



Debt, death, violence & reality

Health care debate takes new, troubling twists this August

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - The Wednesday deficit news from the White House was staggering. The cumulative deficit from 2010 to 2019 is projected to increase by \$2 trillion, for an estimated total of \$9 trillion.

The debt will double by 2019, reaching 75 percent of the size of the entire national economy. This is an absolutely shocking number.

Unemployment will average 9.8 percent throughout 2010. "This recession was simply worse than the information that we and other forecasters had back in last fall and early this winter," explained Christina Romer, President Obama's economic adviser.

"The alarm bells on our nation's fiscal condition have now become a siren," Senate Minority Leader Mitch



McConnell reacted. "If anyone had any doubts that this burden on future generations is unsustainable, they're gone — spending, borrowing and debt are out of control."

But the bells and sirens go well beyond the math. America is now headed toward

what could be its most emotionally pitched political and policy showdown since Vietnam. And there is a threatening suggestion of violent reaction to the political debate.

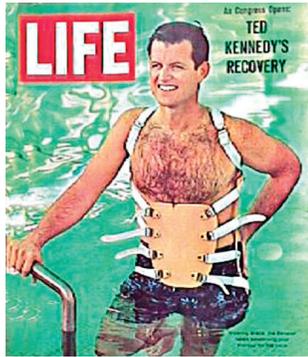
This comes as President Obama spends a fam-

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Hoosiers and Lions

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - Over the weekend, as the surf of Hurricane Bill was crashing against the New England coast, the sailor in me took on the sense that the storm would take Ted Kennedy with it.



Late last week, news came of a letter the ailing Democratic titan had sent Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, seeking to rescind a new law calling for an election to replace senators in the state. Reading between the lines, one knew that this was the end for the Kennedy



"I went back again, smelled the fumes, thought the darn thing might explode, I heard Ted mumble and we were able to get him out of there. Why we didn't go up in a puff of smoke I don't know."

- SEN. BIRCH BAYH



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dynasty as we've known it for the last 60 years.

Ted Kennedy was the anomaly. He was the only one of the four Kennedy brothers who grew old before our eyes. He was the only one to lose a presidential race in which he ran by ballot and not bullet. He was the only Kennedy brother whose personal shortcomings - whether cheating at Harvard or on his wife, too much drink, or the forever stain of Chappaquiddick - were fully aired in his lifetime.

He became a rallying cry for conservatives who always counted Kennedy as the reigning liberal. And yet, Republicans from Sen. Dan Quayle to President George W. Bush worked with him on jobs and education bills and reveled in it. But Kennedy earned the title "Lion of the Senate" for his dedication to education and health issues. He pushed health reform for most of his Senate career. He forged the S-Chip and Americans with Disabilities Act. He killed Robert Bork's Supreme Court nomination.

Hoosiers came to know the Kennedy clan in almost intimate fashion. As Barack Obama barnstormed the state last year, there was a constant stream of consciousness from 40 years earlier, when Robert F. Kennedy did the same. Each community in which RFK appeared, be it South Bend, Muncie, Peru or Indianapolis, had their own Kennedy story.

Among Hoosier Democrats, Ted Kennedy was an icon. In a corner of the United Center during the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, I witnessed a crowd quickly bunching up in front of the Indiana delegation, blocking the aisles.

A Chicago fire marshal eventually appeared as rumors spread across the floor that the convention might be shut down due to capacity issues. "What the hell is going on up there?"

the official yelled.

"There's a Kennedy up there," I told him. One of the Kennedy nephews had waded into the Indiana delegation, setting off the tumult.

"Oh, OK," the official responded, voice lowered. "That explains it."

In fact, Ted Kennedy

owed his life to Indiana Sen. Birch Bayh, who pulled him from a burning aircraft after it had crashed near Southampton, Mass. in 1964. "We'd been bouncing around from one thunderstorm to another," Bayh told HPI of the plane crash. "I thought we'd been struck by lightning, but we had ended up in an apple orchard."

Sen. Bayh said he had what he called "an instantaneous thought that comes with a near death experience: At least we took care of Evan in my will" he said of his son, who would become an Indiana governor and then retake his Senate seat. When Bayh came to, he heard wife

Marvella's screams. He went to the front of the plane and saw that the pilot and an aide were dead. "Then I went back again, smelled the fumes, thought the darn thing might explode. I heard Ted mumble and we were able to get him out of there. Why we didn't go up in a puff of smoke I don't know."

Birch Bayh told Bloomberg News, "You go through something like that and you think the man upstairs had us in the palm of his hand and there is some unfinished business we need to take care of."

The senior Bayh and Kennedy entered the Senate after the 1962 elections. He said older members wondered what they would get with Ted Kennedy. "When your name is Kennedy and your brother is the president and your other brother is the attorney general, you'd think he'd have a head bigger than his body,"



The young Bayh family



Bayh recalled. "But he didn't come in like that. We were one of the troops. We were at the far end of the seniority level. A lot of the older members wondered what this young pup was going to be like. They were pleasantly surprised."

Bayh and Kennedy forged similar paths. They supported the historic civil rights and Voting acts as well as President Johnson's Great Society program that initiated Medicare. They served on the Senate Judiciary Committee where Bayh would write constitutional amendments on presidential succession and lowering the voting age to 18. "Ted was one of the spear carriers on that," Bayh said. Both backed the historic Title IX that opened up collegiate athletics to women. The two played a major role in opposing President Nixon's Supreme Court nominees Albert Haynesworth and G. Harold Carswell. Both ran unsuccessful presidential campaigns in 1976 and 1980.

And both parted with President Johnson on the Vietnam War. Bayh toured South Vietnam in late 1967, leaving shortly before the Tet offensive destroyed the administration's credibility on the war. "I think most all of us wanted to support the president," Birch Bayh said. "At least I did. Once we got there, rummaging around, I realized we didn't have the national interest there and it was killing a lot of young men."

Sen. Bayh noted that a huge difference between Vietnam and the Iraq War of today is that Americans watched a stream of young draftees returning home in body bags. "In Iraq, we didn't see the body bags. In Vietnam, that constantly reminded you."

