional delegation, which since 2010 has lost Sens. Richard Lugar, Dan Coats, Evan Bayh and Joe Donnelly and now this year, U.S. Reps. Pete Visclosky and Susan Brooks.

Steady congressional leadership has been replaced by a Trumpian cult of personality, which may begin to recede following President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on Jan. 20.

This lack of coherence at the federal level is augmented by a decline of newspapers and local network TV affiliates, and the collapse of the Indiana Democratic Party. For instance, when HPI began publishing in 1994, there were a couple of dozen active weekly political columnists. Today, there are just a handful (myself, Jack Colwell of the South Bend Tribune, John Krull of the Statehouse File, Mark Bennett of the Terre Haute Tribune-Star, James Briggs of the IndyStar and Nate Feldman of the IBJ).

On the political front, Indiana Democrats are no longer competitive in the majority of the state outside

Lake County and Indianapolis, and the college towns. Some 88% of county offices are held by Republicans, and General Assembly GOP super majorities look to persist into the foreseeable future. St. Joseph County now has three Republican county commissioners. The General Assembly's reapportionment process appears to be prepared to continue Republican dominance at the legislative and congressional levels with new maps for the next decade.

While Indiana Republicans tout themselves as the "party of purpose," and ideas, they appear unable to find a comfort zone in creating truly competitive districts. For the first time in history, not a single congressional incumbent lost a U.S. House race with the current maps.

The dominance of the Holcomb administration is reflected in this year's list. If there is any light for Democrats, it is the emergence of Hoosiers Ron Klain and Pete Buttigieg in influential positions inside the coming Biden administration.

Here is our 2021 HPI Power 50 List:

1. Gov. Eric Holcomb: He is poised to become one of the most powerful governors in Indiana history. He won a second term in landslide fashion.

He has consolidated education policy with his appointment of Katie Jenner as the state's first education secretary. He has had the support of two super majority legislative chambers through the duration of this administration, with no end in sight. And he has been the lynchpin figure in dealing with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic (during the 1918-19 pandemic, Gov. James P. Goodrich largely deferred to local health officials, who prescribed face masks and closed many public facilities). Holcomb generally earned high marks during the "hunkering down" phase of the pandemic last March and April. But his response was complicated

by Vice President Mike Pence's helming the White House Coronavirus Task Force and President Trump's indifference to some of the easiest COVID mitigating factors (i.e. face masks). Holcomb established Stage 5 of the pandemic in late September, insisting that it had nothing to do with his reelection campaign, and took some criticism as November and December became the deadliest months. He and his health team now face the arduous task of getting the COVID vaccines to 6.7 million Hoosiers. In the upcoming General Assembly session, he faces conservative Republican legislators who will seek to chip and chop away at his executive powers. His masterful maneuvering over the past four years of a Trump White House got Indiana maximum attention and resources without putting Holcomb in a place where he must own any of the Trump craziness. As 2024 presidential discussion begins on the GOP side, a no-drama governor who has a record of good government



execution may put Holcomb on VP short lists. If he pulls off one or two big, signature wins, you may quickly see him rise up in RGA leadership and/or be eventually added to lists of candidates who should be considered for higher political office.

2. Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch: She could be in the right place at the right time to become Indiana’s first female governor of all time, even though that is four years away. In a December HPI Interview, she was asked about the 2024 race and said, “So much in politics is about timing. The next four years I’ll be focused on being the very best lieutenant governor I can for the state of Indiana and a great partner to Gov. Eric Holcomb. From a preparation standpoint, having served in local government, in the legislative branch and now in the executive branch of state government,

the preparation will be there. Timing is always the issue. I will certainly be prepared for political opportunities as they arise, but for right now, I’m focused to what I am supposed to be doing, which is lieutenant governor.



The rest will take care of itself.” Asked about her political timeline, Crouch said, “I am already zeroed in on my political future.” She was the governor’s second-biggest donor (next to the RGA) and she maintains a fundraising network that is as extensive as anyone in the state. She has great legislative relationships and an even larger network of local elected officials around the state. Her sprawling administration portfolio places her in the midst of housing, agriculture, rural and tourism policy. She is a loyal partner to Holcomb and continues to raise her profile appropriately as she talks about policy areas such as broadband expansion, local economic development, and mental health. Do not be surprised if you see a more visible LG presence at events around the state in 2021.

3. White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain:

The Indianapolis native and North Central HS graduate becomes President Joe Biden’s chief of staff on Jan. 20. He is the son of Stanley Klain (a building contractor) and Sarann Warner (a travel agent). He went on to graduate from Georgetown University in 1983 and Harvard Law School in 1987. He clerked for Supreme Court Justice Byron White



in 1987-88. Klain joined the Clinton-Gore campaign in 1992 and became Vice President Al Gore’s chief of staff in 1995, and later was fired by Tony Coelho for being perceived as too loyal to President Clinton. He served as an informal advisor to U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh. In 2008, he was named chief of staff to Vice President Joe Biden. On Oct. 17, 2014, Klain was appointed President Obama’s “Ebola czar.” It was that experience through 2015 that positioned Klain to be Biden’s chief of staff during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Speaker Todd Huston: After years of grooming under Gov. Mitch Daniels and then Speaker Brian Bosma, Huston took the helm of the House just as the coronavirus pandemic took aim at the state. Huston walked out of the Indiana House of Representatives on March 11 with the



COVID-19 pandemic just beginning to get a death grip on his state, he recalled, “I remember leaving this chamber believing something

historic could be taking shape. I severely underestimated the magnitude of the impact of COVID-19. You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that is an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before.” Huston has already prioritized business liability reform, with he and Senate President Bray fast-tracking it to Gov. Holcomb by the end of this month. Huston, who survived a bout with COVID last fall, explained on Organization Day, “As we continue to adjust to life living in a pandemic, it would be foolish not to consider what we’ve learned from it and what we can do better. We should never strive to return to a life similar to that of March 11, 2020, as that would mean we have not learned from one of the most monumental and informative experiences of our lifetime.” Huston previously served on the Hamilton Southeastern School Board, Hamilton Southeastern Schools Foundation Board, Fishers Planning Commission and Indiana Leadership Forum board of directors. Additionally, former Gov. Mitch Daniels twice called on Huston to serve the state, first with a four-year term as a member of the Indiana State Board of Education, and from 2006 to 2009 as a member of the Indiana Education Roundtable. Huston was instrumental in passing Daniels-era education reforms in 2011.

5. Senate President Pro Tempore Rod

Bray: Not to be underestimated, Bray’s quieter style has

strong allies among his caucus. His leadership on redistricting could have a longstanding impact on the makeup of the legislative branch. While former Speaker Brian Bosma had expressed support for an independent redistricting commission, Bray appears to be following long-time majority caucus opposition to those reforms. The Senate has been a GOP super majority for much of the last two decades. "Though this session will be challenging, we pledge to commit ourselves to the same level of transparency that we have sought to achieve in 'normal' years, and that applies to the redistricting process as well," Bray said.

"Redistricting is a duty assigned to the legislature by our state constitution, and we are committed to completing that task fairly and transparently." Bray's legislative priorities include COVID-19 business and not-for-profit liability protections, fully fund virtual students during the pandemic, codify telehealth expansions enacted during the pandemic, and improve local government accountability during the pandemic. Speaker Huston and Bray were signaling they were preparing to take the lessons from the 2020-21 pandemic to new levels. A business, school and non-for-profit liability reprieve is likely to pass with bipartisan support and head to Gov. Eric Holcomb's desk sometime in January or early February. Bray is also backing a cigarette tax hike, saying, "We want to be very thoughtful on how the money will be spent on the front end," adding that he wants it to be directed to "improve health standards." Several HPI Statehouse sources have said that unlike his Senate predecessor David Long, Bray has ambitions that extend beyond the upper chamber, and he may seek the 2024 gubernatorial nomination. How he deals with this pandemic session, teacher pay and the biennial budget issues in just his second session will provide the necessary context for such ambitions.



6. Health Commissioner Kristina Box: Dr. Box, along with Gov. Holcomb, has been the week-to-week voice of reassurance during the coronavirus pandemic. To state the obvious, no one, outside of Gov. Holcomb, has had a more public role in Indiana's response to the pandemic. She is about as close to Holcomb as any other person in the administration. She and several family members tested positive for the virus in October. During an HPI Interview with Gov. Holcomb in October, he choked up a bit when asked about Dr. Box's health. "Dr. Box is resilient,

she's strong, she's aware, she's experienced," Holcomb said. "I talk to her multiple times a day. She has a joyful heart and she's a true servant leader."

