



Holcomb stakes out his own policy

New governor taking different route on taxes, education, opioids

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**
and **THOMAS CURRY**

INDIANAPOLIS – One would be hard-pressed to recall an Indiana governor who didn't get off to a good start. Governors are elected on a virtual personal basis with voters. Frank O'Bannon was grandfatherly, Evan Bayh the boy next door, Doc Bowen was the family physician, Bob Orr the friendly giant, Mike Pence the sunny favorite son come home, and



Mitch Daniels the comeback kid.

Gov. Eric Holcomb is, perhaps, the least known new governor of the modern era, elevated to lieutenant governor last March, and then into the gubernatorial nomination on July 26. In the final November WTHR/Howey Politics Indiana Poll, Holcomb's fav/unfavs had risen to 31/26%, up from 17/14% in the September survey where he was

first tested. He had 80% name ID, compared to 98% for Gov. Pence, and 23% had no opinion of him, compared to just 4% for Pence, whose own fav/unfavs stood at

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Pence departs on mute

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – He was supposed to be the great Hoosier communicator.

But when Mike Pence was finished with Indiana this past week, his galloping ambition fulfilled after a three

and a half year run over Hoosier stepping stones, it was a one-way conversation. It was a wrap. No exit interviews as his term came to an end, unlike with exiting Govs. Evan Bayh, Joe Kernan and Mitch Daniels.

In December 2012, Gov. Daniels conducted a series of exit interviews in his Statehouse office. Seated around him were myself, Eric Bradner, Tom LoBianco, Susan Guyett and Leslie



“It was disgraceful that the intelligence agencies allowed any information that turned out to be so false and fake out. I think it’s a disgrace ... and that’s something that Nazi Germany would have done and did do.”

- President-elect Donald Trump



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Weidenbener. LoBianco asked the last question: What's your proudest accomplishment?

Gov. Daniels would answer any question and on this one he responded, "This is the 'Who's your favorite daughter' question. I think the best way I can answer this is to say there are several. Opening doors to building a better business climate. Because that was always the central goal. If it does have staying power, it will lead to all the other good things. It will lead to jobs, therefore to revenues to do the things governments should do. It will underpin the success of the state. If it lasts, establishing Indiana as more of a leadership state at least in certain areas, I hope I've changed the culture inside state government to excellence, efficiency and good service, and outside, change the culture and expectations of higher expectations. An expectation of innovation."

For a politician who was supposed to be the great Indiana communicator, Vice President-elect Pence left us on his own words and terms. What he lacked was the courage to engage in a dialogue over what had occurred here over the past four years. Gov. Pence left us with a video on his final weekend (see page 4), a brief appearance before the Indiana Republican Central Committee, and a few state bicentennial events.

Even though Pence drew a paycheck from Indiana taxpayers since Donald Trump selected him for the ticket, as of last May, when his ambition kindled into flame as scores of Republicans shunned a chance to run with the Manhattan billionaire, the governor simply moved on from the Indiana press and subsequently, his own people.

There were no room for questions about his policies and impacts. He would refuse to talk about the legacy of his prized program, the

Health Indiana Plan 2.0, or about record employment and investment. He would ignore the East Chicago lead crisis that impacted 1,000 Hoosiers, or the wave of carfentanyl and heroin that was killing dozens of Hoosiers and sending hundreds into emergency rooms.

The great Indiana communicator had transformed himself into a mute. It was as if he was saying that once he ascended to the Trump ticket, the 6.5 million of us had served his purpose. Or as an old Boston political operative bluntly put it in a book about Tip O'Neill, when the campaign



Four of the five living governors at the inaugural: Eric Holcomb, Mike Pence, Mitch Daniels and Evan Bayh.

volunteer showed up at the HQ the day after the election, he was told, "Thanks a lot kid, now get lost."

During the Indiana Republican Convention in June when he was renominated, Pence would not speak to the press. He took a couple of questions over the Fourth of July weekend in Noblesville when speculation grew that he was on Trump's short list. He took a couple of questions from WTHR-TV's Kevin Rader at the Republican National Convention and one subsequent campaign imbed flight that cost his station thousands of dollars. Gov. Pence decided not to mingle with the Indiana Republican delegation at the Hilton Gardens in Cleveland, perhaps because there were about of dozen journalists in tow. He opted for a 15-minute appearance at a country club breakfast the day after his acceptance speech.

His media team, headed by

Marc Lotter who abruptly left the Ballard administration months before, refused to return phone calls, emails and texts from Indiana media. Pence's cell phone number, used sparingly by this writer, went dark. Even Pence's hometown newspaper, the Columbus Republic, was ignored. The phrase: "The Pence campaign did not respond to requests for comment" became the norm this past year.

Why would the great Hoosier communicator fear the press? Perhaps it was that April 2015 day at the Indiana State Library when the RFRA legislation and the clumsy way he signed the act left a bad taste in his mouth or scared his inner circle. Pence had seriously bungled not only that press conference, but his interview with ABC's George Stephanopolous that following weekend. Pence's ascension on the Trump ticket brought him new political vitality, a lifeline away from a gubernatorial rematch with John Gregg many believed he would lose.

Reliable sources within the Trump/Pence transition tell HPI that there was a blunt political calculation made that he had nothing to gain by talking to Indiana reporters.

Such a calculation only underscored the widespread notion that virtually everything he did as Indiana governor was conducted in the context of a future national campaign. For three and a half years, Pence became the most tightly scripted politician to come and pass the scene. His answers were so predictable that reporters would mouth his responses as he said them.

In covering Gov. Pence, the challenge was always to find an original thought beyond his talking points. Traveling with him to Aurora, Madison and Salem in October 2014, the journalistic yield was a series of fabulous photos and excellent interactions with regular folks and mayors.

There wasn't a single curve ball or embarrassing question or moment. When the day concluded, I asked Republican Chairman Jeff Cardwell, "Why do they hide the governor? You should let Mike Pence be Mike Pence."

As we passed his alma mater, Hanover College in his Chevy Tahoe, I approached the 2016 presidential speculation swirling around him by asking what he wanted to see in the next nominee. Pence responded, "I'm looking for someone who says, 'Send me to Washington and I'll make it possible for the next man or woman running my state to have more freedom, more flexibility.' And the second thing, the country is looking for someone who expresses optimism and confidence."

I noted at the time that Pence could look into the rearview mirror and see himself.

The historical curveball is that Gov. Pence would sideline his own presidential ambitions with his own RFRA

miscalculation, then find his career salvaged by Donald Trump, who presented a dark, brooding vision for a nation while earning votes from a disaffected strata of the electorate who see their communities and lives undergoing change they don't like or understand.

In President Reagan's farewell address in January 1989, he observed the tradition of farewell warnings, but noted a "resurgence of national pride that I call the new patriotism. This national feeling is good, but it won't count for much and it won't last unless it's grounded in thoughtfulness and knowledge. An informed patriotism is what we want."

Reagan also noted his persistent reference to that "shining city upon the hill."

It's instructive to hear Reagan's lasting vision: "I've spoken of the shining city all my political life, but I don't know if I ever quite communicated what I saw when I said it. But in my mind, it was a tall proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace – a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity, and if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors, and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here."

