

The battle for the national GOP soul

In the wake of Trump's second impeachment acquittal, a political party at a forked road

**Trumpty Dumpty sat on his wall,
 Trumpty Dumpty had a great fall,
 All the king's horses & some Republicans,
 Are hoping he puts it all back together again.**

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – As the Donald Trump presidential era came to its tormented conclusion with Saturday's second impeachment trial acquittal, several fresh images were seared into my mind.

The first was picking up on a theme I wrote about three years ago, likening those around President Trump to the movie, "The Madness of King George." An obviously insane monarch is going about his crazy business, with his staff gasping to keep up with all the nonsense in a frenzied and contorted manner.

The House impeachment managers had obtained internal Capitol video from the Jan. 6 insurrection, showing



dozens of senators running. I'm not talking about running for reelection. They were running for their lives, running

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A legislator's oath

By **ANNE LAKER**

INDIANAPOLIS – The spirit behind the legislation pumping out of the General Assembly this session – bills that advance carbon markets and lead testing in schools, and others that kneecap public schools, wetlands, and Indianapolis – begs the question: What does it mean to be a legislator? What is the promise that legislators make to themselves as they shape the way life is lived in Indiana?

I hoped the oath of office might suggest an answer. It took two phone calls to the Statehouse to find the text of it. A kindly intern in House Speaker Todd Huston's office finally



“Rush Limbaugh’s legacy will live on for generations in the hearts of the millions of Americans he inspired. His matchless voice will never be forgotten.”

- Mike Pence, on the death of Rush Limbaugh.



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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



obliged:
 "I,<insert name> do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Indiana, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge my duties as a member of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana to the best of my skill and ability, so help me God."

A quick word search of the Indiana Constitution doesn't yield a definition of "the duties." But there is this sweeping statement, right off the bat, in Article 1, Section 1:

"We declare ... that all power is inherent in the people; and that all free governments are, and of right ought to be, founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety, and well-being. For the advancement of these ends, the people have, at all times, an indefeasible right to alter and reform their government."

Aside from being a good argument for addressing gerrymandering, this clause stands out for the word choice of "well-being." Whose well-being? Not just the well-being of industry, though that matters in a practical way. The well-being of the people.

What kind of well-being?
 What calculator or compass of values do lawmakers use to decide what, in fact, is good for the well-being of the people?

With some bills, it's clear as day. Take SB377, which promotes broadband development. Or SB170, which would establish a "food desert" grant program at the Indiana De-

partment of Health. These bills are grounded in well-being.

When too few lawmakers are centering their lawmaking on that principle, maybe it's time for an ethics gut check. We turn to Article 2, Section 6: "Every person shall be disqualified from holding office ...who shall have given or offered a bribe, threat, or reward, to procure his election." At what point do gifts from utility lobbyists, agriculture lobbyists, or gaming industry lobbyists count as rewards?

Which brings us back to the oath of office. One word stands out: "impartially." Is Sen. Linda Rogers (R-Granger), president of Nugent Builders, impartial when she sponsors a bill to make life easier for builders by repealing wetland permitting? Is Rep. Ed Soliday (R-Valparaiso) impartial when he took \$113,550 in campaign contributions from the energy/natural resources industries while proposing HB1191, a bill meant to prevent municipalities from phasing out natural gas?

Is anyone policing these breaches of oath? We citizens must.

Where's the long game? What about lawmakers' role in imagining Indiana's future? In stewarding Indiana's natural resources for the long-term? Or anticipating adaptations we need to plan for as a society, such as climate-driven human migration and artificial intelligence?

A bit in the daily e-newsletter "Centered" noted this week: "The Midwest holds major opportunities for modernizing infrastructure and deploying a range of clean energy

technologies, according to a report from the Decarb America Research Initiative. The region's abundance of agricultural resources positions it particularly well for biomass technologies, and the industrial base is well-suited for carbon capture technologies."

Where are the study committees on topics like these? If lawmakers feel responsibility to do industry's bidding, how about some future-looking industries? Sure, author bills that make the world safe for lemonade stands (HB1077) and eyelash extension technicians (HB1554). And, what the heck, make popcorn the state snack (SB97).

That's got my vote.

Legislate with informed hope, not fear of change. Make laws that look long into the distance, not fix us in the past. Re-read the oath, and ponder what will and won't increase the "peace, safety, and well-being" of the people.

❖

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Trump GOP, from page 1

through Capitol hallways, running to stay ahead of King Donald's frothing mob. Last Saturday, 43 of these running senators – including Indiana's Todd Young and Mike Braun along with newly minted Minority Leader Mitch McConnell – voted to acquit the president. It didn't matter that the mob had sacked the Capitol, attacked its police protectors (killing one, while two more have committed suicide since), threatened to hang Vice President Mike Pence, searched for Speaker Pelosi, rummaged through their desks and binders, and generally desecrated what had been the hallowed citadel of democracy.

Sen. Young acknowledged he was "troubled and saddened." The best Braun, who owes his 2018 election upset of Sen. Joe Donnelly to Trump, could summon was that it was "unconstitutional to remove a former president from office." If Young and Braun were to go into the home/office alarm business, I would opt for AZT or Ring.



McConnell feuds with Trump

It was McConnell who ended up saying what Sen. Young was probably really thinking, on the Senate floor just minutes after he voted for acquittal: "There is no question, none, that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the event of that day. No question about it, the people that stormed this building believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their president." McConnell added that Trump's actions were "a disgraceful, disgraceful dereliction of duty" and that he may not escape, being subject to the country's criminal and civil laws. "He didn't get away with anything, yet," McConnell said.

McConnell had spent the prior week leading people to think he might vote to convict Trump. When he realized he was going to come up 10 votes short of driving

a stake through King Donald's heart, he pulled a James Comey, letting Trump off the hook just as the former FBI director did with "Crooked Hillary" in July 2016, but mauling his reputation while doing so.

By Tuesday, Trump became fully engaged, calling the senator a "a dour, sullen, and unsmiling political hack," adding, "The Republican Party can never again be

respected or strong with political leaders like Sen. Mitch McConnell at its helm. McConnell's dedication to business as usual, status quo policies, together with his lack of political insight, wisdom, skill, and personality, has rapidly driven him from Majority Leader to Minority Leader, and it will only get worse. The Democrats and Chuck Schumer play McConnell like a fiddle — they've never had it so good — and they want to keep it that way! If Republican Senators are going to stay with him, they will not win again."

The second image has actually become a recurring nightmare: That a mob could, indeed, actually overwhelm the U.S. Capitol; just as on Sept. 11, 2001, we realized that terror pilots could destroy this citadel. Now there is a realization that we may be in for an era of political violence from hordes who lack issue logic, and that the house of the federal government may be vulnerable, lest it fence itself

off with razor wire to keep the people at arms' length.

New Yorker reporter-at-large Luke Mogelson notes that despite Trump's ardent backing of Israel, many in the MAGA mob freely expressed virulent anti-Semitic views. His Jan. 25 article describes the mob as adorned in "RWDS" (Right Wing Death Squad) and "6MWE" ("Six Million Wasn't Enough") hats and patches and "Pinochet Did Nothing Wrong" and "Camp Auschwitz" T-shirts. The unhinged support for their "emperor" Donald Trump was all the political theory they need.

Pence nightmare

I'll bet that Mike Pence, who refused to leave the Capitol as Flight 93 was bearing down on it in 2001, would have nightmares about that day. Two decades later on 1/6, we have internal video footage of Pence, family and entourage escaping the mob that had been summoned, assembled and launched by President Trump just seconds ahead of the pitchforks. Now we're all having bad dreams of his head being placed on a pike a la Ned Stark.

Amanda Carpenter of The Bulwark observed: "Throughout Trump's impeachment, Pence remained mute. As someone who could provide both important facts – what did Trump know about the situation, when, and what was his reaction – and bear witness to Trump's state of mind in the days and hours leading up to the attack, Pence was in a rare, possibly even unique, position. Over the course of the weeks following the election, Pence had been a perpetrator of Trump's big election lie and at the final hour became a target of it. Jaime Herrera Beutler, who was one of the 10 House Republicans to vote for impeachment and who came forward with her blockbuster testimony during the Senate trial, begged Pence to share what he knew. He refused."

Carpenter adds, "Pence's silence could easily be chalked up to all manner of causes: Submissiveness, cowardice, fear, or naked political calculation. Or maybe it's something worse. Ask yourself: Why would Mike Pence bother lifting his voice in defense of his own life if no one else in his party cares to do so? If you think about it from this perspective, then Pence's silence isn't just complicity. It's another marker of the nihilism that has taken over the Republican party, where nothing matters except for Trump and/or owning the libs."

Which gets us to the political calculations that must be facing Sen. Young, who is up for reelection next year. There isn't a primary opponent on the horizon, though Joe Donnelly appears to be retooling the Indiana Democratic Party by convincing Mike Schmuhl to take the chair as a prerequisite for a challenge.

File these thoughts in the "Running the next election like the last" folder: Among the broader electorate, the exiled Trump is toast. According to an ABC/Ipsos Poll,



57% say President Trump should have been convicted (the same percentage of the Senate's vote to convict). The party breakdown: 90% of Democrats, 64% of independents and a mere 14% of Republicans back conviction. That's enough to get Donald Trump renominated, and enough to lose a third straight election by tanking the popular vote.

