



## Republicans eye '90s era LG selection

Trend in selecting legislators or gender nominees may revert to INGOP delegates

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — For the first generation of the television age of Hoosier politics, major party lieutenant governor nominees were most often General Assembly veterans, tapped by the standard bearer to reflect geographical, demographic or policy considerations.



These nominations tended to take shape between the primary election nomination and the state convention. The ultimate

decision often rests with so-called game-time decisions. In 2004, for example, Republican nominee Mitch Daniels selected State Sen. Becky Skillman, reflecting the need for a female LG nominee who had strength in Southern Indiana.



**Noblesville pastor Micah Beckwith is actively seeking the Indiana GOP lieutenant governor nomination. (WFYI Photo)**

After 2003 when newly ascendant Gov. Joe Kernan, who took office after the death of Gov. Frank

**Continued on page 4**

## Donald, Mike & P.T.

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — P.T. Barnum, meet Donald J. Trump.

Barnum became "the greatest showman" on Earth after he bought a Manhattan museum in the mid-19th Century, and when ticket prices were depressed he recruited "freaks" like singing bearded ladies, Siamese twins and dwarves. He littered media with memorable quotes:



- "There is a fool born every minute."
- "No one ever made a difference by being like everyone else."
- "Without publicity, a terrible thing happens: nothing."
- "There's no such thing as bad publicity."



**"We came up with this document so parents could have the confidence, armed with knowledge, and do their job growing their kids. We have no time to indoctrinate; schools cannot afford one second of distraction."**

- Attorney General Todd Rokita on his Parental Bill of Rights

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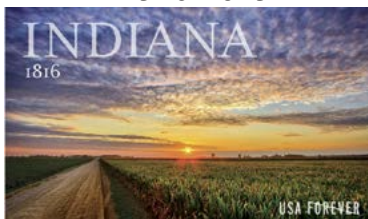
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**Jack E. Howey**  
editor emeritus  
1926-2019



Fast forward to this past week, when former president Trump was indicted for the third time on Thursday, now facing more than 70 criminal charges. On Friday Special Counsel Jack Smith sought a protective order against the former president after he tweeted (or Xed), "IF YOU GO AFTER ME, I'M COMING AFTER YOU!" And he leads the Real Clear Politics polling composite for the Republican presidential nomination by 38% at 53.9%, compared to 15.9% for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, 5.9% for Vivek Ranaswamy, and 5% for Mike Pence.

We've learned that small donors to Trump's super PAC have contributed more than \$40 million to his legal defense after Trump repeatedly said that he was being indicted for his followers. "I'm being indicted for you," Trump said Tuesday in New Hampshire. "They want to take away my freedom because I will never let them take away your freedom. They want to silence me because I will never let them silence you."

Trump is promising "retribution" as the GOP veers wildly from President Reagan's "Morning in America," President Bush41's "Thousand points of light" and President Bush43's "compassionate conservatism" to Trumpian retribution.

Next year — the 2024 election coming with such milestone issues as the Russia-Ukraine war, the potential use of nuclear weapons there, a planet that is rapidly heating up, and an immigration crisis on the southern border — will not be dominated by the pressing issues of the day.

The multiple trials of Donald J. Trump will suck the oxygen away from every other campaign and every other issue. After trashing the Clintons and Bushes, the news media, U.S. intelligence, the U.S. military, Congress, (and the U.S. women's soccer team), Trump is taking aim at the nation's justice system and the rule of law.

"Any time they file an indict-

ment, we go way up in the polls," Trump said at a GOP dinner in Alabama on Friday. "We need one more indictment to close out this election. One more indictment, and this election is closed out. Nobody has even a chance."

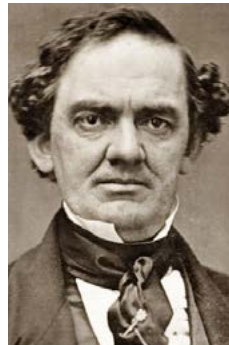
Trump's wild accusations against judges and prosecutors are sending shivers throughout the American justice system.

This sets up a harrowing scenario of a judge jailing a former president who will say just about anything. Should that happen, the political ramifications would be hard to gauge. We do know that Trump has the ability to motivate his 30% hardcore GOP base into taking mob action at the U.S. Capitol. Those supporters only seem to be hardening, with some vowing to wage a "civil war" to an NBC News reporter in New Hampshire if Trump is convicted and jailed, or jailed and then convicted.

Erica Orden of Politico observes of Trump's metastasizing legal array, "Donald Trump's expanding web of legal troubles is becoming ever more intertwined. Actions he takes in one case are coming back to haunt him in others. Potential trial schedules are starting to conflict. Even a lawyer representing Trump in one of his criminal indictments could be a witness against him in another."

Politico Playbook observed: "If Trump is the Republican nominee, there is no persuasive case we have seen that standing trial for falsifying business records, illegally retaining national security secrets, obstructing justice, trying to overthrow an election, and fighting a federal civil case for rape and defamation is a political benefit in a general election."

And then there is Mike Pence, who qualified for the first GOP presidential debate earlier this week. Pence will likely be a key prosecution witness against his former presidential boss. "People can be confident we'll obey the law. We'll respond to the call of law, if it comes, and we'll just tell the truth," said Pence



on CBS' "Face The Nation" last Sunday. Pence took on his former boss more forcefully last week, accusing him of surrounding himself with "crackpot" lawyers after his 2020 defeat. Pence's campaign has sought to profit from Trump's indictment. Last week they began selling hats and T-shirts with a "Too Honest" logo.

Trump's lawyer, John Lauro, said he will welcome Pence's testimony. "Mike Pence will be one of our best witnesses at trial," Lauro said on Sunday in an interview on ABC's "This Week." "I cannot wait until I have the opportunity to cross-examine Mr. Pence, because what he will

do is completely eliminate any doubt that Mr. Trump, President Trump, firmly believed that the election irregularities had led to inappropriate results."

Pence reacted to Trump's latest indictments, saying, "Today's indictment serves as an important reminder: Anyone who puts himself over the Constitution should never be president of the United States. For my part, I want people to know that I had no right to overturn the election and that what the president maintained that day, and frankly has said over and over again over the last two and a half years, is completely false. And it's contrary to what our Constitution and the laws of this country provide."

Former Fox News host Bill O'Reilly said during a Tuesday interview with WABC's Sid Rosenberg, "So there's only one guy that can convict Donald Trump, and that's Mike Pence. And if Pence goes into the courtroom and says, Donald Trump knew the election was not a fraud, but he said it anyway, and I can prove it. And here's the proof."

Pence was heckled outside a campaign stop in Londonderry, N.H. "Why did you sell out the people?" one heckler can be heard saying. "I upheld the Constitution," Pence retorted. "Read it!"

On Saturday, Trump went after "Liddle Mike Pence" in a Truth Social post for being "delusional" and going to what he called "the Dark Side."

On Sunday, Pence was asked by CNN's Dana Bash if he would support Trump if he is renominated, which is a debate requirement. "I'm confident I'll be able to support the Republican nominee, especially if it's me," Pence responded. Trump refused to make that pledge on Newsmax earlier this week.

U.S. Sen. Todd Young told WISH-TV that Trump's criminal charges "should not, in any way, be diminished or dismissed by Americans. That's why I'm not doing that. But I would also say that President Trump, whatever one thinks of him, is deserving of due process and we'll have to make sure that indeed takes place in the coming months."



An analysis from FiveThirtyEight found that in 38 special elections held so far this year, Democrats have outperformed the partisan lean — or the relative liberal or conservative history — of the areas where the races were held by an average of 10%, both romping in parts of the country that typically support the party while cutting down on GOP margins in red cities and counties, too (ABC News).

GOP operatives are sounding alarms. Whit Ayres, a prominent GOP pollster said Trump "has major problems, particularly with college-educated women. They have basically moved away from the Republican Party at this point and become a core part of the Democratic coalition. That doesn't mean they're gone for good. With different candidates and a different appeal, I think many of them could come back to the Republicans. But Trump has driven away a great many college-educated women at this point."

Said Wisconsin GOP operative Brandon Scholz, "If Trump is the nominee in 2024, he will be zero help. He'll be a drag on the ticket, he will be a drag on Republicans, especially down-ballot Republicans. When you get right down to it, this is going to be a s— show. Every trial with Trump, it's going to be witnesses on the stand, it's going to be statements. It's going to be a story to itself. I don't know when those trials would end, how soon before November 2024, but for every day they get closer to the election the worse it's going to be."

Conservative jurist J. Michael Luttig said, "Frankly, I don't care about the Republican Party at all, except to the extent that the two political parties in America are the political guardians of democracy in our country. American democracy simply cannot function without two equally healthy and equally strong political parties. So, today, in my view, there is no Republican Party to counter the Democratic Party in the country. And for that reason, American democracy is in grave peril."

But Washington Examiner columnist Byron York explains, "It is absolutely clear to all involved that the indictments, filed by an elected Democratic district attorney in New York City, by the Biden Justice Department, and soon by an elected Democratic district attorney in Fulton County, Georgia, will influence the 2024 presidential campaign. People can debate whether that is the intention, or part of the intention, of the prosecutions. But there is no doubt that the cases will affect the campaign."

I'll let P.T. Barnum provide our final thought here: "The common man, no matter how sharp and tough, actually enjoys having the wool pulled over his eyes, and makes it easier for the puller." ❖

**Brian A. Howey is senior writer and columnist for Howey Politics Indiana/State Affairs. Find Howey on Facebook and Twitter @hwypol.**

# Lieutenant governor, from page 1

O'Bannon, tapped Indianapolis Controller Kathy Davis to fill in the open office, the trend was to nominate females.

But in the 1990s, there was a brief period when Republican convention delegates played a crucial role in selecting LG nominees. In 1992, gubernatorial nominee Linley Pearson nearly quit in a convention floor meltdown after his personal selection was rejected, with delegates nominating Vincennes businessman Bob Green. And in 1996, Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith threw the decision outright to the convention, with delegates selecting Bluffton newspaper publisher George Witwer, Jr., who lost to Goldsmith in the primary but was heavily backed by social conservatives and the Right to Life movement.