Sen. Evan Bayh explained on Wednesday, "I think historians will remember Ted Kennedy as a member of an iconic American family who knew great tragedy but also great triumph. He was a leader who pressed on and picked himself up in the face of adversity and disappointment to make an enduring contribution to the American people."

The younger Bayh remembered his first tumultuous days in the Senate, entering as President Clinton's impeachment trial was getting underway. "I'll never forget one of my earliest experiences in the Senate - the first impeachment trial of a president in over 100 years," Bayh recalled. "There were no rules. It was intensely partisan and political. Who was respected enough to broker a way forward? It was Ted Kennedy who hammered out the agreement of how the Senate should proceed. He had strong convictions, but he also was intensely pragmatic.

Those qualities made him the type of person that leaders of both parties respected and wanted to work with."

Evan Bayh saw in Kennedy a throwback to the time when his father served in the Senate. "He was never reading talking points," Bayh said. "We live in an era where everything is tested by focus groups, but Ted was old school. He spoke authentically, from the heart. At the end of the day, he cared most about the things that matter to ordinary people. He was so immensely knowledgeable. He really wanted to drill down and say, 'Okay, how are we going to get costs down? How are we going to make sure everybody has access to health care coverage?' Those are the sorts of things he was a master at resolving."

Sen. Dick Lugar recalled what he said was "a long and productive friendship in the United States Senate."

The two worked on anti-apartheid legislation related to South Africa. "In 1994, we helped provide bipartisan support for education reform legislation which preceded passage of No Child Left Behind during President Bush's administration," Lugar recalled. "In recent years, we co-chaired the Cultural Bridges program that brings several hundred students from Muslim countries to live and study with American families each year. During the past two years, I read inspirational words from Ted Kennedy to the assembled Cultural Bridges students."

Kennedy and Lugar shared a rare accomplishment. Both became members of the Senate's exclusive 10,000 vote club. Sen. Kennedy wrote Lugar on March 27, 2003, "While we've not always been on the same side of those 10,000 votes, I am proud to have been here with you while you cast them. I'm sorry that I missed the celebration in honor of this great occasion. You deserve 10,000 such events to honor all you have done in the Senate."

Lugar replied, "You have long been a member of the 10,000 vote club and I deeply appreciate your note recognizing my entry into the group. As I watched the vigor and passion of your work, day to day, I know that I have a good mentor in discovering a great way to proceed in the post-10,000 vote aftermath."

Lugar added, "These vivid personal memories and so many others of experiences I enjoyed with Ted Kennedy greatly increase the sense of loss I share with the Kennedy family and Senate colleagues who have also experienced remarkable events with Ted Kennedy. He lived a great life of service, family strength, and enduring friendships. I will miss him very much."

Late Wednesday afternoon, Gov. Mitch Daniels ordered flags on Indiana buildings at half staff, in accordance with a proclamation issued earlier by President Barack Obama. ❖



Sens. Birch Bayh and Ted Kennedy during a Senate Judiciary Committee meeting.



Death and debt, from page 1

ily vacation at Martha's Vineyard, perhaps contemplating the new emerging realities. It is a place where presidents in crisis have gone before, perhaps most famously when President Clinton and First Lady Hillary grappled with verbal depositions during the Monica Lewinsky scandal that would ultimately result in his impeachment.

Tugging the new president on his path for national health care reform is the Tuesday death of U.S. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. This signals a new emotional turn for the struggle on the part of Democrats who have huge majorities in the House and Senate.

Last week, it was reported that Congressional Democrats had come to the conclusion that there would be no Republican support for health care reform and they would have to go it alone.

They were goaded into this notion by Joe Scarborough last Sunday on Meet the Press. "They don't need a bipartisan bill," said the MSNBC Morning

Joe host and a former Republican congressman. "Barack Obama and Democrats own Washington. They've got 60 senators, a filibuster-proof majority. They control the House of Representatives by what, 79 votes? That's what's so funny. Barack Obama's picking fights with Fox News, he's picking fights with talk radio types. He needs to focus on his Democratic Party. He doesn't need to reach out to Republicans. The president is failing right now not because of what some talk show host is saying, and not because Orrin Hatch is against the bill. He's failing because he can't get Claire McCaskill, Democrat from Missouri, on board. He can't get Evan Bayh, he can't get the Blue Dogs on board."

PBS's Tavis Smiley, a Kokomo native, agreed. "If you control the House and you control the Senate and you control the White House, and you told us a year ago that there was nothing in the world more important than reforming health care, that was the centerpiece of the Democratic plan, and that's why many Americans voted for

President Obama. If they can't get this done they can't, in midterm elections, blame the Republicans for being obstructionists. I agree on that."

The Indiana stage

If this becomes the new reality, Indiana once again takes center stage as key Democrats ranging from Sen. Evan Bayh to Rep. Baron Hill need to be brought into the Obama fold. While Bayh's position is still murky and complicated by his wife's health care directorships and his own re-election bid, Hill was spending his time on teleconferenc-

es with the AARP and in public forums trying to bash the "myths" and endorsing the goal. "I'm committed to getting this bill passed," Hill said on the AARP call. "The time has come for us to do it."

U.S. Rep. Brad Ellsworth hosted a Saturday morning call in show last week and heard the same "slow down" message that Gov. Mitch Daniels heard during the first months of his administration. "Why is President Obama in such a hurry to get everything done?" a caller asked, in a report in the Evansville Courier & Press.

Ellsworth responded, "We've talked about it. It's time for action. This non-sustainable rate that we're paying continues to go up, and we've talked long enough. Let's go ahead, and now the public has seen it because the bill is written, and being parsed by members of Congress in both parties and by the people. It's not new discussion. We've got to do something."

Guns of August

The virtulent subplot is an emerging lack of trust in government witnessed in the 1993-94 guns and health care reform sequence and the ugly twist of gun-toting people showing up at Congressional town halls and appearances by President Obama. It was described by New York Times columnist Frank Rich last Sunday as the "Guns of August."

