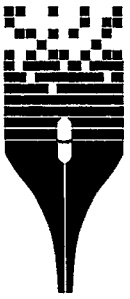
THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT



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An act of God may have aided Helmke

Sunny skies probably led to Price's defeat

INDIANAPOLIS - With great irony, it may have been an act of God that finally doomed the John Price U.S. Senate campaign.

Had it not been for the sunny skies and warm spring temperatures that bathed the Hoosier state on Election Day, it is easy to conceive that 5,000 or so mainstream Republicans might not have turned out at the polls, depriving the winner - Paul Helmke - of his harrowing 1 percent victory over Price, 35-34 percent. Peter Rusthoven, who relied on the calcified Republican organization, finished third with 31 percent. Had Price and Rusthoven not split up the more conservative vote, it could have been a totally different story.

Helmke seemed to glide to victory as the Leisurely Candidate. He did not enter the race until eight months had passed since Sen. Dan Coats announced he would not seek re-election. He concentrated on his duties as U.S. Conference of Mayors - meeting most often out-of-state - and took flak from Rusthoven for a friendly introduction of President Clinton, an act he will repeat today. The fact that he took a week to vacation with his family in April and spent last Saturday at the Kentucky Derby while his campaign was gasping for TV money seemed to be the antithesis of Price, who scrambled vigorously for months to turn out a coalition on the right.

When placed next to George Witwer's 8 percent showing in the 1996 gubernatorial primary by essentially trying to motivate that similar coalition, Price's 34 percent showing was an extraordinary feat. It also may have revealed the ceiling of the state's confederation of evangelical Christians, home schoolers, and Second Amendment advocates.

Helmke's reaction to some of the muffled criticism was duly noted on the front page of the *Indianapolis Star*, where he took aim at the pundits (HPR excluded) by saying, "They didn't think I could win this one. The Sunday talk shows had me coming in third."

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"QUOTE" OF THE WEEK

"I can win this by just standing still and doing nothing...."

- Virginia Blankenbaker, in the April 20 edition of the Indianapolis Business Journal. She lost to Gary Hofmeister by a 44-37 percent margin

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- **Bob Lang: Primary turnout blahs** page 2
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HPR will publish official primary results on May 14

Bob Lang

TICKER TAPE

U.S. Rep. Dan Burton apologized for his Republican colleagues for taking what CNN calls "major league heat" over the release of the Webster Hubbell prison tapes. Burton said he denied "any intent to deceive anyone" and added that he was "sickened by the thought" that any one would. Burton's apology capped an incredible week that found him a lightning rod of criticism after a disastrous appearance last Sunday on NBC's Meet the Press. The New York Daily News reported that House Republicans "made a public show of support for embattled Rep. Burton while quietly moving to usher him off center stage. One Republican said the strat-

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Bayh-Helmke, *from page 1*

Helmke said on WIBC-AM at midnight Tuesday that voters weren't looking for a candidate imbued in conventional wisdom. "People get tired of full-time campaigns." But in the next breath, he promised to "campaign very aggressively against Evan Bayh."

That will be a campaign that will center on several basic themes:

■ **Taxes** - Evan Bayh's mantra is that he kept taxes low and budget surpluses high. He will try to paint Helmke as a high-tax mayor thanks to Helmke's initiation of COIT, CEDIT and garbage collection user fees in Fort Wayne. Helmke will attempt play off the media's "caretaker" characterization of Bayh's eight year's in office, when the property tax burden increased dramatically. "I took care of things," Helmke said, "the state ignored things."

■ **Gambling** - Helmke views gambling as bad public policy. Under Bayh, state sanctioned gaming exploded.

■ **Tenure in Office:** Again, Helmke can try to make a case that he inherited great debt and a city in crisis over crack cocaine and turned it around. Indeed, Fort Wayne is a vastly different and better place than it was eight years ago. Bayh will point to job creation, 21st Century scholars, and his fiscal conservatism. He may attempt to show he is more conservative than Helmke. Whoever can tell their story best (and that will take lots o' money) will be in better shape.

