



Daniels, Bayh head 2008 Top 50

Tax crisis shapes top of the list

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**
MARK SCHOEFF JR.
and **MARK CURRY**

INDIANAPOLIS - We enter 2008 in crisis and yet with high expectations. Indiana's political establishment has been turned on its ear by a populist uprising and yet another stunning election upset. There is an unpopular war and while the Iraq troop surge appears to have brought success, there are considerable doubts as to whether it can be sustained. Last week, there were 16 American soldiers killed in battle.

The **2008 HOWEY POLITICS INDIANA TOP 50 LIST** is like its nine predecessors going back to 1999: we weigh the potential contributions in relation to our times. In 2007, we featured U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts - an Indiana native - who presided over a series of 5-4 votes on topics that profoundly impact Hoosier politics such as abortion and



Gov. Daniels at the Tipton County Courthouse last July to announce the Getrag plant. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

the voter ID law. We had UAW Presidents Ron Gettelfinger and Mo Davidson, both of whom played huge roles in new

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The Hoosier primary

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - As a political writer watching the presidential race get started this month, I've been envious of my colleagues in states like Iowa and New Hampshire. They get to see the presidential candidates up close and personal. The candidates visit their newsrooms and editorial boards. They appear at cafes and bowling alleys.



Brian Howey's Column

It's been since 1976 that an Indiana primary in the first week of May meant anything. That's when President Ford and Ronald Reagan were in a dead heat. Reagan won Indiana, then headed into the convention at Kansas City trailing by 187 delegates, eventually



“Woe unto anyone who underestimates Jon Elrod.”

- Republican Tom Rose after losing the 7th CD caucus to State Rep. Jon Elrod last Sunday



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losing.

The most epic Indiana primary occurred in 1968 when Bobby Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy spent most of April campaigning in Indiana. I still remember Bobby and Ethel Kennedy coming through my hometown of Peru on the Wabash Cannonball. Peru was mostly a Republican town, but several thousand people turned out at the N&W tracks to hear RFK speak. We watched him pull away, waving to us as the train - and ultimately RFK a month later - disappeared down the tracks.

Over the past couple of weeks, we've heard Hoosiers weigh in on how we might get to have a say in presidential politics. Democrat Ann DeLaney floated the idea of adopting a caucus system similar to Iowa's. The big reason Indiana still has its primary in May is that the legislature is reluctant to move the date. That's because during its short session, their adjournment doesn't occur until mid-March in presidential election years. That gives legislators a mere six weeks to campaign and fewer if there's a special session.

So Indiana won't move its date due to the many self-preservation instincts of legislators.

Gov. Mitch Daniels floated a plan: have the Indiana presidential primary the same day as New Hampshire's and levy a surtax on any campaign-related sales (such as TV ads and direct mail) to pay for the cost of holding the election. Great idea.

There's a historical aspect to the governor's proposal. Early in the 20th Century, Indiana actually had the earliest primary ... before primaries were so sexy. But we gave it up decades ago and New Hampshire took over. So under the Daniels proposal, we would just reclaim what is right-

fully ours.

Of course, the irony in all of this is that with no current Democratic and Republican frontrunner, there's a chance - perhaps a good chance - that our May 6 primary may actually mean something.

On the Republican side, Mike Huckabee (Iowa), John McCain (New Hampshire) and Mitt Romney (Iowa) have split the three primaries. Despite all the early bad news, Romney actually leads in delegates. There is plenty of speculation that Fred Thompson could win the South Carolina primary, and on the Feb. 5 Super Tuesday, Rudy Giuliani could find the winner's circle in states like Florida, California and New York. Republicans could easily see four or

five different winners by Feb. 5 and the potential of no clear frontrunner on the date many experts - and my, how they've been so wrong this year - figured the two nominations would be wrapped up.

Things are as unsettled on the Democratic side. U.S. Sen. Barack Obama has a one delegate lead over Sen. Hillary Clinton, with John Edwards in third a mere six delegates behind.

Again, Feb. 5 was

supposed to be the day of a knockoff punch for either Obama or Clinton. I don't see either one of them running the table. Obama has a 38-33 percent lead over Clinton in a Rasmussen poll in South Carolina. Hillary has big leads in Florida (56-23), California (47-31) and New Jersey (42-30) in big Super Tuesday states and will likely win Arkansas, Connecticut, probably New York (though that is competitive). Obama will win his home state of Illinois. The two will likely split the remaining states.

Maybe, just maybe, it will all come down to Hoosiers on May 6 anyway. ❖



Robert F. Kennedy in Indianapolis the night Martin Luther King Jr. was killed.



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contracts for the flagging U.S. auto industry and, in Davidson's case, was instrumental in landing the Getrag plant at Tipton.

This year the list is weighted toward the governor's race, which will be impacted by the property tax crisis and pending solutions. Thus, we have the Governor, legislative fiscal and chamber leaders, and Eric Miller, who has fanned the repeal movement. We bring up our junior senator, who by the end of summer could find himself on the presidential ticket. All of these people and events could have profound repercussions on Indiana politics.

We have seen old names - Bart Peterson, Julia Carson and Graham Richard - fade. There are new characters on the scene like Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard, who will certainly influence events and remind us of the consequences for failing to act, or acting with courage with the consequences be damned. And we cite visionaries who saw things others missed and their actions steered events in ways no one could have ever predicted.

Our 10th Top 50 List is an opportunity for us to step back, listen to our readers and colleagues, and attempt to add some context to the day-to-day, week-to-week events that shape our professional lives. Judging from the volume of e-mail and phone calls we received from HPI subscribers and friends, there continues to be great interest in this annual compilation.

The thing we like best about it is that it fuels conversations, debates and alters perspectives. Sometimes the reaction we get alters our own perspectives. And every year, a day or two after our list is published, there is always something or

someone we wish we had remembered, or a valiant soul we would have liked to have cited. It is, after all, subjective analysis, but, we think, a useful one.

To the many readers who participated, our heartfelt thanks. And that goes out to just about everyone on our list who contributes one way or another to something we all cherish: a thriving and stable Indiana.