7. Transportation Secretary-designate Pete Buttigieg:

The former South Bend mayor commenced a long-shot Democratic presidential campaign, won the tormented Iowa caucus, barely lost in New Hampshire before his meteoric effort began to seize up. His early endorsement of Joe Biden, along with that of U.S. Rep, James Clyburn and U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar in March, was critical for the moment, giving the future president-elect the necessary momentum to outlast socialist U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders. Buttigieg was rewarded with the U.S. Transportation cabinet position. When he was introduced by Biden, he was acknowledged in the same vein as the late Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden. Buttigieg recognized the historic context of where he's been and where he's going. "My hometown of South Bend, Indiana, was built by the power of American transportation," he began. "From trade along the river at the bend that gives the city its name, to the rail lines which connected us to the rest of the country when we were considered the west, to livelihoods created by the good paying union jobs at ... Bendix and Studebaker. And now climate and infrastructure innovation are bringing my community into the 21st Century. I faced a constant battle with that natural enemy of all mayors, the pothole," Buttigieg continued. "At its best, transportation makes the American dream possible, getting people and jobs where they need to be, directly and indirectly creating good-paying jobs. At its worst, misguided policies and missed opportunities can reinforce racial, economic and environmental injustice, dividing or isolating neighborhoods, undermining government's basic goal to to empower everyone to thrive. Now comes a historic opportunity, this administration can deliver resources to create good jobs to address the climate challenge while equitably to empower all Americans."

8. Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer:

Hoosier Republicans now control 88% of all county elected offices, or 1,330 out of 1,509. This comes on top of holding all of the Statehouse constitutional offices, nine

out of 11 congressional offices, 71 mayoral offices after a 19-office increase in 2019, while it has maintained super majorities in the Indiana House (71 out of 100) and Senate (40 out of 50). Hupfer's partnership with Gov. Holcomb has led to four of the strongest years in party history, with \$25 million raised. The Indiana GOP has set and broken fund-raising and voting records, made significant inroads with constituencies not historically aligned with their party, and expanded the map of elected Republicans throughout the state. In a December HPI Interview, Hupfer explained, "I had many folks, when I took the position, question where we can go with the party. We've proven in three successive elections that we could continue to broaden the relationship between the Republican Party and all Hoosiers, from the top of the ticket all the way down. It's just reflective of the policies the Republican Party stands for in Indiana; a success Indiana as a whole has had under Republican leadership at the state and local levels. Voters in Indiana have come to trust the Republican Party to deliver on our commitments. If we say something during the campaign we strive to achieve it." Hupfer just became a partner with Taft Law, is expected to seek a second term as chair later this winter (telling HPI, "I'm leaning that way") and will take a hard look at the 2024 gubernatorial race. I'm not going to exclude anything," he told HPI, "but I think it is not the time to be talking about 2024 for anyone who is a serious candidate. We're heading into what may be one of the most complex legislature sessions we've ever had in Indiana from a basic task at hand, which is the budget and COVID response."

9: U.S. Sen. Todd Young: Indiana's senior senator has the most promising political future of anyone in the Hoosier congressional delegation. But, like almost all Republicans, he has been tarnished by mostly acquiesc-

ing to President Trump's unfounded allegations of election fraud – at least until the last possible moment this week. As chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, he raised a record amount of cash for the GOP's effort to hold onto its Senate majority, spoiled by Trump's sabotaging the two lost Georgia seats Tuesday night, creating a 50-50 split with Vice President Kamala Harris giving the Dems the majority. But that gives Republicans plenty of leverage to disrupt President-elect Joe Biden's agenda, a position they've maintained thanks to wins Young helped secure in competitive Senate races. Falling just short of a majority would be a significant accomplishment in a year where Republicans had many more incumbents up for reelection than Democrats did and were battling headwinds created by Trump's daily volatility and his disengagement from the coronavirus pandemic. Young is earnest to a fault. He strives to be a policy wonk who can work across the aisle to advance legislation. He kept his head down and ignored most Trump tweets and stood up to Trump on some foreign policy issues. But you would have expected more pushback from someone who never misses a chance to tout his experience as a Marine. Trump surely violated Marine Corps standards almost daily with his tantrums and antics, and Young remained silent. But he supported the Electoral College results on Wednesday, putting him in alliance with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and likely giving himself a boost to move up in the leadership ranks.

10. Vice President Mike Pence: Four years of fealty to President Trump effectively ended when the veep was evacuated by armed police from the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday after the president fumed over his decision not to support the coup. It was entirely predictable that Trump would turn on his loyal vice president. You could



ask any number of Trump business partners and past cabinet officers, many of whom have been fired by tweet, to predict this could happen. Where this leaves Pence's political future remains to be seen. Wednesday's MAGA storming of the U.S. Capitol



may have finished off any notion of a Trump comeback in 2024. That would have been a roadblock for Pence, but if this mob riot ends Trump's future political viability, it could prove to be an opening for the vice president, who had signaled he would not take part in the coup d'etat. Having said that, critics of Pence will note that Pence was mostly silent as events trended toward Wednesday's fiasco. And Pence helmed the coronavirus task force, the Trump transition, and a Presidential Commission on Election Integrity that went nowhere. Pence is a politician, not a policy wonk.

11. Commerce Sec. Jim Schellinger: While the Holcomb administration has been fighting the global pandemic, Schellinger and his team at IEDC have put together what will likely be a record year of jobs and investment in Indiana, including a massive retention/growth opportunity with the Elanco headquarters across the White River from downtown Indy at the old GM Stamping Plant site. As one of Holcomb's top advisors, expect Schellinger to maintain laser focus on setting more economic records, especially as it relates to federal defense development and attracting jobs from overseas companies.

12. INDOT Commissioner Joe McGuinness: The I-69 Finish Line project will be one of, if not the biggest, infrastructure programs going on in the country in any state in 2021. Another big project on the horizon is the siting for the I-69 bridge to Kentucky at Evansville. McGuinness has been close to the governor since before the Holcomb for Senate campaign so look for McGuinness to continue to be in the governor's inner circle on the official side. He will likely have the opportunity to work with Pete Bttigieg as DOT secretary which could mean good things for Indiana's infrastructure.

13. FSSA Commissioner Jennifer Sullivan: Though she has played a less public role in the pandemic response, the FSSA secretary is beloved by Gov. Holcomb and will likely play a more public role in Holcomb legislative and policy initiatives surrounding mental and public health as the state emerges from the pandemic in 2021.

14. OMB Director Cris Johnston: The pandemic

gnawed a \$900 million fiscal hole during 2020, with the state ending the fiscal year with \$1.4 billion in reserves. Last July, Johnston called for "austere" budgeting, saying, "To not only meet and deliver sound services to our citizens but then the ultimate outcome is to restore the reserves."

15. Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown:

Dr. Brown has made a remarkable recovery from a motorcycle accident two years ago. He shared the biennial budget stewardship with now Speaker Huston in 2019, and will have a decisive impact on the budget, which begins with his committee. After a year grappling with the pandemic, the December fiscal forecast projected the state will have about \$360 million in increased revenue compared to the current budget, with a \$2.3 billion surplus at the end of the current biennium. Brown said in December,



"We'll be looking at, are there one-time things we want to have in this government and what's an appropriate reserve amount? We need a reserve amount for the next time we are in a situation like this."

16. Senate Appropriations Chairman Ryan Mishler:

This will be his second biennial budget at the helm of Senate Appropriations after long-time Chairman Luke Kenley resigned in 2017. Following the December fiscal forecast, Mishler said the coming biennial budget will have a split personality. "It is basically a flatline the first year, so we'll have to be very careful the first year," Mishler said. "The second year, if the economy continues to grow like they're anticipating, we could have more revenue to work with." As for increasing teacher pay, Mishler said, "A flatline is a win, even in K-12, when other states are making drastic cuts. So, in Indiana I don't think you're going to see a cut in K-12 like other states."

17. Rep. Timothy Wesco and Sen. Greg Walker:

These are the two chamber Election Committee chairs and this is the reapportionment year. So Wesco and Walker will play an instrumental role in determining the legislative and congressional maps for the next

decade.