One issue that may not air well is the embattled President Clinton. Both Helmke and Bayh are friends of the president. Unless Clinton is utterly crippled and has his heels dug in and the election turns into a national referendum, this Senate race probably won't be a replay of the 1994 Hogsett-McIntosh race where Bill Clinton became the Democratic millstone.

PLAY of the week

Monroe County Councilman Jeff Ellington, who unofficially won a heated House District 60 race against Republican maverick Rep. Jerry Bales by 14 votes. When you take that along with his 1996 council victory by four votes, Ellington has now won two elections by a grand plurality of 20 votes. Thus, we bequeath upon him the apt nickname - *Landslide Ellington.*

1998 Racing Form

Voters seemed to vote for the man, not ideology

It was a valiant try by the Christian right, which came within a few thousand votes of capturing the U.S. Senate nomination, won the 10th CD with Gary Hofmeister's stunning victory, and Jeff Ellington's apparent defeat of State Rep. Jerry Bales in the 60th HD.

HORSE RACE

But other elements of this coalition, including Mark Higgins in the 53rd HD and Chris Dickson in the 54th HD came up way short. In essence, Hoosier voters seemed to vote for the man as opposed to strict ideology.

In our status report, **Toss-Up** means the race is within a statistical margin of error or we're on to something; **Leans** is just outside the margin of error and up to 9 percent; **Likely** is 10 to 15 points or the race has yet to mature; and **Solid** means watch out for a landslide.

Indiana Congressional Primaries

U.S. Senate: **R Primary:** Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke, Peter Rusthoven, John Price. **D Primary:** Evan Bayh. **HPR General:** Helmke v. Bayh. **1992 Results:** Coats 1,267,972, Hogsett 900,148. **1998 Forecast:** Where does Evan Bayh stand on: 1.) global warming; 2.) campaign finance reform; 3.) Bill Clinton? We don't know. Helmke and the press should try and find out. Helmke has to do this if he is going to make this a serious race. He absolutely has to have money. Sen. Dan Coats may have up to $400,000 to help jump start the campaign. Price was planning to use Bayh's huge $3.2 million warchest against him like Paul Wellstone did in his 1990 race in Minnesota. Helmke began the campaign with this little jab at Bayh: "He had income of $800,000 and he only gave $2,000 to charity. That starts to tell something about him as a person." Helmke also said, "Races are not won by the most money." Helmke traveled to Washington to introduce President Clinton to another U.S. Conference of Mayors event. He told the *Indianapolis Star* that this introduction will be "somewhere inbetween" Burton's "scumbag" remark and his own complimentary intro for Clinton last January. Bayh says he would like to avoid a negative campaign, but adds, "I'll defend myself. I won't let someone tell half-truths and untruths." Bayh went to bed Election Night without knowing who his opponent was. Two historic perspectives on Helmke and Bayh: Helmke talks about being 40 points down to Win Moses in the 1987 Fort Wayne mayoral race. Helmke won when the Republican Allen County prosecutor announced that Moses' brother was under investigation for homicide (charges were never filed). Moses' numbers went through the floor. Helmke can do a hard-hitting campaign. As for Bayh, he ran his father's losing 1980 Senate campaign that once had a 40-point lead over Dan Quayle, so he is not apt to take seriously *Journal Gazette* columnist Sylvia Smith's declaration that the race is over. Helmke is going to have to do something quick to convince the media that he can make the race competitive, otherwise he's destined to follow Joe Hogsett's '92 footsteps against Dan Coats when the race essentially ended in the spring. Both Bayh and Helmke will have 10-year records of public office to promote and defend. That process should begin in earnest soon. No media outlet has really taken a comprehensive look at either Bayh's legacy as governor or Helmke's tenure as mayor. If Helmke is to make it a race, he's got to narrow the current 30-point lead into the 12 to 10 point deficit by Labor Day so that he can *shoot the gap* and hope the political dynamic slides into his zone next fall. **Status:** *Likely Bayh.*

Congressional District 6: **R Primary:** U.S. Rep. Dan Burton, George Holland. **D Primary:** Bob Kern, Nag Nagarian, Carrie Jean Trammell. **Geography:** Greenfield, Franklin, Tipton, Indianapolis collar counties. **HPR General:** Burton v. Kern. **1994 results:** Burton 136,876, Bruner

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TICKER TAPE

egy is to let the controversy simmer for a few days, then switch part of the Burton committee investigation over to the House Oversight Committee.