Both those GOP tickets lost in the general election.

As Howey Politics reported on April 10, 1996, the ghosts of the 1992 convention when delegates chose Green might have been raised if Goldsmith decided to "dictate" a ticket. "The mayor has said all along that he feels the convention needs to decide the lieutenant governor," said John Hatfield, spokesman for the Goldsmith campaign. Will Goldsmith nominate a candidate? "I doubt it," Hatfield responded. "The mayor has been fairly clear on that."

In 2024, there is a new movement afoot to empower GOP delegates to make the LG determination. Noblesville pastor Micah Beckwith has already announced his independent candidacy. Over the weekend, the Columbus Republic picked up on long-time speculation that Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch was considering U.S. Rep. Greg Pence for a potential ticket, the notion of delegates making the final determination picked up steam.

After the Crouch/Pence article appeared in The Republic on Monday, Beckwith said in a statement, "Delegates should be able to choose who should serve in the second highest level in office in our state government instead of just one person choosing. That's why today I am challenging Congressman Greg Pence to enter the race for

lieutenant governor. If he wants to be lieutenant governor he should run and make his case to the delegates and not look for an anointment. I believe in delegates. They are fully capable of making a choice in the race for lieutenant governor. Does Pence?"

Hours later, Crouch told Howey Politics/State Affairs, "It is not my right to choose a lieutenant governor nominee. It is by a vote of the delegates that my potential running mate is selected. The fact that several people have expressed interest in joining me in a campaign that will make history is both very flattering and quite encouraging."

U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, who is also seeking the gubernatorial nomination, took a more nuanced approach. "Mike Braun is an outsider and comes from Main Street just like the hundreds of grassroots Hoosier conservatives that serve as convention delegates," campaign senior advisor Josh Kelley told Howey Politics/State Affairs. "Mike Braun believes our party and state are stronger when the grassroots has a seat at the table, and he looks forward to working with the delegates next summer to find a lieutenant governor candidate that shares his conservative values and can help further his agenda to make Indiana a beacon of freedom and opportunity."

There has been speculation that Braun will choose former congressman Trey Hollingsworth as his LG nominee. The campaign told HPI it had no comment on that potential alignment and called the speculation "not accurate." Other sources are telling HPI that while Hollingsworth, who retired from the House in 2022 and is backing Braun,

has future political aspirations, they are beyond the 2024 cycle.

Eric Doden campaign spokeswoman Caroline Sunshine told HPI on Tuesday, "Eric doesn't support changing the current process."

The campaign of Curtis Hill said, "We intend to

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Page 1 of 8

## THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT

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### "QUOTE" OF THE WEEK

"I don't know the word 'shameless.' I don't use the word 'shameless.' I have little saltier words..."

-Rex Early, on WNDV-TV's Mike Pence Show, commenting on Steve Goldsmith's characterization of his TV ads.

### Goldsmith's LG to be delegates' choice

Witwer reaffirms his commitment to the race

INDIANAPOLIS - Should Mayor Stephen Goldsmith win the May 7 primary, he is going to let Republican convention delegates select his lieutenant governor nominee, HPR has learned.

And in another gubernatorial development, Bluffton newspaper publisher George Witwer reaffirmed his intention of staying in the race. That comes on the heels of speculation that Witwer may be angling for the lieutenant governor's nomination.

"Everything we're doing is focused on having the best result we can on Election Day," Witwer said Tuesday. "We think we have a grassroots, get-out-the-vote plan that will make me very competitive. Anything with regards to lieutenant governor would have to happen after we decide who the nominee is."

In HPR's March 20 edition, the analysis centered on how a victorious Goldsmith in the primary could find a Republican convention made up of delegates whose allegiance is to Rex Early, the favorite candidate of many party regulars. However, in a *Murder Times*/WSBT-TV poll conducted by Mason-Dixon (822 registered, +/- 3.5 percent), showed Goldsmith leading Early 68-18 percent. The ghosts of the 1992 convention when nominee Linley Pearson chose Robert Green might be raised if Goldsmith decided to "dictate" a ticket. Now, the Goldsmith campaign appears to be interested in having the delegates play a major role in crafting a ticket.

"The mayor has said all along that he feels the convention needs to decide the lieutenant governor," said John Hatfield, spokesman for the Goldsmith campaign.

HPR asked Hatfield, will Goldsmith nominate a candidate? "I doubt it," he responded. "The mayor has been fairly clear on that."

Despite Hatfield's assertion, that strategy comes as news to many key politicians and analysts across the state, including Witwer.

"The lieutenant governor needs to be someone who is a good

continued on page 2

### INSIDE FEATURES

- **Play of the Week: Witwer's endorsement** page 2
- **Horse Race: Supt. Reed's big battle looms** page 3
- **HPR Interview: Robert Schmuhl** pages 4-5
- **Columnists: Smith, Klein, Lanosga, Howey** page 6
- **Perhaps We Wander: Al Spiers' legacy** page 7
- **HPR's Pre-Primary Briefing Luncheon April 23, see page 8**



announce our choice for running mate ahead of the primary, so as to give the voters the fullest understanding possible." Outgoing Commerce Sec. Brad Chambers is expected to enter the race in the next few weeks.

Indiana Republican Party Chairman Kyle Hupfer downplayed talk of changes to the selection process. "Nothing is (happening) right now," he told the Capital Chronicle. But, he continued, "I mean, where I stand is that the governor should get their choice. I think that, you know, those folks who are electing their governor candidate are entrusting them with that ability to choose their lieutenant governor."

While the mechanism of choosing a running mate requires a vote by delegates, it has been customary to approve the selection of the gubernatorial candidate. Several sources tell Howey Politics that a rule change was floated to change the process at a recent Indiana Republican Central Committee meeting, but it did not gain traction.

In 2004, State Sen. David Ford literally shadowed the Daniels campaign RV after the primary and before the convention. Daniels made it clear he wanted Skillman, and that ticket easily prevailed at the convention.

Customary but not always the case.

Delegates forced Linley Pearson to accept Green as his running mate after he nearly quit the nomination in a convention floor meltdown over the selection. In 2008, Gov. Daniels backed Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas for attorney general on the way to a landslide reelection, only to face a delegate rebellion that resulted in the nomination of Greg Zoeller. And at the 2022 GOP convention party, delegates rejected Gov. Eric Holcomb's secretary of state appointee, incumbent Holli Sullivan, in favor of Diego Morales, who ended up winning the general election by a 14% plurality despite a number of controversies.

Beckwith is setting up for a potential win in two ways: 1. Recruiting delegate candidates; and 2. Using the argument that he should be selected over a "hand-picked" candidate. Crouch's remarks about delegates choosing seem to undermine the ability of any eventual nominee, including her, to get the running mate they want.

So the stage is set for a rough and expensive GOP gubernatorial primary and a contentious party battle for the number two spot where the top of the GOP ticket might not have much to say about his or her running mate.

Beckwith, who has been generating headlines as



**Govs. Mitch Daniels (top) and Robert Orr opted for state senators John Mutz and Becky Skillman for their tickets in 1980 and 2008.**

a board member of the East Hamilton County Library Board, which is in the process of reclassifying teenage section books, is a lightning rod with potential to be a disrupter. In a normal world, the Democrats would seize on this as potential disarray. But they seem uniquely unprepared, with the only candidate (Jennifer McCormick) raising just \$250,000 at her mid-year report. Beckwith finished third in the 2020 5th CD Republican primary with 12.7% of the vote, well behind the eventual winner — U.S. Rep. Victoria Spartz (39.7%), and Beth Henderson (17.6%).

### A brief LG history

Most television-era major party LG nominees have come from the General Assembly. The gubernatorial nominee usually selects a legislator who is perceived to have the ability to help move legislation, or offers some geographical, demographic or gender balance.

In 1960, Democratic state Sen. Matthew Welsh selected State Sen. Richard O. Ristine as his LG, while defeating GOP Lt.

Gov. Crawford Parker.

In 1972, House Speaker Doc Bowen (the GOP gubernatorial nominee) picked State Sen. Robert Orr of Evansville for his ticket. In 1980, Orr selected State Sen. John Mutz of Indianapolis while Batesville Democratic industrialist John Hillenbrand picked State Sen. Robert Peterson of Rochester for LG.

In 1988, Democratic nominee Secretary of State Evan Bayh picked State Sen. Frank O'Bannon of Corydon after he had dropped out of the gubernatorial race. In 2000, Republican U.S. Rep. David McIntosh chose State Sen. Murray Clark of Indianapolis for his ticket. Four years later, after Gov. Kernan selected Kathy Davis, GOP nominee Mitch Daniels continued that trend, choosing State Sen. Becky Skillman (Democratic nominee Jill Long Thompson picked State Rep. Dennie Oxley for her 2008 ticket). In 2012, Republican U.S. Rep. Mike Pence selected State Rep. Sue Ellspermann while Democrat John Gregg went with State Sen. Vi Simpson, and in 2016 he chose State Rep. Christina Hale.

There were exceptions. In 1968, Democrats nominated Anderson Mayor Robert Rock for governor after a harrowing convention floor fight with State Rep. Dick Bodine. Rock and delegates then selected Marion County Democratic Chairman James Beattie for LG as a compro-

misd candidate. The Republican nominee that year, Secretary of State Edgar Whitcomb, chose GOP Central Committee Treasurer Richard E. Folz, who had run unsuccessfully for state treasurer in 1964.

In 1984, Democratic State Sen. Wayne Townsend selected Indianapolis attorney Ann DeLaney as his LG. In 1996, Lt. Gov. O'Bannon opted for South Bend Mayor Kernan as his running mate.

