

# Political Report

Thursday, May 25, 2006

V12 N37

Weekly Briefing on Indiana Politics

## 3 Congressional seats in play

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** in Indianapolis and **MARK SCHOEFF JR.** in Washington, D.C.

National political analysts are beginning to revise upward the number of Republican Congressional seats in play for the November elections.

HPR believes that three Hoosier Republicans - U.S. Reps. Chris Chocola, Mike Sodrel and John Hostettler, who swept into office during the last big national tide in 1994 - are vulnerable. HPR considers all three races "tossups."

Last Friday, the **Cook Political Report** revised from 24 to 36 the number of Republican seats seen as competitive. "The playing field is certainly expanding," said Amy Walter, analyst for Cook, in Sunday's **New York Times**.

Former Indiana Republican Chairman Rex Early knows all about high tides washing away ruling parties. He was in the Indiana House when the LBJ tidal wave produced a very Democratic House from one dominated by Republicans. He left the GOP chair in 1993, a year before Republicans captured control of Congress.

"I know what one of these feels like," Early told HPR. "This one feels like a wave. I go down to Brown County every weekend and you should hear the guys at the local store. They are mad and they're mad at Republicans."



U.S. Rep. Chris Chocola with President Bush during a 2005 visit to South Bend.

For Rep.

Chocola, he resides in a 50/50 district with a history of competition and susceptibility to national waves. In 1980, House Majority Leader John Brademas was defeated by John Hiler in the Reagan tidal wave. This year he faces a playing field flummoxed by local issues - Daylight saving time and Major Moves - along with a Republican president and governor who are unpopular in his district. At a recent St. Joseph

County Lincoln Day dinner where Gov. Daniels was the keynote, Chocola didn't attend.

Democrats in the 8th and 9th CDs seeking to knock off incumbent Republicans in two of the most competitive congressional races in the country seem to be settling on a similar theme: The GOP-controlled House of Representatives is out of touch with the average Hoosier.

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## Bayh meets the blogosphere

By **JOSHUA CLAYBOURN**

U.S. Sen Evan Bayh (D-IN) met with a small group of Indiana bloggers Monday in an ongoing attempt by the senator to reach out to alternative forms of media.



This isn't the first blogger meeting Bayh's had, and judging from my discussions with his staffers it won't be the last.

Sen. Bayh's presidential aspirations are no secret. In 2005 alone he visited 22 states, with two visits to both Iowa and

“QUOTE  
of the Week”



"That program's gone. It's not coming back. It won't be there."

- House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer on lifetime health care for legislators



New Hampshire. His PAC also raised more money than any other potential Democratic candidate during the first six months of 2005, along with continued fundraising success in '06. He offered a refreshingly candid response about a possible run when he said, "It's no secret that I'm doing all of the things one needs to do" to run for president. Bayh's approach on the campaign trail is best summarized in a possible campaign bumper sticker he suggested to the *Des Moines Register*: "I kind of like 'Bayh-partisan.'" This theme of partisan reconciliation was echoed numerous times during our lunch today and it will no doubt form the bedrock of his presidential campaign.

But in an incredibly diverse party Bayh's soft, moderate approach requires a tough balancing act. Anyone attempting to win the party's nomination must first convince mainstream Democrats that he's a champion for their issues. That was no doubt a factor in his vote against Bush's tax cuts, against drilling in the Arctic, and for requiring gun-show background checks (in 2004, the National Rifle Association gave him a D-minus). He's even garnered an 88% rating from Planned Parenthood and a 50% rating from NARAL (National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League).

In addition to bill votes, Bayh has opposed numerous crucial Bush nominees, all of which should help his Democratic street cred. He voted against Condoleezza Rice's confirmation as Secretary of State because "she has been a principal architect of policy errors that have tragically undermined our prospects for success" in Iraq. He also voted against confirming John Ashcroft as attorney general and John Roberts and Samuel Alito for the Supreme Court.

Yet all of this "triangulation," as it has been called in the past, can leave a voter wondering about

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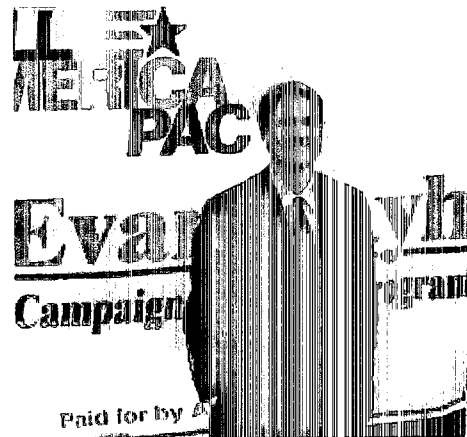
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its sincerity. Whether you agree with John McCain's "maverick" positions, few seem to doubt he's genuine. That's why I wanted to dig deeper into Evan's "Bayh-partisanship" by asking about specific policy positions. But Bayh, saying he was wary of ideology, chose instead to speak generally about an "agenda for progress." Roughly 4 minutes into answering the question he did vaguely list "jobs,

health care, and national security" as possible issues in '08, but there were no specifics and no concrete proposals.

Presidential contenders almost always hold off from too many specifics until the months leading up to the election, but you still have an idea of what's important to them, and the values they'll apply to a given issue. With Bayh, the only ideology appears to be a lack of it. That may help him win votes in a red state, but it doesn't instill the type of passion and energy that wins national campaigns.

In my mind this is Bayh's biggest hurdle, and indeed the problem facing the national Democratic party. Americans are disillusioned with Bush's leadership, but unsure about an alternative. That attitude will get Democrats a few more House seats and perhaps even a president in '08. But it won't inspire a lasting movement. That is Bayh's challenge. ❖



# HOWEY Political Report

"People feel there's a disconnect between what is going on in Washington and what is going on in southern Indiana," said former Rep. Baron Hill in an HPR interview on Wednesday. Hill is trying to recapture the 9th CD seat he lost in 2004 to Republican Rep. Mike Sodrel by fewer than 1500 votes.