If Burton had any good news, it was that his Democratic opponent will be Bob Kern, who has a 1987 conviction for theft and forgery and a 1995 conviction for disorderly conduct (WTHR-TV). The Indianapolis Star reported that Kern also has an arrest for prostitution. Channel 13 quoted Marion County Democratic Chairman Steve Laudig as saying of Kern, "I've never even met the fellow."

U.S. Sen. Dan Coats is in discussions with the Republican Senatorial Committee and Indiana Republicans about turning over his campaign warchest to the Helmke campaign. "I pledge my support to the party's nominee," Coats said.

Evan Bayh acknowledged the Clinton factor could come into play in his Senate race. "Things can always happen," Bayh said Tuesday night. "We didn't see '74 coming until late in the summer."

Moderate Tippecanoe County Republicans beat back an effort by conservatives to control a number of county, town-

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40,815. **1996 Results:** Burton 189,461, Dillard-Tramell (D) 58,362, Peterson (L) 5,295. **1998 Forecast:** This race is shaping up to be the Hoosier state's big embarrassment. Burton is under fire for his questionable tactics of releasing the Webster Hubbell prison tapes. House Republicans may be moving to shunt him aside. Kern has three convictions and doesn't even know his district's leadership. Nagarian had been the slated candidate, but there has probably never been anyone elected in Indiana with the first name of "Nag." **Status:** *Solid R.*

Primary Toss-Ups

1st - Lawson v. Ceperich, Katic

10th - Moseley v. Cheney

39th - Irsay v. Torr

53rd - Maxwell, Dillon, Darley, Putt, Blandford, Coleman, Yingst

60th - Bales v. Ellington

73rd - Birk v. Oxley

Open Seats

1st - Tabaczynski
9th - Alevizos
10th - Wilson
37th - Webber
49th - Warner
50th - Stephan
53rd -Gulling
73rd - Heeke

Congressional District 9: **R Primary:** Jean Leising, Michael Bailey, Cecil Copley. **D Primary:** Baron Hill, Fred Holt, James McClure. **Geography:** New Albany Jeffersonville, Madison, Nashville and SE Indiana. **HPR General Forecast:** Leising v. Hill. **1994 results:** Hamilton 91,459, Leising 84,315. **1996 Results:** Hamilton 128,885, Leising 97,747, Feeney (L) 2,315. **1998 Forecast:** Leising ended up pulling this race out with an impressive 68 percent. We had it as a "Toss-Up" based on continued turmoil within the Leising campaign and district press observers who thought Bailey might have had a chance. GOP voters were clearly not buying the "new and improved" Michael Bailey, remembering him for his crude 1992 campaign when he ran ads showing aborted fetuses. While the race will attract much attention in Washington because it is an open seat, and polls show that Republicans could have a chance at pulling it off, Baron Hill has a warchest of more than $500,000, is a great and seasoned campaigner, and will have the services of Lee Hamilton in the waning days if things get close. For Leising to get competitive, she is going to have to stabilize her staff and get the money machine pumping in the next two months. Hill has proposed three debates; Leising would like more. **Status:** *Likely Hill.*