In 2016, after Ellspermann resigned as LG to become president of Ivy Tech, Pence selected Eric Holcomb as LG. Holcomb was a former state GOP chairman and was seeking the U.S. Senate nomination. After Pence resigned from the gubernatorial nomination to run for vice president, Holcomb returned to the General Assembly/gender mode in selecting Auditor Suzanne Crouch, who in 2014 had completed 10 years in the Indiana House before Pence selected her to fill out the auditor term.

Since 1964, the only LG nominees without an elected General Assembly background were James Beattie, Richard Folz, Ann DeLaney, Kathy Davis and Eric Holcomb, though he unsuccessfully ran for the House in the 1990s.

### What would Pence bring to the ticket?

Crouch has apparently had LG conversations with several potential running mates. Should she win the primary, her selection of U.S. Rep. Greg Pence would be curious.

While two sitting members of Congress (Reps. Mc-Intosh and Mike Pence) have won gubernatorial nominations, there hasn't been a congressional member nominated for a statewide ticket as LG in the state's modern era.

It's important to remember that the Indiana LG portfolio is sprawling — encompassing agriculture, housing, broadband expansion, tourism — and requires an executive touch. The Hoosier LG is also perceived, at least initially, as a potential future standard bearer. In the modern era, Indiana LGs from Orr, to O'Bannon, to Ellspermann and now Crouch, not only played the game as loyal second fiddles, but also projected accessibility to their parties, the public and news media.

Rep. Greg Pence's tenure in the U.S. House, as both a candidate and public servant, has been constricted. His office does not have collaborative media operations. Reporters from The Columbus Republic and Muncie Star Press, for instance, often report that Rep. Pence did not respond to requests for comment on topical articles. Local media is not alerted to his appearances in the district in advance and he has not participated in candidate forums during election cycles, nor does he hold town halls for constituents. This is in sharp contrast with his brother Mike Pence, who represented the 6th CD for a dozen years. That Rep. Pence had a responsive press operation, would respond to media questions and make the congressman available for interviews.



Past LGs often have business portfolios and acumen. Pence joined Kiel Brothers Oil Company in 1988, after his father died, and served as its president from 1998 to 2004. After his departure, the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. According to Associated Press reports, the cleanup from the defunct business sites has cost Indiana at least \$21 million, and there are other remediated sites in neighboring states.

Gov. Daniels appointed him to a position at the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (which had oversight responsibilities for scores of Kiel Brother contamination sites) during his transition in 2004/2005, but he resigned just months afterward.

In 1999, he was elected to the board of directors of Home Federal Bancorp and its subsidiary, Home Federal Savings Bank. His failure to honor \$3.8 million in personally guaranteed loans was part of that bank's bankruptcy after he reimbursed the loans at "pennies [on] the dollar."

Pence owns antique malls in Edinburgh and Bloomington, and the Los Angeles Times reported that his net worth is valued at over \$12 million, according to the Center for Representative Politics.

While the Pence name and brand remain strong in the 6th CD (the current Rep. Pence defeated Democrat Cynthia Wirth with 67% of the vote in 2022), from a gubernatorial perspective it isn't that compelling. Mike Pence was the only modern Indiana governor to win the office with under 50% of the vote and he was in a tossup race against Democrat John Gregg when he resigned his reelection bid to join Donald Trump's national GOP ticket.

On Jan. 6, 2001, Rep. Pence was with Vice President Pence at the U.S. Capitol during the insurrection. He could be seen with the vice president and family members fleeing the mob, which was just seconds away. Later that night, Rep. Pence voted to return Pennsylvania Electoral College results back to that state's Legislature.

"My brother was being asked to do what we don't do in this country," Greg Pence recounted at a Republican fundraising dinner in his district last July, one of the rare instances he has spoken publicly about the attack (Los Angeles Times). He later added: "I couldn't be prouder."

As far as what Pence would bring to a Crouch ticket, veteran GOP operative Jim Pfaff told Newsmax earlier this week, "Greg Pence could not successfully run for statewide office because his brother is disliked in Indiana — fairly or unfairly. He's best suited to serve in Congress."

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# Holcomb approval at 55%; U.S. governors outshine past two presidents

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Eric Holcomb’s approval rating in the recent Morning Consult Pro state gubernatorial surveys was 55%, with 35% disapproving. In fact, while there are a handful of governors polling below 50%, there isn’t a single governor who has lower approval than disapproval.

That’s in sharp contrast to the presidential race, where the Real Clear Politics polling composite puts President Biden’s approval/disapproval at 41.4% to 54.4%, while Republican Donald Trump’s favorable/unfavorables stood at 38.4% to 57%.



In the Morning Consult survey, current and potential presidential candidates’ polling figures stand as such: Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis stood at 54% approval/42% disapproval, North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum was at 57% approval/27% disapproval, Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin at 57% approval/32% disapproval, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer at 57% approval/39% disapproval and California Gov. Gavin Newsom at 56% approval/37% disapproval.

As for neighboring states, Kentucky’s Gov. Andy Beshear stood at 64 approval/32% disapproval, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine was at 57% approval/36% disapproval and Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker was at 54% approval/41% disapproval.

Clearly, Americans view their own governors in a much more positive light than the last two presidents. Part of the reason is that billions of dollars of federal post-COVID-19 monies are spilling into state coffers as part of President Biden’s post-COVID-19, infrastructure and CHIPs laws passed over the last two years. Governors and state Legislatures are now spending those funds.

Half of Kentucky voters who disapprove of Biden’s job performance approve of Democrat Beshear’s, and those who voted for Trump in 2020 are only slightly more likely to disapprove of the governor than approve, according to Morning Consult.

The share of anti-Biden voters who strongly approve of Beshear is relatively small (13%), but so too is the share of these

voters who strongly disapprove (20%). This gives Beshear an opportunity to reach out to anti-Biden voters to build a bipartisan coalition. It could also cause the Republican nominee — Trump-endorsed state Attorney General Daniel Cameron — to try to nationalize the contest in an attempt to force Kentucky voters to draw comparisons between their popular Democratic governor and the unpopular Democratic president.

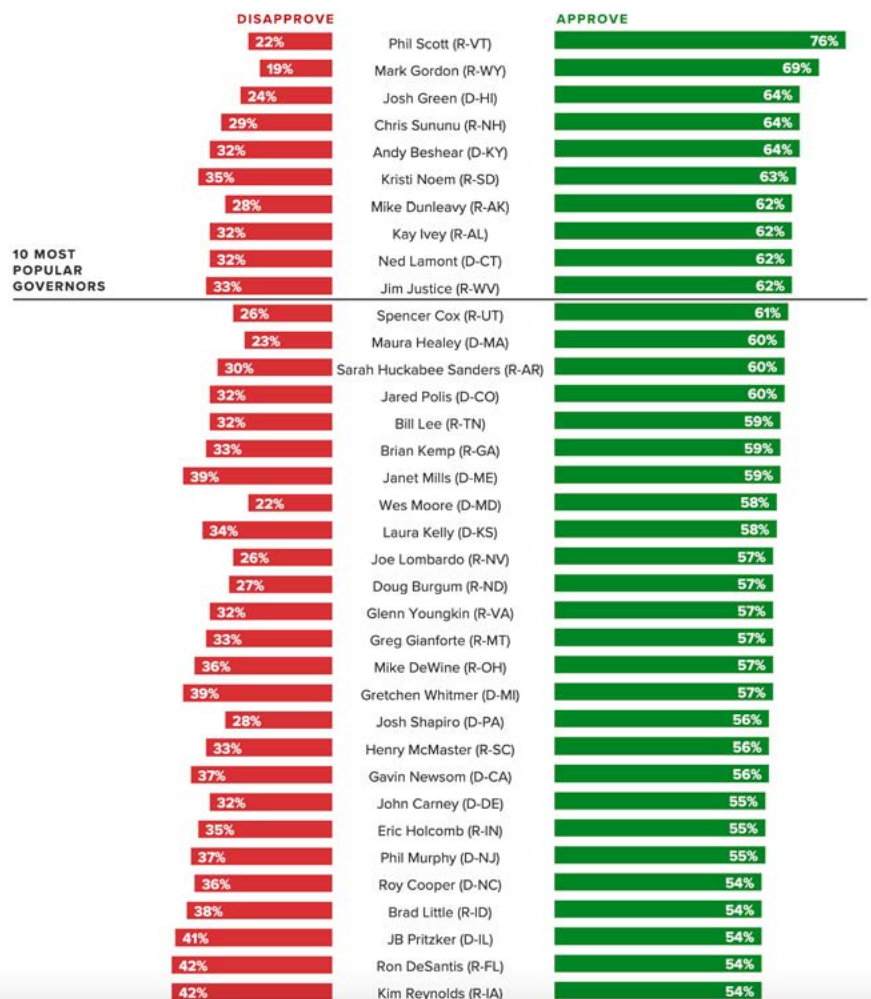
While approval ratings do not always translate to electoral victories, Beshear’s unique standing among Republicans in his state will be handy if he can keep it in the hottest governor’s race on the map this fall.

For the third quarter in a row, Phil Scott, R-Vt., is America’s most popular governor, earning positive marks from 76% of voters in his state compared with 22% who disapprove. He’s followed by Gov. Mark Gordon, R-Wyo., who has a 69% approval rating, while governors Josh Green, D-Hawaii, and Chris Sununu, R-N.H., share 64% approval ratings with Beshear.

While Green is the most popular newly elected governor, Republican Sarah Huckabee Sanders of Arkansas and Democrat Maura Healey of Massachusetts aren’t too

## America’s Most Popular Governors

Shares of voters who approve or disapprove of the following governors’ job performance:



far off, receiving positive marks from three in five voters in their respective states. One in five voters expressed uncertainty about their views of newly-elected governors Wes Moore, D-Md., and Jim Pillen, R-Neb., showing that the two have some work to do to raise their profiles at home even as the Marylander gets glossy attention at the national level.

Following his 2022 reelection, Gov. Tony Evers, D-Wis., is America's most disliked governor, with a 44% disapproval rating. He is followed by Gov. Jay Inslee, D-Wash., who has a 43% disapproval rating and has decided not to seek reelection next year.