While Republican U.S. Reps. Mark Souder, Mike Pence, Steve Buyer and Dan Burton and Democrat Joe Donnelly have conducted town halls without incident before



U.S. Rep. Mike Pence talks to more than 200 people at a New Castle town hall meeting earlier this month. (Pence Photo)



large crowds, Indiana's senators and U.S. Reps. Baron Hill, Andre Carson and Ellsworth had refused, until Hill announced on Wednesday that he would host an unrestricted town hall (save fire codes) at IU-Southeast in New Albany from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. next Monday and another Wednesday at Bloomington North HS.

A Democratic source told HPI that Carson has been getting threats against his physical safety. He opted for a Downtown Rotary Club on Monday and a WTLC-AM call-in show with Amos Brown along with the White House's Christina Romer this afternoon.

During an appearance at the New Albany-Floyd County Library last Tuesday, Hill was quoted in the Louisville Courier-Journal saying, "I want to thank the police officers here today, who unfortunately have to follow me around because of the violent nature of this debate."

At almost the same time, U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer was in Danville, where 700 people showed up and a citizen named Carol Livingood declared, "This is not about your health, it's about more government control."

Buyer agreed. "This is about increasing the power of government. The reason they're centralizing the power and authority behind this health czar is they want this health czar to control everything."

This is a sentiment repeatedly expressed outside of Indianapolis and Washington, whether it is health care reform or Kernan-Shepard. The powers - be they Republicans or Democrats, presidents or governors - are seeking to "control" the hinterlands they simply don't understand.

After mostly civil crowds gathered on Hoosier streets, at libraries, retirement centers and gymnasiums during the first part of the month, the talk and hints of violence followed on cable news. Reports of people showing up with holstered guns and an African-American man at an Obama appearance in Phoenix with an AK-47 strapped to his back, segues a new, more decisive twist to this, the most compelling issue of our time.

Outside an Obama town hall in Portsmouth, N.H., a man was seen carrying a sign, "It is time to water the tree of liberty" playing off a Thomas Jefferson quote: "The

tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."

It was followed by an NBC Meet the Press appearance by Oklahoma Sen. Tom Coburn - a physician that candidate Obama had cited as having a working relationship with Republicans in the Senate - who explained, "I'm troubled any time when we stop having confidence in our government, but we've earned it."

It is revealing that Coburn represents the state that suffered the worst domestic terror attack at Oklahoma City before Sept. 11.

Eroding underpinnings

As America emerges from this August, we find the underpinnings of health care eroding due to staggering deficits and debt, a spiraling mistrust of government, and reticent Democrats who appear to be more concerned about their 2010 re-election prospects that out-weigh the essence of what it means to actually be a Democrat.

Earlier this summer, U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar told HPI that Obama's perception of a revenue neutral opportunity to universal reforms are not realistic and that "incremental" approaches would be a viable alternative. On Wednesday, as the shock of Romer's new debt and deficit estimates began to sink in, some Democratic commentators on cable news were suggesting that Obama should accept "half a loaf" dealing with aspects such as controlling costs and pre-existing conditions, saving universal coverage for another day when the economy improves.

Tugging at the backs of Democratic minds has to be the story of Doc Bowen, who as Health and Human Services secretary helped President Reagan successfully pass legislation that dealt with many of the problems that exist today, only to have their legislation unravel under the attack of special interests shortly after they left office.

The Republicans appear to have moved away from Mike Pence's assertion, after talking with the citizens at the Henry County Fair in July, that doing nothing is an option. They give lip service to the problems American families and small businesses face.

But there is no compelling Republican alternative vision, and no one with enough credibility to galvanize a GOP position and offer it as a viable option to Obama's goals that are being hammered out by liberals and Blue Dogs in Congress.

In this policy vacuum - where the stakes appear to be an Obama/Democratic reform or nothing - it will be fascinating to see, in the wake of Sen. Kennedy's death, if Democrats can themselves gather up the emotion, will and debt reality check to come up with at least a half loaf. ❖



William Kostnic with a 9mm holstered gun outside of President Obama's town hall in Portsmouth, N.H.



A state reconciles with greatness and Bobby Knight

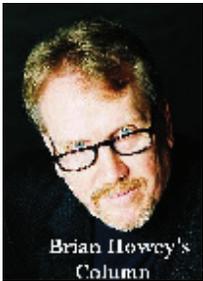
"When my time on earth is gone, and my activities here are passed, I want they bury me upside down, and my critics can kiss my ass!"

- **Bob Knight**, 1994

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - We now ponder the great Hoosiers.

Our three presidents: Lincoln and the Harrisons. Our Chief Justice John Roberts. Our pioneers and chiefs: Johnny Appleseed, Little Turtle and Leopold Pokagon. Our leaders like Gov. Oliver P. Morton, Sen. Birch Bayh, Sen. Dick Lugar, Rep. Charlie Halleck and Eugene Debs.



Brian Howey's Column

Our actors: James Dean, Karl Malden, Red Skelton and Steve McQueen. Our composers and musicians: Cole Porter, Joshua Bell, Michael Jackson, Hoagy Carmichael and John Mellencamp.

Our writers: Ernie Pyle, Kurt Vonnegut, Booth Tarkington, Lew Wallace, James Whitcomb Riley and Stephen King.

Our business leaders: Bill Blass, C.G. Conn, Madam Walker, Carl Fisher, Cols. Harlan Sanders and Eli Lilly. Our inventors and aviators like Gus Grissom, Amelia Earhart, Philo T. Farnsworth, Elwood Haynes, and Frank Borman.

Of course, our sports heroes: Johnny Wooden, Knute Rockne, Larry Bird, Bill Garrett, Tony Hulman, Tony Hinkle, Tony Stewart, Tony Dungy, Jeff Gordon, Oscar Robertson, Rod Woodson, Alex Karras, Reggie Miller, Marvin Harrison and Peyton Manning.

And our notorious, such as Belle Gunness, John Dillinger, D.C. Stephenson, Jim Jones and Charlie Manson.