Congressional District 10: **R Primary:** Virginia Blankenbaker, Gary Hofmeister, Marvin Scott, Jack Hartford, Jack Reynolds. **D Primary:** U.S. Rep. Julia Carson, Suzanne Fischman. **Geography:** Indianapolis. **HPR General Forecast:** Hofmeister v. Carson. **1994 results:** Jacobs (D) 58,573, Scott 50,998. **1996 Results:** Carson 85,965 Blankenbaker 72,796, St. Angelo (L) 3,505 . **1998 Forecast:** This is where the most colossal primary miscalculation occurred. Hofmeister opened up his campaign with positive name ID ads, then drew a contrast over the abortion issue with a heavy TV buy. Incredibly, Blankenbaker decided to respond with radio instead of TV, figuring she could hold on to her double digit lead and have money left over to take on Carson in the fall. By last Friday, Hofmeister's tracking showed them leading with most likely voters. It was summed up with what may go down in history as one of the most audacious quotes in Hoosier political history when Blankenbaker told the *Indianapolis Business Journal*, "I can win this by just standing still and doing nothing." Hofmeister called Blankenbaker's decision not to respond with TV until the final week "a very big tactical mistake" and noted that she had $62,000 leftover from her unsuccessful 1996 race, something that turned off some of her donor base. Hofmeister said there will be no personal attacks in the fall, but said he will go after Carson's record. While Carson said, "I hope we don't get involved in a debate on choice," that will be a huge Hofmeister tactic against the incumbent. Carson would rather concentrate on crime and the economy. Carson has a good political organization that delivers. But Hofmeister ran the best primary campaign in the state, seems to thrive in the art of politicking, will have Ralph Reed at his disposal, and could give Carson a run for her money. We expect this to be an intense race. **Status:** *Leans Carson.*

Indiana House

House District 1: **R Primary:** Michael Tiltges. **D Primary:** Linda Lawson, Peter Katic, Patricia Ceperich. **Geography:** Hammond, Lake County. **HPR General Forecast:** Lawson v. Tiltges. **1994 results:** Tabaczynski (D) 6,644 (unopposed). **1996 Results:** Tabaczynski (D) 11,860 (unopposed). **1998 Forecast:** We saw the momentum shifting to Lawson and it did. The only reason we didn't move this one out of the Toss-Up zone is that you never know what's going to happen to ballots after they've been cast in Lake County. Lawson pulled this one out rather handily, thanks to help from the ISTA and newspaper endorsements. Katic's loss poses a problem for Lake County Democrats, who had hoped to move him down to Indianapolis. Now he will likely be a candidate for Hammond mayor in 1999 . **Status:** *Solid Lawson.*

HORSE RACE

House District 9: R Primary: Bradley Allamong, Jeff Tucker. **D Primary:** Scott Pelath, Dennis Metheny. **Geography:** Michigan City, LaPorte County. **HPR General Forecast:** Pelath v. Allamong. **1994 results:** Alevizos (D) 11,202 (unopposed). **1996 Results:** Alevizos15,424 (unopposed). **1998 Forecast:** As we expected Pelath and Allamong cruised to primary victories. Despite warnings from the disgruntled Tom Alevizos that the GOP might have a shot at this race, we see it as remaining in the Democratic column unless there is a national trend against the Democrats on the scale of 1994. **Status:** *Likely Pelath.*

House District 10: R Primary: John Cannon, Frank Jury II. **D Primary:** Chuck Moseley, Duane Cheney. **Geography:** Porter County. **HPR General Forecast:** Cannon v. Cheney. **1994 results:** Wilson (D) 9,701 (unopposed). **1996 Results:** Wilson 15,672 (unopposed). **1998 Forecast:** OK-OK, we really screwed this race up. So much so that we've sacked HPR's Valparaison Bureau and moved it to Kouts. Duane Cheney pulled out a narrow victory. He is a long-time lobbyist with the ISTA and used that muscle to defeat Moseley. Cannon entered the race as an unknown. "Nobody knew who we were," Cannon told the *Gary Post-Tribune*. "Today people will see the headlines and they will know who we are." Watch for education, utility reform and property tax reform to be the big issues in the fall campaign to see who replaces the retiring State Rep. Esther Wilson. **Status:** *Likely Cheney.*

House District 20: R Primary: Rep. Mary Kay Budak. **D Primary:** Donna Kavanagh v. Tony Underly. **Geography:** LaPorte and St. Joseph counties. **HPR General Forecast:** Budak vs. Underly. **1994 Results:** Budak 12,688 (unopposed). **1996 Results:** Budak 12,672, Underly 8,313. **1998 Forecast:** This race was the true stunner. Caucus Democrats were really taking up Kavanagh. Late press reports in the *Michigan City News-Dispatch* and *South Bend Tribune* reporting that Underly paid himself $6,000 out of campaign funds over the previous two years seemed to be explosive. But Underly won this race and now faces a real uphill battle against the popular Budak. **Status:** *Likely Budak.*

