

Buttigieg drawing Republican fire

As he kicks off his campaign in South Bend on Sunday, GOP begins to weigh in

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Pete is sizzling. He's the hottest thing in American politics these days and at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Mayor Buttigieg officially launches his Democratic presidential campaign in downtown South Bend.



But being "hot" nine months before the first caucuses and primaries can be seen as one of the first steps

toward ascending power, or the proverbial flash in the pan as Herman Cain, Gary Hart, John Connally, Ross Perot and John Edwards can attest.

Unlike the aforementioned presidential wannabes, Buttigieg has yet to nudge into anything close to frontrunner status. Beyond the Emerson College Iowa poll that had him at 11% and trailing only Joe Biden and



Sen. Bernie Sanders, the coming Buttigieg candidacy is a mostly single-digit enterprise at this point. Morning Consult Poll on Tuesday had the national race with Joe Biden

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Aboard the crazy train

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – Please forgive me but I can't watch the news without thinking of Ozzy Osbourne. You know, "Hahahaha, aye, aye, aye aye! They're going off the rails on a crazy train."



Three years ago, Republicans had to suffer through the winnowing of 14-plus presidential candidates to arrive at nominee Donald Trump. It wasn't a pretty process. We saw candidates, all good men and women, derided for the size of their ears, their beauty (or lack thereof), their veracity, their manliness, their relatives, etc. You name it and we saw it during the primary process. Donald Trump went where no man



"Well, it's kind of funny, because I don't think the vice president does have a problem with him, but I think it's helping Pete get some notoriety by saying that about the vice president."

- Second Lady Karen Pence on Mayor Buttigieg's criticism of her husband



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had ventured before, utilizing a campaign strategy that achieved the nomination for him, and yet also virtually guaranteed that the political enmity would not end with the Republican Convention.

Serious issues facing our country rarely received the attention that they deserved during the 2016 primaries because salacious mudslinging is much more fun to cover in the press. I feel it's safe to say that one of the candidates could have possessed ideas for ending our horrendous national debt, finding permanent world peace, eradicating hunger and poverty, and curing cancer and they would have been lost in the crowded Republican presidential field or dismissed because they'd failed sixth grade penmanship.

Why is it that the Republican Party suffered through the mess of the 2016 primaries and now Democrats are going down that same ugly path?

Let's not blame the media. They only serve up what we want to see. Let's not blame the political parties. They only reflect the wishes of their members. No, the blame for a primary process that leaves more questions than answers rests fully with you and me. Vox populi is who we should blame. We generally get the candidates and the government that we deserve.

In retrospect, the Republican primary campaign waged by Donald Trump in 2016 was brilliant. It may have taken a ruthless cynic like Corey Lewandowski to design a strategy to put tons of money, an attention grabbing egotist, the fears of the Republican primary voter and the GOP primary rules into a big cauldron in order to serve up Donald Trump to the delegates at the Republican Convention in Cleveland.

In a two- or three-candidate primary election campaign, the voters generally get a candidate that a majority of voters like. This is how it would work in a perfect world. But reality smacks you square in the face like a Trump one-liner when it comes

to the presidential primary system.

First, each state has their own system for awarding who gets its delegates. Fifty states (and a few territories) have their own rules and guidelines that were designed to give the entity as much muscle and power as possible. Some states even design their rules to put as much power as possible in the hands of the state party apparatus because you just can't trust that democracy thingy. In addition, there is no rhyme or reason to when each state holds its primary. This gives outsized influence to states like Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina.

The unintended result of this mumbo jumbo, impossible-to-understand primary process is to place an inordinate amount of politi-



cal power in the hands of the most extreme wings of each political party. The reality of the primary system is that the most conservative voters in the Republican Party generally control the outcome of its primary process and the most liberal elements carry outsized weight for Democrats.

In a primary campaign that has more than four or five candidates, if a candidate can garner a solid 35% of the vote, week in and week out, then they are going to win the nomination. It makes no difference if 65% of your party did not have the winning candidate as a first choice, the 35% guy wins it all going away.

Politics used to be about tailoring your message to appeal to as broad of a base of voters as pos-

sible. While reaching "50%-of-the-vote-plus-one" is still the ultimate general-election goal, the primary system can present big rewards to a .350 hitter. Doubt my math? At the end of the first four caucus/primaries in 2016, Donald Trump had received 24, 35, 33 and 46%, respectively, of the votes cast and yet he won 82 of the 133 delegates awarded.

Even the 11-state Super Tuesday primaries could not alter the math. Trump failed to win 50% of the vote in any state, averaging just 34% of the vote, and yet he won 56% of the delegates awarded. By the time small results and dismal fundraising had reduced the field of 14 candidates (who started the horse race in the winter of 2015) to just three as the field made the final turn and started down the homestretch in Indiana, the race was over.

I'm not saying that Donald Trump should not have been the Republican candidate for president. I am just saying that the strategy for getting the nomination in both parties may encourage the winning candidate to adopt an unorthodox game plan that leads to some extremist policies.

Trump's immigration strategy was excellent at helping him lock in a solid 35% of Republican voters, but the "Build the Wall!" mantra of the primaries has given our country a debilitating and unsolvable issue which has been a major distraction for the Trump Administration. "Lock her up!" received a lot of support at the polls as Trump demonized Hillary Clinton, but it also unleashed a Justice Department full of Clinton supporters who made it their goal in life to "get" Donald Trump.

Sadly, the candidates who tried to address the most serious issue of our time, the national debt, were relegated to a bare minimum of media time. After all, what sounds more interesting: "Lock her up!" or "We need to depress the growth curve of our national debt?" Man bites dog wins every time!

Some voters might question the sudden and alarming tack of the Democratic presidential candidates to the extreme left. Given the rules of the road for winning the Democratic nomination, it is perfectly understandable. There is a sizable percentage of people who call

themselves Democrats who, for a variety of reasons, have failed to successfully participate in the American economy. Whether they failed to get an education or a skill, chose the wrong education or skill, are underemployed, lazy or drug-addled, they have embraced the concept of taking money from one group of people and giving that money and benefits to themselves. Hey, we all liked the Robin Hood story as kids didn't we? The detritus of the capitalist system are desperately looking for the candidate who will give them the biggest pile of free stuff and the Democratic candidates are vying for the title of socialist-in-chief.

There is another huge block of Democratic votes belonging to those who think a woman's right to choose extends to pulling a baby out of the womb and sucking its brain out. They are looking for a champion and several Democratic candidates are reaching out to them.

There are those who want to disarm the American citizenry and ignore the 2nd Amendment. They want a candidate who will not rest until the American people are at the complete mercy of a controlling government.

There are a significant number of Democrats who think the world will end 12 years from now because of global warming and want all vestiges of a carbon footprint permanently removed, regardless of the impact on our country or its economy. Democratic candidates are lining up to appeal to this nonsensical twaddle.

The ultimate winner of the Democratic nomination for president will be happy and beaming, and then will be faced with trying to convince 50%-plus-one that they really didn't mean all of that crazy garbage they spewed during the primaries. You wonder why we have so many unsolved serious problems? Look to the root of the problem. We the people.

"Ha,ha,ha,ha!"

"Aye, aye, aye, aye."

"All aboard!"

The Democrats' candidates are on board. The usual suspects are on board. The media is on board. "They're going off the rails on a crazy train!" ❖

Dunn is the former chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

Buttigieg, from page 1

leading with 32%, Bernie Sanders 23%, Kamala Harris 9%, Beto O'Rourke 8%, Elizabeth Warren 7%, Buttigieg 5%, Cory Booker 4%. Buttigieg was at 1% in mid-March and 3% last week. A Saint Anselm College Survey Center poll in New Hampshire released Wednesday had Buttigieg at 10.7%, trailing Biden at 23% and Sanders at 15.6% (and ahead of Warren).



If anything, he's made the cut with the talking heads commentariat, earning praise from New York Magazine's Andrew Sullivan to the Wall Street Journal's Gerald Seib. And he appears to be closing in on a top-third echelon in the sprawling Democratic field approaching 20 candidates.