1. Gov. Mitch Daniels:

The governor is at the fulcrum of the 2008 political process. If he can forge a historic property tax reform in March or April of this year, that, in tandem with the record \$6.7 million cash-on-hand, would be enough to place him on firm political turf. His state of the state address summed up other successes: record job creation and investment (many of these jobs are still in the pipeline), a trend-setting telecommunications act,

more families with health insurance, shorter BMV lines (remember how BMV was a lightning rod two years ago?), a fully funded transportation program, a new Colts stadium next September, and the inevitable TV ads that promise a trip to Indy from South Bend/Elkhart with no stop lights will be powerful campaign tools. But stop for a moment and listen in your mind to his speech Tuesday night: it was brimming with optimism while throwing out a gauntlet of challenges. We expect Daniels to use 2008 not simply as a reaffirmation of his power, but a referendum on where this state goes from here. This is a governor who spent more political capital than his three predecessors combined.

In doing so, he is picking up impressive labor endorsements that no Republican has ever had before, with more on the way. The re-elect will be about vision, vision, vision, something his opponents currently lack. The governor is a master strategist and communicator. We expect he will be at the height of his mojo when his campaign is rolling full steam come late March (depending on when the legislature adjourns). His potential opponents aren't anywhere close in money, message and gonads. He will possess the money to define them before they can sweep up the primary night confetti.

2. U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh:

Indiana's, and perhaps the country's, most cautious politician finds himself involved in a risky wager this year.



Gov. Daniels visits citizens in a cafe in Crawfordsville last summer. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



Sens. Clinton and Bayh last in January 2007 after traveling to Iraq and Afghanistan. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)



When he endorsed Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton for president, she looked like a shoo-in for the Democratic nomination. She's now in a fierce battle with Sen. Barack Obama. For Bayh, this provides an opportunity to campaign for Clinton and boost his chances for a vice presidential nomination. But it's not readily apparent what he brings to the ticket. Clinton and Bayh occupy the same moderate left-of-center political space. He can't guarantee a win in Indiana. Besides, by the time the convention rolls around, Clinton might need someone who can help heal wounds in the African American community. But Bayh continues to use his committee postings - armed services, intelligence, banking - to burnish his national security and economic credentials. He is viable as a Clinton cabinet secretary, if he's not vice president. HPI telephoned the senator's office yesterday and spoke with Press Secretary Jonathon Swain. "[Sen. Bayh] wanted to be helpful to Sen. Clinton because he feels strongly about her candidacy," Swain said. "I do believe you will continue to see him work on her behalf." But what about all the rumors? Does he want to be considered for vice president? "He's certainly flattered by it," Swain said. "I've heard him say that many times. He knows that the election is of great consequence, so for people to speculate that he might be beneficial to the Democratic nominee is certainly flattering What he's doing now is concentrating on being the best senator from Indiana that he can be and the rest of it will play itself out."

3. House Speaker B. Patrick Bauer:

The speaker is at the height of his power. He's gone from a "car bomber" (as the governor put it in 2005) to a true statesman as he has signalled a consistent willingness to forge a compromise on property taxes. Hoosiers are more trusting when political foes come together (as Frank O'Bannon and Stephen Goldsmith did in 1997 on Conseco Fieldhouse; as Daniels and Gov. Kernan did in 2007) and find solutions. Bauer faces an uphill battle to maintain control of the House with a number of open seats in districts where Bush/Daniels had big pluralities in 2004. There may be more retirements revealed between now and Feb. 22. Statescraft with the Governor will at least keep him and his caucus in the game, turning many of these House races on local issues if he forges historic tax reforms. If Bauer doesn't, he becomes a target.

4. Senate President Pro Tempore



Speaker B. Patrick Bauer

David Long: The tall Fort Wayne sycamore turned in a gracious and inclusive first year of power, in which the face of the Senate went from grizzled old white men to a new generation that gave women seats at the table. This year, President Long is on a tightrope, seeking to balance the goals of the Daniels administration from a restive conservative wing of his own caucus seeking a more radical course. If you read this on Thursday afternoon, the Senate Majority Caucus will be making a fateful decision on whether SJR-8 gets out of Senate Rules for a vote. If it's killed, he'll have to weather the populist storm in the coming days. Could the snuffing ignite an Eric Miller candidacy for governor? Or endanger Senate incumbents? If it hits the Senate floor, the repeal will probably pass, multiple sources tell us. If Long emerges in March or April with good reviews and power

intact, he becomes a giant beyond his own physical stature. In 2009, we see him as perfectly placed to help install the thrust of the Kernan-Shepard reforms. Should Long emerge from the 2009 long-session this highly regarded, he ends up on our short list as we head into a post-Daniels era.

5. State Sen. Luke Kenley: The Noblesville Republican (and West Texas rancher) has not only been the man of the hour in the early weeks of this session, but he will be a huge player in the hours prior to sine die. He has an excellent working relationship with the Governor. Some of his cautionary statements have been made with an eye to various constituencies. The governor's staff has high trust in him. The nettles under his saddle are the conservative Senate Republicans, who felt he caved to Bauer and Chairman Crawford on the property tax reform/rebate check fiasco that lit the tax crisis last June. We, too, wished



Mike Sodrel and Baron Hill debate in 2006 at Vincennes University-Jasper.

Kenley had stuck to his guns after that late LSA report in April that killed what we thought was a credible plan that would have saved many homeowners much angst and fear. Kenley is as bright as they come, but his political instincts aren't as keen.

6. U.S. Rep. Baron Hill and Mike So-



drel: A recent Wall Street Journal article demonstrates that Indiana's 9th CD will once again draw national attention. It's a bitter feud that encompasses four cycles and now includes Sodrel's allegation that Hill punched him after a debate in their 2002 tilt. Hill denies the story. The interest in this race becomes more intense this year because it's one of two in the state - the other being the 7th CD - that is likely to be competitive. Hill has used his seat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee to develop an auto fuel economy bill that put him at the heart of the recent energy policy debate in Congress. He's also got a chance to fortify his budget-cutting credibility if he insists that an economic stimulus bill is offset by future spending reductions. Hill seems to be sending signals, like jumping out early on a bill that would curtail U.S. involvement in Iraq last spring, that he wants to join House leadership. He helped Majority Leader Steny Hoyer win his position in a battle against Rep. John Murtha, who was backed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. With Hill's huge fundraising lead and a tepid GOP presidential field that may depress Republican turnout, Sodrel faces a big challenge in winning back this seat and improving his record against Hill to 2-2.