House District 22: R Primary: Rep. Bill Ruppel, Wabash Commissioner Brian Haupert, Charles Tiede. **D Primary:** Open. **Geography:** Wabash, Marshall, Kosciusko counties. **HPR General Forecast:** Ruppel. **1994 Results:** Ruppel 10,954 (unopposed). **1996 Results:** Ruppel 13,714 (unopposed). **1998 Forecast:** We viewed this race as a barometer on whether there was any percolating dissatisfaction with incumbents. All the national polls say there isn't, and so did the voters of the 22nd District. Haupert went into the race complaining that the legislature had lost track of the people's priorities. This district is a cinch to remain in the Republican column. **Status:** *Solid Ruppel.*

House District 39: R Primary: Rep. Jerry Torr, Nancy Irsay. **D Primary:** Open. **Geography:** Lebanon, Zionsville, Carmel, Boone and Hamilton counties. **HPR General Forecast:** Torr. **1994 Results:** Willing (R) 15,974, unopposed. **1996 Results:** Torr 21,451, unopposed. **1998 Forecast:** The strangest dynamic of the primary season was at play here: incumbency v. celebrity. No one could get a real read on how Irsay's celebrity would translate into votes. Torr went from being shell-shocked, to bummed out, to nervous. That body language (along with no tracking data) kept us from moving this out of the Toss-Up zone. Then in the final days of the campaign, his demeanor changed and he seemed confident. That's what a nice mailer from the National Rifle Association can do for a running scared Republican. Torr was also able to run a pretty comprehensive phone bank operation and these factors along with plenty of help from Paul Mannweiler and the caucus propelled Torr to a 2-to-1 victory. This race will not be in play this fall. As for Irsay, there is a place for her in public service in the future. She just needs to build up ties in the party. **Status:** *Solid Torr.*

House District 50: R Primary: Kent Maxwell, Gary Dillon, Scott Darley, Rodney Putt, Judy Coleman, Mary Blandford, Ned Yingst. **D Primary:** Raymond Scribner. **Geography:** Huntington and Whitley counties. **HPR General Forecast:** Dillon v. Scribner. **1994 Results:** Stephan (R) 13,418, Yingst 5,392. **1996 Results:** Stephan 15,856, B. Yingst 5,855. **1998 Forecast:** The first name we heard as a potential frontrunner to replace Dan Stephan was Gary Dillon. But it took him forever to decide whether he was a Republican or a Democrat, Maxwell has the population base in his backyard, and scores of other candidates (including one of the Yingsts) made this difficult to call. Dillon should be in the driver's seat this fall, although Democrats think highly of Rev. Scribner, who is Stephan's pastor. As to how Dillon will fit into the GOP caucus, we wonder if he's had any coaching from Dan Stephan? **Status:** *Likely R.*

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TICKER TAPE

ship and precinct offices. The election prompted the Lafayette Journal and Courier to editorialize, "Voters are sick of county government being jerked around by a minority of vocal, radical activists. Voters will not abide intolerance and bigotry." Moderate Republicans formed two PACs to defeat a slate of candidates that were backed by the Family Times newspaper.

Last week, Indiana University Coach Bob Knight campaign for State Rep. Jerry Bales in Bloomfield, hoping to give his fishing buddy a boost in Greene County. But challenger Jeff Ellington carried three out of four precincts in Bloomfield in an area Bales had expected to carry. The fact that Knight only drew about 150 people to last week's rally had observers wondering whether Knight is also losing popularity in a region where only a few years ago folks thought he could part the waters of Monroe Reservoir (or at least walk across them during the summer).

Kosciusko County Prosecutor David Kolbe finished third in his primary battle for re-election, finishing behind winner Charles Waggoner and Daniel Hampton. Kolbe acknowledged, "I believe my re-election was an uphill battle," and

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TICKER TAPE

acknowledged that several of his programs have "to some extent been disruptive" (Lisa Shidler, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette).

Allen County Chief Deputy Sheriff Jim Herman will face Fort Wayne Police Sgt. Jim Zamora this fall for Allen County Sheriff. Herman, who trailed Republican City Councilman Marty Benner by a wide margin in a recent WTPA-TV poll, won the upset with 54 percent of the vote. Zamora said he is embarrassed that Allen County and Fort Wayne police can no longer talk by radio.

