



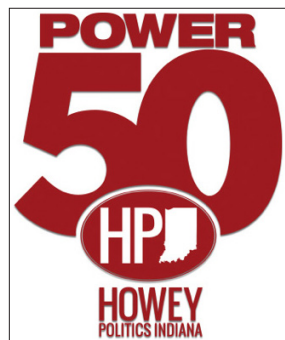
Holcomb, Pence crest power apex

Governor approaches historic threshold while vice president is astride President Trump's tempest

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

The next 350-plus days promise to be a watershed year. We could be watching the most powerful governor operate and consolidate in the state's history. We could be witnessing the ascension of a fourth Hoosier president.

We will be watching the first true "opioid budget" coming with looming billion-dollar price tags as Hoosiers in all socio-economic classes grapple with this insidious evil. And we will be scanning the horizons to determine whether this has become a true one-party state.



This year's Power 50 list reflects the emerging prowess of Gov. Eric Holcomb, who has accumulated an unprecedented array of political and policy attributes. It is a biennial budget year with a new leadership and fiscal team in the Senate, and new players in the House.

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Instinct alarms sounding

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Sometimes the instincts of a leader, or a political operative, or a journalist kick into high gear. It's the Radar O'Reilly factor, when you can sense the medical choppers coming in before you hear the blades and feel them thumping in your chest.

And my radar is going off these days. We are on the precipice of something big and, perhaps, unfathomable.

I certainly got that feeling in late October 2016. The polls showed Hillary Clinton leading Donald Trump just over the margin of error. But I could see events unfolding on the ground, with all those homemade Trump



"We are redefining that even a consensual relationship with an intern is now going to be unethical."

- State Sen. Liz Brown, on coming changes to the Indiana Senate's sexual harassment policy.



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signs and farmers cutting his name into their crops and lawns. Something was happening.

It was the same way in the final week of October 1980, when Ronald Reagan had a tiny poll lead over President Carter. Few were predicting that Sen. Birch Bayh and House Majority Leader John Brademas and the Democratic Senate majority were toast, but you could feel it.

And again in the home-stretch of the 1996 gubernatorial race, when Stephen Goldsmith's "worst case scenario" according to his pollster was a 5% victory. When Lt. Gov. Frank O'Bannon was declared the winner by the networks just minutes after the polls closed, there was a feeling of surprise, not so much that it happened, but that it happened so fast.

And I got that feeling this past October, when late polls showed Sen. Joe Donnelly up over Mike Braun between 3 and 7%, while FiveThirtyEight's metrics had the Democrat with somewhere between 68 and 70% chance of winning. The energy I was feeling on the ground belied the presented data sets. It was one of those things where you couldn't quite put your finger on it, but it was stirring.

Sometimes in the churn of events, profound things come completely out of the blue: The JFK assassination in 1963, or the Challenger space shuttle explosion on a crisp January morning in 1986, or the Sept. 11 terror attacks that came just a few days after a parachuting Frenchman found himself entangled on the torch of the Statue of Liberty. That pissed off Mayor Giuliani, but you couldn't fathom what was in store for him, his city, his nation and the world just days later. You look back on those events and in hindsight, you kick yourself for missing the warning signs. Like in 1963, the killing of South Vietnamese President Diem as Buddhist monks

self-immolated seemed as if it should have been an ominous precursor to the demise of young Jack Kennedy.

So here on the doorstep of 2019, as we head into our 25th year of publishing Howey Politics Indiana, I'm here to tell you I can sense profound stirrings. The little cranial alarm bells are dinging. It's one of those dynamics that the way things are at the advent of the year, and where we'll be next Dec. 31 will be completely different. I just can't tell you what exactly it will be or what it will look like.

I am no soothsayer, don't read tarot cards, and don't have the number of Nancy Reagan's astrologist. But I certainly sense that the President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence we know today won't be the same at year's end.

When U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi retook the helm of the U.S. House last week, she said earlier



in the day that she would not rule out the impeachment of President Trump.

"Everything indicates that a president can be indicted after he is no longer president of the United States," she told "Today" anchor Savannah Guthrie, who asked whether she thought Special Counsel Robert Mueller could "legally" return an indictment on the president as a result of his investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election. "I think that is an open discussion. I think that is an open discussion in terms of the law."

Am I predicting a set of circumstances that would commence an

impeachment of President Trump, events that could install Mike Pence as the 46th president of the United States? In the Pence worldview, 46 was the highway you took to Bloomington or Greensburg.

I'm not quite sure. In a recent lunch I had with U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, I told him I hoped Special Counsel Mueller would either clear the president, or his report would be so damning that his political support in the Republican Party would collapse.

Some thoughts: Any impeachment of a president is an American tragedy. They don't turn out well. We went more than 110 years between the first in 1868 involving President Andrew Johnson to the probable case against President Nixon in 1974, and then just 25 years with the 1999 attempt against President Clinton.

If we become a nation which impeaches presidents once every generation, the American experiment is doomed.

Having said that, those of us who love our nation will take the Mueller report, read it, and then take the time to digest what it says. It has the potential for a significant course correction.

Will there be a determination of whether there is a case for high crimes and misdemeanors? Wise Americans will weigh this information and then determine how to act, including the prospect of a collapse of political support for President Trump, which is what happened with Nixon and Senate Republicans in 1974. People forget that until the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on the White House tapes, Nixon's support in the GOP was strong. But once they

learned that Nixon had lied, a delegation of congressional leaders (Sens. Hugh Scott and Barry Goldwater and House Minority Leader John Rhodes) went to the White House and told the president he had to go. And he did.

I am open to the notion that Trump and his campaign may not have crossed the line of unlawful conduct or treason, as some dot-connectors maintain. In a way, that's the best case scenario for all Americans. If you don't like Trump, then defeat him at the polls in 2020.

So, perhaps my instincts are detecting that for all the rancor and speculation about the Trump Tower meetings with the Russians, the special counsel will find that they fell within the realm of an intense political fight, and not much more. That, finding, too, would be sensational in the context of the social media torque we feel these days.

The best way to determine the fate of a president is the ballot box. That should be the first option.

As my high school days waned in 1974, it was Seals & Crofts who sang, "We may never pass this way again." By the 1980s, REM was telling us that it was the end of the world as we know it. And newsman Dan Rather took a sidewalk assault with an amazing query: "What's the frequency, Kenneth?"

Sometimes you can feel gigantic shifts afoot. Sometimes the real surprise is something completely different. We just don't know the bandwidth or the frequency.

But there's something out there, man, there's really something. ❖

Power 50, from page 1

It will be a municipal election year. In a state where the only true Democratic power resides in city halls, it will be fascinating to see whether the Republican encroachment can overtake Democratic mayors Tom Henry in Fort Wayne and Joe Hogsett in Indianapolis (pictured, right). We learned in the wake of Sen. Joe Donnelly's defeat last year that the Democratic Party's base has been fractured and ransacked. It controls just 43 of the 150 General Assembly seats, two of 11 congressional seats, no constitutional offices in the Statehouse, only 20% of county courthouse offices and only 11% of county commissioner seats. This is the first Power 50 since 1999 where one party dominates the top 10.



If the Democratic Party begins to lose the big city halls, then we are truly looking at a decade of monolithic Republican rule. We will be watching to see if a Baron Hill,

John Gregg or Christina Hale emerges to credibly challenge Gov. Holcomb in 2020. The Democrat Party's mayors appear to be staying in their municipal lanes.

One of those mayors, South Bend's Pete Buttigieg, looks to be preparing for a presidential run. He would join the ranks of Birch Bayh, Vance Hartke, Richard Lugar, Evan Bayh, Mitch Daniels and Mike Pence who at one point in their career looked in the mirror and saw a future president. Some say Buttigieg is simply angling for a cabinet post in a Democratic administration. But history shows us obscure governors like Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton made it all the way to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., and so did a Manhattan billionaire no one gave much credence.

As for Vice President Mike Pence, his lifelong aspiration has been that very address. If scandal and indictments overtake the Trump clan, Pence could make the ultimate ascension to power.

Here is the 2019 HPI Power 50 list.

1. Gov. Eric Holcomb: The governor has become one of the strongest in modern history, coming in a state with a historically and constitutionally weak chief executive. He begins the second half of his initial term with another super-majority Republican General Assembly. To put that in perspective, Gov. Mitch Daniels had to deal with

a Democratic House and Speaker Pat Bauer in his third year, Gov. Robert Orr was saddled with a deep recession, a historic budget deficit and had to call a special session for a record tax increase (leading to a tough and narrow reelection victory in 1984), and Gov. Doc Bowen lost General Assembly majorities heading into his third year due to the electoral fallout from the Watergate scandal. The Holcomb administration has been stable, with few agency and senior staff departures that typically come by now. With the Senate and fiscal leadership changes this past year, Holcomb's budget team wields unprecedented influence in that sphere. With the decision by Supt. Jennifer McCormick not to seek reelection, Holcomb is poised to move up the date for a gubernatorially appointed superintendent to coincide with his 2020 reelection, which would allow him to be the first governor to consolidate education appointees within his administration. Govs. Bayh, O'Bannon and Pence could have only dreamed of such a scenario. Politically, he sits on an unprecedented \$4 million campaign war chest (\$4.8 million when combined with Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch) and nearly \$6 million when the Indiana GOP is included. So, this gives Holcomb immense political clout as his team seeks to ward off credible Libertarian and Democratic challengers. His approval rating in the Public Opinion Strategies Poll in December stood at a gaudy 65%, with only 22% disapproving. The state's right/wrong track numbers were at 55/33%.