7. U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar: If Barack Obama continues to win Democratic primaries, Lugar could eclipse Bayh as the most influential Indiana senator in the presidential race. As Obama nears the nomination, questions about his experience could start to dominate the race. That's when he might begin highlighting his work with Lugar. Indiana's senior senator has teamed with Illinois' junior senator on weapons-reduction legislation. Obama's work with Lugar in this area may become one of the most important examples of his understanding of international security and geopolitics. The senior senator resides in this spot only by circumstance. When we compile our Decade List, Lugar would certainly be at the top because of the many ways he has



Sen. Lugar and staff on the Potempkin Stairs on Odessa, Unkraine last summer. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

impacted Indianapolis, Indiana, our nation, our world. I had the opportunity only a few get to see - Lugar working an international stage in Russia, Ukraine and Albania. It was an unforgettable experience and only heightens our regard for his body of work and causes us to reflect on the many ways he has changed so many lives for the better. He was viewed as a statesman, a diplomat, an intellectual, and a keen humanitarian. Lugar con-

tinues to be active in areas ranging from weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, to Iraq, to energy, to agriculture, our burgeoning national debt, to complications of the actions of our warriors and our teachers. A press release late last year on educators got me to think of all the teachers who had impacted my life. Few politicians are so adept at prompting not only introspection, but the interconnected worldwide view. Without Dick Lugar, Indiana and America would be very different places. Had he been president, we believe we could have avoided some of the tragic mistakes over the last 12 years. With the elevation of the next president - particularly if it is a Republican - there will be calls for him to join the administration. We don't believe he would ever do that, though part of us wishes we could share him more vividly with the rest of this writhing world.

8. Eric Miller: The man running controversial





Advance America has been on the cusp of breaking out of his 25-percent Christian right fringe into a populist prairie firestorm mainstream on the property tax repeal effort. At this writing, it's unclear how this will turn out, but there's no doubt that Miller has made himself a real player. If President Long denies him a floor vote on SJR-8, the political repercussions could be enormous. While he insisted personally to Gov. Daniels that he wasn't going to challenge him in the 2008 GOP primary, he refused to do the Gen. Sherman thing with us, saying he wasn't a candidate "at this time." Miller has made himself someone who has to be taken seriously. Having said that, the way he conducts Advance America as a tax-sheltered non-profit when it truly is a public policy advocacy group means Miller is walking a legal tightrope. Regardless of how the tax repeal turns out, we expect Miller to run for governor in 2012.

9. Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard: We have a Republican mayor of the Circle City when this was supposed to be a conglomerating Democratic bastion.

He truly is a man who found himself in the right place at the right time. Allies tell us he knows he is mayor more for what Bart Peterson had become as opposed to who he is. He was unslated; his county chairman repeatedly told crowds in his presence that the City-County Council was the top priority. He was mostly ignored by the state party and many top GOP operatives and money people. In producing one of the most stunning upsets in Hoosier history (Newt Gingrich was still talking about it on the "Today Show" on Monday), Ballard has become the poster boy of what can happen when an incumbent loses the voice of the people. The "Ballard Rules" are the dark shadows haunting every legislator these very hours. The beautiful thing about Ballard is that he owes no one. He won without flinging a speck of mud at his opponent. He gets to define himself when most incoming officeholders have had to spray themselves with disinfectant. Ballard has surrounded himself with good people (i.e. Joe Loftus, Lisa Kobe, Scott



Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard as a candidate at a tax protest rally on Monument Circle last July. Below, Councilman Andre Carson minutes after his first ballot caucus nomination last week. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howey)

Newman, Paul Okeson). He's been able to cast his showdown with Sheriff Frank Anderson in civil, public policy terms. It's going to be fascinating to watch Ballard in the coming years. Semper Fidelis.

10. Councilman Andre Carson and State Rep. Jon Elrod: These are the main players that will give us an early look at 2008 election trends. The two face off on March 11 in the special election to replace the late U.S. Rep. Julia Carson. Andre Carson won an impressive first ballot victory last Saturday, though he got just



over 50 percent of the vote. That tells us he has a coalition to build. With State Rep. David Orentlicher vowing to run in the primary, and perhaps others will join him, Carson begins his political career with big challenges. He passed his first test admirably, but Democratic critiques such as Bilerico's Bil Browning were alleging a fix by the Carson machine. We've heard persistent talk that some Democrats are urging supporters of other caucus candidates to vote for Elrod in the special election. We'll believe that when we see it. If Carson emerges on March 11 and then again on May 6, he will have navigated troubled waters and should be in good shape for the fall. This seat is crucial for Marion County Democrats, who lost the prosecutor's race in '06, the mayor and the council in '07. To lose this congressional seat would be devastating for what was supposed to be the coming majority party. We believe that if Barack Obama is the Democratic presidential nominee, that bodes well for Democrats to hold on to this seat. Having said that, Rep.



Elrod comes into this race as a giant killer, defeating State Rep. Ed Mahern, the man who drew the maps. Elrod is an impressive grassroots campaigner, having won two races in very Democratic districts. As a moderate Republican, he is a better fit than his caucus opponent Tom Rose. Some in the GOP hierarchy were tepid on Elrod because they said he couldn't raise money. That's disingenuous since his 2006 HD97 race wasn't targeted, and thus put him at a disadvantage on the money front. We began hearing whispers about HD97 coming into play early that October and it wasn't until later that month that resources began to flow in what was one of the biggest upsets of the '06 cycle. Anyone dismissing Elrod is playing with fire.

