



Pence's politics impacting policy

High stakes move to shorten new ISTEP exam comes as fissures in Indiana education process exposed

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The phrase heard around the Mitch Daniels governorship and campaigns was a simple one: “Good policy makes good politics.”

What Hoosiers are witnessing this past week could be the reverse of that axiom, that politics can make bad policy.

With the stroke of a pen in March 2014, Gov. Mike Pence rescinded the Common Core standards that had been forged by Republican governors. Indiana was the first state on board during the Daniels administration, a component of a series of education reforms he forged with Supt. Tony Bennett. Legislative



Gov. Mike Pence with Future Farmers of America at the Statehouse this past week. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

Services Agency estimated the cost local districts used to prepare for Common Core was \$120 million. Pence made

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Howard Beale was right

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Ponder during this next commercial break how embattled NBC's Brian Williams first sat on the coveted Nightly News anchor's chair and we'll discuss this and more puppy videos when we come back.



It was 2004 and former war correspondent Dan Rather was Williams' rival over at CBS. You remember Rather, perhaps, from the movie “Charlie Wilson's War” with the Tom Hanks character wondering what Dan Rather was doin' over there in Afghanistan with a turban on his head. And Rather's elder at CBS, Morley Safer, had gone on Mekong Delta patrols and watched U.S. troops torch villages with



“While we are all united in our resolve to destroy ISIS, we need the President to lay out a clear plan and strategy for victory in this ever-evolving war. His press conference today left me with more questions than answers.”

- U.S. Rep. Luke Messer



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WWHHowey Media, LLC
405 Massachusetts Ave.,
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Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Jack E. Howey, Editor
Mary Lou Howey, Editor
Maureen Hayden, Statehouse
Matthew Butler, Daily Wire
Mark Curry, advertising

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

Contact HPI

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

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Zippo lighters.

The aspiring anchor Williams' tenure came just after Operation Iraqi Freedom. NBC seemed set with its uber war correspondent, David Bloom, out-fitted in armored "Bloomobile." Shortly after the hostilities began, Bloom was dead not from bullets, but from an embolism. NBC parachutes Williams into Iraq later that year, which led to his fateful tale, originally reported and then embellished to David Letterman: "Two of our four helicopters were hit by ground fire, including the one I was in, RPG and AK-47."



in his daily "Playbook" on Wednesday, noted that there was "Shakespearean drama at 30 Rock" now extending to Williams' "expense accounts." Allen reported, said one top network exec: "Brian was hung out to dry in every way."

Dowd's "Anchors aweigh" column on Sunday was brutal, end-



END OF REAL NEWS: BRIAN WILLIAMS SUSPENDED FOR 6 MONTHS
DRUDGE REPORT

The embellishments continued while Nightly News stood atop a cratering audience share as Americans turned to the Internet, YouTube and Jon Stewart to get their news.

The problem with all the scenarios I've heard about Williams' exaggerations is that he didn't go to Iraq or post-Katrina New Orleans alone. He had a producer, sound and video guys, and almost certainly a security detail. Anchors and senior correspondents go into war zones with a team and a good part of the team experiences what the star newsman does.

So the unanswered question is whether there was a producer in Baghdad or a news director at 30 Rock who was goading Williams and his team for drama, some action, or as New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd wrote on Sunday, the day after Williams was put on leave, "Hemingwayesque, bullets-whizzing-by flourishes to puff himself up."

The irony here is that Williams would receive his suspension from NBC brass on the same day that Stewart announced he was leaving Comedy Central's "Daily Show." Or as Drudge put it, "The end of real news; the end of fake news."

Politico's Mike Allen, writing

ing with a swipe at Williams and the entire diminished industry: "As his profession shrinks and softens, Williams felt compelled to try to steal the kind of glory that can only be earned the hard way."

Allen would offer "one idea: Jon Stewart and Brian Williams switch jobs." The New York Post openly wondered if Williams regretted not taking over "The Tonight Show" after Jay Leno retired. Instead, Williams ended up slow jamming the news with Jimmy Fallon.

That's the way it is in 21st Century news media. Bob Kravitz is writing for a TV station and IndyStar reporters shoot video. Kravitz moved his high-paying gig to WTHR-TV at a time when the viewership of local network affiliates is following the path of the big network news divisions.

This all sets the stage for the fantasy news evolution we witnessed 40 years ago with Faye Dunaway in "Network," when news became Jon Stewart-style entertainment and beyond. The Ecumenical Liberation Army has morphed into ISIS. There could be the "Terrorist of the Week" or the "Suicide of the Week." As my former news director at WKJG-TV once said at a staff meeting, "I may be an atheist, but I pray for good ratings."

And Howard Beale warned us in "Network": "Right now, there is a whole, an entire generation, that never knew anything that didn't come out of this tube. This tube is the gospel, the ultimate revelation; this tube can make or break presidents, popes, prime ministers; this tube is

the most awesome goddamn propaganda force in the whole godless world; and woe is us if it ever falls into the hands of the wrong people." ❖

Howey is publisher of Howey Politics Indiana.

Pence, from page 1

sure that Indiana was the first state out, and it became a critical talking point last summer.

Appearing on Fox News' "Fox & Friends" on May 13, 2014, Pence said that "like millions of Americans, I believe education is a state and local function." He acknowledged that while Indiana had been one of 45 states to sign on with Common Core, he added, "We've got millions of Americans who have been rising up, being heard. We want to write our standards, write our curriculum, we want to choose our own textbooks in our own state. I'm proud of the fact that Indiana was the first state in the union to legally withdraw from Common Core and go through the process of writing our own standards. My objection is to the notion that the standards that are written for Hoosier kids and Hoosier schools were crafted somewhere other than Indiana. I wanted standards to be written by Hoosiers for Hoosiers, to be uncommonly high."

When HPI polled the question in April 2013, 54% favored Common Core and 26% wanted to pull out.

Today, the revocation of Common Core represents a continuum of lurches by the U.S. and Indiana that have buffeted the education establishment since President George W. Bush forged the bipartisan No Child Left Behind in 2001. Over the past decade, Hoosier educators have seen a cascading wave of standards-based education reform established on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education.

Shifts under the Daniels administration in 2009 were then used to create the Common Core standards in 2011. In 2013, Gov. Pence and legislative Republicans decided to "pause" Indiana's participation. Then came the revocation in 2014, which set in motion another set of standards and testing. The ramifications of the new standards and the use of grading teachers are only now just beginning to be known. Indiana's top teacher school, Ball State University, had a 45% drop in students entering the

elementary education program.

In a Wednesday interview with HPI, Pence was asked if he calculated the impact on state testing after he rescinded Common Core. "It was my expectation that we would be required to conform our standards," Pence said. "There was a delay in assembling the process. But at the end of the day, neither state nor federal standards stipulate the length of the test. Other states have gone through adopting new standards without doubling the length of the test. We expected some questions at some grade levels to be harder."

Pence told HPI and Statehouse press on Wednesday that recommendations for shortening the exam would



Gov. Mike Pence meets with teachers at the Statehouse this week. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

be on his desk by Friday. "I want to wait for the expert analysis," Pence said, while expressing "confidence" that the test can be shortened before testing begins.

"In this building, we occasionally have disagreements," Pence said at the Wednesday press conference. "But today, everyone is focused on the problem." Asked about his relationship with Supt. Ritz, Pence said, "I have a very good relationship with the superintendent. There has never been a cross word between us. We had a productive conversation today and I am grateful."

Pence added that he had spoken to both Republican and Democratic legislative leaders. "If there is need for legislation, I am confident it will receive favorable action," Pence said.

He opposed suspending the A to F accountability this year. "If we grade our kids every day we can grade

our schools every year. Our parents deserve to know how their schools are doing," he said.

The Associated Press reported on April 17, 2014, that Indiana was "rushing to approve new state-crafted benchmarks in time for teachers to use them this fall, and education leaders from across the nation are closely watching." The story by Summer Ballantine quoted Stanford University Prof. Emeritus James Milgram as saying, "Since Indiana is the very first state that has actually gone in this direction, I view this situation as incredibly important to get it as right as they possibly can."

Milgram assessed the new standards, telling AP he took 10 days to do a complete review of sections of the math standards. Three weeks were devoted to finalizing the latest draft. The AP story also quoted State Board of Education member Andrea Neal to say, "We're doing way too much, too rushed at the last minute. I don't think that's the appropriate (process) for developing world-class standards."

