THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT

The Weekly Briefing On Indiana Politics

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"QUOTE" OF THE WEEK

"You and others will bring that question up until I start winning primaries, if I run for president. Then we'll end that question..."

- F rmer Vice President Dan Quayle t CNN's Judy W druff n his reputati n as a "lightweight"

Quayle, Thompson, Bush emerging trio

Midwest GOP conference sets stage for 2000

INDIANAPOLIS - Dan Quayle in 2000 for the Republican presidential nomination? Any takers?

There seated at Table 85 with yours truly just prior to the luncheon at the Midwest Republican Leadership Conference were Charlie Cook of the *Cook Political Report*, Paul West from the *Baltimore Sun* and George Conden of Copley News Service.

They were skeptical.

Quayle, West observed, will never be able to ditch the deer-in-the-headlights candidacy of 1988. The press will be all over him.

By Monday morning, after the enormously successful conference concluded, West was right. They were talking about Quayle. But this time it was as one of an emerging triumverate of GOP presidential timber. Quayle, along with Tennessee Sen. Fred Thompson and Texas Gov. George W. Bush figure to be the three most likely Republicans to be in the battle for the nomination.

While all three are on national trajectories, Quayle, Bush and Thompson are homing in at different angles.

For Quayle, last weekend had him making the earliest cut because he beat expectations. While Richard L. Berke of the New York Times cast Bush as a politician who "has rapidly burst into the political stratosphere as the hottest figure among major players in Republican circles," he noted that Quayle had delegates "more impressed with the speech delivery" during his half hour talk last Friday afternoon.

CNN reported that Quayle "beat the expectation game" by "giving a rousing speech about the dangers of abandoning fundamental conservative values." Later, in a CNN interview with Judy Woodruff, Quayle responded to his reputation "as a lightweight" by saying, "You and others will bring that question up until I start winning primaries, if I run for president. Then we'll end that question."

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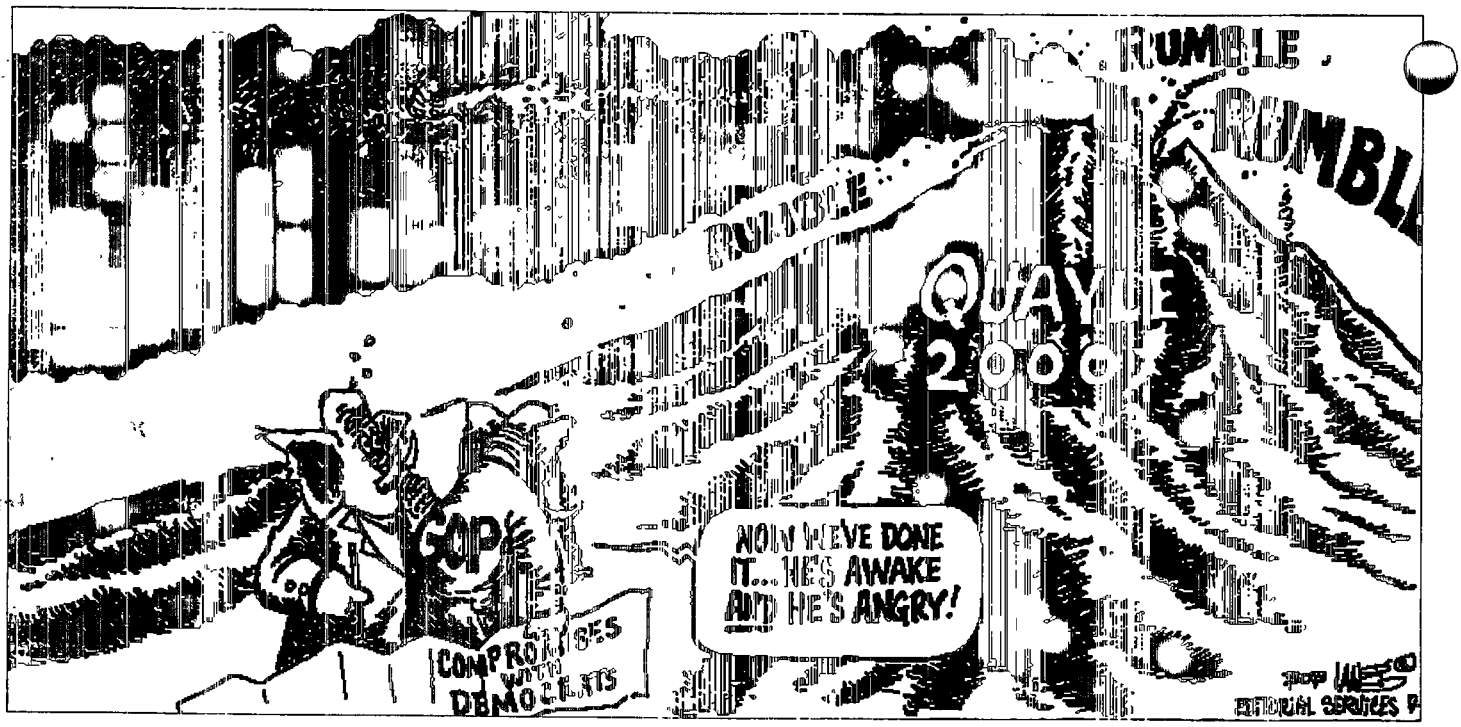