18. U.S. Rep. André Carson: Now the dean of the Indiana congressional delegation and in the House majority, we keep waiting for Carson to become more of a force among Democrats in the House. It hasn't happened yet to the extent

we were anticipating. Maybe he will become more of a player during the new congressional session that gavelled in this week. He's a member of both the Progressive Caucus and the New Democrat Coalition – an

interesting combination that allows him to put one foot in the liberal and moderate factions that will shape the Democratic Party. He's on the Transportation Committee, which will give him a chance to work with incoming Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. He also serves on the House Intelligence Committee, where he chairs the subcommittee on counterterrorism. That puts him in a position to weigh in on the Russian cyberattacks that have penetrated several government agencies.



19. Attorney General Todd Rokita: His statewide role will give him a platform to raise his name identification around the state, crucial ingredients for a 2024 gubernatorial run. However, winning a primary for future statewide office will be more difficult than winning at a convention, as Rokita discovered during his 2018 U.S. Senate primary loss to Mike Braun. While he may have the ability to be antagonistic to Holcomb's administration, it may not serve him well in the future given Holcomb's popularity and potential opportunity to help pick his successor. Rokita does have an opportunity to focus on some policy issues which have broad appeal to Hoosiers and use those to drive his office's external engagement.

20. Republican National Committee members John Hammond III and Anne Hathaway: It was Hammond who correctly told HPI in 2015 about the appetite for a "strongman" president. That's what we ended up with from President Trump, who repeatedly displayed autocratic tendencies while completely taking over the GOP to the point where the Republican National Convention did not even attempt to pass a platform. The critical question for Hammond and Hathaway is whether Donald Trump recedes in the next four years, or attempts a comeback. If it's the former, what replaces Trumpism?

21. Purdue President Mitch Daniels: The former Indiana governor and White House budget director became the collegiate face of the pandemic, insisting on reopening Purdue University after his famed "miles of plexiglas summer." As he explained in his Washington Post column: "Like almost all hard calls, the choice had to be made with a less-than-ideal amount of information in hand. Experience warned us against procrastination; the operational difficulties of the task ahead clearly were going to require every possible day of planning and preparation. We did reopen Purdue University in late August, and with great relief just completed a semester with more than 40,000 students taking courses on



campus. More than two-thirds of their classes were either partially or totally in-person. Their organizations sponsored more than 17,000 events and meetings, two-thirds of those in-person. Our residence halls were 86% occupied and, while dining shifted to mainly outdoor and carryout modes, we provided tens of thousands of meals each day. It was far from the typical resident experience, but our students' educational progress continued uninterrupted." Of the 2,770 positive coronavirus test results for students during the semester, 82% were either asymptomatic or had only one minor symptom. Less than 1% rose above even the fourth level of a six-level severity index. Daniels also backed the reopening of Big Ten football last fall.

22. Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett: It's been a tough year for the mayor after the downtown riots last Spring, the pandemic, and another record in homicides. But the Elanco deal for the old GM Stamping Plant site and news that the NCAA's March Madness men's basketball tournament will be played mostly in Indianapolis give Hogsett a path for revival. As the 2024 gubernatorial race unfolds, he will likely be on a list of Democrat alternatives, though as we've pointed out before, Indianapolis mayors beyond the late Sen. Richard Lugar don't play well politically in outer Indiana.

23. Education Sec. Katie Jenner: Now that Gov. Holcomb will have direct oversight of education issues in Indiana, Jenner will play a key role in the ongoing conversations and action on teacher pay, etc. Is a turning point on the horizon for a GOP governor's relationship with the public school establishment?

24. Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke: The three-termer is the GOP's largest city mayor and knows everyone. He and Deputy Mayor Steve Schaefer have direct lines of communication with Gov. Holcomb and are regular-

ly engaged in policy discussions. He will also be an ardent backer of a Suzanne Crouch gubernatorial bid.

25. Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry: The four-term mayor began the year hoping to make inroads on infant mortality, diabetes and obesity before the pandemic shut down Indiana's second largest city, and then civil unrest following the George Floyd slaying in Minneapolis in May. "When the COVID-19 situation hit our community, a lot of that stuff was put on the back burner," Henry told WFFT. He is now reevaluating racial justice. "What happened to George Floyd, we never want to happen in Fort Wayne," Henry said. "So, let's make sure we have policies and protocols to prevent that from happening."

26. Indiana Gaming Commission Executive Director Sara Gonso Tait: With the legal troubles hitting Spectacle Entertainment impacting the Hard Rock casino in Gary and the new Terre Haute enterprise, there is speculation that the fallout will spread inside the Hoosier gambling landscape. Tait will play a key role in oversight.

27. Fishers Mayor Scott Fadness: His proactive leadership during the pandemic has earned him accolades from many Republicans and Democrats for working to lower the number of cases in Fishers and Hamilton County. The economic progress taking place in Fishers continues to make positive headlines and he should still be on anyone's list of potential 2024 candidates for governor. His leadership on regional governance issues within Central Indiana is being noticed in other parts of the state as he was a guest speaker at a One Southern Indiana Chamber of Commerce event earlier this year. His call to action in a September op-ed in the IBJ also seemed to hit at a long-term interest in being part of a future leadership discussion. The question remains, however, would Fadness want to be governor at this point in his career?

28. Sen. Jeff Ratz and Rep. Robert Behning: The two chamber chairs of their respective education committees will play an influential role in the teacher pay reforms. They face a new day in education, with Gov. Holcomb's first-ever appointment of a cabinet level education secretary. Sen. Ratz has introduced Senate Bill 2, which would provide full per-student funding for the remainder of the school year to schools who have students learning virtually due to COVID-19. It is a priority bill of Senate President Bray.

29. U.S. Sen. Mike Braun: After the Electoral College results were announced on Dec. 14, Braun gave a full-throated call to accept the outcome and acknowledge that Democrat Joe Biden had won the White House. It looked like a watershed moment for Braun. He put himself far in front



of the rest of the Republicans in the Hoosier congressional delegation – including his Senate mate Todd Young, who, following the Electoral College outcome, only mumbled a line about working with President-elect Biden to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Then suddenly he did a comprehensive flip-flop, declaring that he would join about a dozen other senators

to oppose the Electoral College vote count on Wednesday. He tried to make his stance sound like a benign call to conduct a quick audit of several states that Trump lost. What he was really doing was adding his name to an effort to disenfranchise millions of voters – a move he would have forcefully denounced had Democratic senators made it on behalf a Democratic presidential candidate. But Braun knew he could continue to curry favor with President Donald Trump – to whom he owes his Senate seat – and not really affect the election outcome because enough Republicans like McConnell and Young would accept the democratic results. After his disastrous flipping, Braun reacted to the mob on Wednesday, saying, "What we're seeing at the Capitol is wrong, hurts the cause of election integrity, and needs to stop immediately. Rioting and violence are never acceptable." After this stunt, Braun may not be taken seriously on his efforts to tackle major policy issues, such as climate change and health care. And this comes on top of last summer's qualified immunity bill that brought criticism from conservative quarters. If he continues to genuflect to Trump, which seems likely, he will simply align with Trump rather than carving a distinct policy profile for himself.

30. U.S. Rep. Jim Banks: Unlike Sen. Braun, Banks had a clear political reason for doing President Donald Trump's bidding in trying to overturn the election results. He signed onto an amicus brief supporting a Texas lawsuit that challenged the election outcome in Wisconsin, Michigan,

Pennsylvania and Georgia. On Wednesday, he was among the House Republicans who objected to the Electoral College vote count. Banks could not have sat on the sidelines during those two crucial efforts and let any Republican get to the right of him in support of Trump's unfounded allegations of voting fraud. As the incoming chairman



of the Republican Study Committee, Banks is one of the leaders of the far right. In that role, he will help shape the policy agenda and develop the rhetorical artillery that Republicans hope will keep House Democrats off balance. With a narrow Democratic majority, a unified and aggressive far right wing in the House could cause more disruption than usual – and Banks will be in the middle of the effort. First elected to Congress in 2016, Banks has solidified his grip on his northeast Indiana district over the last couple elections while sharpening his partisan edge, as his rise to RSC chairman indicates. Banks is a potential 2024 Republican gubernatorial candidate, telling HPI last November that he will make that decision sometime after the 2022 election.