"Any delay past that time really then puts the professionals in a compromised position," Keith Gambill, Indiana State Teachers Association vice president, told AP. "At some point in time, there has to be: This is it."

Education fissures

Surrounding this policy pressure cooker were the fissures coursing through Indiana's fractured education establishment. Democrat Glenda Ritz threw the first wrench into the process when she upset Republican Supt. Tony Bennett in November 2012. In the past 24 years of education policy making, only the four years of the Daniels/Bennett tenures were the governor and superintendent of the same party. Bennett's predecessor, Republican Suellen Reed, was not a reformer and she found ways to work with Democratic Govs. Evan Bayh, Frank O'Bannon and Joe Kernan, with the first two of that group envisioning themselves as "education governors."

The Daniels/Bennett reforms of 2011, created once Republicans retook the Indiana House, not only reshaped Indiana policy and education standards, but also fueled a sharp political division that extended well into the more than 50,000 educators who saw and felt the ground shift below their professional stations. On the other side were vocal Tea Party activists like Monica Boyer of Warsaw, who were heavily leaning on the newly elected Gov. Pence to rescind Common Core.

That led Indiana to March 2014, when Pence followed through. "I believe when we reach the end of this process there are going to be many other states around the country that will take a hard look at the way Indiana

has taken a step back, designed our own standards and done it in a way where we drew on educators, we drew on citizens, we drew on parents and developed standards that meet the needs of our people," Pence said as he signed the legislation.

The Washington Post reported in March 2014: "You've got these governors who understand the business argument for keeping Common Core," said Michael Petrilli, executive vice president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, an education policy think tank. "But they've got this Tea Party base that's really fired up about this issue, so they're trying to find a way to walk this fine line by giving voice to the Tea Party concerns without backing away from higher standards." The Indiana bill, which began its life as a straight repeal of Common Core standards, was changed so much and left so many of the common requirements intact that the original author, State Sen. Scott Schneider (R), pulled his name and voted against the final version.

This became a problem for Pence, that conspicuously surfaced when he traveled to Dallas last summer to make his pitch for states as "laboratories of innovation" before Americans For Prosperity. Conservatives were up in arms.

Conservative activist Michelle Malkin wrote, "Flip-flopping Big Government Republican Mike Huckabee has led the 'Rebrand it' strategy to take the heat off his Common Core buddies. Now, it's Indiana Gov. Mike Pence's moment: Will he pull a Huckabee or do right by the parents who have been at the vanguard of exposing Common Core's costly, invasive, academic excellence-sabotaging, control-usurping, choice-undermining scheme? After garnering positive press for withdrawing from Common Core last month, Pence must decide whether he truly believes in high standards or whether he will rubber-stamp guidelines that are even worse and have the endorsement of Common Core's number one lobbyist and peddler, Gates Foundation-funded Achieve Inc."

Malkin added in her April 2014 column: "As Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute observes, what the left hand giveth in SB 91 ordering the state out of Common

Core standards, the right hand taketh in the same bill with its instructions that Indiana remain under the yoke of the federal government. Translation: Indiana will continue to rest under a waiver from No Child Left Behind given by President Obama's Education Department. The price: Adopt college- and career-ready standards, i.e., the Common Core or its equivalent. We are now poised to adopt the latter."

Milgram observed of the emerging post-Common Core standards in April 2014: "Gov. Pence's office even commissioned me to analyze it. My understanding is that



When Gov. Pence spoke in Dallas last August, anti-Common Core advocates aimed a Twitter Storm at him.

you have been told that I 'am on board with this current draft.' This is absolutely not true. The only thing that I could say in my review that was even mildly positive was that 'it has good bones.' But that's all. No flesh, just the POSSIBILITY of developing into something halfway decent. I tried to make it as clear as I possibly could that even this would require an inordinate amount of work on the part of highly qualified people. In my view this was a committee of people, perhaps qualified in other areas not related to mathematics, but not qualified in any sense to handle fixing the mathematical monstrosities inhabiting the current document."



While in Dallas, the Twitter world erupted, aiming strident criticism at Pence. "Hoosier parents #DeserveBetter than junk standards thrown together instead of a real plan to #StopCommonCore," and "@GovPenceIN your Common Core rebrand violates free market principles, your state #DeservesBetter."

Heather Crossin, anti-Common Core Indiana activist, said in an email to Breitbart.com, "It is apparent that since Gov. Pence is considered to be contemplating a presidential run, he will have to start answering to the nation about what occurred in [Indiana] on Common Core. It's moved far beyond Hoosiers. As a Republican candidate seeking the Oval Office, he will have a hard time explaining that with a Republican supermajority and an appointed [State Board of Education], tweaking and rebranding Common Core was the best he could do."

Washington Post columnist George Will, writing about Pence in today's edition, observed: "Because some critics consider the standards that Pence's administration wrote insufficiently unlike Common Core's, he is excoriated as insufficiently hostile to 'Obamacore.' The content of the Common Core standards is beside the point. Even excellent content would not redeem Common Core because it abets what Pence correctly says will eventually become federal micromanagement of K-12 education — unless Common Core is stopped. If Hoosiers want different standards, Pence says, they now are forever free to write them."

Policy purgatory

Therein lies the crux of this policy purgatory today. A hostile Indiana Department of Education, which has fended off repeated legislative assaults and executive branch end-around (i.e. CECI), is in the driver's seat of the standards testing. The Obama administration must sign off on any No Child Left Behind waiver. On Pence's right flank are the Tea Party factions who believe he has sold out.

The end result is a new standards test that has ballooned from six to 12 hours, prompting an angry Pence

to take the actions he took on Monday, which was to order its reduction just 10 days before the testing is to begin, with pallets of testing material literally arriving on school loading docks across the state. Stress tests on the system failed miserably in January (another one is set for today) and teachers have told HPI there is little confidence in the system.

David Smith, Evansville/Vanderburgh School Corporation superintendent, told the Courier & Press, that it is "too late to try to rewrite the test to make it less lengthy."

And Supt. Smith zeroed in on a potential political crisis if the test were conducted this winter and spring: Test scores will almost certainly go into free fall. Smith said the EVSC has consulted with experts from Indiana University, Harvard and Vanderbilt, to name a few, and those people study what occurs when states move to a college- and career-readiness assessment. In states including New York, Minnesota and Kentucky, Smith said it has caused pass rates to drop by as much as 54 percent. "This test, which has never been piloted because of the rush, should be the pilot," he said. "We don't know what changing the test will do to the validity of the test. It should not count for accountability grade purposes. Then, let what we have learned in the testing this year inform how we proceed in the future."

Pence acknowledged that the new testing could impact scores. "The assessment experts will tell you, with a new statistical set there is a normal shift in outcomes," Pence told HPI on Wednesday. "What we have the authority to do, and the Superintendent acknowledges this, we can account for that by setting the cut score differently. We have the authority to accommodate for that." Pence said when he met with Supt. Ritz last week, that subject came up.

Political miscalculation

After the General Assembly sine die on April 30, Gov. Pence was going to survey his presidential prospects with family and close allies. If Jeb Bush (a Common Core proponent) was blowing the doors off other contenders financially, there would either be an opening to become a conservative alternative, or if that window was closing altogether, begin to burnish the veepstakes credentials.

But headlines of Indiana ISTEP scores going into free fall do not match up with the strict Pence talking points.

At Monday's presser, Pence explained, "Doubling the length of the 2015 ISTEP test is unacceptable and requires an immediate solution. As soon as I learned of this issue, I vowed to support efforts to shorten the test while preserving the accountability that Hoosier students

and families deserve." Saying he was hiring a consultant to figure out how to shorten the test, Pence has now thrown the entire process into a surreal place, with an outcome almost impossible to gauge.

The key words there are: "As soon as I learned of this issue."

Asked if there was a breakdown with staff or between the Governor's office and DOE, Pence explained, "I wasn't the only person who wasn't aware. So were members of the State Board of Education." He said that the issue was first raised on Feb. 4, and his office became aware of the test lengths late in the week. Pence said he and his staff worked over the weekend to draft the executive order he issued on Monday. Pence mentioned a YouTube video from last September where the DOE's chief assessment officer was asked about the test length. "She said there would be a few more questions," the Governor said.

"I'm less interested in the rearview mirror than looking out the windshield to solve the problem," Pence said.