A Quinnipiac Poll found 75% of Republicans would like Trump to play a "prominent role," despite the fact that after winning his unexpected upset in 2016, he lost the House in 2018, the White House on Nov. 3, and the Senate after Trump's Georgia debacle on Jan. 5, the first time this has occurred since President Herbert Hoover presided over such a dismal trifecta.

The House was 241-194 Republican after the 2016 election, now it's 235-199 Democratic; Republicans held a historic 33-16 advantage in governor's seats after the 2016 election, now it's 26-24. Republicans had a 32-14 advantage in state legislatures controlled after 2016, now it's 30-19; Republicans had a total state governance lead of 24-7 in 2016, today it's 22-14; Republicans led 57-42% in state legislative seats, today it's 52-47%.

Quinnipiac Pollster Tim Malloy explained, "He may be down, but he is certainly not out of favor with the GOP. Twice impeached, vilified by Democrats in the trial, and virtually silenced by social media ... despite it all, Donald Trump keeps a solid foothold in the Republican Party."

Republicans told us who they are

Charlie Sykes, writing for The Bulwark, observed: "Actually, the Republicans told us who they were. Let's run the numbers from the last few weeks:

- The number of Republicans who backed the Texas lawsuit to overturn the presidential election: 126;
- The number of Republicans who voted against certifying the electoral votes of Pennsylvania: 138;
- The number of Republicans who voted to protect conspiracy theorist/bigot Marjorie Taylor Greene's committee assignments: 199;

■ The number of House Republicans who voted against impeachment: 197; a

■ And then Saturday's vote. Overall the pro-Trump GOP vote (in the House and Senate): 240-17.

"This is Donald Trump's party," Sykes said, "but worse. Over the last five years, Republicans have shown willingness to accept – or least ignore – lies, racism, and xenophobia. But now it is a party that is also willing to acquiesce to sedition, violence, extremism, and anti-democratic authoritarianism."

A Politico/Morning Consult Poll on Tuesday revealed that 59% of Republicans want Trump to play a major role between now and 2024. That's up 18% from a similar poll on Jan. 7, three days after the insurrection. Morning Consult adds, "Another piece of evidence: While Trump's overall favorability rating is an abysmal 34% in our latest poll, 81% of Republican respondents gave him positive marks. Trump was at 77% approval among Republicans on Jan. 7 and 74% on Jan. 25."

In a 2024 matchup, Trump leads with 53% (the same percentage he won the 2016 Indiana primary), while Pence comes in at 12%, Donald Trump Jr. at 6%, and everyone else at 5%.

This is why Attorney General Todd Rokita tweeted out a Valentine's Day meme: "You stole my heart like a 2020 election." Twitter banned the posting, but Rokita laid out a 2024 gubernatorial race marker for the support of die-hard Trumpers.

Haley's criticism

Nikki Haley forged headlines last week when she told Tim Alberta in his final Politico article: "When I tell you I'm angry, it's an understatement. Mike has been nothing but loyal to that man. He's been nothing but a good friend of that man. I am so disappointed in the fact that [despite] the loyalty and friendship he had with Mike Pence, that he would do that to him. Like, I'm disgusted by it."

Hoosier Republicans, other than U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon, were rather mute with few publicly expressing similar angst over the veep's well-being.

Haley added of Trump, "I think he's going to find himself further and further isolated. I think his business is suffering at this point. I think he's lost any sort of political viability he was going to have. I think he's lost his social media, which meant the world to him. I mean, I think he's lost the things that really could have kept him moving. He's not going to run for federal office again. I don't think he's going to be in the picture. I don't think he can. He's fallen so far. We need to acknowledge he let us down. He went down a path he shouldn't have, and we shouldn't have followed him, and we shouldn't have listened to him.

And we can't let that ever happen again."

Or there's South Carolina's Sen. Lindsey Graham who was planning to golf with Trump in Florida this week to plan the former president's role in the GOP moving forward. Appearing on Fox News' "Hannity" Tuesday, Graham said, "I know Trump can be a handful, but he is the most dominant figure in the Republican Party. We don't have a snowball's chance in hell of taking back the majority without Donald Trump."



Calling Trump a "hell of a president on all of the things that conservatives really believe in," Graham acknowledged the Capitol siege of Jan. 6 while forgetting the Georgia Senate debacle of Jan. 5, saying, "I'm sorry what happened on January 6th. He'll get his fair share of blame, but to my Republican colleagues in the Senate, let's try to work together and realize that without President Trump, we're never going to get back in the majority."

Graham also declared daughter-in-law Lara Trump and her pending North Carolina Senate candidacy "the future of the Republican Party."

The New York Times reported on how Michigan Republicans aren't ready to move on from Trump. The Michigan Republican Party is "more Trumpy today than it was before the election," said Jeff Timmer, a former executive director of the Michigan Republican Party. The former president's electoral coalition failed, he said, but its adherents are so vehement in their beliefs that the party cannot acknowledge or learn from its mistakes.

"That's why Trumpism will continue long after Trump. People who weren't around four years ago," he said, "people we had never heard of, they now control the levers of the party. When you make a deal with the devil, the story usually ends with the devil collecting your soul. You don't get it back and have a happy ending."

It may take more election losses for the GOP to move on from Donald John Trump. ❖

Impacts from the Capitol siege, trial

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – Here are the impacts of the second impeachment of former president Donald John Trump:

1.) Chants of “Kill Mike Pence” from large numbers of conservative rioters, at more than one location, was spine-tingling and chilling. Those who watched it in context will likely never forget it. The absurd



anger was scary and ugly. This should have been a wake-up call to every Indiana Republican elected official. Mike Pence had been a loyal ally of President Trump until Trump asked him to directly violate the Constitution. “Hang Mike Pence” could easily become any elected official when confronted by a “hang anybody not 100% with us” mob. Indiana Democrats only need to worry

when they become politically relevant again. Democrats in other states, however, should also be worried about the increasing willingness of mobs to be incited by exaggerated political rhetoric. Continued out-of-control rhetoric will have escalating consequences.

2.) Vice President Mike Pence was likely the biggest “winner” from the impeachment trial.

It is far too early to say whether he will benefit politically. However, in the eyes of history he will become a legend in the story of the only assault on the Capitol of the United States by Americans. The second highest official in the nation. A man betrayed by his president. Eerily close to potential serious bodily harm. Guardian of free elections. A true profile in courage, not a rhetorical one. Even liberals are likely to give him credit because it makes Trump seem worse.

3.) Nikki Haley’s comments critical of Trump may have been the clearest canary in a coal mine warning to Republican politicians. Haley is generally a cautious politician, who along with Pence is a presidential front-runner for 2024. Her verbal embrace of Pence and condemnation of Trump was aggressive. She doesn’t have a two-year political window but is on a four-year timeline. But it was more than that: “He went down a path he shouldn’t have, and we shouldn’t have followed him, and we shouldn’t have listened to him. And we can’t let that ever happen again.” Pretty clear. But that was just a warm-up. “When I tell you I’m angry, it’s an understatement. I am so disappointed in the fact that (despite) the loyalty and friendship he had with Mike Pence, that he would do that to him. Like, I’m disgusted by it.” Obviously, it was a skilled political move in the sense that Pence is a potential rival and so is Trump, but the political risk and the emotion

of the statements suggest that it was a rather deep, longer held position.

4.) Trump’s reported comment to Republican House Leader Kevin McCarthy, as McCarthy’s office was under siege – “Well, Kevin, I guess these people are more upset about the election than you are” – was mind-numbingly appalling because it is so typical of his personality. He was calling senators during the riot, not concerned about others, but just himself. Trump defined himself as democracy and America, not the actual institutions. If he is held criminally liable in any way, this type of statement illustrates why.

5.) The House manager’s videos of the rioters, words, timelines and wordless recorded video was the type of video that viewers want because it capitalizes on popular distrust of pontificating media. The video speaks for itself.

6.) The Democrats nevertheless overreached by not anticipating the counter-punching, or at least they dramatically underestimated it. They left themselves vulnerable for a counter-punch. And it was delivered. They simply did not prepare skeptics enough about the political rhetoric argument. Stressing “fight” as the key word set up the defense. The emotions of the manager’s video overpowered the presumed logic of the severity of event as opposed to using the word in context. You remembered “fight” then saw fighting. For example, had the Democrats showed a video of Bernie Sanders calling for a “fight” and showing no action, it might have helped establish a stronger context. It was the context that was critical to a link: No elected official with a sane mind (I must add) praised the violence that happened. And most politicians used the word “fight” but would have behaved differently in this situation.

7.) The establishment media bias sealed the inability of most Republicans running for election within two years to defect once Trump had an effective defense. The national (i.e. liberal) media’s inability to understand the effectiveness of the Trump counter-attack was an appalling demonstration of bias. They were so vested in believing the anti-Trump position that they could not understand why some Republican skeptics of Trump, but having doubts about the process anyway, now had to deal with this fact: The Democrats were proven, in their own words, to be hypocrites.

