

Young & Braun in the Trump era

As a reckless president breaks precedent, what's at stake in Indiana?

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

WASHINGTON – In late September, most Republican senators were dodging reporters asking about the whistleblower report alleging that President Donald Trump asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate former vice president and Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his son.

But the Wall Street Journal briefly caught up with Sen. Todd Young in a Capitol hallway.

Young told the WSJ reporter he hadn't read the report but would later in the day. "It's not because it's unserious or I'm an unserious legislator," Young said in a Sept. 27 article.

Over the course of his tenure in the House and his first two-plus years in the Senate, Young has established



himself as someone who takes policy seriously. That's why Trump's potential impeachment represents such a big risk – and opportunity – for him.

Like most senators who could become the jury for a trial that would determine whether Trump is removed from office, Young has been circumspect about Trump's actions that have catalyzed the House impeachment inquiry.

A rough transcript of the July 25 Trump-Zelensky conversation put out by the White House shows that Trump asked Zelensky

for "a favor," which was to probe the Bidens in relation to corruption in Ukraine. In remarks to reporters after the transcript was released, Trump confirmed he would like

Continued on page 3

Aberrant behavior

Merriam-Webster: Aberrant (n) 1: a group, individual, or structure that is not normal or typical: an aberrant group, individual, or structure; **2:** a person whose behavior departs substantially from the standard. **Synonyms:** (Adjective) aberrated, abnormal, anomalous, atypical, exceeding, exceptional, extraordinary, extraordinary, freak, odd, peculiar



By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – On July 27, 2016, Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump made his infamous "Russia, if you're listening ..." appeal for dirt on Hillary Clinton. It commenced a two-year jigsaw puzzle type investigation that



"Obviously marijuana is illegal in the State of Indiana. It is today and it was when this decision by a county prosecutor was made. I have some concerns about the message it sends."

- Gov. Holcomb, reacting to HPI on marijuana charging by Prosecutor Ryan Mears.



Howey Politics Indiana
WWHHowey Media, LLC
405 Massachusetts Ave.,
Suite 300 Indianapolis, IN
46204
www.howeypolitics.com

Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Mary Lou Howey, Editor
Susan E. Joiner, Editor

Subscriptions

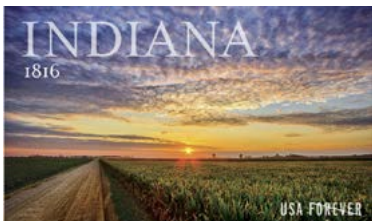
HPI, HPI Daily Wire \$599
 HPI Weekly, \$350
 Ray Volpe, Account Manager
317.602.3620
 email: HoweyInfo@gmail.com

Contact HPI

bhowey2@gmail.com
 Howey's cell: 317.506.0883
 Washington: 202.256.5822
 Business Office: 317.602.3620

© 2019, **Howey Politics Indiana**. All rights reserved.
 Photocopying, Internet forwarding, faxing or reproducing in any form, whole or part, is a violation of federal law without permission from the publisher.

Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



became President Trump's nightmare. It all seemed to end last July 24, when Special Counsel Robert Mueller testified before Congress that he could not indict Trump for obstruction of justice because of a Department of Justice rule that a sitting president can't be charged. Mueller distinctly said, "The President was not exculpated for the acts that he allegedly committed."

July 25 should have been a new day, a new era for President Trump, the proverbial sigh of relief. The House could impeach, but there was no way the 55-seat Senate Republican majority would convict.

So what does President Trump do?

According to a rough transcript released by the White House, the president essentially attempted to extort dirt on potential rival Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, from the rookie President Zelensky of Ukraine, a former comedian. It is the same Ukraine that gave up its nuclear weapons under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, went through a revolution in 2014, then saw Russian President Putin annex the Crimea before launching a low-grade war on the eastern part of the country that has since claimed 13,000 lives. This summer, President Trump inexplicably held up close to \$400 million in U.S. military aid from this new president, pulled Vice President Pence away from attending Zelensky's inauguration last May, and then subtly put the screws on him on July 25.

This prompted the urgent whistleblower complaint from the Office of National Intelligence (then headed by Dan Coats) in early August. Now we have a whole new scandal. This is not a news media concoction; it is entirely Trump's making. If the Mueller probe was a complex and opaque jigsaw puzzle, the Trump/Zelensky call is a four-piece Romper Room version, there for all to see.

The early yield of this dis-

heartening turn of events is aberrant behavior from someone who should be and act like the most powerful human on earth. As this column was being drafted, President Trump said on Thursday, "China should start an investigation into the Bidens."

President Trump has suggested that if he were to be removed from office via impeachment and conviction, the result would be a second American "civil war."

The president of the United States suggested the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Rep.



Adam Schiff, conducting the impeachment inquiry, is guilty of "treason."

President Trump believes the whistleblower from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, is also guilty of "treason," suggesting to a group of U.S. diplomats at the United Nations last week that such a person should be put to death. "You know what we used to do in the old

days when we were smart? Right? The spies and treason, we used to handle it a little differently than we do now."

President Trump does not understand the concept of a federal "whistleblower," long a silent hero of Capitol Hill Republicans looking for internal allies to root out waste, fraud and corruption. Trump tweeted during a rage-filled Tuesday, "I want to meet not only my accuser. Was this person SPYING on the U.S. President? Big Consequences!"

On Tuesday, President Trump tweeted, "As I learn more and more each day, I am coming to the conclusion that what is taking place is not an impeachment, it is a COUP." He suggested the same thing at the NRA convention in Indianapolis last spring about the Mueller probe.

A coup d'état is generally defined as a sudden, violent overthrow of a government or a seizure of power by a military. The reality is that our Founding Fathers placed in the U.S. Constitution provisions for impeach-

ment as a non-violent method for removing a leader determined to have politically committed "high crimes and misdemeanors."

In a press event with the president of Finland on Wednesday, Trump insisted that Rep. Schiff couldn't carry Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's "blankstrap," which we figure meant "jockstrap."

Whew.

According to a report in the New York Times, our president threatened to close down the U.S./Mexican border last March on the following day. If you've got an auto supply or agro export company in your town, ask the president or CEO if abruptly shutting down the Mexican border would be a good thing.

In that same report, the president of the United States privately talked about fortifying a border wall with a water-filled moat, "stocked with snakes or alligators."

Donald Trump, the president of the United States, suggested earlier this year that the U.S. military drop

nuclear weapons into hurricanes. Trump asked, "Why don't we nuke them? Why can't we do that?" Axios reported from a source present: "You could hear a gnat fart in that meeting. People were astonished."

Since this post was written last Thursday, President Trump abruptly announced a withdrawal of U.S. forces from Syria without consulting the Pentagon. He did this based on a phone call with autocratic Turkish President Erdogan, betraying our Kurdish allies. Why would a U.S. ally trust us?

Many Americans voted for Donald Trump in 2016 to, essentially, burn the house down. He is now torching constitutional institutions and vital alliances.

If I'm a Hoosier Republican, I've got to be thinking a "President Pence" – assuming he's not implicated in the scandal – heading the national ticket in 2020 might be a more stable course than the aberrations we are witnessing on a daily basis, and are likely to get worse as the walls close in. ❖

Young & Trump, from page 1

Ukraine to investigate the Bidens and said China should as well.

HPI has been seeking comment from Young and his Hoosier GOP Senate colleague Mike Braun. Leaving aside impeachment, we've asked them whether it's appropriate for a president to encourage foreign leaders to get involved in a U.S. election.

Young's office finally responded with a statement on Monday.

"One thing is clear, the far-left has been desperate to get rid of President Trump since Day One," Young said. "That much has not changed. I take all of my responsibilities very seriously and will continue to evaluate the facts as we get them, but my primary focus will remain on the work Hoosiers elected me to do, including passing USMCA [the U.S.-Canada-Mexico Trade Agreement], reining in health care costs, taking care of veterans, keeping Americans safe and secure and continuing to grow our economy."

Feel the squish. What happened to the Marine senator?

It was a comfort-food statement. Young put himself in a bland safe zone, keeping impeachment at arm's length and not answering the yes/no question of whether Trump's request of Ukraine – and now China – is right or wrong. Braun's office didn't respond to a request for comment.

The impeachment stakes are much higher for Young than Braun, who owes his seat in large part to last-minute campaigning Trump did for him in the last few days of the 2018 campaign. He asserts he shares with Trump a political outsider aura.

Between political favors and political kinship,

there's little chance Braun will break from Trump and vote to convict him. Besides, Braun isn't up again until 2024, when impeachment will be far in the past, regardless of its outcome.

For Young, the political calculations are much more intricate, and the stakes are much higher.

First, Young is the chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee for the 2020 cycle. The GOP has 23 seats up for re-election, compared to 13 for Democrats. Although the GOP policy positions will largely be set by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., where Young comes down on impeachment may also resonate with GOP candidates, especially the vulnerable ones.

As NRSC leader, Young is primarily a fundraiser – and has been doing well with that portfolio. The NRSC under Young has raised \$42.7 million and has \$11.7 million on hand, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee has raised \$37.7 million and has \$16.2 million on hand.

Standing should-to-shoulder with Trump against impeachment could boost NRSC fundraising.

But supporting Trump presents reputational risks for Young.

He once described himself in an HPI interview as a "policy entrepreneur." He very much wants to live up to the standards of a serious legislator.

Young, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, has staked out positions independent of Trump on foreign policy. He has advocated holding Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed bin Salman responsible for the murder of journalist Jamal Kashoggi. He also has led the effort to end U.S. support for the Saudi Arabia's participation in the civil war in Yemen.