Next door in the 8th CD, the Democrats are sounding a similar theme. "People want change in D.C.," said Jay Howser, campaign manager for Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth, who is challenging incumbent GOP Rep. John Hostettler. "Congress isn't listening to them."

One of the issues that both campaigns use to make their point is energy. Everybody feels pain at the pump at some point each month, with gas prices hovering around \$3 per gallon. Hill and Ellsworth accuse their opponents of supporting tax breaks for oil companies.

"Mike (Sodrel) has come out here (Washington) and completely lost touch with reality," said Hill, who claims that Sodrel is ducking an energy debate.

Hostettler "is on the defensive on his 12-year record of supporting big oil," said Howser.

The Sodrel forces are trying to employ political jujitsu on energy and force Hill to defend his record on energy while serving on Capitol Hill from 1998-04. Hill "voted against energy bills for six years," said Cam Savage, Sodrel's chief of staff. Savage asserts that legacy helped prevent domestic exploration, a policy that Sodrel supports.

Sodrel's background as the chief executive of a Jeffersonville bus and trucking company is being highlighted. "Mike understands energy in a way most people in Congress don't," said Savage. "At least we're trying to do something about it."

### Split on economic issues

Hill and Sodrel also split on other economic issues. Last week, Sodrel went to the White House to stand behind President Bush as he signed a \$70 billion bill that would extend until 2010 several tax cuts Congress approved in 2003, including those on dividends and capital gains.

"Basically, we're talking about preventing a tax increase," said Savage, who touts current strong economic



Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth with former congressman and 9/11 Commissioner Tim Roemer in Terre Haute. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

fundamentals, such as low unemployment. "We have to keep that going, and a tax increase is the worst thing to do for the economy."

The bill is misguided because the U.S. faces a mountain of debt, says Hill. "To be giving tax extensions at this time makes no sense whatsoever," he said. "I call that being out of touch."

Hill also criticizes Sodrel for opposing a measure that would force Congress to align tax cuts and spending increases with spending reductions elsewhere in the budget.

"This Congress, including Mike Sodrel, does not care about fiscal responsibility," said Hill.

Social issues are likely to play an important role in the 9th CD again this year. Sodrel eked out his 2004 victory in part by emphasizing "moral values" centering on abortion, flag burning and gay marriage.

Sodrel's conservatism is a good fit for the district, says Savage. "Mike is who he is," said Savage. "You don't get a lot of double talk or flip flop with Mike Sodrel."

Hill now doesn't shy away from discussing his own faith and will fight back on moral issues.

"He feels he's learned some lessons from the last race," said Chris Sautter, owner of Sautter Communications, a Washington consulting firm. "He won't let himself get caught being blind-sided by attacks."

Hill said he will unveil a social issues initiative in the coming months. "It will become a reality," he said. "People will see it."

Although it's hard to tell how issues will play out during the campaign, the political atmosphere is pretty clear -- it strongly favors the Democrats. Both Bush and Gov. Mitch Daniels are posting approval ratings south of 45 percent. Bush is usually in the 30s.

"It's better to be running with the wind behind you rather than in your face," said Sautter, who has worked in Indiana politics for more than 20 years.

But John Hammond, an attorney with Ice Miller in Indianapolis who supports Republican candidates, says that this year's most competitive races -- the 8th, 9th, and 2nd CDs -- will be determined by local politics, not national trends.

That favors Sodrel, Hostettler and Rep. Chris Chocola (R-



2nd CD).

"All three are well suited to the culture of their districts," Hammond said. "No one should underestimate their ability to connect on an individual basis with their constituents." That's what Sodrel is banking on. For instance, he has worked with Democratic Mayor James Garner of New Albany and the Environmental Protection Agency to help the city deal with sewer issues.

In addition, Sodrel will emphasize his deep district roots. "Mike Sodrel is the change, he's not a career politician," said Savage.

In the 8th CD, local flavor will come from the grass roots. Hostettler relies on an army of committed conservatives who faithfully turnout and help him win elections consistently with 53 percent or less.

### Ellsworth's network

Ellsworth has established his own support network, with 1,000 volunteers signed up so far. "It's going to match John Hostettler's ground campaign door-to-door, block-to-block and neighborhood-to-neighborhood," said Howser. "He better get ready. He's never seen anything like this in his 12 years in Congress."

What Hostettler has seen is a lack of fundraising. Again this year, he's woefully behind, with \$55,844 on hand, according to the latest Federal Election Commission filing. Ellsworth has \$533,465 on hand.

Hostettler is typically bailed out by hundreds of thousands of dollars of advertising spending by the National Republican Congressional Committee. That money might not be there this year because the organization has many other close races to support to help the GOP maintain its slim House margin.

Hostettler's money problems are "not a brush fire. It's like a forest fire to put out," said Amy Walter, House editor of the **Cook Political Report**.

There are no money worries in the 9th CD. Hill has \$693,416 on hand. Sodrel has \$846,343 on hand.

After almost dropping off the **National Journal's Hotline** list of congressional challengers poised to knock off incumbents or win open seats that were held by the opposition party, Joe Donnelly, Democratic nominee in Indiana's 2nd District, clings to No. 47 on the list of 50.