31. Secretary of State Connie Lawson:

Considering the scrutiny of the 2020 election execution in other states, Lawson deserves a hero's "thank you" for overseeing a largely flawless 2020 general election in Indiana. Could 2020 be the last general election overseen by Secretary Lawson? Lawson may look to play a significant role in identifying her successor should she consider resigning before her full term is complete.

32. U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth: He signed onto the amicus brief in support of the Texas lawsuit to challenge presidential election results in several swing states. He didn't seem as if he needed the political protection in his district, where he has won the last two general elections comfortably and a serious primary challenger is not apparent. Hollingsworth has carved a niche for himself on the House Financial Services Committee as a strong proponent of making it easier for small businesses to raise capital in the public and private markets. His seat on the committee also gives him a nice fundraising perch. He is self-term limited, with several sources telling HPI that he will consider the 2024 Republican gubernatorial race. One of the wealthiest members of Congress (he won the crowded 2016 primary by self-funding), he could bring the family checkbook into what could be a crowded primary race. His problem on that front is that he is mostly unknown outside of the 9th CD.



33. U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski: She is another GOP member of the Hoosier congressional delegation who did not have a pressing political reason to go as far as she did in supporting President Donald Trump's quixotic effort

to convince America that the election was stolen from him despite his presenting no evidence of malfeasance. She has taken control of her north-central Indiana seat in a district that used to be competitive but has sent her back to Washington by comfortable margins in the last two elections. It's hard to imagine a primary challenger who can beat her. She is a member of perhaps the most important House committee, Ways & Means, where she has developed a reputation as a strong proponent of free trade. She held her ground on that issue even when Trump implemented tariffs on much of the rest of the world. Yet, she genuflected to him when it came to resisting the presidential election results. In the new Congress that gavelled in this week, Walorski will serve as the ranking Republican on the House Ethics Committee, a post that could raise her profile in the chamber while also giving her a lot of work and headaches.

34. Earl Goode: It is impossible to find one individual who has had more years of influence on the executive branch in this century as Earl Goode. "Rumors" by a rival publication that Gov. Holcomb's chief of staff is preparing to retire were shot down by the gov's press office. Goode has spent a full decade in the role of chief of staff, six years under Gov. Mitch Daniels and now four with Gov. Holcomb. The governor's chief of staff continues to have an incredibly strong command of what is happening in the Holcomb Administration as it heads into an important budget session.

35. Patrick Tamm: The president of the Indiana Restaurant and Lodging Association has been sounding the alarms of the pandemic's threats to thousands of restaurants and bars. He will be a key voice once vaccinations progress and the pandemic lifts, revealing sprawling wreckage throughout Indiana's hospitality industry.

36. South Bend Mayor James Mueller: The former protege of Mayor Pete Buttigieg has spent the first year in office dealing with the pandemic, homelessness, and public safety issues in the wake of the police action shooting of a Black man in June 2019. The city is in the process of putting in place study recommendations.

37. Joe Donnelly: The former senator will play a role in any revival of the Indiana Democratic Party and could challenge either Sen. Todd Young in 2022 or in a rematch with Sen. Mike Braun in 2024. Donnelly weighed in on Braun's embrace of the Electoral College challenge by Republicans earlier this week, saying, "Indiana has a long history of serious, hard-working U.S. senators. It is stunning Hoosiers now have a senator who is trying to overthrow the Electoral College results and Joe Biden's election."

38. U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon: The Bloody Eighth has become the Boring Eighth, as Bucshon has cruised to several easy reelections. He also has steered clear of the GOP civil war over supporting President Donald Trump's unfounded assertions of election fraud. He continues to be a back bencher with a low profile in Washington and in Indiana. If Republicans get serious about developing a real alternative to the Affordable Care Act, Bucshon may have an opening to gain more attention. He could use his background as a physician to make some impact on health care policy.

39. Seema Verma: Though her tenure as director of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid will soon be over, Verma will return to Indiana where her family has remained and where she remains a longtime friend and ally of Gov. Holcomb. She will likely field professional opportunities from Silicon Valley, among other places, including governors around the country who will seek her counsel on how their states can better navigate the relationship with the federal Medicaid system. Verma's perseverance through reported criticism from HHS Secretary Alex Azar is proof of her toughness and staying power in the rough and tumble Trump World.

40. HHS Secretary Alex Azar: He oversaw the federal response to the coronavirus pandemic. Several sources tell HPI that the former Eli Lilly executive is considering a 2024 gubernatorial bid.

41. Mike Schmuhl: He ran Pete Buttigieg's meteoric \$100 million Democratic presidential race last year and has become a director of Heartland Ventures, a Seed and Series-A fund with an investor base made exclusively of strategic middle-America business owners and CEOs with 500-15,000 employees based in South Bend. He put out a statement saying he wasn't interested in becoming Indiana Democratic chair, but HPI sources claim that talks are on-going. John Gregg took himself out of the running for that job, leaving former legislator Karlee Macer as the only declared candidate, while Trish Whitcomb is making the rounds. Schmuhl will almost certainly be involved in any post-DOT political activities of Mayor Pete.

42. U.S. Rep. Frank Mrvan: The newly sworn-in 1st CD Democrat picks up the mantle of long-time U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, taking his endorsement to upset Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. in the delayed primary last June. Mrvan has asked Speaker Nancy Pelosi for a seat on the influential House Appropriations Committee. If he makes that committee, it will give him a big leg up in filling Visclosky's big shoes.

43. State Sens. Mark Messmer and Ed Charbonneau: Messmer, the Senate majority floor

leader, is carrying Senate Bill 1, the pandemic business liability legislation that General Assembly leadership and Gov. Holcomb have said they want fast-tracked during the early quarter of the session. SB1 would help protect businesses and individuals by giving them immunity from civil liability for damages if someone is exposed to COVID-19 on their property or during an activity they organized. This immunity does not apply if the party engages in gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct. Likewise, Senate Bill 4, authored by Charbonneau, would expand the existing civil liability protections that apply to health care services rendered during a disaster emergency. Charbonneau is also carrying another legislative priority of Senate President Bray, SB3, which would permanently codify many of the expansions in telehealth implemented during the pandemic to ensure that all Hoosiers have access to the health care they need regardless of where they live.

44. Zionsville Mayor Emily Styron: A talented female Democrat mayor in a doughnut county is not a common occurrence, but Styron's "Leslie Knope-like" appeal and approach to good government and collaboration with state and local officials make her one to watch as she enters her second year. Her rise comes with the Democratic Party bench in Indiana extremely thin, particularly after the congressional defeats of Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott and Christina Hale.



45. Cam Savage: The principle founder of Limestone Strategies, he will play a key role in Sen. Young's reelection campaign, which is essentially underway. It's not clear whether Savage will manage the campaign, or continue his 2016 role as the key consultant.

46. Jodi Golden and Erin Sheridan: As two politically savvy co-chiefs of staff for the lieutenant governor, these two will have their hands full with an energetic Suzanne Crouch in 2021. Both have an understanding of the importance of a well-run official office operation when ramping up for a potential election, given their extensive experience working for previous statewide offices (Treasurer's and Auditor's Offices, respectively).

47. Lacy Johnson: As an advisor to the Biden Transition team after helping secure Congressional Black Caucus support of the Biden Campaign (putting him over the top in South Carolina), Johnson is one of the best positioned Hoosiers a few weeks out from inauguration.

48. Lawren Mills: The former policy and legislative director for former Gov. Daniels now chairs the Ice Miller Public Affairs practice group and has built one of the

strongest executive branch lobbying practices in the state given her extensive relationships with Holcomb and his senior team.

49. LaPorte Mayor Tom Dermody: The former House Public Policy Committee chairman has moved to city hall, and his influence extends well beyond his northern Indiana city. He co-founded the nine-county Northern Indiana Advocates, which is pushing the Holcomb administration for a fair share of state resources, board and

commission appointments from that part of the state.