8.) Much of America remains dubious that impeachment applies to non-officeholders. The historical defense of that intent was shallow at best. The strained examples of attempted impeachment of lower-level officials were not compelling unless you were focused on finding an excuse to proceed. Impeachment is to remove a threat. Banning a person from holding future office is also pretty sketchy. I don’t hold myself up as a moral example but I cannot avoid pointing out that my skepticism of impeaching Bill Clinton came with intense political pressure. Been there, done this. Impeachment with political motives is becoming just another political

gimmick. I have made my personal views on Trump clear from the beginning but count me still as a skeptic on impeachment. (For the record, I honestly do not know how I would have voted. It was more serious than the charges against Clinton – by say, 100-fold to 1,000-fold – but then again, Clinton was still president, which to me seems to be implied in removing someone from office.)

9.) BTW why didn't the Democrats include a video of Republican statements on the impeachment of Clinton? People, including senators, focused when videos were shown. It would have undermined the predictable coming Republican video. It might have likely been countered by a similar Republican video of Democrats reversing themselves. However, then the fundamental argument of what constitutes an impeachable offense would have been clearer now and for historical purposes. By both parties pretending that they hadn't switched sides, they made impeachment seem mostly political. And, BTW,

why doesn't the mainstream media ever note the lemming nature of the Democrats – not one has broken with the herd, even on a flip-flop. The obvious reason for media silence is this: The media believes the Democrat position is correct and not deserving of debate, even constitutional arguments of opposition without the media framing the answer. So much for neutral media.

10.) As I concluded in my last column, the Republican future and its ties to Trump are dependent upon some yet unknown variables: Whether Trump collapses financially, whether Biden solidifies opposition by implementing still unpopular extremely liberal policies, and whether the Republicans return to being a party of ideas rather than "the weird worship of one dude." ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.

Future of GOP will be written by Republicans (not former Republicans)

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS – It was perfection. The Washington Post on Wednesday hosted a virtual event with Evan McMullin, a former Republican who ran as an independent candidate for president in 2016 and endorsed Joe Biden in 2020, to discuss "The Future of the Republican Party."



What qualifies someone like McMullin to discuss the future of a party to which he no longer associates? From the media's perspective it's because he assembled a group of more than 120 former officials from the Reagan, Bush 1, Bush 2 and Trump administrations to plot

founding a new center-right party.

Again, I ask: Then why is he talking about the future of the Republican Party if he's trying to start a new party? Was Nancy Pelosi too busy? Could Alexandria Ocasio Cortez not clear her schedule?

The future of the Republican Party will be written by Republicans and only Republicans. It will be determined by those who can best harness the energy and passion of the working-class voters Donald Trump brought along, coupled with advocacy for traditional tried and true conservative policies that are making the difference in states coast to coast.

On that note, it is wrong to say the Republican

Party is broken. Yes, the party is in the midst of a family feud at the national level. Sore wounds are being licked and the grassroots is lashing out at the likes of Congresswoman Liz Cheney (WY), Congressman Adam Kinzinger (IL) and Senator Bill Cassidy (LA), all three of whom are viewed as political apostates by the Trump base after their respective votes to impeach and convict.

Never mind the fact that Cheney voted with Trump 92.9% of the time, Kinzinger 90.2% and Cassidy 89.1%, based on a FiveThirtyEight analysis. As it turns out, partisans give criminals more strikes than politicians. Criminals get three and politicians get one.

But a truly big tent party sets its sights on inclusion and not exclusion. It speaks from the heart – which even on his worst days is precisely what Trump did – and leads by example.

The Republican Party in states like Indiana already works this way. In our Statehouse, where the General Assembly and Gov. Eric Holcomb are crafting Indiana's ninth straight balanced budget, investing dollars in rural broadband and infrastructure and combating the coronavirus pandemic, you don't hear Trump's name muttered. The legislators and leaders are, as Holcomb often likes to say, looking "forward through the windshield, not backward in the rearview mirror."

Some backward looking, in the form of a detailed after-action report, will be needed, though, to best position the party for renewed success nationally. The Republican National Committee is reportedly reluctant to produce such a report lest it be ridiculed and ignored like the "autopsy" after Mitt Romney lost to Barack Obama. I, for one, believe such a report is warranted following every election, win or lose. A win does not mean everything went well and a loss does not mean every decision was wrong. There are lessons to learn on both sides of the coin.

But the only people who should be sitting at the table sifting through and analyzing the data, discussing

the findings and charting the path ahead are Republicans and not former Republicans who are now Democrats or independents. This is a family matter and they chose to run away from home. ❖

Pete Seat is a former White House spokesman for President George W. Bush and campaign spokes-

man for former Director of National Intelligence and U.S. Senator Dan Coats. Currently he is a vice president with Bose Public Affairs Group in Indianapolis. He is also an Atlantic Council Millennium Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations Term Member and author of "The War on Millennials."

Walorski, Upton take different paths

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Jackie Walorski and Fred Upton, Republican members of Congress from Michiana, both were in the national political spotlight in the debate over taking away choice committee assignments from Marjorie Taylor Greene, she of the QAnon conspiracy controversy.



They took different stands on that and impeachment, too.

Walorski, congresswoman from Indiana's 2nd District, was manager of the defense against efforts of Democrats to kick Greene off committees on education and the budget after Greene

suggested that 9/11 and school shootings were hoaxes and spread calls for political assassinations. As manager, Walorski presented opening and closing statements of the Republican leadership opposition to removing Greene from the committees and allotted time for Republican speakers. She had that prominent role as ranking member, top Republican on the House Ethics Committee.

In opposing taking away the committee posts, Walorski stressed: "I am not here to defend Rep. Greene. I am here to defend the process." To be clear, Walorski never has endorsed Greene's conspiracy theories.

The process, Walorski argued, should have been a hearing by the Ethics Committee, not quickly taking the question of any punishment to a vote on the House floor. Walorski labeled it a Democratic power grab to take away committee assignments made by the Republican leadership.

Democrats contended that the "process" argument was just a ploy, a way to dodge the real issue of what Greene has advocated and what to do about it. They said Republican leadership should have acted on its own to kick Greene off the committees.

Upton, veteran congressman from Michigan's 6th District, was in the spotlight as one of only 11 Republicans voting to take away Greene's committee assignments. Every Democrat voted to do so. Greene was removed from the committees in a 230-199 vote. But she called it a vic-

tory, freeing her from committee work and making her a more famous and effective supporter of former President Donald Trump.

More than a couple of committee assignments were at stake. Reaction to the deliberations over Greene and especially over impeachment will help to determine the Republican Party's path and control of Congress after the 2022 elections.

Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell clearly sent a message to House Republicans to take action against Greene when he said her "loony lies and conspiracy theories are a cancer for the Republican Party and our country."

McConnell and some other Republican senators, smarting from loss of Senate control and blaming Trump campaign rhetoric for two key losses in Georgia, wanted to move on after Trump. They wanted their House colleagues to send a clear message, through discipline, that Greene is not the face of the Republican Party.

There are staunch Trump supporters in his still formidable base also sending clear messages. They send angry messages to Republican representatives such as Upton, who was censured by party organizations in some counties in his Michigan district after his vote for impeachment. And they won't like that he then voted against Greene. It's not that they all agree with Greene's suggestion that the shooting of kids at that high school in Parkland, Fla., was a hoax. They just know that she is a strong supporter of Trump and he has endorsed her. Many may regard accounts of her outrageous comments as just fake news.

So, how will all of this be looked at in the 2022 elections? Will Greene be a heroine for the Trump base, a national figure campaigning successfully to knock off Republicans who haven't always backed the former president? Or will she be passe, an old joke?

Will traditional Republican conservatives like Liz Cheney push back successfully against Trump's rule of their party? Or will they be pushed out? Will Walorski win again by a landslide? Will Upton win Republican renomination, if he tries? And will a Greene spotlight now color their prospects then? ❖

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

Don't think Capitol siege was normal

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI Indiana Bureau

ANDERSON – There's a meme floating around on social media concerning last month's attack on the U.S. Capitol. "Democrats say the storming of the Capitol is outrageous, but did you know the Senate was bombed by communists in 1983?" it asks. "A woman involved in the attack was convicted and sentenced to 58 years in prison. She was pardoned by Bill Clinton and now sits on the board of Black Lives Matter Inc."



The person who shared that meme added a note. "Inconvenient history," she said. Someone else posted a link to an article from History.com recounting a number of attacks on the Capitol.

The first came while the building was still under construction during the War of 1812. A year into the fighting, American troops had set fire to a capitol in colonial Canada, and the British retaliated in 1814 by setting fire to some buildings in Washington, D.C., including the White House and the U.S. Capitol.

The building has also been the scene of violence among members of Congress. Among the most famous came in 1856 when pro-slavery Congressman Preston Brooks attacked anti-slavery Sen. Charles Sumner with a cane on the floor of the Senate.

And then there was the fistfight that broke out in the House chambers in 1858. It started when a southerner grabbed a northerner by the throat, and by the time it was over, about 30 congressmen had joined the melee.

In March of 1954, four Puerto Rican Americans opened fire in the House chamber, injuring five congressmen.

And then there were the bombs planted in 1915, 1971 and 1983. That post about the 1983 bombing is a reference to Susan Rosenberg, a former member of a left-wing terrorist organization who was indeed freed from prison by the former president on his final day in office. She was at one point a suspect in the Capitol bombing, but she was ultimately convicted of having a large cache of weapons and explosives.