11. Gary Mayor Rudy Clay: Clay succeeded Mayor Scott King when King resigned and won his own term in 2007. As Lake County Democratic chairman, he has consolidated power and wrestled the party's base from East Chicago, where it resided for half a century to the Steel City. That's an impressive feat and that's why he's up this far on the list. With the Northwest RDA in place, and the Gary-Chicago Airport hot property, Clay becomes the biggest Region power broker.

12. Jill Long Thompson/Jim Schellinger: Between the two of these Democrat candidates, we don't have a full campaign. Schellinger reported \$2.4 million for his year-end report with \$1.8 million cash on hand. But if you look at his \$10,000 donors, he raised \$650,884 in the first half and \$543,033 in the second half, and many of those donors were second and third time contributors from his partners at CSO Architects and the Simons. That is not a good trendline. After reporting \$1.2 million in the first half, we figured a decent year-end total would be \$3 million, and he came up way short of that. Go past the money situation and we have a candidate who "listens" but his campaign is in turmoil. Name the phrase that Jim Schellinger stands for? We can't think of one. There is no campaign manager less than five months from the



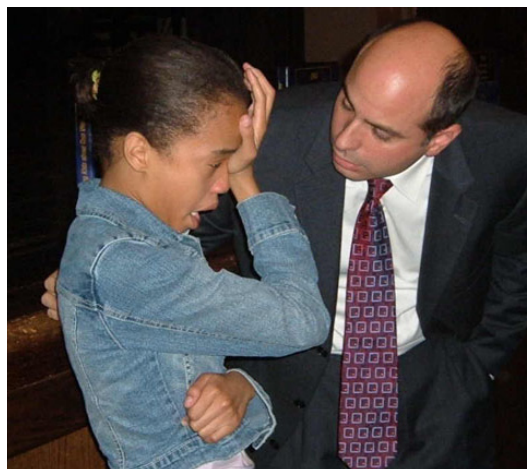
Jill Long Thompson and Jim Schellinger at the HPI Forum last October.

primary. We haven't had any kind of meaningful access to the candidate in almost a year when he could have used all the earned media he could get. To win in May, he will not only have to build up his non-existent name ID, but he will have to tear down Jill Long Thompson in the process. Add to this scenario that two of his campaign co-chairs - Bart

Peterson and Julia Carson - have been defeated and departed. This is not a good scenario. As for Thompson, she's had half a year to get into the money game and raised \$634,000 with \$200,000 coming in on Dec. 31 from the SEIU. She has only \$430,000 cash on hand. Not impressive. On the issues, she gives a good critique of the Governor's failings, but there is no vision. No white paper. No definitive stance on property taxes (ditto for Schellinger). She seems to want to go back to the days when government did all the work (she wants to review all out-sourcing) and the pre-daylight saving time era. We just don't think either of those thrusts are enough to topple an incumbent despite what the polls said late last year. Remember, Gov. Joe Kernan had a double-digit lead on Daniels at the beginning of 2004. A winning campaign has to have a compelling message with a vision, raise money, unite their party, and provide media access. It's likely one of these candidates will emerge (thus, the 12th ranking). A true front-runner

should have been up in the Top 5 and we resisted the argument that these two candidates really need to be in a lower percentile. Our sources are telling us that as of now, there are no unification talks under way between the two campaigns, as was the case in 1988 when Evan Bayh and Frank O'Bannon joined forces.

13. Marion County Prosecutor Carl Brizzi: As this past week has sadly revealed, crime is a huge issue in the state's capital city and Brizzi will play a critical role in working with Mayor Ballard and public safety officials to staunch the flow of blood. His



Prosecutor Brizzi with a student at Shortridge Middle School. (HPI Photo)



decision to put a satellite resource office in the Meadows sends a critical message. The continued perception of a crime problem will only enhance the out-migration of people into the suburbs. WIBC (93.1 FM) that reaches most of central Indiana, recently offered him a live mic on his own weekly "Crime Beat" show. While few, if any, elected officials across the country have their own shows on major media, a friend of Brizzi's did. From 1994 - 2001 Mayor Rudy Giuliani hosted his own radio program, "Live from City Hall." And while Brizzi needs no media coaching, as Giuliani's Indiana State Finance Chair he certainly has VIP Rudy access.

14. Evansville Mayor Jonathan

Weinzapfel: If he had wanted it, the second-term mayor of Evansville would be the unanimous gubernatorial hopeful for Indiana Democrats in '08. He made an astute judgment to go for a second term and await the open race in 2012. If he does, Mayor Weinzapfel will probably enter that race as a frontrunner. And we expect his name to come up in the LG derby come May and June. He'd be a great geographical, generational, local government balance for either JLT or Schellinger. We suspect fulfilling a second term is a wiser course. Weinzapfel's upsides and promises are towering. If he can stabilize Casino Aztar, develop a new sheen for downtown Evansville and avoid the second-term controversies that can pockmark a mayor, the sky's the limit.

15. House Minority Leader Brian

Bosma: The House Minority Leader wants the speakership so badly he can taste it. And it shows. If he plays his cards right ... but not too far right ... he has a decent shot at returning to the gavel in 2009. It's been interesting to watch him advocate for the Governor's tax reforms, while playing to the aspirations of caucus members who dream of a property tax repeal. It is the art of relieving pressure. Bosma has largely resisted some of these tugs to the right (i.e. intelligent design) and has become a true player with economic Republicans. Bosma has also done more to make the process transparent (I-Span, coming to a TV set or computer near you) than anyone else. He made a series of bold decisions on health care for life that history will judge



Sen. Waltz congratulates Mayor Ballard on Election Night as Melyssa Donaghy looks on. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

kindly. A return to the speakership in 2009 while forging historic compromises on the Kernan-Shepard reforms will make him a real player as the post-Daniels era takes shape.

16. State Sens.

Brent Waltz and Mike

Young: This freshman and veteran tandem have done more to push the property tax repeal agenda among Senate conservatives. In doing so, they are creating headaches for President Long and Gov. Daniels. Waltz is beginning to emerge late in his first term as a player. We see in Sen. Young a potential map-maker when redistricting comes into play in 2010-2011.