St. Joseph County Councilmen Larry Jasinski and George Nome were both defeated for re-election (Terrence Bland, South Bend Tribune). David Niezgodski defeated Jasinski and Frank Canarecci defeated Nome. Carareccі played on Indiana University's 1968 Rose Bowl football team.

Delaware County Prosecutor Richard Reed won his primary re-election battle against Donald Dunnuck, a man he successfully prosecuted five years ago for theft and perjury (Muncie Star Press). That conviction was overturned in 1994 by the Indiana Court of Appeals. Dunnuck is closely aligned with Democratic

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HORSE RACE

House District 53: **R Primary:** Councilman Robert Cherry, Mark Higgins. **D Primary:** Sarah Wolf. **Geography:** Greenfield, Cumberland, Hancock County. **HPR General Forecast:** Toss-Up v. Wolf. **1994 Results:** Gulling (R) 13,945 unopposed. **1996 Results:** Gulling (R) 20,174 unopposed **1998 Forecast:** John Willey tormented Horse Race on this one and we're sure he has a smug look on his face now. Cherry won it handily. Our gut feeling was that Cherry would prevail, but catching wind of the John Price factor in the Senate race, press reports that Higgins might have a sizable evangelical following kept this in the Toss-Up zone. And we'll keep it there for the time being since Cherry will face former Rep. Sarah Wolf, who lost the seat by only about 300 votes to popular Hancock County Sheriff Nick Gulling. The county has changed since then with the influx of white Indianapolis Republicans, so this one could easily shake into the Leans category. One other interesting note: despite the Indianapolis Star/News "Statehouse Sell-Out" series questioning the roles of lobbyists and lawmakers, two lobbyists (Cherry and Cheney) have won open seat primaries. That is very telling about the public's mood. **Status:** *Toss-Up.*

House District 56: **R Primary:** Ken Paust, Chris Dickson. **D Primary:** Rep. Richard Bodiker. **Geography:** Richmond, Wayne County. **HPR General Forecast:** Bodiker v. Paust. **1994 Results:** Bodiker 7,142, Hamm 7,087. **1996 Results:** Bodiker 10,772, Hamm 8,159. **1998 Forecast:** Dickson's burma shave sign campaign is defeated by the Wayne County GOP, which Paust heads, as well as his legacy as a civic builder. Paust has the potential to be an excellent legislator and his upcoming race against Landslide Bodiker could very well have the control of the Indiana House hanging in the balance.. **Republican Primary status:** *Leans Paust.*

House District 60: **R Primary:** Rep. Jerry Bales v. Jeff Ellington. **D Primary:** Open. **Geography:** Bloomington, Monroe County. **HPR General Forecast:** Ellington v. open **1994 results:** Bales 11,825, Anderson 5,210. **1996 Results:** Bales 15,743, Germann (L) 1,931. **1998 Forecast:** This was the epic primary battle - a 14-vote victory for Ellington. From now on, if Horse Race describes another confrontation like "that Bales-Ellington race waaay back in '98," then you'll know it's a doosey. Two weeks ago, we felt Ellington was going to win this one with considerable momentum. But he seemed to be getting nicked up over his businesses, and Bales used his Doc Bowen and Bob Knight cards. The speculation was that the Bloomfield School Board election might bring more Bales support out, and Knight was brought in to reinforce that. Not only did just 150 people show up, but Ellington ended carrying three out of four Richland Township precincts in Bloomfield. Ellington clearly benefitted from vigorous support from the Monroe County Republican organization - one of the few in the state that can actually deliver. They and the Indiana Chamber were able to beat down a full-scale Bales comeback bid that included Paul Mannweiler, the ISTA and the unions. Ellington told the *Herald-Times*, "I've sent the message basically, that we should lower property taxes and reform education and strengthen families and improve our roads." Watch for the Democrats to slate a candidate for the fall election and test Ellington. **Status:** *Solid Ellington.*