While in prison, Rosenberg became a writer and activist, and as recently as last June, she was listed as the vice chair of the board of directors of Thousand Currents, then the fundraising arm of the Black Lives

Matter Global Network. That organization no longer lists its board of directors on its website, so it's hard to say whether Rosenberg still holds that position.

The website does, however, say that Thousand Currents is no longer affiliated with Black Lives Matter. It still supports the cause, it says, but another organization has taken over fundraising. And the fact is none of it matters. None of it makes what happened on Jan. 6 any less outrageous.

Some folks will try to convince you the violence that day was no big deal. It was a demonstration that got out of hand, similar to what we witnessed in Seattle and other American cities. Sure things got out of hand, they'll say, but this was no different than what happened when businesses went up in flames during those riots last summer.

Democrats are a bunch of hypocrites, they'll argue. Progressives take to the streets, and it's an exercise of free speech, but conservatives do the same thing, and it's an insurrection.

The woman who shared that Facebook meme said she was just offering perspective, adding some historical context that lots of folks might otherwise miss. Here's my perspective: This was the first time in American history a mob of our fellow citizens overran the U.S. Capitol in an effort to overturn the results of a free and fair election. It was also the first time such an assault had been inspired by the sitting president of the United States.

Don't lose sight of that. This is not normal behavior. ❖

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

Limbaugh transformed radio, Republican Party

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The election year of 1992 brought the first billionaire politician, Ross Perot, to the fore, and a bubba (Bill Clinton) to the Oval Office, but the truly transformational character in America was Rush Limbaugh.

Covering northeastern Indiana politics for the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette, it became apparent to me that among the grassroots, two sensational elements, Perot and Limbaugh, were changing the dynamic. Perot faded quickly, but in a mere four years, it soon became obvious that Limbaugh had changed conservative politics much like the orthodoxy's patron saints, William F. Buckley, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan.



Limbaugh died of lung cancer at age 70 on Wednesday, about a year after President Trump had honored him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. His legacy has been in place for four decades. Lunchtime "Rush Rooms" tuned in to WOWO popped up across the region, where folks became "dittoheads" to learned to despise "feminazis" and "wacko environmentalists."

"He was the most important individual media figure of the last four decades," Ian Reifowitz, professor of historical studies at the State University of New York and author of "The Tribalization of Politics: How Rush Limbaugh's Race-Baiting Rhetoric on the Obama Presidency Paved the Way for Trump," told the Associated Press.

Working out of an obscure Sacramento radio studio a year after the Federal Communications Commission repealed the Fairness Doctrine in 1987 during the Reagan administration, Limbaugh was soon picked up by hundreds of radio stations at no cost to the broadcaster, other than four minutes of national advertising time. It set off a corresponding conservative talk radio movement that never had a liberal Democratic bookend to contend with.

Speaking from the floor of Congress in 2001, then U.S. Rep. Mike Pence who had a statewide radio show he described as "Rush Limbaugh on decaf" said, "I am in Congress today because of Rush Limbaugh."

Pence reacted to Limbaugh's death, tweeting, "Rush Limbaugh's legacy will live on for generations in the hearts of the millions of Americans he inspired. His matchless voice will never be forgotten. And during my service as governor and vice president, he was the anchor of conservatism, giv-

ing voice to a movement and fighting for the ideals that make America great. May God comfort his family and all those who loved him. God Bless Rush Limbaugh."

Pence biographer Tom LoBianco recalled a conversation with Jon Quick of WIBC, who said he had "once asked Pence (after he got off air) why he literally sounded like Rush (intonation, delivery) and Pence didn't seem to know that he'd been reflexively mirroring Rush."

WIBC talk show host Tony Katz said on Twitter, "I do not have a career without #RushLimbaugh opening up the opportunity for men and women like me."

Hugh Hewitt, a national conservative voice, added, "When I began on AM 640 on the weekends LA in 1990, Rush was already huge, a phenomenon. He cut promos for me as he did for many broadcasters at the start of the industry. Never stopped being a professional's professional."

Limbaugh's last hurrah came after Trump lost last November and he picked up on the president's description of a stolen election. Trump, Limbaugh said earlier this month, "Represents an uprising of the people of this country against Washington, against the establishment, and it had been building for a long time ... since Perot in 1992 ... Trump was just the first guy to come along and actually weaponize it."

It prompted Trump to say about Limbaugh, "I have a very beautiful weakness: I tend to like people who like me."

Former Fox personality Glenn Beck said, "Thanks Rush for all you taught, gave and were. A hero to many. An icon. A patriot. A revolutionary that saved radio."



Limbaugh's staying power bedeviled Democrats. "Whether you loved him or hated him – and there are very few people in between – Rush Limbaugh was indisputably a force of historic proportions," said Democratic operative David Axelrod. "Over the past three decades, he did as much to polarize our politics as anyone and laid the groundwork for Trump and Trumpism."

Former Indiana Democratic chairman Kip Tew added, "Limbaugh was one of the most important forces in American politics in my lifetime. And there is a direct line from his show and Trumpism. History should show that the 'conservative' movement was hijacked by Rush for entertainment and it spawned a terribly destructive force."

Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer added, "Few, if any, have done more to spread the conservative message and attract more people to our conservative movement than #RushLimbaugh. He was a trailblazer and an icon who will be missed. My prayers go to his family, friends, and millions of listeners." ❖

Sullivan poised to follow Lawson

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The southwestern Indiana pocket has produced two lieutenant governors from House Districts. State Rep. Holli Sullivan is poised to become the third to advance to a constitutional Statehouse office.



Multiple informed and reliable sources are telling Howey Politics Indiana that Sullivan will be named the new secretary of state following Monday's announcement that Connie Lawson

is stepping down.

Sullivan represents HD78, the same district that put Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch into an enhanced statewide orbit. Crouch was subsequently elevated to state auditor, and then LG.

Sullivan has been viewed as a rising star after she succeeded Crouch in HD78. She is secretary of the Indiana Republican Central Committee and in 2016, she was elected to serve as president of POWER, the Indiana House women's caucus. Sullivan has been an engineering consultant for the University of Southern Indiana, and managed a database manager for a church.



Secretary of State Lawson announced resignation Monday, citing her 32 years of public service and the toll the 2020 election year took. "I have dedicated the last 32 years of my life to public service. I have served with all of my heart and soul," she said. "It has been an honor to serve, but it is time for me to step down. Like many Hoosiers, 2020 took a toll on me. I am resigning so I can focus on my health and my family. I will work with Gov. Holcomb to ensure our next secretary of state is up to the task and has the tools and resources to hit the ground running."

This resignation wasn't totally unexpected. In the Jan. 7 HPI Power 50 edition, we observed: "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."

Identifying an appointed successor is now a dominating factor at the Statehouse. In the General Assembly,

21.3% of current members were appointed by caucus following resignations.

Of the five Statehouse constitutional offices, Gov. Holcomb and Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch were nominated via the Indiana Republican Central Committee after Gov. Mike Pence joined Donald Trump's presidential ticket in 2016. Holcomb was appointed by Gov. Pence to fill out the term of Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann, who resigned in the winter of 2016. Auditor Tera Klutz was appointed to that position after Crouch was elected LG in November 2016. Lawson was appointed by Gov. Mitch Daniels following the felony conviction and resignation of Charlie White in 2012.

Indiana Dems make Rokita records request

The Indiana Democratic Party formally submitted a records request to the Office of the Indiana attorney general after a news report revealed Attorney General Todd Rokita had not resigned from his role with healthcare company Apex Benefits after assuming office, presenting a potential conflict of interest for Indiana's top law enforcement officer. The same news report disclosed the state's former inspector general, Lori Torres, may have issued a confidential advisory opinion claiming Todd Rokita is compliant to Indiana's ethics laws. Torres was then hired to be Rokita's deputy attorney general. This advisory opinion, however, has not been published, and the Indiana Democratic Party is asking this advisory opinion to be made public so that voters can understand the Rokita's potential conflicts of interests between his role with Apex Benefits and serving as the state's attorney general, especially since Rokita is a staunch opponent of the Affordable Care Act. "Public trust in state government regulators is paramount in ensuring the integrity of our justice system. If that system appears to protect special interests at the expense of Hoosier families, it has failed the state," said Lauren Ganapini, executive director for the Indiana Democratic Party, in the request.

Rokita refuses to sign letter

Attorney General Rokita, whose Valentine's Day social media tweet alluding to a stolen election briefly drew a Twitter warning, declined weeks earlier to sign a nearly universal statement from attorneys general condemning the Jan. 6 attack on the United States Capitol (Stafford, [Indiana Lawyer](#)). The letter condemning the Capitol attack from the nonpartisan National Association of Attorneys General was signed by 50 Republican and Democratic attorneys general of the American states and U.S. territories, but Indiana was one of three states whose AGs conspicuously did not sign. Louisiana and Montana were the others. All three of those states' AGs are Republicans. Rokita on Wednesday pointed to a letter dated Jan. 12 that he sent to the association, which also is posted on his Twitter account. In the letter, the AG writes, "I certainly join you in the condemnation of the outrageous violence at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. I lament the violation of personal safety and destruction of property. And most of all, I mourn with you the unnecessary loss of precious life the events of that day wrought.

"Instead of signing your letter, though, I have chosen to communicate with each of you via this letter. That is because I cannot help but wonder where your level of outrage was, as a group, when cities across our country burned last summer," Rokita wrote.