## Governors

### Doden first to go up on TV

Republican gubernatorial candidate Eric Doden released the campaign season's first television ad for the 2024 race, promising it was only the beginning of a statewide \$2 million push this fall (Capital Chronicle). The video opens with a young boy and grandfather inside a church learning from the book of James, depicting Doden's own childhood growing up with a preacher grandfather. In a release, the campaign said the candidate's character and leadership philosophy "[were] rooted in his faith ... learning the wisdom of the book of James: Faith is the foundation of your life, and actions put faith to work." In the TV ad, Doden touts his economic development record, efforts to revitalize Fort Wayne and his stance against abortion rights. Previously, the businessman served as the president of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation under former Gov. Mike Pence. "Eric Doden is a visionary leader who is dedicated to giving Hoosiers an even better way of life," the ad narrator says. "And that's what he'll do as governor." Though Doden brought in \$1.8 million in the last fundraising quarter, roughly one-third of that funding came from his father and other large donations have similar ties to the wealthy Doden family.



### Doden challenges field on issues

Tuesday night, in Rochester at the Fulton County GOP candidate forum, Doden laid out a "bold challenge to all gubernatorial candidates on stage: Put your plans on paper so people can read them!"

"I'm the only candidate on this stage and in this race that has publicly put my plans in writing. You can read all of my detailed policy plans on my website, or grab a copy of them at the end of this forum. All of the other candidates on stage tonight, out of respect for the voters, should do the same. If you are asking people for their

vote, they deserve to see in full detail how you plan to solve their problems," said Doden. "I lead from my faith. Faith without works is dead, and bold rhetoric without solutions is just talk."

**Rep. Judy endorses Braun:** In a tweet Monday, state Rep. Christopher Judy, R-Fort Wayne, announced his endorsement of gubernatorial candidate Mike Braun. "Mike and I came into the General Assembly back in 2015 and actually served three years together," said Judy in a statement. "With Mike's business sense, his success and his understanding of Hoosiers, I think Mike will make a great governor for the state of Indiana."

**Streeter endorses Crouch:** In a tweet Monday, Knox County Commissioner Kellie Streeter announced her endorsement of Suzanne Crouch for governor of Indiana. "Suzanne always works hard for counties," read a statement from Streeter. "Her understanding of local government is invaluable and I proudly endorse her for Governor!" In a tweet Friday, Clark County Treasurer Monty Snelling announced his endorsement of Suzanne Crouch. "Indiana needs an honest, strong and steady hand moving into the future. Suzanne is the embodiment of these qualities. She has my full endorsement."

## Mayors

### Indianapolis: Record spending on ads

Republican Jefferson Shreve bought about another \$1 million in ads in July, per FCC records, piling up spending on a campaign that could double Democratic Mayor Joe Hogsett's likely \$5 million budget (Axios Indianapolis). Hogsett spent about \$677,000 on TV ads in July.

### Fort Wayne: Didier frustrated by Henry

Republican Councilman Tom Didier made the following statement following the city council's vote to hold all projects not oriented to neighborhood improvements in Mayor Tom Henry's supplemental funding request: "Last night city council made a bipartisan stand for neighborhoods and dialogue. Prior to the city council meeting last night Mayor Henry issued a long statement blasting Councilman Russ Jehl for suggesting more collaboration between council and the mayor was needed to identify spending priorities. Not a single council member voted against Councilman Jehl's proposal to fund neighborhood projects and hold spending on downtown, which amounted to almost half of the proposal. I said, 'Mayor Henry frequently ignores the council when it comes to setting priorities, but we always get asked to pick up the bill,' when asked about his proposal last week. I am encouraged that Mayor Henry's staff made commitments to the city council last night to work with us to identify priorities throughout the city. I hope that Mayor Henry follows through on those commitments. His statement implied he is meeting with council members regularly to put together his budget and

I know from first-hand experience that is not true. It's been over a year since the mayor has taken a meeting with me and I know many other members have not met with him to discuss spending priorities in some time. One of the biggest changes that has taken place in our city since I was elected is the revitalization of downtown Fort Wayne. I supported Mayor Graham Richard's vision for Harrison Square and Parkview Field, which local business leaders have credited for initiating revitalization of our downtown. I also supported all the efforts fund improvements to the waterfront area. Now we need to let the private sector take a greater role in developing downtown and focus taxpayer dollars on areas of Fort Wayne where sidewalks and pavement are still cracked and broken. Restoring the promise of what it means to live in Fort Wayne is not myopic, as the mayor suggested - it is about making the people who live in Fort Wayne your top priority.

### **Evansville: Terry endorsed by commissioner**

Vanderburgh County Commissioner Ben Shoulders endorsed Democrat mayoral candidate Stephanie Terry, saying that "she embodies what it means to serve. She has not only served as CEO of our local Children's Museum for many years, but also continues to serve on the County Council since 2010. She exemplifies servant leadership in all ways. I wholeheartedly support her."

### **Evansville: Firefighters endorse Rascher**

The Evansville Firefighters Local 357 endorsed Republican mayoral nominee Natalie Rascher. "From rescuing individuals to CPR administrations, they are true superheroes!" Rascher said. "Thank you, firefighters, for your trust and support!"



### **Terre Haute: Mayoral debates scheduled**

Republican incumbent Duke Bennett and Democratic nominee Brandon Sakbun have agreed to a series of debates this fall. "Today, I am filled with immense pride as I announce my upcoming debates and discussions with our current mayor this coming fall," Sakbun said. "We have scheduled three significant debates and forums that will provide a platform for substantive dialogue. Notably, the League of Women Voters and NAACP's Mayoral Candidate Forum, a gathering of utmost importance, is open to all members of the public. This event will not only be live-streamed for widespread accessibility but also broadcasted on radio to reach every corner of our great city. In the forthcoming month, I will unveil the 'Believe in Terre Haute and Believe in Brandon Plan.' This comprehensive and visionary plan is designed to tackle pressing issues such as housing, economic development, infrastructure, public safety and much more. I believe in the power of these strategies to drive positive change and

prosperity for our beloved community."

### **Terre Haute: Tommy John visits Bennett**

Terre Haute native and former Major League Baseball star Tommy John was in Terre Haute this week to participate in the filming of a documentary about his life. "I caught up with Tommy at the Terre Rex game on Wednesday as they held 'Tommy John Night' at the ballpark, Bennett said. "It was great to see Tommy again and the Rex beat Danville to make it an exciting night at Bob Warn Field!"

### **U.S. Senate**

#### **Banks voting record**

In his four terms as representative for Indiana's 3rd CD, U.S. Rep. Jim Banks has written four pieces of legislation that have become law, either directly or by being inserted into someone else's bill. All have to do with veterans. Banks is a veteran of the Navy Reserves (IndyStar). The legislation includes:

House Bill 8656, signed by President Joe Biden in 2022, which renamed the clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Mishawaka as the "Jackie Walorski VA Clinic" after the congresswoman who died last year in a car crash.

House Bill 3656, signed by President Donald Trump in 2018, which added an eligibility date to the part of the law that provides gravestones for spouses and children of veterans whose remains are unavailable.

Banks' Military Career Intermision Program Act of 2018 was incorporated into the National Defense Authorization Act signed by Trump that year. Banks' provision allows members of the armed services to take time off from active duty to participate in job training programs.

Banks' Veterans Success on Campus Act of 2017 was incorporated into the Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, signed by Trump. Banks' provision directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide job counseling services to veterans attending college.

For the last two sessions of Congress, his score ranked him in the top 70 of more than 200 House Republicans. "He's essentially as successful as you'd expect," said Alan Wiseman, a Vanderbilt political science professor who co-directs the Center for Effective Lawmaking.

### **Congress**

#### **3rd CD: Smith enters GOP race**

Nonprofit CEO Tim Smith entered the Republican race. The unsuccessful 2019 Fort Wayne mayoral nominee said, "In Congress, I will put a stop to the radical left's agenda that is threatening the very freedoms that we value as Americans. I'll fight for our values, the lives of unborn children, secure our Southern border, up-

hold law and order and expose government waste, fraud and abuse. My focus will be to end wokeness and expand freedom." Smith joins the GOP field that includes former U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, former Allen County Circuit Court Judge Wendy Davis, state Sen. Andy Zay, Auburn lawyer Chandler Likes, Warsaw maintenance technician, military veteran Mike Felker and Jon Kenworthy, a military veteran and former political staffer.

### **3rd CD: FEC flags Doden funds to Zay**

The FEC flagged a \$13,200 donation from Fort Wayne-based Ambassador Enterprises, LLC to state Sen. Andy Zay's campaign for Congress for exceeding donation limits of \$3,300 (Capital Chronicle). "Although the Commission may take further legal action concerning acceptance of excessive contributions, your prompt action to refund or redesignate and/or reattribute the excessive amount will be taken into consideration," said a letter from the FEC to Zay for Congress, Zay's political committee. The \$13,200 donation came through Ambassador Enterprises, LLC, owned by Daryle and Brenda Doden, parents of gubernatorial candidate Eric Doden. Zay's campaign responded by sending an itemized receipt detailing the donation, adding that the FEC allowed LLCs to make contributions so long as they were taxed as a partnership and members were identified. Zay's campaign has until Sept. 11 to respond to the FEC's letter.

### **General Assembly**

#### **SD24: Crane won't seek reelection**

State Sen. John Crane, R-Avon, won't seek reelection in 2024. "This decision has come through considerable prayer and discernment," Crane said in a statement. "I originally ran for public office because I was called by God to do so. I have never set my sights on becoming a career politician. The mission has always been to follow God's lead and serve where I'm able." First elected in 2016, Crane won reelection in 2020 and is currently ranking. In a release, the outgoing senator said he wasn't leaving the Senate to pursue a higher political office nor was it because of any negative experiences. "On the contrary," Crane said, "it is one of the highest privileges of my life to serve the great people of Indiana in the Senate and to work alongside so many high-caliber colleagues. I look forward to continuing that good work through the remainder of my current Senate term until November 2024." Rather, Crane said the "growing demands" of professional responsibilities with JBC Leadership Strategies and the Sagamore Leadership Initiative contributed to his decision. Despite his planned departure, the senator said he was committed to his work in the interim and 2024 legislative session.