Pence hired Edward Roeber of Michigan and another from Oregon. Roeber specializes in large-scale educational assessments, and he will make suggestions to state Supt. Ritz and CTB/McGraw-Hill, the company developing the exam. The problem there is that a Michigan expert is now going to winnow down the "tough standards" written by Hoosiers, for Hoosiers. The logistics of revamping the test, and producing the corresponding materials in just days has the potential to be a sensational story that will play out over the next three months.

The political miscalculation is that at the same time, Pence and legislative Republicans went into a full assault mode against Supt. Ritz. Legislation is aimed at taking away her automatic chairing of the State Board of Education. Other bills would make her elected position appointed. All of these measures have created conspicuous headlines while beginning to create the initial picket lines for the 2016 gubernatorial race.

Pence's 2012 Democratic opponent, John Gregg, explained, "Ramming these major changes through without public input just because you don't like the voters' choice is no way to make sound public policy or instill confidence in state government. The tactics on display in the Indiana Statehouse to neuter a duly elected office holder on personal and political grounds are a gross subversion of our most basic democratic principles. And, regardless of your political party or your position on the issues facing In-

TIME	EVENT	GRADE LEVELS	DETAILS	TIME OF YEAR
1987	ISTEP is created			
1988	ISTEP is first administered	1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9	Multiple-Choice Writing	Spring
1995	ISTEP changes to ISTEP+	Grades 3, 6, 8, and 10	Norm-referenced and Criterion-referenced Multiple-Choice Applied Skills	Fall
2002 (2004)	ISTEP+ reflects new 2000 Academic Standards	3, 6, 8 (10)	Criterion-referenced Multiple-Choice Applied Skills	Fall
2003	ISTEP+ adds other grade levels	3-8, 10	Criterion-referenced Multiple-Choice Applied Skills	Fall
2008	ISTEP+ moves to the spring	3-8	Criterion-referenced Multiple-Choice Applied Skills	Fall and Spring
2009	ISTEP+ / new Graduation Requirement	3-8 / Algebra I and English 10	Criterion-referenced Multiple-Choice Applied Skills	Spring / Completion of course
2015	ISTEP+ reflects new college- and career-ready 2014 ELA, Math Standards	3-8 / Algebra I and English 10	Criterion-referenced Applied Skills, Multiple-Choice, Technology-Enhanced	Spring / Completion of course

diana schools, all Hoosiers should also be alarmed."

Another potential 2016 challenger, former congressman Baron Hill, wrote in the Greensburg Daily News, "Over 1.3 million of us chose Glenda Ritz to be our superintendent of public instruction. The coalition that elected her was composed of members of all political parties, business leaders, members of labor organizations, senior citizens, Baby Boomers, all genders, all races and diverse political ideologies. Now, certain members of the General Assembly choose to ignore those election results and are working each day to undermine the results of that 2012 election. I ask that you join me in contacting Gov. Mike Pence to let him know that President

Reagan was right when he said that governments 'tend not to solve problems,' now many of his same Republican colleagues have certainly 'rearranged' them to the detriment of all Hoosiers."

State Rep. Terri Austin, D-Anderson, is tired of the showdown, "I think it's time for everybody to take a timeout," Austin told HPI on Wednesday. "It is beginning to look like a playground brawl. People need to stop writing letters to the editor pointing fingers at one party or another. We are all adults and it's time for people to start acting like it, all the way around. This does not serve our state well. I can only imagine how this must look to economic development site selection consultants when the top elected officials across the state are all about trying to make the other guy look worse."

"The governor and the superintendent need to sit down and have some frank conversations with one another," Austin said, not knowing that Gov. Pence and Supt. Ritz would have a phone conversation about 1 p.m. Wednesday. "And the SBOE needs to basically step back and the department staff need to step back."

Indeed, the legislation has energized Ritz's base, as well as the sprawling Indiana education community that helped forge her upset of Supt. Bennett. The visuals here are Republican super majorities and the governor seeking to take away duties of an elected official. And a female at that. Bad optics.

In doing so, not only has Ritz reactivated the base that elected her, but her name ID has to be skyrocketing.

If Pence had clamped down on the legislation aimed at Ritz, the ISTEP story would be hers, not his. "He has now taken ownership of the issue," said one Republican county chairman speaking on background. "The jungle drums are beating." ❖

POS Poll: Pence approval at 62%

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – A new statewide poll by Public Opinion Strategies for the Indiana Realtors shows Gov. Mike Pence popular, President Obama not so much, and that Indiana is headed in the “right direction.” The POS poll was of 600 likely voters statewide, conducted on Jan. 25-27, which was during the week when Gov. Mike Pence announced that the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0 waiver had been accepted by the Obama administration, as well as the Just IN news site story broke. Pence had an approval rating of 62%, including almost 60% by independents.

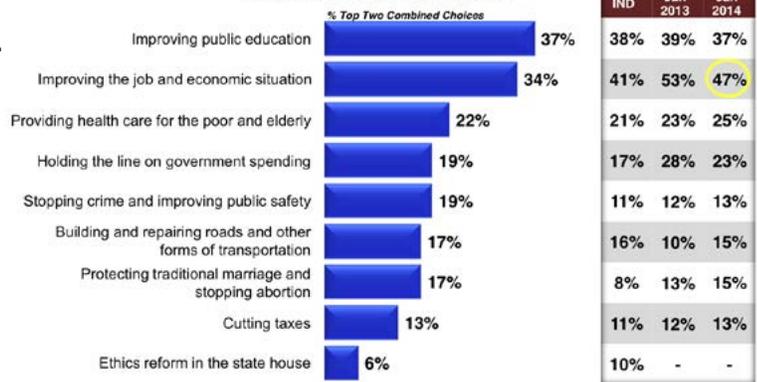
President Obama’s approval stood at 41% with 57% disapprove. In December 2011 Obama stood at 42/55% approve/disapprove. The poll was conducted before President Obama’s trip to Ivy Tech in Indianapolis last Friday. Obama was at 50% or above only in the Chicago media market and in Indianapolis.

On the right track/wrong track question, 60% of Hoosiers saw Indiana on the right track while 31% saw it on the wrong track, while 63% saw the U.S. on the wrong track while 32% saw it on the right track.

When it comes to the Indiana General Assembly, 52% approve and 36% disapprove. ON a generic ballot, 40% said they would vote for a Republican, 35% for a Democrat and 22% were undecided.

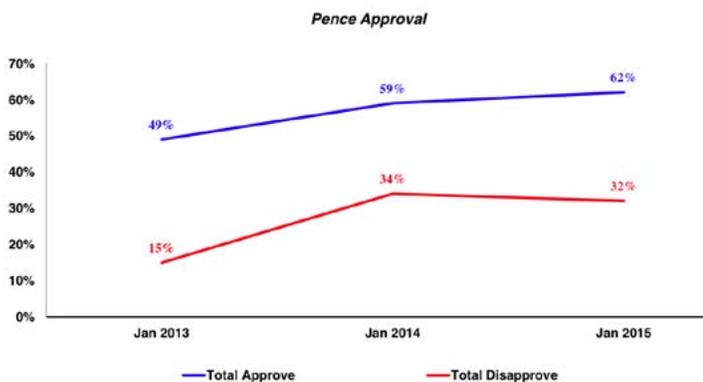
Improving public education is now the top priority among voters in the Hoosier state. Economic concerns have decreased significantly.

“Thinking of issues for a moment, which of the following issues do you believe should be the top priority for Indiana’s Governor and the State Legislature?”



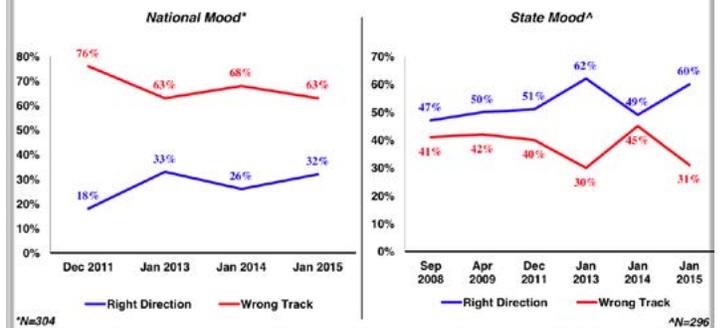
A strong majority of voters approve of the job Mike Pence is doing as Governor.