Rokita Tweets the 'big lie'

Indiana's attorney general is promoting the same untrue claim that former President Donald Trump used to incite a mob of his supporters to attack the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 as members of Congress were counting the electoral votes from last year's presidential election (Carden, NWI Times). Republican Todd Rokita tweeted from his campaign account on Valentine's Day an image of Trump with the message: "You stole my heart like a 2020 election." Records show officials in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., certified the Nov. 3 presidential election. Those officials concluded the election was conducted in accordance with state and federal law, and dozens of lawsuits filed by or on behalf of Trump claiming the election was "stolen" have been rejected by state and federal courts at every level, including by several Trump-appointed judges and justices. In a series of follow-up tweets Monday, Rokita

insisted: "It is perfectly reasonable that many citizens in Indiana, and across the nation, have valid concerns regarding the conduct of the 2020 presidential election. Deeply rooted in these concerns is the fact that several left-leaning states conducted their elections without regard for the U.S. Constitution," Rokita said. "We'll never know the full extent to which these states' actions impacted the 2020 presidential election."

Weinzapfel seeks Southern DA

Former Evansville Mayor and AG candidate Jonathan Weinzapfel is applying for the U.S. attorney job in the Southern District. Informed and reliable HPI sources say that U.S. Sen. Todd Young is giving an assist.

Census data won't come until September

National Public Radio reports that the 2020 Census data needed for congressional and General Assembly reapportionment won't be available until Sept. 30. Last week, Senate President Rod Bray said he expected the data by the end of June, setting up a late summer special session to draw new maps. The data was originally scheduled for a March 31 legal deadline. ❖

House overrides Holcomb rental veto

Howey Politics Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana cities will be largely blocked from regulating rental properties after state lawmakers voted Wednesday to override the governor's veto of the prohibition (Smith, AP). The Republican-dominated Indiana House voted 67-32 largely along party lines to override the veto that Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb issued in March following the end of the 2020 legislative session. The Senate also voted down the veto last week, putting the prohibition into law. Republican backers

of the bill pushed by the Indiana Apartment Association argued that it established uniform statewide regulations for landlord-tenant issues, rather than forcing landlords to face a "hodgepodge" of local regulations. Opponents maintained that it takes away the ability of local officials to protect tenants from abusive landlords and that the prohibition was only sought in the closing days of last year's legislative session after Democratic city officials in Indianapolis approved regulations allowing fines for landlords who retaliate against renters over living condition complaints. The bill would prohibit local regulations on matters such the screening process for renters, leasing terms, fees charged by landlords or requiring notification of tenants'

rights. Tenant advocates, however, have maintained the proposal would be unfair to the estimated 30%, or some 2 million, of Indiana residents living in rental housing and tilt state law heavily in favor of landlords.

Senate passes stiffer riot penalties

People involved in protests that turn violent would face new or harsher criminal penalties under legislation easily approved by the Indiana Senate Tuesday (Smith, [Indiana Public Media](#)). Sen. Mike Young's (R-Indianapolis) bill creates a new crime, conspiracy to commit rioting. It raises the penalty for rioting – which is when a protest becomes violent – to a felony if there's more than \$750 worth of damage caused (or if someone is seriously injured). Violating a curfew would now be a class B misdemeanor, which can be punished with up to \$1,000 in fines and 180 days in jail. Young said he's not trying to stop people from protesting. "We want to make sure that our citizens are safe, our businesses are safe and that the individual has the right to exercise their constitutional right to redress their grievances against their government," Young said. Sen. Greg Taylor (D-Indianapolis) said the bill is an unreasonable overreaction to last year's Black Lives Matter protests. "People are tired of being abused. And yes, they act out of anger. Yes, it is bad," Taylor said. "'If your idea of freedom doesn't fit mine, I'm gonna make you a criminal?'"

Work share bill dies

Despite support from both Republicans and Democrats and no industry opposition, legislation to establish a work-share program in Indiana appears to be dead for



the year (Erdody, [IBJ](#)). The Senate Pensions and Labor Committee on Wednesday discussed Senate Bill 44, which would authorize the Indiana Department of Workforce Development to implement work sharing, but the chairman of the committee refused to vote on the bill. The committee will not meet again before the deadline to pass bills to the Senate floor. Work share, sometimes called “short-term compensation,” allows employers to reduce the hours of workers instead of laying them off during an economic downturn. Those workers can receive partial unemployment payments while keeping their jobs and benefits. Since 2011, a work-share bill has been filed every year, but it has never received a vote in either chamber. Despite strong support from the business community, Republican Sen. Phil Boots, who chairs the committee, said he had concerns about creating a new government program when it’s uncertain how many companies would utilize it. He cited research that shows only 0.6% of companies in the 28 states with work share actually use the program. “It’s not just a slam dunk issue,” Boots said.

Brinegar lashes out at Boots

Indiana Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Kevin Brinegar comments on the decision today to not take a vote on work share legislation in the Senate Pensions and Labor Committee – effectively killing the policy for another year: “We know Senate Bill 44 on work share would have passed committee today if the chairman, Sen. Phil Boots of Crawfordsville, had permitted a vote. In fact, there is overwhelming bipartisan support in the entire General Assembly – and there is good reason for that. Work share keeps employees on the job part time while receiving employer-sponsored benefits like health care and drawing partial unemployment from the state for their lost hours. Work share enables employers to keep team members they have invested time and money into their training. But instead of acknowledging the benefits of work share or what employers had to say, Chairman Boots was more focused on a false premise he put forth. Senator Boots offered it could be better for an individual to lose a job (and benefits) entirely than to be on work share because they would have time for training. That’s insulting given the current climate.”

Senate committee OKs drug discount bill

An Indiana Senate panel has approved a bill that would pass along discounts to consumers at the pharmacy checkout on drug rebates negotiated between pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies (Russell, [IBJ](#)). The Senate Health and Provider Services Committee voted 10-2 to approve Senate Bill 62 after more than two hours of debate and testimony. The bill pitted the two largest companies headquartered in Indianapolis—drugmaker Eli Lilly and Co. and health insurer Anthem Inc.—on opposite sides of the issue. The bill would pass along at least 85% of all rebates received by insurers or health maintenance organizations to consumers at the pharmacy counter.

Harris lakefront bill passes House

Legislation authored by State Rep. Earl Harris Jr. (D-East Chicago) that serves as a catalyst for lakefront development today passed through the House with bipartisan support. House Bill 1090 removes the requirements that an oil refinery be located within a municipal lakefront development project and that a municipal lakefront development project must be funded in part with local, state and federal money. “One of our state’s greatest sources of untapped potential is our lakefront,” Harris said. “Lake Michigan has 45 miles of shoreline in Northern Indiana that we could open up to new businesses, residential areas and tourism attractions. This legislation would boost our state’s economy and help our lakefront communities not only recover from the financial burden of the pandemic, but also grow and thrive in the years to come.”

Workplace pregnancy bill advances

Legislation to allow pregnant women to ask employers for accommodations at work was heard in the Indiana House on Tuesday, but critics say it’s too weak and doesn’t actually change anything (Hicks, [Indiana Public Media](#)). There are several bills in the General Assembly addressing pregnant worker accommodations. Multiple advocacy groups, including Women4Change Indiana and Hoosier Action, held rallies for bills requiring accommodations, but this was the only one to be heard in a committee. Rep. Maureen Bauer (D-South Bend) offered an amendment to the bill that would mandate accommodations, putting it more in line with what advocates want and other measures Gov. Eric Holcomb supports. However, it did not pass. “The fact is, without a bill that requires all employees and all employers to make these modifications, we know the stories of infant loss and maternal morbidity will continue,” she said while introducing her amendment.

Indiana cuts funding for poverty students

Even though the state boasts an increased education budget each year, Indianapolis Public Schools receives \$15 less per student today in basic state funding than it did seven years ago (Wang, Chalkbeat). That’s because IPS’ gains in funding for each student have been eaten up by a sharper decline in state support for students in poverty, district officials say. In recent years, Indiana lawmakers have prioritized across-the-board increases for schools over support for disadvantaged students, favoring budget strategies that buoy more affluent districts while higher-poverty schools say they’re left without enough resources to serve disadvantaged students. Now, state representatives are proposing a two-year freeze on the amount of extra aid for educating students in poverty. Under the House budget projections, IPS would receive the smallest hike in basic state funding for each student out of more than 40 Central Indiana districts — just 0.5% over the next two years, while the rest of the state averages a 3.4% increase. ❖

Holcomb ignores teacher pay issue

By **DAVE KITCHELL**

LOGANSPORT — In Indiana, there are really only two moments that stand out that make you feel like a Hoosier. The first happens on the last Sunday in May when 33 cars line up and a voice audible for more than a mile is heard to say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, start your engines."

The second happens in January or February when the governor appears before a standing ovation from the Indiana General Assembly, justices of the Indiana courts and state officeholders to deliver the State of the State Address. Maybe it's simply mimicking what the president does, but it offers the one moment that puts every Hoosier of any party in front of a dashboard where we can see where we are as a state and where we need to go.



The COVID-19 pandemic has robbed us of that moment this year. In fact, Gov. Eric Holcomb delivered the first State of the State of his second term in a vacuum, or put another way, virtually. There were no swells of applause, nodding heads or lines of eager hand-shakers urging a sense of progress in our state.