On the list update, out Wednesday, two Indiana congressional races rank high. Listed No. 9 is the challenge of



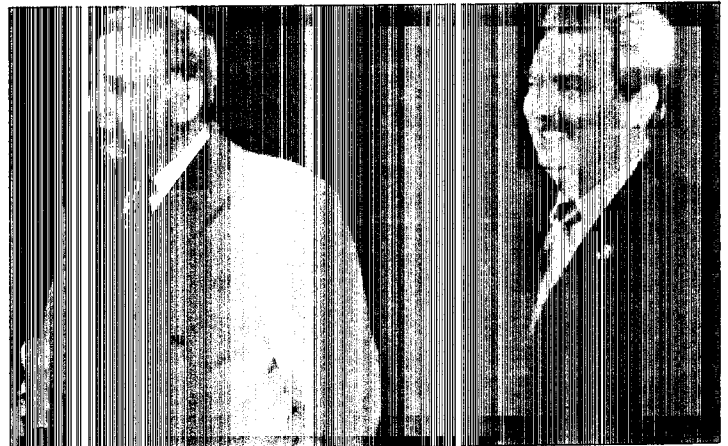
U.S. Rep. John Hostettler talks with constituents. (Photo courtesy of Rep. Hostettler)

former Democratic Congressman Baron Hill to Republican Congressman Mike Sodrel. No. 13 is the race between Republican Congressman John Hostettler and Vanderburgh County Sheriff Brad Ellsworth, the Democratic challenger.

In the April list, Donnelly, who is challenging Chocola, was dropped to 49th on the list, in part apparently because of campaign finance reports showing Chocola far ahead in fundraising.

But the 2nd District race was moved up to 47th on the new list after Donnelly won big in the Democratic primary and Chocola encountered a significant protest vote in winning GOP renomination.

"After voting for \$8 billion in giveaways and a multi-million dollar tax break for the CEO, this donation to Chris Chocola is ExxonMobil's special way of saying thank you," said Bill Burton, communications director for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "Indiana families deserve better than a member of Congress who is nothing more than a rubber stamp for oil industry fat cats, especially when they're paying more at the pump than ever before. This November, Indiana voters will choose change because they deserve better than sky-high gas prices and a member of Congress on the take from big oil." ♦



U.S. Reps. Dan Burton (left) and Mike Sodrel are at the bookends of vulnerability. Burton is about as safe as an incumbent can get; Sodrel finds himself in a precarious position. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)



## A new era arrives for Hoosier health care

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS - Bob Garton, Larry Borst, John Frenz, Markt Lytle, Ron Liggett.

There can be little doubt now that the Indiana political landscape is littered with bodies, political victims of legislative health care for life.

On Tuesday, that bomb of an issue was lobbed from the south steps of the Indiana Statehouse into the court of House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer.

"House Republicans repealed this program during the 2006 session and we did what was right for the Hoosier taxpayer,"

said House Speaker Brian Bosma along with about 60 members and candidates on the Statehouse steps. "We should now ensure, through legislation, that it cannot be reinstated by any future speaker of the House."

Bauer responded, accusing Bosma of "pure demagoguery" and "changing the subject" and "beating a dead horse."

"That program's gone, it's not coming back, it won't be there," Bauer said. It was a vastly different response than the equivocation he delivered to Indianapolis Star columnist Matt Tully in February, when he seemed to splice the issue into innuendo and legalize.

The Tuesday exchange had both parties firing volleys at each other. Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker said in a statement Tuesday afternoon, "Brian Bosma needs to stop with the rhetoric and start with the truth. For the past two years, legislation has been authored to end this perk, and Brian Bosma personally has sent that legislation to die in committee." Parker referred to House Bill 1459 in 2005 and House Bill 1309 in 2006. Both were assigned by Bosma to the Rules and

Legislative Procedures Committee. "I'm not surprised that Brian Bosma and others in the Republican-dominated Statehouse have decided to grandstand on this issue. It's one of great importance to Hoosiers, but to pretend like this is the first time they've had the opportunity to eliminate the perk is disingenuous at best."

Parker also lobbed his first shot at Indiana Republican Chairman J. Murray Clark, noting that he signed up for the program in January "after he knew it was going to be a political issue."

Parker was responding to HPR, which noted in Wednesday's HPR Daily Wire that Democratic convention chairman John Gregg helped institute the program

with Senate President Pro Tempore Garton in 2001 and 2002. "John Gregg is on the program," Parker said. "So is Paul Mannweiler. So is the Indiana Republican chairman."

And Parker accused Bosma, as House minority leader, of knowing about it and "signing off on the process."

But the real news beyond the finger pointing this week is that both parties seem to be -- finally -- interested in finding a solution for the 800,000 uninsured Hoosiers and the tens of thousands of sole proprietors girding under the weight of huge

premiums or a total lack of coverage for those with pre-existing conditions.

Bosma said his caucus was just beginning to study the issue. Bauer said, "As Democrats, we would like to see universal health care for everybody. We need to help the uninsured, we need to help the underinsured and we need to have public employees treated equally."

Sen Tom Weatherwax, a candidate for Senate Pro Tem, also promised to make it a legislative priority if elected.

Now, that's progress. ♦



House Republicans make their first pledge - on health care for all - at the Statehouse Tuesday. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)



## Evan Bayh: A moderate

### in partisan times

By MARK CURRY

The Howey Political Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. - "Greatness does not happen by accident. It is earned, it is made, it is created by those who have the strength to make it happen, and so must we."

That's what Sen. Evan Bayh said during commencement ceremonies at DePauw University last Sunday. Standing beneath a wide blue sky on a gorgeous Indiana afternoon, addressing the large crowd come to see the 607 students in the Class of 2006 graduate, he offered this explanation for America's greatness.

"What makes America special, for more than 10 generations, is that each generation has been willing to meet the challenges of its time, the sacrifices, the tough decisions, the hard going," he said in the gentle voice and style familiar to many Hoosiers. "That's what happened in Concord, that's what happened in Gettysburg, that's what happened on the cliffs of Normandy, that's what has always happened to make America great. Now it's our time to give that idea, that promise a renewed sense of vitality and a reality in the context of our own times."