TICKER TAPE

PLAY OF THE WEEK: This one has to go to Mike McDaniel for pulling off a virtually flawless convention, the first 2000 presidential cattle call, dozens of national clips, and a positioning of Indianapolis as a national convention caliber city. It may have been the finest modern moment for an Indiana party chairman. When McDaniel addressed the conference at noon Friday, he told the delegates, "Think back to Election Night '92 and how many truly believed we would ever see a Republican majority. Next, think of the chameleon Clinton saying, "The era of big government is over."

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Quayle, from page 1

How did Quayle beat the expectation game? Well, the home crowd didn't hurt. Quayle stood before a mic with no rostrum and chatted with the delegates. He seemed comfortable.

His was the first major address following Newt Gingrich's and Quayle drew blood and the next day's headlines by accusing Congressional Republicans of caving in on the issue of government expansion.

Quayle historically has always thrived by being overlooked and taken lightly. The fact that he chose to pounce on the unpopular Speaker - although these Republicans ranged anywhere from respectful to enthusiastic - reveals a streak in the former Indiana senator the national media has never gotten a grip on. The Quayles - Dan and Marilyn - are shrewd political strategists and tacticians. His '88 vice presidential nomination was the end result of a carefully orchestrated strategy to position the Indiana senator for the nomination which then fell into his lap. The budget contrast issue playing to the conservative choir was an adroit move before the masses looking for someone to adore.

It established Quayle as a true player among the other established presidential runners - Alexander, Kemp and Gingrich.

Saturday, the newcomers bracket found Fred Thompson and George Bush emerging. Thompson is riding a wave as premier investigator of the campaign finance scandal. Republican activists are interested in that. But Thompson's radiant personality mixed in with an extremely clever Southern "good ol' boy" charm and a cutting edge message - "Reform is about restoring people's confidence in their government and their leaders. We can't remain a great nation without it" electrified the 1,200 people who jammed the Westin to hear him.

Thompson added that "after only 11 days of hearings, even the most objective observer would conclude that the array of illegal and improper activities in our presidential campaign were absolutely unprecedented in this country. There was a systematic flow of millions of dollars of illegal money, much of it from foreign sources, into the Democratic National Committee and the President's re-election effort."

If Fred Thompson hits the motherlode during the upcoming Senate hearings next month, he will be a fast train traveling down a steep Smoky Mountain grade that could be hard to stop if he executes his politics well.

Bush represents a Republican legacy the loyalists seem to have been looking for since Camelot. He is the son of a president. But unlike the Kennedys, the Bushes don't die of drug overdoses, plunge off bridges or face allegations of

City of Indianapolis emerges from conference as national convention contender

HORSE RACE

TRENDLINE: People might have laughed at the notion of Indianapolis hosting a Republican National Convention prior to this weekend. But if there were any big winners from the Midwest Republican Leadership Conference, it was Indianapolis. Numerous delegates and national reporters said they were impressed with the conference, the city and the RCA Dome/Indiana Convention Center facilities, compared to New Orleans (the Super Dome was too big) and San Diego (too small).