### **Presidential 2024**

#### **Trump won't sign GOP loyalty pledge**

During a Newsmax interview, Donald Trump said that he took issue with a particularly clause of the pledge

that says the candidate will support the eventual GOP nominee. "I wouldn't sign the pledge," Trump told host Eric Bolling. "They want you to sign a pledge, but I can name three or four people that I wouldn't support for president. So right there there's a problem."

### **Nation**

#### **Ohio: Issue 1 fail, alarming Republicans**

Ohio voters issued a temporary reprieve to abortion-rights supporters on Tuesday when they rejected a proposal to make it harder to amend the state constitution (Columbus Dispatch). But an expensive, nasty fight over abortion access in Ohio is only beginning. Fifty-seven percent of voters said no to Issue 1 with over 3 million votes cast, according to unofficial results. If passed, the measure would have required 60% of voters to enact new amendments — instead of a simple majority — and changed the signature-gathering process for citizen amendments.

"The Ohio result tonight, coming on the heels of the shellacking in Michigan and the unexpected loss in Kentucky, needs to be a five-alarm fire for the pro-life movement," Patrick Brown, a conservative scholar at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, tweeted late Tuesday.

"There shouldn't be any sugarcoating over what happened last night. It was a major setback in what became a very public fight between pro-choice and pro-life groups," Bill Stepien, the campaign manager for former President Donald Trump's 2020 campaign, said on Fox News. "This happened in Ohio, which is not a pink state anymore. This is a state that is red."

Tuesday's election was aimed squarely at defeating the abortion rights measure in November. GOP politicians said as much. "This is 100% about keeping a radical pro-abortion amendment out of our constitution," Secretary of State Frank LaRose said during a Lincoln Day dinner in May. "The left wants to jam it in there this coming November."

Eighteen states allow voters to directly amend a state constitution through ballot measures. During the November 2022 midterms, voters added protection for the right to get an abortion to constitutions in California, Vermont and Michigan. Kentucky voters were asked a reverse version of this question — whether the state constitution should bar abortions. They said no by a margin of 52.35% to 47.65%. Kentucky's vote is similar to an August 2022 referendum on abortion that was held in Kansas, with 59% voting to preserve abortion access.

In Indiana, where Gov. Eric Holcomb held a special session last year to push through sweeping abortion restrictions, legal challenges made it all the way to the state's Supreme Court. That body recently upheld the ban, which prohibits all abortions except in cases of rape or incest, up to 10 weeks post-fertilization, in the case of a severe fetal abnormality, or to preserve the health or life of a pregnant person. ❖

# A helped wanted ad for 2nd CD Democrats

By JACK COLWELL  
South Bend Tribune

SOUTH BEND – Maybe Democrats in Indiana’s 2nd Congressional District could try a “help wanted” ad.



“Wanted: A loser.

“Must be willing to work hard for over a year — nights, weekends and some 12-hour days required — as Democratic candidate for Congress in heavily Republican 2nd District. Expect to drive around sprawling 11-county area in all kinds of weather.

“Need to present positive message while being way outspent in campaign funding and knowing chances of winning are

about the same as White Sox chances now of winning the 2023 World Series.

“Compensation: No congressional salary likely after campaign, but knowledge of helping other Democrats win and possibility you can win by losing.”

Democratic leaders have had difficulty finding a serious candidate to run next year against Republican Congressman Rudy Yakym. No wonder. Yakym, who replaced the late Jackie Walorski on the Republican ticket after her tragic death, won big last year, with 65% of the vote. He carried all 11 of the district’s counties, even St. Joseph County. And that was while Democrats in many states were doing far better than expected. But it’s vital politically for Democrats to find a congressional candidate to rally party voters as a ticket leader, especially in St. Joseph County, if they hope to recover from the drubbing in 2022 when Republicans took control of county government in what long was regarded as a Democratic bastion.

Democratic voters stayed home in droves all over the county, with no party nominee for Congress leading the ticket to raise issues, to excite the party base, to counter Republican criticism and to at least provide a message on TV with campaign ads and in debate.

There was a nominee, Paul Steury, someone willing to try when all Democrats with name recognition, actual campaign skills and credentials for Congress wouldn’t

run. Steury, sincere and trying his best, found that his best just wouldn’t make a dent.

Party leaders know it’s important to have a viable ticket leader, somebody to get Democrats to vote. They need to find a loser. The right loser. Someone knowing that it’s possible to win by losing.

Pete Buttigieg is an example. He launched his political career by losing a hopeless race for state treasurer. Although he had no chance in a Republican sweep in Indiana, he was impressive, very impressive, and soon became a favorite for mayor of South Bend, winning that office twice and gaining attention nationally. Then he lost a bid for Democratic national chairman. He again won by losing, with accolades for his presentations. That helped him in his amazing presidential campaign. He now is U.S. transportation secretary.

John Brademas, longest serving member of Congress from the South Bend-centered district, lost twice before he went on to win 11 races for Congress and become House majority whip. Then he was president of New York University.

Joe Donnelly, trounced in his first congressional race, then won House races and election to the Senate. He now is ambassador to the Vatican.

There’s no guarantee that a Democratic nominee for Congress in 2024 would go on to future success. There’s a virtual guarantee of losing to Yakym, who has already established a likable image.

But a Democrat losing by only 10 percentage points, not by over 30 points this time, and carrying St.



Joseph County and maybe some other country, would win praise for the effort and for helping Democrats in other races. Could it be a win by losing? Actual win? I guess there could be a scenario of a big blue wave sweeping even across Indiana from a Donald Trump

meltdown. There also could be the opposite, another big Trump win in Indiana.

Meanwhile, Democrats need to find a congressional candidate, one who would answer a “help wanted” ad for a likely loser role that could, maybe, result in winning by losing. ❖

**Jack Colwell has covered Indiana politics for over five decades for the South Bend Tribune. Email him at [jcolwell@comcast.net](mailto:jcolwell@comcast.net).**

# What the GOP needs is another Goldwater

By **KELLY HAWES**  
CNHI Indiana

ANDERSON – In August of 1974, Arizona’s Barry Goldwater, the party’s standard bearer 10 years earlier, had finally lost patience with the scandal enveloping his president, Richard M. Nixon. “There are only so many lies you can take,” Goldwater told his fellow Republican senators, “and now there has been one too many.”



Goldwater called the White House to set up a meeting where he would tell Nixon he had lost support of Republicans in the Senate. “There’s not more than 15 senators for you,” Goldwater said.

Nixon turned to Pennsylvania’s Hugh Scott, leader of the Republican caucus, for what he hoped might be a brighter assessment. “I think 12 to 15,” Scott said. Nixon resigned the next day, Aug. 8, 1974.

More than 46 years later, Mitch McConnell, the Senate minority leader, stood before his colleagues to make the case for exactly the sort of trial our nation will soon witness. Donald J. Trump had just survived his second impeachment, but McConnell said the defeated president was hardly innocent. McConnell accused Trump of stoking the Jan. 6 rioters with wild falsehoods of a stolen election.

“Former President Trump’s actions that preceded the riot were a disgraceful, disgraceful dereliction of duty,” McConnell said. “Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of the day.” But the answer, he said, was not impeachment.

“We have a criminal justice system in this country,” he said. “We have civil litigation. And former presidents are not immune from being held accountable by either one.”

**Now the former** president is facing three federal indictments with at least one more on the way, and McConnell is strangely silent. The official position of the Republican Party is that Democrats have weaponized the justice system. Witness this from House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, a man who at one point had insisted Trump bore responsibility for what happened during the attack on the Capitol.

“Everyone in America could see what was going

to come next,” McCarthy said after the latest indictment. “DOJ’s attempt to distract from the news and attack the frontrunner for the Republican nomination, President Trump. House Republicans will continue to uncover the truth about Biden Inc. and the two-tiered system of justice.”

What do you suppose Barry Goldwater would think of his party today? What would he say about guys like McConnell and McCarthy and House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer?

**In the aftermath** of a closed-door committee hearing featuring testimony from Hunter Biden’s business partner, Comer’s campaign committee sent a fundraising appeal to supporters. “Star witness Devon Archer delivered BOMBHELL testimony in front of the House Oversight Committee,” it said. “No wonder Biden’s DOJ tried to throw him in jail before he could testify. This is the smoking gun evidence we needed to prove that Joe Biden was the head of the Biden Bribery Scheme.”

Actually, Archer didn’t deliver a “bombshell.” There was no smoking gun. Check the transcript. What Archer said was pretty much the opposite of what Comer claimed. The younger Biden was trading on his father’s influence, but never really delivered, Archer said.

In the aftermath of Donald Trump’s latest indictment, The Wall Street Journal editorial board offered its thoughts. “We’ve argued that an indictment of a former president should be based on serious charges with enough evidence to convince most Americans that it is justly brought,” it wrote. “We doubt most Republicans will see

this one in that light, and that means we are headed for more difficult and dangerous months ahead.”

There’s some truth in that. A portion of the electorate will always believe whatever lies their leader is telling. The only viable response is transparency. The proceedings must be held out in the open, in the full light of day. Show the American

people the facts, and let them reach their own conclusions. That’s the way democracy works.

And let’s hope for some statesmanship from the Republican Party. ❖



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# Our system works, but it needs attention

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – Back in mid-July, an eye-opening poll came out. It raises some serious questions about Americans’ underlying confidence in our democracy.

The poll, from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, was filled with dire findings: Only about half the country thinks democracy is working

at least somewhat well; a majority of US adults believe our laws and policies do a poor job representing what most Americans want; 53% of Americans say views of “people like you” are not represented well by the government; and the same percentage say Congress does a poor job of upholding democratic values — while just 16% say it’s doing a good job.