“Now, thinking about things in Indiana, do you approve or disapprove of the job Mike Pence is doing as Governor?”



Voters in Indiana are more optimistic about the direction of the state and country than last year.

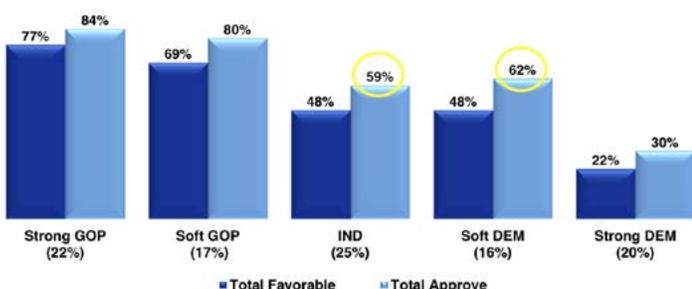
“Generally speaking, would you say that things in the COUNTRY/INDIANA are going in the right direction, or have they pretty seriously gotten off on the wrong track?”



Six-in-ten Independents and soft Democrats approve of the job Mike Pence is doing as Governor.

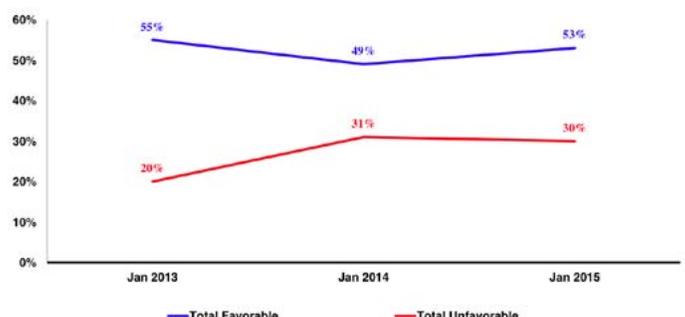
Pence Image/Approval

By Party



Governor Pence’s image is a net five points more favorable than last year.

Pence Image



Jobless rates and Pence's Indiana

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – In his State of the State address, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence cited declining unemployment in the state since the Great Recession and concluded:

"Tonight, there are 49 other governors across the country who wish they could be me!"

Well, maybe not the governors of: North Dakota, Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah, Minnesota, Idaho, Colorado, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Oklahoma, Vermont, Wyoming, Texas, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Wisconsin, Delaware, Missouri, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Arkansas



and Kentucky.

All of those states had lower jobless rates than Indiana in the latest unemployment statistics on seasonally adjusted unemployment in December. They are listed above in order of their unemployment rates, starting with the best, North Dakota, 2.8 percent.

Indiana, one of the few states with the unemployment rate ticking up, had a 5.8 percent rate, 31st in the nation and above the national rate of 5.6 percent.

Going to be a bit difficult for Pence, if he formally seeks the Republican presidential nomination, to brag about economic wonders of Indiana in campaigning in the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary. The unemployment rate in Iowa is 4.1 percent. It's 4 percent in New Hampshire.

Coming from a state with a higher jobless rate than the nation also makes it a bit harder to claim that the governor could do better than the current national administration in job creation.

But just the number of jobs doesn't tell the complete story of a state's economy. Are jobs high paying or minimum wage? High tech with a promising future or low skilled with a dead end? How many high-salaried folks with

money to spend in the community and spur the economy? How many low-income folks at poverty level, sometimes draining rather than contributing to community resources?

Where does a state rank in terms of personal income? Well, Indiana has been ranking even lower among the states in per capita personal income and income growth than it does in the joblessness statistics.

This isn't to say that there are no bright spots. Indiana has been doing much better in manufacturing jobs, a nice segment to have improvement. And look at the job gains in the Elkhart area production of recreational vehicles and mobile homes.

Does Gov. Pence deserve credit because the American auto industry was saved and Chrysler made huge investments in the state, or because plummeting international oil prices helped spur the sales of the Elkhart area products? And are the lousy jobless figures all his fault?

Governors claim too much credit and get too much blame for the jobs picture in their states, when it's the impact of the national economy and of economic shifts in things like international oil prices that have the most effect.

All Indiana governors in recent times have claimed to have brought prosperity as the state has stumbled downward for decades in per-capita income. But claiming that all the 49 other governors must envy him, as Pence did, is going farther than the usual claims.

Indiana rankings have not exactly been tops in the nation in areas such as education and health. Gov. Pence,



to his credit, is speaking out in some of those areas, including the state's horrible 7.7 per 1,000 infant mortality rate. Let us hope this leads to getting that rate down to the level in Slovakia, 5.7. ❖

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

Horse Race following 20 mayoral primaries

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Just under 20 mayoral primaries will be on Howey Politics Indiana’s radar heading into May 5, with hotly contested races in Anderson, Bloomington, Columbus, Elkhart, Logansport and Richmond.

First term Columbus Mayor Kristen Brown faces the most intense challenge from Council President Jim Lienhoop. Former State Rep. Tim Neese will take on Elkhart businessman Dan Boecher for the right to challenge three-term Democrat incumbent Dick Moore. And in Anderson, the Democratic primary is being described as a potential “wild west” shootout.



The open seat in Bloomington will find 2011 Democratic challenger facing Council President Darryl Neher, who has the backing of retiring Mayor Mark Kruzan.

Here is a roundup of primary races Howey Politics Indiana will be monitoring over the next four months:

Anderson: As one campaign manager described it, the Democratic Party primary for mayor of Anderson will resemble a “wild west” shoot-out (de la Bastide, Anderson Herald-Bulletin). Six Democrats have filed for the May 5 primary election in an effort to be the party’s standard bearer in the fall election, and eight are seeking at-large seats on the city council. The council at-large race in the fall will be crucial; the Republican Party is pursuing election of a GOP-controlled council, which would work well with incumbent Republican Mayor Kevin Smith, should he win reelection. The last time the Republican Party won all three at-large council seats was 1979. Smith is challenged for the Republican mayoral nomination by political newcomer Heather Prophet. The list of Democratic candidates for Anderson mayor includes four candidates who have been elected to public office and three who have run for mayor in the past. Kris Ockomon defeated Smith for Anderson mayor in 2007 but lost a rematch in 2011. Ockomon announced his mayoral campaign in early 2014. Fred Reese, running for the Democrats’ nomination for mayor, lost in the 2011 mayoral primary to Ockomon and was elected in November to a term on the Madison County Council. Reese will represent the 4th District. Tom Broderick Jr. served a term as Madison County prosecuting attorney and several terms on the Madison County Council. The manager of Broderick’s campaign for the Democratic nomination for mayor is city councilman David Eicks, who had been considering a run for mayor himself. Rodney Chamberlain has been elected several times to an at-large seat on Anderson City Council. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Democratic Tossup.

Bloomington: Bloomington Democrats face a three-way primary among John Hamilton, who challenged Mayor Mark Kruzan in 2011, City Council President Darryl Neher, and John Linnemeier. Adam Mikos, the most recent person to have filed candidacy for mayor of Bloomington, told the Indiana Daily Student he is withdrawing his name from consideration because of Monroe County Democratic Party’s advice. Mikos is a graduate of IU and political consultant. He entered the race on Friday but withdrew his name from consideration after the party encouraged him to do so, he said. “I believe the party was concerned I have not been involved with them locally and they were not personally familiar with me despite me being heavily involved across the country electing Democrats for over a decade,” Mikos said in an email to the IDS. Mikos said he is now considering running as an independent in November’s general election.

We see this as a race coming down between Hamilton and Neher, a senior lecturer at IU’s Kelley School of Business, who has been endorsed by Kruzan. The winner will take on Republican John Turnbull, sports director for the Bloomington Parks & Recreation. Republicans have not fielded a candidate since 2007. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Democratic Tossup.



Bloomington Council President Darryl Neher has the backing of out-going Mayor Mark Kruzan.

Carmel: Six-term Mayor Jim Brainard will face City Councilman Rick Sharp. We see Brainard as a clear favorite. While Sharp has questioned Carmel’s debt load and spending, he has also voted for many of the proposals he is now criticizing the mayor for. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Brainard.