Can Young now look the other way on a question that is fundamental to U.S. foreign policy like Trump's

abrupt withdrawal from Syria without consulting the Pentagon? Does the president have the latitude to involve foreign countries in the U.S. election? Is it right for him to withhold military aid, as he reportedly did with Ukraine, unless they meet his demands for investigations into political opponents?

Like many Republicans who are members of a party that has been taken over by Trump, Young has had to acquiesce to a president who levies tariffs to the point of slowing global economic growth and running up the federal deficit to historic highs.

But Young, who is up for reelection in 2022, might be able to put himself into a position to rebuild the party after Trump leaves, depending on how he handles impeachment. Perhaps he'll do fine with the politically expedient vote on conviction. Maybe he will take a more thoughtful approach.

Profile in courage?

Chris Sautter, a Hoosier Democratic political consultant who occasionally writes for HPI, said that Trump's popularity in Indiana takes the pressure off Young.

"He's hardly a profile in courage, as few of them are," Sautter said. "I don't see what he has to gain by separating himself from Trump. Unless you're in a swing state, a swing district or a Democratic district, there's no advantage to taking on Trump. That's all the more reason for Todd Young. It's his job to protect Republican seats."

Pete Seat, an Indiana GOP consultant, insists politics will not dominate Young's thinking on impeachment. "Todd Young is a thoughtful, analytical guy," Seat said. "He has demonstrated a proclivity for doing what he believes is right. His perspective is that it would be inappropriate to rush to judgment without having all the evidence and all the facts about [Trump's] calls in question."

Waiting to pass judgment also protects Young from going out on a limb for Trump that Trump then cuts off. No GOP senator can know what consequences Trump's next Tweet will bring.

Different for Young & Braun

The impeachment situation is different for Young and Braun than it is for the other 53 GOP senators. If Trump is evicted from office through a Senate conviction, the outcome is a Hoosier president with the elevation of Vice President Mike Pence. Of course, that assumes Pence is not implicated in the scandal – an assumption that is becoming less certain.

As Young mentions whenever he can, he is a former Marine. He now faces the biggest political challenge of his career in deciding how to respond to the latest behavior by Trump that would surely violate the Marine code.

The Trump behavior

The subpoenas are flying in Washington. President Trump has issued the triple dog impeachment dare, after publicly goading Ukraine and China – China! – to supply dirt on his American political opponents in what appears to be a violation of FEC rules and laws.

There are more Trump administration whistleblowers about to emerge at DNI and the IRS, flagging his behavior, and, perhaps, that of Vice President Pence. Trump is being called out by Fox News' Shep Smith, Chris Wallace and Judge Napolitano over what they describe as "impeachable" offenses.

Last Thursday, Trump said at the White House, "China should start an investigation into the Bidens." Trump said he hadn't directly asked Chinese President Xi Jinping to investigate Joe Biden and his son Hunter but said it's "certainly something we could start thinking about. I have a lot of options on China, but if they don't do what we want, we have tremendous, tremendous power."

His standing on impeachment in the polls, once a liberal fantasy, is now in historically shaky territory. At the start of his impeachment inquiry in October 1998, President Bill Clinton found 45% approved of impeach-



ment and 53% disapproved. When impeachment against President Richard Nixon began in October 1973, just 38% approved. With Trump, there's an inversion, with a Washington Post-Schar School poll today revealing a surprising 58% support the impeachment inquiry and 38% oppose, while 49% back impeachment.

Cass Sunstein, the legal scholar who formerly taught at Notre Dame, wrote, "Impeachment: A Citizen's Guide," that traces the roots of this constitutional act, and observes of the current predicament, "The constitutional background also helps explain the game-changing impact of President Trump's conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The facts are still emerging, but it is reasonable to worry that the president may have abused his authority in two different ways. First, he appears to have pressed the leader of a foreign country to investigate a political rival – and thus to interfere with the democratic process in the United States.

"Second," Sunstein writes, "he appears to have pressed that leader to commence a criminal investigation of two American citizens, and thus to intrude on civil liberty (assuming, as it appears, that the investigation would have been baseless). In the coming weeks, the House of

Representatives will have to get clear on exactly what happened here, and also on whether other potential grounds for impeachment warrant serious consideration under the legal standard."

Judge Napolitano observed in a Fox News column, "The criminal behavior to which Trump has admitted is much more grave than anything alleged or unearthed by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, and much of what Mueller revealed was impeachable." Napolitano said that Trump's request for a "favor" after Zelensky spoke of his need for anti-tank missiles was a "clear unmistakable inference" that approved military aid "would be held up until the favor was delivered. The favor he sought was dirt on Biden. Now he has attempted in one phone call to bring the Ukrainian government into the 2020 election! Does he understand the laws he has sworn to uphold? It was to remedy just such reckless, constitutionally destructive behavior that impeachment was intended."

This past weekend, congressional Republicans like Rep. Jim Jordan and Sen. Ron Johnson played off Trump's request for China to investigate the Bidens as a "joke," with great irony that Joaquin Phoenix's "The Joker" became a box office smash in the very seen sequence Young and Braun evaded questions.



Braun told the Terre Haute Tribune-Star Monday, "I look at the context of anything. President Trump got elected in November 2016 because he was a different kind of individual. We all knew with that package, you are going to have somebody that isn't going to tiptoe around like a typical politician, and thank goodness, because I don't think things were working in a way that would work in the long run. Part of his style, and we have seen it since he has been there, is he will push the envelope. I think the key thing, in my opinion, is since November 2016, when you look at the subtext, there has been a calculated effort to disrupt the disruptor."

Why Trump acts blatantly

Two national commentators seem to capture why President Trump is acting so brazenly. Andrew Sullivan writes in New York Magazine: "Why would a president say such things? And in public? Trump's pathological narcissism overrides reality on a minute-by-minute basis, and that because of this, the very idea of the rule of law, which makes no distinction between the really stable geniuses and everybody else, is impossible for Trump to understand. It's designed as a neutral check on any individual's desire to do whatever he wants, and a 'neutral check' is, quite simply, beyond Trump's comprehension.

"Looking at his long and abysmal business career, the rule of law was always, always an object of scorn, something only suckers cared about and lawyers were paid to circumvent," Sullivan explained. "For Trump, the law is something to break, avoid or pay off. And as president, he

clearly believes he is above it."

Paul Brandus, writing for MarketWatch, adds: "Trump spent most of his life as the CEO of a privately held company. For the bulk of his career, Trump has preferred to run things in private. This means no public accountability, no quarterly 10-Qs or annual 10-Ks to file with the feds. Immersed in this transparency-free zone for half a century, he has always believed that he wasn't required to answer to anybody. And until announcing his candidacy in 2015, he was right."

Brandus continues: "And yet Trump still has not learned – much less respected – the essential fact that he has been, for three years now, a public servant. Be it city councilman, or mayor, or all the way up to the Oval Office, public servants are answerable to the public. But 50 years of doing whatever you want and not having to explain any of it is apparently hard to shake."

So the Rule of Law is a scornful topic for Trump, but once a cultural pillar for Republicans like Young, Braun and Pence. They are now all in for a tortuous ride as cultural and philosophical principle is flanked by this really bizarre political cult of personality they've jumped in bed with.

The Republican base — at least part of it, with many Hoosier Republicans we know expressing vivid fear and disgust off the record — appears to be loyal to Trump, even if it means a 1974-style electoral disaster.

Pence has fully bought in to Trump, even as the Bossman repeatedly ponders his veep's loyalty. Speaking in Scottsdale, AZ, on Thursday, Pence said, "The American people have the right to know if the vice president of the United States or his family profited from his position as vice president during the last administration. That's about looking backwards and understanding what really happened."

This week, Pence has lunch with Trump today, then barnstorms the congressional districts of Democrats in Iowa, Minnesota, Michigan and Virginia, making his case against Trump's impeachment.

As for the Trump and Pence conversations with President Zelensky, Pence said that the topic broached was on "corruption," explaining, "Those were the topics that we discussed. And that was all we discussed. The simple truth is, that those are the same issues that the president raised with President Zelensky during that call."

Braun told the Tribune-Star that if the House votes on impeachment and it moves to the Senate, "it will be heard quickly in the Senate and I think if there is nothing further to what we have seen, especially with some details" involving whistleblowers "to maybe set the stage for this ... this backfires on the people who are so eager to run this through the gauntlet."

Epilogue

As author Kurt Vonnegut might sum it up, so it goes in the Trump era. Anything can happen. Anything. ❖

Holcomb optimistic about Asia trade pacts

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric Holcomb returned from a series of four trade missions to Asian nations over the past month to South Korea, Japan, China and India on Sunday, where he witnessed the first NBA game in Mumbai involving the Indiana Pacers.

HPI asked Gov. Holcomb about the on-going trade war with China and what he was picking up on the ground while there.

Here is our conversation that took place mid-Monday afternoon:

HPI: Certainly the trade war is a hot issue, but I have to ask what they call a McDonald's Quarter Pounder in Beijing or Mumbai?

Holcomb: (Laughs) No. 4.

HPI: You visited these countries with international trade a prime topic. What do Hoosier farmers and manufacturers need to know as the U.S./Chinese trade talks shift into high gear this month?

Holcomb: Everywhere I went in those four countries, our hosts were overly appreciative that we came. Our partners realize, just like we do, that trade is not one-way. It's a two-way street, particularly when you're looking to address mutual needs, but explore mutual opportunities with each other. Rule No. 1, like in life, is show up. Anything less than that can be perceived as lazy, or worse, late. That is just not who we are. Obviously our Hoosier hospitality was matched at every stop I made. I just can't tell you how productive those meetings were at this exact moment in history. It will not be forgotten that we were there and expressed our continued appreciation for all the investment made in our state.