You can see why all this might be troubling. To be sure, individual respondents expressed a range of concerns, from the sense that Congress is arguing over issues that have little to do with the realities and struggles of their lives to the belief that political contentiousness is turning many Americans away from getting involved in public and community life. But it’s not a very big step from a sense that things are awry with our system to a conviction that the problem is the system — our representative democracy — itself.

Now, I don’t believe that most Americans favor authoritarianism. They want a voice in government. But they also want decent lives for themselves and their families, and if they don’t see our elected officials addressing the issues they believe matter, it’s a problem. As tempting as it might be to coast on the assumption that belief in democracy is such a bedrock value that we can take it for granted, we can’t. Democratic governments like ours have to perform. They have to show they can improve the quality of their citizens’ lives.

**Over the centuries**, of course, this is exactly what our system has done. Through world wars, the Civil War, economic recessions, depressions, and enormous challenges, America has not just survived, but improved. We continue to live in the world’s largest and most competitive economy, we have bettered the lives of countless older Americans with programs like Social Security and Medicare — remember, these were once just ideas that got turned into legislation and then into daily reality — and we’ve improved the lives of many younger people through access to college, training programs, and broader opportunities. Perhaps most important, we have created a country where economic and social opportunity, while still not as

evenly distributed as they should be, are available to the overwhelming majority of Americans. This remains a land of opportunity because our system makes that possible.

So, while I get that these are politically divided and contentious times, I also take heart by looking back at the course of our history. We’re coming up on 250 years of practice in resolving issues that arouse great passion and affect the nature of life in the U.S., and only once has the system failed — with the disastrous result, of course, being the Civil War. That great national trauma ought to be a reminder that we Americans thrive best when we settle our differences through the political process. We bring our beliefs into the voting booth, genuine grassroots lobbying campaigns, organizing efforts, and other means of peacefully advancing our points of view.

**One key aspect** of that recent poll gave me hope as I read the results: Where people express disappointment, it’s with the system falling short of our ideals, not with those ideals themselves. We believe that Congress and other representative bodies should do just that, represent the concerns of a majority of Americans. And most Americans recognize that reaching practicable solutions usually means finding areas of common ground with political opponents — and that, win or lose, there’s always a next time.

So as we look ahead, it doesn’t hurt to look back and reflect on all the challenges we’ve overcome. It’s an



impressive record. The strength of our country lies in the fact that over our history, Americans have always found a way forward by embracing the opportunities that our system offers. That’s no less true now than it ever was. ❖

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# Looking back on mistakes

By **MICHAEL J. HICKS**

MUNCIE – In my line of work, it is helpful to look back from time to time and assess one's mistakes. So, I spent a couple of hours perusing my old columns to see what I might wish to rewrite considering what I now know. It is important to be forthright about analytical errors so that we can draw lessons from them. Three issues really stuck out to me.



First, I thought the 2009 American Recovery Act was about right with its nearly \$900 billion price tag. Still, I was worried about inflation and thought that tighter monetary policy would control the effects of excess spending. I said as much in columns and in interviews. How-

ever, viewed from the years of now available information, it seems clear that the stimulus in the American Recovery Act was far too small. The economic recovery from 2009 to 2020 could've been much better had we more aggressively coped with the deep demand shocks of 2008.

This matters because much of the long economic expansion from 2009 to 2020 was weak. Job creation, infrastructure investment and, most especially, growth in educational attainment all lagged. The retrospective consensus of economic historians will be that the Great Recession stimulus was too small. In the decades to come they will also view the effectiveness of monetary policy as oversold. I think these assessments will be empirically correct, which means that I was wrong about it in 2009 and 2010.

Second, I criticized the Affordable Care Act, better known as Obamacare. I was deeply concerned that the expansion of government would do little to improve health care outcomes. I also felt that government intrusion into these markets would reduce the efficiency of providers and divert resources from the private sector to the public sector. I was right to oppose the ACA, but the problem wasn't what it seemed.

**As it turns out**, the Affordable Care Act did almost nothing to improve health care outcomes in the USA. In fact, life expectancy, particularly among poorer Americans, is now reversing course. We are arguably in the midst of the worst setback of health among any people in recent centuries. This cannot be laid wholly at the feet of this legislation, but certainly didn't change the course of increasing mortality.

I supported the decisions of both Govs. Mitch Daniels and Mike Pence in expanding Medicaid as part of the Affordable Care Act. I stand by that call. Today it is

clear that the extension of Medicaid was among the very few good outcomes of Obamacare, and Indiana's market-based approach was as good a model as anywhere in the nation. But, fears about the effects of the ACA caused most states to ignore broad abuses by hospital systems around the country. Indiana was ground zero for this problem.

Prior to 2010, Hoosier businesses and consumers paid about the right share of their incomes on health care. In other words, our spending could be explained by demographics, primarily age. Since 2010, the cost of health care in Indiana skyrocketed, but only in a couple of areas. Hospital costs especially ballooned as large systems bought out competitors. Then, the cost of physician services began to explode as hospitals bought out private practices to eliminate competition.

**Today, Hoosier consumers** and businesses pay among the very steepest prices for health care in the nation. From 2009 to 2021, the share of the average American family budget spent on health care declined by 0.3%. But, here in Indiana, it grew by 1.1%, or more than an additional \$1,000 per year for the typical family. Prices here outpace almost all the rest of the nation, and they continue to worsen. At the same time, the most profitable industry in Indiana remains not-for-profit hospitals. It remains a difficult, if not intractable, policy challenge.

I was right to oppose Obamacare, but for the wrong reasons. I thought the legislation would cause such a large increase in the size of government that it would push us closer and closer to a single-payer (socialized) medical system. Ironically, that is not at all what happened. Today, the real risk of pushing us into a socialized medical system isn't an overreaching federal government, it is the breathtaking monopolization of health care markets led primarily by not-for-profit hospitals. So, if the American public becomes frustrated enough to implement a single-payer system, the blame won't fall upon an expansive federal government, but on the boards and CEOs of not-for-profit hospital systems.

My third big mistake was supporting the Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA). The large tax reforms of the Trump administration were predicated on the belief that reducing the corporate tax rate would bring large capital stocks back into the United States from overseas tax havens. These were in excess of a trillion dollars. At the same time, the TCJA simplified tax filings for most American families. For these reasons, I supported the bill.

The TCJA was always an inflationary risk because it would add to the federal budget deficit. At the time, I thought this was a reasonable risk because the economic recovery was so poor (see above, mistake number one). However, the repatriation of funds was not enough to accelerate growth. To be fair, the Trump administration's choice to place tariffs on China, a few months after the TCJA took effect, also slowed the economy. A coherent, pro-growth economic policy might have rescued the TCJA and boosted economic growth. But, coherence is not a

word one easily associates with the Trump administration.

I was not alone in making these mistakes, but there's no comfort in being wrong with a crowd. I wish we would have had a bigger stimulus in 2009. Had we done so, the need for a TCJA would've been lessened. More importantly, the TCJA effect on the federal deficit would have been more modest if the economy grew faster after the Great Recession.

**The lesson that a generation** of economists will take from this is to pursue fiscal policy more aggressively during a recession. This will bring its own risks, but no one wants to revisit the slow growth and political turbulence of the last decade.

The expansive monopolization of hospitals following Obamacare is a more familiar warning. Every govern-

ment action carries with it risks of unanticipated effects. So many of us were worried about the growing federal bureaucracy that we completely missed the exploding monopolization of hospitals. In the years ahead, I, along with the many other economists who made these specific mistakes, will need to carefully learn lessons about fiscal policy, the business cycle and the unintended consequences of regulation. These all are familiar topics. ❖

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



## Bring back the disputes of old

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Where are the great debates of yore? Those disputes which enlivened our desultory discussions of great import? Why have we forgotten to ask, “What time is it in Indiana?”



Remember those golden years when we argued about time zones? Do you recall the vituperation we heaped upon the extremists who insisted on one time zone for the entire state? What fun we had, certain of the appropriate time zone (Eastern or Central) for our county. What disdain we had for those who disagreed with us. Eastern time was the natural choice for all counties adjacent to Ohio. Likewise, counties adjacent to Kentucky — from Louisville east, sought to be in sync with their neighbors. However, the northwestern counties in the Chicago TV market insisted on Central time as their natural right. Furthermore, the Southwestern counties around Evansville had a strange preference for Illinois and St. Louis time. Without an Interstate highway to Indianapolis, they felt estranged from the rest of Indiana.

**Indianapolis and** then-Gov. Mitch Daniels wanted Eastern time. Tradition and vanity demanded Central Indiana to be on Eastern time. It was essential, commercial interests claimed, to have the same time as the New York Stock Exchange. Otherwise, stock trading professionals and day-trading junkies would have to rise an hour earlier to enjoy the opening bell, a hardship to be avoided at all costs.

We coupled the Eastern vs. Central dispute with the question of daylight saving time (DST). Farmers

claimed DST was unnatural and unethical. Animals were geared to solar time and we, animals ourselves, should not depart from what nature dictates. Parents feared for the lives of their children waiting for school buses in preternatural darkness. After all, sunrise would be an hour later with DST. Inflexible school administrators would not change schedules to save the lives of their students.

**However, the proponents** of DST always won out. That enormously powerful lobby — the golfers — favored DST as it extended playing time into the evening hours. Farmers don't play golf; bankers and their business borrowers do. Legislators play golf so they can buddy up with bankers and their business pals. And the latter want to buddy up with the legislators.

But times have changed. Golf is of less consequence in today's world. More women are in banking, business and the Legislature; they don't play golf as frequently as a bonding activity.

But DST will survive. Young adults attend their children's athletic events rather than playing golf. It's the new fashion in parenting. DST means more time for games after the workday.