Mike Pence had an opportunity to lend perspective and create a dialogue about his tenure at the Hoosier helm. His own paranoia and that of his staff reveal a lost confidence that he could communicate his perspective.

In his campaign with Trump, the Pence we knew in Congress who created the media shield, gave way to a politician who went to war against the media. The irony is that in the homestretch of the campaign, Pence's ample communication skills salvaged the Trump candidacy, in addition to his very own nomination. He exhorted Republicans to "come home" and they did.

But his ascendancy comes with a president-elect whose popularity are at historic lows for someone poised to take office. They defeated a candidate whose own negatives were at historic highs, and that losing candidate received almost three million more votes. Throw in the Russian interference in the election and that Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania were won by less than 100,000 votes combined creates an illusion of illegitimacy that isn't completely understood.

They are claiming a "mandate," but things will not get easier for Donald Trump and Mike Pence. His lack of confidence to finish a dialogue in his home state is ominous, given the trying times that lie ahead. ❖



Gov. Pence's farewell video

By **MIKE PENCE**

INDIANAPOLIS – As my time serving as your governor comes to a close, I would like to share a few thoughts about the last four years and what we as Hoosiers have accomplished together. I am so proud of the people of Indiana. Hoosiers are known around America for being good and kind-hearted people, always willing



Click the photo to watch Gov. Mike Pence's farewell video.

to help each other in times of need, but as I learned traveling across this country, our state has also become synonymous with fiscal responsibility, innovation and a growing economy.

Together we made great strides since that January, 2013, day when I took the oath of office. We lived up to our reputation and worked hard to create a state that attracts investment and jobs. With the Indiana General Assembly, we cut taxes in each of the last four years. We held the line on spending and with balanced budgets and record reserves, Indiana became the fiscal envy of the country. We rolled back burdensome red tape and made historic investments in education, infrastructure, innovation and reform.

We set a record for private sector employment. Today, we have more Hoosiers working than ever before in the 200-year history of this state. Indiana's economy added more than 165,000 new private sector jobs, and our state's unemployment rate has been cut in half. Indiana's labor force participation rate outpaced the national average for more than two years running.

Because of hardworking Hoosiers and our state's competitive business environment, we secured commitments from companies that represent more than \$15 billion in capital investment creating more than 90,000 jobs in the future.

And, because our fiscal foundation is strong, the state has been able to partner with local communities through the Regional Cities Initiative to support quality of life improvements, attracting even more talent and investment in our cities. The state investment of \$126 million will yield more than \$2 billion in total investments – a great value for taxpayers – and will span more than 100 projects that include the redevelopment of downtown areas and waterways while enhancing cultural and economic opportunities.

As the Crossroads of America, Indiana made robust infrastructure investments to meet the needs of our economy. In the last four years, we committed more than \$2.5 billion in new funding for roads and bridges, with-

out raising taxes. We also secured the first ongoing, new investments for local infrastructure projects in more than a decade and cut the ribbon on new bridges on the Ohio River, made improvements on U.S. 31 and made critical progress completing I-69 from Evansville to Indianapolis.

Our innovative Healthy Indiana Plan is a national model of how to provide affordable health care coverage to our most vulnerable citizens. Hoosiers are proving we can improve healthcare and drive down costs with consumer choices and preventive care without the federal mandates, taxes and fees.

With HIP 2.0, we have also made great strides expanding treatment for those who struggle in the grip of drug addiction. This year, we also broke ground on Indiana's first mental health hospital in more than a generation and brought together experts from across the state to craft solutions to combat the scourge of substance abuse in our communities.

In education, while investing record amounts in K-12 public education, we set aside millions of dollars to increase pay for good teachers. I'm especially proud that we made historic strides to ensure that our schools work for all our kids, regardless of where they start in life and regardless of where they want to start. We became the first state in America to make career and vocational education a priority again in every high school.

I am especially proud to have signed legislation that, for the first time ever, provides public funding for quality pre-K education for disadvantaged Hoosier children. Our pilot program is opening doors for vulnerable children across Indiana and creating a framework for future investment in early childhood education. Our focus on education is affecting student performance in the classroom. Thanks to the hard work of our kids, parents and teachers, graduation rates and test scores improved over the past four years all across the state.

The success our state has enjoyed is a product of the work ethic and ingenuity of businesses large and small, in the city and on the farm but credit must also go to the men and women who serve our state at every level of our government.

The greatest blessing of my life is my wife, Karen Pence, and in her service as our First Lady, Hoosiers have seen her love and devotion to Indiana throughout the past four years. As First Lady, Karen has impacted the lives of children and families in a lasting way. Her travels across our state as our bicentennial ambassador and her charitable efforts supporting organizations in all 92 counties have touched hearts and inspired Hoosiers, and I will always be proud of her service.

I was fortunate to have at my side two dedicated lieutenant governors, Sue Ellspermann and Gov. Eric Holcomb, who were full partners in every success of our administration. Credit is also due to the dedicated men and women of my governor's staff, the members of my cabinet and the thousands of state employees whom I have had the privilege of working alongside the last four

years. With their integrity and work ethic, these state employees personify the best of public service, and it has been my honor to serve the people of Indiana with them.

I am also grateful for the stewardship of the men and women of the Indiana General Assembly, especially Speaker Brian Bosma and Senate President Pro Tem David Long. These legislators enabled our state to become the fiscal envy of the country as we advanced innovative policies to improve the economy and well-being of Hoosiers.

But most of all, credit belongs to you, the people of Indiana, who demanded a government as good as our people. We worked each day to fulfill the trust you placed in us and while the work of the people will continue, I believe every Hoosier can be proud of the progress our state has made at the outset of our third century.

As my time as your governor comes to an end, I want to say thank you. Thank you for giving me and my family the opportunity to serve the state we love. Thank



you for supporting our efforts to build an even better Indiana over the last four years. Because of your support and faith, our state is more prosperous today, our economy is more dynamic, our children are better-prepared, and the quality of life for Hoosiers is improving every day.

As we prepare to assume new responsibilities in our nation's capital, we leave with grateful hearts knowing that everything we will ever do is owing entirely to the grace of God, my wonderful family,

and you, the good people of Indiana. Wherever our service takes us in the promising days ahead, our hearts will always be here, where the moon shines bright upon the Wabash and until we come back home again, we pray that God will continue to bless this great state and all who go by the name of Hoosier. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your governor. I know the best days for Indiana and America are yet to come. ❖

Pence served as Indiana governor from 2013 to 2017.

Gov. Holcomb, from page 1

50/44%.

These middle weeks of January give Holcomb new exposure and a forum to burnish his era of first impressions. The emerging image is of Tall Hickory Holcomb, his own man.

He is constantly compared to Gov. Daniels, who brought him to the Statehouse 12 years ago, and Gov. Pence, who made him lieutenant governor. But Speaker Brian Bosma, echoing the new governor's own campaign trail rhetoric, said as Holcomb's agenda was unveiled, "He's not Mitch Daniels, he's not Mike Pence. He is going to be Eric Holcomb."

The first conspicuous step was Holcomb's inaugural address on Monday, when he conjured images of Indiana's pioneer past and connected them to the first and second century innovators – business titans Eli Lilly, Madam C.J. Walker and astronaut Gus Grissom.