I bring this up as we ponder perhaps the most controversial Hoosier of our times, one Robert Montgomery Knight. Pour through Wikipedia's famous Hoosier list and

he's not there (nor is Gene Keady).

Bobby Knight re-emerged over the weekend when Indianapolis Star sports columnist Bob Kravitz (also not on the Wikipedia list) reported that new Indiana University Athletic Director Fred Glass is planning to induct Knight into the university's hall of fame on Nov. 6.

As a lifelong Hoosier and IU grad, I certainly welcome this news. There was a time in my life when I wouldn't miss an IU basketball game. We watched him gather in three national titles and 11 Big Ten crowns as he taught and prodded a parade of All-Americans. His teams emasculated Michael Jordan and Shaq. He would grab the mic and lecture fans to stop spewing profanities, throw ashtrays across the Memorial Stadium press box, throw chairs during games and punch cops. There was profanity, but never any cheating.

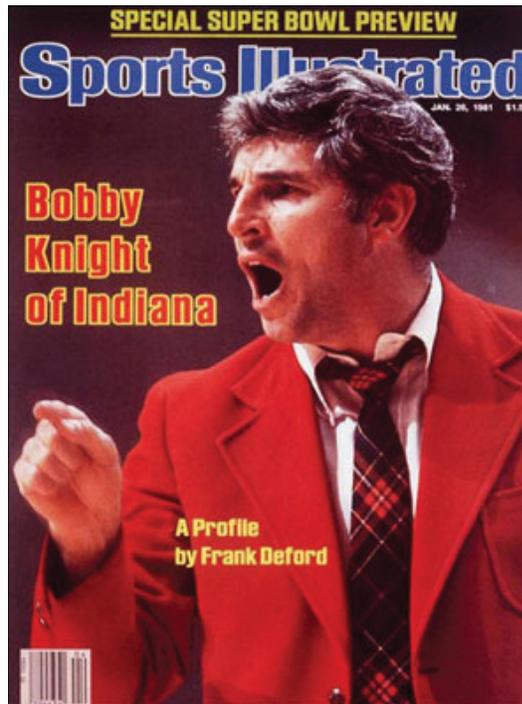
This was a painful, tortured relationship that finally frayed for me and my family when I took my sons to an IU game up at Northwestern and they watched Knight yell at the rival pep band and almost come to blows with Wildcat coach Kevin O'Neill. After that, we began to earnestly fol-

low the Butler Bulldogs, though I could never determine any lasting damage to the boys after what they saw at Welsh-Ryan Arena. They never threw chairs or punches and they admonished me for my own copy desk cussin'.

I actually began to ponder Hoosier greatness after visiting the Lincoln Boyhood National Monument at Gentryville earlier this month. Abe Lincoln said it simply and profoundly when he talked of Indiana: "There I grew up," Lincoln said in 1859 as he moved from prairie politician toward the White House and a house divided. His first stop on his way to Washington was Indianapolis in 1861 and four years later he would lie in state here.

Lincoln not only grew up in Indiana. He and his family literally moved into the fledgling state in December 1816 within days of President Madison admitting us into the union.

As my wife and I walked past a towering flagpole and up a gentle knoll, there was the grave site of Nancy Hanks Lincoln and the quote etched in stone at the Lincoln State Park across the highway: "All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."





We walked the nearby woods surrounding the Thomas Lincoln farm as a thunderstorm approached. As our shoes punched the same soil the future president surely did almost two centuries ago, the rolling thunder accentuated our perception of his tormented life.

To tell the Lincoln story is to find the Indiana backdrop. Just as with many of the other names in the first several paragraphs, they either came from here (as Cole Porter did from my hometown of Peru) or carved out their most enduring life's work here. Porter's personal trail constantly crossed my own during my teenage years and he now rests in peace surrounded by Indiana soil. The first decade I spent in Michigan City probably had me crossing paths with Chief Justice Roberts as a kid (we are the same age). We were influenced by similar elements.

Knight was a towering, forbidding figure during my time in Bloomington. What made him fascinating then, is what makes Peyton Manning the same today: You know when you're watching history in the making and have the front row seat to greatness. We talk about their triumphs, exploits and antics in school, at the bar, after the Sunday sermon. There may someday be statues of Manning and Dungy or namesake highways. Hoosies will be talking about the legendary Manning decades if not centuries from now. Ditto with Johnny Wooden, whose own path cut from Martinsville, to Purdue, to South Bend and Terre Haute and countless bandbox gyms in between.

No matter what Bob Knight thinks today, after his teaching and triumphs sequed into double secret probation, his firing, the lawsuits, the name-calling and the Lubbock exile, the fact is that Indiana is intertwined in his life. You cannot tell the Bob Knight story without the Indiana stage which stretched from Bloomington, to West

Lafayette, to Heltonville. That path literally began upon his hiring in 1971 when he quickly beat a path to Peru to try and recruit 6-10 All-Star center John Garrett (he ended up a Boilermaker after Purdue assistant George Faerber took him hunting).



Indiana's Lincoln Boyhood bicentennial monument at Lincoln State Park near Gentryville pays homage to the 14 years the future president spent in the state. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howey)

Indiana is etched into his bio. It will be the most significant part of his obituary. So I hope Fred Glass, Bob Hammel, Landon Turner, Joe Hillman, Kent Benson and Ted Kitchell can convince the Coach to come back home to Indiana on

Nov. 6. I know I'll be there to pay tribute whether he does or not. He deserves to have a stadium full of people regale his life's work, the greatness and the unsavory. We want to retell the stories and memories.

I hope that Bob Knight won't turn his back on the prime stage that made him great and all the Hoosier people who helped him do it, no matter which way he decides to leave us and greet his maker. ❖

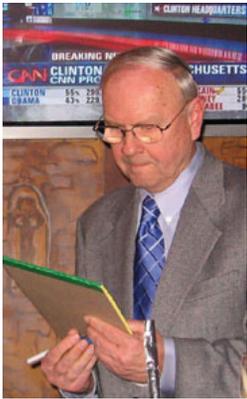


Indiana averts the Big One

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - The big one has been averted. It loomed earlier this year, with the economy in free fall. Many economists warned of a Second Great Depression.

