113th Indiana General Assembly

SENATOR GLENN HOWARD

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The national recession has taken a heavy toll on Indiana and most other states. The downturn has cut into state sales, income, and other tax revenues. At the same time, the federal government has either frozen or reduced funding which it provides to states for a number of programs and initiatives. As a result, most states, including Indiana, are experiencing a budget squeeze.

However, Indiana continues to move forward and make significant strides. During the swearing in ceremony of Indiana's first female Lieutenant Governor, Kathy Davis noted a few of the state's recent accomplishments:

- *Indiana continues to have the lowest state and local taxes as a percent of personal income of any Midwestern state.*
- *In 2002, Indiana was the only state in the nation to conduct a comprehensive overhaul of its tax system. In the process, it eliminated the corporate gross income tax, reduced property taxes for most Hoosiers, and began phasing out the inventory tax.*
- *Indiana's K-12 academic standards are among the highest in the nation.*
- *In 2000, 60% of Indiana's high school graduates went on to college, ranking the state 17th in the nation, up from 37% in 1986 when the state ranked 40th.*
- *The Community College of Indiana program has added 21,000 students since it started in 2000 – an increase of 50%.*
- *With the establishment of a new research center at Purdue, Indiana will remain at the forefront in the area of agricultural research and development.*
- *Indiana is the only state in the nation to have a network operation center for Internet 2, the next generation Internet.*
- *With the completion of Prophetstown State Park, all Hoosiers will be within an hour's drive of a state park or state recreation area.*

While we as a state face many challenges, we must not lose sight of the progress we've made. These advances would not have occurred without bipartisan cooperation among members of the General Assembly and the consensus-building efforts of the late Governor Frank O'Bannon and his successor Governor Joe Kernan. In the months ahead, I look forward to working with my colleagues to help foster a stronger state in which to live and raise our families.

Wishing you a healthy and happy new year,

Glenn H. Howard

REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 33
INCLUDING CENTRAL PORTIONS OF MARION COUNTY.

2004 legislative session underway

General Assembly addresses property taxes

Every November, all 150 legislators gather at the State House in Indianapolis for the annual Organization Day, when we make final preparations for the session to follow in January. This year, however, we will immediately begin considering legislation to deal with property tax relief and the ongoing property tax reassessment.

Ideas to be considered range from providing additional targeted property tax relief to the elderly and working families to tighter restrictions on local government spending. Some of these proposals may require lengthy consideration, but I am confident we will accomplish important goals prior to the scheduled start of the 2004 session in January.

Chief among these goals is the extension of the filing deadline for the Homestead Credit and numerous property tax deductions. I support legislation which would retroactively extend the original May 10th deadline to December 10th as suggested by Governor Joe Kernan thus allowing many taxpayers to take advantage of these important tax relief programs.

Some suggestions regarding legislation to place new limits on local spending should also be considered and would certainly help control property tax growth in the future. I support many of these initiatives, but I also remain committed to an even bolder vision.

Indiana needs a tax system where the burden does not fall so heavily on working families, seniors and farming communities. This means decreasing the overall reliance on property taxes and making other taxes less regressive. We have made progress, but there is much more work to be done.

Economic development efforts targeted

During the past several years, the General Assembly has made tremendous strides to provide a positive atmosphere for economic development in Indiana. In 2002, legislators worked together to enact the most comprehensive tax restructuring package in state history that, among other things, significantly overhauled corporate taxation in Indiana.

Attracting New Business

Funded by a legislative appropriation from the 2003 General Assembly, Governor Kernan launched an ambitious campaign to promote Indiana as the place to do business thanks to the recently restructured tax system. In October, the Governor and the Indiana Department of Commerce announced a bold initiative to market Indiana's business-friendly climate to regional and national audiences through statewide daily newspapers and business journals, as well as in the regional editions of national business publications and those focusing in major Midwestern cities.

The campaign logo, which features the word "GO" placed on what normally is considered a traffic stop sign, is designed to indicate that Indiana is moving forward in the face of a national recession.

Technology Partnerships

Legislators also approved legislation that created or revised economic development tools to encourage new jobs for working Hoosiers. One of the new tools being implemented is the "Certified Technology Park Program." This program creates partnerships between universities and local governments to encourage the location of high-tech businesses within areas identified by local redevelopment commissions and approved as Technology Parks. Each park must have a firm commitment from at least one business primarily engaged in high-tech activity that will locate within the park and create a significant number of jobs.

These programs are needed to promote our commitment to education, retain Hoosier graduates and boost the high-tech sector which ultimately creates jobs.

Technology Park Locations in Indiana: Anderson, Fort Wayne, Hammond, West Lafayette, and Shelbyville.

2004 Legislative Questionnaire

You may also complete this survey on-line at www.state.in.us/S33

Feel free to have another family member, as well as yourself, respond to questions.

	Respondent #1	Respondent #2
1. Do you support using part of the state-allocated tobacco settlement funds to supplement the state budget shortfall while using the balance for its intended purpose of funding tobacco prevention and control programs?	1. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑
2. With more than 12,000 employees, the Family & Social Services Administration is the largest state agency administering numerous human service programs including Medicaid, child welfare and mental health. Some people believe the agency has become too large and is losing some of its effectiveness. Do you support legislation that would divide the agency into several smaller agencies?	2. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑
3. Do you support non-elected board members, e.g. Library Boards, having the ability to levy taxes?	3. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑
4. Regarding new school construction, do you support a change from the current petition remonstrance process (the collection of signatures on a petition) to a local voter referendum?	4. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑
5. Do you support efforts to raise the age at which a child may drop out of high school from age 16 to age 18?	5. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑
6. Currently, children under age 4 are required to be in child restraint systems, e.g. booster seats, while in motor vehicles. Do you support legislation to enforce the use of child restraint systems in motor vehicles for children up to the age of 8?	6. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑
7. Motor vehicles with truck plates, including some sport utility vehicles (SUVs), are currently not included under the law that requires the use of seat belts. Do you support legislation which would require the use of seatbelts by front seat passengers in all motor vehicles?	7. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑
8. Given Indiana's burgeoning prison population, do you support legislation to reduce current mandatory minimum sentences for certain non-violent offenses as an approach to alleviate prison overcrowding?	8. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑
9. Indiana has established a voluntary self-exclusion list that allows gamblers to bar themselves from Indiana casinos. Do you support legislation to establish a state-enforced maximum loss limit for customers at casinos?	9. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑
10. Do you support legislation which would make the current State Office of the Clerk of the Courts an appointed position instead of an elected position?	10. Support ❑ Oppose ❑	Support ❑ Oppose ❑

Additional Comments: _____

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Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your opinions are very important to me!

PLEASE COMPLETE, DETACH HERE, FOLD, ADD POSTAGE, & RETURN.

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Stay Informed

To keep you up-to-date on the many issues being considered by the Indiana General Assembly, I will be distributing brief updates discussing the challenges we face here in Indiana. If you are interested in receiving these periodic updates, please check the appropriate box.

- ☐ Please send me issue updates at my home address printed below.
- ☐ Please send me issue updates via email. My email address is: (print clearly)

  _____

- ☐ I am not interested at this time.

If address is different than above, please print corrections clearly or affix mailing label here.

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Place
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Howard '04 Legislative Survey Response

Please tape or staple here. Thank you.