All of this allows Holcomb to use his considerable political capital on such issues as hate crime legislation. He is prudently looking to increase by considerable amounts state investments in the Department of Child Services, Medicaid expansion, the opioid crisis, rural broadband and a state trails system. And his consolidation of power has given him the gravitas to make out-of-box decisions, such as his toll road tax increase on truckers last summer. While it has prompted some pushback from legislators, this is classic asset management with a strong hand that he learned from his days under Gov. Daniels. When you scan Holcomb's horizons, only the specter of a recession glowers. Holcomb is taking the policy helm of the Republican Governors Association, giving him a foothold on the national stage.

There have been some rumors of a Holcomb ap-



pointment as ambassador to Italy (and he has made recent trips to Dallara HQ at Varano de' Melegari), but spokeswoman Rachel Hoffmeyer insisted the rumors have no basis. When you add all of this up, and ponder a potentially open White House in 2024 (or, perhaps, a Democrat incumbent), don't be surprised if you start hearing Team Holcomb talk about a presidential run after his boot heels amble out of the Second Floor in a six-year scenario.

2. Vice President Mike

Pence: When it comes to worries about who is left in the administration to rein in Trump, few mention Pence. Is that further evidence that Pence is looking out for his political future and trying to position himself to take over when Trump is ousted or leaves offices? For the moment, Pence is not perceived publicly as a Dick Cheney exercising power behind the scenes. Watching the vice president this past year has been a virtual bipolar experience. We don't know if we're looking at a future president by year's end, or yet another loyal associate of President Trump who ends up under the bus. We don't know if the Mike Pence we're watching is a critical mechanism keeping the mercurial POTUS inside the guardrails, or a toady stooge fanning his worst instincts. At this writing, he is backing the president's description of a "national emergency" with terrorists coming across the southern border, with

no statistical data to back up the assertion. Depending on what Special Counsel Robert Mueller's Russia collusion report says, many expect Trump, in his best case scenario, to face a political maelstrom, or in the worst case, allegations of treason, high crimes and misdemeanors that could force him from office. On the public front, Pence has been an undyingly loyal lieutenant willing to chuck long-standing principles on free trade and fiscal responsibility for Trump. As the federal government was poised for shutdown, Pence became a zombie, silent as Trump vowed to "accept the mantle" of the shutdown. By the second week, Pence had become point man on negotiations despite his lack of relationships with any congressional Democrat. We watched in fascination Pence chief of staff Nick Ayres flirt with the notion of accepting that tormented post under Trump. That Ayres decamped to Georgia instead leads us to believe that he is keeping his powder dry for a similar future opportunity with Pence should Trump be forced from office.

3. Speaker Brian Bosma: There is persistent talk that after the change of the guard in the Senate, we could be looking at the twilight of Bosma's speakership.

His path to the governorship was blocked by the Republican Central Committee in August 2016. In the modern era, only Doc Bowen was able to ascend from a speakership to governor. A 2024 run is a possibility given Bosma's extensive House network across the state and his fundraising prowess, but Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch appears to be well prepared to assume the gubernatorial mantle in ways her predecessors were not. This budget session gives Bosma more clout than in past years, with the critical injuries to Chairman Tim Brown, and the new Senate fiscal team of Ryan Mishler and Travis Holdman. Bosma has moved some of his top policy talent over to Ways & Means, and he is appointing Reps. Todd Huston and Holli Sullivan to prominent fiscal roles.



with the Brays. Senate Republicans chose Bray as the incoming president pro tempore, replacing the retiring David Long. Bray's election differed from the other two pro tempore showdowns in 1980 and 2006 that have shaped the modern leadership of the Indiana Senate. Those were three-way races with Sen. Robert Garton defeating Sens. Larry Borst and Joe Harrison in 1980 (Harrison cut a deal with the winner). In 2006, Long out-distanced Sens. Brent Steele and Tom Weatherwax with the help of six female senators and four moderates after Garton was defeated in the primary. Bray,

49, comes from a political family. His grandfather was U.S. Rep. William Bray. His father, Richard Bray, served in both the Indiana House and Senate in the seat he serves today. "We were a very political family," Bray said a few days after his selection. "Some people say the rule of thumb is you don't talk politics or religion at family dinners; it's not too much of an exaggeration that's what we talked about exclusively. You glean information and opinions from that and, by its very nature, you adopt those types of issues. I did as a child spend a decent amount of time at the Statehouse being a page for my father. I just

4. Senate President Pro Tempore

Rodric Bray: Hoosier voters are familiar with a number of political family dynasties (e.g. the Bayhs, Carsons, O'Bannons and Viscloskys) and now another is emerging

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appreciate the place and respect it. It's a fun honor to be here now." The Martinsville Republican is already wielding considerable influence, announcing he was steering hate crime legislation into the Senate Rules Committee he controls. That was the kind of decisive leadership that Long used and it looks as if it will continue with Bray.



Senate President Pro Tempore Rodrick Bray.

5. Ways & Means Chairman Tim

Brown: The fact that Dr. Brown is even with us after suffering critical injuries in Michigan late last summer underscores the notion in the famed song, "Ain't God Been Good to Indiana." Brown has been a steady fiscal steward on Ways & Means and his loss there would have been a tragic chapter. Brown is still recovering and is handing some of the early budget work to Reps. Todd Huston and Holli Sullivan. With the new fiscal team in the Senate, this House triumvirate will be a steadying influence in this changing-of-the-guard scenario.

6. Senate Appropriations Chairman

Ryan Mishler: The new Senate Appropriations chairman is the son of a legislator, hails from Bremen and was first elected in 2004. Once on the fiscal track, he established working relationships with Luke Kenley, Brandt Hershman and House Ways and Means Chairman Tim Brown. Since 1970, only Republicans Larry Borst, Robert Meeks and Kenley have chaired the appropriations portfolio in the Senate, so this is a historic changing of the guard. Doc Bowen's legacy helped shape his career. "My dad was in the House years ago and (Bowen) was the one who really convinced my dad to run for the House. He ran for the first time in 1980," Mishler told HPI. "I've known Doc Bowen from a young age. When I decided to run, that was one of the first places I went. He had these index cards and he told about things to do as a candidate. His No. 1 rule was, 'Never use your own money.'" This will be Mishler's first biennial budget since taking the Appropriations helm in 2017. "Obviously, I want to keep a balanced budget and strong reserves," he told HPI. "As a business owner, that's a general philosophy every day. Indiana is a fiscal leader in the country and I want it to continue to be. I want to keep our bond rating and remain the fiscal envy of the country." As for the opioid crisis, Mishler said he will use accumulated data gathered by the Holcomb administration to address priorities, ranging from DCS to Medicaid expansion. "We'll have the flexibility to deal with this opioid crisis and I think by the next budget cycle the administration will have data for

what we need to do."

7: U.S. Sen. Todd Young: Indiana's senior senator will have the most challenging two years of any member of the Hoosier delegation. As chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, he'll have to figure out how to defend GOP seats during an election cycle in which President Trump could suffer grave political injuries from Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation and if the economy falters or goes into a recession. If Trump survives the Mueller report, his continued multiple daily tweets – and propensity for falsehoods – will give Young plenty of flak to catch. Will Young be able to take advantage of Trump's popularity with the GOP base while shielding his candidates from the worst of Trump's excesses and deficiencies? Is he sure he wanted this job? Stay tuned.

8. Lt. Gov. Suzanne Crouch: She is the fourth female LG, but potentially the first to ascend to the governor's office. From a political standpoint, she has traveled more extensively across the state than her predecessors. She posted \$815,000 on her year-end finance report but that's really \$1 million, considering she gave \$200,000 from her coffers to Gov. Holcomb (on top of the \$200,000 check she wrote him in 2016). She oversees five state agencies that primarily serve rural Indiana. When you hear Holcomb talk about "rural Indiana as the next economic frontier," he's really talking about those policies/programs which Crouch is leading. She has a close relationship with Accelerating Indiana Municipalities, where Matt Greller is seeking to create regional hubs of innovation that Crouch buys into. And she's maintained strong relationships with legislators of both parties. Crouch is leading on rural broadband expansion in response to outcry from rural communities clamoring for fast, reliable internet service. She created the cabinet-level position that brought Scott Rudd and his expertise into the job, found the money for the "broadband-ready" pilot projects through OCRA, advo-



Gov. Holcomb with Lt. Gov. Crouch and Sen. Mike Braun at the GOP Convention in Evansville. (HPI Photos by Mark Curry)

cated for \$100 million broadband money to be part of Next Level Connections. She is also transforming the state's tourism agency.