One network poll found that 45 percent of Americans expected the big one, a depression as devastating as the one in the 1930s, when banks failed, businesses closed, unemployment hit 25 percent and multitudes were left homeless and hungry.



Now, the economic experts tell us that the worst recession since the Great Depression appears to have bottomed out and recovery, though sure to be slow, is or soon will be under way.

Instead of praising those who helped to stave off the big one - including the much-disparaged former President George W. Bush - a lot of Americans, showing little patience with just a little progress, grumble about flaws, some real, some not, in the recovery effort.

Noble Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman declared on Aug. 10 at a world capital markets conference that a Second Great Depression has been avoided, thanks to aggressive government action. Krugman also wrote in a column that the economic situation "remains terrible." He said the slight dip in the unemployment rate last month "was probably a statistical fluke," with unemployment to remain high for some time, lagging behind improvement in other indicators.

The noted economist said the financial panic late in 2008 "was as severe in some ways as the banking panic of the early 1930s, and for a while key economic indicators - world trade, world industrial production, even stock prices - were falling as fast as or faster than they did in 1929-30."

This time, the nation didn't plunge into the abyss, Krugman said, because government took aggressive action rather than the hand-off approach of the Hoover administration, providing economic stimulus and stepping in to rescue the financial sector.

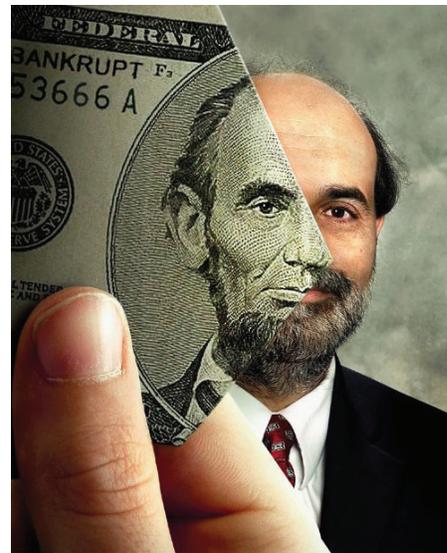
Krugman is critical of some of the action. He said the stimulus package should have been larger for maximum effect but that "reasonable estimates" are that around a million more Americans are working now because of the package. He said the effort, flaws or not, had a significant role in pulling the economy out of free-fall.

While the Bush administration can be faulted for

some of the economic policies and negligent regulation that helped to bring on the economic woes, the former president was instrumental in pushing through a \$700 billion bailout to prevent a catastrophic collapse of financial markets.

Bush's action, though unpopular with many in his own party, also helped the Republican image as he helped to keep the economy from the abyss. He was not a hands-off Hoover, whose inaction hurt the Republican brand for decades.

Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, a target of grumbling over efforts of the Fed along with the Bush and Obama administrations to save big institu-



tions that had not operated efficiently, looks better now as talk turns from fear of depression to hope for an end to a recession that began in December 2007.

"When the elephant falls down, all the grass gets crushed as well," Bernanke said in a public television forum.

While "disgusted" with circumstances in saving some

inept operators, Bernanke said the goal was to prevent damage to the overall economy, to prevent a Second Great Depression.

Efforts to save financial institutions and the domestic auto industry, even if flawed with some unfairness, kept wounded elephants from falling dead, crushing the grass all around, worsening the economy, and creating depression-promoting panic.

If General Motors had fallen, the crushing all around would have included Indiana, so reliant on automotive-related work.

Action speaks louder than words. It doesn't help to proclaim that prosperity is just around the corner. It does help to show that government can and will take action to prevent collapse of institutions and the economy.

Would the nation have plunged into the abyss if Bush had not successfully pushed the 2008 bailout, if Congress had killed the Obama stimulus, if big institutions had been left to die, if there had been no action?

All of the action, even if involving some mistakes, helped to avert the big one. A plan of action that is far from perfect is far better than no plan, no action at all. ❖



The governor's double standards

By **SHAW R. FRIEDMAN**

LaPORTE - It's become more and more obvious that the incredibly high standard for perfection and budget precision this governor seeks to hold local officials to is nothing like the standard he holds himself or others to in state government.



Over the past five years, there has been no governor in this country more critical and contemptuous of local government than Mitch Daniels. Whether it was seeking to eliminate various long-standing local institutions like county commissioners or sheriffs or his criticisms of local school boards or even his insistence that city and town officials must somehow labor to "do more with

less" under the weight of tax caps that were thought out on the back of a paper napkin, Daniels has been "in the face" of local officials throughout his tenure.

Though local officials struggle mightily with reduced state support, fewer grants and shrinking tax revenues, our "let them eat cake" governor's response has been to blithely state, "this is a terrific time to shrink government." As he told the American Legislative Exchange Council late last year, "These are the moments sometimes when you can get the most important work done."

I guess if your idea of important work is slashing local police, firefighters and first responders and closing parks and social services, then he's right, these are the times to do just that.

Daniels has been "Johnny One Note" when it came to criticizing local budgets and local officials while always claiming more "fat" could be wrung out of already shrunken budgets. Yet, he simply doesn't hold himself or his administration to the same standard.

Case in point: His foundering privatization plan at FSSA was so badly conceived that it needed an injection of \$180 million on top of the budgeted \$1 billion to try to fix the problems. His vendor IBM just issued a one-inch-thick corrective action plan that was dubbed "version 21" to try to fix at considerable cost to taxpayers the myriad problems caused by ignoring the social service community and reducing human, face-to-face interaction and replacing it with computerized phone intake and eligibility run by private vendors.

Case in point: The highly controversial I-69 project is said by many to be facing significant cost overruns of \$120 million or more and is unlikely to be finished any-

where near the \$700 million budgeted amount the Daniels administration said it would cost. According to an Indianapolis Star story dated Aug. 17, the actual cost is much likelier to be near a billion dollars. Again, so much for the Daniels claim of being lean, frugal and efficient.