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■ ¡ **8TH CD:** Evansville Councilwoman Gail Riecken came out of French Lick as the prohibitive favorite to win the Democratic nomination. In a move engineered by Tony Long during the 8th CD meeting, the county chairs voted unanimously (with two abstentions) for the endorsement. Long told HPR that the move for the endorsement had come from a county chair he did not identify who had previously not committed to Riecken. The endorsement caught Jay Southwood, the Shelbern Town Clerk-Treasurer, off guard. Southwood had showed up at French Lick expecting to compete for support only to find he had been out-manuevered. Word had it by Sunday that Southwood would leave the race. However, Southwood later set a $50,000 fundraising goal by the end of September as the threshhold for his staying in the race. "It's silly for me to stay in the race if I can't raise the money," Southwood told the Evansville Courier.

■ ¡ **1998 INDIANA SENATE:** Indianapolis attorney John Price released a name ID poll conducted by TeleResearch last May that showed Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke with a 41 percent name ID rating, Price with 40 percent and Peter Rusthoven with 25 percent. There was some speculation that the numbers were high for all three candidates. But Jeff Lewis of TeleResearch said the poll (1,049 statewide, (+/- 3 percent) was conducted from a list of Republican voters who had participated in the last two primaries. "It's those folks who will determine the nominees," Lewis explained. "It was a highly-informed electorate we polled." What it did not tell was any favorable/unfavorable data on each candidate. But it was the first statistical peek into a race that has had absolutely no numbers to go on up to this point. Both Helmke and Rusthoven had told HPR that to go into the field at this point would have been a waste of money.

sex crimes. George W. Bush has embraced core conservative principles in his popular Texas administration, as has his brother Jeb, possibly the next governor of Florida. He was the president's family enforcer during the Oval Office days, so he can make the case that he has been there, done that. He has been a man who likes to tip a few beers during an afternoon on a bass boat and comes off as the kind of guy you'd love to have at your backyard barbecue.

While Bush's speech got off to an excellent start with the line about following his father's footsteps ("I will not jump out of any airplanes") the rest of the speech was stiffly delivered. Yet delegates and reporters like the *New York Times'* Berke were ready to anoint him Big Cheese. "Despite the most open field in years, many political professionals are declaring, embarrassingly early, that Mr. Bush is the Republican to beat," Berke wrote.

If there was a big loser, it might be Jack Kemp, the 1996 vice presidential nominee. While he drew cheers from the delegates, many told HPR and other reporters that they couldn't get the 1996 presidential campaign out of their minds. The predominant feeling was that both Kemp and presidential nominee Bob Dole failed to press Clinton/Gore on the ethical problems swirling around the campaign and that's why they lost.

TICKER TAPE

LaGrange County Chairman Ken Wonderly announced a Senate debate for the annual LaGrange County Republican Picnic on Saturday, at 1:30 p.m. Sept. 20. Candidates John Price and Peter Rusthoven have already accepted. Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke has yet to commit. U.S. Rep. Mark Souder will serve as the moderator. "We are very privileged to have the first of many debates which will be held throughout the state for this very important race," Wonderly said.

Former Indiana Republican Chairman Al Hubbard may have been responsible for luring Texas Gov. George W. Bush to Indianapolis. Hubbard and Bush attended Harvard business school together and the Hoosier told the New York Times he enticed Bush to Indianapolis with a Saturday fundraiser. "We've been buddies forever," Hubbard said. "I said, 'I'll raise a little money for you if you come up here.'" Hubbard also has extremely close ties to Quayle, serving as head of the White House Council on Competitiveness and has also been a business and investment partner with the former vice president.

Several signs seen during the Quayle speech Friday read like this: "Quayle-Bush."

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HPR
Special Report

"Right now the news is about as good as it can be. It's been strong leadership for eight years. It's no aberration that the state continues to do well..."
- Gov. Frank O'Bannon

Hoosier Democrats buoyed by strong numbers, song, stories ... and cigars

FRENCH LICK - While Hoosier Republicans made their way through a forest of presidential timber in Indianapolis, more than 600 Indiana Democrats gathered at the French Lick Springs Resort with old friends and accomplices to discuss nuts and bolts politics, sing with Mary Lou Conrad and match wits with Govs. O'Bannon and Bayh.

The turnout openly buoyed both state Democrats and members of its host for 117 years, the Indiana Democratic Editorial Association. The event has been steadily growing in recent years, from 84 people in 1994, to 169 in 1995, up to 207 in 1996 and 637 in 1997.