17. Betsy Burdick:

Who is the governor's enforcer? Many legislative and gubernatorial sources point to Burdick, the deputy chief of staff who has become a trusted trouble-shooter and deliverer of messages of discipline down at the Sausage Factory. Her age and gender create a beguiling veneer that can catch trouble-makers off guard. And she knows her football as well as Condi Rice.

18. Bob Grand:

When no one else was coming to the side of Greg Ballard - not Gov. Daniels, not Chairman Clark, not a Goldsmith, Hudnut or Lugar - hardly anyone of stature, there was Bob Grand, hosting a late-summer fundraiser that lit the fuse on the greatest upset in Hoosier history. From his perch as managing partner of Barnes & Thornburg, to his role in the Phoenix Group that revitalized the Kittle era GOP and created the scenario for Mitch Daniels to come back to Indiana and run in 2004, Grand has proven to be an instrumental player ... from Pennsylvania Avenue to Market Street. In writing this, we simply ask Grand to show some humility to Bill Moreau (who may be closer to the Bayh motherlode than many think these days).

19. U.S. Rep. Mike Pence:

Pence is no longer the chairman of the House conservative caucus. But he remains a Republican touchstone. He doesn't limit his interest to social policy. He ventured out on immigration to forge an alternative approach that might have moved the debate farther than his enforcement-only GOP colleagues allowed it to go. With his penchant for reducing the size of government and his squeaky-clean background, he can help Republicans overcome the profligate spending and scandals that caused them to lose their congressional majorities. In addition, he can work the media as well as



anyone in Washington and has an affable personality that has drawn praise even from his political opponents. But how many people will follow Pence is a question. He was blown out by Rep. John Boehner in their race last year for Republican leader in the House. His prospects for becoming Speaker of the House are slim, even in the highly unlikely event that the GOP reclaims the majority.

20. Lee Hamilton: He has more influence and a higher profile in his congressional retirement than he did during most of his long tenure in the House. Hamilton is the Democrats' top elder statesman on international relations and national security. As co-chair of the 9/11 Commission and a participant on the Iraq Study Group, he has helped shape the national discussion about the two most important issues of the new century. His position as president of the Woodrow Wilson International Center ensures he'll continue to have a forum to weigh in on policy matters.

21. Chief Justice John Roberts: Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito are the new additions to the Supreme Court. As President Bush hoped, they have pushed the court in a conservative direction. Roberts' influence can be seen in crucial 5-4 decisions. Observers credit him for his political skill in persuading Justice Anthony Kennedy, the key swing vote, to side with the court conservatives.

22. U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky: Nobody brings home the bacon like Visclosky. Even when his party was in the minority, Visclosky was adept at using his position on the House Appropriations Committee to fund projects in northwest Indiana. His stature has only been enhanced now that his party is in charge and he has a subcommittee chairmanship.

23. U.S. Rep. Brad Ellsworth: The Evansville Democrat is the new sheriff on Capitol Hill. He has carved an image for himself by taking advantage of his background in law enforcement. He is one of the leading first-year Democrats calling for a crackdown on illegal immigration at the border and in the workplace. This is one of several stances that will likely play well in his re-election bid in this conservative 8th CD. He also can use his perch on the House Agriculture Committee to connect with farmers. He's voted against House leadership enough that he can claim some independence and he's working the district hard. He seems to be heading toward a solid re-election.

24. U.S. Rep. Joe

Donnelly: At the beginning of the 2006 election cycle, Donnelly was seen as a second-tier candidate at best. Now he's formidable. He has \$700,000 in cash and no declared opponent in a blue-collar district that leans Democratic anyway. He has voted against Iraq withdrawal bills to bolster the independent image he's trying to promote. He's on the House Agriculture Committee, which helps him in the district, and on the House Financial Services Committee, which helps him on fundraising. Like Ellsworth, he opposes his party's leadership on enough votes that it might be difficult to portray him as a lackey to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

25. U.S. Rep. Mark Souder: When the GOP was in control of the House, Souder was often a central figure in shaping and promoting conservatives' social policy positions. In the minority, he is relegated to criticizing what he sees as the Democratic drift. But his arguments - in some cases his harangues - in the House Education and Labor Committee outline the primary lines of attack that the GOP pursue against the majority. He also continues to be one of the most political savvy pols in Indiana. He'll need to use all his skills this year in what could be one of his closest races yet. He's raising money earlier than he ever has.

26. U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer: The Monticello Republican has found his niche in military matters - specifically policy toward former soldiers. As the highest ranking Republican on the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Buyer has not endeared himself to all veterans groups. But his position allows him to highlight his own military background while reaching out to a highly motivated part of the electorate. Like the Republicans in the Hoosier delegation, his influence is severely limited in the minority. But he serves one of the safest GOP districts in the country.

27. U.S. Rep. Dan Burton: Another casualty of the Democratic takeover of Congress, Burton's profile has diminished considerably on Capitol Hill. When the Republicans ruled, he could be eccentric and influential, especially when he chaired the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. Now, he's just eccentric.

28. Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman: If Gov. Daniels' tax package gets through the legislature and still looks like the governor's original plan, a good part of the accolades will go to Skillman, who plays a crucial liaison role. She's played a conspicuous role on energy issues, which are crucial to the state's future. Looking ahead, we ask if she has



Rep. Ellsworth with Sen. Barack Obama.
(HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



gubernatorial aspirations. Those we've talked with inside the administration say the subject never comes up,

29. Chief Justice Randall Shepard and former Gov. Joe Kernan: In unprecedented fashion, Gov. Daniels charged a sitting chief justice and the man Daniels defeated to head a Blue Ribbon Commission in Local Government Reform. Their 25-point recommendations are a credible blueprint to fashion Hoosier government for the 21st Century. While the legislature is obsessed with property tax reform this year, we hope at least some of their recommendations are brought up for votes this year and most of the rest in 2009. We see both these statesmen playing a continued role in coaxing a reluctant legislature to leave the 19th Century behind.