It was an inspired turn of phrase and the kind one would hope to hear at just such an event, conveying ideas one might expect from a politician with lots of practice at public speaking. Perhaps more importantly, the words were tempered with the same sense of conviction and encouragement that Bayh has delivered on the stump all over the country in his effort to be a contender in the 2008 presidential election.

Earlier in the weekend the senator was in Iowa to attend fundraiser events for local candidates. Bayh has already begun to invest time, money and manpower in Iowa in hopes of building support before the caucuses which could make or break his candidacy. Writing for MSNBC, Tom Curry (no relation) noted "the Indiana senator's mellow demeanor, folksy Midwestern charm and credentials as a governor and U.S. senator gave Bayh threshold credibility with most of the rank-and-file democrats he met." The senator is building credibility wherever he goes these days. On Monday, Rob Harrington, who writes the blog "Confessions of a Hoosier Democrat," cited six bloggers ranging from Iowa to Georgia

who reported they were surprised to come away with a favorable first impression after hearing Bayh for the first time.

But not all who hear Sen. Bayh are convinced or encouraged. According to MSNBC's Curry, the senator's vote in support of the 2003 invasion of Iraq troubled some of the state's democrats, including one woman who was unhappy with his response to her questions. As Curry wrote, "With exasperation in her voice, she said, 'I wanted him to say to say we were leaving Iraq tomorrow. At this point, I don't care if there is a civil war in Iraq, because there already is a civil war.'"

Hoosier Joshua Claybourn of the blog **In The Agora** wrote this week that he, too, walked away less than satisfied after meeting with Bayh (see Page 1). While Claybourn said he was disappointed in Bayh's less-than-specific answer to a very specific question offered during an event designed

to promote the senator among Indiana bloggers, leading the writer to complain that "With Bayh the only ideology appears to be a lack of ideology."

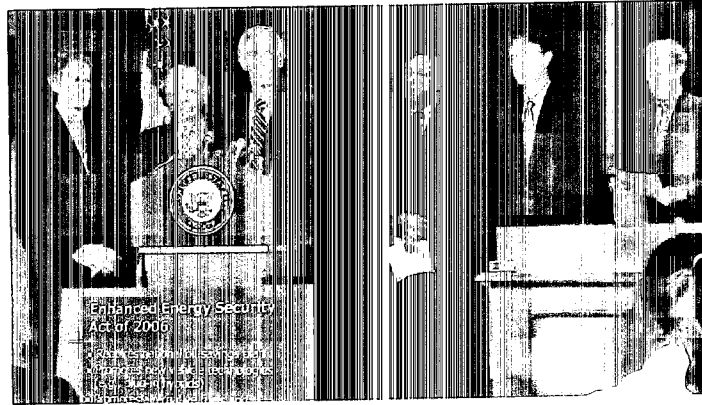
"In my mind this is Bayh's biggest hurdle, and indeed the challenge facing the national Democratic party," Claybourn later wrote. "Americans are disillusioned with Bush's leadership, but unsure

about their alternative. That attitude will get Democrats a few more House seats and perhaps even a president in '08. But it won't inspire a lasting movement. That is Bayh's challenge."

**Winning converts as a moderate** in partisan times is no easy task. The Spring 2006 issue of the UVA (University of Virginia) Lawyer included a friendly yet thoughtful article on alumnus Evan Bayh, who earned his law degree in 1981. Author Cullen Couch said it best: "...it won't be easy for a moderate to finesse a primary system where third-party interest groups funded by the most zealous partisans of both sides build huge war chests to drive wedge issues for short-term political gain."

"The center of the common ground has been eroded by politics," Bayh told Couch, "and the irony is that I find a thrill on the part of the American people for more consensus, for greater reconciliation of differences. I don't think the political process is representing their desires as well as it needs to."

The pressure to compromise must have been striking





for Sen. Bayh this week as the Senate Intelligence Committee deliberated President Bush's nomination of Gen. Michael Hayden to be CIA director, but on Tuesday he voted against the confirmation which passed 12-3.

"My vote against confirming General Hayden was not based upon any objection to the man – he is an outstanding person and a patriot," Bayh said in a statement (see **HPR Daily Wire**, May 24). "Nor was my vote in opposition to aggressive surveillance of terror suspects. I support such activities. My vote was an objection to the Administration's unwillingness to ensure both our physical security and our civil liberties."

As might be expected, the nuance articulated by the senator was quickly lost in the ensuing media frenzy. Katherine Shrader of the Associated Press failed to mention the reasoning behind Bayh's stance but found room to include a quote from Democratic Sen. Russ Feingold of Wisconsin, the current darling of the net roots left. The **Wall Street Journal's** James Taranto also omitted Bayh's statement but gleefully criticized the vote in his widely circulated "Best of the Web Today" email newsletter in an item entitled "Buh-Bayh, Moderation."

## Daniels seeks to lure Hoosiers back home

By MARK SCHOEFF JR.

The Howey Political Report

WASHINGTON - Gov. Mitch Daniels wants the next Steven Jobs, founder of Apple computers, or Bill Gates, the father of Microsoft, to set up shop in Indiana.

On Wednesday in Washington, Daniels hosted the first in a series of meetings around the country designed to lure Indiana expatriates back to the state. He's searching for former Hoosiers, and graduates of Indiana colleges, who are pursuing an entrepreneurial idea or have achieved success elsewhere and want to use their skills in a state where the cost of living is low and the quality of life can be high.

**"We're looking for talent," said Daniels.** Dubbed the "Hoosier Comeback Tour," the initiative will focus on meetings with Hoosiers now located in cities like Washington or Los Angeles.

Daniels addressed about 60 people at a breakfast in the capital. The group was cobbled together through invitations sent to university alumni groups and the Indiana Society of Washington.

The talent tour is part of Daniels' effort to bolster the Indiana economy. He touts landing 57 projects that have brought \$1.3 billion in private capital investment and commitments to create 7,228 new jobs over the last year.