9. U.S. Sen. Mike Braun: The Jasper businessman and former state legislator pulled off two up-

sets in 2018, sidelining U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita in the primary, and then defeating U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly in the general. He used his career and business as the “outsider,” painting himself as a more disciplined entrepreneur than President Trump to return Indiana to a one-party Senate team (which ended in 1998 when Evan Bayh went to the Senate). No one will be sitting on the edge of their chairs wondering whether Braun will support President Trump when he comes under fire from Special Counsel Robert Mueller’s findings. He should be with Trump until the bitter end because he basically owes his seat to Trump’s visits to Indiana last fall that stoked up the GOP base. Braun fared well in his committee assignments: He was placed on the Senate Agriculture and Environment and Public Works committees, which will give him plenty of opportunities to deliver for Indiana. He’s also on the Senate Budget Committee, which will give him an opportunity to pushback on profligate Trump administration policies, if he decides to jump into that fray. He’s also on the Special Committee on Aging and the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. Braun’s first bill would freeze congressional pay during government shutdowns.

10. National Intelligence Director

Dan Coats: The former Indiana senator is now widely seen as one of the “adults” keeping President Trump within the “guardrails.” This part of the administration once included Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Chief of Staff John Kelly and Defense Sec. Jim Mattis. Only Coats remains. It has been a tortured tenure for Coats, who remains close with Vice President Pence. Trump appeared to side with Russian President Putin last June in Helsinki over U.S. intelligence estimates that the Kremlin assaulted the 2016 election. Coats then seemed to be caught off guard at the Aspen Conference when the White House announced a fall meeting with Putin (which was subsequently cancelled). Coats has expressed concerns about cyberterrorism that could assault and shut down the energy and internet grids. Thus he walks a tight rope with a volatile president who can easily distrust key officials in his own administration, while keeping morale kindled within the intel ranks. Think of the book he could write once this chapter of Coats’ life closes (and we hope and pray it extends another two years).

11. Reps. Todd Huston and Holli Sullivan:

With Chairman Tim Brown still on the mend, Huston and Sullivan will play key roles on the biennial budget. Sullivan also has dual roles: She assumed the Roads and Transportation chair from the mercurial Ed Soliday (who walked back his incendiary comments after Holcomb’s

decision not to seek new tolls) and is also secretary of the Indiana Republican Party.

12. Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett:

The mayor is now the most conspicuous Democrat in the state, and will seek a second term this year. While internal polling HPI has seen shows the mayor with strong favorables and reelect numbers, he will also battle perception problems as the city has notched yet another record homicide rate. There are also road and infrastructure problems, prompting him to successfully seek \$120 million for improvements there. Hogsett will play a key role this winter in seeking state funding for Banker’s Life Fieldhouse, a move being orchestrated to keep the Indiana Pacers here for the next generation. This could require Hogsett to work in tandem with Gov. Holcomb the way Mayor Stephen Goldsmith and Gov. Frank O’Bannon did in 1997, and again in 2005 when Gov. Daniels and Mayor Bart Peterson joined forces to fund Lucas Oil Stadium. Hogsett is telling people he will not run for governor in 2020.

13. South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg:

This rising star Democrat announced in December he won’t seek a third term and is preparing a presidential bid. In 2010, he unsuccessfully challenged State Treasurer Richard Mourdock, served in the Afghanistan War as a naval intelligence officer, and became the highest-profile Hoosier politician to announce he is gay. State and national Democrats have wooed him to challenge Rep. Jackie Walorski or Gov. Holcomb, but after an unsuccessful run for Democratic National Committee chair last year when he picked up the support of former chairs Ed Rendell,



Mayors Joe Hogsett and Peter Buttigieg will both be on the campaign trail this year.

Howard Dean and top Obama era operative David Axelrod, Buttigieg will likely opt for a presidential race where he doesn’t register in the early polls. But the 2020 race is utterly wide open and even the most obscure entrant could have a shot, as President Trump showed could happen just two years ago. Some believe he is angling for a potential cabinet post, but his JFK-style calls for a passing of the torch to a new generation could resonate, so he will be a fascinating candidate to watch.

14. Republican Chairman Kyle Huffer:

He is the most conspicuous part of Gov. Holcomb’s tight inner circle, that includes 4th CD Chairman Mike O’Brien and Brian McGrath, who heads up the Imagine Indiana advocacy arm. This is the group with which Holcomb mulls policy and politics. The junior concentric circle

here includes Indiana GOP Executive Director Matt Huckleby, Joe Elsner (who handles messaging), GOP Finance Director Mindy Colbert (who was instrumental to the governor posting \$4 million for his reelection), and GOP Communications Director Pete Seat. These are the folks that make Team Holcomb a historic force to be reckoned with. During his two years heading up Holcomb's political wing, Hupfer has united the various campaigns (governor, lieutenant governor and state GOP) and raised an unprecedented amount of money while the GOP dominates the Statehouse, General Assembly, congressional delegation and county offices.



Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer with GOP Finance Director Mindy Colbert and Comm Director Pete Seat. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

15. U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky:

The Merrillville Democrat is closing in on former Republican Sen. Richard Lugar for the longest tenure of a Hoosier federal officeholder, according to the website Capitol & Washington run by HPI columnist Trevor Foughty. Visclosky currently has clocked in 34 years, 11 days and will surpass Lugar on Jan. 4, 2021, if he continues his House service. Visclosky has specialized in bringing federal dollars to his northwest Indiana district to fund transportation and other projects. Now that the Democrats are in the majority in the House, will he be able to do more with his Appropriations Committee assignment – or expand his portfolio beyond federal funding? We'll see.

16. State Sen. Ron Alting and Mike Bohacek:

These two Senate Republicans are authoring hate crime legislation, coming after Gov. Holcomb announced it would be a 2019 legislative priority. State Rep. Greg Steuerwald is authoring the House version. The decision by President Bray to assign all such bills to the Senate Rules Committee that he controls isn't concerning to the

two Republican senators. "I have full confidence in the process," Bohacek told IndyStar. "And I trust Bray to do the right thing to bring a bill that gives a fair and equitable position to Indiana citizens." Alting said, "I'm not panicked. (The bill) stands for inclusion, which is what Sen. Bohacek and myself believe in and our constituents believe in. And that's the point that we really want to get across to Hoosiers and the other 49 states, that we're a welcoming state."

17. U.S. Rep. Andre Carson: The Indianapolis Democrat could be the most intriguing member of the Hoosier congressional delegation. Certainly, he is the one to watch in the House. Now that the Democrats are in control of the chamber, he'll have more latitude to create a signature issue. Perhaps he will do that by becoming chairman of the emerging threats subcommittee of



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the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Carson can help develop the Democratic approach to fighting terrorism, which could put him on the opposite side of Congresswoman Susan Brooks in this policy area. Perhaps we'll see home-grown competing ideas on homeland security. Carson also could be pivotal in helping Indiana Democrats figure out how to increase their number of young, minority and immigrant voters, three groups who underperformed for the party in 2018. He also might be able to help formulate a solution for helping Democrats achieve bigger wins in Marion County to offset what continues to be difficult terrain in the Indianapolis suburbs. Carson certainly seemed as if he's looking forward to the new Congress, based on his enthusiastic greeting of just about every attendee at the Indiana Society of Washington's holiday party.

18. U.S. Rep. Jackie

Walorski: She was unique among Indiana GOP candidates in the 2018 cycle in that she never wavered in her support of a traditional Republican approach to trade. She remained a free-trader while others, most notably former Reps. Todd Rokita and Luke Messer, as well as eventual GOP Senate nominee Mike Braun, competed to be the candidate who most enthusiastically genuflected in support of President Trump's protectionism. Her consistent criticism of Trump's trade policies that hurt her district's farmers and RV industry did not harm her congressional campaign. She won handily. Her strong margin of victory over a well-funded and highly regarded opponent shows that she's developed a firm grip on a district that used to be consistently competitive.

19. RNC Committee Members John Hammond III and Anne Hathaway: These two RNC members are in for an interesting year. There is movement on the RNC to close off potential primary challenges to President Trump. Then there is Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who is expected to issue a report on his Russia collusion investigation later this winter. If President Trump is forced from office, it will be due to an erosion of his support in places like the RNC and the U.S. Senate, where Republicans hold a 53-47 majority. It was the loss of Republican political support in July 1974 that resulted in the resignation of President Nixon. If the Mueller report is damning or cites behavior deemed treasonous, it will be party stewards like Hammond and Hathaway who will have to explain to their brethren how national interests diverge from partisan ones, as Sens. Hugh Scott, Barry Goldwater and House Minority Leader John Rhodes did in late July 1974.