But numbers revealed by Democratic pollster Fred Yang had party members feeling extremely optimistic. He placed Gov. Frank O'Bannon's favorable rating in the 60 to 70 percent range. That's the first indication since the end of the Indiana General Assembly on how deep the governor's popularity runs.

In his speech at the Saturday night dinner, former Gov. Evan Bayh also revealed a bit of Yang's polling data. "Sixty-six percent believe the leadership and the Democrats are headed in the right direction."

Said O'Bannon, "Right now the news is about as good as it can be. It's been strong leadership for eight years. It's no aberration that the state continues to do well."

While Yang was reluctant to release much of his data, he did indicate that Democrats continue to get their message out better than Republicans. That essentially mirrored a report Republicans heard at the Midwest Leadership Conference from GOP pollster Bill McInturff. With the economy in such a robust shape, McInturff noted that social issues - education, health care and children - will become the vital battleground in 1998 and those issues tend to favor Democrats.

Essentially, Yang mirrored that before Democrats here.

What Democats have to fear, Yang mentioned, are the ethical clouds hovering over the Clinton administration. He said that Democrats lost 5 to 8 percent in the final two weeks of the 1996 campaign because of the fundraising scandal. Democrats also lost an advantage on congressional races because much of the money was spent early, whereas the Republicans unloaded a "massive infusion" of cash in the final weeks of the campaign. "They made the best decision," Yang said.

Essentially, both Hoosier political parties ended the weekend longing for each other's advantage. Republicans want to communicate their message better, while Democrats hope to execute their strategy on issues they believe will favor them.

Conrad's vision restored

The IDEA Convention at French Lick is an evolution of what the late Secretary of State Larry Conrad injected in the annual August event a generation ago. There were also singing, story telling, golfing, barbecues, numerous hospitality suites, and players hunkered down in the numerous foyers and alcoves around the sprawling hotel.

That has been restored with vigor. Last Friday night, the merry Democrats heard Mary Lou Conrad pounding the piano on the balcony over the grand lobby while Gov. O'Bannon literally sang himself hoarse.

This went on for somewhere between three and four hours.

Saturday's seminars centered around the theme of "Give a damn" (those round, red stickers were everywhere) while Indiana Democratic Chairman Joe Andrew assaulted couch potatoes sagging in Lazy Boys. The essential theme: Get off your ass and work!

By the dinner Saturday night, what should have been an exhausted Andrew took the stage and conducted his introductions of the luminaries in Letterman fashion, flipping index cards right and left. He updated the giddy Democrats on topics of the GOP seminars to the north: "You might want to catch the Newt Gingrich seminar: Why marriage is so important." Or one on the economy: "How to rent

limos if you don't own one."

Andrew's performance prompted State Rep. Jerry Denbo to observe, " People all over will tell you Joe Andrew is the top chairman in the nation."

When Bayh addressed the dinner (to a standing ovation), he observed, "The toughest act to follow is the wild animal act."

Bayh noted that he had toured the renovations underway at the historic West Baden Carlsbad Hotel. "History is being preserved right before our eyes," Bayh said. "That was the golden age of Democrats - 12 consecutive years of Democratic governors beginning in 1933." Bayh noted that Indiana Democrats have duplicated that in the 1980s and '90s.

And Bayh noted that it has been 24 years since the party won its last U.S. Senate race. "I, for one, hope there is time for a change," he said.

Cigars amidst Modisett

When it came time for story telling about 60 people sat in a circle, many lighting up stogies. There in a row sat former State Sen. Bob Peterson, Govs. O'Bannon and Bayh, Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan, and Attorney General Jeff Modisett, who ended up seated next to a cigar-chomping Matt Gutwein.

As Modisett entered the room, he declared, "The tobacco deal didn't include cigars," as the place erupted in laughter. But the clouds of smoke made a not-so-subtle impression on First and Second Ladies O'Bannon and Kernan, who were wincing at the acrid smell of Macanudos.

Bayh was the most prolific story teller, which is natural when you grow up as the son of a U.S. senator. He told several yarns, including a conversation when former House Speaker Sam Rayburn had given advice to a young Lyndon Johnson, who had ripped an opponent. "Lyndon, if you're going to tell someone to go to hell, you'd better make sure they go."

Another Bayh story talked of a headline in a Milwaukee newspaper after Wisonsin Gov. Tommy Thompson had vetoed a bill. Bayh said the headline read, "Thompson veto pen is a sword." Only there was no space between the words "pen" and "is."