Perhaps significantly, Buttigieg is now drawing fire from Hoosier Republicans after his "Meet The Press" and LGBT Victory Fund comments last weekend had him crossing rhetorical swords with Vice

Wednesday, April 10

Race/Topic (Click to Sort)	Poll	Results	Spread
California Democratic Primary	Quinnipiac	Biden 26, Sanders 18, Harris 17, Warren 7, Buttigieg 7, O'Rourke 4, Booker 2, Castro 2, Klobuchar 2, Yang 1, Inslee 1, Gabbard 1	Biden +8

Tuesday, April 9

Race/Topic (Click to Sort)	Poll	Results	Spread
2020 Democratic Presidential Nomination	Morning Consult	Biden 32, Sanders 23, Harris 9, O'Rourke 8, Warren 7, Booker 4, Buttigieg 5, Klobuchar 2, Gillibrand 2, Yang 1, Castro 1, Inslee 1, Hickenlooper 1	Biden +9

Monday, April 8

Race/Topic (Click to Sort)	Poll	Results	Spread
2020 Democratic Presidential Nomination	The Hill/HarrisX	Biden 36, Sanders 19, Harris 9, O'Rourke 7, Warren 6, Booker 6, Buttigieg 4, Klobuchar 2, Gillibrand 2, Yang 1, Castro 1, Inslee, Hickenlooper	Biden +17
Massachusetts Democratic Presidential Primary	Emerson	Biden 23, Sanders 26, Warren 14, Buttigieg 11, O'Rourke 8, Harris 7, Booker 2, Klobuchar 2, Yang 1, Castro 1, Gabbard 1, Delaney 1	Sanders +3

President Mike Pence. Buttigieg was asked about President Trump and God, with Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo engaging in predestination by recently saying that "God" wanted Trump to become president. Buttigieg responded, "It's something that really frustrates me because the hypocrisy is so unbelievable. Here you have somebody who not only acts in a way not consistent with anything I hear in Scripture and church, where it is about lifting up the least among us and taking care of strangers, which is another word for immigrants, and making sure you're focusing your effort on the poor. But also personally how you're supposed to conduct yourself, not chest-thumping and 'look at me,' but humbling yourself before others."

Later that morning, he described his personal struggle with his sexuality before the Victory Fund. "If me being gay was a choice, it was a choice that was made far, far above my pay grade," Buttigieg said. "And that's the thing I wish the Mike Pences of the world would understand. That if you got a problem with who I am, your problem is not with me – your quarrel, sir, is with my creator."


Hupfer responds

That brought Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer into the fray for the first time. "These attacks contradict the relationship he shared with Vice President Pence when Pence was governor of Indiana – and also fly in the face of the positive statements Vice President Pence has made about Buttigieg over the years," Hupfer said.

"Now that Buttigieg is spending more time in Washington, D.C., Iowa and New Hampshire and neglecting his day job in South Bend, it seems that some of his recent statements have become detached from reality, especially when it comes to Vice President Mike Pence. After years of maintaining a positive, working relationship with Vice President Pence, Buttigieg has decided that it's now more politically expedient for him to drag that relationship through the mud with personal attacks. As Hoosiers, we know that's wrong."

Hupfer added that prior to becoming a potential presidential contender, Buttigieg spoke for years on the need for more civility in politics. "These unhinged, mean-spirited attacks from Buttigieg on Vice President Pence are a complete reversal from the relationship they shared while they both held public office in Indiana," Hupfer said.

Alyssa Farah, spokeswoman for Vice President Pence, tweeted on Tuesday, "Since some are asking: The last time we recall Pence even mentioned @PeteButtigieg was in 2015, after news that Pete came out, Pence said: 'I hold Mayor Buttigieg in the highest personal regard. I see him as a dedicated public servant and a patriot.'"

Indiana Republicans also noted when then-Gov. Pence and Buttigieg broke ground on a major overhaul of the former Studebaker facilities in South Bend, funded largely through a state grant. Pence said at the time, "I especially want to mention to you today, particularly, South Bend, Indiana, is so blessed to have an energetic, innovative, forward-looking, creative mayor in Pete Buttigieg."

So if nothing else, Buttigieg has gotten the attention of Hoosier Republicans. The reality is that anti-Trump/Pence rhetoric will fuel Buttigieg's candidacy for a Demo-

cratic constituency.

Others on the right are taking notice as well. Conservative commentator Hugh Hewitt observed of Buttigieg on "Meet The Press", "This was another hurdle crossed for Mayor Pete. I've been following him very closely. He worries me from a Republican standpoint. I've always said Donald Trump is the very best interview in America because he holds the attention of the audience. And he remains the very best interview in America, but I think Mayor Pete may give him a run."

Fox News host Laura Ingraham observed, "As they did with Obama, the media is attempting to take a novice with limited experience and wrap him up in a warm, fuzzy personal narrative." She warned voters not to be "fooled by the carefully curated public image. The 'cool fact' that 'cool Pete' speaks seven languages doesn't change that socialism doesn't work in any of them."

Gerald Seib wrote in his WSJ column that the "Buttigieg candidacy, in short, is a sign that the political system is at an inflection point, and voters are prepared to think outside the box. 'I've bet a lot on that premise,' Mr. Buttigieg said in an interview. Put another way, as different as the two men are in most every way, Candidate Buttigieg

might not exist without the example of President Trump, who shattered expectations and all the old paradigms in 2016."

Inflection point and contrast

Andrew Sullivan describes in New York Magazine a potential showdown along the lines that Indiana mayors described to HPI last week: "Trump would be the oldest president in history at 74; Buttigieg would be the youngest at 39. Trump landed in politics via his money and celebrity after years in the limelight; Buttigieg is the mayor of a midsize midwestern town, unknown until a few weeks ago. Trump is a pathological, malevolent narcissist from New York, breaking all sorts of norms. Buttigieg is a modest, reasonable pragmatist, and a near parody of normality. Trump thrives on a retro heterosexual persona; Buttigieg appears to be a rather conservative, married homosexual. Trump is a coward and draft dodger; Buttigieg served his country. Trump does not read; Buttigieg does. Trump's genius is demonic demagoguery. Buttigieg's gig is careful reasoning. Trump is a pagan; Buttigieg is a Christian. Trump vandalizes government; Buttigieg nurtures it.

"To put it simply," Sullivan adds, "Mayor Pete

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seems almost designed to expose everything that makes the country tired of Trump.”

It underscores what Purdue President Mitch Daniels told HPI late last year, that Americans have a tendency to go in a completely opposite direction from one election cycle to the next.

Age and socialism

And that concept is what makes 2 p.m. Sunday in South Bend a potentially significant milestone in the 2020 presidential race. Many Democrats are hearing that their nominee will really matter if they want to end Trump’s political career, particularly if they want to rebound in rural America.

Sen. Sanders’ socialist agenda, built on his Wednesday proposal of a robust “Medicare for All” campaign cornerstone, would give President Trump his ideal matchup. Sanders’ \$18 million first quarter haul means he will be a force in Iowa, New Hampshire and then California on Super Tuesday. That’s the state where Buttigieg or Sen. Kamala Harris might represent a retaining wall against a potential barrel-roll into socialism.

Biden is the current polling frontrunner and along with Sanders sets up the critical JFK-inspired generational contrast with Mayor Pete.

Washington Examiner columnist Byron York explains, “Voters are clearly open to older candidates. President Trump, born June 14, 1946, is the oldest president ever to take office, 70 years old on inauguration day, a few months older than Reagan when he took power. And of course, Trump defeated Hillary Clinton, born Oct. 26, 1947, who, had she won, would have been the same age as Reagan, 69, upon taking office. Americans elect a president with the understanding that he or she might serve eight years. If that were the case with a President Sanders, he would be 87 years old on leaving office, and a President Biden would be 86.

“There’s no doubt both are vigorous men,” York adds. “But having a president pushing 90 would be a new experience in American politics. According to actuarial tables maintained by the Social Security Administration, the life expectancy of a 70-year-old man is 14.30 years, enough time to serve two terms and move on to physical decline. The life expectancy of a 78-year-old man is 9.33 years, enough to last two terms and not a lot more. The life expectancy of a 79-year-old man is 8.77 years, barely enough to make it out of the White House.”

Beyond generational and religious contrasts, Buttigieg will use his South Bend backdrop Sunday to highlight

his experience. Perhaps the question asked most often to this point is whether the mayor of a 100,000-population city is capable of handling the demands of the presidency.

Buttigieg made clear Sunday morning that South Bend will become a campaign metaphor. “There’s the sense we’ve really changed the story for our city,” Buttigieg told moderator Chuck Todd. “I think that’s something the country needs to hear because you’ve got a president who’s telling anybody from a community like mine, be it an industrial community or a rural community where people (are) growing up, means getting this message that success means you have to get out.

“He’s telling us the greatness is in the past; we’ve got to stop the clock and turn it back,” Buttigieg said of Trump and his campaign slogan “Make America Great Again.” The mayor added, “I’m out there making the case that South Bend is living proof that good politics is not one based on the word ‘again.’”