The goal is to raise average pay in the state, which is

"This is further evidence that every Democrat in the field is trying to position himself as the left-wing alternative to Hillary Clinton," Taranto wrote.

As proof that Bayh's ideas resonate with many pundits, consider the May 22 column by the **Washington Post's** Jackson Diehl, who stated that "a coalition of mostly younger foreign affairs professionals...who have spent the past several years formulating a distinctly Democratic response to the post-Sept. 11 era...are beginning to gravitate toward some of the centrist Democrats who...might actually emerge as serious presidential candidates in 2008," including Evan Bayh.

At least people are hearing what Bayh has to say, even if they don't always agree. Building a consensus is difficult, and even more so among today's deeply divided electorate, but, as the senator told DePauw graduates last Sunday, "America is at its best and at its strongest not when we are divided, but when we are a one people with a common heritage and a common destiny.

"This country has always been a crucible in which we take our differences and instead find common ground." ❖

now below the national average. "The number one strategic objective in our administration over the long haul is to raise the net income of Hoosiers," Daniels said.

**One part of the strategy involves** improving Indiana's infrastructure. While in Washington, Daniels went to Capitol Hill to testify about Major Moves, a nearly \$4 billion deal in which a private consortium will lease the Indiana Toll Road. The proceeds will finance highway construction throughout the state. Daniels also emphasized broadband resources that will result from the telecommunications bill recently passed by the state legislature.

"We think we are building the most growth friendly environment in America today in Indiana," said Daniels.

The next piece is to find people to fill jobs. Daniels noted that Indiana has problems retaining college graduates. For instance, Purdue University produces the most computer science Ph.D. graduates each year in the country. But last year, they all left the state. "That's not acceptable," he said.

So now Daniels is trekking across the country to try to bring people home. It's not clear whether anyone at the Washington meeting will take him up on his offer. But two or three people in attendance did indicate that they want to look into doing business in Indiana. They will be referred to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation.

Even modest interest will bring a return on the investment in the continental breakfast served at the Washington event. "If I can talk one of you or five of you into returning, it has paid for the orange juice five times over," Daniels said. ❖



# Political Report

## Sizing up the Weatherwax candidacy for Pro Tempore

By DAVE KITCHELL

Logansport Pharos-Tribune

**LOGANSPORT** -- Some positions in state government are positions of power and others are positions of privilege. Some are both. How exactly the job of Indiana Senate president can be defined is open for interpretation. For most Hoosiers living today, Bob Garton of Columbus has defined it because he has held the post for three decades. He will no longer, but if Logansport's Tom Weatherwax does get the job, look for the definition to be one of more privilege than power.

Not that Weatherwax will get a better parking space, office or desk, but he will get the unspoken respect from his party of not making him look bad, which is never a good idea if you want a bill heard or an appropriation funded.

Weatherwax is expected to face State Sens. David Long of Fort Wayne and Brent Steele of Bedford. There are plenty of factors for Republicans and Democrats to consider as they cast the most important 49 votes Weatherwax may know in his lifetime:

•**Weatherwax has known when not to be a lightning rod.** This lesson is not something arguably either Garton or former House Speaker J. Roberts Daily learned. Daily, a staunch Muncie Republican, refused to let Indiana legislators pursue bills to create a state lottery, but a referendum cleared the way for it, and cleared him out of his seat. Weatherwax is smart enough to know the best place to be in a storm is in the legislative tent, not on top of it.

•**Logansport State Hospital.** This may not seem that important, but if Mitch Daniels is successful in privatizing state hospital facilities and he wins a second term, Weatherwax and Daniels could lock heads on this one. Then again, Daniels may back off, realizing he faced real opposition from food service workers at the hospital when he took office. Ultimately, they won out by winning a contract to keep their jobs and improve productivity.

•**Hoosier Heartland.** Daniels said last week he would "let the experts decide" which segment of the Logansport-to-Lafayette road would be built first. Make no mistake about it, he has veto authority over those decisions. Expert or not, Weatherwax has indicated he will make a case



Sen. Weatherwax

for the Logansport-to-Delphi segment being built simultaneously because of its economic significance, particularly for the new ethanol plant in Clymers that will open next spring. As for Long, he has been a virtual no-show in Hoosier Heartland activities and at annual meetings since 1984. He would probably support the Fort-to-Port portion of the project that would be great for Fort Wayne and Ohio, but Logansport-to-Delphi would remain a bottleneck for another three or four years while taxpayers watch the Major Moves money being spent in every other corner of the state.

•**Weatherwax passed.** When he had a chance to run for Congress in 2002 after the 2nd District was created and Rep. Steve Buyer was outside of it, Weatherwax did not snap at the chance to run. Unlike Chris Chocola, he had actually been elected to offices in the southern two-thirds of the district.

•**Legislative contacts.** Weatherwax will probably not let bills die in committee or squirrel them away in pigeonholes that are not large enough for pigeons to see the light of day. He's a let it out kind of legislator who knows both sides of the vote and the parties involved. He knows fights come back to haunt in later battles.

When State Rep. Craig Fry, D-Mishawaka, criticized him a few years ago for an energy summit, Weatherwax took a high road when he could have taken the highway.

•**Compromise.** And this, simple as it sounds, may be the most important factor.

Because of the nature of Indiana politics, Weatherwax has had to work with the other side of the aisle. By virtue of being in the Senate right after the late Frank O'Bannon left to become lieutenant governor, he was at the right place, at the right time to learn from some seasoned senators and work with his former colleagues in a Democrat House to pull off legislation. For six of the years he has been in the Senate, Logansport has had Democrat state reps, which forced him to work with both parties.