Next Tuesday, Holcomb will give his first State of



the State address to a statewide TV audience. He observes that he is Indiana's first governor of its third century, and he issued his challenges: "Despite our standing, despite our ongoing momentum, we can't afford to get complacent or take our eyes off the ball. Too many Hoosiers and their families feel they've been left out or are in danger of being left behind. Too many are not participating in today's economy or getting a quality education, or are struggling

with the strangling grip of drugs. Too many Hoosier grads explore opportunities outside our state line. And too many Hoosier businesses are having trouble finding the skilled workers they need to grow. While Indiana remains an agricultural powerhouse, our average farmer is 58."

And then he touched on an issue that could very well settle Indiana as a 21st Century stanchion of progress and employment, or bring fomenting people the middle class left behind

due to industrial automation and artificial intelligence into the streets.

"In the next 10 years, we'll need to find one million new skilled workers to replace the 700,000 Baby Boomers who will retire, plus the 300,000 new jobs we will

need to create," Holcomb said. "Rather than ease up, we must hammer down and maintain that pioneer spirit. This is where I will focus every day on ways to take our state to the next level: To make Indiana a place where people thrive. Where they can get a good, fulfilling, well-paid job and a world-class education. Where our kids are well taken care of."

Holcomb's first hours in office found him issuing an executive order creating a drug czar position. "Since 1999, Indiana has seen a 500% increase in drug overdose deaths. This is an epidemic tragically affecting Hoosiers from every walk of life in every part of our state," Holcomb said after the long lines of welcoming constituents funneled through and out of his office. "This new position will provide the urgent and concerted attention required to effectively reduce the impact drug addiction is having on families, individuals and children."

The executive order, one of 11 signed, creates the executive director for drug prevention, treatment and enforcement. Holcomb named Jim McClelland, who retired in 2015 as CEO of Goodwill Industries of Central Indiana to serve as the chairman of Indiana's Commission to Combat Drug Abuse, coordinate and direct the drug-related activities of nine Indiana state agencies, and measure results and outcomes of state programs to reduce addiction. McClelland will report directly to Holcomb.

This is a fulfillment of a campaign pledge to elevate the state response to the triangulating threats of heroin, opioids and methamphetamine that are harassing cities and towns and sending scores of addicts into emergency rooms. The elephant on this table is that everyone from the new governor, Speaker Bosma and Senate President David Long knows the state lacks capacity and funding for addiction and mental health services, while they acknowledge the crisis. The policy dilemma is to create meaningful funding mechanisms to appropriately confront the siege. This will take extraordinary political will.

Almost immediately, Holcomb moved to allow local officials to make needle exchange decisions, a departure from Gov. Pence, characterizing it as a "prudent step." Some 25 counties have sought needle exchange programs, needing time-consuming approval from the state. Only three have active programs. "When we open the newspaper and you see the obituaries it's heartbreaking, and we know that this is just the tip of the iceberg," Holcomb said when he outlined his agenda. "We know it goes much, much deeper below the surface affecting our families."

"This is terrific news," said Beth Meyerson, co-director of the Rural Center for AIDS/STD Prevention at Indiana University. "Now it's a different day and a different

administration."

While Gov. Pence was averse to any phrase that included the words "tax increase," fearing it would hamper his presidential aspirations, Holcomb is embracing the FIRSST recommendations for a 10-cent gasoline tax hike to pay for a long-term road and infrastructure program. "It is important we keep our funding options open," Holcomb explained, adding that talks will continue. "It's certainly a good start, but we have a lot of talking to do." In contrast, Holcomb was openly against using increased tolling to fund the infrastructure plan.



Statehouse Democrats have proclaimed this session to be "the most tax heavy ever," and after Holcomb's plan was revealed, House Minority Leader Scott Pelath said it "looks like a tough sell." But Holcomb dismissed those claims, saying, "You get what you pay for and we want to get the most out of it. This is something that needs to be done, so we are looking at every option."

Holcomb added that he expects something to get done this session on the issue, and that "the only option we aren't looking at is doing nothing at all."

The governor embraced a Pence era initiative for investing \$1 billion into shaping Indiana into a "innovation hub." Holcomb's plan would call for increasing investment in the already created 21st Century Fund in order to encourage new businesses to move to Indiana. "We have to let the world know that Indiana is a place to grow and invest," said Holcomb. "We are competing with other states, and the world, in attracting businesses."

On education and supporting Indiana's workforce to be ready for the 21st century, Holcomb promised to double the state's current investment in the pre-K program, but keep it within the current five counties. He called for an increase of \$280 million in the coming biennial budget, a 3% increase, with \$70 million coming in 2018 and \$210 million in 2019.

And Holcomb embraced the notion that voters should elect policymakers, not bureaucratic functionaries, when he proposed eliminating the superintendent of public instruction position and replacing it with a governor-appointed secretary of education. The plan would take place beginning in 2021, and Holcomb explained, "This is something we have been looking at" and that he will "certainly take input on the issue."

As party chairmen in 2012, both Holcomb and Democrat Dan Parker called for the position to be appointed and it was backed in both Republican and Democratic party platforms that year. Gov. Pence wouldn't touch the issue, particularly after he repeatedly sparred with Democrat Supt. Glenda Ritz during his first two years

in office. With McCormick's defeat of Ritz last November, the notion of a partisan power grab recedes. So Holcomb is signaling a willingness to revisit the long-time contours of state government and bring change.

Legislative leaders are embracing the Holcomb agenda and changes. "We look forward to working with Gov. Holcomb this session as we focus on our shared priorities, including fiscal integrity, passing a long-term road funding plan, responsibly expanding our pre-K program and growing Indiana's economy through continued workforce training," Bosma said. "I am also pleased to work with him on legislation to make the Indiana superintendent of public instruction an appointed position, with the goal of taking politics out of the process and ensuring consistency in education policy. Democrats and Republicans have supported this reform in the past, and I've personally advocated this change for many years."

Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane is critical of the proposed gas tax hike, calling it regressive and unfair to middle- and lower-class consumers. But he told the Anderson Herald-Bulletin, "Taxes are going to be raised. We have to find a more permanent way to fund infrastructure maintenance and improvements."

Lanane wouldn't rule out backing the appointed superintendent position.

During his inaugural address, Holcomb paid tribute to "three people without whom I wouldn't be here today,

beginning with my wife, Janet." He then listed Daniels and Pence. "Twelve years ago, I sat side by side as Mitch Daniels became governor and, through his focus, vision and fearless leadership, Hoosiers came to not only accept change, but to expect it," Holcomb said. "The results of those early reforms fueled our current greatness."

He then cited Vice President-elect Pence, who will be sworn into office with Trump on Jan. 20. Pence was warmly received by the crowd of about 2,000 people on several occasions prior and during the ceremony.

"Mike Pence took that momentum and kept it going with more Hoosiers employed in the private sector today than at any time in our history," Holcomb said. "Our state's loss is our country's gain; it says a lot about Indiana leadership that Mike is the sixth Hoosier to go on to serve as vice president of our great nation. You are two tough acts to follow. The best way I know how to show my appreciation for the faith you both placed in me is to uphold the same courage, conviction and commitment you each showed in your own ways every day in this office."