Said Bayh, "We were all impressed by Gov. Thompson."

O'Bannon told the fable of John Mutz looking for a seasoned running mate 25 years older than he was in 1988 and how he might have decided on Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz. Had that Republican ticket won, O'Bannon said, the headlines might have said, "Mutz Butz Bayh O'Bannon."

A Democratic victory might have been reported this way: "Bayh-O'Bannon kicks Mutz-Butz."

Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan probably had the best story, telling about the days when his father was a Democratic precinct captain in Chicago. He recalled the "worst acceptance speech ever" by a winning aldermanic candidate. "Ladies and gentlemen," Kernan quoted the victor, "I spent the last six months kissing all your asses. I just want you to know you can spend the next four years kissing mine."

Kernan added that the alderman served only one term.

O'Bannons celebrate

The most poignant moment of the weekend came when the O'Bannons celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on stage at the French Lick Springs resort. It was the same place where the governor's parents had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with their entire family years ago.

Frank and Judy O'Bannon were presented a wedding band quilt as a gift. The First Lady began speaking extemporaneously in a manner that will clearly make her one of the most beloved First Ladies in Hoosier history. She observed the stitching in the quilt and the "beauty of the human hand."

She talked of the many activities at the governor's mansion aimed at inner city kids and added, "Thank you for the quilt to remind me every day who made it possible."

She and the governor then stood for nearly an hour to be photographed with most of those present.

It was an extraordinary ending to a day that many may mark as the beginning of great things for Indiana Democrats after the looming battles are resolved in 1998.

TICKER TAPE

Quayle did tell a great story about his recent days in Indianapolis. He decided to go to the store one night and decided to go incognito, pulling his hat well past his brainpan. A man looked at him and asked, "Hey, anybody ever tell you you look like Dan Quayle?" "Yes they have," the former veep responded. "Kind of makes you mad, doesn't it?" the man said.

Civil rights activist Coretta Scott King will appear at a fundraiser at Roberts Stadium in Evansville at 6 p.m. March 6 at the request of the Evansville Ministers Wives Council. "Her life is not just an inspiration to the wives of ministers, but to anyone who knows hardship," said Lois Duncan, president of the council (Evansville Courier).

Jonathon Weinzapfel, the 1996 nominee against U.S. Rep. John Hostettler, told 8th CD Democrats he will not run in 1998, citing the fact that he got married shortly after the '96 race. "Running for Congress in 1998 probably isn't the best idea for me," he said.

While former Vice President Quayle was criticizing the recent budget bill, U.S. Rep. John Hostettler was praising it, saying it would help the average family by about

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TICKER TAPE

$2,300 a year. "It is a good first step but it is by no means the last step," Hostettler told the Evansville Courier.

State Rep. Win Moses took issue with the fact that his Fort Wayne House seat was drawn up for an African-American candidate. "It is a 70-30 white district," Moses told HPR. "It never has been drawn up for a a black candidate."

U.S. Sen. Dan Coats told HPR that President Clinton's historic use of the first line item veto was both "restrained" and "reasonable." Coats championed the line item veto and helped get it passed.

Geoff Paddock, who was considered to be a potentially strong auditor or secretary of state candidate for the Democrats, told HPR that he will not run for either office, opting to finish his work as director of the Headwaters Park Commission in Fort Wayne. He is overseeing a major flood control/park project in downtown Fort Wayne. "I don't want to move too fast," Paddock said. "I want to finish that job."

U.S. Rep. Dan Burton has not issued subpoenas regarding allegations made by Johnny Chung, according to CNN.

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COLUMNISTS ON INDIANA

Robert Novak, *Chicago Sun-Times* - (George Bush) generated less fervor than any presidential possibility who spoke earlier in the conference. "Unquotably," a grizzled former state party chairman told me after Bush's speech, "I'd say George was the dullest knife in the pantry. Dan Quayle looked more relaxed and self-confident, delivering the conference's best one-liner: "What the American people want is a contract with America, not a contract with Bill Clinton." Lamar Alexander was more focused than in 1996, bluntly calling Republicans losers in "the national political competition between parties. Steve Forbes showed the most improvement of all. His speech did not disappoint. Calling the budget deal an "abomination," an unsmiling Forbes relentlessly recounted, point by point, its shortcomings. But more than anybody else, Fred Thompson looked like the new face the GOP awaits. The big former movie actor demonstrated what the conference's organizer, Indiana State Chairman Mike McDaniel, called "star power." That's what the Midwesterners also looked for in George W. Bush. They leave here realizing they will have to wait a little longer, until his re-election as governor and until he gets up to speed on what ails the GOP.