As for the time zones, our population is aging. Older folks watch TV from 7 to 10 p.m., which favors being on Central time, a particularly important factor for watching Colbert and professional sports on TV. Today, stock market followers can do their thing at home in their pajamas. Maybe we can resurrect the time zone issue and have some fun again. ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at [morton-jmarcus@yahoo.com](mailto:morton-jmarcus@yahoo.com). Follow him and John Guy on “Who Gets What?” wherever podcasts are available or at [mortonjohn.libsyn.com](http://mortonjohn.libsyn.com).**

# Ohio Issue #1 smackdown

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

CHARLOTTESVILLE – There is an old saying that “pigs get fat, but hogs get slaughtered.” It is an apt description for what happened in Ohio’s Issue 1 vote on Tuesday evening.

Ohio Republicans, who already dominate state government, asked voters to essentially take away their own power by raising the threshold for voters to approve statewide constitutional amendment ballot measures from a bare 50% majority to a 60% supermajority. The proposal also would have made the signature-gathering process much more difficult in order to place such amendments in front of voters.

The whole point of this process was to erect an impassable barrier in front of a looming constitutional amendment on the ballot in November that would enshrine abortion rights protections into the state constitution. Secondly, Issue 1 would have made it much harder for redistricting reformers to successfully present a constitutional amendment to voters, perhaps in 2024, to establish a new, independent redistricting system in Ohio, which Republicans would oppose.

Basically, the Ohio Republicans got greedy in seeking to eliminate the most surefire way in which voters could go over the top of elected state leaders and impose something that Republicans did not want. The voters did not respond kindly to it.

### Turnout was robust for

this irregularly-scheduled August election that featured only a single item on the ballot. As of Wednesday morning, 3.06 million votes were cast. That is nearly three-quarters (74%) of the total cast in the state’s high-profile Senate race last year, 4.14 million. The Issue 1 total was markedly higher than the 1.66 million cast in the May 2022 primary, which featured a competitive GOP primary for the Senate nomination.

County-level turnout data suggests that Democrats had an edge compared to the 2022 electorate. Map 1 shows the patterns – counties in yellow were over that 74% statewide figure, and counties in purple were below.

Notice that turnout was relatively weak throughout Appalachian Southeast Ohio. The state has 32 counties in eastern and southern Ohio that are classified by the feder-

al government as part of Appalachia – all but one of them is in purple. The lone exception is Ashtabula in far north-east Ohio, a postindustrial Obama-to-Trump county that really isn’t actually Appalachian at all, culturally-speaking, but the designation opens it up to economic development aid.

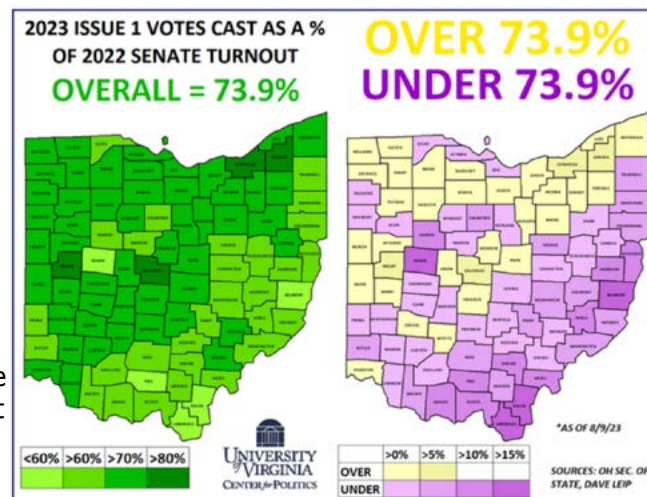
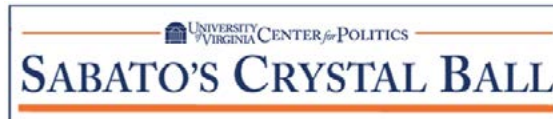
Meanwhile, the state’s bluest county, Cleveland’s Cuyahoga, was at 81% of 2022 Senate votes cast, the third-best mark in the state. Just ahead of it were Delaware, the traditionally Republican but blue-trending northern Columbus suburban/exurban county, as well as traditionally Republican Geauga, which is south-east of Cleveland and is relatively well-off and highly educated.

**Not only was turnout** robust in those two counties, but they also shifted by more than the state did from the 2022 Senate race. In that contest last November, Sen. J. D. Vance (R-OH) defeated former Rep. Tim Ryan (D, OH-13) by 6 points, 53%-47%. On Tuesday, Issue 1 lost by 14 points, 57%-43%. So there was a 20-point statewide difference between the Senate margin and the Issue 1 margin -- yes, we know that one was a partisan race and this one was not, but we thought some of the differences were telling.

Delaware and Geauga were among the counties that exceeded that 20-point Senate-to-Issue 1 shift, as Delaware went from backing Vance by 6.3 points to rejecting Issue 1 by 15.4 (a nearly 22-point swing) and Geauga went from Vance by 18.7 to No by 4.4 (a 23-point swing). Other higher-turnout counties with above-average swings from 2022 Senate to Issue 1 were Lake, Lorain, Medina, and Portage. These are all places in Northeast Ohio, and Lorain and Portage were important parts of the state’s

Democratic coalition that swung to Donald Trump. Another place with high turnout and a high swing was Union, a northwest Columbus exurban county.

Other “collar counties” surrounding the big city counties -- Cleveland’s Cuyahoga, Columbus’s Franklin, and Cincinnati’s Hamilton -- also saw bigger-than-average swings against Issue 1 but were also below average in terms of percentage of 2022 votes cast. That description applies to Hamilton’s trio of blood-red collar counties, Butler, Clermont, and Warren. According to our calculations, Issue 1 passed with just about 51% in the 8th Congressional District, a 60% Trump district that includes Butler County. Similarly, Issue 1 failed by nearly 30 points in District 1, a Joe Biden +8 seat that pairs Cincinnati proper



with Warren County. All of this is suggestive of both a turnout and persuasion problem for Republicans that we would not expect in, say, a presidential general election.

This is a good time to say that ballot issues – and, as we have pointed out in the cases of some other states, judicial races – are not directly comparable to partisan elections, and this election does nothing to impact our belief that Ohio is likely to vote Republican for president next year.

Still, while we aren't expecting Joe Biden to carry Ohio next year, the state is set to host one of the 2024 cycle's key Senate races, as Sen. Sherrod Brown (D) is seeking a fourth term. Brown, who is the sole Democrat occupying a non-judicial statewide office, was last reelected in 2018. Map 2 considers Brown's 2018 showing, which may be considered something of a high-water mark for Democrats, alongside the results of Issue 1.

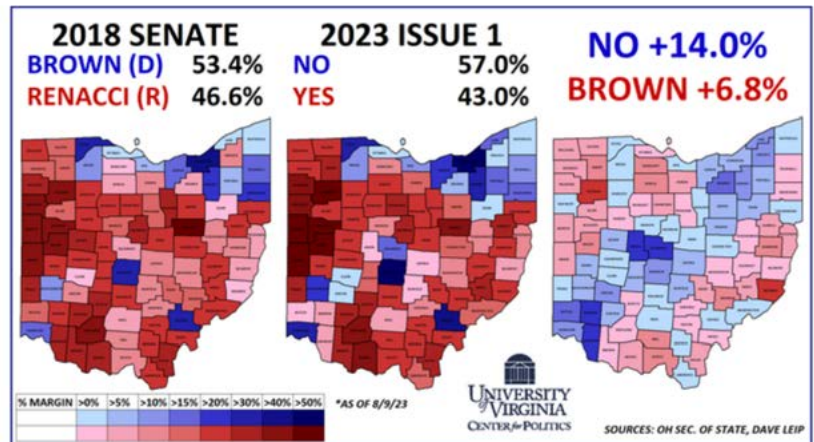
**The No side on Issue 1** won by 14 points, or about double Brown's margin. The trends on the third image on Map 2 are basically familiar. "No" outperformed Brown in most of the major metro centers – a diagonal running from Cincinnati then to Columbus and then up to Cleveland is obvious – while it ran behind his showing in most counties along the Ohio River and in the northwest. Four counties saw swings that were over 20 points in No's direction: Cincinnati's Clermont and Warren as well as Columbus's Delaware and Union – this reinforces our view that Brown's path to reelection probably runs through improvement in the suburbs, as Democrats seem to have more room to grow in counties like that. One exception to that urban trend was the Youngstown area, which has been drifting towards Republicans for several cycles. Though No fared a little better in Mahoning County than it did statewide, its 58% was down from Brown's 60.5%.

One other note on the results/turnout: the Democratic big-city trio of Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Hamilton all saw a little less than the 20-point swing from 2022 Senate, but all were above average for percentage of 2022 votes cast. To the extent that Issue 1 held up well for Republicans in both performance and turnout, it was in some parts of rock-solid Republican northwest/western Ohio, but even there we saw some erosion compared to the 2022 Senate election.

A major difference between Tuesday night's vote and the looming abortion amendment in November is that the sides will be reversed. On Tuesday, the Democrats' position was No and the Republicans' was Yes. For the abortion amendment, the Democrats will be backing the Yes position to enshrine abortion rights protections in the state constitution, while Republicans will be on the No side. There is often a "status quo" bias that advantages the No side in a statewide ballot issue, and that may have been a factor in Tuesday's vote (we noted last year that this dynamic may have been at play in what became a watershed referendum in Kansas). That said, this kind of bias

could have been mitigated given the robust coverage of Issue 1 and the strong turnout, and that also could apply to the November vote, which on its face is probably easier to understand than yesterday's issue. It seems possible that the abortion issue will do worse than Issue 1 because there likely were some Republicans who oppose abortion but who did not want to disempower themselves in voting on constitutional amendments. Then again, with abortion directly on the ballot in November, as opposed to indirectly on the ballot in August, the pro-abortion rights side may be even more energized. It's hard to know, but we do feel confident in saying that the pro-abortion rights side starts the November campaign with a cushion based on what we saw on Tuesday night.