50. Brian Tabor: As the COVID-19 pandemic surged last November, the president of the Indiana Hospital Association sounded the alarms. "The fear is that the system essentially gets overrun, and that sounds really scary, and that is why we are ringing the alarm now," Tabor said then. The state will be facing a similar crisis over the next couple of months as the post-holiday surge fills Hoosier hospitals, so Tabor will be an important voice in the coming weeks. ❖

Time to choose sides on the rule of law

By **JOSHUA CLAYBOURN**

EVANSVILLE – If we gauge a nation's performance in terms of economic prosperity, peace, freedom, and lack of corruption, the single biggest determining factor in ensuring that performance is citizens' respect for the rule of law. Few things, if any, matter more to a nation's success and longevity.

The rule of law depends on a citizenry collectively respecting those boundaries. We tell one another and ourselves that the words we ascribe to law – due process, equality, justice – carry force and meaning. Against cynicism, we believe we're ruled not by raw power, but by these magical ideas underlying the rule of law. We underestimate what happens when we set aside the rule of law and we underestimate the utter fragility of modernity. Many times in history, we've turned



the clock back to a much tougher and rougher past. The events of the past week offer just a peek at what may be in store for us.

Although ancient Romans and Europeans could enjoy things like hot piped water, luxurious baths, and central heat, these were nothing more than dreams for centuries after Rome fell.

We think that our traditional normal is here to stay and that the "system" will deliver the goods. But the truth is that modern systems are like spiderwebs – break one part and the whole thing gets exponentially weaker. Romans who lived through the fall must have been shocked at how quickly things fell apart.

When we blithely mock our own systems, when we knock down institutions, when we take political pleasure in zero-sum fights, when we take war and pandemics

less than seriously, brutality, starvation, and violence are never too far away from modern life.

Even the most cynical, jaded, and corrupt Romans of Nero's era must have been horrified at what they had unleashed once it was clear they were going way back in time. And once they went back, the only way forward was centuries of deprivation and painfully slow invention. Ancient Rome saw itself and its progress as eternal, as did pre-war Europe. Have we lulled ourselves into similar complacency?

Modernity is one of God's greatest gifts to us. Cherish it, cultivate it, protect it. Don't let systems get vandalized or institutions get wrecked.

Protecting modernity means protecting systems, institutions, and norms of civilization. This is not some idle musing: these things stand between you and your family and chaos. Without truth, systems, and objective laws,



you don't get science. Without science, you don't get clean water, antibiotics, and vaccines.

As Rome fell, it's interesting to note that truth and facts became subordinated to pleasure, corruption, luxury, and belief in magic. We must take note of prior mistakes and not let them repeat. Modernity, technology, and civilization are all very fragile things.

Which side will you choose? ❖

Claybourn is an Evansville attorney

Upholding a Republic

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – These last few weeks have been a particularly tumultuous political brawl in our democratic Republic. Wednesday it changed to sustained violence. Excuses must stop. It is well past time to stop defending and excusing incendiary rhetoric that resulted in such behavior.



It is one thing to raise concerns about potential fraud in voting. There were policies implemented in an attempt to get around the dangers of COVID that were potentially vulnerable to large scale cheating. But “potentially” is not the same as actual fraud.

Ballots in the challenged states were counted and re-counted. There were 50 some court cases dismissed, without even being viewed as meritorious enough to have a trial. It

became increasingly apparent, in legal terms, that the effort was not about proving fraud, but using the courts to convince supporters of President Trump that the election was stolen. No evidence, but because the courts dismissed the cases it was portrayed as de facto proof that the system was protecting itself from Trump. It was a cover-up.

Then the states certified the results. Every state. Whether governed by Republicans or Democrats, every single state verified the results.

In 2012, Mitt Romney received 47.2% of the popular vote for President. In 2020, Trump received 46.9%. Trump claimed that was because of California, which of course has been part of the count since it became a state in 1850. It is, in fact, the most populous state by far. But it should be noted that election victory comes from winning the Electoral College. This brings us to last night.

The cause of the mob riot and attempt to seize our nation’s Capitol Building was the belief – falsely alleged again by Trump just before the riot – that the election was stolen. The constant attacks on the credibility of our government as a swamp, as untrustworthy in all respects, has fueled an anger that just boiled over.

On my personal Facebook page yesterday, people who claimed to be concerned about America had been so deceived that they were posting just crazy things. A few praised the riots. One said they had just begun and we should see what is next. Another said that it was important to stop things now, before it was too late. I was incredulous. Here our nation was under internal attack, and there not only wasn’t sorrow, but more threats.

It has become a bipartisan common tactic to repeatedly refer to Washington as a crooked swamp. Candidates of both parties and both parties have used it at will. But this isn’t just about Trump, though he is the worst

offender. What has become most sleazy about politics are the deceitful, lying methods used to gain and hold power. Here in Indiana, both parties and all our elected officials need to do some self-analysis as well.

And for liberals. Do you think that allowing rioters to control whole areas of our major cities did not help fuel things? Do you think that blasting juries for not concluding what you wanted them too, did not help fuel a lack of respect for the law? Both sides argue that it is the other side that is wrong. It is all sides. You can’t support upholding the law just by those holding opposing views.

So today I grieve for our nation. I am saddened that this great nation has been humiliated in front of the world, in this case by Trump advocates who call themselves “conservative Republicans.” It was so awfully ironic that their hats, shirts and slogans said “Make American Great Again” as they trashed it verbally and then violently.

I grew up in small-town Indiana in a very conservative, evangelical Christian, small business family. My dad was a proud veteran. The way I was raised was to honor America literally including our government even when we intensely disagreed with liberal policies. In our furniture business, we sold Democrats and Republicans, including elected officials from both parties. I was taught to respect both.

When we went to California, among the highlights I wanted to see was the reproduction Independence Hall at Knott’s Berry Farm since I had never been to Philadelphia. In my office and today at our house, we have Independence Hall reproductions of various types all over – a larger one of the buildings and grounds at Independence Park, a large porcelain one, a smaller pewter one and many more. To me it symbolized the roots of our nation: The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the first Congress, the first Supreme Court.

Undergirding all this framework was a democratic Republic grounded in the balance of powers. As founders articulated, because the sinfulness of man no one could be trusted with sole power. No institution could in fact be trusted. Nor could mobs.

This foundation was built upon an assumption that people will resolve differences peacefully. As John Adams said, it requires a people with moral grounding. That was the foundation. Otherwise, what you get is what happened this week: Mobs that seek to impose their authoritarian will upon everyone else.

I am sure that many of the people who participated in the Washington protests did not fully see the logical consequences of their participation. The failure of many Republican leaders to speak out against President Trump showed they did not understand the risk of how far this man would go or the dangers of someone unhinged from fundamental respect for anything except raw power for personal benefit.

The consequence of the failure to speak out earlier is that America has been undermined in the eyes of the

world. His legacy will be the mob riots where his supporters smashed their way into the Capitol Building in an attempt to overturn an election so this man could stay in power.

Millennial Members not waiting to legislate

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS – The Millennials made me mad. So mad, in fact, that I cannot bring myself to admit I am one of them and will rather refer to them in the third person.

Why am I upset? Thanks for asking. I am upset because State Reps. Ethan Manning, Jake Teshka, Zach Payne and Blake Johnson, four of the 16 Millennials serving in the Indiana General Assembly, wouldn't tell me what I wanted to hear.



America is evenly split, right down the middle, between political ideologies and urban and rural divides. We are grappling with racial and civil unrest in our cities. Children are leaving schools with less knowledge and skills than generations before. A virus has claimed the lives of nearly two million around the world and over a quarter of a million here at home. And all they wanted to talk about was working together to solve our problems.

But what about me? I wanted these three Republicans and one Democrat to help me further fan the flames of generational division and agree that we are fighting a war between us (Millennials) and them (Baby Boomers). I wanted to hear the rallying cry of Millennials everywhere: "They may take our lives, but they will never take our avocado toast!" It all would have made for much better copy. But I got nothing.

How do we win Revolution de TikTok unless we are sequenced in spastic solidarity?

Instead of focusing on my wants, these elected officials to whom I still appropriately genuflect the way former President Barack Obama would bow to foreign leaders, were unbearably thoughtful, boring and normal in our virtual discussions last month. They were so boring that I questioned their Millennial-ness.

None of them has piercings (that I know of). They don't use their hair as a contemporary version of mood rings (we conducted all interviews on Zoom so I could be sure). Manning did drop off our call briefly to "walk through security at the airport" after attending a

Conservatism, real conservatism, will survive. The Republican Party, if it purges itself, might survive too, but it will have a more difficult struggle. It certainly can never win again as Trump's personal playground. ❖

coronavirus briefing with Vice President Mike Pence. Having found no match for the phrase on UrbanDictionary.com I am left to assume he actually did walk through security. See? Boring.