30. Democratic Chairman Dan Parker: He's kept the party afloat without the personal license plate money, helped hold on to the House and his mayors rule most of Indiana's big cities. He steered resources when the South Bend mayor was on the ropes. His attempts to unite the party against Daniels have failed. He may be called upon to do the same thing in the 7th CD. We'll see how he does at crisis management. His verbal attacks on the governor are often shrill and extremely partisan, but ... that's what the chairman is for.

31. Ways & Means Chairman William Crawford: The Ways & Means chairman will have an influential role in the governor's tax package, as he did on Wednesday when Gov. Daniels testified before his committee. While he has significant influence over the process, we still think his tax rebate was one of the worst pieces of public policy we've ever seen. Perhaps this year if he can help steer a compromise on the governor's tax package, he can renew the luster on his career. And we see Crawford blocking any attempt to get SJR-8 through the House.

32. Chamber President Kevin Brinegar and IMA President Pat Kiely: In a year when property taxes are front stage center, Brinegar has emerged as the chief business advocate, taking on the governor over the different cap levels for homeowners, renters and business. If the repeal movement somehow gets unleashed, Brinegar will be a key person to try and tamp it down, Kiely, the former Ways & Means chairman is a compelling voice on taxes and heads the Indiana Manufacturers Association. His analysis on that volatile part of the economy and personal income could make him a key voice in 2008.

33. John Hammond III: A key confidant of Gov. Daniels, Hammond is Republican chairman of the

7th CD, which will be a key state and national battleground early in the 2008 election cycle.

34. Paul Mannweiler: The former House speaker is now a respected lobbyist with Bose Public Affairs and is an influential voice with not only legislators, but the Daniels administration.

35. Republican Chairman Murray Clark: We've long admired Clark as a senator and lieutenant governor nominee. If he runs for governor in 2012, we would welcome his candidacy and take it seriously. He heads the state party at the behest of the Governor and it functions well. We like him personally. But his tenure as state chairman has been extremely troubling. We have had a number of influential Republicans tell us that the state party turned a cold shoulder on Greg Ballard, in part due to Clark's relationships at Baker & Daniels. This is the second time we've seen a GOP chair from that law firm (John Keeler with

the Marion County GOP being the other) curry favor with the Peterson administration when they should have been performing as the loyal opposition. As a resident of Indianapolis and a business owner, it was exceedingly troubling that the party didn't put forth a frontline candidate at the beginning, and then when it discovered one quite by accident, didn't get on the bandwagon until extremely late in the process. Those kinds of decisions leave us shareholders in the city with a lack of choice. That's a political sin. We think that lobbyists and people from the big law firms don't make good party chairs because there are too many conflicts.

36. Eric Holcomb: He chairs Gov. Daniels' re-election campaign that has a record (by far) \$6.7 million cash-on-hand (almost \$4 million more than the two Democratic candidates combined) and has already turned in ballot signatures. This is a campaign in stride.

37. Farm Bureau President Don Villwock: While he continues to be a leader in the national debate on farm policy, Villwock emerged this year



Democratic Chairman Dan Parker watches Senate Minority Leader Richard Young pull out of the gubernatorial race, a scene he'd like to see happen one more time. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



as an articulate spokesman for rational and responsible property tax reform in Indiana. Farm Bureau was the first to place a responsible tax reform plan on the table and has been aggressive in advocating the basic principles of that plan. With Farm Bureau's emergence as one of the truly bipartisan big players in Indiana politics, Villwock is in a position to challenge leaders of both major parties to craft a property tax solution that provides real reform not just short-term relief. He has made a compelling point that the classification of taxpayers should be repugnant to them. "We believe in Farm Bureau that our forefathers got it right in the Constitution the first time around – that property taxes should be uniform and equal for all," he has said. "It seems to me that something is wrong when you need to amend the Constitution to discriminate against farmers."

38. FSSA Commissioner Mitch Roob:

We expect FSSA to be one of the '08 battlegrounds when the Democrats take on "privatization." Roob will be one of the point men to dash those criticisms.

39. State Rep. Jeff Espich: He's the ranking minority member of Ways & Means. Many House Republicans take their cues from Espich on tax and budget issues. And he still looks the same way he did back in the 1970s when HPI's Howey paged for Speaker Kermit Burrous. Come to think about it, Bauer looks much the same, too. Saay, you don't suppose ... no ... nevermind.

40. State Sen.

James Merritt: The Republican chaired Ballard's campaign committee, making him one of the few in the GOP establishment to see the light, early on. He mixed it with Mayor Peterson over consolidation issues over the past couple of sessions. Now he has taken up the government reform mantle himself and will become a significant player on this issue this year and in '09 when we expect major segments of the Kernan-Shepard reforms to be debated in the public and General Assembly.

41. Fort Wayne

Mayor Tom Henry: He preserves a three-term lock on city hall in an election many believed would go to the Republicans due to the heavily GOP annexed areas. But establishment favorite Allen County Commissioner Nelson Peters lost the primary to Matt Kelty, who went on to self-destruct in ways we've never seen before, ultimately facing a 9-count indict-

ment on finance and perjury counts. Henry didn't have to say a bad thing about Kelty, and the two even praised each other during debates. So Henry, who was a late entry into this race, now leads Indiana's second largest city. It's a scenario no one would have predicted a year ago.

42. South Bend Mayor Stephen

Leucke: The three-term Democrat was in a tough re-election battle and he pulled it out. As mayor, he is a commanding presence in the South Bend/Elkhart television market.

43. Marty Morris: Lugar's chief of staff makes Lugar World the Cadillac political operation of Hoosier politics.

44. Tom Sugar: As chief of staff and gatekeeper to Sen. Bayh, Sugar could find himself in a crucial position if there's a Clinton-Bayh ticket, which is a distinct possibility at this writing.

45. State Sens. Teresa Lubbers and Connie Lawson: Lubbers, along with Sens. Bev Gard, Connie Lawson, Pat Miller, Sue Landske and Vaneta Becker, played a huge role in 2006 in installing the regime of David

Long. He has shared this power with the female senators. Lawson is cited here because she is Majority Floor Leader. But source after source tell us that Lubbers' stature continues to grow and that she has the ear of Long and other leaders, including the Governor. Lubbers is an education expert and would make a compelling superintendent of public instruction if she ever wanted to head into the executive branch.