20. Budget Director Jason Dudich

and OMB Director Micah Vincent: These are Gov. Holcomb's point men on the biennial budget. With Chairmen Mishler and Holdman working their first biennial budget, Dudich and Vincent (along with staffer Dave Reynolds, who worked with Dudich under Mayor Greg Ballard and Gov. Daniels) will be the steady hands.

21. Joe Donnelly, John Gregg, Baron Hill and Christina Hale: This is the Democratic cluster which can, perhaps, make some definitive decisions on the Indiana Democratic Party which is now just a couple of notches above the Libertarians in political potency. We don't know what Donnelly's plans are after a bruising loss last year, but a gubernatorial nomination could be his for the asking. Gregg has been nominated twice and his



Christina Hale and John Gregg at a 2016 campaign campaign stop in Greensburg. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

second run was far better than the first, his defeat coming with the unprecedented circumstance of Gov. Pence leaving for the Trump ticket. Historically, Democrats have gotten one shot at the nomination (think Larry Conrad, John Hillenbrand and Wayne Townsend). Mention Gregg's name to some party faithful and you get those "retread" looks, but Gregg worked the state this past year and may be in the best position to begin to rebuild at the local level. Hill, we are told, is pondering a run, which would come four years after Evan Bayh bumped him out of the Senate race. Hale could be the future of the party and has always been more inclined to run for governor in 2024 with an open seat, though she is scouring statewide and 5th CD data from 2016 and 2018. She needs to grow her gravitas by laying out a vision for the party and start to rebuilt its decimated local ranks. Other names that have popped up include State Sen. Eddie Melton of Gary and former state representative Steve Stemler.

22. Bob Grand: He's moved more into the Washington orbit while helming Barnes & Thornburg, with that state role now in the steady hands of Brian Burdick. Grand is extremely tight with Vice President Pence, main-



IMA's Brian Burton, U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks, Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke with U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, and Commerce Sec. Jim Schellinger. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howey)

taining critical access there. He was also on President Trump's Inaugural Committee, which is now under federal investigation.

23. Seema Verma, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid administrator: According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace subsidies accounted for a combined 26% of the budget in 2016, or \$1 trillion. Nearly three-fifths of this amount, or \$594 billion, went to Medicare, which provides health coverage to around 57 million people who are over age 65. The rest of this category funds Medicaid, CHIP, and ACA subsidy and exchange costs. So, Verma oversees about a quarter of all federal spending.

24. Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke: As the Republican mayor of Indiana's third largest city, he heads into an election for his third term and may end up without an opponent. He maintains incredibly high approval ratings, despite governing a Democratic city, and his campaign war chest continues to grow. In the face of such obstacles, local Democrats have struggled to recruit a viable candidate. Buoyed by this success, Winnecke has not only continued to implement a bold vision in southwestern Indiana, but has also become a valuable source of counsel to municipal executives throughout the state.

25. Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr.: The four-term mayor is seeking reelection after pondering 2020 gubernatorial or attorney general bids. He is ambitious, occasionally considering a challenge to Rep. Visclosky. Clearly, he believes another term at the helm of the largest city in Lake County gives him better options for a post-Visclosky and post-Holcomb world.

26. U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks: She served in one of the most thankless positions on Capitol Hill during the Republican majority, chairwoman of the House Ethics Committee. It's not clear that she ever received a reward for taking one for the GOP team, which is now in the minority and can do little for her. But, she can still do a lot for her party. We'll be watching to see how Brooks pushes

GOP reforms that will help it generate more female support at the polls as well as more female candidates on the ballot. A former Indianapolis deputy mayor, Brooks has demonstrated a command of terrorism and homeland security issues. She could be a brighter star in the Hoosier GOP firmament if the guys would step aside at some point and let her run for a higher office.

27. U.S. Rep. Jim Banks: The rising star Columbia City Republican has deftly used his position on the House Armed Services Committee to develop an expertise on defense issues. His committee assignment and deployment in Afghanistan as a Navy reservist gives him the credibility to critique President Trump's defense and national security initiatives when they violate common sense and diminish U.S. leadership abroad. He doesn't always push back against the president, but he's shown more moments of independence than most other members of the Hoosier delegation. His brand of conservatism isn't perceived as being thoughtless or scary, which makes him hard to beat, as his 2018 Democratic opponent, Courtney Tritch, discovered.

28. Commerce Sec. Jim Schellinger and Elaine Bedel, president of IEDC: The Schellinger/Bedel tandem continued to set records in 2018: The IEDC announced commitments for 30,710 jobs in 2018, compared with 30,158 last year and 27,620 in 2012; from 316 businesses which will invest \$6.75 billion to locate or expand in Indiana. And there are 45 foreign firms, involving 6,420 jobs and a \$3.15 billion in investments.

29. Brian Burton: The president of the Indiana Manufacturers Association is pushing workforce issues in the most manufacturing intensive economy in the nation. He told HPI in December the state is facing a 45% decline in its workforce due to Baby Boom retirements over the coming decade and is advocating expansion of the state's training grants from \$10 million to \$20 million that was proposed by Gov. Holcomb. He told HPI, "We would like to see a (individual) relocation incentive. We do a lot of economic incentives for companies, but not workers." He proposes eliminating the state income tax

for imported workers for five years, saying that these new workers would still be paying property and sales taxes. "It's a net positive."

30. ISTA President Theresa Meredith: We've watched teacher pay issues whip up everything from stirring rallies and strikes in red states like Kentucky, West Virginia, Arizona and Oklahoma. While today's ISTA is a shadow of what it was back in the days of the legendary Bob Margraf, it seems to have caught the attention of Gov. Holcomb and Speaker Bosma. They evolved from a two-biennial budget cycle solution, to finding money in the upcoming budget. So Meredith has caught their attention.



31. Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry: The third-term Democrat is expected to seek another term, and has presided over a downtown renaissance that he is attempting to extend to the city's sprawling river system.

32. Purdue President Mitch Daniels: The former governor remains a national leader on higher education and a cog in Indiana, though his letter to the Purdue family this week is ominous. Daniels notes that a quarter of non-public institutions reported running at an operating deficit in 2017-18 and one in five small private colleges are under "fundamental stress." There is a multi-year decline in enrollments, and a flattening pool of 18-year-olds. And there is a 3.3% decline in foreign students as the Trump administration clamps down on legal immigration. In 2013, Daniels initiated a 10-point "Purdue Moves" plan that seeks to develop STEM disciplines, the establishment of Purdue Polytechnic Institute, a 98% increase in Purdue students studying abroad, the consolidation of two units into Purdue Northwest, the realignment that produced a new Purdue Fort Wayne, and the successful establishment of Purdue Global to meet the needs of the working adult learner. "We are now serving an unprecedented 45,000 Hoosiers," Daniels said in the letter. And he warns: "The wisest words I ever heard on the subject of 'strategy' are that a real one is defined not by what it includes but by what it leaves out. In business, public life, and academia, we have all seen grand 'strategies' that, because they felt compelled to respond to every pressure and include everyone's pet project, ultimately were of no actionable value and expired, forgotten and unlamented, on a shelf somewhere. We must strive to avoid that all too human pitfall."

33. State Sen. Travis Holdman: He has assumed the mantle of Sen. Brandt Hershman as the Tax & Fiscal Policy chair. He's also shown some desire to take on tough issues like RFRA, so watch his moves this budget

session.

34. Drug Czar Jim McClelland, Health Commissioner Kristina Box and FSSA Sec. Jennifer Walthall:

This is Gov. Holcomb's team formulating strategy and policy on the opioid crisis, that has become the story of our time. With 1,800 Hoosiers dying of overdoses in 2017 (a number likely to grow once the 2018 stats are compiled) and the billions of dollars that it will take to get a handle on this, this trio play crucial roles in an effort that Holcomb hopes to declare successful as he seeks reelection.

35. HHS Sec. Alex Azar: The former Eli Lilly exec oversees the sprawling Health and Human Services, which has its hand in everything from Obamacare to immigrants at the border. Azar's watch has been controversial, as Obamacare insurance rates are falling (down 11% in Indiana) while premium costs continue to rise as Congress and President Trump can't find solutions for accelerating costs. The 2,000-plus immigrant kids detained at the borders have also been a national embarrassment.

36. Surgeon General Jerome Adams: He has become one of President Trump's key point people on the federal response to the opioid crisis that is costing the states and nation tens of billions of dollars. "Even as the surgeon general, I'm not immune to this," said Adams, the 20th surgeon general who was Indiana Health commissioner. "I was not able to prevent my family from going down the pathway of addiction." Dr. Adams has sought to "normalize" the use of Naloxone, which is now widely used across Indiana and the nation. As Adams explained, "Naloxone is that tourniquet for someone who's suffering from an overdose. It allows us to get them into a more definitive and long term treatment."