•**Progress.** Like it or not, the Senate president pro tem is no temporary position. Weatherwax, unless he becomes the Strom Thurmond of legislators, will not hold the position as long as Garton did. But he will be in a position to shape state policy and funding for some time, and with elections every four years in a district that is not particularly friendly to Democrats, he could be protected for some time. No Democratic legislators are on the horizon in the House who appear ready to make a bid to unseat him, and he's never lost an election.

Then again, they said that about Bob Garton before the calendar turned to May. In that respect, power, privilege and the Indiana Senate presidency really are temporary jobs, and we all are really just temps. ♦





**David Keene, The Hill** - One can blame it on Osama bin Laden and the war on terrorism, but what really began to dawn on conservative observers of this president and those around him is the simple fact that, unlike the Reaganites from whom they claim to have sprung, they want to use government and actually believe they can control it for their own purposes. They see themselves as managers and problem solvers who have been as willing as the architects of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society to use and grow government to achieve their social goals. As if that hasn't been bad enough, the president and his chief advisers dismissed the opinions and views of those with whom they disagreed as irrelevant, outdated, racist, sexist or simple-minded. When push came to shove, one was all too often either with this White House or against it and, as a consequence, when things started to go bad (as conservatives predicted they would), there were few willing to stand and fight for an administration they had come to dislike. What conservatives and those in the administration have to realize now is that, regardless of how they feel about each other, they will all be driven from power in November and set the stage or a liberal policy nightmare unless they can get together in the face of a common foe. The question now is not whether Bush is one of us or whether we "like" him but whether we can work together to avoid political disaster. It's going to take some give and take on both sides, but if we can't do it or if it's too late, we're liable to lose the Congress this fall and the White House in 2008. ♦

**Rich James, Post-Tribune** - To Gov. Mitch Daniels: Mitch, you better get up here. You've got a problem. No, it's not the Major Moves thing. That will take care of itself in time. It's a party problem. If you're trying to build a strong two-party system in Lake County, you've got a funny way of showing it. Democrats are laughing themselves silly watching the beleaguered Lake County Republicans become even weaker. It's a mess. You think George Bush is in the crapper? You ought to see what Republicans are doing up here. Maybe you don't know what's going on, Mitch, but you should. We appreciate your concern for Lake County and the amount of money you've already ponied up. But, you can't do it alone. Without a two-party system, all the money in the world won't turn around Lake County. The problems revolve around the fund-raiser for statewide candidates held at the Innsbrook Country Club last week and the upcoming county chairman's election later this month. You guessed it, Mitch, your buddy Dan Dumezich is right in the middle of it. He's the guy stirring the honey bucket. Dumezich organized

another of those big-buck fund-raisers for statewide candidates. Yeah, \$10,000 to be a host, \$5,000 a co-host, \$1,000 a sponsor and \$250 to stand in the back of the room and suck down a beer. This is the third time in a year-and-a-half he's done this. How is county Republican Chairman John Curley supposed to be competitive if you, Mitch, let people like Dumezich suck the money out of the county to finance the campaigns of the likes of Secretary of State Todd Rokita? Lord, Democrats don't have a chance of beating him anyway. And, you're not going to believe this, Mitch: Dumezich didn't even tell Curley he was hosting this snooty gala. Then after the fact, Dumezich wanted Curley to come up with \$5,000 and be a co-host. He wrote Curley a note, saying: "This is your chance to do something for the party. Please step up and be a leader and work for the party on this event. Be a co-host — please." Talk about a condescending attitude. But, I guess you can do that when you have deep pockets. Curley told him what he could do with his cocktail napkins. But this isn't just another one of your high-priced fund-raisers. No siree.

This is about Dumezich's quest to oust Curley as county chairman. A better man would take on Curley himself. But not Dumezich. He's the Republican counterpart of Bobby "The Fix Is In" Cantrell. Dumezich has his money on West Creek Township Assessor Rick Niemeyer. But, Niemeyer can't win. The bulk of the party appreciates what Curley has done. ♦

**Jack Colwell, South Bend Tribune** - Just two weeks after the primary election defeat of Indiana Senate President Pro-Tem Robert Garton, R-Columbus, leader of the Senate since 1980, Pennsylvania primary voters on Tuesday toppled the powerful, long-time president pro-tem of their Senate. In stunning upsets, President Pro-Tem Robert Jubelirer, 32-year Senate veteran who had held the top leadership job for 20 years, and the Senate majority leader as well were ousted in Republican primaries in their districts. Voter animosity toward Garton grew as he defended what was dubbed "health care for life" as part of legislative compensation. Voter animosity toward Jubelirer was fueled by a big pay raise legislators voted themselves -- up to 54 percent -- in a late-night session, without hearings or floor debate. Pennsylvania voters remembered and retaliated, defeating in all at least a dozen Republican incumbent legislators. Senate Majority Leader David Brightbill, who also lost in Pennsylvania, was defeated by a tire salesman with little political experience, campaign funding or name recognition when he filed. Sounds somewhat like the challenger who defeated Garton in Indiana, although the Pennsylvania challenger did not praise flogging as a criminal penalty. ♦

**COLUMNISTS**  
Indiana



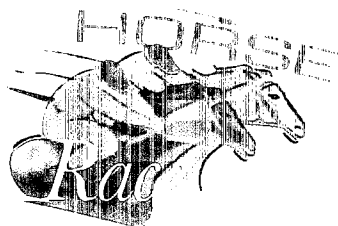
# Political Report

## Revised GDP shoots upward

**TRENDLINE NO. 1:** The U.S. Commerce Department revised the first quarter GDP and said the economy grew 5.3 percent, the fastest pace in more than two years. Before the revision, the GDP was forecast to be 5.8 percent for the year.