The difference between Holcomb and his two immediate predecessors is that this governor, at least at this time, doesn't have presidential aspirations. He is showing independence in putting money where his mouth is, four years ahead of the time when voters will make a second judgment. ❖

4 Drivers
33 Goals
1 Mission

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Macer consent bill aimed at trafficking

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – A lawmaker who has advocated for sex-crime victims wants to raise the age of consent to give prosecutors and police another tool to combat sexual predators. But she's struggling to convince colleagues that doing so won't criminalize what they call "young love."



Rep. Karlee Macer, D-Indianapolis, is working on legislation raising the age of sexual consent from 16 to 18, the minimum age to buy cigarettes or cast a vote. In addition, her proposal increases penalties for the crime of child

seduction, allowing prosecutors to go after adults at least 23 years old who have sex with someone younger than 18.

The measure comes at the request of law enforcement including former Attorney General Greg Zoeller, who've supported recent laws aimed at cracking down on human trafficking and commercial sex crimes. Her bill aims to protect older teens from being coerced into commercial sex work as prostitutes, or from being exploited by much older adults, she said.

"Pimps and predators are preying on young people who are 16 and 17, because they know the law," Macer said. "They're luring our children into the sex trade and abusing them." Another example Macer cites is based on stories she's heard from Indianapolis sex-crime detectives who've had to tell parents that it's not a crime for their 16-year-old daughter to have sex with a 56-year-old. "Most people think that's statutory rape," he said, "but in this state, it's not."

A similar bill filed two years ago got nowhere. That's because some legislators were convinced that it would undermine Indiana's so-called "Romeo and Juliet" law. That allows teens as young as 14 to engage in consensual sex as part of an ongoing relationship with someone less than four years older, and not be charged with a sex crime.

Larry Landis, head of the Indiana Public Defender Council, has expressed concerns with the proposal, saying lawmakers need to be wary of over legislating sexual behavior in a way that could cause unintended consequences. Rep. Greg Steuerwald, R-Avon, chairman of the House Committee on Courts and Criminal Code, said he hasn't seen the language so doesn't yet know whether it will get a hearing.

Behning bill would create ILEARN

A key Republican lawmaker is calling for Indiana's next state test to be known as "ILEARN," finally abolishing the hated ISTEP in time for the 2018-19 school year. But

the new test, should the plan move forward and become law, might not look that different to students and teachers (Cavazos, Chalkbeat). Rep. Bob Behning, R-Indianapolis, filed House Bill 1003 in the Indiana General Assembly Wednesday setting out details for a new state testing system, whose name stands for "Indiana's Learning Evaluation Assessment Readiness Network." Behning championed the so-called "kill ISTEP" bill last spring, which came out of complaints about the test's history of scoring glitches and delays. Behning's bill is the first to outline a plan to replace the test, and it still faces a number of legislative hurdles. But as House Education Committee chairman, Behning has considerable influence. "ILEARN" would be similar to recommendations released late last year by a committee of lawmakers and educators charged with helping create a new test. That committee called for mostly tweaks to the ISTEP testing system, not an overhaul as some educators had favored.

Needle exchanges a success

Indiana's health commissioner told lawmakers needle exchanges were effective in combating the state's worst-ever HIV outbreak (Associated Press). Scott County in southern Indiana saw about 22 new cases a week at the height of the 2015 outbreak. Health Commissioner Jerome Adams told the Senate health committee Wednesday that's dropped to between one and three new cases a week. Indiana prohibited needle exchanges when the outbreak began primarily among intravenous drug users. But lawmakers passed a law in 2015 allowing the exchange programs with state approval. Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb wants to roll back that law. He says local officials should be able to approve the exchanges. Needle exchanges provide intravenous drug users with clean syringes and collect used ones to reduce needle-sharing and the spread of HIV, hepatitis C and other diseases.

Coalition delivers abortion petitions

A new activist group is fighting legislation that would make abortions illegal in Indiana (Lange, IndyStar). The Indiana Reproductive Justice Coalition took 3,000 petitions to Gov. Eric Holcomb's office Wednesday, asking him to stop the Protection of Life bill if it gets to his desk. However, it's unclear the bill would even get that far. House Speaker Brian Bosma, R-Indianapolis, has expressed reservations about the measure, though he said he hadn't formed a final opinion. "I don't think we should buy a lawsuit, personally," Bosma said recently. House Bill 1134, authored by Republican Rep. Curt Nisly of Goshen, would change Indiana code to define life as beginning as soon as a human egg is fertilized. Under the proposal, an abortion would be a crime. If passed into law, the Protection of Life bill likely would be found unconstitutional, under standards set by Roe v. Wade, legal experts have said. Nisly said he hasn't received any negative feedback from GOP leaders about the measure and largely has the support of his dis-

trict. He isn't worried about the possibility of the proposal being considered unconstitutional. "We're claiming state sovereignty and saying that the federal government has no jurisdiction in this," he said.

Moseley seeks to legalize cannabis oil

State Rep. Chuck Moseley (D-Portage) is seeking to make cannabis oil - also known as CBD - legal in Indiana for a person diagnosed with epilepsy (Howey Politics Indiana). According to a news release, House Bill 1148 mirrors legislation adopted in Texas that allows using CBD for the treatment of epilepsy, also known as Dravet syndrome or Lennox-Gastaut syndrome. This legislation will require the State Board of Health to oversee the regulation and distribution of the CBD. The cannabis oil must also be approved by the state's Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). To receive the treatment, a patient would need to show a written diagnosis from a physician stating that the person has epilepsy.

Randolf proposes \$5M for schools

A state lawmaker from East Chicago has proposed legislation that would provide \$5 million to help East Chicago schools deal the financial fallout from the city's lead crisis (Colias, Post-Tribune). Sen. Lonnie Randolph, D-East Chicago, has sponsored legislation that would provide about \$2.2 million for payments on the former Carrie Gosch Elementary School and just over \$2.8 million to cover an emergency state loan for the district that was approved in August.

Melton seeks Gary school fund solution

State Sen. Eddie Melton (D-Gary) issued a statement, excerpted below, after the failure of a public referendum regarding funding for the Gary Community School Corporation (Howey Politics Indiana): "For the past several weeks, I have been meeting with leaders in the Indiana General Assembly to discuss immediate and long-term solutions that will address the district's financial state. During our meetings, we've discussed multiple cost saving measures that would help the district gain control over its financial crisis. I've also expressed the urgent and immediate need for action on behalf of the State to provide some type of debt relief."

Torr bill gives trucks roundabout right of way

A new bill is looking to give the right-of-way to large trucks in roundabouts throughout Indiana (Sullivan, Statehouse File). State Rep. Jerry Torr, R-Carmel, has authored a bill that would give the right-of-way to large trucks in order to reduce accidents and sideswipes in a roundabout.

Since large trucks can have trouble staying in one lane going through a roundabout, the bill would require cars to yield to the trucks. The issue was brought to Torr by the mayor of Carmel, Jim Brainard. Brainard said he received an email from an out-of-state truck driver who felt he was breaking the law by spilling over into the other lane in the roundabout. Brainard also added that the state of Wisconsin had already made this change.