37. Attorney General Curtis Hill: The proven GOP vote-getter is ostracized by the party after credible sexual harassment

allegations were leveled at him by State Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon and three legislative aides. While Special Counsel Dan Sigler didn't indict, the fact that the accusers attended his press briefing and were handed the stage revealed how estranged he is from the Statehouse establishment. Hill won't be impeached nor will he resign,



but expect a convention challenger (perhaps from 2016 convention opponent Sen. Randy Head) in 2020, though the Kyles and Jennifer Hallowell continue to warn Team Holcomb supporters that Hill might mount a 2020 gubernatorial challenge. It's one reason Holcomb and Statehouse leadership attempted to step on his throat last July. Our analysis is that it would be a fool's errand to challenge

a governor with a 65% approval rating, but out in the country past the city limits signs, the attorney general still has some cache, and these warnings conjure an old saying about speaking things into existence.

38. Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight:

This Democrat has been one of Indiana’s most effective mayors. He will announce for a fourth term on Jan. 26. When Goodnight took office, the City of Firsts faced a potential decimation if the U.S. auto industry had crashed. But with the revival of Fiat/Chrysler and Delphi, Kokomo has thrived under this mayor. He has built a new downtown stadium, provided free public transportation, reduced the city’s municipal workforce and lowered debt. Goodnight faces a Democratic primary challenge from a former Kokomo policeman, but will be a heavy favorite for reelection.



39. State Sen. Jim Merritt: The seasoned majority caucus chair is now tooling up a challenge to Indy Mayor Hogsett. It comes after a tight reelection battle against Democrat Derek Camp. So, Merritt will be playing in two political arenas anchored on opposite ends of Market Street this year.

40. Earl Goode: Gov. Holcomb’s chief of staff has now become a Statehouse legend. After six years as Gov. Daniels COS, he’s now heading his third year with Holcomb, establishing a Lou Gehrig/Cal Ripkin-like record of longevity. Generally, chiefs last two or three years; he’s now showing Vinatieri durability. Perhaps the beard thing might apply here.

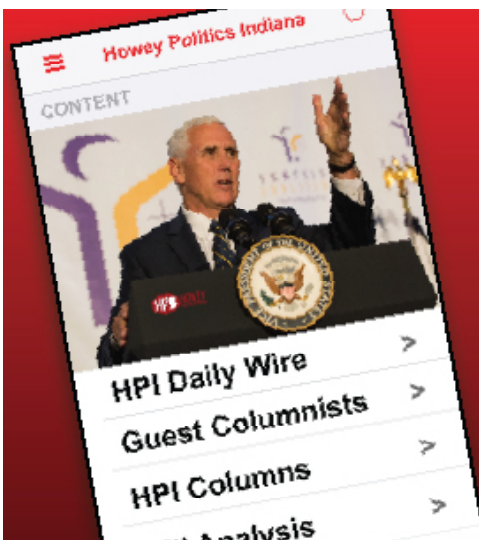
41. Marty Obst: He’s a political adviser to Vice President Pence who works the veep’s PAC Great America Committee. This is the group that was formed to promote President Trump’s agenda. Obst is also part of Gov. Holcomb’s inner circle, so he is playing in both D.C.

and Indianapolis arenas.

42. U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon: His district used to be known as the Bloody Eighth; now it’s the Boring Eighth, with Bucshon decisively beating primary challengers as well as Democrats in the general election. As the district has become less competitive, Bucshon has faded into a quiet role as a backbencher – and that was when Republicans were in the majority. Now that the GOP has lost control of the House, Bucshon will be even farther off the radar in Washington and Indiana, but safely ensconced in his seat.

43. Rod Ratcliff: We thought the former Centaur CEO would be heading off into the sunset after cutting a \$1.8 billion sale to Caesars of the racinos at Anderson and Shelbyville. But Ratcliff turned around and bought the two Gary casinos, and is now seeking to move one to the Borman Expressway and the other to Terre Haute. This would allow Gary to utilize Buffington Harbor as an intermodal port. Ratcliff and his General Assembly point man, former legislator John Keeler, have adroitly traversed the complicated processes within the state. He brought the racinos back from bankruptcy and established them as a critical component in the state’s gaming sector. Ratcliff continues to play a critical role.

44. Chamber President Kevin Brinegar: The Indiana Chamber is targeting a cigarette tax hike and workforce development issues while enduring criticism for myopia and meandering out of its “business-issues” lane under its long tenured CEO. “There is nothing else the state could do to infuse the revenue stream that would have the impact of increasing the cigarette tax by \$2 per pack,” said Brinegar. “While we agree with what Gov. Holcomb has said in past years that funds collected should go to related health care programs – to cover smoking cessation and Medicaid costs – we also believe any additional money could go to where the state has the greatest needs.” Brinegar is also calling for a hate crimes law and a re-evaluation of state workforce programs. “After several years of concentrated efforts, it’s time the



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state evaluates the existing programs,” Brinegar begins. “We have to pinpoint what will most help retrain workers for the current job market and how best to get the word out. There’s no magic answer, but we must achieve better results.” He is opposing medicinal marijuana, even as the state is poised to be surrounded by recreational states.

45. Anne Hazlett: She’s the assistant to the secretary for rural development and with the Trump tariffs impacting Hoosier farming, we considered Indiana agriculture head Bruce Kettler and USDA undersecretary Ted McKinney (with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer dominating that sphere with his hardline approach on China), but we landed on Hazlett for the significant role she is playing with the opioid epidemic that is ransacking rural communities. Just this week, 11 rural Indiana counties are being designated to receive federal mental health services. Our sources tell us Hazlett is playing a significant role in rural development and especially the rural opioid response.

46. U.S. Rep. Greg Pence: Everything you need to know about Pence’s political prowess is his last name. He relied on it to run one of the most unremarkable – many would say disappointing – congressional races in recent Hoosier history. He relied on the name identification built by his vice president brother to cruise to victory. He did not develop a discernable policy agenda of his own. He did not grant any media interviews – even to the New York Times to defend himself in a story that outlined some questionable business dealings. His interactions with voters were mostly in private. We’ll be watching to see if he can remain hermetically sealed while serving in Congress. He will have the kind of access to the Trump administration that most freshman can only dream of. But it remains to be seen if he is his own man or a sad, coat tail-skating fraternal doppelganger.

47. U.S. Rep. Jim Baird: The former legislator won what was essentially a three-way Republican primary and then cruised to victory on Nov. 6. He is expected to work on veteran and agriculture issues.

48. Senate Majority Leader Mark Messmer: New to the role and chair of the Senate Environment Committee, we wait to see what Messmer’s political trajectory might be.

49. Luke Kenley: This is proof that even those who ride off to the ranch in the sunset of life can make a comeback. The former Senate Appropriations chair is poised to try and get the Bankers Life Fieldhouse improvements through a tight budget year on behalf of Mayor Hogsett and the CIB.

50. Victor Oladipo: Last fall, the Indiana Pacer star endorsed U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly’s reelection bid and hinted he might have a political career in front

of him after his spectacular playing days end. With the Indianapolis CIB and the Hogsett administration working on a deal to secure the Pacers for the city (and state) for the next generation by upgrading Banker’s Life Fieldhouse, Oladipo could find himself as the proverbial ace in the hole if the General Assembly balks at the project (think Peyton Manning pitching that tight, laser-focused spiral to Speaker Bosma in the ramp up to the Lucas Oil Stadium deal). And if you’re a beleaguered Hoosier Democrat, you’ve got to think about the star’s charisma and crossover appeal if they spend the coming decade in the wilderness.

Honorable Mentions

Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane and House Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta: Key question here is, can they impact crucial legislation in any meaningful way and bring their priorities to the front burner? With their super-minorities, we’re skeptical.

House Speaker Pro Tem Mike Karickhoff: A potential successor to Speaker Bosma?

House Majority Floor Leader Matt Lehman: Ditto.

Democratic Chairman John Zody: He has presided over a party now on its fourth General Assembly super-minority status, a party at its Statehouse nadir and receding from relevancy at the county level, too. The party never recalibrated after Bernie Sanders won the Indiana primary with 53% in 2016, but Hillary Clinton supporters dominate the Central Committee. It only took Indiana Democrats a generation to come up with a bookend to the GOP’s effective Lugar Series. This is a party that continues to put the “fun” in dysfunction.

U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth: We tried to talk to the sophomore congressman, but he is inaccessible, as many 9th CD civic organizations have discovered. He also doesn’t have a brother who is vice president.

John Pence: The vice president’s nephew is deputy executive director of Trump’s campaign committee.

Sen. Randy Head: A potential 2020 attorney general candidate.

Holcomb Deputy Chief of Staff Cris Johnston: Could be a successor to Earl “Vinatieri” Goode.

Senate Chief of Staff Jeff

Papa: He’s come back to help get the Bray era started on the right track.

Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson: She was recently elected president of National League of Cities, though her city remains a fiscal mess, as local media continues to point out.

Michigan City Mayor Ron Meer: We love the safety measures he’s taken at the lighthouse, which can be a deadly place in stormy weather. He’s also implementing a strategic plan for a city most Hoosiers don’t know much about. ❖



House GOP unveil 2019 priorities

By JACOB CURRY

INDIANAPOLIS — House Speaker Brian Bosma announced Republican legislative priorities for the 2019 session Monday morning that will focus on kids and teachers, as well as a balanced biennial budget.