One key figure who did not appear to be involved much if at all in the Issue 1 campaign was Gov. Mike DeWine (R), who said he supported Issue 1 but otherwise did not play any apparent role in pushing for its passage. One telling result – and we're not suggesting this has anything to do with the governor himself – came in DeWine's home county, Greene, where No narrowly won amidst high turnout and an average swing from the 2022 Senate race.



Greene is a Dayton exurban county that is higher-than-average in terms of educational attainment, and it is otherwise reliably Republican. DeWine won his first election as Greene County Prosecutor nearly half a century ago. We are curious to see if the governor takes a more active role on the reproductive rights amendment, given his deeply-felt and long-held opposition to abortion.

**Secretary of State Frank LaRose** (R), who recently joined what should be an intense U.S. Senate primary that also features businessman Bernie Moreno and state Sen. Matt Dolan (who both ran in 2022), was the public face of the "yes" on Issue 1 campaign. One wonders whether its failure will negatively impact LaRose.

This week was in keeping with what we've seen elsewhere in the post-Dobbs era – the pro-abortion rights side performing well in a statewide ballot issue that is either directly or, in this case, indirectly about abortion rights. There is another ballot test for the abortion rights side coming up in Ohio this November. ❖

### **Chuck Zumbrun, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette:**

Wendy Davis, who is running to represent Indiana's 3rd District in Congress, had an opinion article run in The Journal Gazette on Aug. 5. For a candidate, this is a tremendous opportunity to put their message in front of a large audience. It's a chance for the candidate to show what's important to them, to show their grasp of difficult issues and to present their solutions.

What did candidate Davis choose to write about? Immigration? The war in Ukraine? The rocky relationship between the United States and China?

The threat posed by a nuclear North Korea? Davis chose to write about transgender people and their imagined threat to high school girls' sports. She demonstrated as a candidate, and should she win the election, that she prefers to wade into the culture wars, to divide and inflame rather than propose solutions to substantive issues. The rights of transgender people are a serious issue, and they deserve a serious response. Davis did not provide that. Instead, she resorted to simplistic sound bites, suitable for whipping up division on social media but far beneath what someone aspiring to be a member of Congress should bring to the issue. As a lawyer and former judge, Davis surely knows her statements on the proposed changes to Title IX to include sexual identity are patently false. Davis states that these changes "would prevent schools from banning biological men from playing in women's sports" when in fact the proposed rules say nothing of the sort. The guidance provided by the Department of Education says, for example, "For older students, especially at the high school and college level, the Department expects that sex-related criteria that limit participation of some transgender students may be permitted." Why does Davis present an argument that is clearly false? Is she willing to present anything, no matter how outlandish, if she thinks it will help her get elected? Is all that matters her ambition? Indiana's 3rd District deserves a representative who upholds and aspires to that ideal, not someone who imagines themselves a culture warrior, who encourages division and anger, all for her personal gain. ❖

**Rich Lowry, New York Times:** Donald Trump is the most-indicted front-running presidential candidate ever. There is, of course, no other competition for this distinction. The myriad charges, with perhaps another set on the way, have shown no sign of denting Mr. Trump's appeal among Republicans. Indeed, it's not that he's winning despite the indictments; it's almost as though he's winning because of the indictments. The indictment by the Manhattan district attorney, Alvin Bragg, over the Stormy Daniels hush money changed the trajectory of the Republican race. Mr. Trump had already stabilized from the hit he took after the disappointing midterms for Republicans,



but the indictment helped boost him nearly 10 points in the national polls, and he's stayed on that elevated plane ever since. Before this, the presumption in contemporary politics has been that a serious presidential candidate would have to withdraw if indicted. If the time and resources necessary to fight criminal charges didn't dissuade him or her, the voters would leave the candidate no other choice. Why hasn't this happened to Mr. Trump? His ability to weather, and benefit from, his legal straits is a testament not just to his hold on the party but also to a deep distrust of the criminal justice system among Republicans. A figure like Mr. Trump, a colorful populist adored by a political base that loves him, in part, because he is so embattled, is unlikely to be taken down by the very authorities he says are corrupt and arrayed against him. ❖

**John Krull, Statehouse File:** People so often misread Mike Pence. They see the former vice president's bland, open face, his stilted high-school-speech-star gestures upon the stage and his awkward emulations of former President Ronald Reagan and consider him as little more than a mannequin. Because so many see him as a lightweight, even a blank slate, they feel free to project their fears and hopes onto him. That is why so many progressives have viewed him as the great theocratic threat to personal liberty and so many social conservatives as the untiring champion of their values. He is neither. Mike Pence always has been a politician, one with an insatiable ambition for advancement and an impeccable instinct for self-preservation. He is, first and foremost, a survivor, a man who will find a way forward even when all paths seem closed to him. He will pull himself back onto his feet after he's been knocked down, endure defeat after defeat as he staggers ahead in pursuit of his goal, never losing sight of what he wants. He has the patience and the guile of the long-distance traveler. The more rabid partisans of former President Donald Trump now are in an uproar over what they see as Pence's betrayal of the man who "saved" the former Indiana governor's career. They fail to understand the situation in at least two critical ways. The first is that Pence had no choice but to testify truthfully to what he saw and heard under oath once he had been legally compelled to do so. To do otherwise — to commit perjury — would have put Pence in at least as much trouble as Trump is in. That's not something Pence's unswerving survivor's instinct would allow him to do. The second key way Trump supporters misunderstand the Trump-Pence relationship involves the question of obligation—of what the two men owe each other. If Trump saved Pence from defeat in the Indiana governor's race, Pence saved Trump from defeat in the 2016 presidential race. They owed each other. Only one of them, though, honored the obligation. ❖

## Indiana author on his book ban

FISHERS — Indiana author John Green took to social media on Wednesday to express frustration over the handling of his book "The Fault in Our Stars" ([WRTV](#)). Hamilton East Public Library system, which has two locations in Noblesville and Fishers, has a new policy requiring librarians to review every book in the teen section of the library to see if it fit for teenage readers.

Green learned of the removal of his book, which was eventually adapted into a hit movie, and shared frustration over the "ludicrous". "The Fault in Our Stars has been removed from the YA (young adult) section in the suburbs of Indianapolis and is now considered a 'book for adults.' This is ludicrous. It is about teenagers and I wrote it for teenagers. Teenagers are not harmed by reading TFOS. This is such an embarrassment to the city of Fishers. I only have a small voice in these decisions, of course, but you won't catch me alive or dead in Fishers, Indiana until these ridiculous policies are revoked."



## Young calls for more U.S. chips

BLOOMINGTON — Indiana Republican U.S. Senator Todd Young says the U.S. should tailor legislation to produce more here, while coordinating production with other allies ([Indiana Public Media](#)). It was one of several topics at Wednesday's Federal Focus lunch with the chamber of commerce at Ivy Tech Bloomington. Bloomington's tech park still mainly sits empty, though work is being done to fill the Trades District with economic activity. Young says a feature of the CHIPS in Science Act is to increase investment in university research. "That will lead to more discoveries, which in turn, will lead to more startups in our university communities like Bloomington.

ton. So we're very excited about the tech Park and the vision that President Whitten and others have there," he said.

## Chamber report focus on education

INDIANAPOLIS — College degrees, skills training and high-quality certificates are the future of Indiana's economy, according to the Indiana Chamber of Commerce's recent reports ([Indiana Public Media](#)).

The chamber unveiled its Indiana Prosperity 2035 initiative Monday, which said getting Hoosiers post-secondary degrees and certificates are crucial to the state's economic outlook. Chamber President Kevin Brinegar said education and its impact on workforce development are top priorities in getting more people jobs in the 21st century. "That's why workforce and K-12 education are the cornerstone pillars of the six pillars of our Indiana Prosperity 2035 plan," Brinegar said. Indiana Prosperity 2035 is the "primary driver" of the Chamber of Commerce's work and advocacy. The initiative is intended to engage legislators and business groups. The plan took 18 months to develop and includes six pillars: the Workforce; K-12 Education; Economic Growth, Innovation and Entrepreneurship; Superior Infrastructure and Energy, Quality of Place Strategies; and Healthy, Prosperous Communities and Citizens.

## Clergy calls for IMPD chief to quit

INDIANAPOLIS — A group of concerned clergy members has called for IMPD Police Chief Randal Taylor to step down ([CBS4](#)). This comes after multiple officer-involved incidents this year. Reverend David Greene with The Concerned Clergy of Indianapolis said another family is grieving the loss of their loved one. Last week, Gary DeWayne Harrell was shot while running away from police. "There is a pattern. The repeated explanation for these egregious acts is the same.

The officers failed to follow their IMPD training and policies," said Greene.

## Purdue to build new dormitory

WEST LAFAYETTE ([WLF1](#)) — Purdue is approving more opportunities for on-campus housing. The Purdue Board of Trustees has approved the construction of a new residence hall. The \$149 million, 250 square foot building will be located on the south side of Hillenbrand Hall.

## Alarming fentanyl ODs spike in city

FORT WAYNE ([WPTA](#)) — City leaders are warning residents of what they call "alarming rates" of recent fentanyl overdoses. Police say just 2 milligrams of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine, can cause an overdose. That amount is equal to just about two grains of salt. Police say 2 milligrams of fentanyl, equal to just about two grains of salt, can cause an. Police say 2 milligrams of fentanyl, equal to just about two grains of salt, can cause an overdose.

## Wildfires kill 36 in Maui

WAILUKU, Hawaii ([AP](#)) — Thousands of Hawaii residents raced to escape homes on Maui as blazes swept across the island, destroying parts of a centuries-old town and killing at least 36 people in one of the deadliest U.S. wildfires in recent years. The fire took the island by surprise, leaving behind burned-out cars on once busy streets and smoking piles of rubble where historic buildings had stood in Lahaina Town, which dates to the 1700s and has long been a favorite destination for tourists. Crews battled blazes in several places on the island Wednesday, and the flames forced some adults and children to flee into the ocean.