Case in point: While demanding local officials to hold the line on salaries and shrink payrolls, Daniels made sure his buddy Mitch Roob got a \$20,000 annual salary bump when he left the disaster he created at FSSA to assume the leadership of the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. So much for leading by example!

Case in point: Daniels' Department of Local Government and Finance has held county after county across Indiana hostage with its incessant and ever-changing standards for assessments. Tax bills are held up and delayed throughout Indiana. Whether it's a county held up over demands about its software or a re-trending demand or even some slight statistical variation between given townships, DLGF has held local officials to unbelievably precise standards that various state agencies could never meet if they were held to the same exacting standards.

Why should we expect that Mitch Daniels would hold himself or his state agencies to the same degree of precision? This was a man who insisted that a war could be fought halfway around the globe for no more than \$60 billion tops when he was Bush's budget director. He was only off by a factor of 10, yet we've not heard the first note of contrition or remorse that he got it so remarkably wrong. (Also, in privatizing the war effort to so many private vendors and contractors, Daniels and his cronies in the Bush White House ought to be ashamed of the new 111-page report by the Commission on Wartime Contracting that talks about the billions that were lost in waste, fraud and abuse. Before you beat up on the next county commissioner or local library board member, governor, I'd be interested in your reactions to that report.)

Mitch Daniels is in no position to continue waging the war of words against local government or exacting demands from long-suffering local officials who are doing their level best in the middle of a deep recession to deliver services. Governor, the double standard must end. ❖

Shaw R. Friedman is a LaPorte attorney who served as Legal Counsel to the Indiana Democratic Party from 1999 to 2004.



How often must things be said?

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - Some things need to be repeated over and over again. Repetition is required when a concept is hard to grasp or when narrow-interests are allowed to override the public interest.



Morton Marcus
Column

• **I-69 from Indianapolis to Evansville** is not intended to connect only Indianapolis to Evansville. The I-69 extension was designed to provide significantly improved access to the many communities in southwestern Indiana, including suburban Indianapolis, Martinsville, Bloomington, Washington, Petersburg and a host of other towns. Every necessary study has been made. More delay only increases the costs and pushes the benefits farther into the future.

• **We have a moral obligation** to our fellow citizens to see that they receive necessary and appropriate health care. Insurance is but one means of financing such care. Insurance need not be related to employment. There is no substantial reason for employers to finance health care. Some people will argue that it is in the interests of employers to protect their workforce through health insurance. This is as fallacious as arguing that employers should see to it that their employees have auto insurance so workers can get to the job.

The prime beneficiaries of basic health care are those who require such care. Secondary beneficiaries are the families of those persons. In select instances, entire communities benefit from containing the spread of infectious diseases.

This is akin to the benefits of education. The prime beneficiaries are the students. Current and future families are the secondary beneficiaries and the public in general is a tertiary beneficiary. Would any rational person deny basic education to our citizens because they cannot afford to pay for it? Public financing should not be confused with public provision of the service.

How much education? How much health care? These questions never will be resolved. We agreed long ago, however, that the society in general has a responsibility to bear much of the cost of education. Now we must recognize that the same is true for health care.

• **Restrictions on pollutants** should be encouraged. If Indiana benefits from polluting the air by burning coal there are at least two solutions. First, we could pay

the rest of the U.S. to accept our pollution via the cap and trade proposal. Second, the U.S. could pay us to stop polluting and to move to another energy source.

Without alternative scientific answers, Indiana is in no position to argue that solutions to the global warming issue should exclude those that hurt us more than other states. Would we hesitate to condemn other states that pollute our air and water? Political opposition to cap and trade is narrow-minded pampering to our short-term self-interest and rejection of the global interest in reducing pollution.

• **Local issues should** be decided by locally elected governments. Should Wishard Hospital issues bonds to build new facilities? This is an issue for local government in Marion County. Instead the legislature, which should have no say in the matter, chose to have a decision by popular vote. This single-issue special election will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Should there be a transit district for Lake, Porter, LaPorte and St. Joseph counties? Again, the legislature determined there would be a special election in those four counties on the issue. The costs are staggering to decide what should be settled by the governments of those counties.

The Indiana General Assembly does not believe in local representative government. It decides by itself when issues should be determined by plebiscite, by local government, or by its own fiat.

Remember how "Unigov" was formed in Marion County? The people of Marion County did not vote on it. It was a creation of the legislature. Did the citizens of Northwest Indiana create the Regional Development Authority? No, the legislature did that.

These are a few of the issues that we will face repeatedly until more people have a clear understanding of our opportunities and obligations. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an independent economist, speaker, and writer formerly with IU's Kelley School of Business.

The Washington Post
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2007

"The Best Indiana Political Reporter: Howey Political Report editor Brian Howey."

HOWEY
Politics Indiana



Doug Ross, Times of Northwest Indiana: For 18 years, I've been listening to Dennis Hodges of Merrillville praise high-speed rail and urge the implementation of a system that would cross the Midwest. The idea received wide public acclaim at first, then interest waned quickly when it became apparent that this was a pipe dream. Except that all of a sudden, there's \$8 billion in the pipeline for high-speed rail, with the expectation that more will be coming. Who knew anyone was listening that intently to Dennis and other prophets like him? President Barack Obama listened to that concept, and his support makes a big difference. "There's a real paradigm shift that has occurred here," said Roger Sims, who signed onto the high-speed rail initiative only one year after Hodges did. "Ten years is certainly within the realm of possibility" for the start of a 3,000-mile system with Chicago as its hub, Sims said. A few weeks ago, a memorandum of understanding was signed on behalf of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Wisconsin and Chicago -- hey, Chicago has more people than many states, so why not? -- to support the creation of a high-speed rail network across the Midwest. The idea makes sense, especially in a post-9/11 world. For trips up to 100 miles, a car is most economical. More than 600 miles, and air travel is cheapest. But for jaunts of 100 to 600 miles, rail is the smart choice. [private]