The Republicans outlined top priorities: Enacting a balanced responsible state budget, increasing protections for Indiana's youth, strengthening the state's commitment to students and teachers,

promoting further workforce initiatives and supporting Hoosier veterans.

Bosma acknowledged that the budget took special emphasis. "Passing an honestly balanced two-year state budget will take center stage," he said, but added, "We are hitting the ground running to ensure a productive legislative session."

The two points Republicans are focusing on for the budget are to be expected: Maintaining the state's reserves and its AAA credit rating. But that's not a simple ask; Bosma said the additional \$286 million that the Department of Child Services will require annually over the two-year budget period has narrowed this year's fiscal focus to K-12 education funding.

On the education front, Bosma spoke of three bills which would introduce initiatives to help solve funding issues and also make Indiana more competitive when it comes to attracting and retaining quality teachers.

First, House Bill 1003, authored by State Rep. Dale DeVon (R-Granger), aims to increase spending of school funds on classroom expenses as opposed to overhead or operational costs. The bill sets a target for local public schools to spend at least 85% of their state funding on "instructional expenses," about a 5% increase over what most schools are currently able to spend. The other two bills, Rep. Bob Behning's (R-Indianapolis) HB1008, and HB1009, also introduced by Rep. DeVon, aim to improve career opportunities for educators in the state. HB1008 would establish career advancement paths for teachers that keep them in the classroom rather than moving them to administrative positions. HB1009 seeks the creation of new residency programs to attract young professionals to Indiana classrooms.

Also on the GOP agenda is increasing protections for Hoosier children, both at school and in the field of health. Rep. Greg Steuerwald's (R-Avon) DCS reform bill HB1006 was the first Bosma acknowledged. The bill deals with balancing case manager workloads and giving them greater flexibility in reporting and prioritizing. Bosma

also recognized the need for increased school safety in Indiana, highlighted by the shootings in Noblesville and Richmond last year. HB1004, authored by Rep. Wendy McNamara (R-Evansville) implements the recommendations of the governor's school safety report, comprising the focus of Republican efforts on that front.

Finally, Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer's (R-Beech Grove) HB1007 intends to reduce Indiana's seventh-highest-in-the-nation infant mortality rate. The bill increases engagement with at-risk expecting mothers and requires providers to give verbal substance use screenings to pregnant women.

In line with the goals on attracting educators to the state, the GOP also seeks to help Indiana retain and retract a quality workforce in other areas. Bosma highlighted Rep. Holli Sullivan's (R-Evansville) work on HB1002 as the spearhead for this priority. The comprehensive bill seeks to invigorate career exploration and navigation in Indiana through technical education courses, certificates and post-secondary degrees. HB 1002 additionally prioritizes funding for programs with proven return on investment (Bosma floated the Cook Program as an example) and encourages schools to further partner with employers for learning opportunities.

Lastly, HB1010 from Rep. Bob Cherry (R-Greenfield) comprises the House GOP's effort to aid Hoosier veterans. The bill grants an income tax exemption for military retirement pensions and increases the assessed value eligibility cap for disabled vets' property tax exemption.

Indiana House Democratic Leader Phil GiaQuinta reacted, saying, "The GOP priorities listed are the same ones that have been a part of Republican agendas stretching over the past three administrations: Cut spending at all costs in order to increase the surplus. When in doubt about what to cut, study and delay making any decisions ... unless it comes to cutting taxes for big business." ❖

Senate to update sexual harassment rules

Indiana senators on Monday changed their proposed sexual harassment policy to prohibit relationships between lawmakers and interns after public outcry over the initial language, which one expert previously called "shockingly dated" ([IndyStar](#)). The new proposal, approved by the Senate's ethics committee, would bar senators from engaging in sexual conduct with any legislative intern "regardless of whether the individual consents." The House Ethics Committee is set to vote Thursday on its own proposal and amendment prohibiting relationships between lawmakers and interns. Senate Ethics Committee Chair Liz Brown said the two chambers' proposals will likely be "mostly the same." "We are redefining that even a consensual relationship with an intern is now going to be unethical," Brown said. ❖

The need for the watchdog press

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – As noted in a South Bend Tribune headline, it was: “A very busy year for your watchdog.”

Yes, newspapers, despite cutbacks in reporters and coverage, the loss of circulation and advertising, and dismissal by critics as irrelevant, still perform a watchdog role.



The Tribune story about that role, keeping an eye on public officials and others to spot and disclose corruption and fraud that would otherwise go undetected, focused on the newspaper’s uncovering of wrongdoing by Elkhart police and in the Elkhart County justice system.

The police scandal brought the firing of the police chief and a decision by the

mayor to forego running for reelection. The mess, now uncovered, can be cleaned up by good cops, informed citizens and determined civic leaders.

Tribune journalists flexed their muscle in other cases from the last year as well. Among them were investigations into the sudden departure of a Transpo CEO, excuses for a vote-counting problem, and a fatal crash involving a speeding South Bend police car.

That’s what newspapers are supposed to do. Long have done. Still do, though with fewer watchdogs now barking.

Some communities are left without newspapers or with publications so lacking in resources that they can’t look beyond the surface or won’t dare to do so in fear of alienating remaining readers or advertisers.

It’s unfortunate. Public officials tempted to steal or abuse powers don’t have to fear in those cases that a newspaper watchdog might be watching.

The problem goes beyond local coverage. Most states now lack the extensive coverage of the legislature and state offices once provided by newspapers from throughout the state. Few papers can afford to send reporters to the state capital.

Nationally, press coverage dwindles as well, except for the efforts of giants like the Washington Post, New York Times and Wall Street Journal.

What they do is ridiculed by people

who don’t like the facts uncovered. Journalists are the ones seeking to drain the swamp in Washington, even as swamp creatures call the facts reported about them “fake news.”

It’s not just politicians who seek to undercut the honorable cause of journalism. What’s uncovered by watchdogs in the press often has nothing at all to do with politics.

That was certainly the case following extensive and exemplary reporting by the Indianapolis Star in uncovering widespread sexual abuse of gymnasts.

The Star didn’t help to bring down the infamous Dr. Larry Nassar because he was a Republican or a Democrat. They neither knew nor cared if he contributed to some political party or candidate. They cared that he was a monster who needed to be sent where he is now, prison.

Corruption uncovered by newspapers in their communities usually has little or nothing to do with the politics of the perpetrator. A sheriff found to be stealing public funds isn’t on the take because of the local Republican or Democratic party. A reporter uncovering the theft doesn’t care if the sheriff was elected as a Republican, a Democrat or as the last remaining Bull Moose lawman.

Newspapers aren’t what they used to be. Still, they are something. They serve a vital watchdog role not easily mimicked elsewhere in the community.

Newspapers may not in decades hence be landing on porches, a printed product. But the “press,” even if without presses, will continue online to provide news and bark at public servants who serve only themselves and at others guilty of fraud or the horrors of a Larry Nassar.

Retaining that role is vital. Now. And in whatever way journalists provide the news in the future. ❖

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

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

How the Europeans handle their sports

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – American conservatives frequently like to make fun of and/or bash Europeans for the whacky socialist programs permeating virtually all elements of their daily lives. As good jingoistic patriots, we laud the American exceptionalism that has built an economic colossus, created incredible standards of living and provide us with enough



spare change to basically meddle wherever our hearts desire.

However, the proud and economically wise Americans harbor a socialist cancer that has been allowed to entrench itself over time. The men, yes they are all men, practicing this heinous economic socialism are virtually all extremely skilled in the knockdown-and-drag-out business world. They won their vast fortunes by playing the capitalistic game to the maximum. They

are economic victors in our society.

When these scions of capitalism get together over cocktails at their frequent meetings, do you think that the good old boys talk about making America great again through competition? No, these men are looking for ways to make sure that they win no matter how well their business performs. These titans of business are not mere mortals. They own professional sports franchises.

One might expect the socialist countries of Europe to practice a socialist philosophy from top to bottom and in the United States for a competitive fervor to permeate every molecule of our existence. You are terribly wrong if you feel that way. Nothing is further from the truth when it comes to professional sports.

Just for giggles, let's take a comparative look at the economic differences between football in England and baseball in the United States. Note: Most uninformed American sports fans refer to that kind of football as soccer.

England has eight levels of professional soccer leagues. The Premier League (20 teams), the Championship (24 teams), English Football League One (24 teams), English Football League Two (24 teams), The National League (24 teams), The National League North and South (Each has 22 teams), Four level seven leagues with 22 teams each and seven level eight leagues with 20 teams each.

Confused?

Trust me, it will get more confusing as I tell you more.

Now in the good old USA we have Major League

Baseball with 30 teams. Triple A professional baseball has 30 teams. There are 30 Double A professional baseball teams. The Single A Advanced League has 30 teams. The Single A League fields 30 teams. The Class A Short Season League has 22 teams and several other lower level leagues comprised of over 100 teams compete at varying skill sets.