Mary Beth Schneider, *Indianapolis Star* - Once again, Marion County Democrats are back at the starting line. They're trying to reorganize and re-energize with their fifth county chairman in as many years. Tuesday night, Democrats held a county convention marked by apathy and angst. They couldn't even get enough precinct committee workers to come to make the vote for a new county chairman official. But they had a fight anyway over who should be the new chairman. The winner - if someone inheriting this thankless job can be called that - is attorney Stephen Laudig. He'll officially become county chairman after the Indiana Democratic Party's state central committee rubber-stamps the convention delegate's choice. The choice of Laudig has many Democrats I talked to skeptical, to say the least. Laudig, they say, comes up short in some key areas. He's not a proven fund-raiser. He's not known as a healer or a bridge-maker. Quite the opposite. He's a rabble-rouser.

Hevrdejs & Conklin, *Chicago Tribune* - We hear Newt Gingrich, Steve Forbes and Fred Thompson - unlike Jack Kemp - boosted their stock at the just-concluded Midwest Republican Leadership Conference, a beauty pageant for U.S presidential wannabes in Indianapolis. But here's a tip for Texas Gov. George W. Bush: Next time you're in Indiana, don't refer to residents as 'Indianans" in speeches. They're Hoosiers, and proud of it.

Morton Kondracke, *Roll Call* - With 27 months to go before the 2000 presidential election, Congress should start the process of changing its date from Tuesday, Nov. 7 to Saturday, Nov. 4. Why? For the convenience of voters, to increase participation in the election process, and, eventually, to move the center of gravity of both parties away from their extremes. And not only should the day be changed from Tuesday, a work day, to Saturday, but the polls should be open for 24 hours and close at the same time across the country so that early reporting of results from the East doesn't affect voting behavior in the West. All these compelling ideas are contained in an as-yet-unpublished paper by Edith Wilson, a senior fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute, who argues that "America deserves a new election tradition for the next century" instead of the 19th Century tradition we now have. "Tuesday elections," she argues, have "become the epitome of inconvenience in a country where consumers demand convenience and time saving. We do our banking at 24-hour ATMs, deposit our paychecks automatically, shop by phone seven days a week, go to the grocery store at dawn or midnight and renew our automobile registration by mail. Market research tells us what we already know - that we hate to stand in lines and go out of our way to avoid doing so.

PERHAPS.. WE WANDER

By Brian Howey

Lawsuit alleges Gov. Bayh glossed over minority program

WASHINGTON -Some Democrats see Gov. Evan Bayh's eight-year legacy as one where more minorities were appointed or promoted to offices of great importance - the Indiana Supreme Court, the Indiana Court of Appeals, the attorney general, the department of administration - than at any other time in state history.

But Democratic critics of Bayh complain that when there was a chance to bolster minority-owned businesses with contracts from the Indiana departments of transportation, corrections and administration, the governor did not seize the opportunity. In fact, a lawsuit filed by minority contractors alleges the Bayh administration failed to correct white-owned front companies that did business with the state under the guise of minority and disadvantaged business programs.

"There were mixed signals from the Bayh administration," observed State Rep. William Crawford, an African-American legislator from Indianapolis. "The Bayh administration represented the greatest gain in affirmative action in terms of employment. If you look at his appointments, he did not demonstrate or manifest any fear in affirmative action. However, when it came to the procurement side, they had a fear of a lawsuit based on the (legal) decision."

"The essential allegations of the lawsuit were that the federal government, through USDOT and the Indiana Department of Administration and the Indiana Department of Transportation, was conspiring against African-American contractors in particular," said D. Robert Webster, the Indianapolis attorney representing the Indianapolis Minority Contractors Association. Testimony from Harry C. Alford, founder and current president of the National Black Chamber of Commerce and formerly deputy commissioner for Minority Business Development in the Bayh administration, illustrates numerous "front companies" owned by white wives of millionaire construction owners that took advantage of minority and disadvantaged programs. Alford paints a vivid picture under oath of black-owned companies in South Bend and Gary who receive most of their work in neighboring states because Indiana has refused to certify them for the minority and disadvantaged programs in their own states.