House District 73: **R Primary:** Grayson Goodness. **D Primary:** Tom Birk, Dennis Oxley, Bernie Fallon. **Geography:** Jasper and Southwestern Indiana. **HPR General Forecast:** Oxley v. Goodness. **1994 Results:** Heeke (D) 9,629, Goodness 8,241. **1996 Results:** Heeke 12,371, Goodness 8,847. **1998 Forecast:** The ISTA delivers for Oxley (pretty good primary sequence for ISTA candidates). We originally saw this as heading Birk's way, but it really tightened up down the homestretch. Democrats should be able to hold on to this seat unless the national dynamic turns wickedly against them this fall. **Status:** *Likely Oxley.*

House District 94: **R Primary:** Rep. Candy (Morris) Marendt. **D Primary:** Jeb Bardon, Ricky Hence, John Steinkamp.. **Geography:** NW Indianapolis. **HPR General Forecast:** Marendt v. Bardon. **1994 Results:** Morris (Marendt) 7,838, Reasoner 5,537. **1996 Results:** Marendt 10,396, Hinman 9,586, Neal 422. **1998 Forecast:** Jeb Bardon defeats the party slated Hence. We wonder if voters confused it for "Barton," a popular Democratic name in Indianapolis that helped propel Mary Catherine Barton in the Marion County Democratic prosecutor primary. Bardon, 25, will find an invigorated Marendt, who had a close call two years ago and has vowed to be fully prepared this time. Democrats will target her anyway. This could be an interesting race, but Marendt will be tough to beat, particularly with a Democratic organization that can't deliver. **Status:** *Leans Marendt.*

Brian A. Howey

Riecken having money success

Challenger gains stature in DC; Hostettler reliance on PACs

By Mark Schoeff Jr.
Howey Political Report

WASHINGTON - Gail Riecken's fund-raising prowess is giving Democrats hope that she will be part of the vanguard that helps her party take the House of Representatives back from the Republicans in 1998.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee highlighted Riecken as one of its top challengers in a press conference for the national media in October. At the time, Riecken said she had to earn continued support by raising money. So far, she seems to be succeeding. As of mid-April, the Evansville city councilwoman had more cash in her campaign coffers than incumbent Republican John Hostettler. She showed $204,276 while Hostettler's total was $195,106. In the first three months of the year, she raised $147,381 to Hostettler's $55,997.

The Hostettler campaign criticized Riecken for depending heavily on out-of-state political action committee contributions from liberal interest groups whose agendas conflict with the 8th CD constituency. A Hostettler spokesman said her cash on hand is reduced, if you factor in the $22,281 debt the Riecken campaign carries. Hostettler's operation is debt-free.

The "Bloody 8th" is hotly contested nearly every year. Hostettler won in 1994 with 52 percent of the vote and again in 1996 with 50 percent. "Regular Democratic donors give to candidates who they think have a chance to win, and they think she has a good shot," said Chris Sautter, a Washington Democratic consultant and Riecken's media adviser. "Generally, the talk around town is very positive."

A Washington political observer said Riecken's campaigning skills have distinguished her. "She's proven to be a tenacious candidate and strong fund-raiser," said Amy Walter, House editor for the Cook Political Report. "She's in that top tier of challenger Democrats." One factor contributing to Riecken's fund-raising success was that she didn't have to waste resources on a competitive primary race.

Riecken received a major boost from Emily's List, a political action committee that supports female candidates. The organization touts Riecken on its Web site as one of 22 candidates it is recommending. In January, it promoted Riecken in a mailing sent to more than a thousand of its members nationwide. People who supported Riecken made their checks out to her and sent them to Emily's List in Washington, which then forwarded them to the Riecken campaign. The organization raised $6.5 million for candidates in the last election cycle.

CONGRESS WATCH

"Gail Riecken has done an excellent job," said Stephanie Cohen, communication director for Emily's List and a former spokeswoman for the DCCC. "Her fund-raising obviously has been outstanding for a city council woman from Evansville. She raised a significant amount of money, much of it without the help of Emily's List because we didn't mail on her until January."