Each English football team from the lowest level team to the highest level team strives to eventually make it to the top league, the Premier League, and win its championship while making a profit for the team's owners.

Each American professional baseball team tries to make a profit while developing talent for a Major League team through a contractual relationship.

Thus, Biggleswade United (real name), playing in the lowest level league, can aspire to one day win the Premier League title and all of the cash that comes with it. Unfortunately, the Indianapolis Indians, no matter how successful they are, will never win the World Series.

The English system is as intriguing as it is confusing. The system revolves around an economically bone-crushing system of promotions and relegations. Simple and simply brutal.

Each year, the bottom three performing teams in the Premier League are relegated to the Championship and the top three performing Championship teams are promoted to the Premier League. The bottom three performing teams in the Championship are relegated to English Football League One and the bottom three teams in English Football League One are relegated to English Football League Two, etcetera, etcetera. As Frank Sinatra might sing it, "You're riding high in April, shot down in May."

Some of the lower level leagues will automatically promote two top teams and then play a tourney among the next four to determine the third team to be promoted. Now, talk about sudden death shootouts!

Imagine a year when the New York Yankees are relegated to AAA and the Indianapolis Indians are moved to the Big Leagues. Wow! Bad play is punished. Bad management is punished. Fans can vote with their wallets. In English football, good play is rewarded. Good management is rewarded. Fans of winning football are rewarded.

Let's contrast the English system with Major League Baseball. The 2018 Baltimore Orioles won 47 games and lost 115. They will be back to play in the MLB in 2019. Baltimore fans will still pay top dollar for seats. The team gets the number one draft pick. Hot dogs will still cost an arm and a leg. Players will still have the fat contracts and the team owners' net worth will continue to rise. The 2018 top performing Triple A Memphis Redbirds won 83 games and lost 57.

Next season they will still be playing in Triple A baseball. Fans can expect cheap seats, bobble heads, buy-one-get one sacks of peanuts and low-paid players trying as hard as they can. The team owner will have to be on the top of his game next season to make a profit.

In American business, relegation or failure is a fact of life. K-Mart is relegated to bankruptcy. Sears acquires K-Mart. Sears is relegated to bankruptcy. Businesses come and go like leaves on a maple tree. Yet, in this great bastion of free enterprise and competition, professional baseball is a peculiar entity. There is no relegation for failure. Everyone who is lucky enough to own a Major League Baseball franchise makes a killing, win or lose.

Rarely do I point to Europe and say that we

should emulate them. That said, deep in the bowels of the socialist states that comprise the European Union shines a bright light for the Americans to follow. It's brutal and painful capitalism played out on the pitch. Maybe that's why football/soccer is the number one sport in the world. ❖

Dunn is the former chairman of the Howard County Republican Party

Brookings pans state's workforce strategy

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – The Brookings Institution recently published a study for the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership outlining labor market challenges in the region. It is a good study that I admire because it restates many of the points I have been making over the past years regarding failures of economic development and workforce training policies in Indiana.



Most of the media coverage of the study has focused on mistakes in business attraction policies. In particular, the finding that a quarter of the jobs attracted to Central Indiana are essentially dead-end jobs. They

are right, of course, but anyone who understands job attraction efforts should be surprised that only one quarter of the jobs we subsidize are, in effect, dead-end jobs. The important part of the Brookings study was its broad and scathing assessment of Indiana's workforce development policies. Space limits prevent me from doing their criticism full justice, but I will try to cover the major points.

The first complaint about Indiana's workforce development policies is an implicit criticism of the state's research of workforce issues. The Brookings research team performed an analysis of the skills workers need to see wage growth. That is a study that our workforce development officials could and should have done years ago. That modest piece of analysis should be sufficient to cause a major redeployment of dollars surrounding the ways Indiana educates and trains workers.

This criticism deserves some background. Over the past few decades Indiana has spent tens of millions of dollars on collecting data to inform workforce development decisions. But, the state has done almost no meaningful analysis with that data. To say it plainly, Indiana is decades behind places like West Virginia and Tennessee when

it comes to analyzing workforce training and education needs.

In fewer than 100 pages, the Brookings study noted how labor markets are changing so that workers in all occupations possess a stronger set of specific skills and outlined specific knowledge, skills and abilities that correlate with better jobs and higher wage growth. The study even analyzed the skills needed by job changers and in the occupations that are upwardly mobile.

The Brookings study also noted that our workforce development programs and IvyTech fail to focus on these skills. In fact, the study reports that the most lucrative and promising skills across both workforce development and community college offerings aren't even part of the core offerings of most programs. In plain language, we are focusing our workforce spending towards yesterday's jobs and doing little to prepare workers for the skills needed to enter the careers of the future. It should surprise no one that we aren't teaching the right skills, since we aren't even asked ourselves what the right skills might be.

The Brookings list of skills are focused on workers who will not pursue a four-year degree, which has long been the focus of our workforce and community college efforts. But, what should surprise many readers is that these skills are mostly taught in the K-12 classroom. Unfortunately, after adjusting for inflation, per student spending on K-12 education in Indiana is lower than it was in 2011. Nearly everyone talks about the importance of K-12 education in preparing citizens for a productive future, but budgets, not rhetoric, reveal priorities. In a better-informed Indiana, resources should be moving from ineffective community college and workforce development programs into K-12 education. Sadly, we appear poised to pursue the opposite course.

To be fair, I did not find all the Brookings recommendations compelling. For example, the study called for more state-level intervention in labor markets than I believe are appropriate. However, my biggest disagreement was their recommendation that Central Indiana undertake stronger efforts to attract the right kinds of jobs.

This sounds prudent, but nearly all serious research on the issue finds that efforts to attract jobs are ineffective, and so will do little to improve the employment prospects of Hoosiers. Thus, I believe it is unwise to spend

more resources to attract jobs, when the factors that attract new businesses are mostly related to the underlying quality of the workforce and community.

Still, it is ironic that my major complaint about the Brookings study actually reinforces its broadest critique of Indiana, which is that our workforce and community college systems are focusing on the wrong type of training for the wrong type of jobs. In reality, new employers will come to places in Indiana that have an abundance of well-trained workers who are ready for tomorrow's jobs. In

the words of the Brookings study, we have "a responsibility to equip Indiana's current and future workforce with the broadly applicable skills that will allow them to navigate a changing world of work." Today we are failing this responsibility. ❖

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The billboards along our way

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Drive along some of Indiana's interstates and a single fact becomes evident: There are large numbers of persons on the road with you who are sexually deprived or unsatisfied. How else can you explain



all those ads for "adult" literature and apparatus? Freudians would likewise see the many billboards for fireworks as appealing to suppressed libidos.

Billboards are unlike other advertisements. You cannot avoid them. They enter your line of sight and are a distraction. But they also provide information, often desired and welcome information.

That's the tradeoff – information vs. intrusion. Some will escalate the discussion by

arguing freedom of speech and property rights of land owners are at stake when regulation of billboards is under consideration. Newspapers, television, magazines, cell-phones, your computer screen all are carriers of advertising. However, there is a difference: You and I invite those media into our lives. We can choose to ignore advertisements or to study them in detail. With billboards, we do not choose to be informed about Kitty's Krunchy Karamels, Fred's Fearsome Fireworks, or George's Gents' Grotto. Yet, it's good to know a Bilge Burger is just ahead.

Fred Flintstone did not travel at 70 miles per hour and had few means of knowing what businesses were available. Cellphones reduced the need for billboards. Even alone in his over-sized SUV, today's Fred can ask his audio assistant for the nearest taqueria.

On the public roads, you and I are subjected to the will and whim of landowners, billboard companies and advertisers. Billboards are designed to attract our atten-

tion. They are successful at doing that. Yet they are pollution for our eyes as they obstruct our view of the neighborhoods and scenery of urban and rural areas.

It is bad enough that highway departments nationwide plant trees and build walls that keep drivers from seeing where they are. Thus rural squalor is easily hidden and suburban housing, inappropriately built after the highway was constructed, is "protected" from the sound and sight of commerce.

Many cities and states have stringent regulations applying to billboards. The size, content, placement and density of billboards are subject to regulation, but that does not mean such regulation is enforced.

Grandfathering existing billboards is a convenient way to increase their value and discourage new billboards. Often disruptive aspects of existing billboards are neglected by such grandfathering. In addition, assessment practices for property taxes on billboards are highly variable.

Some billboards are witty and provide a chuckle. Some threaten us with eternal damnation if we don't follow their dictates. Some digital signs change as we drive along and distract us with their bright colors and confuse us with their fleeting messages.

The absence of billboards is rarely noted. The presence of billboards is too often a shoddy representation of a community with little respect for itself and its visitors.