46. IEDC Director

Nathan Feltman: With the governor's re-elect centered on jobs and investment, Feltman - probably in the twilight of his stint at IEDC - could find himself in the campaign crosshairs. It's a record we suspect he'll look forward to defending.

47. Rod Ratcliff: He was the driving force for slots at the race track that has pumped \$500 million into state coffers with

another \$200 million pending. It fueled the biggest tax rebate in history. They are in the process of revitalizing the two horse tracks at Anderson and Shelbyville and a sector of Indiana agriculture. There aren't too many people in too many states that can say that.



Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry was a reluctant candidate who got all the breaks.



48. Budget Director Ryan Kitchell: The man at OMB helped engineer the financial underpinnings of Major Moves, which, despite its controversy is going to be seen as a significant part of the Daniels' legacy. He's a voice in the administration that isn't full of yes men that can produce a series of credible scenarios for big problems.

49. Secretary of State Todd Rokita: Judging from comments at the U.S. Supreme Court last week, Indiana's voter ID law is likely to survive. Rokita deserves credit for that, as well as keeping the election process running relatively smoothly despite all the major changes. Time to give credit where credit is due.

50. Chamber Political Director Michael Davis: Over lasagna at Amici's three weeks before the 2007 election, Davis confidently predicted that Greg Ballard would upset Bart Peterson. He's been an astute analyst for the Indiana Chamber and one of the sources that make **HPI** a worthwhile read. His Gauge Market Research firm is joining **HPI** in a polling alliance in 2008 and we think his analysis on our team will serve you quite well. I place him on the HPI Top 50 as publisher's prerogative.

Honorable Mention

(Listed Alphabetically)

Karl Berron: The top Realtor at the Statehouse will be influential as a solution for the property tax crisis finds its way,

State Rep.

Randy Borrer: Beyond House leadership, we see Borrer as a House Republican with real substance and potential. We could see him as a future mayor of Fort Wayne, in Congress, or on a state ticket some day.

Attorney General

Steve Carter: He could have a tough re-election battle on his hands.

Dan Clark:

ISTA's top lobbyist was caught off guard on a committee capital project referendum vote in the opening weeks of the session.

UAW President Mo Davidson: As the auto industry goes through more rough seas of red ink, he's labor's point man here in auto rich Indiana.

Ann & Ed DeLaney: She's the Democratic voice

on Indiana Week in Review; his name is coming up as a possible candidate to run in State Rep. David Orentlicher's seat.

State Sen. Mike Delph: We see Delph as an emerging force in the conservative wing of the Senate Republicans.

Melyssa Donaghy: The Peterson administration cracked down on her home based Central Avenue dominatrix business. She channeled her anger into the earliest stages of the tax revolt last June - she organized the first demonstrations at the Governor's Residence and Monument Circle in July. She's our citizen activist of the year.

Rex Early: Let's see, he played a big role in Brent Waltz' upset of Larry Borst in 2004. He had a hand in Greg Walker's upset of Bob Garton in 2006, And he was one of the only ones to lend a hand to Greg Ballard in 2007. Not a bad track record for the old hog nuts veteran.

Mike Gentry: He's heading the House Republicans campaign, though his private consulting firm (as well as Rep. Elrod's decision to run for Congress) have some in the party nervous.

Earl Goode: The governor's chief of staff.

John Gregg: He'll be on short LG lists.

Fort Wayne Councilman Mitch Harper: After serving more than a decade in the Indiana House, Harper won a council seat in 2007 and will be well positioned if and when Rep. Mark Souder decides to retire.

Paul Helmke: The former Fort Wayne mayor now heads the Brady gun control organization.

Andy Jacobs Jr.:

Played a key role for the Carson machine in helping to position "The Seed" even before the congress- woman had died.

Joe Loftus: One of the early Republicans who saw the potential in Greg Ballard and helped with the transition.

J.D. Lux: He'll direct House races for the Democrats in 2008.

Morton J. Marcus: This economist/columnist is writing some

of the best perspectives on the property tax crisis and the economy, both obviously major issues in 2008.

Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott: He just won a second term, fending off criticism over his closure of the Hammond Health Department. He'll be on LG lists this May and June as the Democrats forge a ticket.

Butch Morgan: The St. Joseph County Demo-



Ed DeLaney, Linda Pence, Morton Marcus and Sarah Evans Barker in a mock trial. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)



cratic chairman helped his leading mayor survive and has been an early backer of the Schellinger campaign and has pressed for changes there.

State Rep. Winfield Moses

Jr.: One of the more thoughtful and seasoned voices among House Democrats. We hope there's a leadership position in his future some day.

State Sen. Bob Meeks:

A key Senate financial chair, but sources say he's easier to out-manuever than Kenley. His meanderings on the Barden Gary riverboat license for Steuben County (but not Clark) is an example of not fully thinking things through, as his quotes afterward revealed.

Michael Montagano: The 3rd CD Democrat posted credible numbers last July and has spurred U.S. Rep. Mark Souder to uncharacteristically pick up his fund raising. If people are talking about Montagano next October, it's an indicator there's a Democratic wave developing.

Dr. John McGoff:

He raised \$250,000 in his primary challenge to Rep. Dan Burton. If he can harness the energy for change there could be two congressional districts in play come April and May.

State Rep. David Orentlicher: He will challenge Andre Carson in the 7th CD May primary after finishing second in last week's caucus. Orentlicher is a tireless campaigner who will test Carson's skill and organization.

Jim Payne: The head of Department of Child Services, one of the more sensitive posts in the Daniels administration, as stories like the TaJanay Bailey murder case reveals.

Linda Pence: This Democratic power attorney is taking aim at Carter for attorney general.

Bart Peterson: While his defeat was stunning, it doesn't mean the end of his political career. The sum of Peterson's work will outlive the devastating turn of events last summer - much of it beyond his control. We were struck by the fact that a couple of days after his defeat, S&P awarded the city its highest bond rating. The irony is that the income tax hike he passed for financial, not political considerations, bailed out the city's police and fire pensions, though most of the cops voted against him. And remember, Dick Lugar, John Brademas, Phil Sharp and Mike Pence all absorbed defeats before the prime of their careers.