Columbus: First term Mayor Kristen Brown will seek to fend off Council President Jim Lienhoop. Brown had a controversial first term, clashing frequently with establishment Republicans on the council. In her campaign kickoff, the mayor said, “The sentiment is that we’re on the right path of positive reform and tremendous progress. We’ve rejected politics as usual and the power of city government has been restored to the people.” Some 500 people showed up for Brown’s campaign kickoff in January. Lienhoop, who was critical of Brown’s demotion of the parks department director, told the Columbus Republic, “I think we’re also interested in trying to stem the flow of tal-

ent from city hall, we've seen an awful lot of people leave the last several years, and decades worth of institutional knowledge that's walked out the door, and I think we can stem that tide." **Primary Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

East Chicago: Mayor Anthony Copeland is the city's first African-American mayor, and he is facing a Democratic primary challenge from long-time City Clerk Mary Morris Leonard, who is also black. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Leans Copeland.

Elkhart: Former State Rep. Tim Neese is facing a Republican challenge from Dan Boecher, executive director of Downtown

Elkhart Inc. Neese has outlined 10 goals he'll pursue if he's elected, including working on filling vacant buildings and storefronts, improving morale at the police and fire departments and having a city government that is professional and returns calls promptly, according to the Elkhart Truth. Boecher will focus on economic and residential issues and how he would shape a livable city that is welcoming for families. The winner faces three-term Democrat Dick Moore. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Leans Neese.



Former State Rep. Tim Neese with Miss Indiana Mekayla Diehl.

Fort Wayne: Two-term Democratic Mayor Tom Henry is facing a primary challenge from Wayne Township Trustee Rick Stevenson as well as from Tom Cook, David Roach and John Roberson. Stevenson will be Henry's main threat, but we think he easily prevails. Henry will likely face Council President Mitch Harper. Andy Downs, director of IPFW's Mike Downs Center, told WANE-TV of Harper, "He's been doing some things that people would expect a candidate to do in terms of legislative action, things he's done from the council table. The fact that he was a state rep before, that he's a member of city council right now: All of that would make you say he's a legitimate candidate and a credible candidate. There are also some downsides to him. He hasn't typically raised a lot of money. Unfortunately, in this day and age, you need to raise a decent amount of money in order to be a legitimate candidate for mayor, especially come the fall. He has been lucky in that no one else has stepped forward, and it could be argued that he has helped to keep people from stepping forward because he could be a very legitimate candidate himself." **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Henry.

Gary: First-term Democrat Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson faces four primary opponents, Robert Buggs,

Joe White, Dean Hensley and James Nowacki. She will win easily. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Freeman-Wilson.

Hammond: Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. is seeking a fourth term and should easily win the nomination based on a stellar record in city hall and his popularity with the electorate. City Councilman Homero "Chico" Hinojosa is the challenger, but he had only \$7,500 in his campaign war chest and does not have campaign staff or a headquarters. "I'm not taking things for granted, but I'm confident I will win this primary battle," McDermott told HPI on Tuesday. A victory by McDermott in the primary and again in the fall would set him up for a possible run for statewide office in 2016. Republican Umberto Prado will face the winner. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe McDermott.

Indianapolis: Republican Chuck Brewer was slated by Marion County Republicans, and he faces Jocelyn-Tandy Adande, Terry Michael, a former Fall Creek Township trustee in Hamilton County who now lives on the far Northside, firefighter Darrell Morris, and janitor Larry Shouse. Hogsett faces token opposition from community activist Larry Vaughn. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Hogsett, Safe Brewer.

Jasper: Republican Mayor Terry Seitz faces challenger Steve Messmer in the primary, with the winner taking on Democrat Wayne Schuetter. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Seitz.

Kokomo: Howard County Auditor Martha Lake faces Jack Dodd in the Republican primary, with the winner challenging two-term Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight. Dodd recently moved to Kokomo after living in Arizona for seven years. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely Lake.

LaPorte: First term Republican Mayor Blair Milo is opposed in the Republican May primary by Councilman Roger Galloway (Maddux, NWI Times). Galloway said the mayor communicates too much on Facebook and was critical of her recent weekend trips promoting fitness to each county in the state, feeling it was adding even more distance between her and the citizens. "I'm a little old-style. I like to talk to people face to face. Shake their hand," said Galloway, 65, a former platoon sergeant in the Army who served in the Vietnam War. Among his other top priorities are fixing more of the dilapidated streets and beefing up the fight against drugs by hiring more police officers and giving law enforcement rifles and other tools he believes they currently lack. Overall, though, Galloway said Milo has done a "good job" in areas like job creation and promoting the city. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely Milo.

Logansport: First term Republican Mayor Ted Franklin filed on the last day of filing last Friday. He has two opponents in the GOP primary. One is an Indiana state trooper, Larry Hood, who is the serious primary candidate. The other is Mike Berkshire who has been a candidate before but is not a serious threat. On the Dem side, Matt Meagher, the former county Democratic chair, is

running against former Logansport Pharos-Tribune editor Dave Kitchell, as is Ricky Ricks, a retired Logansport State Hospital employee who is the son-in-law of the late Mayor Bill Vernon. Meagher's only previous political bid was for an at-large seat on the council and he finished last four years ago. The mayor's race is the only contested race on the Democratic ballot. The clerk-treasurer and mayor's races are the only contested races on the Republican ballot. Democrats have more candidates now than they slated for the last city election in 2011. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Republican Tossup, Democrat Likely Kitchell.

Noblesville: Mayor John Ditslear is facing a Republican primary challenge from Mike Corbett, publisher of the Hamilton County Business Magazine. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely Ditslear.

Richmond: Businessman and college basketball referee Kyle Ingram faces Dianna Pappin in the Republican primary. A group of businessmen recruited and will actively back Ingram. Democrats Larry Scott, radio personality Dave Snow and Monica Burns are seeking the Democratic nomination. Scott is disability services coordinator at Indiana University East. Incumbent Democrat Sally Hutton is not seeking reelection. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely Ingram; Leans Snow.

South Bend: First term Democratic Mayor Pete Buttigieg will face Henry Davis Jr. in the primary. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Buttigieg.

Terre Haute: Republican Mayor Duke Bennett is seeking a third term and will face either Vigo County Councilman Mark Bird or semi-retired businessman John Walters. Bird has been a popular vote-getter and is likely to win the Democratic nomination. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Bird.

Westfield: Mayor Andy Cook will face Pike Township firefighter Jeff Harpe. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely Cook.

Governor: Gregg posts \$129,000

Democrat John Gregg's gubernatorial committee raised \$109,000 in 2014 and ended the year with \$129,519.34. The campaign finance report for Gregg for Indiana reveals that almost all of the contributions came from Labor. The big donors included Iron Workers local 395 and Northern Indiana Operators Joint Labor-Management PAC at \$10,000 each; IBEW PAC Voluntary Fund, Indiana State Pipe Trades Association PAC Fund, UA Plumbers & Steamfitters Section 527 PAC and Indiana UAW-SAC Joint Escrow at \$5,000 each; Local 841 Indiana PAC at \$4,000; Laborers International Union North America Local 795 and Laborers International Union North America local 1047 at \$3,250 each; and the Sheet Metal Workers Local 20, LIUNA State IN District Council, LIUNA local 741 at \$3,000 each. Gov. Mike Pence's committee reported \$3.2 million in contributions, \$1.1 million in expenses and had an ending balance of \$3.54 million. As for a potential 2016 rematch with Gov. Pence, Gregg told HPI on Wednesday,

"I'm still pluggin' away. Doing a lot of listening to folks."

Indiana an 'average' conservative state

Hoosiers might not be as conservative as we are made out to be. Indiana ranks as only the 21st most conservative state in the nation in a recent Gallup poll. And in Gallup's map of where states fit on a 5-point scale of ideology - from "most conservative" to "more liberal than conservative" - Indiana and most of the Midwest are in the middle category, or "average conservative." Gallup said 39.8 percent of Hoosiers identified themselves as ideologically conservative, 34.8 percent as moderate and 20.6 percent as liberal. The most right-leaning states are Mississippi, where 48.9 percent of residents identified as conservative; Alabama, 46.5 percent; and Louisiana, 45.7 percent (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette) The most left-leaning states are Massachusetts, where 30.3 percent of residents identified as liberal; Vermont, 29.8 percent; and Hawaii, 29.6 percent. The most centrist states are Delaware, where 43.9 percent of residents identified as moderate; Rhode Island, 41.2 percent; and North Dakota, 40.8 percent.