Bill would require Lake consolidation

Lake County election officials could be forced to consolidate up to a quarter of the county's 523 voting precincts under legislation debated Wednesday by an Indiana House committee (Carden, NWI Times). House Bill 1147, sponsored by state Rep. Hal Slager, R-Schererville, would require leaders of the county election and registration board to determine how many "small precincts" are in Lake County, whether they could be combined with adjacent precincts and how much money the precinct mergers might save. The proposed statute defines a small precinct as having fewer than 600 active voters. Lake County has an estimated 140 small precincts - significantly more than any other county in the state.

McCormick defends DOE layoffs

The new Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jennifer McCormick, is responding to concerns about layoffs and resignations at the Indiana Department of Education (Kenney, WRTV). "This is the part of transitioning that nobody enjoys," said McCormick. "Obviously they're good people that are in just a situation where we want to make some changes." McCormick denied politics were at play when it came to layoffs. "It wasn't a political activity," said McCormick. "We looked at job performance and where we want to go with programming." ❖



Trump compares U.S. intel to Nazi Germany

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – At their first press conference since last summer, Donald Trump and Mike Pence assailed the media and the U.S. intelligence community, at one point Trump comparing them to Nazi Germany, appeared to evolve on the notion of Russian interference in the U.S. presidential election, and vowed to simultaneously repeal and replace Obamacare this month.

The 90-minute event at Trump Tower was the first presser since July 27, when Trump invited the Russians to hack Hillary Clinton's campaign. And it came hours after BuzzFeed and CNN reported that U.S. intelligence leaders supplied Trump with a two-page "salacious" addendum provided to President Obama and Trump last Friday that the Russian government has damaging personal and financial information on the president-elect. The New York Times and NBC News reported on Wednesday that none of material has been independently verified.

It prompted Trump to say at one point Wednesday, "I think it was disgraceful -- disgraceful that the intelligence agencies allowed any information that turned out to be so false and fake out. I think it's a disgrace, and I say that -- and I say that, and that's something that Nazi Germany would have done and did do. I think it's a disgrace that information that was false and fake and never happened got released to the public."

The CNN and BuzzFeed reports had sent Trump into another Twitter tizzy Wednesday morning. "Intelligence agencies should never have allowed this fake news to 'leak' into the public. One last shot at me. Are we living in Nazi Germany?" Trump tweeted. "I win an election easily, a great 'movement' is verified, and crooked opponents try to belittle our victory with FAKE NEWS. A sorry state!"

The Washington Post is reporting today that the intel chiefs faced an "excruciatingly delicate question: Should they mention the salacious allegations in Washington for months that Moscow had compromising information on the incoming president? Ultimately, they concluded they had no choice." It noted that every major news organization seemed to have a copy.

CBS News reported that Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said later Wednesday that he had spoken with Trump about the dossier and told him the intelligence community "has not made any judgment that the information in this document is reliable."

Vice President-elect Pence introduced Trump and quickly took aim at BuzzFeed and CNN. "There has been

such a concerted effort by some in the mainstream media to delegitimize this election and to demean our incoming administration," Pence said. "You know, I have long been a supporter of a free and independent press and I always will be. But with freedom comes a responsibility. And the irresponsible decision of a few news organizations to run with a false and unsubstantiated report when most news organizations resisted the temptation to propagate this fake news can only be attributed to media bias and attempt to demean the president-elect and our incoming administration and the American people are sick and tired of it."

Trump also assailed CNN and BuzzFeed, while praising other news organizations and backhanding U.S. intelligence agencies once again. "I must say that I want to thank a lot of the news organizations here today because they looked at that nonsense that was released by maybe the intelligence agencies -- who knows? -- but maybe the intelligence agencies, which would be a tremendous blot on their record if they in fact did that -- a tremendous blot -- because a thing like that should have never been written, it should never have been had and it should certainly never have been released."

When CNN's Jim Acosta attempted to ask a question, Trump shot back, "You are fake news." He called CNN's reporting "a failing pile of garbage."

Trump was asked whether anyone on his campaign had contact with the Russian government during 2016, and the president-elect did not answer.

As for the hacking of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign, Trump evolved, saying, "As far as hacking, I think it was Russia. But I think we also get hacked by other countries and other people." Trump blamed the DNC for not protecting its cyber systems, incorrectly saying that the Republican National Committee did so. Multiple media sources say that the Russians also hacked the RNC, but did not release internal information during the campaign.

Trump vowed Obamacare will be repealed and replaced. He added, "It will be essentially simultaneously. It will be various segments, you understand, but will most likely be on the same day or the same week but probably the same day. Could be the same hour."

Five Senate moderates and U.S. Sen. Rand Paul have urged Congress to take its time to find a suitable replacement. NBC News reported that U.S. Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, a member of Senate leadership, is concerned that Trump doesn't understand Congressional procedures. "From a messaging standpoint, yes I worry," Thune said about Trump's comments. However, House Speaker Paul Ryan said, "It is our goal to bring it all together concurrently."

And Trump reiterated that Mexico will eventually pay for the wall he wants to build on the southern border.



President-elect Donald Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence at their Trump Tower press conference on Wednesday.

"We're going to build a wall. I could wait about a year and a half until we finish our negotiations with Mexico, which we'll start immediately after we get to office, but I don't want to wait," he said. "I don't feel like waiting a year or year and a half. We're gonna start building. Mexico in some form ... will reimburse us, and they will reimburse us for the cost of the wall. That will happen."

And responding to potential conflict of interest allegations, Trump attorney Sheri Dillon said that the president-elect will be "fully isolated from the management

of the company," with sons Donald Jr. and Eric taking over. "President-elect Trump should not be expected to destroy the company he built," Dillon said, adding that Trump would not divest or form a blind trust, as previous presidents had done. She promised that Trump would not "exploit the office of the presidency for his personal benefit."

"No new foreign deals will be made whatsoever during the duration of President Trump's presidency," Dillon said, adding that domestic deals will "go through a vigorous vetting process." ❖

Sessions and voting rights

By **TERRI JETT**

INDIANAPOLIS – "Make America Great Again?"

As a child growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area I was aware of the civil rights and voting rights movements as they were taking place right at that time in what was called the Deep South, but I did not personally know of anyone participating in those activities. I did understand from the stories told to me by the elders of my family, especially on my mother's side, that they had migrated to California from Louisiana because of the racism and oppressive economic conditions that kept so many Black families stagnant and systematically prevented them from progressing.



So even though they were landowners, my great-grandmother, her 15 young adult children,

and their families headed west. After all, my grandfather Rafe Taylor told me, in Louisiana if he was walking down a street and a white person was on the same side of the road, especially a white woman, he would have to cross the road or risk getting lynched. Those day-to-day experiences, among others, were just too much to bear. America wasn't so great at that time.

And while they thought that there was also greater economic opportunity beyond farming, they really just wanted a sense of true freedom and belonging, especially for the children, so the Taylors headed west, while many other Black families from the South headed north – this is known historically as "the Great Migration."