We have 38 countries who have invested in Indiana, representing just over a thousand foreign-owned companies. They employ just under 200,000 Hoosiers. I just state the obvious that we have very deep roots in our communities from businesses who have sought to locate here in the heartland. When we go, we're there to say thank you, first and foremost, in person. Secondly, we're there to export contextual growth, both in their country and in ours. So when Cummins is doing well in Tunay India, Cummins is doing well in Columbus, Indiana. When Eli Lilly is doing well in China, Eli Lilly is doing well in Indiana. So we're also there to say we want to be even

more helpful to Indiana companies who are already based abroad and seek new growth opportunities there as well.

And we're meeting people in cultural exchange programs. Our universities have gateway programs all over the world. Notre Dame University is in charge of surveying the surface of the Taj Mahal to make sure the wear and tear erosion doesn't occur. We've got 10,000 Asians students in Indiana right now. We have partnerships with various organizations and businesses and we're growing those partnerships. We've tripled our direct foreign investment in Indiana just since 2016. We are growing inside out and growing outside in. When you think about the way the world is shaping up, it used to be that 80% of the world's population lived in G7 counties in 1980. Now those G7s represent less than 50% population. The world, from a population perspective, is tilting toward Asia. It represents about 60% of the global population, so when you think a country like India and a country like China, you're talking about 2.7 billion people.

I jokingly referenced to Prime Minister Modi in India that everything in Indiana that starts with millions ends up billions in India, and everything in Indiana that starts with billions can be translated to trillions in India. It's a different scale and we both face relevant challenges and opportunities. Our purpose is to find out our mutual goals and work together to solve, not just problems, but

also scale up growth and opportunity for each other. That comes in various forms, like the Indiana Pacers playing basketball in Mumbai. We're there to underscore during this time of globalization and technological advancements unlike the world has ever seen before, the scale and pace of change. Of course there's going to be some turbulence from a trade perspective as well. People who have been around for 5,000 years like in these countries

I've visited, they understand that this, too, will pass and we will get to a better place when we are all looking at these new, modernized trade deals.

HPI: You were on the ground in China. The trade talks begin this month ...

Holcomb: This week.

HPI: Are people optimistic that we'll be able to forge a deal to get Hoosier soybeans back into Chinese markets?

Holcomb: What I'm hearing is that everyone wants to get a deal done. Everyone wants to make sure the deal is done right, and so there is some, of course, some pain associated to make sure we get this right. Obviously, just like the USMCA, the new NAFTA, so to speak, that was a long time in the making, going back to the 1990s. A lot has changed since NAFTA was first put into place. And needed to be. Same is true with our deals in Asia. The good news is there is optimism, not just optimism, but patience, to get it right. I experienced this in In-



dia and China. With Japan, today could be a very good day in terms of progress being made with China. These things will ultimately be resolved, but we need to make sure we're all operating on the same playing field, that are rules based, and we're both aiming for free and fair trade.

HPI: There are trade pacts in motion with both Japan and South Korea. What are you hearing on those?

Holcomb: We just have an enormous upside in potential with the Pacific. These are economies that are uber competitive on the technological front and obviously for a state like Indiana where we're ranked as the No. 1 manufacturing state in the country per capita, we are looking forward to partnering with companies we already have, like Honda, Toyota, Subaru and this long supply chain that follows behind it to the tune of thousands of jobs all over the state. This is a huge potential for our world class universities to work on research and development projects with these companies and these governments. It's also a huge potential for us to tap into those markets, which are just becoming more consumer-driven with each year that passes. I expect good things to come after being on the ground. We heard



... optimism about the Japanese trade deal which I hope we learn some news later today. We heard from the Chinese foreign minister who said he had high hopes the next round would produce a positive outcome. He emphasized a huge opportunity, China and America working together. He stressed that America will still be the world leader for the foreseeable future and understands that we would like wider access to Chinese markets while all making sure we adhere to the deal and rules. There were a lot of positive statements from Chinese and Indian government leaders at the highest levels, the people who are making the decision, just like (Robert) Lighthizer and President Trump are here in America.

Financial Strategy
Leading Progress, Intelligently

Strategic Management
How, Why, Who

Policy Preparation
Comprehensive, Transparent

Areas of Concentration

5-Year Scope Capital Planning
Clear Vision, Proven

Proficiency Mastery
Proven Knowledge, Proven

Communications
Clear Communication for Every Audience

Oscar Gutierrez, Principal

Trish Whitcomb, Partner



MUNICIPAL • FINANCIAL ADVISORS

**Bond Mastery for
Common Good**

www.BondryConsulting.com

Inquiries@BondryConsulting.com

317-537-9555

HPI: We have more than 200 Japanese companies here in Indiana. Are we expecting in the coming generation to see that kind of investment from Chinese and Indian corporations?

Holcomb: When you do the math, you would think that is a target rich environment for growth. Think about this: Infosys had a zero presence in the State of Indiana not too long ago. Infosys is on the flight path to hire 3,000 Hoosiers in our capital city. There are already 600 hires right now. Of those 600 hires, they have attracted about 60% from outside Indiana's borders. They are, in part, the reason why from around America we are an in-migration state. It's just a simple fact that our birth rate and death rate aren't what they used to be. So what is the strategy to grow? Certainly one of ours is attracting people to attend one of our colleges and universities and then deciding to stay here. It's a great state to live, work and play. We want to attract people to come and work here. That's exactly what happened with companies ... like

Infosys, which came out of India. That's 1.3 billion Indians right now and it will certainly be more tomorrow. It's a huge, huge potential for explosive growth in Indiana.

HPI: Are we going to see the Pacer fan base go from five million to 50 million?

Holcomb: After I met with Prime Minister Modi, he tweeted out about our conversation and our passion for sports ... to 250.5 million followers.

HPI: Wow.

Holcomb: The game I was able to take in was in an arena that was jammed packed with school kids. The gymnasium was filled with screaming NBA fanatics. The owner of the Sacramento Kings is of Indian descent and it was an environment that every Hoosier would have loved to have seen. They were expressing not just interest, but energy from the tip-off until the last buzzer beater to send it into overtime. There are a lot more Pacer fans in India tonight. ❖

The joy of politics

By LEE HAMILTON

BLOOMINGTON – You're probably chuckling already. Seriously? "The joy of politics"?

That was pretty much the reaction I got the other day when, in the middle of a conversation about how confrontational, adversarial, and downright unpleasant politics has become of late, I suggested that it could be both fun and a source of satisfaction. Yes, of course there are always irritations and inconveniences. And the often mean-spirited tone of today's contentious politics is well beyond anything I encountered when I was in office.



But none of this erases the satisfactions that also come with the territory. They start with the people you can meet in the political arena: Able, ambitious, articulate, often at the top of their game. They may be friends or foes, but the foes aren't usually permanent; sometimes they become friends, as the debate moves along to other issues and you find yourself sharing common ground. In fact, you're never lonely in politics, because nothing can be accomplished alone. There's huge satisfaction in the teamwork, in rolling up your sleeves with a likeminded group of people focused on a common goal.

Politics is also what allows you to hold government to account, call out its misdeeds and failures, and highlight its successes. You find that you have a voice in the public debate. It's hard, maybe impossible, to measure your own impact. But there's a true thrill in the battle – win, lose, or draw. You're participating in the success and

the direction of your community and your country.

More to the point, you're trying to change things. As Teddy Roosevelt said in a famous 1910 speech, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena... [Whose] place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

The satisfactions of engaging in politics do not just come when things are easy or running smoothly. They're most acute, in fact, when circumstances are difficult, when being involved can make a difference, and when working through fraught times yields progress on the other side.

It's true that progress is often incremental; it rarely comes all at once. The pleasures come from knowing that you're doing your best to solve or mitigate problems and fighting for what you think is right. You're participating in the great experiment of democracy in America, and are part of a long line of Americans trying to answer Lincoln's question at Gettysburg of whether this nation "so conceived and so dedicated can long endure."

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said that one "may live greatly in the law." It's true for politics, too, despite its difficulties. It challenges you to develop your talents, to hone skills – listening, articulating your thoughts, negotiating with able adversaries and partners, building consensus, compromising in the name of moving forward – that are vital in all walks of life. At its best, politics stretches you and makes you live better.

I have to confess that when I suggested to some of my colleagues that I planned to write about the joy of politics, they thought I was joking. Many people don't like the political process, and they don't want to engage in it. There's something about it that turns them off. ❖

I recognize that it's not an endeavor that fits everyone's makeup or desires. But I'd also ask you this: If you're serious about being a citizen in a democracy, how can you avoid engaging in it in the manner and to the extent of your choosing? In the end, politics is just how we Americans do our best to help our neighborhoods, our towns and cities, our states, and our country become even better places to live. And if you do get involved, here's my

bet: That you'll have times that make you wonder why you bothered, but you'll also find plenty of moments that bring you satisfaction, and even joy.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar of the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies.

Forests serve Indiana today and tomorrow

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Indiana's public forests are primarily south of I-70, yet our population and industry are located primarily north of that interstate. Preserving existing public forests while developing new forested areas throughout the state would correct this imbalance.