2016 Presidential

WARREN LEADS HILLARY IN IOWA, NH: The YouGov poll of likely Democratic voters for MoveOn.org and Democracy for America also found that 79 percent want Warren and majorities support her anti-Wall Street



positions. Warren has said she doesn't plan to challenge Clinton, though several others have indicated that they are looking at a bid, including Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. The poll of 400 conducted Jan. 30 to Feb. 5 put Warren ahead of Clinton in Iowa, 31 percent to 24 percent. In New Hampshire, her lead is 30 percent to 27 percent.

JEB RAISING BIG BUCKS: Jeb Bush continues to clean up with establishment money, and is attracting a new generation of fundraising muscle (Allen, Politico). He'll pick up at least \$150,000 this morning in the boardroom of Blackstone, the private-equity giant, at a reception organized by Michael Chae, 46, a senior managing director in private equity.

WALKER 'PUNTS' ON EVOLUTION: Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker (R) on Wednesday dodged a question about whether he believes in evolution (Huffington Post). Speaking at the Chatham House foreign policy think tank London, Walker was asked: "Are you comfortable with the idea of evolution? Do you believe in it?" "For me, I am going to punt on that one as well," he said. "That's a question politicians shouldn't be involved in one way or another. I am going to leave that up to you. I'm here to talk about trade, not to pontificate about evolution." ❖

Sunday sales bill passes to full House

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – Long awaited and fiercely debated, the House Public Policy Committee heard and passed 10-2 a bill Wednesday that would allow convenience, drug, and grocery stores to sell carryout alcohol on Sundays.

There were tremendous caveats, however, leading to one coauthor voting against the legislation. Its future before the full House is quite uncertain.



A major amendment filed Monday by the bill's author, Chairman Tom Dermody, R-LaPorte, drastically changes how and

where alcohol is displayed and sold within non-package stores seven days a week. Original Sunday sales advocates were shocked by the amendment and have since vehemently opposed it, calling for a return to the "clean bill." During the hearing they said compliance would cost Indiana retailers over \$100 million to retrofit their stores. Now amended, package stores, perhaps surprisingly, support the bill.

As Chairman Dermody presented his HB 1624, he began his remarks acknowledging this was an "historic day": The first vote in over a decade would be taken on the issue of both Sunday alcohol sales and new regulations for alcohol retailing.

"Opinions have changed. Year after year people ask why or why not," Dermody said. "It's time to modernize our laws."

As Dermody navigated the nuances of the issue, he noted access to alcohol on Sundays was a reality but uneven for Hoosiers. Whereas package stores were closed and retail stores could not sell alcohol on that day, alcohol was still readily available at professional sporting events, bars, restaurants, craft breweries, and other venues. He asserted there was no evidence to suggest greater access to alcohol on Sundays would lead to social ills. The chairman also observed that some Hoosiers drive across state lines for their Sunday shopping because they can procure alcohol. This meant lost business and tax revenue.

"Revenue is not the reason

for this bill," Dermody asserted. "It's about convenience. Prohibition is over. It's time to allow 7 a.m. to 3 a.m. Sunday sales. It's common sense policy."

Dermody's amendment was adopted by consent. The amended bill would strongly overhaul how non-package stores sell alcohol every day of the week. It would have to be displayed and sold in a separate area and served by specially trained clerks over 21. And, what Rep. Dermody admitted "might be the biggest rub," hard liquor would no longer be self-service, but behind an employee-manned counter. "Alcohol is a controlled substance, not a free-market product," Dermody said.

Divided authorship, divided committee

At times coauthors, Reps. Terri Austin, D-Anderson, and Sean Eberhart, R-Shelbyville, seemed frustrated by details in the newly amended bill and how the hearing was handled. Both legislators had submitted HB 1026 together at the beginning of the session, which would have simply expanded Sunday sales to all alcoholic permit holders. As public policy chairman, Dermody's HB 1624 obviously subsumed their effort.

Rep. Austin posed rather difficult questions to those from the package store side of the argument. She also got into a testy, but brief, exchange with Rep. Dermody over details of where exactly alcohol would be allowed within grocery stores. She said restricting alcohol to one aisle would reduce inventory and choice. Dermody said he would support limiting alcohol to one area, not necessarily an aisle.

In regard to liquor restrictions, Austin said loudly while shaking her head, "I'm not asking for behind-the-counter." She explained to HPI that such a restriction would hinder shoppers' ability to compare offerings and prices.

Rep. Eberhart took issue over amendment restrictions to retail displays. He said society was well past the point of exposing children to the sight of alcohol. Dermody said alcohol displays next to back-to-school sales and in checkout lines were detrimental to minors. "Kids are constantly exposed to alcohol one way or another," said Eberhart. "I'm struggling with that argument."

After the hearing passed the three-hour mark, acting chairman Rep. Timothy Wesco limited interaction between Eberhart and a witness, citing time constraints. The coauthor appeared quite unhappy.

Afterward Eberhart told HPI, "The amendment is a big change. It contains a lot of components that I think de-



State Rep. Tom Dermody says "it's time to modernize our laws." (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

serve a lot more discussion. To make such a huge shift in public policy in such a short period of time without enough input and discussion, is the wrong, wrong public policy."

"I think this legislation has been rushed," Rep. Eberhart said at the end of the hearing. "With regret, because I'm a coauthor of the bill, I vote no."

Other committee members indicated they were comfortable with the adopted amendment. In crafting the changes, Dermody said he consulted with fellow committee members and mentioned by name Reps. Ed Clere, Ben Smaltz, Matt Lehman, and Phil GiaQuinta.

If it were to become law, Rep. Lehman said retail stores would still have some advantages over package stores such as having no 21-and-over requirement. "I don't think this is asking too much," said Rep. Lehman. "I think this is a good amendment." Rep. Clere posed questions which seemed to indicate he thought drug and grocery stores were not doing enough to restrict access to minors.

Sunday sales betrayed?

When Dermody presented his bill he directly addressed backlash from the pro-Sunday sales community to his amendment. "This is our bill," Dermody said. "This bill is not a compromise. This bill is not for big box retailers. This bill is not for package liquor stores. This bill is for Hoosiers."

It is "a very stunningly lopsided bill in terms of the amendment," John A. Elliott, Kroger manager of public affairs, told HPI Monday evening. Asked if the amendment could be characterized as a "poison pill," Elliott responded, "This is enough poison bills to stock a Kroger pharmacy. The amendment as written is not only unacceptable, but it's really outrageous."

"Don't feel bad when you hear this bill is about poison bills," Dermody told the committee. "Our job is to protect Indiana's children. Responsible retailing is a part of that."

During an interaction with Kroger's Elliott, Rep. Clere said Dermody's amendment should not be characterized as "last minute" because it was circulated Monday and that "there were no secrets here" concerning discussion of the bill and the newly adopted language.

Rep. Austin told HPI she was notified of the amendment late last week. "The chairman did run what he was going to do by me," Austin said. "I'm not going to suggest that he hid anything from me. It doesn't mean I said, 'Oh yea Tom, go right ahead do it all.' Here's the thing: He's the chairman, that is his prerogative to offer his amendment."

Dermody noted that various requests by package

stores were not included in his amendment, such as limiting alcohol sales during pharmacy hours. The amended bill still allows, as Dermody put it, "full bore" sales between 7 a.m. and 3 a.m. on Sunday. The amendment also removed a provision repealing the list of items package stores could not sell. That element in the original version of the bill was considered by many the key concession to package stores if retail stores were to begin Sunday sales.

"What we're asking for is the bill as originally introduced," Elliott testified before the committee. Grant Monahan, of the Indiana Retail Council, agreed. "The amendment that you adopted today is no compromise. The amendment is nothing more than the liquor stores' legislative wish list. The amendment is anti-consumer. The amendment turns back the clock 40 years."

Speaking of the restricted display area and behind-the-counter liquor requirement, Monahan said it would be an extreme burden on retail stores: "Which is why the liquor stores want this. They want to see our members spend \$100 million to do this."

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce's Cam Carter concurred: "It is objectively one-sided with all of the burdens put on one class of alcohol providers," he testified.

"This will hassle consumers not only on Sunday ... but every single day of the week." If passed into law, Carter predicted a political backlash against lawmakers.

The amendment language, Elliott told HPI on Monday evening, was tantamount to a "copy-and-paste menu of all of the worst liquor store lobbying ideas of the last decade."