The donations from around the country that Emily's List has generated, however, drew sharp criticism from the Hostettler camp. "I have never seen a contributor list from a challenger that is this geographically diverse," said Jim Holden, political director for the Hostettler campaign. "It's scary. They're all liberal feminists who support unlimited abortions on demand and radical environmental stances. These are people who would not be very popular in the eighth district."

Riecken attributed her fund-raising success to factors closer to home. The money "emanated from a lot of personal contacts in Vanderburgh County," she said. She also deflected criticism of political action committee contributions, which comprise about 30 percent of her donations. "I'm very comfortable

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TICKER TAPE

Chairman Phil Nichols, who is being prosecuted by Reed on racketeering charges.

Evansville Democrats are touting sheriff nominee Brad Ellsworth as a "rising star" (Alan Julian, Evansville Courier). Ellsworth defeated Art Gann by a 4-to-1 margin. Said longtime Democrat Rick Borries of Ellsworth, "I see big days ahead for him. The sky's the limit. He's got everything going for him." Ellsworth will face Republican Ed Bassemier in November.

Mark Wehrle won the 4th CD Democratic nomination, defeating two other candidates with 49 percent of the vote for the right to challenge U.S. Rep. Mark Souder. Wehrle spent his victory evening babysitting. "My wife had Girl Scouts, so I had to babysit," said Wehrle (Jonathon Maze, Fort Wayne News-Sentinel). "I'm glad they voted for a candidate who can't be bought. The campaign finance system needs to be fixed."

Republican Dan Holtz won the 3rd CD nomination and will face U.S. Rep. Tim Roemer. "Taxes are the number one issue, both the burden and complexity," said Holtz (Jack Colwell, South Bend Tribune). Holtz said he would also stress a national drug policy. Roemer said his campaign emphasis

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TICKER TAPE

will be to "boldly reform our public schools."

There will be a rematch in the 1st CD, where Republican Michael Petyo defeated Mark Leyva with 72 percent of the vote. He will have a rematch with U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky.

Democrat David Steele won the 5th CD nomination with 44 percent of the vote over Hugh Salisbury (27 percent) and Morris Livengood (29 percent). He faces U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer in November.

U.S. Rep. Ed Pease easily won his primary challenge from David Hess with 83 percent of the vote. Pease faces airline worker Samuel "Dutch" Hillenburg in November.

Riecken, *from page 1*

with PAC money. I find that it is a way for working people to support you. It's no different than going to board rooms" to seek political contributions.

Regardless of the origin of the donations, the momentum she's gaining from her money drive is raising her profile in the media. Last week, the *Wall Street Journal* mentioned Riecken in its Friday front-page political column. A couple weeks ago, she was quoted in The *Washington Times* on education. Her cash-on-hand lead also landed her on the front page of *Roll Call*, a Capitol Hill newspaper and the Washington-insider bible read closely by the capital's politerati. The 8th CD race also has been featured recently in the *Washington Post*, the *National Journal* and *Congressional Quarterly*. In addition, CNN is considering doing a profile, according to Sautter.

Riecken is working hard to extend her reach beyond her base, traveling throughout the district in a motor home. "It's been a real grass-roots effort," she said. "I'm meeting people one-on-one who I've never met before."

With fund-raising rolling along, Riecken is moving toward a new phase of the campaign -- promoting an agenda. "We have just now initiated our platform," she said. "I'm concentrating on issues that people are interested in." She is focusing on health care, retirement security, and education.

Last week, Riecken highlighted retirement security. She supports dedicating the budget surplus to shoring up Social Security. "I have a problem with how this issue has become divisive. There's been a desire to divide age groups. I'm very uncomfortable with that. That*s not what we're about."

Holden countered that the debate about how to use extra federal funds is due to the work of Republicans. "Without Congress and (people) like John Hostettler, there wouldn't be a surplus to draw from" to protect Social Security.

Hostettler is concerned about the same kinds of issues that are Riecken's focus, but the difference is their approach to solving them. "This year, there is a much more obvious ideological difference between the two candidates," said Holden. "It is the classic conservative versus liberal showdown, and in this district, the conservative generally fares better."

Whatever the outcome in 1998, the district is inherently competitive, said Walter. "It would be included on a target list (by the national parties) no matter what year it is."

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