But while none of them placated my leading questions by admitting to seeing themselves as representing their generation, they clearly felt a weight of responsibility to meet the demands of this moment, and an urgency to act that comes from the constant reality that political dynamics outside their control can bring their time in office to an unceremonious end every two years.

It was that dual-current of responsibility and urgency that pulsed through our conversations. They spoke of seeking office because the stakes are too high to binge more Netflix. They spoke of finding consensus on criminal justice reform and how we can better define the role of government in society. After all, as Johnson reminded me, Millennials spent hours working on group projects in school, so we know a thing or two about working together (unless you were like me and ended having to do the whole thing yourself).

And they all agreed – breaking news: Republicans and Democrats agreed! – that there's no time like the present to prove we are up to the task.

That's why not a single one of them planned to heed the bad advice Payne heard from a current member to sit back and wait his turn. "No, I wouldn't listen to that," Manning immediately interjected. He would know. The guy had five of his bills signed into law in his first session.

These Millennials, and the ones I didn't take the time to meet with, earned their seats. And despite their age, they aren't the fish out of water that Will Smith was in *Bel Air*. All four served in local office before grabbing a cubicle in the Statehouse. Better yet, they aren't so jaded by life's experiences that they remain eager to maintain Indiana's stellar reputation for fiscal integrity all while improving our state in areas in which it needs improved.

"I'm just young and inexperienced enough to think I can make a difference," Payne would half-jokingly tell voters on the campaign trail.

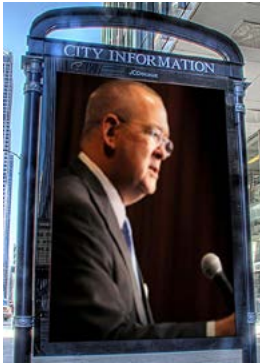
It all leaves me with the nagging feeling that maybe I was wrong to be upset. I guess for the veterans of the legislature, the only thing to fear from this group of 30-somethings is that they plan to, you know, legislate. Well, then there's Johnson being a Democrat. But that's a grievance for another time. ❖

Pete Seat is currently he is a vice president with Bose Public Affairs Group in Indianapolis.

Recalibrating conservatism

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – The holidays are an indulgent time, so I spoil myself here with a bit of political economy. By way of background, I think it is now obvious that significant changes to our economy have wreaked havoc with our political coalitions. While this itself isn't necessarily a bad development, it is something we will reckon with for years to come, so deserves some reflection.



I'll focus primarily on the conservative coalition, because it experiences the most disruption.

To be a conservative in America means something different than it does anywhere else. The differences are so profound that what we call conservatism is referred to in Europe as classical-liberalism. The reason for this

is simple. Those ideals American conservatives wish to preserve remain the most radical in history. Their essence lies in that one sentence George Orwell said could not be translated into newspeak. It begins, "We hold these truths to be self-evident . . ."

Even today, it is radical to believe we must be equal before the law, free to think, worship and speak as we wish and that governments exist to protect individual rights that transcend human design. The American conservative movement has long held these ideas as central to their philosophy. I am unabashedly that kind of conservative.

There are other things we conservatives celebrate. We want to see family life nurtured, hard work rewarded, personal responsibility respected and strong communities flourish. Conservatives don't agree on all the policy particulars of these ideals, nor are we alone in celebrating these values. But respect for these philosophies are central to what we have claimed to be. To avoid the stain of hypocrisy, ideas must also guide our behavior.

Conservatives who love America cannot also hate our government. Service in that government is noble, but it is not enough to make a society or nation. American conservatives believe we need a strong private sector as well as institutions that are outside both commerce and government. Places of worship, and social institutions such as the Elks, YWCA, and Rotary, fill the gaps of commerce and government. These simple gatherings provide the mortar that holds fast the stones of our civilization.

Whatever else we American conservatives cherish, we must always return again to the documents of our founding. Unmoored from the Constitution, American conservatism easily erodes into something altogether differ-

ent, strange and foreign. This can easily become a vulgar conservatism that looks backward, not forward. Conservatism that forgets the essence of our founding is not true American conservatism.

American conservatives also cannot fear argument, nor hate American progressives. The belief that each of us has a right to speak, think and worship also commands us to respect those with whom we disagree. Moreover, progressives have been right often enough – on slavery, civil rights, and myriad other matters – that conservatives must honestly welcome their contribution. When they are right, their ideas must become ours, and conserved with all our strength.

There is also much I've left out. American conservatives prefer less government and greater federalism, or more state and local control of matters. I've given short shrift to progressives as well, but their argument is not mine to make. As an American conservative, I respect them enough to leave them that task.

None of this is an argument for or against a political party. Even a casual student of history will understand that the progressive/conservative center of balance has swung several times in the past two centuries. I believe we are in the midst of such a shift. In that shift, many of my conservative friends, along with the deans of conservative thought, have changed their political allegiance, finding a different party better aligned with their ideals.

Despite what appears as broad electoral success, American conservatism is in crisis. What we witness today is not merely a modest realignment of coalitions. Many American conservatives no longer recognize the arguments or actions of maybe half those whom we once thought were ideological allies. Some of these disagreements are tactical, such as recent indifference to the federal debt, which will vanish with Mr. Biden's inauguration. More fundamental issues may be unresolvable.

For example, the many recent efforts to undo the election clash with the most fundamental canons of American conservatism. Viewed by itself, the Texas electoral lawsuit to undo Article II of the Constitution violates a half dozen conservative tenets, yet two-thirds of GOP House members supported it. This continuing rejection of the electoral results is deeply un-American, infantilizes tens of millions of voters and risks radicalizing many to political violence. This American conservative finds it repugnant and cowardly.

Now, it may be true that many voters don't give a whit about conservative ideas. Perhaps the populist appeal to "own the libs" is a more lucrative path to electoral success. If so, this will diminish the future for many Americans. Turning away from traditional American conservatism will be especially bad for those citizens who live in deeply red states. More than anywhere else, Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, Indiana, Arkansas and Missouri need more state and local control, stronger social institutions, a more robust private sector and more effective

government services, particularly in education. Mr. Trump's brand of populism will deliver none of this.

The turn away from American conservatism will surely make us less prosperous, but that is not my biggest worry. Rejecting elections, fueling political violence and weakening our Constitutional norms risks everything American patriots have struggled for these past two and one half centuries. It should come as no wonder that the

conservative coalition is in crisis. ❖

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Gore chose country over politics; will Pence?

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI News Bureau

ANDERSON — Twenty years ago, some folks called Al Gore a sore loser. What do you suppose they'd say about Donald Trump?



Two months after the presidential election, the nation is still fighting over who won. Millions of the president's supporters are convinced the election was stolen, and the president has encouraged them to march on Washington. Just think what the president and his supporters might be saying if the election had actually been close. What if instead of losing the popular vote by millions, the president had actually won it by hundreds of thousands? What would he and his supporters have done then?

We know what happened 20 years ago when Gore lost to George W. Bush. Gore had actually conceded on election night only to change his mind after the major networks decided the contest in Florida was too close to call. What followed was a seemingly endless 36 days of controversy as lawyers argued over counting and recounting the ballots.

Voters learned more than they wanted to know about hanging chads and dimpled chads and pregnant chads. They also learned about a so-called "butterfly" ballot that some thought might have led folks trying to vote for Gore to wind up casting a ballot for independent candidate Pat Buchanan instead.

In the initial tally, Bush led Florida by about 1,700 votes, but a recount trimmed that margin to 317. Through it all, the Democrats were sure the deck had been stacked against them. Not only was Bush's brother, Jeb, the state's governor, the woman charged with overseeing the counting was the co-chair of Bush's Florida campaign, Secretary of State Katherine Harris.

The fight twice wound up before the U.S. Supreme Court. The first time, the justices sent it back to Florida, but the second time, they decided Florida had run out of time to sort out its issues, and they halted the recount, effectively handing the election to Bush.

The court issued its decision on Dec. 12, the same day states were required to certify a slate of electors. The vote was 5-4, with the court's five conservatives siding with Bush and its four liberals siding with Gore. Gore conceded the next day.