At the same time, enhancing the urban forest canopies, the linear street forests in our cities and towns, needs to be encouraged. These are long-term components of Indiana's essential infrastructure that offer significant benefits on at least six levels:

1. Forests are silent workers cleaning the air of harmful substances while providing oxygen. They also are habitat for innumerable plants and animals. Trees stabilize ground water levels, reduce land erosion, and protect properties from flooding. The benefits of forests are local and worldwide. In cities, they not only improve the air we breathe and provide shade to reduce air-conditioning expenses, but they raise property values as a desired amenity.

2. Indiana has an undesirable image as a place lacking natural attractions of mountains and a seacoast. Forests can provide a place rich in opportunities for healthy, stimulating outdoor recreation, exploration, and education. Tourism and corporate investments are determined by the image we project.

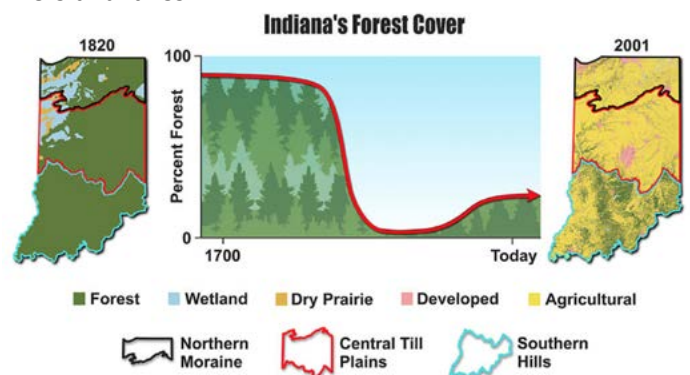
3. Hoosier businesses want to attract and retain young, well-educated workers. Many of these workers seek communities offering good housing values as enhanced by trees. They also want diverse, convenient outdoor recreational opportunities. An evolution of forestry management to more contemporary standards, de-emphasizing timber-cutting, along with development of urban and new rural areas, will serve these desires.

4. Forests provide many opportunities for a variety

of outdoor recreation activities. Biking and hiking, bird-watching, and photographing animal and topographical features are very popular activities. Increased forested areas offer new opportunities for Hoosier communities to develop existing and new businesses for residents and visitors alike.

5. Outdoor recreation is prescribed by the medical community as a means toward a healthier lifestyle. Increasingly Hoosiers are learning the value of outdoor recreation as a preventive and remedial aspect of health care. Part of this recognition is due to longer life spans and the costs of health care for chronic illnesses like diabetes.

6. Our state forests and urban tree canopy offer opportunities for citizens of all ages to understand the natural and economic history of Indiana. Whether through formal education or informal conversation with forest docents, we can learn about glaciers that formed our land, rivers and lakes.



Moreover, we can learn how forests contributed to building our farms, our towns, and our cities. We can appreciate how our industries developed from forest products, continue to support employment, and how today Hoosier products are valued both at home and throughout the world.

Forests, in both rural and urban areas, in great tracts of rugged land, across broad sweeps of formerly agricultural prairie, or lining urban streets, can become Indiana's image, a magnet for migration, a reason for being back home in Indiana. ❖

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 ❖

Braun suspends 5th CD campaign as GOP field expected to expand

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Republican Steve Braun announced Monday he was suspending his 5th CD campaign due to health reasons, injecting a new wave of volatility just as the field is about to expand.



Braun's announcement came just days after Zionsville Dr. Chuck Dietzen entered the race, while Col. Kent Abernathy and Beth Henderson are poised to enter. Another potential candidate, former state senator Mike Delph, is expected to enter after the November municipal elections.

Micah Beckwith, State Treasurer Kelly Mitchell and Danny Niederberger have already filed FEC paperwork and have formed campaigns.

Braun was expected to be a potential frontrunner with his ability to self-fund, as he did in his 2018 race for the 4th CD. But Braun said Monday, "During an annual check-up with my doctor in September, an issue was identified that requires me to step away from campaigning for 5th District for the next few months. I am both frustrated and disappointed to have to suspend my campaign at this critical juncture. Now more than ever, we need to send individuals to Washington who have the capability, the experience and the willingness to address the problems we face."



Braun's decision to suspend his campaign injects uncertainty. It is unclear if he will reactivate. But losing two or three months heading into a crowded and contested primary will pose a significant hurdle. Braun was expected to compete for the so-called "moderate" Republican vote, with Beckwith, Delph and Dietzen actively courting the social conservatives.

State Sen. John Ruckelshaus, who pondered a 5th CD run but then decided to seek reelection, told HPI Monday that Braun's decision won't change his plans. "I wish the best for Steve," Ruckelshaus said. "I'm still committed to the state of Indiana and my reelection. We're sticking to our guns."

Abernathy to run

West Point graduate and businessman, Col. (ret.) Kent Abernathy, announced his 5th CD candidacy on



Monday. "West Point instilled in me the principles I have carried with me throughout my life – duty, honor, country," said Abernathy. "We need leaders in Washington willing to make the tough decisions to defend the constitution, to pay down our debt, to honor our veterans, and to support our military." Abernathy describes himself as an "outsider" having spent his career in the military and business. "Now more than ever we need principled leaders in Washington to break the

stranglehold career politicians have on the system," said Abernathy. "I've spent my entire career in service and in business where we get things done and come home - I'll do just that as your next Congressman."

Dietzen announces

A Kokomo native has announced he is running for the U.S. Congress seat currently occupied by outgoing Rep. Susan Brooks. Republican Dr. Chuck Dietzen, who grew up in Kokomo and now lives in Zionsville, announced Thursday that he would seek Indiana's 5th CD seat after Brooks revealed in June she would not seek a fifth term (Myers, Kokomo Tribune). "I want to serve the community that has given me extraordinary opportunities to make a difference in the lives of people here and all over the world," said Dietzen in a media release announcing his campaign. He added: "Some important and far-reaching issues will be decided in Washington in the near future. I want to make sure we make healthcare work for patients, and socialized medicine does not work. I want to ensure our families and communities thrive – to do that we must protect our constitutional freedoms. Dietzen recently retired from his role as director of child opediatic rehabilitation medicine at Riley Hospital for Children at Indiana University Health, according to the release. Dietzen, a member of the Howard County Hall of Legends, is the founder of and a volunteer for Timmy Global Health. The organization is described by his campaign as "an Indianapolis based nonprofit that has worked to expand healthcare access in developing countries." He is also a co-founder of iSalur Healthcare, an electronic medical records system.

Black caucus hosts Thornton

The Indiana General Assembly Black Caucus is hosting a luncheon with 5th CD Democrat candidate Dee Thornton at noon today at the Indiana Firefighters Union Local 416, 748 Massachusetts Ave., Indianapolis.

Governor

Melton prepares to enter with McCormick

State Sen. Eddie Melton will announce his entry into the Democratic Indiana gubernatorial race at 5:30 p.m. tonight (CT) at the Gary Public Library. He will be joined by "special guest" Supt. Jennifer McCormick, a Republican. He will appear at events in Indianapolis on Wednesday. He joins the race that includes Dr. Woody Myers and businessman Josh Owens seeking to challenge Gov. Eric Holcomb. Melton told the NWI Times' Dan Carden, "Most folks feel that state government is not paying them any attention, is not focused on the issues that matter to them the most. We have to prioritize these issues. These have to be issues that are at the top of our agenda as a state."



"You still have individuals spending years in prison, that are nonviolent offenders, that are doing 10 to 20 years for having a few ounces of marijuana on them," said Melton, who favors marijuana legalization paired with criminal justice reforms.

As for whether a Melton-led Democratic ticket might include McCormick, whose elected office is being replaced in 2021 by a governor-appointed secretary of education, he only would say: "All options are on the table ... I'm not ruling anything out." McCormick has made similar comments.

Mayors

Mayoral race homestretch

We're a month out from mayoral elections and at this point, we do not detect a significant change wave as we've seen in past cycles that ousted more than a dozen mayors. There is little polling data available, so our assessments are based on past history, who's advertising and how the various candidates and campaigns are acting.

City halls most likely to see a party change include New Albany, where Republican Mark Seabrook is challenging Mayor Jeff Gahan; the open seat in Kokomo, with Republican Howard County Commissioner Tyler Moore facing Democrat Abbie Smith; and another open seat in Elkhart where former Republican mayor Dave Miller is facing Democrat Rod Roberson after Republican Mayor Tim Neese decided not to seek a second term.

Another race we are closely watching is Fort Wayne, where Mayor Tom Henry is seeking to fend off the energetic Republican challenger Tim Smith, who tells HPI that his campaign metrics have brought more than 4,000

new voters into the race. Henry has been running a TV ad campaign since August and we still give him a narrow edge. In Muncie, Republican Dan Ridenour has a shot at shifting that city hall in his race against Terry Whitt Bailey, who could become the city's first African-American mayor. But there are more FBI investigations underway in Muncie, a dynamic that has plagued Mayor Dennis Tyler's administration, giving Ridenour a chance for that party switch.

We continue to see Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett as a nominal favorite while Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke and South Bend Democrat James Mueller are heavy favorites.

In Indianapolis, Mayor Joe Hogsett remains a heavy favorite for a second term. He began running his first 60-second ad of the cycle titled "Mothers Against Violence" and featuring Donita Royal, who lost a son to gun violence. It began airing two weeks after six people were shot downtown on a Saturday night. "What I love about Mayor Hogsett – he's a man of faith," Royal says. "And my spirit connects with that."

The Indy Chamber's Business Advocacy Committee (BAC) endorsed Hogsett. "Our city's economy is stronger when more of our citizens are able to contribute to it," said Indy Chamber President and CEO Michael Huber. "Mayor Hogsett is committed to this ideal of inclusive growth, restructuring local economic incentives to upgrade our job market and launching initiatives like 'Indy Achieves' to upskill our workforce, while supporting improved transit to connect people and employers."