This year's State of the State did more than provide an infection-free way to see the governor. It provided a progress-free way for the governor to say he prioritizes neither public education nor the environment in the state. Although "Red for Ed" rallies at the Statehouse have been enough to have the governor find something to do out of town for a day, he happily announces extension of funding for charter schools and vouchers, yet ignores the reality that our public school funding per pupil ranks 47th in the nation.

No money for raises that would make teacher pay competitive with other states? What about diverting lottery revenue, or using the Indiana Bond Bank to underwrite grants to attract outstanding teachers from other states to ours, or even the state's best teachers to rural areas? What about increased funding for the Indiana Academy to open up opportunities for gifted and talented students from across the state? What about more money for Head Start so that the state extends early childhood education and allows children to enter their first day of school as ready to learn as any other student?

It won't happen because education has become the enemy of conservatives who need a common

enemy to bind them together. It happens because legislators and the governor don't consider a stronger public education system an economic development selling point for Indiana. They'd rather have a lower tax structure than a slightly higher tax commitment that produces the best students in the Midwest.

And then there's the environment, ranked 48th in the nation by the United Health Foundation. Our air quality ranks 46th in a state that is mostly cornfields, soybean fields and small towns. Our coal-fired generating plants are shutting down, but so are those in every other state.

The governor, who was challenged during the debates for his support of WSP, a zinc plant that was turned away from Muncie and gave to Holcomb's campaign, according to Dr. Woody Myers. Holcomb did not respond to that question, but the state agency he oversees will probably allow a permit for that plant to open near Clymers in north central Indiana.

Unlike what happened to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in Michigan, there likely won't be a militia making its way to Indianapolis to kidnap Holcomb. But there's far worse crime happening to our school children and for every Hoosier who breathes in this state.

Holcomb is term-limited and cannot seek a third. This would be an appropriate time for him to order the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to deny a permit to WSP and to make a stand for Indiana's air quality and environment. It would speak well of him to return a campaign contribution to WSP if he accepted one, and send the message that Indiana's environment is just not for sale.

It would be wonderful if under his leadership, which now lets him to select his own state school superintendent, he would say about education, "Let's get this right on our watch like Otis Bowen got property tax reform right on his."

But don't look for that to happen because there's a vacuum of responsibility on both issues and a faulty assumption that the more we deny our children and the more polluted we make our environment, there will be a special place in heaven for us. I'd submit there's a special place, but it's in the other direction. ❖

Kitchell is the former mayor of Logansport.





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Moving past Trump's second impeachment

By J. MILES COLEMAN

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Over the weekend, former President Trump was acquitted by the Senate. Days before his term as president expired last month, the House, in a bipartisan vote, impeached Trump for inciting an insurrection at the Capitol. After a shorter-than-expected trial in the Senate – one which featured no witnesses – 57 senators, out of 100, voted to convict the former president. As this was short of the constitutionally required two-thirds of the chamber, Trump was acquitted.

Though Democrats control both houses of Congress, achieving a two-thirds majority in the Senate to secure a conviction was always going to be a tall order. It seems hard enough to get more than 60 votes in the Senate for any major policy these days – let alone for something as politically, and emotionally, charged as impeachment.

Map 1 shows the breakdown of the Senate vote by state delegation. Republicans Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Ben Sasse (R-NE), Richard Burr (R-NC), Pat Toomey (R-PA), and Mitt Romney (R-UT) joined a unanimous Democratic caucus in supporting conviction.

A month ago, when the Crystal Ball first looked at how Trump's second impeachment trial may shape up, we noted that, in the Senate, his fate largely rested with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY). While he himself voted against conviction, many observers went into the process expecting fewer than seven GOP defections.

Given his standing within the caucus, McConnell could have likely whipped the necessary votes if he felt that barring the former president from running for office again, a potential consequence of conviction, was worth it.

Instead, the minority leader made it known that, while he considers Trump responsible for January's insurrection at the Capitol, he viewed the trial as out of the Senate's purview: Citing Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution, he argued that as a former president, Trump shouldn't be eligible for conviction. Much of the GOP conference agreed.

Republicans up in 2022 mostly supported Trump. To a large extent, Republican hands were tied, as Trump is still a popular figure in the party. When he was on the ballot himself, Trump generated turnout that boosted Republicans down the ballot. In 2016, he arguably kept the

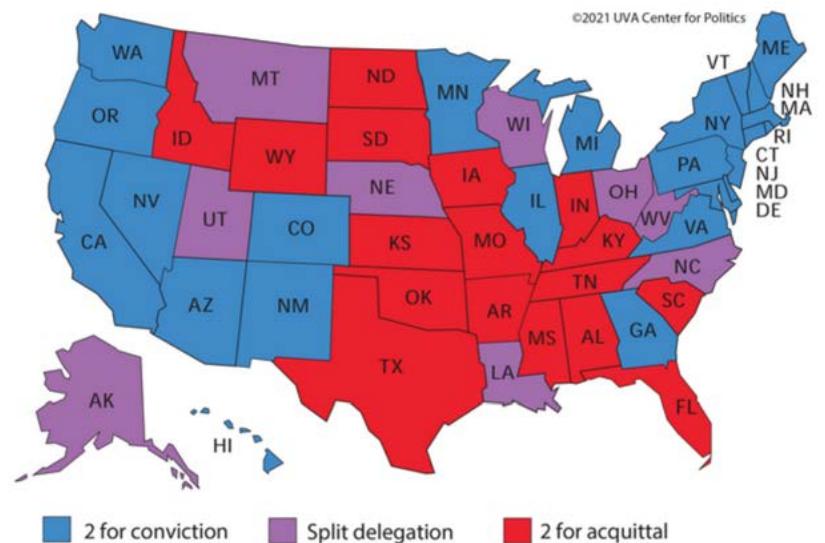
Senate in GOP hands and in 2020, Republicans beat expectations in the chamber, only narrowly losing control. While Trump didn't carry the states he needed for reelection, the rural turnout he inspired helped vulnerable Republicans in states like North Carolina and Iowa, while other red state Senate contests that seemed competitive – such as South Carolina and Montana – ended up as solid Republican wins.

The Republican senators up for election next year would very much like to have Trump's base on their side. To GOP members, this would be helpful both in their primaries as well as in the general election, where turning out Trump's voters, without the former president on the ballot, will be a priority. Perhaps not surprisingly, every Republican senator facing voters in 2022 was against conviction, with the exception of Sen. Lisa Murkowski.

Murkowski, in some ways, can be viewed as an independent who caucuses with Republicans. A moderate, she's faced primary challenges since her earliest years as an incumbent legislator; she famously lost her 2010 senatorial primary, but mounted a successful write-in campaign to keep her seat that year. Murkowski seemed free to vote



Map 1: 2021 Senate vote on Trump conviction



her conscience, as she won't realistically be a favorite of the Trump crowd anytime soon – the former president has vowed to campaign against her. But the Alaska senator has put together diverse electoral coalitions in the past and, as the Crystal Ball outlined recently, the state's new ranked-choice electoral system may insulate her from more ideological challengers.

Two of the top three Democratic Senate targets that the Crystal Ball identified in our initial 2022 ratings – Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Wisconsin – are open seats. Both retiring Sens. Richard Burr and Pat Toomey voted for conviction but were promptly censured by parti-

sans in their states. It's a good sign of where the party is that Republican candidates running to replace them struck a much more pro-Trump tone. Former Rep. Mark Walker (R, NC-6), who's framing himself as something of a consensus candidate for North Carolina Republicans, charged that Burr cast a "wrong vote." In the third state, Wisconsin, there was no question that Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) would support acquittal. Though he's still deciding whether to run again, Johnson is popular with conservatives in his bright purple state.

Last weekend's vote may lead to some new maneuvering from Republicans who aren't in especially tough races, too. One of the most surprising votes for conviction was Sen. Bill Cassidy – since his election in 2014, he's generally supported GOP leadership. When asked for his reasoning, he simply summed up that Trump "is guilty." While Cassidy isn't up in 2022 himself, his colleague, Sen. John Kennedy (R-LA) is.

Kennedy got to the Senate by beating out several other Republicans in a 2016 jungle primary, in part because he was able to own the conservative mantle. It's easy to see Kennedy criticizing Cassidy's stance on the campaign trail, as he tries to preserve that image. After the vote, the Louisiana Republican Party immediately censured Cassidy but praised Kennedy.

As an aside, this type of contrast between Louisiana senators of the same party isn't new. For the first eight years of her three-term tenure, former Sen. Mary Landrieu's (D-LA) critics would often compare her to the state's other member at the time, Sen. John Breaux (D-LA). Republicans would bash Landrieu as a New Orleans liberal, while Breaux was held up as a "conservative" Cajun Democrat.

Aside from Kennedy, the only other Republican up in 2022 who had a home-state colleague of the same party vote for conviction is Utah's Mike Lee. Though he serves with Sen. Mitt Romney, a frequent Trump critic, Lee has a libertarian streak, and few question his credibility with conservatives.

Conviction votes may hurt red state Democrats in 2024 – if the electorate remembers it.

If Republicans are concerned about their near-term electoral prospects with Trump off the ballot, the consequences of last weekend's vote may hurt Democrats most in the next presidential year.