“There’s so much work to do in a community,” Buttigieg said, describing his city. “People know it’s home to Notre Dame. They might assume it’s a wealthy, homogenous college town. We’re a city that was devastated by

the loss of industry, especially when the auto factories left in the 1960s.” That was a reference to the 1963 collapse of Studebaker and the loss of companies like South Bend Troy, South Bend Watch, South Bend Lathe Works, Allied-Signal and more job loss at Bendix and Honeywell.

“When I took office there were arguments as to whether we were a dying city,” Buttigieg said. “Our poverty rate is too high, but it’s down. We’ve cut unemployment by more than half and we’ve been able to change the trajectory of the city to where we’re growing in terms of population and in investment we haven’t seen in a generation. It’s not like all of our problems are solved.”

Buttigieg is preparing for a contrast not only with 70-something Democratic frontrunners Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders, but President Trump, who won Indiana with a 19% plurality in 2016. Todd asked the mayor, “Are you a capitalist?” after Trump has invoked his opposition to “socialism” that began with his State of the Union address last winter.

Buttigieg responded, “Sure. America is a capitalist society, but it’s got to be democratic capitalism and that part is really important. It’s slipping away from us. When capitalism comes into tension with democracy, which is more important? I believe democracy is more important. When you have capitalism capturing democracy, when you have a regulatory capture where powerful corporations are able to arrange the rules to their benefit, that’s not real capitalism. If you want to see what happens with



Mayor Buttigieg makes a fundraising pitch at Barnes & Thornburg in South Bend this week. (HPI Photo by Shaw Friedman)

capitalism without democracy, you can see it very clearly in Russia. It turns into crony capitalism and that turns into oligarchy.

"I know the temptation especially from the commentariat is to align everybody as dots on a spectrum," Buttigieg said of his potential electability. "That's not how most voters think. Think of the number of voters math-

ematically in St. Joseph County, Indiana, who must have voted for Obama and Trump and Mike Pence and me. There's a lot more to this than an ideological analysis, especially with the ideology in our country so scrambled, having a president who doesn't even have an ideology, just a style, undertaking a hostile takeover of the Republican Party." ❖

Taking seriously Buttigieg's candidacy

By SHAW R. FRIEDMAN

LaPORTE — I have to give credit where credit is due – my daughter Margaux – who bought me Mayor Pete's book and asked me why I hadn't yet gone "all in" for his campaign. She and her Millennial buddies had taken a shine to Pete as a potential candidate for president some time ago after reading "Shortest Way Home."



I was one of Pete's earliest donors to his state treasurer campaign in 2010 and have long respected his basic decency and integrity. I've admired his solid work as mayor and have always been a fan, even though I might

occasionally disagree with his decision-making, such as the fact we're on opposite sides of the 2019 South Bend mayor's race – Pete siding with his longtime friend and city department head James Mueller, while I and many others in politics and labor in our area are supporting former Democratic county chairman Jason Critchlow, widely viewed as one of the top two or three county chairs in the state for his success at party-building and inclusion.

Candidly, you can color me as someone, like many other veterans of Indiana politics, who was somewhat skeptical when Pete first announced his exploratory committee for president, figuring it might be a tad too ambitious, surprised as we were that he wasn't angling for a cabinet position with one of the early frontrunners.

Yet in the months since forming that exploratory committee, with the publication of this book and his incredible success at reaching such a diverse audience hungry for authenticity and decency, I've been incredibly proud of the reach and appeal that my friend has achieved and have come to realize this: Pete can go the distance.

Anyone reading "Shortest Way Home" cannot come away with anything but a great home-state pride in our area having produced such an eloquent, compassionate and thoughtful representative of a new generation eager for change and reform.

I've gotten calls from friends and family on both coasts and in between. I must tell you there is a great satisfaction as a native Hoosier in having our state viewed through a different lens than the state that produced a Mike Pence or a RFRA when folks consider a Mayor Pete; it's a lens that has folks looking at Indiana a bit differently when seeing someone like Pete Buttigieg on the national stage.

The picture he paints of himself in his book is so endearing, both for its humor and humility as much as for the insights it gives on the man himself. As New York Times columnist David Brooks put so well in a recent column, so many Democrats are "sick of the moral melodrama. They just want a person who is more about governing than virtue-signaling, more about friendliness and basic decency than media circus and rhetorical war. Buttigieg's secret is that he transcends many of the tensions that run through our society in a way that makes all sides feel comfortable."

Pete has an extraordinary intellect and a capacity to absorb complex policy issues, but then to convey them in understandable terms that regular folks can relate to. He is comfortable with his faith and is also defiantly proud of his modest roots in his beloved South Bend.

Pete Buttigieg and his long-time campaign manager, Mike Schmuhl, are as grounded and as down to earth as one can imagine. They both satisfy, in a very authentic and real fashion, the hunger for a campaign that is built on policy ideas, effective governing and decency.

It was widely respected Rep. Adam Schiff of California who put it best in an interview with the Los Angeles Blade this week when he stated of Mayor Pete that it "just goes to show you that the country is filled with great people and talent who have a positive vision – that this sort of dark cloud that has descended on Washington isn't representative of what's best in the country." Said Schiff, "Mayor Pete is one of those great illustrations of what's right in America."

Yes, Margaux – I'm all in. There is a boldness, an assertiveness, a fresh vision in Pete's Buttigieg's candidacy that addresses the anxieties and partisan anger of our era. Mayor Pete is exactly what our country needs and deserves right about now. ❖

Shaw Friedman is former legal counsel for the Indiana Democratic Party and a longtime HPI contributor.

Gauging Mayor Pete's presidential boomlet

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – The Buttigieg Boomlet continues. Here are five significant things about the explosion in national attention for South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg as he seeks the Democratic presidential nomination.



1. Mayor Pete now gets more space in the New York Times — lengthy articles from all around the country, frequent favorable columns, big photos — than in the South Bend Tribune. This doesn't mean his hometown paper neglects him – not at all. But the definition of a national political boomlet includes lots of attention in the national news media.

The Times, with its size and resources, competes with the rest of the national news operations to cover the Buttigieg Boomlet. And the coverage and analysis add to the boomlet. For example, columnist David Brooks writes: "Pete Buttigieg has some kind of magic right now." He notes the mayor's surprising showing in polls, book sales and fundraising.

2. Buttigieg has raised enough money to collect a lot more money for his presidential bid. His report of raising over \$7 million means he will attract the attention of more potential donors and can afford more fundraising efforts. He reported 158,550 donors, far more than enough to qualify for the first Democratic debates. He also qualifies with poll results, including third place in a poll of likely participants in the Iowa Democratic caucuses.

Money isn't everything. The candidate with the most funding doesn't always win. But a healthy level of funding is needed in a presidential campaign for staff, travel, organizing and eventually advertising in multiple states. Buttigieg has reached a healthy level – for now. The necessary level keeps expanding as a campaign goes on and on from early tests in Iowa and New Hampshire to subsequent presidential primaries in state after state. Well, it goes on as long as expectations are met.

3. A big winner already in the Buttigieg Boomlet is the South Bend area. Some cities, states and regions spend millions on advertising to promote tourism and economic development and proclaim their site as a good place to live, to work, to invest. The Chamber of

Commerce couldn't begin to buy all the positive publicity for the area generated by the Buttigieg campaign and promotion of his best-selling book, "Shortest Way Home."

Everywhere he goes — book signings, TV appearances, newspaper interviews, campaign events — Buttigieg tells of South Bend, a city once described as dying, bouncing back with new developments, an end of population decline and a positive spirit to replace decades of can't-do doldrums after the Studebaker automotive demise.

Buttigieg neither claims nor deserves total credit for resurgence of his Rust Belt city. But shaking off the rust mentality is real and due in no small measure to Buttigieg.

4. Despite initial skepticism about whether a presidential campaign by a 37-year-old mayor of South Bend would be taken seriously, Buttigieg has proved that his candidacy — to be declared officially on Palm Sunday — was no mistake.

When I wrote last July that he should run for president, the response was mixed. Substantial in the mix was the view that I was nuts to suggest it and that Buttigieg would be nuts to try so soon for president.


Whether I'm nuts is a matter for debate. But it's clear that Buttigieg made the right decision. He had a message first coming to national attention as he won by losing in his impressive quest to become Democratic national chairman. So why not take a message of paying attention to concerns of folks in Middle America to those folks and beyond?

5. Buttigieg remains a long shot. Turning a boomlet into a boom throughout the 2020 Democratic primaries will be tough. Probable? Not yet. Impossible? Well, once it seemed impossible that Donald Trump could be president. ❖

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?