The stories of my grandparents, which I heard well into my adult life as all but one lived to be at least 90 years old, stuck with me as I decided to pursue a graduate education in Alabama. I wanted to see first hand what they talked about – the ugly and the beautiful, learn that history firsthand, touch red clay, meet the adults who,

as children, marched, were hosed, bitten by police dogs, jailed, kept marching and through it all, stayed put. They held steadfast to the Bible and to the U.S. Constitution as both were seen as sacred.

As a graduate student at Auburn University, I found my way to the Black Belt of Alabama, specifically Wilcox County, where Gees Bend is located. Gees Bend was a campaign stop for Sen. John McCain when he ran for U.S. president, and is known for the Gees Bend Quilting Bee and the Gees Bend Ferry. The Black Belt is named for the richness of the soil, but also for the fact that most of its 10 counties have Black populations of at least 75%. Those are also some of the poorest counties in the country.

And so, in 2015 when the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency announced they were closing 31 driver's license offices because of economic reasons, I knew the Black Belt would be hit hard and that is exactly what happened. Eight of the 10 Black Belt counties had their offices closed, which reportedly saved little money. The NAACP sued and ultimately the U.S. Department of Transportation concluded that Black residents in the state were disproportionately hurt by a slate of closures and reductions in 2015.

This is the state where Sen. Jeff Sessions is from, the current nominee for U.S. attorney general. He is actually from Selma, that recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery Voting Rights March. In 2006 when Congress was holding hearings regarding the extension of the Voting Rights Act, Sessions stated "I am worried because... (the extension) does little to acknowledge the tremendous progress made in the past 40 years in Alabama and other covered jurisdictions."

Once Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act was set aside, Alabama went back to its usual manipulations of voter suppression so they could go back to a time where America wasn't so great. And this is where our next U.S. attorney general is supposed to come from? What time period exactly are we talking about when referencing, "Make America Great Again?" ❖

Dr. Terri Jett is an associate professor of political science at Butler University and is special assistant to the Provost for Diversity and Inclusivity.

Obama's address and Indiana voting

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – Perhaps it was only fitting that President Barack Obama gave his last national address within a stone's throw of Indiana. He never referred to the state by name, but some of his references about the future could well have been promoted by Hoosier history. Obama's talk was essentially a civics lesson as he encouraged people to revisit the same political roots that got him elected. "Democracy is threatened when taken for granted," the president said.



Obama talked about the U.S. Constitution being a wonderful document but is little more than a piece of paper.

"We the people give it power," Obama said. And then his hour-long civics lesson hit home in Indiana. "We should be making it easier, not harder, to vote," the president said. Almost a decade ago, Indiana made it more difficult to vote when it passed the voter ID law that requires a voter to show a government photo ID before being allowed to vote.

That law was sponsored by former Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita, a native of Munster, who is now a member of Congress. Indiana hasn't passed additional laws to make it more difficult for people to vote. But the Republican-controlled legislature wouldn't think of allowing people to register and cast a vote on Election Day. That is a practice that more states are moving toward.

One very positive thing has happened in Indiana as a result of what occurred in 2008, the first time Obama

ran for president. Because early voting sites were very limited in Lake County, there were massive lines of voters snaking out of the county government center. Wait times were measured in hours, not minutes.

The uproar over the long waits prompted the county election board to greatly expand early voting sites and their hours. While that was a help to Lake County voters, Republicans are attempting to make it more difficult to vote on another level. The General Assembly, at the behest of Lake County Republicans, approved legislation attempting to force Lake County Democrats to reduce the number of precincts, and thus the number of polling sites.

That would make it more difficult for voters in



urban areas who don't have transportation to get to the polls. That would reduce the number of Democratic votes.

And, Obama urged middle America to continue the fight for voting rights as the means to right what's wrong in the country. He cautioned, "Far too many of us feel safer to retreat into our own bubble." ❖

Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for The Times of Northwest Indiana.

Funding Hoosier roads the right way

By MORTON MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS – This is a note of hope to the General Assembly's Funding Indiana's Roads for a Stronger, Safer Tomorrow Task Force, known by its friends and family as the FIRSST task force. The hope is FIRSST will continue the work done on House Bill 1002 modernizing Indiana's road financing policies. That bill has begun



its travels and travails through the sausage machine of state government.

The guiding factors in a road finance bill, where new construction is not the centerpiece, should be road use and safety, plus changes in the costs of maintenance and reconstruction. HB 1002 allows a 10-cent increase in the 18-cent tax per gallon of gasoline. This is double the increase in consumer prices since the last change in 2003. Was 10 cents an estimate of what a gullible public would accept?

Or is it because the bill creates an index for future increases based on the changes (does that include decreases?) in consumer prices and personal income? [We cannot believe legislators know how personal income is determined, and how it overstates income as any ordinary

citizen would define it.]

The gas tax was a good idea for the past 100 years. It was a good proxy for distance traveled. Incidentally, it was also a moderate measure of vehicle weight, efficiency, pollution, and speed of travel. In recent decades, improvements in vehicular efficiency have decreased the revenue potency of the gas tax. To raise the tax further encourages drivers to choose vehicles and usage patterns that reduce gas consumption. The tax is no longer a road use tax as much as an environmental statement that many legislators would not like to consider.

If we want to tax road use, let's get serious.

The proposed annual \$150 tax on electric vehicles simply punishes car owners who decided not to support the petroleum cartel here and abroad. [Full disclosure: I own a Prius, a hybrid not found in the legislation I've read.]

Likewise, the proposed annual \$15 increase per vehicle produces revenue, but abandons the concept of a use tax. Instead, institute odometer readings. It's easy with the EZ Pass we'll all have when we start tolling selected roadways. Toll roads make sense. You want to drive a premium road, you pay a premium price. With EZ Pass in your car, police can monitor your speed, which they rarely do now.

Information about a vehicle, its weight, footprint, horsepower, etc., is available from the manufacturer and has a bearing on safety and congestion. The elephant in

the conference room is taxing trucks. Trucking companies don't want to pay for the highway damage trucks do. Manufacturers and merchants don't want to pay higher trucking fees and consumers don't want to pay higher prices. Drones are not ready to take the big loads, yet.

FIRSST has its work cut out for the next two years. Let's hope they are courageous enough for the task.

❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.

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Our system comes with no guarantees

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – The problem is not just the politicians. It's us, too.

There are a lot of dire predictions about our representative democracy out there. We're just past a presidential election campaign in which candidates complained about a rigged political system. Now, commentators worry about the imminent failure of the American experiment.

I don't agree with these predictions of calamity.



Our representative democracy is not on the verge of collapse. But I do see stresses and tensions that should concern anyone who cares about our system of self-government. Our representative democracy has been remarkably stable and successful for over two hundred years, but that is no guarantee it will survive and prosper.

The mere fact that this nation is filled with so many citizens who have lost confidence

in key institutions is worrisome. The Gallup organization's ongoing polling has found declines in public confidence over the past few decades in everything from the Supreme Court and Congress to the police and even the military. It shows a pervasive drop in public regard for the institutions that undergird American life.

The reasons stem in part from a declining willingness among the people who inhabit those institutions to observe the norms of behavior that evoke public confidence. This is notable especially on Capitol Hill and in political life, where the parties seem to have abandoned fair play and taken to using institutions to maximize partisan advantage. In the Senate, the recent refusal even to hold hearings on the president's nominee to the Supreme Court brought the lack of comity between branches to a new low.