Leslie Stedman Weidenbener, Louisville Courier-Journal: Just months after lawmakers finished the current \$27 billion, two-year state budget, Gov. Mitch Daniels is already warning about the next one, even though it won't be written until 2011. Speaking to Statehouse reporters from across the country on Friday, the governor warned that Indiana and other states are facing an "enormous challenge" when it comes to future budgets. States "have to decide what is central and what is not," Daniels said during a breakfast session of the Association of Capitol Reporters and Editors conference. "It will make for some interesting debates." Even in Indiana, which doesn't have a deficit and has cash in the bank, the budget situation is ominous. Assuming projections are correct, Indiana will have less money two years from now than it did two years ago, Daniels said. And so far, tax receipts haven't been meeting projections. Add to that the problem created by the federal stimulus funds — which allowed Indiana and other states to balance budgets this year but will disappear before the next budget — and things don't look good. Daniels' concerns were backed up later when the conference's lunch speaker, Steve Cochrane, managing director of Moody's Economy.com, shared projections showing that the state economies will be emerging slowly from the recession

and that those in the Midwest will suffer most.

Sylvia Smith, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette: Rep. Mark Souder might have expected the world would little note nor long remember his service to a commission celebrating Abraham Lincoln. Wrong. Prudential Financial reported giving \$125,000 to the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission in honor of Souder and three other lawmakers. But when Souder heard about the "honor," he was mystified. There might have been stronger emotion as well because Souder's name, linked to the insurance giant, turned up on a list of lawmakers who had received the second-hand benefits of corporations whose financial interests are securely tied to what Congress does or doesn't do. The fact is Souder's election campaigns have never received as much as a Lincoln penny from Prudential, even though the company donated \$2.2 million to congressional candidates in the past decade. Souder doesn't remember ever meeting with Prudential lobbyists or executives. Nonetheless, there was an official report saying Prudential had contributed \$125,000 to Honest Abe's 200th birthday commission and had done so as a favor to Souder and two other members of Congress.

Rich James, Post-Tribune: Psst! Rudy! Listen up! I've gotta whisper 'cause some folks frown on newspaper people giving advice to elected officials. But since it's free, I guess it's OK this time. It's about this Michael Jackson thing. You know, the museum and hotels and retail shops that will have people streaming to Gary. It's a smart thing to get in on the action, even though Jackson rarely looked back after Papa Joe pulled the family out of here 40 years ago. Although I think the museum and all could be a wonderful thing for Gary, I also believe it's still a risk. A roll of the dice, if you will. I see, Rudy, that there's already a bit of contention over the MJ museum, et al. Seems this New York City-based Emmes Group owns The Village Shopping Center at 35th Avenue and Grant Street. And, because it owns the property, that's where Richard Coles of the Emmes Group said members would like to build the Jackson museum. In fact, Coles said his company has the funds and is ready to go. What is it they say about a bird in the hand? Besides owning the land, Coles notes that the site is just a few blocks from Interstate 94 -- one of the busiest highways in the nation. I've read, though, that you're not too keen about this Village site, Rudy. Yeah, you'd like the MJ thing to be the catalyst for the revitalization of downtown Gary. You know, just like the Genesis Convention Center and U.S. Steel Yard were supposed to do. It's not going to happen. That's not a rap on you, Rudy, nor a rap on Gary. The downtowns are gone all across this country. ❖





Donnelly finds split crowd at Delphi

DELPHI - Mercedes Brugh brought her lawn chair and a sign supporting a proposed government-run health insurance program, showing up more than an hour early for Rep. Joe Donnelly's town hall forum Wednesday night (Groppe, Louisville Courier-Journal). "I know Congressman Donnelly is . . . more conservative than a lot of the other Democrats, but I want to encourage him to support insurance reform," said the 62-year-old jewelry designer from Logansport. James and Annette Dehner, health insurance agents from Long Beach, drove more than 80 miles from the top of Donnelly's district to send the opposite message. "There's nothing in here I can back," Annette Dehner said of the House health plan. Donnelly, one of the few Indiana Democrats who has held open public forums on health care this month, faced a largely polite audience with diverse opinions. One section of the audience applauded when a woman said she'd be willing to pay higher taxes if it meant everyone would have health insurance. Another section applauded when another speaker expressed skepticism that the government would do a good job running an insurance plan. The split isn't surprising, considering Donnelly is a potential swing vote from a swing district. The 2nd Congressional District, which runs from South Bend to Kokomo, is fairly evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. James Dehner, who voted to re-elect Donnelly last year at the same time he voted against Barack Obama for president, said Donnelly's position on health care will make a difference to him at the ballot box next



year. "I have a bit of a feeling that this is being shoved down our throats," he said.

Hill to host town halls in New Albany, B-ton

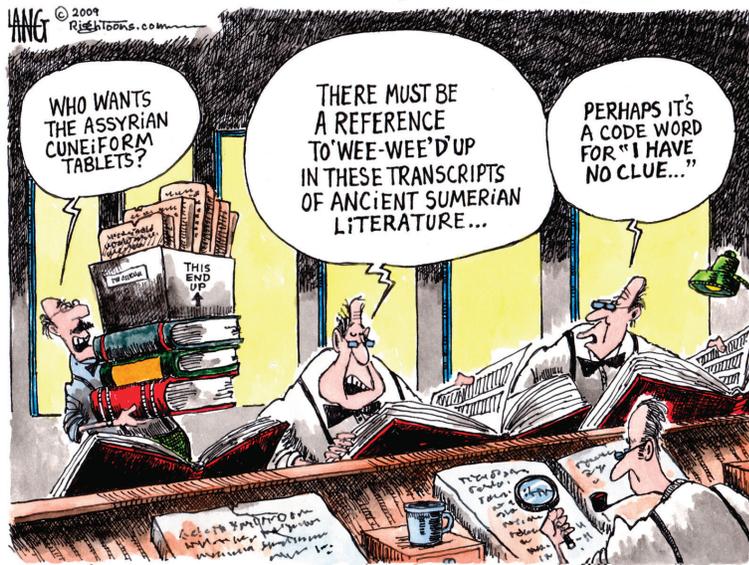
WASHINGTON - People who've been waiting for a chance to talk to U.S. Rep. Baron Hill about health care have at least two opportunities next week--at events Monday in New Albany and Wednesday in Bloomington (Louisville Courier-Journal). Entry to the public forums — Hill's first since the health care debate heated up in Congress — will be on a first-come, first-served basis, and the total number of participants will be determined by "fire code capacity," according to announcements by Hill's office. No reservations will be accepted for the

thing are heard," Moreau said. "We're taking recommendations from other folks who have made this work." The New Albany forum will be in Indiana University Southeast's Hoosier Room, which has a seating capacity of 400 when both the east and west sections are open, according to the campus Web site. The forum is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. Monday and last one hour. The Bloomington event will take place at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Bloomington North High School.