Mayoral roundup includes abortion, probes and collapse

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Mayoral primaries are less than a month away and this past week brought us a county investigation, a candidate suspending her campaign and then resigning from office, along with debates on abortion and the pace of development.



The biggest change this past week came in Bloomington, where Monroe County Commissioner Amanda Barge suspended

her challenge to first-term Mayor John Hamilton over sexual harassment allegations. In Carmel, the Hamilton County Election Board will explore an alleged bribery scheme involving Mayor Jim Brainard. And in Fort Wayne, while there is no longer an abortion clinic operating in the city, that issue is coming to the fore between Councilman John Crawford and businessman Tim Smith.

Between now and the May 7 primary, the HPI Horse Race will profile the most competitive primary races. Those include big Democratic showdowns in South Bend, East Chicago, Kokomo, and Gary, as well as Republican races in Carmel, Fort Wayne and Anderson.

Here are some mayoral primary updates:

Bloomington: Barge crash n' burn

There's usually at least one crash n' burn in the mayoral cycle and it may have occurred here. Monroe County Commissioner Amanda Barge was challenging first-term Mayor John Hamilton, until the Indiana Daily Student reported she sexually harassed a male county contractor. Late last month after denying the allegations, she abruptly suspended her campaign, though she remains on the ballot. Monroe County Democrats called on her to resign and on Tuesday, she did. In a statement Wednesday, Barge wished incumbent John Hamilton luck and said she would not accept the nomination if she wins in May. "What's best for me, and for Bloomington, is to focus on healing and moving on," Barge said. There is no Republican nominee, but Nile Arena has filed as an independent. Arena has no political experience but has seen his fair share of govern-



Former Monroe County Commissioner Amanda Barge and Carmel Mayor Jim Brainard.



ment meetings as a master controller at Community Access Television, which streams and records city and county government meetings among other content, according to the IDS. He said what he knows about local politics has inspired him to do more. **2015 Results:** Hamilton (D) 6,248, Turnbull (R) 1,822. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Hamilton.

Carmel: A bribery probe

Republican Mayor Jim Brainard is being challenged by Hamilton County Councilman Fred Glynn, with the Hamilton County Election Board preparing to look into allegations made by the Hamilton County Democrats about a bribe. The Carmel Current reported that Glynn was offered a bribe by the Brainard campaign on Feb. 3 to exit the race. The bribe came during a meeting involving former Glynn campaign manager Dan Hennessey, Brainard consultant Allan Sutherlin and Hamilton County GOP chair Laura Campbell.

Hamilton Democratic Chairman Joe Weingarten told IBJ he filed a request with the election board in order to get to the bottom of the claims, which were originally reported in a March 21 Current in Carmel article. During an election board meeting Friday morning, board member Greg Purvis, a Democrat, suggested the board look into the allegations themselves or ask the State Police to get involved. "To me, this is serious business," he said. "You're talking about either one campaign offering a bribe or the other campaign soliciting the bribe in order for possibly one of the principle candidates to drop out. That pretty fundamentally

implicates the election process and its legitimacy altogether, if it's true."

County attorney Mike Howard said the board might not have legal authority to do anything about the allegations. The IBJ's Samm Quinn reported the three-member board decided to hold a meeting next month and invite both campaigns, the GOP and the Democratic Party to talk with members about what happened during the meeting and present any evidence that might exist that supports the claims. Laken Sisko, Brainard's campaign manager, told IBJ neither she nor Brainard was at the Feb. 3 meeting so they wouldn't have any information to offer the election board. She said the campaign would never do anything unethical, but even if it considered doing so, it "defies logic" that it would offer money to a candidate it didn't view as a threat. "It's arguably one of the most absurd things that's ever been suggested," she said. "It simply didn't happen." **2015 Results:** Brainard ran unopposed. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely Brainard.

East Chicago: Aguilera presses Copeland

Mayor Anthony Copeland is opposed by John Aguilera, a former Lake County councilman and state legislator. Copeland is East Chicago's first black mayor seeking a third term, while Aguilera is seeking to become the second modern Latino mayor. Copeland's second term has been momentous due to the lead contamination sequence that forced more than a thousand people from their homes. Initially the crisis was ignored by Gov. Mike Pence, but upon taking office Gov. Eric Holcomb quickly forged a working relationship with Copeland as the two have sought to combine local, state and federal resources to confront the crisis. It is now an EPA Superfund site. According to the NWI Times, Copeland and Aguilera first faced off for mayor in the fall of 2010 at a caucus of East Chicago



Democratic precinct committee members to replace former East Chicago Mayor George Pabey following his conviction for public corruption. Copeland won. Aguilera was an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for state treasurer in 2018. In February, Aguilera survived an attempt to force him off the ballot due to residency issues, with the Lake County Election Board ruling in his favor. **2015 Results:** Copeland (D) 2,111, Santos (R) 204. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Leans Copeland.

Fishers: Fadness faces Day

Mayor Scott Fadness is facing a primary challenge from Logan Day, who charges that Fisher's first and only mayor is trying to do too much, too fast. "If we keep racing down the race track at full speed and never come in for a pit stop, we'll eventually run out of gas," Day said in a Facebook "metaphor." He added, "I believe in controlled, context-sensitive development that will allow Fishers to grow into a sustainable, holistic community which will thrive for decades to come. Many residents are very upset

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with the seemingly haphazard and spontaneous development that will likely continue under the current administration." Fadness told the IBJ he realizes change can be difficult, but said it's necessary and was underway long before he became town manager in 2011 and was elected the city's first mayor in 2015. Fadness is attempting to do what Carmel did, which is to build a new downtown, arguing that continued construction of sprawling subdivisions is unsustainable. "It's more about the culture and the people who live here," Fadness told the IBJ. "They're really family-focused, and they're hard-working. Those are the things that make Fishers Fishers. I don't believe it's a bell on a silo ... or even the train. As long as we have the courage and entrepreneurial spirit to recognize what is happening globally, innovate and adapt, we will continue to be a strong community, poised for success." **2015 Results:** Fadness (R) 3,872. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely Fadness.

Fort Wayne: GOP insider v. outsider

There hasn't been an abortion clinic operating here in the City of Churches for years, but that issue is at the crux of the Republican showdown between Councilman John Crawford and businessman Tim Smith. Dr. Crawford has long ignored the Right to Life questionnaires. The thrust of Smith's campaign is the Allen County Right to Life PAC's endorsement. Cathie Humbarger, communications director of the Allen County Right to Life PAC, said, "Tim and his family have been long-time supporters of multiple pro-life organizations throughout Allen County and Tim has shown consistency and dedication advocating for the unborn." Crawford has been up on TV since mid-March and cites accomplishments that include the building of Parkview Field and the riverfront development projects. Smith is now running TV ads. While Smith is aiming for the social conservative/evangelical voter, Crawford is seeking the more urban voter. Crawford is the insider in the race, telling voters he knows how things work in government, while Smith is the outsider. So Smith



Fort Wayne Republican mayoral candidate is running a campaign aimed at Right to Life supporters.

is running on 2016 and 2018 models, where having a title in front of your name in the GOP presidential race was a liability, with businessmen Donald Trump and Mike Braun winning presidential and senatorial races. The danger is, of course, running on the last cycle. There are indicators that voters in 2019, after viewing Trump's chaotic tenure in the White House, are gravitating more toward experience. So this Fort Wayne GOP primary may be something of a bellwether, coming in a city with an isolated media market and a long history of being a corporate test market. The winner faces three-term Democratic Mayor Tom Henry, who faces non-credible primary challengers Gina Burgess and perennial candidate Tommy Schrader. **2015 Results:** Henry (D) 23,769, Harper (R) 18,068. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

Gary: Prince eyes upset

Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson is facing an intense challenge from Lake County Auditor Jerome Prince, along with Councilwoman LaVetta Sparks-Wade and six others. The NWI Times endorsed Prince: "In a field of nine candidates, only three appear to be serious contenders for the 2019 Democratic primary nomination in May. Of those three — incumbent Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson and challengers Jerome Prince and LaVetta Sparks-Wade — Prince is the candidate best poised for the top-down change the struggling city needs. A look at Gary's crumbling neighborhoods, unacceptably high crime rates and shambles of municipal finances should be enough to convince any Gary voter a change is needed at the top. Prince is an accomplished public servant who brings the freshness the entire



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Region should get behind.” The Times has also criticized Freeman-Wilson for heading the National League of Cities at a time when Gary faces many financial, crime and infrastructure issues. The city is going through a homicide spate, with 17 people murdered thus far in 2019. Sparks-Wade was also in the news after she was assaulted by former Lake County Councilman Jamal Washington. **2015 Results:** Freeman-Wilson (D) 7,190, Wright (I) 228, Tarver (I) 1,581, Campbell (I) 212, Syron Smith (I) 423, Charles Smith (I) 472. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Top-sup.