Politicians engage in a degree of partisanship that a few decades ago would have disqualified them in the eyes of the voting public. They attack opposing politicians' patriotism, impugn their loyalty, accuse them of criminal activity, question the fairness of the election process itself — with virtually no evidence — and seek to undermine their effectiveness in office. Small wonder that elected officials' legitimacy is increasingly called into question among the public at large.

If we had a media that prized both the vigilance and impartiality it displayed during its heyday, these tendencies might not run so rampant. Similarly, if politicians were willing to negotiate, compromise, and search

for remedies to the nation's challenges, then our current dysfunctional inability to get things done would be less of a hallmark of these times.

Yet too many politicians seem fine with dysfunction. They appear more interested in holding power than in using it to solve problems. They reject the norms of behavior in a civil society — for example, the New York politician who wished President Obama dead of mad cow disease. They sidestep accountability and transparency: tweeting their stances rather than facing hard questions, avoiding press conferences that would give reporters a chance to hold them to account, preferring public rallies to the give and take that allows the public to examine and scrutinize their stances.

All of this poses real challenges to the system. So what might be done to restore public faith in its fairness, justness and decency?

Paul Light, a professor of public service at New York University, recently came out with a paper, "What Americans Want from Government Reform," that reinforces the proposals many reformers have been pushing in recent years. His list of fixes that would enjoy support among ordinary Americans in both parties includes reducing the role of money in elections, boosting ethical constraints on elected officials, reducing waste and inefficiency, finding ways to increase the voices of ordinary citizens, and ensuring that civil servants and political appointees are qualified and competent.

Americans don't expect miracles. They just want the basic features of government to work. But here's the thing: Making this happen is up to us. Politicians may be directly responsible for the problems above, but you and I as voters allow them to get away with it. We voted them into office, kept them there, and paid little attention to their shenanigans.

The problem is not just the politicians. It's us, too. The first words of the Constitution read, "We the People," not, "We the Government." It's up to us to strive for a more perfect union, and to be vigilant about these adverse tendencies that threaten to undermine our representative democracy. ❖

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar, IU School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice, IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

It's 2017 quiz time

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Quiz time. You'll need some knowledge of local, state and national affairs and maybe a sense of humor.



1. What will be the new Secret Service code name after Inauguration for Donald Trump?

- a. Rogue One.
- b. Bigly One.
- c. Hair One.
- d. It's a secret.

2. When Mike Pence travels, his plane will be designated:

- a. Air Force Two.

- b. Trump Force Two.
- c. Indy 500.
- d. None of the above.

3. Who is expected to have over \$10 million spent to criticize his record, attack his character and portray him as a total incompetent?

- a. Brian Kelly.
- b. Tom Crean.
- c. Joe Donnelly.
- d. Alexander Hamilton.

4. Pete Buttigieg shows interest in:

- a. Being mayor for life.
- b. Running for Congress.
- c. Being Democratic national chairman.
- d. Joining the Trump administration.

5. Since she won so big, Indiana's new state school superintendent must be well known. She is:

- a. Glenda Ritz.
- b. Jennifer McCormick.
- c. Tera Klutz.
- d. Suzanne Crouch.

6. Presidential candidate Cherunda Fox got how many votes in Indiana?

- a. 1,867.
- b. 861.
- c. 86.
- d. 1.

7. The last Democrat to serve as governor of Indiana was:

- a. Evan Bayh.

- b. Joe Kernan.
- c. Frank O'Bannon.
- d. Mitch Daniels.

8. Mike Pence will be the first vice president from Indiana since:

- a. Dan Quayle.
- b. Wendell Willkie.
- c. Schuyler Colfax.
- d. Bobby Knight.

9. Which president from Indiana gave the longest inaugural speech ever, in bitter cold without top-coat or hat, and died of pneumonia 31 days later?

- a. William Henry Harrison.
- b. Benjamin Harrison.
- c. Oliver Morton.
- d. Bobby Knight.

10. Chief Justice John Roberts, who grew up in Indiana, had to administer the presidential oath a second time to Barack Obama because:

- a. Obama had his hand on the Quran the first time.
- b. Obama hadn't produced a birth certificate before the first ceremony.
- c. Roberts messed up the oath wording.
- d. Joe Biden interrupted the first oath.

11. Which journalist profited the most from the Trump candidacy?

- a. Megyn Kelly.
- b. Margaret Fosmoe.
- c. Maureen McFadden.
- d. Bobby Knight.

12. Which colorful Indiana political figure once defended bragging about his accomplishments by saying that in politics: "He who does not toot his own horn has his horn untooted"?

- a. Sen. Vance Hartke.
- b. U.S. Rep. Ray Madden.
- c. Gov. Roger Branigin.
- d. Mayor Lloyd Allen.

13. Thousands of Notre Dame students and alums asked that President Trump not be invited as commencement speaker because:

- a. They want Bobby Knight.
- b. They fear Trump would just tweet his remarks.
- c. They find his views counter to Notre Dame ideals.
- d. They're losers. Pitiful.

ANSWERS: 1-d; 2-a; 3-c; 4-c; 5-b; 6-d; 7-b; 8-a; 9-a; 10-c; 11-a; 12-a; 13-b

Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier:

So, Eric Holcomb's first bite to eat as governor of Indiana came from the counter of McDonald's? In a city with some of the best, locally owned, rising cuisine, the camera – as documented on his own Twitter account – found our new governor checking out the McPick 2 menu options at lunch time. (All Day Breakfast, anyone?) Expectations on Inauguration Day are never particularly high when Indiana installs a governor – the 51st version included. Grab Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Loretta Rush, a Bible, a few raise-your-right-hands for Holcomb and Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch, and there you go. It's your new administration, Indiana. All in under an hour. All before noon. Maybe the only thing more conspicuously Hoosier on Monday morning might have been to announce a request to form two lines at a potluck downstairs. Absent that, McDonald's will have to do. By way of introduction to his new job, Holcomb played the deferential Hoosier, giving a decent account of what that meant in the process. It wasn't profound for a guy who wore a Hickory jersey from the movie "Hoosiers" and shot hoops with folks on Sunday at Butler University's Hinkle Fieldhouse. In those dozen minutes or so that focused on "Hoosier pioneers" Eli Lilly, businesswoman C.J. Walker and Purdue astronaut Gus Grissom – "who made the heavens our new horizons" – what Holcomb described wasn't anything you haven't heard before. But it was on point. "What all of these pioneers have in common are the same traits that have been part of our DNA for 200 years: Self-reliance, grit, a can-do attitude, a sense of fairness and a spirit of generosity," Holcomb said in his inaugural address. "Now, I know that sharing our strengths doesn't always come naturally to us Hoosiers because of another trait we share, humility. Ironically, Hollywood does it for us." He rattled off familiar titles. "Rudy." "Breaking Away." "Hoosiers," naturally. "They're all stories of perseverance, of David not just taking on but slaying Goliath, of the underdog punching above its weight class through hard work, utilizing their strengths, playing by the rules, getting the basics right," Holcomb said. "That's become our story – the Indiana story – and what Indiana has globally grown to be known for." Like I said, it's not breaking a ton of new ground. But it struck a chord Monday morning. ❖