When Dermody closed on his bill he bristled at the retail interests' criticism. "I didn't go work with two package store retailers and say write a bill," said Dermody. "Was this expected to be the first bill untouched and un-amended?"

Package store representatives, however, praised Dermody's amended legislation. Matt Bell of Big Red Liquors, the state's largest package store chain, said it was important to assure alcohol vendors had training, facilities, and procedures to prevent sales to minors and in that regard the amendment was "excellent public policy." Pat Tamm, of the Indiana Beverage Retailers, echoed these remarks and said alcohol retail reform should not be de-regulation.

Others in support of the bill stressed the need to tightly control alcohol due to its public health costs. During the hearing retail store representatives countered that Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission statistics demonstrate package stores are more likely to sell alcohol to minors than retail stores.



The Indiana Chamber's Cam Carter says there could be a political backlash from hassled consumers. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

Retail advocates said the committee should not conflate minors' ability to see alcohol with access to alcohol.

"It's ironic to me that these businesses that only sell alcohol, they sell nothing else, suddenly are so concerned about the evils of alcohol and the societal ills that it creates and minors getting it," Monahan told HPI. "I think they're just disingenuous and are clearly trying to use this bill to hold the competition back."

Rep. Eberhart tried to probe why package stores were finally relenting to Sunday sales. He asked if they would support HB 1624 without the amendment. Both Bell and Tamm answered they would not, as did others. Eberhart explained his incredulity on this point to HPI in light of his past unsuccessful efforts to pass Sunday sales legislation. In previous years' testimony, package store advocates told the same committee 25% of their clients would go out of business if Sunday sales were allowed.

"It's really ironic that we see total reversal in support for this bill compared to my bill and all of a sudden it's okay to have Sunday sales because we're putting in severe restrictions on their competition," Eberhart told HPI. "They're using their statistics and their studies for whatever best suits their argument."

HPI sources are convinced the amendment is, indeed, intended as a 'poison bill,' it being noted that the repeal of commodity restrictions on package stores is no longer included in spite of that camp's approval. Repeal of those restrictions has historically been a major lobbying goal for package stores and is regularly cited as a major handicap for retail stores. Setting it aside in such a sweeping bill, some interpret, means package store interests aren't really serious.

Sunday sales going forward

Asked for comment Monday before the hearing, Speaker Brian Bosma told HPI, "I instructed Rep. Dermody to explore the issues with the committee to try to find the right spot, and I did predict that sometimes the right spot is something that everyone objects to. I don't know if that's the case with that amendment or not. I'm quite confident he's trying to bring people to the table to discuss exactly where the committee can land."

After almost four hours of testimony and discussion the House Public Policy Committee did land on an agreement. HB 1624 passed 10-2, something many thought undoable only a couple months ago. Joining



State Rep. Terri Austin calls the bill "a work in progress." (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

Eberhart's 'no' vote was Rep. Smaltz. In explaining their 'yes' vote, Reps. Austin, Todd Huston, and Wesco indicated they had reservations with the current language but also wanted the bill to advance to the full House.

Asked if the original "clean" bill could have cleared the committee, Dermody told reporters, "Personally, I would doubt it."

Naturally, retail interests would like to scrub the entire amendment from the bill going forward, but the sharpest sticking points will revolve around specific display restrictions for beer and wine

and, most especially, behind-the-counter hard liquor. That latter element appears to scare some legislators the most.

After the hearing Dermody referred to behind-the-counter as "a minor restriction" and was confident it could be worked through by stores as in other states. "It's funny, because big-boxes [stores] are still getting Sunday Sales," he remarked. They counter an extra day cannot make up for the lost business and increased costs they predict will result from that method of selling hard liquor.

In response to HPI's questions, Dermody indicated that Sunday sales aside, he believes the current manner in which alcohol is sold in Indiana retail stores is unacceptable. "I think you heard the debate, the concerns, the questions," he said. "The status quo when it comes to a controlled substance, I don't know if that makes sense. I think the opportunity to bring both together to have a quality debate is a great mix."

Both Reps. Austin and Eberhart now look toward second reading on the House floor. "We'll have a chance to discuss the bill and amend the bill on the floor," Eberhart told HPI. "We'll have our shot at it. Hopefully the bill will get better."

"Oh, I'm not throwing in the towel," Rep. Austin told HPI after the hearing. "Anyone who has been in the General Assembly as long as Sean [Eberhart] and I know this bill—every bill—is a work in progress. We're not even at the halfway point yet. This bill is going to through many more forms."

The much-anticipated hearing drew a large crowd of interested parties that filled the House Chamber floor. Among the spectators were other legislators not on the committee, including Rep. Milo Smith who briefly testified against Sunday sales in any form, citing abuse by an alcoholic father during his childhood.

A full chamber discussion on second and third reading promises to be interesting. ❖

Ritz to propose A-F suspension to SBOE

INDIANAPOLIS – The State Board of Education will consider a resolution proposed by the Department of Education that would suspend accountability for schools and teachers tied to results from the spring ISTEP+ exam. The board convenes Friday for a special meeting to address the length of this year’s test, which sparked outrage from educators and parents when the news became public last week (StateImpact). In an effort to address these concerns, Governor Mike Pence signed an executive order Monday hiring a national testing consultant to recommend ways to shorten the test to the IDOE and SBOE. But the testing window for the ISTEP+ begins Feb. 25, giving the consultant, the IDOE and CTB McGraw-Hill a tight deadline to make any changes to the test.



The resolution asks the board to vote on the following changes to the state’s testing

procedures:

Request that the General Assembly allow the IDOE and SBOE to suspend A-F grades for the 2014-2015 school year (which are based partially on ISTEP+ grades),

Ask the General Assembly to pause interventions for failing schools “due to a sixth consecutive year of placement in the lowest category or designation of school performance resulting from the hold in school categories and designations for the 2014-2015 school year,”

Ask the General Assembly to remove social studies portions of the 2015 ISTEP+ for fifth and seventh graders,

Ask the General Assembly to approve the decision not to administer the IREAD-3 test this year, to reduce the amount of testing for third graders, and

Not incorporate ISTEP+ scores into teacher evaluations.

If the SBOE approves the resolution and the General Assembly votes to suspend accountability, schools would retain their current A-F grade for one more year.

In a letter to the SBOE, Senate President Pro Tempore David Long, R-Fort Wayne, expressed concerns about

these suggestions. “It would set back, and put at risk, the systems of improvement for our schools and children that we have all worked so hard to implement,” Long wrote. State board member Brad Oliver also expressed concerns on Facebook, saying he is “disappointed there is no item to address the length of ISTEP+ and only a resolution to suspend accountability.”

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GAMING EXPANSION BILL PASSES COMMITTEE

TEE: A Bill to provide land based gaming passes Public Policy, 10-2, this morning. It now heads to Ways & Means.

KENLEY BILL WOULD END ISTEP: If Republicans in the Indiana Senate get their way, Hoosiers will never have to fight about ISTEP again (Elliott, Chalkbeat). That’s because Senate Bill 566, which passed the Senate Education Committee today 7-3, would end the state’s tradition of hiring an outside company to create a test just for Indiana, instead requiring the state to use an “off-the-shelf” exam used by several states, such as Iowa Test of Basics Skills or the ACT. Senate Bill 566, authored by Sen. Luke Kenley, R-Noblesville, and Sen. Ryan Mishler, R-Bremen, would stop the process of creating a new ISTEP for 2016, instead letting the state use a national test that year. It also would eliminate high school end-of-course exams, starting in 2015-16, and the state’s third-grade reading test, IREAD. The committee vote, which sends the bill to the Senate Appropriations Committee, came as Gov.

Mike Pence and state Superintendent Glenda Ritz clashed this week over how much time students would spend taking ISTEP this year. “I think this big blowup about the length of the ISTEP test helps show why we need to have 566,” Kenley said.