Indianapolis: In general election footing

Mayor Joe Hogsett faces a primary challenge from Denise Hatch, and while he should easily be renominated, it has been a brutal week for the first-term incumbent. Last weekend Indianapolis was in the midst of a homicide spree, with seven people being killed. Hogsett is also under attack for street conditions. A “Pot Hole Joe” video launched by Republican State Sen. Jim Merritt has gone viral on the internet. Merritt is expected to defeat Felipe Rios and Christopher Moore in the GOP primary. But this race is already on a general election footing. Hogsett launched

the Crime Gun Intelligence Center, which is an embrace of the technology-led precision policing model. The CGIC allows IMPD and its partners to more effectively target



the most violent offenders and their sources of guns. “This weekend, we saw the senseless devastation crime guns have on our community,” said Hogsett. “And so today, we add another tool to our violence reduction toolkit. By focusing on violent individuals, rather than on the areas they victimize, we more effectively hold accountable those who are disproportionately responsible for gun crime in our city.” Merritt reacted to the homicide spree, saying, “It is with deep sympathy that I offer my condolences to the families and friends of the four people who were killed by senseless violence overnight, as well as to those who were wounded and their loved ones. It’s difficult to know

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what to say at times like these. There's nothing rational about brutal acts of violence." On the street conditions, Merritt toured the city with CBS4 anchor Bob Donaldson and said, "I mean look at that, cones that are in the potholes themselves, so you avoid them ... in the potholes! It does make me mad, because it could have been avoided. We're really having a difficult time because there was no preventive maintenance, we just didn't prepare for this." On another front, Merritt voted for SB198, the hate crimes bill that was signed into law without the "list." Merritt explained, "With RFRA and with hate crimes, you evolve and I don't think people mind when you change your mind, not flip-flop but actually understand where people are coming from for it. I was disappointed that Mayor Hogsett and his administration chose not to testify in favor of this very important bill." **2015 Results:** Hogsett (D) 92,830, Brewer (R) 56,661, Carson (I) 221. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Hogsett, Safe Merritt.

South Bend: Three-way Dem showdown

There are nine Democratic candidates for South Bend mayor seeking to replace Mayor Pete Buttigieg, who endorsed James Mueller, the executive director of the city's Department of Community Investment. But this race appears to be coming down to three candidates: Mueller, former St. Joseph County Democratic chairman Jason Critchlow, and former deputy mayor and congressional nominee Lynn Coleman. Critchlow is the first up on TV, and has been endorsed by State Reps. Ryan Dvorak and Pat Bauer, and former mayor Roger Parent. Critchlow also has the FOP and several major union endorsements. His tenure as county chair has allowed him to cash in some IOUs. Mueller is a high school friend of Buttigieg who came back to South Bend in 2015 to be Buttigieg's chief of staff after getting a PhD in oceanography and working for a Washington senator on energy issues. Mueller has a reputation for being very smart, but lacks charisma. His slogan is "Building On Our Progress." In other words, if you like the job Mayor Pete has done, he'll keep it going. Coleman is African-American and a retired cop and was special assistant to Mayor Steve Luecke, akin to a deputy



mayor role. He was highly visible in the community in that job. He's since worked for Memorial Hospital's community outreach program. A South Bend Tribune reporter who interviewed Coleman for a profile piece said they must have been interrupted 25 times during their interview by people walking by in the hospital and saying "hello" to Coleman. Who wins? If this race becomes a referendum on Buttigieg, who has not actively campaigned for Mueller beyond an initial endorsement, he could win. If Critchlow's IOUs and endorsements are indicative of support, he could win. Or if Critchlow and Mueller split the white vote and Coleman can gin-up black turnout, he has a path. **2015 Results:** Buttigieg (D) 8,515, Jones (R) 2,074. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Leans Critchlow.

Terre Haute: Nasser clear Dem favorite

Councilman Karrum Nasser is a clear Democratic primary favorite over Robert "Superman" Hamilton and David "Dots" Conder. Funny nicknames on the ballot usually reveal a ruse. Mayor Duke Bennett is seeking an unprecedented fourth term for a Republican. Former city engineer Pat Goodwin is running as an independent. The dynamics of a fall matchup could be taking shape this month as Mayor Bennett is seeking the relocation of one of the Gary casinos to his city. **2015 Results:** Bennett (R) 4,285, Bird (D) 3,972. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Nasser.

Kokomo: Libertarian joins race

Libertarian Michael Virgin, a political newcomer who moved to Kokomo in 2016, has joined the race to become the city's next mayor. Virgin, who beat out one challenger in late March to be nominated by the Libertarian Party of Indiana during its annual conference, will appear on November's general election ballot (Myers, [Kokomo Tribune](#)). His candidacy will give city voters a choice outside the local Democratic and Republican parties in the fall election. The two parties will decide their general election candidates during primary contests on May 7. Virgin joins Democratic hopefuls Kevin Summers and Abbie Smith, and Republican candidates Tyler Moore and Richard Stout, on the list of people seeking the office held for the last 11-plus years by Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight. ❖



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Peril on the border

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — The Mexican frontier can be a dangerous place for an American, be they from norte or central. In December 1913 the famed Hoosier-born journalist Ambrose Bierce headed to El Paso to check out the Mexican Revolution. In a Dec. 26 letter to Blanche Partington, Bierce closed his final known writing by saying, "As to me, I leave here tomorrow for an unknown destination."



He was never seen or heard from again, perhaps a victim of the encroaching Pancho Villa following the Battle of Tierra Blanca.

President Trump will not vanish as Bierce did, but the Mexican border which three years ago gave him an unrelenting populist opportunity that helped forge his epic election upset, now poses great, great

peril. He has induced the promised chaos to the equation that earned him legions of supporters. But his stirring foment and threats to cut off aid to some of the poorest nations on Earth has stoked up a diaspora that is unleashing some of the most compelling moral questions of this era.

In his famed "Devil's Dictionary" (and, full disclosure here, I was once president of the Ambrose Bierce Society of Cynics of America, or as it was known, ABSCAM) Bierce defines: "Immigrant, n. An unenlightened person who thinks one country better than another." And "Presidency, n., The greased pig in the field game of American politics."

On Monday, Trump dismissed Homeland Security Sec. Kirstjen Nielsen, beginning a purge that has left DHS without permanent heads of FEMA, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as the Secret Service. This elevates Stephen Miller, the man who once introduced Trump to MAGA rallies across the nation and who has emerged as his hardline immigration enforcer, as the new border honcho. Axios reports that Trump told Miller recently, "You're in charge."

This is where "I, alone, can fix it" intersects with Miller's infamous February 2017 quote, "The media and the whole world will soon see as we begin to take further actions, that the powers of the president to protect our country are very substantial and will not be questioned."

On April 19, 2018, the strategy of separating immigrant children from their families began, and by the time it ended that June, close to 2,000 children were swept

away from their parents. Many have yet to be reunited. The idea professed by then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions was that such separations would staunch the immigration tide. Or as Trump explained, "When you prosecute the parents for coming in illegally, which should happen, you have to take the children away ... when people come up, they have to know they can't get in."

By late June, Trump caved, signing an executive order ending the separations with Nielsen and Vice President Mike Pence looking on. "I didn't like the sight or the feeling of families being separated," Trump said. "I think anybody with a heart would feel strongly about it. We don't like to see families separated."

In fact, the steady stream of 2018 has turned into the torrent of this year. Why? Because Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador are corrupt, gang-riddled failed states, as former Indiana GOP Chairman Jeff Cardwell will attest. Trump's solution is to cut off aid to service organizations in those tormented nations, which will only magnify the danger and send more mothers and children fleeing north.

As Nielsen was cleaning out her desk, the word was that Trump wanted to restart the immigrant family separations. The Wall Street Journal reported: "Even as aides have cautioned him that restoring the policy would be a public-relations disaster and operationally difficult, the president has continued to call for its reinstatement. 'He has been pushing for it since the day he stopped it,' the administration official said. By Tuesday, there was a head-snapping backtrack, with Trump saying the family separations would not be restarted." But ... stay tuned.

From an optics standpoint, the family separations have been a disaster, a fiasco. While Trump wore it like a badge of honor leading up to the 2018 mid-terms as his supporters continued to chant "Build that wall," the political reality is that Democrats gained 40 seats in the House, including many in the border states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

It had some of the most ardent Trump supporters squirming. "It's disgraceful, and it's terrible to see families ripped apart and I don't support that one bit," the Rev. Franklin Graham, a notable ally of President Trump's and son of the prominent evangelist Billy Graham, said on the Christian Broadcasting Network last June.