State to get NIHI flu dosages

INDIANAPOLIS - State health officials expect to receive an initial shipment of at least 838,000 doses of swine flu vaccine by late October with additional dosages expected to arrive

weekly, they've told local health officers (Kusmer, Associated Press). Indiana is set to receive about 2 percent of the nation's production of the vaccine, based on its population. If total production reaches the 195 million doses the



AMERICA'S FOREMOST MINDS CONTINUE WORKING TO DEFINE OBAMA'S LATEST COMMENT...

events. Hill's spokeswoman Katie Moreau said she expects constituents who attend to be "pretty fired up," as they are for most congressional town hall meetings. But she said she doesn't believe the forums will devolve into protests and angry exchanges that have taken place at similar events in some other congressional districts. "We want to try to make sure those who want to voice some-

government has ordered by December, Indiana's share would be more than 4 million doses, enough for about a third of Indiana's population of 6.38 million people.

Sept. 3 Hobnob to focus on urban policy

INDIANAPOLIS - The Greater



Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce's HobNob, presented by State Farm Insurance and Baker & Daniels, will be held on Thursday, Sept. 3 from 1 - 7 p.m. at the Indiana State Museum. Different from years past, the event will include a HobNob Policy Conference taking place during throughout the afternoon. The event will begin at 1 p.m. with a keynote address by Jeff Speck, a city planner and co-author of *Suburban Nation: the Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*. Following Speck's address, several breakout sessions will be held that will focus on key issues and initiatives affecting the greater Indianapolis community, including infrastructure, economic development and green business practices. "HobNob will drive real dialogue around the greater Indianapolis area's most pressing needs - whether it's a strong mass transit system or how our community can grow during the challenges in today's economy. HobNob is one of the few business networking events that allows participants to be elbow-to-elbow in discussions with our region's civic and elected leaders," said Roland Dorson, President of the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce.

USI counselor, wife arrested in pot bust

EVANSVILLE = James W. Browning, 66, director of counseling at the University of Southern Indiana, and his wife Sara Ellen Browning, 64, the director of Kindergate day care center at 623 Gum St. in Evansville, remained lodged in the Vanderburgh County Jail on Wednesday night after Indiana State Police discovered marijuana plants with a reported street value of more than \$40,000 growing at their Vanderburgh County home Wednesday morning (Evansville Courier & Press). Officers executing a search warrant at the couple's residence at 8908 No. 3 School Road also found approximately two pounds of

processed marijuana in a freezer in the basement of the house. Police described the marijuana as being "packaged for dealing." James Browning is facing charges of dealing marijuana of more than 30 grams, cultivating marijuana of more than 30 grams, maintaining a common nuisance and possession of paraphernalia. The investigation started shortly before 10 a.m. when troopers spotted the marijuana plants during a helicopter flyover, according to a news release. Police say the troopers landed in a nearby field and found 73 cultivated marijuana plants - ranging from a foot to 6 feet in height - growing in the area. The Brownings were not there initially, but were arrested when they returned to the scene later Wednesday.

State to get stim funds for biofuels in fleet

INDIANAPOLIS - Indiana has won a \$10.1 million federal grant to convert hundreds of gasoline-powered state vehicles to run on alternative fuels (Times of Northwest Indiana). The state's Transportation Department plans to switch more than 600 trucks to bio-fuel propane, allowing the trucks to run on either propane or gasoline. INDOT also will convert 60 dump trucks to use compressed natural gas for fuel. The grant also will pay to install 13 new E85 and three natural gas fuel pumps that will be available for government vehicles and the public. "This grant will allow us to continue helping our state's biofuels industry, save the state money and allow us to do more, faster," Skillman said in a written statement.

Charter school funds missing

GARY - More than \$30,000 in student fees paid to a Lake County charter school between 2006 and 2009 is missing (Times of Northwest Indiana). State auditors found that Charter School of the Dunes in Gary issued \$71,297.08 in receipts to students for school lunch

payments, after-school programs and other fees, but only \$38,475.64 was deposited in the bank. That leaves \$32,821.44 unaccounted for.

Columbus councilman resigns after Iraq duty

COLUMBUS - Craig Hawes has resigned from Columbus City Council, citing a desire to "do what is right" for people in Columbus who deserve consistent representation (Columbus Republic). A National Guard commander of the 215th Area Support Medical Co., Hawes had been absent from council meetings three of the last five years because of tours of duty overseas. He spent a year in Iraq before returning to Columbus a few weeks ago to reconnect with his wife, Diane, and their children.

Carmel Council seeks budget cuts

CARMEL - The City of Carmel could be facing a deficit next year, and the city council wants Mayor Jim Brainard to reduce his proposed 2010 budget to prepare for it (Indianapolis Star). Brainard countered that reductions could lead to job cuts. The proposed \$84.1 million budget is slightly less than this year's budget, set at \$84.4 million, but the council unanimously voted Tuesday night to request that the mayor reduce it even more.

Jail commander's death to grand jury

CORYDON - A Harrison County grand jury is expected to be convened soon to review the circumstances surrounding the death of former county jail commander Christine Britton (Louisville Courier-Journal). Britton, 28, died of a single gunshot wound to the head at her Ramsey home on March 29.