In his address to the nation, Gore recalled what Stephen Douglas had said after losing to Abraham Lincoln nearly a century and a half before. "Partisan feeling must yield to patriotism," Douglas told Lincoln. "I'm with you, Mr. President, and God bless you."

Like Douglas, Gore chose to be conciliatory in defeat. He sought to bring a divided country together. "While we yet hold and do not yield our opposing beliefs," he told his supporters, "there is a higher duty than the one we owe to political party. This is America, and we put country before party. We will stand together behind our new president."

Weeks later, Congress met in joint session to certify the results. Gore, as vice president, was the presiding officer. Several members of the House rose to object, citing various concerns about the election, but Gore ruled them all out of order.

Finally, he announced that Bush had won the Electoral College by a margin of 271 to 266. "May God bless our new president and our new vice president," Gore said, "and may God bless the United States of America."

Twenty years to the day after Gore spoke those words, Vice President Mike Pence will stand in the same spot. Disappointed supporters will be marching outside, and members of his own party have promised to stand and object to certification of the election result.

How do you think the vice president will respond?

❖

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Inflation? Maybe; Maybe not

By MORTON J. MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS – There is a special place in my heart for journalists who write about economics. They accept the doubts as well as the dogmatism of economists. Take this passage from The Economist magazine (12/12/20) concerning the aftermath of the stimulus money put into the U.S. economy to counter the effects of Covid-19:



“The private sector will thus find itself flush with cash as vaccinated economies reopen.” Strange. Aren’t businesses and households on the rocks with inadequate stimulus money to make them whole, let alone “flush with cash”?

“Households and firms may remain cautious, sitting on their accumulated savings. But amid the joy of reopening they may instead go on a spending spree, making up for all the time not spent in theatres, restaurants and bars during 2020. (Emphasis added) Split the difference; maybe a cautious spending spree? Maybe not.

“That would result in a lot of money chasing goods and services that might not be in ample supply, resulting in a period of inflation...” Already I can see the editorial cartoon with cash running in pursuit of scarce goods and services. Yet, it is precisely theatres, restaurants and bars with unemployed workers and empty facilities. Hardly

the setting for inflation.

Are returning workers going to see their wages increased? Are new and reopening firms going to pay their suppliers more than before Covid-19 and charge patrons higher prices?

Some numbers might help. In the second and third quarters of 2020, Americans received a \$3.4 trillion boost in unemployment compensation combined with those famous \$1,200 checks for each person. Here in the Hoosier Holyland that boost totaled \$53.7 billion.

These funds compensated for the wages and salaries lost when employment was slashed over the same six months (April through September 2020). And compensate they did! Nationally, the lost wages and salaries totaled \$743 billion, equal to 22% of the \$3.4 trillion stimulus. Indiana’s \$13 billion loss of wages and salaries equaled 24% of our \$53.7 billion stimulus.

Some might say, “Over 75% of the stimulus money was wasted. It was beyond what was needed to replace lost wages and salaries.”

We must reply, it wasn’t wasted. It was spent on TVs and streaming services, larger homes, new cars, home furnishings, remodeling and lots of other things that kept tens of millions of Americans employed and earning.

Total personal income in the U.S. was up 5.1% in the third quarter of 2020 over the first quarter of the year (up 4.3% in Indiana). But look only at U.S. wages and salaries: In the third quarter of 2020 they were down only 0.4% (Indiana 0.02%) from the first quarter of 2020.

We cannot deny the crushing economic hardships endured by many households. But most households did not suffer significant financial difficulties during the epidemic. Now, with the epidemic raging again, sustaining the stimulus is vital. ❖



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The 51% trifecta

By **KYLE KONDIK**
and **J. MILES COLEMAN**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – With apparent victories in both Georgia Senate runoffs – our friends at vote-counting service Decision Desk HQ have called both races for Democrats Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff over Republicans Kelly Loeffler and David Perdue – Democrats have won their first trifecta in Washington since the 2008 election.

But whereas that election a dozen years ago was a landslide that elected huge Democratic legislative majorities, their victory this time was a collective squeaker, producing the barest of majorities.

This takes nothing away from the Democrats' achievement, but it does illustrate the competitive era in which we find ourselves.

In 2008, Barack Obama won by seven points and captured 365 electoral votes. Democrats got as high as 60 Senate seats during the 2009-2010 Congress, or 60% of all the seats, and they won 59% of the House seats.

As this 2020 cycle wraps up, Democrats beat an incumbent president with 306 electoral votes and by four and a half points in the popular vote, and they netted three Senate seats while losing what appears to be a dozen seats in the House compared to what they won in 2018 (one race, NY-22, remains uncalled, and there is a lingering dispute over IA-2, which Republicans won by just six votes).

Joe Biden won 51% of the vote, and Democrats won 51% of the House seats. The Senate is 50-50, but with Vice President-elect Kamala Harris acting as effectively a 101st senator to break ties, the Democrats will have what amounts to a 51-50 Senate majority: 51 divided by 101 is 50.495%. If you'll forgive us for slightly fudging the rounding, Democrats also have roughly 51% of the Senate seats.

Hence, the 51% trifecta.

This mirrors the governing alignment following the 2000 election, when Republicans held the White House along with 51% of the House and, for a few months, a 51-50 edge in the Senate (which evaporated when Republican Sen. Jim Jeffords of Vermont became an independent in mid-2001 and joined the Democratic caucus).

This new Democratic trifecta was made possible by Warnock and Ossoff's narrow, apparent victories.

As of this writing (late Wednesday morning), Warnock was ahead by a little over a percentage point and Ossoff was up by four-tenths of a point. The remaining votes to be counted appear to be Democratic leaning: According to the New York Times' "needle," which is projecting the expected final votes, Warnock is on track to win by about two points and Ossoff by about one. This comes

after Biden won the state by about a quarter of a point in November.

One surprise in Georgia was that turnout was very high, but that Democrats apparently were able to win anyway. As of the most recent tabulations, there were about 4.4 million votes cast, a number that will grow a little. That is roughly 88% of the total presidential vote -- an incredible level of turnout for a non-presidential race, but one befitting the immense stakes involving two Senate runoffs to decide overall control of the Senate.

We wrote yesterday that Republicans needed a bigger share of the electorate to vote on Election Day than in the presidential election, and that they needed to perform better with that group than Donald Trump did

in November. They checked both of those boxes, but still came up short.

Let's focus on the Ossoff-Perdue race, which was closer than the Warnock-Loeffler contest.

Election Day voters as a share of the total electorate were 30% of the electorate, compared to 20% in November, and Perdue won these voters by 27 points, up from Donald Trump's 23-point margin among these voters in November. The general belief among observers, including us, was that this kind of Election Day edge would be difficult for Democrats to overcome.


However, the Democrats were able to hold on because they built a more substantial edge in the pre-Election Day vote than they enjoyed in November.

Votes cast either early in-person or by mail made up 70% of the total votes, down from 80% in November, but Ossoff won these votes by 12 points, double Joe Biden's six-point margin in November. This included winning two-thirds of the mail-in votes -- a little up from Biden's advantage in November -- and narrowly winning the early, in-person vote by a little more than a percentage point after Trump had won the early in-person vote by six. ❖



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

George Will, Washington Post: The three repulsive architects of Wednesday's heartbreaking spectacle — mobs desecrating the Republic's noblest building and preventing the completion of a constitutional process — must be named and forevermore shunned. They are Donald Trump, and Sens. Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz. Trump lit the fuse for the riot in the weeks before the election, with his successful effort to delegitimize the election in the eyes of his supporters. But Wednesday's explosion required the help of Hawley (R-Mo.) and Cruz (R-Tex.).