In a straight-party vote, the entire Democratic caucus voted for Trump's conviction. Public opinion does seem to be on their side: According to an Ipsos/ABC News poll that was out Monday, about 60% of respondents agreed that the former president's actions merited conviction.

So with the 2022 midterms on the horizon, impeachment probably won't be a liability for many Democratic senators, as none of them will be up in states that Trump carried. But 2024 promises to be a much tougher cycle for Democrats. That year, they'll be defending roughly two-thirds of the states with elections – and Trump himself could feasibly be leading the GOP ticket again.

For Republicans, the most obvious 2024 targets will be three Democrats who represent states that Trump won in both times he was on the ballot. Specifically, these are Sens. Jon Tester (D-MT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), and Joe Manchin (D-WV). All three have been reelected because they've been able to cast themselves as different types of Democrats. Though the impeachment vote may well be a distant memory by 2024, Republicans will almost certainly point out that these members voted with their party when it mattered most.

Any competent Republican presidential nominee should carry those three states in 2024, so the electoral threat that those Democratic senators would face is clear. This vote could potentially complicate their efforts to attain the crossover support they'll almost assuredly need in order to win.

Over the last two presidential election cycles, just one senator (Susan Collins in Maine) won while the other party's presidential candidate was carrying their state. Even going beyond federal offices, aside from these senators, there are no Democrats left in partisan, state-wide positions in Montana, Ohio, or West Virginia.

This isn't to say that those seats will be sure-fire Republican flips. Though Manchin has, at times, indicated he may retire in 2024, the others won't be pushovers, should they run again. Brown and Tester were reelected in 2018 after voting against both of the Supreme Court nominees that Trump put forward during the first part of his presidency.

For now, the Senate will return to its more routine business of considering President Biden's nominees and negotiating another COVID-19 relief bill. But, looking to future campaigns, last weekend's vote will likely figure into partisan messaging from both sides. ❖

Nursing home deaths rise

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana State Health Commissioner said Wednesday that the state has discovered 273 long-term care facilities did not report 660 COVID-19 deaths (Kenney, [WRTV](#)). Dr. Kris Box said they made the finding while reviewing COVID-19 cases and cross-referencing them with death records, and determined 660 deaths had not been tied to a nursing home facility. Dr. Box emphasized the deaths were included in the state's COVID-19 death total, which is currently 11,825. "I want to be clear, these deaths are already a part of our overall statewide dashboard," Box said. "These are not new deaths. All of these deaths have already been accounted for in statewide totals." Dr. Box said the Indiana State Department of Health is matching the deaths with long-term care facilities and they will be added to the LTC dashboard today. ❖

Questions from an economic forecast

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – I've spent several days over the past month providing economic forecasts on Zoom. In this pandemic year, I gave a forecast for the five states of the Great Lakes region and seven metro areas. This is a broad set of forecasts, but the pandemic makes the forecast

easier to explain. The evidence is very clear that the disease caused a sharp, historically unprecedented decline in economic activity before any state took action to slow the virus' spread.

The states that are recovering better today are not those with the lightest government action, but those who suffered the least spread of the virus. I don't yet know if it was government action or

luck that reduced spread; that's the work of epidemiologists. Still, the economic evidence is overwhelming. It was always the virus that caused the recession.

The looming universal availability of the vaccine means that we face a potential end to the pandemic. So, the real start of the recovery is in the hands of vaccine distributors, not economic policymakers.

Viewers of my forecast asked many questions, but two dominated every presentation. These were, quite predictably, concerning the size of the federal debt and the long-term consequences of COVID. These are big questions, worth answering.

The U.S. federal government debt rose faster and higher under Mr. Trump's presidency than in any time in history. It is now at 125% of annual U.S. Gross Domestic Product. That's not far off the European Union's or UK's debt level, and less than half that of Japan's. China is very deeply indebted, but the level masked its debt through state-owned enterprises and local governments that are really extensions of the central government.

The size of the debt isn't the big worry; it is the repayment costs that matter. Our debt is almost exclusively issued as bonds, which are then bought and sold on financial markets. If buyers lose confidence in our ability or willingness to repay these bonds, they'll demand a higher interest rate. In that way, it is like any lender and borrower arrangement.

Right now, 6-month U.S. Bonds are selling at an interest rate of 0.05%. In other words, buyers are so eager to own these bonds that they are willing to receive a negative interest rate after adjusting for inflation. As long as borrowers are willing to pay us to lend them money, we should be pleased to take on more debt.

Obviously, this happy circumstance is temporary.

Interest rates will rise, and as they do, a higher proportion of our annual tax revenues will be dedicated to servicing that debt. We should worry about our debt situation before that happens. I am sure Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is considering every way possible to issue long-term debt at low rates.

I have been a critic of government debt all my adult life, but today it is among our least pressing concerns. That will change, but we have time to adjust. To be fair, we probably will not. With both political parties having wholly abandoned fiscal conservatism as a guiding principle, I expect it'll take a crisis for us to react. That is at least years away.

The second question about long-term COVID changes mostly involved the location decisions of businesses and families. Today, 23% of all workers and nearly three out of four office workers are still working remotely. The technology and workplace requirements of a vast home workforce have accelerated by decades. Commercial office space values and family choices about where to live are about to undergo major changes.

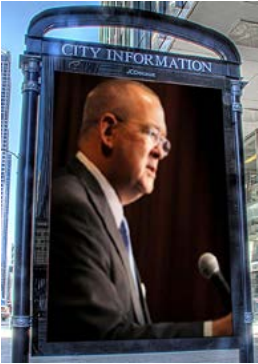
Indianapolis firm Salesforce announced that most workers will not return to offices. No doubt this will affect other businesses and government operations. If a business can sustain productivity, it is far less expensive to permit employees to work at home. I would not be surprised if one out of five workers nationwide work at least part-time at home after the pandemic subsidies.

The location decisions of families change with home-based work. Even if workers must be in the office one day per week, the opportunity to live farther from the office will be alluring. This likely means less densely populated urban centers. However, easing the daily commute will not necessarily cause metropolitan places to shrink. In contrast, less congestion and a broader geographic choice of residences could swell metro areas. I'd expect demand for housing in the outer fringe of metro places to rise, as workers relocate away from the city core, but close enough for that weekly commute.

The aftermath of COVID will ease the need to be proximal to a city center, and that means workers will substitute other preferences in their location choices. Those are certain to be related to higher quality of life. Chief among the factors that determine higher quality of life are the quality of local public services, particularly public schools. Right behind that are safe neighborhoods and other factors that attracted people before COVID.

So, if your community had good schools (ranked A or a high B), safe neighborhoods, access to trails and are still within an easy drive to a large metropolitan center, you should expect faster growth. That's a good thing for places like Shelbyville, Kokomo, or Daleville.

But, if you do not have high-quality schools, then your prospects are no better than they were before COVID, and may well be worse. Municipal areas near an urban core with below-average schools expect declining population as families relocate to more-attractive places.



This means the geography of large metropolitan areas will expand over the next decade, perhaps much faster than anticipated. COVID has not changed Americans preferences; it has changed their ability to act on those preferences.

This means that municipal governments that were successful in making their communities more attractive to residents may well see accelerated growth over the coming decade. Those that did not will surely experience

accelerated declines. ❖

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Righteous rural recommendation

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – “I abhor the idea, but it must be given an airing,” she said. She in this case was the very proper Representative Roberta Righteous speaking to a small gathering of constituents via Zoom.



“It’s nothing I could endorse, but my colleagues in the Indiana General Assembly entertain many more outrageous and vile ideas in each session,” she continued. “In Indiana, we maintain an image of wholesomeness, despite little supporting evidence. It’s time to drop that veil and present ourselves for who we are.”

None of the Zoomers interjected a comment and Rep. Righteous went on.

“Speaking plainly, Indiana needs to take some risk in economic development. Our state is rotting out while the core is absorbing the wealth, the prestige, and the power of a surging economy and an expanding population.

“Now we need to move swiftly, with determination, to establish new wealth-producing activities in communities on the brink of extinction. We must open the state to a neglected market, to legalized sexual satisfaction.”

The silent Zoomers could be heard speechless but gasping.

“As once we drew elegant parties to the forbidden fruit in French Lick, we must build elegant resorts catering to the physically and emotionally adventurous. As the snow-covered slopes entice the wealthy and the fashionable to Colorado and Utah, Indiana’s satin sheets must lure their own clientele. As we discarded our vestments in acceptance of casinos, we should lead the nation and the world in a restoration of honor for the oldest of professions.”

A chat item appeared on the screen. Is she off her

medicine?

“You may wonder why a long-term, dedicated public servant risks bringing this suggestion forward,” the perhaps short-term representative proceeded. “Economic development practitioners frequently lack imagination and courage. They are often passive people in a job requiring innovation. They dress to impress local bankers rather than enterprising investors. But the local banker today is rarely a local leader.

“I know many of my colleagues will make snide remarks about ‘Roberta’s Raunchy Ranches.’ Yes, churches will object, but you saw how little the politicians cared when they started to count the tax money from casinos and marijuana sales.

“Indiana has always been slow to accept any innovation, particularly the formal commercialization of sin, but it’s time to recognize reality. We will sink further among the states as a cultural and economic backwater without a major infusion of capital. Our vision must be broader and more grandiose than that of Nevada.