There were Republican critics, too, though none from Indiana. U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse observed, "The choice before the American people does not have to be 'wicked versus foolish.' This is wrong. Americans do not take children hostage, period." Maine Sen. Susan Collins called the separations "inconsistent with our American values."

But here we are, back at the proverbial definition of insanity. Should Stephen Miller lead the charge to put immigrant kids back in cages, the political ramifications could be immense.

It's already begun, with South Bend Mayor Pete



Buttigieg challenging the Trump/Pence morality on NBC's "Meet The Press" last Sunday. "It's something that really frustrates me because the hypocrisy is so unbelievable," Buttigieg said. "Here you have somebody who not only acts in a way not consistent with anything I hear in Scripture and church, where it is about lifting up the least among us and taking care of strangers, which is another word for immigrants, and making sure you're focusing your effort on the poor. But also personally how you're supposed to conduct yourself, not chest-thumping and 'look at me,' but humbling yourself before others."

This is not to say Democrats are on particularly high ground. Their solutions range from sanctuary cities and open borders to a deal for the Dreamers (remember, late last fall Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer offered \$25 billion for Trump's wall in exchange for a DACA deal).

Conservative New York Times columnist Ross Douthat explains that Trump is in a policy cul-de-sac, noting that the president doesn't "have the capacity to devise a more effective response, it seems, since any policy solu-

tion would require two negotiations. First, negotiation with Congress, to change asylum law to override the court decisions currently tying up the Trump White House's attempts at deterrence, like the attempt to make Central American asylum petitioners wait out the process in Mexico. Second, negotiation with the Mexican government, to get more help discouraging migration on its side of the border. For a different president these tasks would be challenging; for Trump, they seem impossible."

It would be ironic if the issue Trump ignited to ascend to the pinnacle of American politics becomes the one that brings him down, with those prospects exponentially improved if Democrats nominate a mainstream standard-bearer (which is no sure thing). The president who was supposed to have mastered the art of the deal is now flailing at a policy hemorrhage.

It seems appropriate to give Ambrose Bierce the final word here: "Hypocrite, n. One who, professing virtues that he does not respect, secures the advantage of seeming to be what he despises." ❖

Rezoning history

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana Landmarks does a commendable job of historic preservation. They recognize the structures worth restoring because of certain events or persons of the past or for their architectural significance.

Saving neighborhoods, however, by zoning them with strict standards designed to keep them looking as they did in some bygone day is contrary to good sense. Yes, others have different values and I'm supposed to respect them. It doesn't make it easier for me or them when we insist the government be used to enforce our values.



Not every Indiana courthouse is a gem worthy of eternal existence. Just because we grew up with it doesn't mean succeeding generations should be burdened with our nostalgia. Public buildings

constructed before 1920 were, in most cases, more charming than those erected in the past 100 years. But charm alone cannot accommodate the present or the future.

The same can be said of most town squares. Let a horrific natural event (tornado, flood, whatever) rip through downtown and immediately we seek funding to rebuild. Not to redesign, but to rebuild, to replicate what met the needs of yesterday.

Entire neighborhoods are designated "historic" with existing land owners in control, monitoring every design for exterior modification. It protects neighboring property owners from devaluation of their land and struc-

tures by denying the property rights of others.

The presumption is future buyers want to locate in places offering limited structural diversity. The extreme examples of this are the city and suburban developments where one set of dwellings looks just like all of its neighbors. We know them well. Many of us expect to live in such places as we struggle with raising families or surrender individuality with advancing age. Presumably, developers have lower costs by limiting diversity of styles and materials. But to require residents to maintain initial uniformity, because it makes lawn mowing or roofing less costly, seems to me a violation of our essential humanity.

This not something new. I recall the owner of the apartment house where we lived in my childhood had an authorized pallet of colors for repainting our rooms. Had my parents preferred a non-conforming tint of the basic choices, it would not have been allowed.

Some old neighborhoods have the advantage of being old. They offer diversity to the extent the initial developers, a homeowners' association, or some governmental entity did not limit exterior changes, plantings, painting, fencing and other expressions of individual preferences.

Indianapolis demolished its old, over-the-top, wedding cake courthouse. They keep seeking a reuse for the old, less ornate city hall. To modernize the home for local government, a featureless slab was built. Now there is a movement afoot to immortalize this prosaic, mid-20th century, utilitarian structure.

Knowledge of history is valuable. But, tell me, why is the physical past not allowed to pass? ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at mortonj-marcus@yahoo.com. Follow his views and those of John Guy on "Who gets what?" wherever podcasts are available or atmortonjohn.libsyn.com ❖

Pulling \$100 million rabbits (and licenses) out of Bullwinkle's hat

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Remember those cartoons of yore when Bullwinkle tells Rocky he's going to pull a rabbit out of his hat? Except, sometimes instead of a rabbit, Bullwinkle ends up pulling out a scary creature.



House Ways & Means Co-Chairman Todd Huston appears to be this session's Bullwinkle. Out of the blue last month he came up with a \$100

million relocation fee to move one of the Gary casinos to Terre Haute. And then after a committee hearing this week, it became \$50 million.

A either level, none of this was on the table when Spectacle began talks to purchase the two Gary casinos and in subsequent talks with the state to move one of them south.

Huston found something else in his top hat: A potential 13th casino license when Huston proposed merging the two Gary licenses into one, then setting up a competitive bidding process for a Gary casino to move to Terre Haute. That could constitute an equally scary "expansion of gaming."

As Dan Carden of the NWI Times reported: "Ongoing, that's a positive for the state and the local community, but at the expense of the operator," Huston said. "We felt like we needed to acknowledge that, and that's being acknowledged in the reduction from \$100 million to \$50 million." The money would have to be paid to the state's general fund in two equal installments: \$25 million when the relocation is approved by the Indiana Gaming Commission; and the second \$25 million exactly one year later. Spectacle also still would be required to surrender the second Gary gaming license, without compensation, as a condition of receiving state approval to move off Lake Michigan. "We've separated the Terre Haute discussion from the Spectacle discussion," Huston said. "If the operator in Gary wants to move, that's their decision based upon the parameters that we provide within the legislation."

The IBJ reported that if Spectacle does proceed with the new Gary casino, the second license would be surrendered to the state and essentially dormant. Any future use of that license would require approval from the Indiana General Assembly.



Gov. Eric Holcomb seemed to suggest in an Indianapolis Star interview that moving a casino should occur within the existing footprint. "I'll need to take a deep dive into all the details, because of how the conversation has expanded and what is all included," Holcomb said. "I'll be doing that in the coming days, now that it is hot off the presses at the 11th hour. Every action has a greater reaction somewhere else. We need to be very mindful of that. I'm not opposed to looking at new ways with existing license, but this bill is far beyond that. I need to do a lot more digging before I weigh in."

Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett was also surprised at what came out of Bullwinkle's hat. "That just seemed very exorbitant because that's \$100 million for Gary and whoever gets the license in Terre Haute it's a \$50 million fee," Bennett told Indiana Public Media's Joe Hren. "And Spectacle has to give up their license in Gary. So wow, that's a big change to the bill. I still feel good about it moving forward. My guess most of this will get worked through a conference committee once it gets through the house."

Asked if it could be a deal-breaker, Bennett added, "It could be, because they just purchased those two licenses, did not know anything about these fees, and you add that on top of their initial investment plus what they're going to have to do to build the new casinos, they're talking about spending \$450 million to build two new casinos. It's a significant amount of money. The state will benefit greatly, and from the business perspective casinos are different anyway because the state controls that business, but you have people that want to invest."

The bigger picture, of course, is that the original proposal was to help cash-strapped Gary set up a new intermodal port in Buffington Harbor by moving the casinos, and cash-strapped Terre Haute would get a casino. If Spectacle were to just walk away, perhaps the top hat will end up filled with eggs.

Senate set to act on budget

Indiana Senate Republicans are set to advance a state budget plan that will show whether they've found more money to boost school funding ([AP](#)). The Senate Appropriations Committee is scheduled to vote Thursday on sending its version of a proposed two-year budget to the Republican-dominated Senate. School funding would increase by just over 2% each of the next two years under a proposal approved in February by the Indiana House. Gov. Eric Holcomb and GOP legislative leaders have touted the importance of addressing Indiana's lagging teacher salaries, but education advocacy groups estimate a 9% funding increase is needed to boost average teacher pay to the midpoint of Indiana's neighboring states.