Muncie: Hupfer pitches for Ridenour

Indiana Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer was in Muncie this week making a pitch for Republican mayoral nominee Dan Ridenour, who faces Democrat Terry Whitt Bailey. "Muncie is a great city – home to a world-class university, great local businesses, and fantastic people. But



it's also an excellent example of what happens when you let Democrats run your government," Hupfer said. "In case you haven't been following, the FBI has been investigating Muncie for years, and this summer, they searched Muncie

City Hall and ended up handing down two indictments. It's a betrayal of the public trust, but sadly, Muncie's problems under Democrats only begin there. This week a state audit broke news that city accounts are overdrawn by more than \$250,000. It's fiscal mismanagement, and it's irresponsible."

Indianapolis: Hogsett's big ad advantage

Mayor Joe Hogsett continues a huge TV advantage, spending more than \$2 million, compared to less

than \$90,000 for Republican Jim Merritt’s campaign. Merritt’s TV ad where he said that car thieves and grifters benefitted from the incumbent ran less than two weeks. Hogstt has two TV ads in rotation.

Terre Haute: Trio debates

It was standing room only at the Vigo County Public Library on Tuesday as three candidates for Terre Haute mayor outlined their positions on a host of topics. But as a baseline from which to start, the candidates were asked to define what they see as the role of mayor and the office’s most important function in city governance (Modesitt, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). Republican candidate and incumbent mayor Duke Bennett said, as he has maintained across numerous forums in the past month, that a mayor’s number one priority is ensuring the safety of the city. “Public safety is number one. No matter what anybody says, that is the most important thing that we can deliver to keep people safe and respond when they have an urgent need,” Bennett said.

Independent candidate Pat Goodwin said the role of mayor is being the face of the city and ensuring that everything undertaken with taxpayer money is something that will benefit the city and its residents in the long run.

Democrat candidate and City Council member Karrum Nasser said he views the mayor’s job as one of customer service and that he is open to borrowing successful strategies from neighboring communities and tapping into the talent graduating from local universities and colleges to help implement them. “People need to trust their government. Often times we hear that something is too complicated or that it’s how we’ve always done it. I think the citizens deserve to have a better answer than that when it comes to some of the challenges in our community.”

Fort Wayne: Crawford’s wife in Henry ad

The wife of Republican Fort Wayne City Councilman John Crawford has been featured in an advertisement



supporting Democratic Mayor Tom Henry’s reelection campaign. The campaign video, which aired on TV and was

posted to the Henry campaign Facebook page, is titled “Republicans for Mayor Tom Henry” and features two

"I have had several opportunities to use the services of Content By Carter and its founder, Cameron Carter, over the years. The fact that I have continued to use Cam and his team to help on new projects speaks more than any words of recommendation can say."

Greg Zoeller

Chairman, World Trade Center Indianapolis
and former Indiana Attorney General



CONTENT BY CARTER
strategic content creation and deployment

Republicans and an independent. One of the Republicans is Marcia Crawford (Gong, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). In the video, Crawford states that she is supporting Henry "because he works for all parties, making sure the neighborhoods are thriving, businesses are investing and our young people are staying in Fort Wayne, living, working and raising their families here." Henry is running against Republican Tim Smith in the Nov. 5 general election. The other two featured in the video are Ryan Neumeister and independent John Dortch, who said Henry is "positive and has a real plan for moving our city forward." John Crawford said his wife's appearance in the ad was her choice. "You don't tell modern women what to do. They tell you what they are going to do," he said in an interview Tuesday. "I gave her no direction one way or another; it was her decision."

Henry, Smith spar over education

Republican mayoral candidate Tim Smith pledged Monday morning to send more public money to area public and private schools and teachers (Rodriguez, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). During a news conference at Republican headquarters in Fort Wayne, Smith laid out a six-point platform containing his positions to aid education – while chastising Democratic Mayor Tom Henry for inaction. "The mayor has said he has no role in education. I fundamentally disagree," Smith said. Smith acknowledged later that, "constitutionally speaking," Henry's statement is correct. Henry, in a statement, reiterated the point. "I do question whether my opponent is running for mayor or the Indiana General Assembly as Fort Wayne's mayor has no direct authority over public schools," the statement says. "Knowing my legal limitations as Fort Wayne's Mayor, I will continue to pave sidewalks to schools like we just completed at St. Joseph Elementary; continue to staff our schools with Fort Wayne Police Officers like we have done throughout my tenure; continue the Mayor's Youth Engagement Council which introduces young people to government; and, continue to foster those valued partnerships with our educational friends from the FWCS Career Academy to our universities, our vocational schools to organized labor."

South Bend: Mueller debates Haas

If you think politicians are all the same, you haven't seen Democrat James Mueller and Republican Sean Haas debate. Although they're both 37, wore gray suits with white shirts and ties, and grew up on the city's east side, attending St. Anthony de Padua Catholic grade school together, they contrasted sharply Tuesday night at Indiana University South Bend's Wiekamp Hall in their only debate before the Nov. 5 South Bend mayoral election (Parrott, South Bend Tribune). Haas criticized Mayor Pete Buttigieg, under whom Mueller served as chief of staff and executive director of community investment, for saying after a shooting that, "All police work and all of American life takes place in the shadow of racism..." Haas said officer

morale has tanked because police believe O'Neill, who has since quit, has been prejudged without due process. "I don't believe in systemic racism. I believe there are bad actors in every single profession, whether it's police officers, teachers, lawyers, but to blanketly call an entire force racist based on the action of a few, I believe, is irresponsible and frankly a lie." Mueller said racism can be more nuanced and "is not always explicit, not always necessarily explicitly hateful. It comes about in implicit ways. You're less likely to get a bank loan approved... you go to the doctor and they're less likely to take your pain seriously because you're a certain race."

Zody calls on Holcomb to denounce Greencastle council candidate

Indiana Democratic Party Chairman John Zody demanded Gov. Eric Holcomb and the Indiana Republican Party call on GOP Greencastle city council candidate Haywood Ware to apologize for racist, transphobic and

by his words and denounce Republicans who threaten Indiana's reputation as a welcoming place," said Zody. "We should hold politicians to the highest standard. There's no place for Ware's hateful speech on the city council in Greencastle. Eric Holcomb needs to lead by calling on Ware to apologize and resign."

General Assembly

HD45: Primary opponent for Borders

Jeff Gormong, 52, announced he will challenge Rep. Bruce Borders in the Republican primary (Modesitt, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). Gormong, a farmer in southern Vigo County, said his decision to run is not an indictment of the job he thinks Borders has done. "This is something I'm passionate about and think I can do well," Gormong said. "I talked to Mr. Borders before making this announcement to let him know I'd be running and that I'm not upset with him but just wanted to give this a shot. I think it's time for some change." Gormong, manager of Gormong Family Farms, has served on the Indiana Farm Bureau state board of directors since 2008. ❖

Buttigieg seeks to make racial inroads

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Mayor Pete Buttigieg’s presidential campaign has a race problem. Wintrop Poll and Fox News polls out of South Carolina this past week revealed zero percent African-American support, and it hasn’t been much better in a number of other surveys, where his total support has sagged into single digits.



Thus, that he found himself in front of the Indianapolis NAACP Friday in his home state where he is devoid of conspicuous black support was an opportunity.

By the time he finished a keynote address and a Q&A session where he called for a “21st Century Voters Rights Act,” he had earned two standing ovations. He spent much of the pre-speech dinner going table to table, pressing the flesh. Through it all, his calls to action and compelling observations seemed to resonate. It came in a state where African-American members of Congress, the General Assembly and the South Bend Council have been silent in their support for this 37-year-old mayor.



“I have seen the possibilities — and the limitations — of what can be done in a diverse community while our nation continues to accept the unacceptable,” Buttigieg said during his keynote. “I also come at this from a perspective shaped by my own story and my own search for belonging. I have not had the experience of being more likely to be pulled over while driving, or less likely to be called back for a job interview, or less likely to be believed when describing symptoms at a hospital, simply because of the color of my skin. But part of what motivates me to stand up for those who are different from me, is the fact that people different from me helped bring me some of the most important rights in my life.

“No two experiences of discrimination are alike,” the South Bend mayor continued. “But I know something of the war that breaks out in the heart of a young person who realizes that a basic fact about him means he is more likely to be feared, hated, subject to random violence, and discriminated against. I know something of the amazing power of activism and advocacy, solidarity and alliance, to deliver equal rights. And as someone whose marriage

exists by the grace of a single vote on the United States Supreme Court, I know why political decisions matter. Why politics matters. It matters because the decisions they make in those big white buildings reach into our neighborhoods, our offices, our homes and our marriages.”

Buttigieg’s presidential prospects, well-funded to the tune of \$51 million (more than frontrunner Joe Biden) are contingent on making inroads with black voters. He was presented a major challenge and negative national press coverage in June when a police action shooting took the life of Eric Logan, who he mentioned twice on Friday night. Mayor Buttigieg responded to that tragedy with civic transparency, a couple of emotional town hall meetings and marches, while reaching out to Revs. Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson.

When HPI asked Indianapolis Council President Vop Osili if Buttigieg had made inroads with a previously skeptical audience, Osili paused briefly, then said, “He has more support tonight than he did last night.”