Neil Pickett: One of the more conspicuous Dan-

iels lieutenants at the Statehouse. Word has it the governor made him write, "I won't say nasty things about the principals" on a blackboard 100 times.

Jim Purucker: A top lobbyist who was influential on last year's historic gaming legislation as well as with the beverage industry and health care industries.

Jay Potesta: The Sheet-metal union chief is backing Daniels' re-election, but is a voting member of the Democratic Central Committee.

Supt. Suellen Reed: She has served the state admirably, but there comes a time to hang it up. We hear more and more how DOE has become a dysfunctional agency. She should avoid a bruising convention floor fight next June and retire with the dignity she deserves.

Jim Robinson: Steelworkers chief is a leading labor voice.

Tim Roemer: Should there be a Democratic president, Roemer is cabinet material on national security, intelligence or education.

Bren & Mel Simon: Big contributors to the Schellinger campaign, but they are going to need a lot more company before they see that investment pay off.

Steve Shine: The Allen County Republican chairman had a nightmare of a year when his party's choice for mayor was defeated in the primary, and then Matt Kely self-destructed. Shine had to walk a line where he backed the nominee, yet was instrumental in convincing him to come clean before the Democrats used the allegations against him last fall. Now he is faced with rebuilding a divided party with key gubernatorial and congressional races coming up. It will be his greatest challenge.

Jennifer Wagner: The Indiana State Democratic Party Communications Director has toned down the venom a tad (whew) but is adroit at undercover (i.e. the Glenn Murphy case) and is the governor's biggest daily critic.

Gary Welsh: Supplies some of the best original reporting and analysis in the blog world on his Advance Indiana blog. It's a must read every day.

Charlie White: The Hamilton County Republican chairman is looking to run statewide by 2010.

Robin Winston: The former Democratic chairman exerts considerable influence in party circles and was one of the first to endorse Andre Carson after his caucus win last weekend. ❖



State Rep. David Orentlicher handled a town hall meeting in Carmel with angry taxpayers adroitly. He will need to be on top of his political game to upset Andre Carson in May. (HPI Photos by Brian A.



Sen. Leahy endorses Obama for president

WASHINGTON - Senate Judiciary Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT) endorsed Senator Barack Obama for President, citing his unique ability to restore America's standing in the world, end the war in Iraq, provide health care for all Americans, and rally this nation around a common purpose. Chairman Leahy said, "Barack Obama is the best candidate to reintroduce America to the world – and restore hope in our country. Barack Obama represents the America we once were and want to be again. When Barack Obama is President we will lead with hope, opening the doors of opportunity to all, realizing the potential of our great nation for its citizens and as a leader of the free world. Barack Obama will be a President who once again believes, 'Yes, we can.' That is why I am endorsing Barack Obama to be the next President of the United States."



Daniels open to most property tax changes

INDIANAPOLIS - Gov. Mitch Daniels said Wednesday he's open to virtually any changes to his property tax relief plan as long as the state income tax isn't increased and the cornerstones of his proposal are preserved. Daniels spent nearly two hours Wednesday answering about 50 questions from lawmakers on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee. Minutes later and a block away at the Indiana Convention Center, Daniels spent another hour touting his proposal and answering questions from some of the plan's staunchest opponents -- 750 local-

government leaders (Indianapolis Star).

Peters working to spend down campaign debt

INDIANAPOLIS - Since losing the Republican mayoral primary last spring, Commissioner Nelson Peters has been busy running county government, but he hasn't been busy raising money for his re-election bid (**Fort Wayne Journal Gazette**). Annual campaign finance reports for 2007 were due Wednesday to the Allen County Election Board. Peters reported ending the year with \$1,059 between his commissioner and mayoral campaign funds. He owes his father and himself a total of \$14,293, according to his filings. He had transferred \$6,500 from his commissioner campaign to his mayoral campaign late last year in part to repay a loan from his mother, Peters said. Peters said if he has competition in the Republican primary race for his commissioner's seat, he would work to raise more money. He's confident in his ability to raise money, noting that he raised about \$385,000 for his bid for Fort Wayne mayor.

Daviess Commissioner charged with theft

WASHINGTON, Ind. - The president of the Daviess County Commission, who last year survived an ouster attempt within the Republican Party, faces charges of theft and official misconduct, accused of using the county's account to buy crushed stone for a company he partially owns (Evansville Courier & Press). The county GOP asked Commissioner Jim Truelove to resign last summer after a State Board of Accounts audit questioned his conduct in the purchase by TSP Development LLC of crushed stone at county rates, which are substantially lower than those paid by contractors or the public. "We

asked Mr. Truelove to resign then, but he refused. It is now in the hands of the court," GOP chairman Martin L. Mumaw III said. Charges were filed Tuesday in Daviess Superior Court by special prosecutor David Powell, alleging three counts each of ghost employment and theft and two counts of official misconduct, all felonies.

Mayor Clay to campaign for Obama in Carolina

GARY - Mayor Rudy Clay plans to travel to South Carolina next week to campaign for Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama (**Associated Press**). The Gary mayor said after talking with the Obama campaign and mayors from around the country, he believes Obama is committed to helping people living at or below the poverty line, while other candidates have honed in on issues affecting the middle class. "I continue to say to those mayors that America will not be what it needs to be until Gary is what it ought to be," Clay said. "I believe Barack Obama is the best candidate because he embodies what's required of the next president."

Clinton, Obama tied in new Zogby poll

WASHINGTON - Barack Obama has erased a once substantial deficit to climb into a virtual tie with Hillary Clinton in the Democratic presidential race, according to a **Reuters/Zogby** poll released on Wednesday. has shown deep volatility. Clinton held a 21-point edge over Obama in October. He cut that to 8 points by last month, and the new survey gave her a 39 percent to 38 percent edge.

Rep. Duncan to announce plans on Friday

INDIANAPOLIS - State Rep. Cleo Duncan will announce her political plans in four district counties on Friday. ❖