“Carefully regulated by the State Board of Health, providing services to all persons regardless of self-identification, with strict enforcement of rules as to acceptable behavior, Indiana resorts could set new standards for the restitution of self-confidence and respectability among those currently afflicted with doubt and shame,” she concluded.

Which declining small towns would you choose for this pioneering effort? ❖

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Chris Cillizza, CNN: As is often the case with talk of possible new political parties, however, there's less than meets the eye. Here's why: 1. The Republican Party already fought this fight in 2016. The anti-Trump crowd, which ultimately became every candidate in the GOP primary field other than Trump, lost. And lost badly. Just ask Marco Rubio. And Jeb Bush. And Lindsey Graham. And Rand Paul. And Ted Cruz. And Chris Christie. And Ben Carson. 2. There's no leader for this movement. Voters rally around candidates, not political parties. Barack Obama appealed to people, first and foremost, because he was Barack Obama. Not because he was a Democrat. Same for Trump, who, prior to running in 2016, was at best loosely affiliated with the Republican Party. Who is the face of this proposed new party or new faction? Ben Sasse? John Kasich? Liz Cheney? Larry Hogan? Adam Kinzinger? Mitt Romney? Lisa Murkowski? You get the idea. Way too many cooks. 3. GOP elected officials have zero interest in it: For people who like to argue that Trump's actions during and after the January 6 riot have fundamentally changed how he stands in the party, I like to remind them that, in the immediate aftermath of that riot, 138 Republicans voted to object to the Electoral College results in Pennsylvania. That's a clear majority of House Republicans on the record in support of an objection based on zero facts and 100% loyalty to Trump. So where again is this clamor to get beyond Trump? The Point: The idea of a non-Trump Republican Party undoubtedly appeals to plenty of GOP establishment types. The problem? There just aren't enough of them in the party for such a move to succeed. ❖



Michael McGrough, Hartford Courant: Was Mike Pence a hero in the siege of the Capitol that was replayed during Donald Trump's impeachment trial? Certainly Pence was a potential victim, as House managers demonstrated by playing dramatic security video of the vice president being hustled away to a safe place. But the managers also emphasized that Pence had refused Trump's call for him to act illegally and overturn election results favoring Joe Biden. "Vice President Pence showed us what it means to be an American," Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., said on Wednesday. "What it means to show courage. He put his country, his oath, his values and his morals above the will of one man." Praise by Democrats for Pence inspired the editorial page of the Wall Street Journal to remark on the "strange new respect on the left" for Pence. The Journal dredged up a 2019 tweet in which Lieu told Pence: "I will pray for you & hope that your hate of LG-BTQ employees and students will one day dissipate." The Journal suggested that it was hypocritical for Democrats to praise Pence for doing his duty after criticizing him on issues such as gay and transgender rights. "As soon as the second impeachment trial wraps, he will go back to being another dark figure in a political 'Handmaid's Tale' told to inspire fear and loathing among Democratic voters," the editorial said. "But for everyone else, Mr. Pence's defense

of the rule of law and the Electoral College should stand as a refutation of that caricature." The Democrats are right to portray Pence as a potential victim on Jan. 6. The insurrectionists' chants of "Hang Mike Pence!" were chilling. But the fact that Pence did his duty doesn't make him a hero. ❖

Jon Webb, Evansville Courier & Press: If you're sick of hearing my opinion, don't worry – so am I. I've written a column for the Courier & Press in some form or another for six years now. The work started as silly and satirical but turned more serious as the world became less funny. Each column was labeled as an opinion. But recently, an increasing number of them haven't contained any opinion at all. When writing about COVID-19 or homicides, it's tough to gin up an "opinion" aside from "this is sad and I wish it hadn't happened." I sometimes found myself shoehorning a paragraph of opinion into a reported article just to justify the yellow label that shines above each column online: "This piece expresses the view of its author(s), separate from those of this publication." This is my last opinion column for the Courier & Press. I'm now a news reporter, largely focusing on longer enterprise stories and anything else that flits across my radar. From here on out, I'll happily keep my opinion to myself. ❖

William Galston, Wall Street Journal: Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell delivered a stinging speech immediately after President Trump was acquitted in his Senate trial over the weekend. The speech has been seen as the opening salvo in Mr. McConnell's effort to marginalize Mr. Trump's influence in the Republican Party. It will be an uphill battle. A Quinnipiac survey released on Monday found that only 11% of Republicans held Mr. Trump responsible for inciting the violence on Capitol Hill on Jan. 6. A mere 9% supported conviction. Only 16% would support even the symbolic rebuke of a censure motion. Not only do 87% of Republicans believe Mr. Trump should be allowed to hold office again; 75% want him to play a "prominent role" in the Republican Party. What does such a role entail? A recent Gallup survey found that 68% of Republicans want the former president to remain their party's leader. According to an Axios-Ipsos poll, 66% of Republicans believe that their party is better with Mr. Trump in it, and 57% favor him as their party's 2024 presidential candidate. These sentiments may change over time. But for now, efforts to weaken Mr. Trump's influence within the party will not succeed. If anything, the opposite seems more likely. State and county Republican Party organizations across the country are censuring elected officials who broke with Mr. Trump to support his impeachment in the House and conviction in the Senate. The Trump base has anathematized even Trump loyalists such as former Vice President Mike Pence, who honored their oath of office. These supporters will not countenance anything short of unswerving fealty to Mr. Trump. ❖

U.S. life expectancy plummets in 2020

WASHINGTON — Life expectancy in the United States dropped a staggering one year during the first half of 2020 as the coronavirus pandemic caused its first wave of deaths, health officials are reporting (AP). Minorities suffered the biggest impact, with Black Americans losing nearly three years and Hispanics, nearly two years, according to preliminary estimates Thursday from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "This is a huge decline," said Robert Anderson, who oversees the numbers for the CDC. "You have to go back to World War II, the 1940s, to find a decline like this." Other health experts say it shows the profound impact of COVID-19, not just on deaths directly due to infection but also from heart disease, cancer and other conditions. "What is really quite striking in these numbers is that they only reflect the first half of the year ... I would expect that these numbers would only get worse," said Dr. Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, a health equity researcher and dean at the University of California, San Francisco. Life expectancy is how long a baby born today can expect to live, on average. In the first half of last year, that was 77.8 years for Americans overall, down one year from 78.8 in 2019. For males it was 75.1 years and for females, 80.5 years.

Chamber objects to Whitmer ad

DETROIT — A satirical billboard naming Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer Indiana's business person of the year as a critique of her COVID-19 restrictions was created by an Indiana businessman, not the Indiana Chamber of Commerce (Detroit Free Press). Swift Broadcasting Company CEO Steve Swick told the Free Press he thought up the display for one of

the digital billboards he owns near the Interstate 69 and Interstate 80/90 toll roads in Angola, Indiana, across the border from Michigan. When the advertisement went live Friday, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce's name was plastered above the award. Monday, the chamber got in touch with Swift by email and requested he remove its name from the billboard.

Fed execution reports 'sanitized'

CHICAGO — Executioners who put 13 inmates to death in the last months of the Trump administration likened the process of dying by lethal injection to falling asleep and called gurneys "beds" and final breaths "snores." But those tranquil accounts are at odds with reports by the Associated Press and other media witnesses of how prisoners' stomachs rolled, shook and shuddered as the pentobarbital took effect inside the U.S. penitentiary death chamber in Terre Haute, Ind. The AP witnessed every execution. Questions about whether inmates' midsections trembled as media witnesses described were a focus of litigation throughout the run of executions.

Newfields president resigns after ad

INDIANAPOLIS — Newfields president Charles Venable has resigned as president of the Indianapolis art museum after nearly 100 staffers, hundreds of artists, and others in the community called for him to step down following a job listing that prioritized maintaining the museum's "core, white art audience" (WRTV). In a letter posted to its website, Newfields stated, "We are ashamed of Newfields' leadership and of ourselves. We have ignored, excluded, and disappointed members of our community and staff. We pledge to do better." This comes after one phrase in an otherwise innocuous job listing that could end

up changing the face of Indianapolis's largest art museum. Calls for the ouster of the president of Newfields grew after the publication of the job advertisement for a director.

60-year-old vaccine access coming

INDIANAPOLIS — Hoosiers age 60 and above should only have to wait a few more days to get their COVID-19 vaccine (WRTV). In his weekly coronavirus press conference, Gov. Eric Holcomb said shipments to the state of the Moderna vaccine were delayed by Monday's snowstorm. But Indiana will start regularly receiving an increased supply of vaccines soon, Holcomb said. As of Wednesday afternoon, more than 356,000 Hoosiers have been fully vaccinated.

Rise in COVID cases at ND

NOTRE DAME — Following a rising number of coronavirus cases on campus, the University of Notre Dame announced it will limit seating capacity in dining halls, restrict visitors in student housing and pivot to virtual activities starting Thursday (South Bend Tribune). The changes come after Notre Dame reported 48 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among faculty, staff and students on Monday and 46 more cases on Tuesday.

Brown County SP added to Registry

NASHVILLE, Ind. — Brown County State Park has been recently added the National Register of Historic Places and makes it the state's largest historic district, the the Department of Natural Resources announced Wednesday (AP). Listing as a historic district recognizes an area that has a high degree of historical integrity in its buildings, structures and landscapes, the DNR said. To be eligible, a district is required to have been associated with events, developments or people that were important.