## 2006 State Races

**Secretary of State:** Republican: Secretary of State Todd Rokita. Democrat: Joe Pearson. **2002 Results:** Rokita (R) 789,261, Fernandez (D) 627,416, Sink-Burris (L) 60,937. **2006 Forecast:** Former Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture Joseph R. Pearson will lead the Democratic ticket this year as candidate for Secretary of State. "Joe brings a wealth of experience in state and local government to this job, and he's an excellent pick to lead our ticket this year," said Indiana Democratic Party Chair Dan Parker. "Hoosiers need someone in the Statehouse who will listen to them and who will do his best to serve their needs," Parker continued. "Joe Pearson isn't in this for himself. He's in it for the people. And that's the kind of person we need in state government these days." Pearson, 63, served as deputy commissioner of agriculture under Govs. Frank O'Bannon and Joe Kernan. He also served 12 years on the Blackford County School Board and is a former president of the Indiana School Boards Association. Before entering public life, Pearson helped run a family grain farming business in Hartford City. "I'm honored to be running for the job of Secretary of State," Pearson said. "I've made a lifelong commitment to public service, and I hope I will be able to continue serving this great state." Parker tells HPR that he believes Rokita is "extremely vulnerable." Parker said that Democratic polling shows Rokita's name ID is low and added, "2002 was a very different year" when Rokita was elected. **Status: LEANS ROKITA**



**Senate District 41:** Republican: Greg Walker. Democrat: Terry Coriden. **1998 Results:** Garton 26,499. **2002 Results:** Garton 21,918, Gividen (L) 3,350. **2006 Forecast:** It was inevitable. There's a spoof website on the Walker campaign - [www.theflogger.com](http://www.theflogger.com). It was created by a Columbus couple who describe themselves, off the record, as "generally Democrats" but who believed Senate President Bob Garton had "done a lot of good things" for Columbus. "The flogger idea was a natural," they said. "We got the website idea after the primary - we had heard the rumors of Walker supporting flogging, so after the election, we researched the Columbus Republic's website archives and found his letter to



**GREG 'THE FLOGGER' WALKER**  
Republican - Indiana State Senate

**Vote Yes to Flogging!**

the editor of 2003. We were surprised the newspaper had not reprinted that letter during the campaign, so we decided to create the flogger website. The truth is, it was an easy target, and very funny in addition." **Primary Status:** TOSSUP

**House District 21:** Republican: State Rep. Jackie Walorski. Democrat: Bob Kovach. **2002 Results:** Mangus 10,722. **2004 Results:** Walorski 13,763, Kaser (D) 7,737. **2006 Forecast:** Walorski told HPR on Tuesday that Major Moves appears to have simmered down in her district. "Southern St. Joseph County will be getting highway projects that it never expected," she said. "They have always been left out." She said the GOP disavowing the legislative lifetime health care "is important." She said, "We've been seeing more letters to the editor on that" than Major Moves. **Status:** TOSSUP

**House District 45:** Republican: State Rep. Bruce Borders. Democrat: Mike Bledsoe. **2002 Results:** Chowning 9,627, Borders 9,337. **2004 Results:** Borders 13,880, Chowning 10,643. **2006 Forecast:** Expecting a tough election? Borders told HPR on Tuesday, "It's always an election year." He acknowledged that Major Moves "is not popular in my district. People don't like it. But when I explain it to them, they tend to say, 'Well, OK.' I also tell them that if I had to do it over, I'd do it again." Borders said that Major Moves "involves a lot of explaining. So be it. It's easy to attack it with an 8 second soundbite." Borders said that one thing his constituents know, "They can trust me" because he has worked for years with many of his constituents. "I was mayor of a town that was 80 percent Democrat," Borders said. And, he said, controversial issues have a way of working out. He said he attended a high school baseball game at Shakamak recently and at the end of the game, "people were talking about how they got their entire game in without turning on the lights." Borders said, "I had to tell them that it was because of Daylight saving time. I'm hearing more of that from people ... that they're enjoying the longer evenings." **Status:** TOSSUP.

**House District 52:** Republican: State Rep. Marlin Stutzman. Democrat: LaGrange County Democratic Chairman Dennis Rorick. **2002 Results:** Stutzman (R) 6,950, Sturtz (D) 6,701. **2004 Results:** Stutzman (R) 12,872, DeLucenay (D) 6,496. **2006 Forecast:** Rep. Stutzman said his final **Status:** Stutzman acknowledged to HPR that his race "is going to come down to Major Moves." He said that it is just



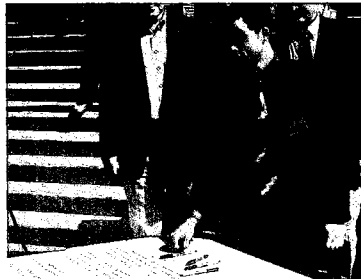
# HOWEY *Political Report*

dawning on LaGrange County officials that they are getting a windfall. "They're going to get \$40 million, which is more per capita than any other county," Stutzman said. "That is a huge windfall."

He said that LaGrange County Councilmen and Commissioners are thrilled by the money and said he would urge them to repeal the county's wheel tax.

"My job is to go out and explain the issue. If I sit down and talk for 20 minutes, people have a better understanding about it."

Stutzman said that he isn't hearing much from his constituents about Major Moves. **TOSSUP**



Republican Jon Elrod signs the GOP Pledge. (HPR Photo)

**House District 69:** Republican: Billy Bright. Democrat: Dave Cheatham. **2002 Results:** Lytle 9,777, Newell 7,678. **2004 Results:** Bright 12,639, Lytle 11,018. **2006 Forecast:** Bright told HPR on Tuesday that the new Ohio River bridge at Madison as part of the Major Moves program will result in "\$100 million in economic development" for his district. "After 30 years of talking, it is finally going to happen," Bright said. He said he expects a tough race from Cheatham. "All I can do is work hard and at the end of the day, voters will decide." He said he is preparing to remind his constituents that the bridge "wouldn't have happened without the Republican majority" and added that he will articulate other issues such as "less government, lower taxes and

defense of the family." **Status:** TOSSUP.