John Kass, Chicago Tribune:

For all the gooey talk about President Barack Obama's legacy, it can probably best be described in four blunt words: Disappointment. And Donald Trump. What we can't measure, not completely, not yet, is the inspiration he's given to millions of people — particularly to African-Americans — who years ago couldn't dare dream that a black man would ever be elected president. And we can't measure what his presidency has triggered in the minds and imaginations of the young. It's all part of his charm that offered hope for future generations, and the long lines of proud families

waiting to see him speak Tuesday night in Chicago are testimony to that. But Americans have an obligation to assess the past, before the historians rewrite it all. And if you look back, you might remember that he was an unknown, presented to America as a transformational figure from Chicago who was somehow unsullied by Chicago politics. His mouthpieces from Chicago politics — straight from City Hall and the Daley machine — promised that his election would transcend the broken politics of the past. And they offered him up as a messiah, though later his White House helped keep the Democratic machine in power in Chicago and Illinois, to run the failing city in the failed machine state. And now, eight years later, consider: Chicago's president of so much hope leaves a Democratic Party in absolute tatters. Democrats have lost not only the White House and Congress, but a horde of state legislatures and governorships. And Trump will be the next president, having won a remarkable election in state after state by running an anti-establishment campaign of referendum, first against the Bush Republicans and later against Obama and his proxy, Hillary Clinton. But there is a part of his legacy that is just beginning: Trump. Donald Trump is Obama's true legacy. ❖

Thomas Friedman, New York Times:

And so it came to pass that in the winter of 2016 the world hit a tipping point that was revealed by the most unlikely collection of actors: Vladimir Putin, Jeff Bezos, Donald Trump, Mark Zuckerberg and the Macy's department store. Who'd have thunk it? And what was this tipping point? It was the moment when we realized that a critical mass of our lives and work had shifted away from the terrestrial world to a realm known as "cyberspace." That is to say, a critical mass of our interactions had moved to a realm where we're all connected but no one's in charge. After all, there are no stoplights in cyberspace, no police officers walking the beat, no courts, no judges, no God who smites evil and rewards good, and certainly no "1-800-Call-If-Putin-Hacks-Your-Election." If someone slimes you on Twitter or Facebook, well, unless it is a death threat, good luck getting it removed, especially if it is done anonymously, which in cyberspace is quite common. And yet this realm is where we now spend increasing hours of our day. Cyberspace is now where we do more of our shopping, more of our dating, more of our friendship-making and sustaining, more of our learning, more of our commerce, more of our teaching, more of our communicating, more of our news-broadcasting and news-seeking and more of our selling of goods, services and ideas. It's where both our president-elect and the leader of ISIS can communicate with equal ease with tens of millions of their respective followers through Twitter — without editors, fact-checkers, libel lawyers or other filters. And, I would argue, 2016 will be remembered as the year when we fully grasped just how scary that can be. ❖

Daniels warns Pence, Coats

LOUISVILLE — Indiana's 49th Governor, Republican Mitch Daniels served as Budget Director under President George W. Bush and worked in the Reagan administration, so his advice for his fellow Hoosiers may be as good as any they might receive as they prepare to work in the Trump Administration (Williams, WHAS-TV). Daniel's successor in Indiana was Vice

President-elect Mike Pence. Dan Coats retired from the US Senate in 2016 but has been nominated as Director of National Intelligence by the President-elect. During the inaugural celebration for Governor Eric Holcomb, Mitch Daniels offered this advice for Pence and Coats, "I just say, do what you can to bring a fractured nation together. It won't be easy, it may not be doable, but I hope they'll try and I think that's Vice President-elect Pence's natural mode." Daniels added, "I would also tell them, you know, watch your six. Your six o'clock, because it's a very, very tough environment they're going in to. A lot of people committed to their failure or undoing and so I just hope they approach it with optimism but also a lot of care and caution."

Donnelly calls Russ hack 'act of war'

WASHINGTON — Hoosiers will play a key role in the new administration, specifically on matters of the nation's intelligence and high-level secrets as lawmakers on Capitol Hill are working to unravel the new reports and overall assertions of Russian hacking on the U.S. election (Smith, FOX59). "This is an act of war against our country and we intend to meet it appropriately," U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) said Wednesday afternoon in an interview with FOX59. "They have interfered in the electoral system of

our country, in electing our own leaders, and that is about as serious as it can possibly get."

McCormick to chair SBOE

INDIANAPOLIS — New state schools chief Jennifer McCormick will chair the Indiana State Board of Education, a political turnabout after Republicans had sought to remove her Democratic predecessor from the leadership role (Schneider, IndyStar). The GOP-controlled state board followed a new state law for the first time Wednesday in installing McCormick, a Republican, as its chair. The law allowed the state board to choose its own leader beginning this year, instead of the superintendent of public instruction automatically serving as chair. The motive behind the law was widely viewed as a way to effectively remove former state schools chief Glenda Ritz as chair if she had won re-election.

It's official: We're 'Hoosiers'

WASHINGTON — It's official. We're Hoosiers. Not "Indianians" or even "Indianans." So says the federal government — on page 95 of the updated U.S. Government Publishing Office's style manual released Thursday. The change came at the request of Sen. Joe Donnelly and former Sen. Dan Coats who argued Indiana residents have proudly called themselves Hoosiers for more than 180 years, even if no one is sure of the term's origin. It's only non-Hoosiers who use the term "Indianian." "In fact," Donnelly and Coats wrote in a letter last year, "we find it a little jarring to be referred to in this way."

Ballard visits Trump Tower

WASHINGTON — Former Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard said

he was "deeply impressed" following a meeting in New York City on Wednesday with President-elect Donald Trump's transition team (Colombo, Indianapolis Business Journal). Robert Vane, the former two-term Republican mayor's spokesman, said Ballard was invited to come out to New York to have a discussion about joining the administration in some capacity. "We had a wide-ranging discussion, and I was deeply impressed by the knowledge and professionalism of the people in the room," Ballard said in a statement.

Young predicts Tillerson will pass

WASHINGTON — Both Sens. Todd Young (R-Ind.) and Cory Booker (D-N.J.) predicted Rex Tillerson will be confirmed as the nation's top diplomat (Everett & Restuccia, Washington Post). Top panel Democrat Ben Cardin of Maryland said most people in his party hadn't made up their mind, but Tillerson may struggle to win any Democratic votes so the potential for opposition from Rubio raises the possibility of a nail-biting committee vote sometime ahead of Inauguration Day. Asked by Young about how he would avoid being undermined as chief diplomat by the president's "quickly drafted, not vetted" tweets on world affairs, Tillerson replied, "I have his cellphone number."

Rep. Banks eyes Freedom Caucus

WASHINGTON — The Freedom Fund ran TV ads for Indiana's Jim Banks, then a state senator, in a competitive open primary to replace former Rep. Marlin Stutzman, a member of the Freedom Caucus who ran unsuccessfully for the GOP nomination for Senate (Pathe, Roll Call). Banks said he hasn't received an invitation yet. But he's remained noncommittal on joining the caucus if he does get one. "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it," a spokeswoman for Banks said this week.