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Marc Chase, NWI Times: It remains one of the most disgusting sights associated with corruption and graft in the Region. Piles of moldering clothing, at one time donated to benefit the less fortunate, lay in 8-foot-high heaps across an area larger than a football field inside a shuttered industrial warehouse in Gary. The best intentions behind the people who donated the clothing went to die on that warehouse floor — the items never making it to the poor and destitute who needed them. It was all courtesy of a politically tied entity known as the Gary Urban Enterprise Association, or GUEA, a nonprofit that would become an icon of foul corruption in Northwest Indiana. Twelve years later, it's a symbol of what could happen if entities seeking to help deliver Gary from its depths of decay aren't careful about how the help is given and who administers it. Some of the elected powers that be in Gary aren't exactly filling us with great confidence in this regard. Just last week, Times reporter Lauren Cross revealed a ghost of GUEA past. Gary municipal government took ownership of the GUEA building after the agency went defunct in 2007, and many of its principals, some who happened to be local government elected officials, were convicted of crimes against the taxpayer. Last month, the city transferred ownership of that building to the church of Curtis Whittaker, a politically tied private accountant whose past clients include the GUEA and the city of Gary. Whittaker also is pastor of the church that took title to the building, and he pledges to use the old GUEA headquarters as the site of urban renewal. Regardless of his intentions, transferring title of a publicly owned building, which once belonged to a symbol of Region corruption, to an accountant who once served the defunct GUEA doesn't send the right message.



Ed Breen, WBAT: Hawkeyes from Dubuque to Sioux City are now girding themselves for what lies ahead in the next dozen months. And, while it has become some sort of theater of the absurd in many ways, the Iowa caucuses are about as close as we can come to plain old gather-round-the-wood-stove retail politics in America anymore. Every crossroads town in the state from Steamboat Rock to What Cheer, Iowa, will be visited. Every morning coffee joint will get its 45 seconds of exposure on national TV as some 14-year-old reporter from New Jersey is astounded by the wisdom of the guys under those John Deere caps, usually seated six to a table set for four. I bring all this up, not to encourage premature hyperventilation, but to arrange the stage just a bit because we have no idea of either who or how many candidates there may be out there. Certainly dozens of Democrats. Maybe a few Republicans; Mitt Romney's already at it and John Kasich many not be far behind. But the one who, potentially, might be the most interesting is the boyish-looking mayor from just up the road here in Indiana. Talking about Pete Buttigieg, the 36-year-old who went to South Bend St. Joe High School, Harvard University, served in Afghanistan. Talking about

he with the seemingly unpronounceable name: Buttigieg. He is of Scottish and Maltese descent. He is openly gay. He is personable, scary smart and is intrigued by the idea of going directly from the City Hall in South Bend to the White House in Washington, D.C. It has never been done. No president has gone from mayor to president without stops in between. But we live in a time of going where no man has gone before, don't we? Buttigieg, who is also a Rhodes Scholar — remember Bill Clinton — has eschewed other elective offices, although he did take a serious shot at the chairmanship of the Democrat National Committee a year ago. He lost, but bought a boatload of name recognition among professional Democrats. Says he's not interested in state legislature or governor or Congress or any of those things. But he has bought some plane tickets to Iowa and he has announced he is not running for a third term as mayor and he has set up a Political Action Committee — the dread PAC — and he is putting some machinery in place in Kansas. ❖

Mike Allen, Axios: White House officials are increasingly concerned that the impending real-world effects of the shutdown could swamp Republicans if they don't find a way to make a deal fast, Jonathan Swan reports. Trump's prime-time address at 9:00 ET tonight, his first from the Oval Office, is part of an urgent P.R. strategy designed to make up for what some Republican officials feel was a languid use of the president's bully pulpit over the holidays. Trump aides realize the situation could slip away from them politically as the impact is felt by taxpayers and federal workers across America. So the urgency is in putting pressure on Dems, and trying to make them own a "crisis" at the border. "I have no idea how this ends. I really don't," a senior White House official said. According to conversations with multiple sources familiar with speech prep, the White House plan is for Trump to ditch his fiery campaign rhetoric and hot partisan attacks on Speaker Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer. But nobody will say so on the record. One reason: It's Trump. And there's never quite a 0% chance that he scrunches up Stephen Miller's script, ignores the advice, and does what he does. Inside the strategy: West Wing officials plan to spend the next 72 hours hammering Democrats and trying to make them feel pain for the shutdown. You'll hear the word "crisis" a lot, and the assertion that Democrats refuse to negotiate. Vice President Pence has repeatedly mentioned a front-page Washington Post story that referred to "a bona fide emergency on the border." A group of reporters was given a slide deck with statistics about border crossings. The point of the briefing — by Pence, Jared Kushner, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, OMB's Russ Vought and others — was to document a crisis. Fact check: U.S. Customs and Border Protection encountered only six immigrants on the U.S.-Mexico border in the first half of fiscal year 2018 whose names were on a federal government list of known or suspected terrorists. ❖

Trump to address nation at 9 tonight

WASHINGTON — With no breakthrough in sight, President Donald Trump will argue his case to the nation tonight that a “crisis” at the U.S.-Mexico border requires the long and invulnerable wall he’s demanding before ending the partial government shutdown. Hundreds of thousands of federal workers face missed paychecks Friday as the shutdown drags through a third week. Trump’s 9 p.m. Oval Office speech – his first as president – will be followed by his visit Thursday to the southern border to highlight his demand for a barrier. Trump’s prime-time address will be carried live by ABC, CBS, CNN, Fox Broadcasting, Fox News Channel, Fox Business Network, MSNBC and NBC.



Shutdown is poised to hammer farmers

FOWLER, Ind. — Bruce Buchanan was so elated with Donald Trump’s October vow to allow higher sales of corn-based ethanol that he carved a 60-acre thank you note in his Indiana cornfield ([Bloomberg News](#)). Now, though, the president’s actions have him worried. The government shutdown that Trump says could last “a long time” without funding for a border wall may hurt farmers by delaying the administration’s ability to steer through the approval for year-round sales of a 15% ethanol blend for gasoline before the summer begins. That’s up from 10% allowed now. The increased sales would certainly be helpful. Farm income has dropped in five out of the last six years. And this season, growers have been hamstrung in selling their crops by an ongoing trade war with China. While Buchanan supports Trump on border security, the shutdown is troubling for a farming community that’s clearly struggling,

he said. “It’s not all fun and games out here,” said Buchanan, a third-generation farmer from Fowler, Indiana, in a telephone interview. “It’s a daily challenge.” The schedule for getting approval of the higher ethanol blend was already ambitious prior to the shutdown. The Environmental Protection Agency had promised to present a final rule in May, just four weeks before existing restrictions on 15 percent ethanol become binding. Now, though, the agency is largely inoperative.

TSA sickout has little impact at Indy

INDIANAPOLIS — A reported sickout by TSA workers in response to the shutdown of the federal government appears to be having little impact on Indianapolis travelers ([IndyStar](#)). Security screening areas at Indianapolis International Airport appeared to be fully staffed Monday morning, even though the working TSA agents will not receive paychecks because of a partial government shutdown, now in its third week.

Brooks praises Pence on shutdown

CARMEL — Rep. Susan Brooks says the current shutdown of the federal government could provide the opportunity for the nation to address border security (de la Bastide, [Anderson Herald-Bulletin](#)). “I was very pleased to see that Vice President Mike Pence led discussions this week-end with the top aides of the leadership in both Houses,” the Republican congresswoman for Indiana’s 5th District said during a Monday interview with The Herald Bulletin. “I think that is very positive. It seems like negotiations has really begun in earnest.” Brooks said Democrats in Congress requested some specific numbers and justification for spending \$5 billion on a border wall sought by Trump. “I always suspected when Nancy Pelosi got through becoming the speaker of

the House that things would accelerate,” she said. “There is a real crisis at the border, and the president, I believe, is going to hold out for a while longer unless these negotiations prove fruitful.”

Braun blasts Dems over shutdown

WASHINGTON — Democrats are being disingenuous when they talk about their concern for government spending and the border wall, said Mike Braun, freshman Republican senator from Indiana, in an interview of WJLA in Washington, D.C. (WIBC). “Look at how many shutdowns we’ve had over the last few years. It looks like it comes to this, and then you get things done. That’s not regular order,” he said. “That’s a silly way to get anything done. You never run your business or state government to the verge or the brink.”

South Bend mayor candidates gather

SOUTH BEND — With just two days before the window opens to officially run for South Bend mayor, some campaigning and political jockeying has already begun ([South Bend Tribune](#)). Some potential candidates met Sunday at the invitation of attorney Pete Agostino, a longtime Democratic Party member, and agreed that if they run, they’ll try to keep the party unified. Present at the meeting, which lasted about an hour and a half at Agostino’s law office, were four of the five men who three weeks ago confirmed they were considering running as Democrats: Lynn Coleman, a retired South Bend cop who was an assistant to then-Mayor Steve Luecke and ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 2016; Jason Critchlow, St. Joseph County party chair; James Mueller, executive director of the city’s Department of Community Investment; and Aaron Perri, executive director of the city’s Department of Venues, Parks and Arts. State Sen. David Niezgodski also was there at Agostino’s invitation.