**House District 77:** Republican: Andrew Smith. Democrat: State Rep. Phil Hoy. **2004 Results:** Hoy 11,308, Henning (R) 9,804, Garrett (I) 1,285. **2006 Forecast:** Smith took up the party leaders' call on health insurance and challenged Hoy to "guarantee the benefit is not reinstated for future retirees." Smith participated in Tuesday's news conference in Indianapolis. But Hoy said Smith and the other Republicans are leaving out the important fact that Republican legislators helped put the benefit in place (Langhorne, **Evansville Courier & Press**). "It's a nice try, but it's pretty shabby," he said. "That (benefit) has been set up since long before I was elected. "I do not take the state health insurance, and when I was on County Council, I didn't take the county policy." Hoy said legislative leaders created the "way too generous" perk in lieu of a raise in pay that would have attracted unfavorable attention, but they should turn that formula around. Instead of a "huge perk," Hoy said, the Legislature could try passing incremental year-to-year pay raises "just like all state and county employees." **Status:** LEANS HOY

**House District 97:** Republican: Center Township Board Member Jon Elrod. Democrat: State Rep. Ed Mahern. **2002 Results:** Mahern (D) 5,016, Klopfenstein (L) 534. **2004 Results:** Mahern (D) 7,705, Butler (R) 6,646. **2006 Forecast:** Elrod believes he can run competitively with Mahern, noting that Roxanne Butler polled 47 percent in 2004. Of course, 2006 is shaping up to be a lot different than 2004. **Status:** LIKELY MAHERN ❖

## Congratulations!

### Rep. Tim Neese and Tom Dermody on your primary election victories.



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## Daniels faced tough questions from Congress

WASHINGTON - Gov. Mitch Daniels faced tough questions from a congressional subcommittee Wednesday about how Indiana is resolving its transportation funding problems through the Major Moves transportation and economic development plan (**Times of Northwest Indiana**). Daniels told committee members the pending 75-year lease of the Indiana Toll Road to a foreign consortium for \$3.8 billion is necessary to prevent a \$2.8 billion shortfall in the state's transportation budget over the next 10 years. The \$3.8 billion, which is a cash payment to the state, also would provide interest of \$500,000 a day, he said. Indiana would be the only state "with pre-funded money for transportation," he said. Ranking committee Democrat Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., questioned Daniels as to why Indiana didn't look to borrow money to pay for the plan, rather than lease the Toll Road. "Even if we could capture this much value over time in our state, we would have missed the opportunity to build roads we need today," Daniels responded. DeFazio was particularly concerned with the potential for the private consortium to increase the Toll Road fee once it gained control of the road. "The point is we have locked in and limited their ability to raise prices," Daniels said. "In this case, you won't control the tolls and in 2010 your truck charge will be 20.4 cents per mile," he said. Committee chairman, Rep. Thomas Petri, R-Wis., also asked Daniels if the lease was expedient in the short run but unwise in the long run. "Does no one notice the risk of inaction?" Daniels



said. "No one seems to have calculated the cost of lost jobs and economic activity that Indiana paid for sitting around waiting for a miracle."

## Skyway CEO pulls out of Forum

MERRILLVILLE - The first public appearance of an official with the newly leased Indiana Toll Road ended in a public relations pique, as Skyway CEO Fernando Redondo pulled out of a scheduled address to the Northwest Indiana Forum (**Post-Tribune**). The decision came after a round of calls by local media after the forum announced Wednesday it would bar the public and the media from the event. "It was pretty apparent there was a concern there," Northwest Indiana Forum President Vince Galbiati said. "We didn't want to put them in a position to out-and-out say they wouldn't come so we took them off the hook."

## Sen. Rogers says public accepting Major Moves

MERRILLVILLE - Sen. Earline Rogers, D-Gary, was still scheduled to speak this afternoon. She said she was disappointed when she learned the press was being kept out of the meeting (**Post-Tribune**). Overall, she said, the public is beginning to accept Major Moves. "I think once they see the jobs it will provide, they will be for it," Rogers said.

## Roob's surgery to delay health hearings

INDIANAPOLIS - Back surgery will keep Mitch Roob, secretary of the Family and Social Services Administration, from his office most of June, a spokesman said yesterday (**Associated Press**). Roob will have surgery May 31 at University Hospital in Indianapolis and anticipates his recuperation will take several weeks,

spokesman Dennis Rosebrough said. The impending surgery forced Roob and the agency to cancel four public meetings to discuss the issue of uninsured Indiana residents. The meetings, which were to be held May 30 to June 6 in Fort Wayne, Lagrange, Elkhart and Terre Haute, will be rescheduled.

## Evansville school chief under fire from board

EVANSVILLE - Evansville-Vanderburgh School Superintendent Bart McCandles' leadership is under question, and two School Board members said Wednesday there may be enough votes to fire him soon. Board member Mike Duckworth told the **Evansville Courier & Press** editorial board that he is "extremely concerned about the superintendent," and School Board President Chris Kiefer said later in an interview: "I think we just need different leadership to get us where we need to go."

## Sen. Lanane meets with corrections union

PENDLETON - more than 20 other members of Unity Team UAW/ATF Local 9212 met Wednesday evening at the Holiday Inn with Sen. Tim Lanane, D-Anderson, to discuss issues facing correction officers (**Anderson Herald-Bulletin**). "Many employees with the Department of Correction come from my district in Madison County," Lanane said. "All those people are my constituents and I have concerns for the safety of the people inside these facilities." Recent Unity Team meetings have seen members take issues with understaffing and virtually mandatory overtime. The union has been vying to regain some power since Gov. Mitch Daniels rescinded an executive order that gave unions the right to collective bargaining agreements. They hope meeting with Lanane is the first step toward that goal.