Conventional wisdom is that this gay Democratic candidate faces a historic obstacle with black evangelical churches. The irony there is that the percentage of gay African-Americans is in sync with the rest of the population, so this is a political perception. Buttigieg attempted to take it on Friday night in a city facing record homicide rates. He did so as well as before the National Urban League in Detroit earlier this summer that earned very little media coverage, along with events in South Carolina where

60% of the primary vote will be African-American.

At an August event in the African-American Chicago neighborhood of Bronzeville, he found an audience mostly white and Millennial. “Find the people who don’t look like most of you in this room and let them know they have the chance, not just to support this campaign, but to shape it,” Buttigieg told them.

“When I launched this campaign, I understood on some level that confronting the urgency of this moment meant reckoning with race in America,” Buttigieg said. “But it is one thing to understand this in theory, or from the perspective of one city. It’s another to get the education that comes with the travels you undertake as a presidential candidate. All of American life takes place under these shadows, not as a distant historical artifact but as a burning present reality which hurts everyone and everything it touches. And if we do not tackle the problem of racial inequity in our lifetime, I have become convinced that it will wreck the American project in my lifetime.”

Buttigieg added, “It is not enough to treat this as some specialty issue, something to talk about with minor-

ity voters and then ignore elsewhere on the campaign trail. Which is why you will see me talking about the need to confront systemic racism not only at the NAACP dinner, but at the union hall, and with the American Legion, and in front of majority white audiences wherever we go.

"I want it said of my candidacy and my presidency not only that we strengthened Black America, but that we helped all of America understand why this nation is not what we think it is until equality is real," he said.

Buttigieg unveils prescription drug plan

Buttigieg released his 'Affordable Medicine for All' plan that will protect Americans from the rising cost of prescription drugs by compelling pharmaceutical companies to price responsibly and work for—not against—the American people. "Time and time again, Washington has proven that it's either uninterested in or incapable of addressing this problem. Instead of siding with Americans, politicians have stood with Big Pharma, as they did when Congress barred the federal government from negotiating with pharmaceutical companies on drug prices for seniors," said Buttigieg. "It's time for a new era of leadership in Washington who will finally make drugs affordable and take on pharmaceutical companies." Currently, Americans spend more than \$1,200 on prescription drugs per person per year. That's more than double what the British, Norwegians, and Italians pay per person. In the first six months of 2019, pharmaceutical companies increased prices for 3,400 drugs, and for those drugs, the average increase was 10.5%, five times the rate of inflation. And more than 40 drugs had price hikes greater than 100%.

Buttigieg's Affordable Medicine for All plan will ensure that Americans can access affordable, quality prescription drugs with policies that:

- Cut out-of-pocket prescription drug costs for seniors on Medicare by at least 50% by the end of Pete's first term, including an out-of-pocket cap on prescription drug costs of \$200 per month.
- Cap out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs under \$250 per month for everyone choosing public coverage under Pete's Medicare for All Who Want It plan.
- Allow the federal government to negotiate drug prices with pharmaceutical companies to make drugs more affordable for everyone.
- Hold pharmaceutical companies accountable for price gouging by exercising 'eminent domain' to take patents away from "worst offenders" that refuse to lower prices for essential drugs
- Rein in outrageous drug price increases by penalizing pharmaceutical companies that raise prices by more than inflation

- Bring transparency to drug pricing by requiring pharmaceutical companies under a public plan or Medicare to report prices, discounts, rebates and free goods, and costs of manufacturing drugs to the federal government.

- Institute a \$0 co-pay for high-quality generic medicines for low-income people on Medicare, Medicaid, and Pete's Medicare for All Who Want It plan.

- Reduce median annual out-of-pocket drug spending for middle-class Americans on Medicare Part D living with cancer by at least \$5,100 and by at least \$2,000 for those living with certain immune disorders, such as rheumatoid arthritis or multiple sclerosis.

- Help end the opioid epidemic by dramatically reducing the cost of naloxone, a drug used to reverse opioid overdoses, and other medicines used to treat substance abuse.

Buttigieg opens up new campaign HQ

A large crowd gathered last Thursday outside of the new 'Pete For America' campaign office to show their support (Indiana Public Media). Buttigieg said there are several reasons he opened the office, like preparation for the Indiana primary in May. "It is very likely the nomination contest will still be pretty intense and undecided when the primary happens here in Indiana so it's never too soon to be organizing right here." Buttigieg also said South Bend is the heart of his campaign and he wanted to grow his local presence. The Buttigieg campaign hired Arielle Brandy as its Indiana state director.

Hupfer calls on Buttigieg to address crime

Ahead of Mayor Buttigieg's stop in South Bend Thursday night to open a new presidential campaign office, Indiana Republican Party Chairman Kyle Hupfer released a statement calling on Buttigieg to stick around South Bend a little longer and to address the city's rising crime. "As homicides and aggravated assaults continue to rise in South Bend, the city needs a leader," said Hupfer. "And sadly right now, it's clear that Mayor Pete Buttigieg is dodging the responsibilities of being that leader. The people of South Bend care about the safety of their own neighborhoods – not baseless impeachment inquiries, and certainly not Buttigieg's latest celebrity endorsement." ❖





Indiana
at your finger tips

Download it today!
howeypolitics.com

HPI Mobile Offers...

The Daily Wire - 6 Days a Week
Photo & Video Galleries
Access to HPI Columnists
News Alerts
and more for

\$0.96
per day

Now available for IOS and Android devices

Democrats, be careful what you wish for

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Note to Democrats: Be careful what you wish for. It just might come true, with unpleasant consequences. Like President Mike Pence.

Many Democrats wish that President Trump would go. Quickly. Before the 2020 election. Through impeachment.



Well, it appears likely now that the Democratic-controlled House will vote to impeach Trump. But that only sends impeachment charges to the Republican-controlled Senate, where chances that the president would be convicted and removed from office range from highly unlikely to none at all.

Still, some Democrats hold out hope - wishing fervently - that Trump could be implicated so deeply in impeachable conduct and become so clearly unhinged that Senate Republicans would join in a two-thirds vote to remove him from the White House.

If the unexpected happened, if that Democratic wish came true, Vice President Mike Pence would become president.

There could be unpleasant consequences for Democrats in President Pence rather than an impeachment-weakened President Trump as the 2020 Republican nominee. Or maybe not. We'll look at that possibility, too.

First, however, consider a Politico Magazine scenario suggesting that Pence, as "a low-key Midwesterner," might be able to "restore calm and soothe an exhausted electorate" and form a strong diversity ticket with former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley as running mate.

Pence now doesn't have high approval ratings. He is seen as sort of a potted plant, there to decorate the Oval Office but never to disagree with anything. But if he moved to the presidency in a crisis, handling it calmly rather than with bombast, wouldn't Pence be tougher for Democrats to defeat than a wounded, impeached and unhinged President Trump?

Pence would inherit much of the Trump base be-

cause of his loyalty to the president. And he could extend appeal to those traditional Republicans now turned off by Trump's conduct and departure from conservative values on spending and deficits.

There's a Washington guessing game about how many Republican senators would vote in an impeachment trial to convict Trump if there were a secret ballot. Probably a lot. Many would prefer Pence. But there will be no secret vote. So, most Republican senators would face political demise in voting against Trump if his popularity with Republican constituents remains high.

While many Republicans in Congress wish secretly that Pence rather than Trump would be their 2020 presidential nominee, perhaps they also should be careful what they wish for.

Pence now has been pulled into the impeachment investigation of whether Trump withheld military aid to Ukraine in an effort to force the Ukrainian president to seek dirt on Joe Biden and his son. Pence conferred face-to-face with Ukrainian President Zelensky about the military aid, and one of Pence's top advisors was in on the famous July 25 call involving Trump and Zelensky.

Trump himself pulled Pence into the situation by suggesting that details of Pence's phone calls and conversations with Zelensky should be released. They were "perfect," Trump said. He has an unusual definition of that word.

Pence denies any knowledge of the effort to encourage the foreign nation to seek negative information about Biden.

If that sounds to Trump like a disagreement with his contention that there is a lot of negative stuff that needs to be found in Ukraine, Pence could be in trouble with his boss.

Could Pence even be dropped from the 2020 ticket? Sure. Trump doesn't hesitate to throw anybody under the bus if he grows dissatisfied with the vehemence of unquestioning support.


Trump likes a down-in-the-gutter fighter, like a Rudy Giuliani. That's not Pence's style. Trump might wish for someone more eye-gouging than Pence.

In this strange political environment, it's hard to figure what ticket either party should be wishing for. So many unforeseen and possibly unpleasant consequences lurk in any scenario. ❖

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

ANTELOPE CLUB

615 N. DELAWARE ST. - DOWNTOWN INDY
antelopeclub@hotmail.com



>> Lunch & dinner 6 days a week

>> Cigar lounge

>> Beautiful view of Downtown from our 2nd floor patio

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

A super PAC forms for conservatives

By CURT SMITH

ZIONSVILLE — For years I have watched great candidates with conservative credentials and wonderful backgrounds go down in defeat, losing to more moderate but better funded challengers. Now that I have passed an important professional milestone, I hope to help level that playing field by forming and guiding a new superPAC we are calling the Hoosier Heartland Fund.



The formal steps to register the fund with the Federal Election Commission are being taken today, and we will soon announce others affiliating with this initiative.

My campaign background is mostly in federal races, where I have served as campaign manager, senior staff or the general consultant for nine winning races for Mike Pence, Dan

Coats (four times), John Hostettler, Mike Sodrel (primary only) and Larry Bucshon, M.D. (two times). Those experiences taught me great candidates with solid, Hoosier-aligned conservative positions can win. But they need money to magnify their message so it goes out far and wide.