Holcomb signs bills

Gov. Eric Holcomb signed a dozen bills Wednesday.

day (WTHR-TV). Two of them created study committees to look into a couple of issues concerning Hoosiers: prescription drug pricing and reckless homicides. Another law requires the State Department of Health to set a list of best practices for schools to follow when it comes to radon testing. Here are all the legislation Holcomb signed,

SB 198 - Makes substance abuse on penal or juvenile facility property an enhancing circumstance.

HB 1029 - Assigns committee to study issues consumers face regarding prescription drug pricing, access and costs.

HB 1051 - Assigns a study committee to look into reckless homicide.

HB 1053 - Specifies new elements for a new design of the disabled Hoosier veteran license plate.

HB 1057 - Allows a Vanderburgh County circuit court judge to appoint an additional magistrate.

HB 1080 - Makes a correction concerning the deprivation of earned good time credit for inmates placed in a community corrections program.

SB 004 - Establishes storm water management task force to study storm water management systems.

SB 191 - Specifies "person" includes nonprofits for purposes of the historic preservation and rehabilitation grant program.

SB 271 - Eliminates state requirement that manufacturers must include certain information on an e-liquid container.

SB 324 - Requires BMV to design a parking placard designating a person who has been deemed eligible to receive a disabled Hoosier veteran plate.

SB 375 - Notes after June 30, 2019, local government may not enact an ordinance requiring a solid waste hauler to collect solid waste management fees.

SB 545 - Requires executive director of Indiana public retirement system and the trustee of the Indiana state police pension to report to the committee overseeing stress tests or sensitivity analyses.

SB 632 - Requires ISDH to distribute best practices for managing indoor air quality at schools.

Payday lending bill moves in House panel

A controversial lending bill that narrowly passed out of the Senate is on its way to the House floor with a few changes. The amendments approved in committee Tuesday were not released until an hour prior to the meeting (Horton, [Indiana Public Media](#)). The House Financial Institutions Committee took no public comment on the bill, which changes rules for high-interest, short-term loans. One of the amendments lowers the interest rate cap for loans of less than \$3,000 to meet the state's 72% rule. And while the cap was lowered to 167% on loans requiring no collateral, that number is still well above what's outlined in existing law. Rep. Matt Lehman (R-Berne) contends these new loan options are needed. "All this bill does is now to create a middle product," said Lehman. The House committee voted along party lines, 7-3.

Senate changes animal cruelty bill

Senate lawmakers this week approved legislation that aims to sharpen state law surrounding animal cruelty. But the measure doesn't go as far as its author originally wanted (Smith, [Indiana Public Media](#)). The original legislation created broader definitions of animal cruelty and increased the criminal penalties for abusing animals. Rep. Ryan Hatfield (D-Evansville) says it's important to give law enforcement the tools they need to go after animal abusers. "What we know about animal crimes, without a doubt – people who abuse animals, abuse people and they abuse children," Hatfield says. But Senate lawmakers worried that the increased penalties weren't proportional to crimes against people, so they stripped out those provisions.

Projectiles can be used in teacher training

A new amendment approved by lawmakers Wednesday would allow projectiles to be used during school active shooter training, if employees consent in writing beforehand. The amendment is part of a bill that funds teacher firearm training (Barrett, [Indiana Public Media](#)). The proposed change comes in response to an incident at an elementary school in Monticello, Indiana earlier this year, when teachers were injured after being shot with metal pellets. Sen. Jeff Raatz (R-Richmond) proposed the amendment to allow for projectiles. He says it should be an option for this type of training. "It's got to do with reality, and making sure they experience the emotions and the adrenaline and everything that happens during the training, but it's not required," Raatz says. Raatz says training participants at the Monticello school were notified beforehand about the use of metal pellets. This contradicts what one teacher from the school told WFYI, that employees were unaware they would be shot during the training. Both bills move now to the full Senate.

Bill increases workplace fines

When Samantha Hogue-Figgs' daughter died in a factory accident last year, the company received only a \$6,300 fine. That's why she traveled to the Statehouse on her birthday Wednesday to watch the Indiana Legislature give final approval to a bill stiffening penalties for businesses in workplace deaths (Kelly, [Fort Wayne Journal Gazette](#)). Rep. Martin Carbaugh, R-Fort Wayne, brought House Bill 1341 to reform how Indiana addresses negligence by an employer that contributes to an on-the-job fatality. "It's shocking to me that we have even one company removing vital safety features from a piece of equipment," Carbaugh said. "This tragedy resulted with the death of a young, vibrant woman and could have easily been avoided. That's the really frustrating part of all of this." HB 1341 increases the penalty for an employer that knowingly violates safety code that results in an employee's death. The new maximum penalty would be \$132,598, nearly double the current \$70,000 standard. The House voted 94-0, which now goes to Gov. Holcomb. ❖

10,000 more Hoosiers need to go to college

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – Over spring break, I read a Bryan Caplan’s very popular book, *The Case Against Higher Education*. Many readers of this column might suppose I’d like this book. I tend to support smaller government, and am a frequent critic of higher education. Recall that I’m the professor who thinks tenure is mostly counterproductive to good research and teaching. While I’d strongly recommend this excellent book, the central policy prescriptions are mistaken. Worse still, they are unwisely becoming a faddish part of the education debate. Let me explain.

Caplan argues that the value of a college degree is split between actual learning and signaling to employers that you are conscientious and intelligent. He makes a very

compelling case, concluding that 80 percent of the wage benefit of a college education is signaling, and 20% actual learning. While several reviewers have tried to poke holes in his analysis, I will not. Because even if he is right, his policy prescription of eliminating public support of higher education is deeply mistaken. Here’s why.



If the learning that results a college degree is only worth

one-fifth of its total value, it is still by far the best public investments most state or local governments make. For example, the annual income gains of higher education that Caplan uses result in more than one million dollars of lifetime earnings. Here in Indiana, a college graduate earns about \$30,000 more per year than a high school graduate. If only 20% of that is due to actual learning, the result is \$6,000 per year in income. There are many other benefits as well, but on this one alone no other government program or spending priority comes even close.

While this is partly due to the generally poor benefits of much government intervention, it is worth restating that if only 20% of the gains of higher education are due to actual learning or acquired skills, it remains perhaps the premier public investment of our times. Economists have done a fine job of accounting for program benefits. The following is a partial list of public spending that using Caplan’s own figures are less economically beneficial than higher education; all transportation, including roads, rail and air, all workforce and economic development, public health, drug abuse and prevention, fire protection, parks and public lands, environmental regulation, occupational licensing and child protective services.

I think the best evidence is that after spending on

basic crime prevention, pre-K-12 nothing is as important to a state’s economy as higher education. Now, there are lots of spending priorities that are more politically popular. For example, workforce development is in vogue right now, but the overwhelming evidence from decades of research is that spending on workforce training yields no net benefit. Popular yes, effective no.

The causal effect of education on wages is clear. It is no accident that Indiana ranks 39th in income and 42nd in educational attainment. Our income ranking is now converging on our educational ranking. Those outcomes are a conscience policy choice to underemphasize higher education and to shift away from the aspirational goals that former Gov. Mitch Daniels set than a decade ago.

There are some important lessons to be gleaned from Caplan’s book. Indiana colleges should be more rigorous and ask more of students. We must be clearer about career prospects, though that probably doesn’t mean what most readers suspect. A good liberal arts education is worth a lot more than a weak professional degree. We should probably limit federal loans to tuition to end the runaway spending on college amenities.

I also think public colleges have a duty to contribute research towards the public good, focused as close to home as possible. Public universities also have a goal of expanding opportunity. I shudder to note that the bottom 25% of students academically, who are in the top income quartile, attend college at the same rate as the top 25% of kids in the bottom income quartile. Far too few high school graduates go to college, especially poorer ones and in Indiana the problem is chronic. Indiana likely needs to send 10,000 more kids to college each year and graduate more than half of them for the rest of this century.