Alford alleged that white-owned construction companies like Huber, Hunt & Nichols set up wives of executives to run a barricade company under WBE status.

Alford later resigned for insisting on enforcement of MBE and WBE practices, saying, "Pressured is a mild term. I was followed by the State Police. John Weliever, John Kish, who was then Commissioner of Administration, told me that I had some serious powerful enemies. And John Weliever called me in one day and he told me that he was going to burn me. And he kept saying, 'I'm going to burn you.'"

Alford's charges represent a widespread feeling that Evan Bayh conducted himself as governor with the intent of using the office as a stepping-stone to loftier positions. In many Democratic circles, legislators and lobbyists complained during Bayh's eight-year tenure that they - in an oft-spoken phrase - "had to carry the water for him" on many fiscal issues to improve Indiana's budgetary bottom line as opposed to trying to pass programs of traditional Democratic constituencies. The Alford lawsuit represents an attempt to prove in federal court that not only did minorities not get their anticipated slab of bacon, some black-owned businesses were destroyed when companies owned by wives of construction company owners were taking away business from legitimate minority companies.

Attorney General Jeff Modisett has moved for a summary judgment on the case, convinced that it is baseless.

On June 8, 1992, Alford released to the Indiana

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TICKER TAPE

Chung told NBC News that an aide to then-Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary sought a $25,000 donation in return for meeting with her. On CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday, Burton said a subpoena had been issued. It however has not yet been issued.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich lauded Burton during his speech Friday to the Republican Midwest Leadership Conference. "Chairman Dan Burton is doing a tremendous job," Gingrich said. "For two years he has been calmly dealing with all the obstruction from the White House. He's not leading a vendetta. He is trying to get to the truth."

Gingrich laid out plans for another "Contract with America" for the year 2000. Of three economic goals, the Speaker called for a tripling of black- and Hispanic-owned businesses. "If we had six black Bill Gates, we'd have a very different America," Gingrich said.

Attorney General Jeff Modisett and his wife are expecting a second child, he announced Saturday night in French Lick. "There will be another Democrat in the Modisett family," he said.

There was great irony in Indianapolis on Wednesday

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TICKER TAPE

night. Protesters marched from Victory Field to Ike & Jonesy's Bar to remember the first anniversary of the Meridian Street Police Brawl that essentially helped defeat Indianapolis Mayor Stephen Goldsmith's gubernatorial candidacy in 1996. While the protest march was occurring, Gov. Frank O'Bannon held a fundraiser at Victory Field during an Indianapolis Indians game.

Watch for big changes in the next edition of The Howey Political Report, beginning its fourth year next month.

Perhaps, from page 7

Black Legislative Caucus a report titled, "Indiana Department ofTransportation - A Racist and Corrupt Institution." It was based on an investigation he conducted with Gary A. Gibson, then deputy commissioner for minority business development in the Department of Administration and currently head of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. "INDOT has and is successful in prompting corruption, racism, and racketeering right before the eyes of the taxpayer," the report claimed. "Any attempts at correcting this situation have been met with death threats, predatory schemes, intimidation and duplicity between INDOT employees and majority owned companies."

"Obviously we were concerned," Rep. Crawford said of the report and the Black Caucus's subsequent approaching of the governor. "We had meetings with Gov. Bayh about this issue. We met with (INDOT) Commissioner Fred P'Pool over there to put these allegations on the table. The basic impression we got was that the administration was looking to gloss over the thing and not give any substance to it. And that's the kind of frustration that led to the filing of the lawsuit."

The political stakes confronting Evan Bayh as he attempts to become the first Democrat elected to the U.S. Senate from Indiana in 24 years are unclear. Bayh critics believe his fear of a lawsuit from white contractors was motivated by the potential campaign finance tap they represented for his 1998 race.

But there is no clear trend in Federal Election Commission reports showing that Bayh benefitted abnormally on campaign contributions from the white contractors in his 1992 re-election campaign or thus far in his 1998 race for the Senate.

Tom Sugar is running Evan Bayh's Senate campaign office and calls the lawsuit baseless. "The Bayh administration's record in making sure that minorities and others have an opportunity for fair participation in the state government is unprecedented. In Fiscal Year 1994 and 1995 alone, minority businesses did over $24 million worth of state business which exceeded the voluntary five percent goal and that's unprecedented in state history."

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