Accordingly, the first focus of the Hoosier Heartland Fund is to boost the chances of winning for Micah Beckwith, a millennial musician whose career has focused on youth development through the gift of music. Yes, he's also a small businessman, pastor, performer, father and husband. But most importantly he's a patriot.

He's also a lot of fun to be around, exuding energy and excitement while showing a keen sense of humor about himself. My only regret in forming this independent expenditure committee (the law book name for this effort) is that I won't get to hang out with Micah anymore. Well, at least not until he wins the general election in November 2020. Federal rules require the fund's efforts to be strictly separated from Micah and his campaign committee. See you in a year-plus, friend.

He is one of at least five declared candidates running for the open Indiana Congressional District 5 seat due to the retirement of Susan Brooks.

My view is that Micah is what conservatism needs for a winsome future, and not just because of his relative youth. He is an outsider. He has never run for office, and he doesn't need to win this race to get a good job — some will debate whether serving in Congress is a good job — nor to fulfill a neurotic need to vanquish the indignities

and slights of a troubled childhood. He loves what he does currently, and is very good at it. But something is gnawing away at him on the inside. America is slipping away, one election at a time.

That's great motivation. But Micah has the other, parallel prerequisite: He will not be changed by Washington when he begins serving. He will believe the same things, champion the same things, and worship the same God, even as a member of Congress with the status that confers. He is rooted, grounded and humble.

But he will need help to have a fighting chance. That's because his likely major opponents have served in office or can self-fund their campaigns. One opponent, Steve Braun, can spend millions to try and win the seat, though he announced on Monday he was suspending his campaign for health reason. We know this because that's what he did in 2018 in a different congressional district, only to see it backfire and help elect then-State Rep. James Baird as now U.S. Rep. Baird. That's because Braun's SuperPAC attacked Baird in a foolish way. Braun's campaign was suspended but not ended on Monday due to an unspecified health issue.

Another opponent, Kelly Mitchell, is the sitting state treasurer, and will have strong party support, which is very important in the May 7, 2020, GOP primary in this largely Republican district. Other candidates and likely candidates have considerable strengths, from compelling stories to deep pockets, to proven voting records.

But Micah is that fresh breeze, young but wise beyond his years. Smart and articulate, but quick to listen and learn from others. Earnest and sincere but not a bore.

For the issues I care about the most to prevail — ending abortion, preserving religious liberty and favoring the traditional family as the building block of a healthy and prosperous society — my generation must identify and assist winsome leaders from the emerging generation to carry forth. The Hoosier Heartland Fund intends to do just that for Micah Beckwith in this Indiana GOP primary next May. I hope and pray my win streak remains intact, albeit in a very different role. ❖

Curt Smith is chairman of the Indiana Family Institute and the principal at Wordsmith Policy, LLC.

Trump supporters quick to jump on Biden, but what about POTUS kin?

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI

ANDERSON — It would be awkward, I suppose, if Hunter Biden's business dealings were to emerge as a major issue in next year's presidential campaign.

Of course, that won't keep the president's defenders from promoting it.

Take U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan. CNN's Jake Tapper was trying to interview Jordan about the president's now infamous telephone conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenky, but Jordan was far more interested in talking about the Bidens.



"The vice president's son gets paid \$50,000 a month and gets hired by a company in an industry he has no experience in, and, oh, that's fine?" Jordan said. "Try taking that message to the American people."

Jordan, the ranking Republican on the House Oversight Committee, had a lot to say about the Bidens. At the same time, he's had very little to say about the business interests of the president's offspring around the world.

Forbes recently reported the president's sons, Donald Jr. and Eric Trump, had sold more than \$100 million of the family's real estate since the president took office. A \$3.2 million deal in the Dominican Republic, it said, represented "the clearest violation of their father's pledge to do no new foreign deals while in office."

During in appearance to promote a Trump project in Indonesia last year, Donald Jr. insisted the family business had turned down lots of deals it could have pursued.

"We could have kept doing deals," he said. "The media is never going to give us credit."

Oliver Bullough, a British journalist who sits on the advisory board of an anti-corruption organization in Ukraine, says Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani's assertions about Joe Biden are "just nonsense."

The former vice president's role in ousting a Ukrainian prosecutor is no secret. Heck, he stood in front of the

Council on Foreign Relations last year and bragged about it.

In that speech, Biden recalled telling Ukrainian leaders they'd have to get rid of that corrupt prosecutor if they wanted the billion-dollar loan guarantee the United States had promised. That prosecutor, Viktor Shokin, is now a key witness in the case being put together by Giuliani.

Shokin insists Biden wanted to shut down an investigation of the natural gas company Burisma Holdings to protect Hunter, who was then a member of that company's board of directors.

Bullough told the Washington Post the real corruption was in Shokin's own office, where top officials had been caught with stashes of diamonds and hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash.

Both Bidens insist they haven't talked much about the younger Biden's business dealings. The elder Biden has said much of what he knows he learned from the news media.

Hunter Biden told the New Yorker he had apologized to his father for the turmoil he had caused, not only with his business dealings but with his struggles with substance abuse and other issues.

"He says, 'I'm the one who's sorry,' and we have an ongoing debate about who should be more sorry," the younger Biden said. Bullough suggests the elder Biden should have taken a different approach.

"Why didn't Joe Biden tell Hunter: 'Come off it. What the hell do you think you're doing?'" he told the Washington Post.

Though there is no evidence of criminal behavior, Bullough said, the better course might have been to avoid even a hint of impropriety.

"Should Joe Biden have prevented his son from essentially trading off the Biden name?" he asked. "Maybe



he should have."

Of course, if we really want to discourage such behavior, we might want to pass a law making it illegal. Do you suppose the president would sign it? ❖

Kelly Hawes is a columnist for CNHI News Indiana. He can be reached at kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com. Find him on Twitter @Kelly_Hawes.

How to fix Indiana's hospital monopolies

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Last week's column on Indiana's hospital monopolies generated ten times the emails of any other column I've penned over the last decade. Hoosier taxpayers are interested in understanding who caused this problem



and how we can fix it. I commend the thousands of readers who visited our website to read the study. What you learned is that my study is just one of several recent reports alerting Indiana to monopoly problems in hospitals. Moreover, you know that my study combined data from several different sources including the IRS, Department of Commerce, Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services and the Rand Corporation, the nation's most

respected think tank.

Awareness of this issue is important because Indiana's not-for-profit hospital industry surely earned a billion dollars in interest on their accumulated profits last year, through their hedge fund and money market investments. That kind of money should attract thorough scrutiny of my work. I welcome more research in this issue, especially a deeper analysis of the IRS financial data, which provide a truthful look at not-for-profit hospital profits. Still, no matter what spin you hear, my study came to the correct conclusions. We have a serious hospital monopoly problem in need of immediate attention.

This invites the question of who we should blame. If you are looking to pin the fault on the legislature, I must disappoint you. It appears that this problem really grew in the wake of the Great Recession and healthcare reform. Even the strongest supporters of the Affordable Care Act (ACA or Obamacare), anticipated significant disruptions in healthcare markets. Many states added tools for hospitals to survive the transition. States also allowed much more aggressive hospital mergers than federal merger guidelines allowed. Indiana was ground zero for these problems.

By 2012 or 2013, it was clear the ACA was not as disruptive as expected, but it left not-for-profit hospitals in Indiana awakened to a host of new tools to prevent competition. They used these tools skillfully, amassing huge profits before almost anyone noticed. The industry kept a tight lid on their windfall profits, spending part of them to convince legislators that we needed less, not more competition in healthcare markets. This diversion and lack of transparency has meant few of us figured out there was a crisis brewing. This is not some failure of a market economy. Instead, an accumulation of small favors by government created this hospital monopoly problem. Of course, now we need to act,

but what can and should we do?

My study recommends that we do three broad remedies, or else we will be in the midst of another major healthcare cost crisis in fewer than five years. First, we have to level the playing field between for-profit and not-for-profit hospitals. The biggest issue is eliminating barriers to market competition. We need to end the Certificate of Need legislation, outlaw non-compete clauses in practitioner contracts, prevent hospitals from limiting admitting privileges to favored physicians, and force hospitals to publish transparent pricing data.

Second, we need to tax not-for-profit hospitals like their for-profit competitors. We should all recognize that these shocking profits come from just three groups who pay healthcare expenses. These are Indiana's state and local governments (including schools), Hoosier businesses and Hoosier families. Without equal tax liabilities, we will see no real competition. As a side benefit, this extra tax can fully pay for the Medicaid expansion that these not-for-profit hospitals lobbied for so eagerly.

Finally, we are going to have to separate ownership control of the accrued profits from these hospital boards. The reason is that the mere existence of these immense war chests represents a classic barrier to competition. For example, Fort Wayne has perhaps the highest healthcare prices of any American city. Normally, this would invite hospitals to compete in that market.

However, Parkview hospital can remain solvent without charging patients a single dollar for several years. That fact alone would rightfully scare off any for-profit hospitals. This is a textbook source of monopoly protection that explains why residents of the greater Fort Wayne area pay such high healthcare prices.

I am not sure where these profits could go, but I have heard some intriguing ideas. Maybe they should fund a large, statewide investment fund. This is an idea I especially like. Perhaps we could end the endless whining by hospitals about a nursing shortage by asking that they permanently endow every nursing school in the state. That would cost only most of last year's interest on their investments. In addition, I expect we will have a few trial attorneys help move these funds back to consumers.