A degree of frankness is in order. My oldest son graduates from an Indiana high school this year and is headed to college. About half of all his classmates will still be working in 2075, and fully one in five Hoosiers born this year will still be employed when this century ends. Our state is near the bottom in educational attainment, and slipping both in our income and in educational rankings. If, in this century, we want Indiana to match the national average in personal income and educational attainment, the time to act is now. ❖

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Kelly Hawes, CNHI: Casting abortion in the worst possible light is part of the strategy for folks hoping to eliminate a woman's right to choose. Take Liz Brown, an Indiana state senator who helped push through a measure limiting access to what her bill describes as "dismemberment abortions." During floor debate on the measure, the Fort Wayne Republican said this: "Today, in House Bill 1211, we are only restricting a particularly barbaric practice. We know these babies feel pain." Maybe she believes that, but here's the reality. This "barbaric practice" she described is the procedure recommended by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. It is the procedure the medical professionals deem safest, the one least likely to cause complications. She was accusing the physicians who perform these procedures of barbarism. And let's be clear. Second trimester abortions are not common. The Indiana State Department of Health reported 27 such abortions in 2017. Make no mistake. The women who undergo these procedures don't do it out of convenience. They are women like Tara Mendola, who learned when she was 28 weeks pregnant the child she was carrying had no chance of survival. Mendola recently shared her story with Boston Globe columnist Yvonne Abraham, noting she and her husband were left with no good options. "Between bad and worse," she said, "we chose bad." It's way past time politicians in Indiana and across the country began to listen to women like Mendola. She says those politicians need to understand what they're really saying to women in her situation. "You're saying you are OK with forcing a woman to continue a pregnancy with a baby that will either die or live a painful, short life filled with drastic medical intervention," she said. "I think if you haven't lived it, you can't understand what a cruel sentiment that is." During that same Senate debate, Sen. Mark Stoops, a Democrat from Bloomington, tried to reason with his colleagues. "Every time we pass one of these bills to limit abortions ... every time we step on women's rights ... because of our own moral prerogative, we're doing damage to the system, and we are basically trying to pass another unconstitutional law." His colleagues, of course, failed to listen to him, and the bill passed 38-10. At this writing, HB 1211 is awaiting the governor's signature. Assuming he signs it, the American Civil Liberties Union has promised a lawsuit. And the fight will go on. ❖



12 minutes ago. He raised more than \$7 million, which is fairly incredible for a guy who's the mayor of South Bend. And even more incredible because he barely has a campaign structure. It's hard to imagine him as a top-tier contender for the long haul, but he is the media's flavor of the week. ❖

Chad Felix Greene, The Federalist:

Both Chick-fil-A and Vice President Mike Pence demonstrate a growing trend in American Christianity to be vocally respectful of liberal social issues while privately embracing religious tradition and morality that directly affects their own lives. The controversy does not come from what Christians, as a group, do to LGBT people, but what LGBT people speculate Christians must collectively and individually think and feel about the LGBT movement as a whole. Pence is remarkably tolerant in every sense of the word, separating his personal religious views from his personal and professional relationships in a way as to not impose on anyone else. He is the ideal example of Christians coexisting in a secular society, and he has been repeatedly kind, generous, polite, and welcoming to LGBT Americans in every scenario he encounters them. There is not a single example of Pence in his professional leadership role being rude, disrespectful, or hostile towards a gay person in the years he has been vice president, governor, or a member of Congress. Remarkably, no one accuses him of doing so privately either. ❖

Marc Chase, NWI Times: How many more times will the hard-working residents of Hammond's 3rd District allow their councilman to put his worst foot forward at their expense? An answer will come one month from today in the Democratic primary election, and voters of the district, which is home to City Hall, have a viable option to replace the long-running embarrassments of Councilman Anthony Higgs. They should choose wisely when weighing Higgs' litany of epic public missteps versus a polished, vision-driven challenger in Barry Tyler Jr. They should consider these exceptional distractions: * In February 2015, Higgs sued one of his constituents, claiming a low-rent satirical video the resident created, which spoofed Higgs on Facebook, was defamation. * Higgs has sought to stifle public commentary against himself by unsuccessfully pushing for an ordinance that would have forbade criticism of council members during the public comment portions of Hammond City Council meetings. * In August 2015, Higgs filed for a protective order, accusing a previous primary opponent of stalking him. * In spring 2018, Higgs attempted to shake down lifesaving personnel of the Hammond Fire Department. Fire department paramedics had come to Higgs' aid for a medical emergency at his home. After receiving treatment, Higgs visited the central Hammond fire station, accusing paramedics of taking \$200 from his home during the call. ❖

Howard Kurtz, Fox News: The media's hot candidate of the moment, hands down, is Mayor Pete. He succeeds, at least for a few news cycles, the media's previous darling, Beto. And you just know that, if she were 35 instead of 29, the media would be leading the AOC-for-prez boomlet. Meanwhile, Joe Biden is most assuredly not hot, in media terms, thanks to the unwanted touching and kissing, although he will be the nominal front-runner on the day he gets in. Close behind, and this is something of a shocker, is Pete Buttigieg, who no one had heard of until

Barr suggest Trump campaign was spied

WASHINGTON — Attorney General William Barr declared Wednesday he believes “spying did occur” on Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, suggesting the origins of the Russia investigation may have been mishandled and aligning himself with the president at a time when Barr’s independence is under scrutiny (AP). Barr, appearing before a Senate panel, did not say what “spying” had taken place. He later said he wasn’t sure there had been improper surveillance but wanted to make sure proper procedures were followed. Still his remarks give a boost to President Trump and his supporters who insist his campaign was unfairly targeted by the FBI. Barr was testifying for a second day at a congressional budget hearing that was dominated by questions about special counsel Robert Mueller’s Trump-Russia investigation. Barr said he expects to release a redacted copy of Mueller’s report next week, and Democrats have repeatedly expressed concern that his version will conceal wrongdoing by the president. Barr, who was nominated to his post by Trump four months ago, was asked about spying by Republican Sen. Jerry Moran. He said that though he did not have specific evidence of wrongdoing, “I do have questions about it.” “I think spying on a political campaign is a big deal,” Barr said. Asked by Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen if he believed spying on the campaign occurred, Barr said, “Yes I think spying did occur. The question is whether it was adequately predicated.”



Braun calls for health care overhaul

WASHINGTON — The health-care system needs a complete overhaul and is broken. That’s just one of the many things Indiana Republican

Senator Mike Braun told 93 WIBC’s Tony Katz Wednesday morning. “It’s broken in the sense that it’s 18% of our GDP. It’s 12-13% everywhere else. It’s evolved through the cloaking of health insurance that tries to cover everything,” Braun said. He says lawmakers can’t be on the sidelines. “Senators like myself that know something about it are going to start pecking away at the problem by challenging the darn industry,” Braun said. He’s planning to crackdown on pharmaceutical companies who he says are charging you way too much for medications. “It costs too much. It’s because they are cloaked in the lack of transparency. They do not embrace competition,” Braun said.

Assange arrested in London

LONDON — Police in London arrested WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange at the Ecuadorean embassy Thursday for failing to surrender to the court in 2012, shortly after the South American nation revoked his asylum (AP). Ecuador’s president Lenin Moreno said a tweet that his government withdrew Assange’s status for repeated violations of international conventions. Moreno described it as a “sovereign decision” due to “repeated violations to international conventions and daily-life.” Assange took refuge in the embassy in London in 2012 and has been holed up inside ever since. “Today I announce that that the discourteous and aggressive behavior of Mr. Julian Assange, the hostile and threatening declarations of its allied organization, against Ecuador, and especially the transgression of international treaties, have led the situation to a point where the asylum of Mr. Assange is unsustainable and no longer viable,” Moreno said in a video statement released on Twitter. Police said Assange has been taken into “custody at a central London police station where he will remain, before being presented before Westminster Magistrates’ Court as soon as

is possible.”

Pence scolds Venezuelan envoy

NEW YORK — Vice President Mike Pence talked tough to the ambassador to the U.N. for Venezuela, at a meeting on the United Nations Security Council, Wednesday (WIBC). Nicolas Maduro cannot remain president of Venezuela. “With all due respect, Mr. Ambassador, you shouldn’t be here,” said Pence. “You should return to Venezuela, and tell Nicolas Maduro that his time is up. It’s time for him to go.” Pence said the U.S. is preparing a resolution to recognize Juan Guaido, as president. Tuesday the Organization of American States (OAS) made up of 34 nations, recognized Guaido. That was a major blow for Maduro. But, Russia, China, and key representatives on the U.N. Security Council support Maduro.

Senate confirms Judge Brady

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate has confirmed Fort Wayne attorney Holly Brady to serve as a federal judge for the Northern District of Indiana (AP). Republican U.S. Sens. Todd Young and Mike Braun announced the chamber approved Brady by a 56-42 vote Wednesday. The 49-year-old Brady fills a vacancy left by the retirement of Judge Joseph Van Bokkelen and the pending transfer of Chief Judge Theresa Springman from the court’s Fort Wayne office to its Hammond office. A graduate of the Valparaiso University School of Law, Brady has been a partner in the Fort Wayne law firm of Haller & Colvin, where she has focused on civil, employment, and labor litigation. President Donald Trump first nominated Brady a year ago and resubmitted her nomination to the Senate in January.