Hawley announced his intention to object to the certification of some states' electoral votes, for no better reason than that there has been an avalanche of "allegations" of election irregularities, allegations fomented by the loser of the election. By doing so, Hawley turned what should have been a perfunctory episode in our civic liturgy of post-election civility into a synthetic drama. He turned this moment into the focus of the hitherto unfocused fury that Trump had been stoking for many weeks. And Cruz, by organizing support for Hawley among other Republican senators and senators-elect gave Hawley's grotesque self-promotion an ersatz cloak of larger purpose. Shortly before the mob breached the Senate chamber, Cruz stood on the Senate floor. With his characteristic unctuousness, he regretted the existence of what he and kindred spirits have not only done nothing to refute but have themselves nurtured — a pandemic of suspicions that the election was "rigged." "I want to take a moment to speak to my Democratic colleagues," said Cruz. "I understand your guy is winning right now." Read those weaselly words again. He was not speaking to his "colleagues." He was speaking to the kind people who were at that instant assaulting the Capitol. He was nurturing the very delusions that soon would cause louts to be roaming the Senate chamber — the fantasy that Joe Biden has not won the election but is only winning "right now." The Trump-Hawley-Cruz insurrection against constitutional government will be an indelible stain on the nation. They, however, will not be so permanent. In 14 days, one of them will be removed from office by the constitutional processes he neither fathoms nor favors. It will take longer to scrub the other two from public life. Until that hygienic outcome is accomplished, from this day forward, everything they say or do or advocate should be disregarded as patent attempts to distract attention from the lurid fact of what they have become. Each will wear a scarlet "S" as a seditionist. ❖

Jeffrey Goldberg, The Atlantic: Insurrection Day, 12:40 p.m.: A group of about 80 lumpen Trumpists were gathered outside the Commerce Department, near the White House. They organized themselves in a large circle, and stared at a boombox rigged to a megaphone. Their leader and, for some, savior—a number of them would profess to me their belief that the 45th president is an agent of God and his son, Jesus Christ—was rehearsing his pitiful list of grievances, and also fomenting a rebellion



against, among others, the klatch of treacherous Republicans who had aligned themselves with the Constitution and against him. "A year from now we're gonna start working on Congress," Trump said through the boombox. We gotta get rid of them." Next to him was a woman wearing a full-body cat costume. "Fuck Liz Cheney!" she echoed. Catwoman, who would not tell me her name, carried a sign that read take off your mask smell the bullshit. The treasonous behavior of Liz Cheney and many of her Republican colleagues was, to them, a fixed insurrectionary fact, but Pence was still in a plastic moment. Across the day I could feel the Trump cult turning against him, as it turns against most everything. ❖

James Briggs, IndyStar: Here's the defining image of Sen. Mike Braun's shameful political career. He's sitting at a desk in the Capitol wearing a gray suit and blue mask. He's holding a blue pen in his right hand, the tip hovering over a sheet of paper. "Signing my objection to Arizona electors," Braun said on Twitter at 12:43 p.m. Wednesday. You know, just a U.S. senator from Indiana throwing out the votes of millions of Americans like it's no big deal. That's apparently how Braun felt — that it's all a meaningless, temporary joke to placate a sensitive loser of a president and then everyone can move on. Braun showed up at the Capitol ready to protest Wednesday alongside several of his Republican colleagues. He tagged Texas Sen. Ted Cruz in his tweet, a show of unity with one of his co-conspirators in the Republican Party's reality-denying MAGA wing, which has been perpetuating President Donald Trump's lies about voter fraud and seeking to overturn Democrat Joe Biden's victory. But within a couple hours of Braun's jovial tweet, Congress would be sheltering in place after a mob of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol. The trespassers, some of whom were armed, breached multiple layers of Capitol security and interrupted the reprehensible effort by Braun and other Trump-flattering Republicans to object to the election certification. Let's be clear: Those rioters were Braun's guests. They arrived in Washington, D.C., broke through barricades and assailed the Capitol steps in an act of communion with Braun and all the other Republicans who sought to serve their idol Trump. ❖

Michael Gerson, Washington Post: The great virtue of President Trump's smoking subversion tape is that it clarifies the goals of all concerned. The president's stated objective is not to expose abuses in the electoral system. It is to pressure the Georgia secretary of state into manipulating the electoral system to squeeze out 11,780 additional votes in his favor. His cynical, delusional justifications are beside the point. They not only help a liar; they become liars. They not only empower conspiracy theories; they join a conspiracy against American democracy. They not only excuse institutional arson; they set fire to the Constitution and dance around the flame. ❖

Braun backs off Electoral protest

WASHINGTON — Some GOP senators who had previously supported the protest of electoral college decided to drop their objections after the siege of the Capitol ([IBJ](#)). “Whatever point you made before, that should suffice,” Sen. Mike Braun, R-Ind., told reporters, explaining that the siege “did change things drastically” and that he wanted to “get this ugly day behind us.” Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., a close ally of the president, also told reporters that “in light of events, there’s a bit of a different attitude” about continuing the objection to the election results. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth responded to the insurrection via Twitter, condemning the “violence” and “vandalism” at the Capitol ([Indiana Public Media](#)). On just his fourth day on the job, freshman Indiana Congressman Frank J. Mrvan was in the final group of lawmakers exiting the U.S. House chamber Wednesday as rioters breached the doors and shots rang out in the Capitol ([NWI Times](#)). “It was pure chaos and disarray,” said Mrvan, a Highland, Indiana, Democrat. “Something I never thought I would see in the United States of America.” Mrvan, like many congressional members, spent the afternoon and evening in a secure room with about 200 other House members and staffers from the Midwest and across the country as angry supporters of President Donald Trump stormed Congress. Mrvan said he initially stayed in the House as the Capitol was invaded for the first time since the War of 1812. In a Tweet on Monday, U.S. Rep. Walorski had said that regardless of the outcome of the election, Congress had to ensure elections are “free, fair, and secure” ([South Bend Tribune](#)). “The integrity of our elections — and the faith the American people have that their votes are fully and fairly counted — is a cornerstone of our democracy,” Walorski tweeted. “I share the concerns



of many Hoosiers about irregularities in the way some states conducted the presidential election.” After the rioting broke out, Walorski called for peace, tweeting: “Every American has the right to exercise their First Amendment rights, but violence and destruction are never the answer. Stop these attacks on our country now and keep the protests peaceful.”

Holcomb condemns Capitol mob

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric J. Holcomb offered the following statement. “It’s both saddening and sickening to watch a mob devolve into thinking their rules would ever replace the rule of law. I unequivocally condemn the violence at the U.S. Capitol that we are now witnessing. Passion, patriotism and love for our nation should always and only be expressed in constructive ways that seek to honor the ideals on which our nation was founded. Any means of violence runs counter to who we are and is never acceptable.” In the chaos, law enforcement officials said, a California woman was shot and killed by Capitol Police and three people died of medical emergencies.

Trump vows ‘orderly transfer’

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump early Thursday morning acknowledged for the first time he will leave office and agreed to an orderly transition of power, bringing an end to an unprecedented and chaotic chapter in U.S. history and a presidential term that supporters and foes alike agree was among the country’s most consequential ([Politico](#)). Notably though, Trump didn’t admit defeat or say he was conceding. He also failed to publicly recognize the deadly riot his supporters participated in inside the U.S. Capitol on Thursday. “Even though I totally disagree with the outcome of the election, and the facts bear me out, nevertheless there will

be an orderly transition on January 20th,” Trump said in a statement.

School funding fix on fast track

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana House could vote as soon as next week to advance to the Senate a fix for a quirk in the school funding formula that punishes traditional schools that switched to online instruction, in place of in-person classes, during the COVID-19 pandemic (Carden, [NWI Times](#)). Under current law, schools providing online instruction at least 50% of the time — primarily virtual charter schools — only are entitled to 85% of Indiana’s \$5,703 basic per student tuition support to reflect the generally lower costs of operating a virtual school. On Wednesday, the House Ways and Means Committee voted 24-0 to approve House Bill 1003, sponsored by state Rep. Hal Slager, R-Schererville, restoring full funding for schools that weren’t operating virtually in February 2020 — prior to the first Indiana COVID-19 case. “Our regular public schools still have the same costs. Teachers are working just as hard, if not harder,” Slager said. “We want to provide our schools certainty, and we understand they’ve had to adapt quickly to ensure learning continues in the face of an unprecedented public health crisis.”

Holcomb expands vaccines to seniors

INDIANAPOLIS ([AP](#)) — Coronavirus vaccinations will start becoming available to Indiana residents 80 and older starting Friday as state health officials start expanding access to those shots. State health officials said that they plan to start offering vaccinations in the coming weeks next to those 70 and older and then 60 and older. Those age groups make up 93% of Indiana’s more than 8,700 deaths. “We are really concentrating on saving lives and reducing hospitalizations,” said Dr. Lindsay Weaver, the state’s chief medical officer.