These three steps are not some sweeping new government intrusion into free markets. On the contrary, they simply level the playing field, removing the government-created advantage not-for-profit hospitals have so successfully exploited. One strategy the industry will employ to avoid these changes is to claim that healthcare finance is so complex that no study single can really be informative. Nonsense. You do not need to be an industry insider or accountant to understand the behavior we observe in Indiana's hospital industry. Any history of the Gilded Age would provide a rough outline of their current business practices. ❖

Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State.

David Frum, The Atlantic: In the throes of Watergate, Vice President Spiro Agnew was caught up in an unrelated corruption scandal. He pleaded guilty and resigned his office on October 10, 1973. To that point, Agnew had served as a useful insurance policy for Richard Nixon, in the manner of the joke Charles II is sometimes reputed to have made to his even more unpopular brother when the latter warned him against plots. "Never fear James; they will not kill me to make thee king." Agnew's replacement—former House Minority Leader Gerald Ford—faced an agonizing personal dilemma. Republicans were monitoring him suspiciously for any sign of disloyalty to Nixon, any tendency to hasten impeachment forward to enter the presidency himself. Democrats monitored him suspiciously, too. Scandals had already consumed two Nixon attorneys general and many other high officials. Could Ford keep clean? Ford's solution: He got out of town. Republicans were facing a tough election in November 1974, so Ford volunteered as their headliner of choice, their fundraiser in chief. As the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library notes, during the 10 months of his vice presidency "Ford represented the administration by making over 200 formal speeches and traveling approximately 110,000 miles."



Ford's travels might have been controversial. In this moment of national crisis, a new vice president acting as such an eager partisan for a damaged party? But criticism was held back by the knowledge, shared by Democrats and Republicans alike, that America was going to need Ford. The country was going to need him to be clean, and the surest way to protect him was to keep him far from Washington. Ford's intact reputation enabled Congress and the country to turn the page definitively in August 1974. Nixon's most tainted appointees had been forced from office before him. When Nixon resigned at last, the government could reset and begin a new era.

Donald Trump may not know much of this history, but he intuits its lessons. From the beginning, he has appeared determined to implicate as many members of his administration as possible in his scandal — Vice President Mike Pence heading the list. At a press conference at the United Nations on September 25, Trump delivered a warning message. "The word is, they're going to ask for the first phone conversation. You can have it any time you need it. And also Mike Pence's conversations, which were, I think, one or two of them. They were perfect. They were all perfect." Indeed, Pence seems to have been involved up to the eyeballs in the Ukraine plot. His team's messaging—Yes, he pressed the Ukrainians to investigate corruption, but he never appreciated that Trump's true purpose was to pursue the Bidens—fails the laugh test. Pence's taint presents a political problem for him, but raises a much graver question for the country. If the Senate ever could muster the integrity to remove Trump from office, there would be no Ford to put in his place, only a vice president who participated in Trump's dirty schemes, from staying at a remote resort to direct government funds to Trump's

failing Irish golf course to extorting an invaded country to fabricate political dirt to help Trump's reelection. ❖

Charles Sykes, Politico: It was a *cri de cœur* from Lindsey Graham, the lament of the sycophant scorned. President Donald Trump's decision to abandon our Kurdish allies in Syria by leaving them undefended against a Turkish invasion was, Graham tweeted, "a disaster" and a "nightmare." As Monday morning wore on, he expanded his indictment. Betraying the Kurds would force them to align with the Assad regime and Iran and would ensure the comeback of ISIS. It would be, he tweeted, "a stain on America's honor," and a virtual surrender to the terrorists. Graham's disappointment was palpable, but understandable, given all that he has given up to avoid this moment. For the past several years, Graham has transformed himself from one of Trump's fiercest critics, into one of his most reflexive defenders. Even by the cynical and shape-shifting standards of Washington, Graham's metamorphosis has been a thing of wonder. The senator once known as John McCain's best friend in the Senate, transformed himself into Trump's shinebox, willing to ingratiate himself with rationalizations and praise even as Trump became increasingly erratic. At first, it was a mere curiosity. During the 2016 campaign, Graham had called Trump a "nutjob" and a loser." He predicted that if the GOP nominated him, "we will get destroyed ... and we will deserve it."

In moments of candor, Graham tried to explain the deal he thought he was making. When Mark Leibovich asked him earlier this year what had happened to him, Graham explained: "Well, OK, from my point of view, if you know anything about me, it'd be odd not to do this," he said. I asked what "this" was. "'This,'" Graham said, "is to try to be relevant." Politics, he explained, was the art of what works and what brings desired outcomes. "I've got an opportunity up here working with the president to get some really good outcomes for the country," he told me. Like many others in his party, staying "relevant" was central to their political calculations. Capitulating to Trump meant that Graham would become a rock star in the increasingly Trumpist party and virtually assured of reelection in South Carolina next year. He would also have the president's ear. And this was at the heart of Graham's Bargain. Graham told himself: by staying close to Trump, he could influence him and prevent horribly bad decisions. What did it matter if he had to endure temporary embarrassments, abase himself on cable television, or even become a political punchline, if he could stop Trump from impulsive decisions regarding Russia or North Korea? Or Syria? The world saw Graham as a craven, cringing Uriah Heep. Graham saw himself as someone who could save the world, or at least the Kurds. And then came Trump's decision. This is the thing about Faustian bargains. The price is high and the rewards turn out to be illusory. They end badly. ❖

Holcomb concerned about Marion Co. marijuana stance

INDIANAPOLIS — Concerned about the “message it sends,” Gov. Eric Holcomb told Howey Politics Indiana on Monday that he is thinking through Marion County Prosecutor Ryan Mear’s decision to stop charging marijuana possession offenders. “I am concerned and will be thinking through this,” Holcomb told HPI. “Obviously marijuana is illegal in the State of Indiana. It is today and it was when this decision by a county prosecutor when this decision was made. I have some concerns about the message it sends, understanding, of course, it’s within the authority of a county prosecutor, whatever county they come from, to decide on the level of punishment. But I have concern when you publicly make a blanket statement that you’re no longer going to. I need to learn what he’s going to do in terms of addressing folks who break the law.” Asked if Holcomb would address what is essentially becoming a dual policy, with cases being dismissed in Indianapolis, but not the rest of the state, Holcomb said, “It very well might be part of our agenda moving forward in a sense we’re never going to take our foot off the gas to address addiction in the state of Indiana. That will certainly take shape and form later this year. Another huge concern is vaping and marijuana finding its way into middle school kids lungs. I want to make sure all of these pieces, from a legislative perspective, fit together appropriately.”

Niles Council OKs marijuana sales

NILES, Mich. — Someday soon — maybe not much more than a year after cannabis was legalized in Michigan — getting marijuana in town

could be kind of like getting a beer ([South Bend Tribune](#)). After voting 11 months ago not to allow recreational marijuana businesses, City Council Monday night reversed course by a vote of 6 to 1. Residents and medical marijuana business owners in attendance at the special meeting gave the council cheers and a big round of applause.

Judge orders Trump taxes to D.A.

NEW YORK — A federal judge on Monday rejected a bold argument from President Trump that sitting presidents are immune from criminal investigations, allowing the Manhattan district attorney’s office to move forward with a subpoena seeking eight years of the president’s personal and corporate tax returns ([New York Times](#)). The ruling issued by Judge Victor Marrero of Manhattan federal court does not mean that the president’s tax returns will be turned over immediately. Mr. Trump’s lawyers quickly appealed the decision, and the appeals court agreed to temporarily block the order. The judge’s decision came a little more than a month after the Manhattan district attorney subpoenaed Mr. Trump’s accounting firm, Mazars USA, for his personal and corporate returns dating to 2011.

No U.S. greenlight for Kurds slaughter

WASHINGTON — The White House insisted on a telephone briefing for reporters last night that President Trump did not offer Turkey a “green light” to slaughter U.S.-backed Kurdish forces in Northern Syria, and that the U.S. would not bear responsibility for any ISIS resurgence in the area, Axios World editor Dave Lawler reports. A senior administration official said Trump will withdraw the 50-100 special forces currently operating near the Turkey-Syria border, but is not pulling out of Syria entirely. Confusion followed the sudden announcement

that Trump — after a call with Turkey’s president — had decided to pull U.S. troops from the “immediate area” into which Turkish troops are expected to advance.

Braun backs Syrian pullout

TERRE HAUTE — U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, R-Jasper, said “we are making the right move” to withdraw American troops in parts of the Middle East (Greninger, [Terre Haute Tribune-Star](#)). In a shift of U.S. military policy, the Trump administration yesterday announced a full troop withdraw from northern Syria, possibly allowing a military operation by Turkey against Kurdish forces, which had battled to uproot ISIS. Turkey has sought to end American support of Kurdish fighters, considering them a terrorist insurgency. However, Kurdish fighters have been a reliable U.S. partner in battling the Islamic State in northern Syria. “I am going to be in the camp that I think we need to be less engaged to the extent than we have been in the past,” Braun said in a stop Monday in Terre Haute at the Tribune-Star. “When President Trump said, ‘Hey, our allies shoulder more of the burden,’ help pay for stuff, help be responsible. It doesn’t mean we don’t do things smartly and we don’t lead. I think we can do both of them,” Braun said.

Bingham to merge with Dentons

INDIANAPOLIS — Bingham Greenebaum Doll (BGD) announced today that the firm is combining with Dentons, the world’s largest law firm (Howey Politics Indiana). “This is an incredible opportunity to connect our clients to a national and global platform, with partners we trust to provide the best possible service to our clients in a variety of practice areas and markets,” said Toby McClamroch, Managing Partner of BGD. “We are excited to join the Dentons platform.”