SCHNEIDER BILL WOULD ALLOW VOUCHER TEST OPT OUT

TEST OPT OUT: The committee also passed a second bill about testing, Senate Bill 470, which proposes that schools receiving vouchers be allowed to opt-out of ISTEP to instead use any national test. That bill, authored by Sen. Scott Schneider, R-Indianapolis, also passed 7-3 (Elliott, Chalkbeat). Sen. Earline Rogers,



D-Gary, voted no on both bills. She said she was confused about why Indiana would change to a national test after so much fuss was made over writing a “Hoosier-specific” test. The inconsistency, not the test itself, is what bothered her, she said. “We lose our focus here in terms of where we need to go and some paths we need to follow in order to make certain our young people achieve and our teachers are satisfied,” she said. Schneider said his bill frees up private schools that accept publicly-funded tuition vouch-

ers for poor children from having to adjust curriculum or programming because of demands from ISTEP. "I really think it's an effort to save school choice," Schneider said. "Because what we're getting when you dictate a homogenized test, you remove any differentiation from a private school and a charter or public school, and the whole point of choice is to give people choices." But Sen. Mark Stoops, D-Bloomington, and other Democratic lawmakers, voted against the bill, saying it should apply to all the state's schools. "I just don't understand why this can't apply to all public schools in the state of Indiana," Stoops said. "I don't understand why we're focused on voucher schools."

INFANT MORTALITY BILL PASSES HOUSE

COMMITTEE: An Indiana House committee on Wednesday unanimously passed a proposal by a Southwestern Indiana lawmaker to create a grant program to help reduce the state's infant mortality rate (Schneider, Evansville Courier & Press). State Rep.



Holli Sullivan, an Evansville Republican, said the proposal establishes a grant program and fund to allow experts and public-private partnerships to try innovative and new ideas to drive down Indiana's rate. Indiana's rate is among the worst in the nation. Infant mortality tracks the number of children who die before their first birthday, and Indiana's rate in 2012 was 6.7 deaths per 1,000 live births. That year, Indiana saw 556 infant deaths, and many factors play into the state's rate, Sullivan said. Some 16.5 percent of Hoosier mothers say they smoked at some point during their pregnancy, and almost a third of pregnant women in the state reported they didn't receive early prenatal care, Sullivan said. Through the program, the state is looking to fund proposals that seek to improve access and outreach to pregnant women who are at-risk of not receiving prenatal care; decrease smoking rates among pregnant women; and promote home visitation services by trained providers, among other initiatives. "I feel this is a win-win for our babies, our state and for the grantees. It gives preference to proposals that seek to combat primary drivers of infant mortality as well as regional and collaboration efforts between health providers," Sullivan said.

BRAIN INJURY BILL ADVANCES: The Indiana House Health and Public Safety committee passed a bill Wednesday that would create a recovery program to help Hoosier veterans suffering from brain injuries (Statehouse File). House Bill 1615, which was authored by Rep. Dennis Zent, R-Angola, would establish the Veterans Recovery Program and Fund for five years. The program would be dedicated to caring for veterans suffering from brain injuries or post-traumatic stress disorder. "We need to jump at this opportunity and not just pass it out of this committee, (but) ensure that it is funded, that we get things going in the right direction," Zent said. "I feel that that would be one of my biggest contributions to not only veterans, but to this country." Veterans from around the state stood in

front of the House chamber to show their support for the bill. One veteran, Austin Fritz, 32, served as a sniper for two tours in Iraq before returning home to Bloomington with PTSD and a severe brain disorder. "I'm here because I have a brain injury," Fritz said. "Fix me." Austin's condition causes him to operate at a 4-or-5-year-old level and to live with his mother and stepfather in constant care. The bill also mandates that the state commissioner of insurance must establish the rules and guidelines of the Veterans Recovery Program and appoint an advisory board for the program. An annual report will also be required. The bill passed 12-0. It will now move to the House Ways and Means Committee for further consideration.

ENERGIZING INDIANA BILL PASSES SEN-

ATE: Legislation intended to replace the state's eliminated Energizing Indiana program passed the Senate with ease Tuesday (Indiana Public Media). Only 8 senators voted against Senate Bill 412, authored by Sen. Jim Merritt, R-Indianapolis. Lawmakers eliminated Energizing Indiana at the end of 2014 amid worries over the costs of the second phase of the program. The proposed energy efficiency alternative would allow utility companies to establish their own goals for energy savings. Utilities would submit their plans for energy savings at least once every three years, and the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission would have to approve those plans. In addition, the state's largest energy consumers would be permitted to opt out of the program, which was allowed when Energizing Indiana was still in place. Supporters say the bill would benefit business and consumers alike, but critics have voiced concerns that rate payers would suffer under the new program. Utility companies would be allowed to recoup some of their energy efficiency costs through periodic rate hikes. ❖



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High schools are a better investment

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – President Obama came to Indianapolis to rouse support for his \$60- to \$80-billion program for financing community college students. At best, it's a good idea ahead of its time.

Those \$60 to \$80 billion dollars for education should be put to use where they can do more good.



Let those funds go to into our high schools where they are urgently needed to prepare young people for citizenship, the workplace or college.

Employers complain too many workers are not ready for the workplace. IvyTech teachers and administrators complain too many students are not prepared for community college work. Four-year college teachers face too many students who are not equipped for education

at that level.

What needs to be done? First, stop students from dropping out of school. Change compulsory education laws to require all persons under age 21 hold a CCC – a Certificate of Citizenship Competence. This would require, at minimum, an ability to read at the eighth grade level, do sixth grade math, and have sufficient knowledge in communications, civics, history and science to participate in our society (yes, there will be medical exceptions to this rule).

Second, require still higher standards for high school graduates. There is no excuse for any college to have courses in remedial reading, writing or math. Some community college leaders say their schools are sites for second chances. Why not reopen high school doors for that purpose? Don't lean on the argument adults don't want to be seen in a high school. It's time to reconfirm the high school as the center of education in each community.

Third, restore skill training to our junior and senior high schools. My schooling included typing and typesetting, plus wood- and metal-working. The first of these I use writing this column each week. The other three taught me respect for those who are more dexterous and imaginative than I am.

Fourth, many of the skills desired by business should be taught at the expense of business. Let's drop this idea that government, through community colleges, ought to subsidize business when the benefits of training are to be shared by business and the trainees. There are few externalities for the general public from learning to use a computer numerical control (CNC) machine.

Fifth, where is the evidence supporting claims that community colleges are needed when local high schools

are allowed to do their jobs as intended? Yes, let's support education at the community level, but not to further the empires of statewide institutional bureaucrats and the careers of their political backers.

The President's proposal is fine, but mistimed. We need resources for programs that prepare students for life, for work, as well as for community colleges and other advanced education. When we get serious about education, a young person who cannot read, write or do basic math, is not prepared for citizenship (who does not have a CCC), he/she will be denied a driver's license.

This will reduce the dropout rate. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at atmortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.



Jobs report and the polarized labor market

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – The monthly Employment Situation Summary (aka the jobs report) offers good detail on the state of employment in the United States. Despite claims that the job market is unambiguously happy, there is real evidence of deepening problems along with the good news. A look at job creation from January 2014 to January 2015 paints a clear picture of the continuing challenge in our labor markets.



The good news is that over the course of a year, the economy has grown by a tad more than 3 million jobs. The unemployment rate has dropped from 7.0 percent to 5.7 percent, and the labor force participation rate has risen by 0.4 percent. Also, the share of long-term unemployed has dropped by 2 percentage points, as have the levels of discouraged workers. One could hardly blame the administration for boasting about these numbers. Still, the remainder of the report is a good bit less sanguine.

Of the 3.026 million jobs created over the past year, precisely 75.05 percent were in management, professional and related occupations. Almost 45 percent of new jobs nationally occurred in the professions: law, medicine, science, engineering and the like, while almost a third was in management and financial operations professions. These are jobs that require a four-year college degree or more. In contrast, service occupations grew slowly, accounting for fewer than 2 percent of all net new jobs over the past year. Sales and office occupations, including administrative support, lost 118,000 positions over the year.

Jobs in mining, construction, agriculture, and maintenance and repair accounted for only 86,000 new jobs, or 3.8 percent of total job growth over the past year. The only real bright spot for blue collar workers was in the manufacturing and transportation occupations, which saw growth of 731,000 or a quarter of total job growth over the past year. It is worth noting that more than half of these jobs probably require some college education.

It is very blunt news that in 2014 there were 25 percent more jobs created for the roughly one-third of folks with four-year degrees than in all the other educational attainment categories combined.

Other than temporarily quieting those folks who think college is unimportant, these facts offer no good news. This jobs report clearly depicts the hastening of what we economists call the polarization of labor markets. Forget the nonsense about the "1 percent" crowd, the real problemfacing American income distribution is that there is

a shrinking middle set of job opportunities.

There are many reasons for this phenomenon. Some are purely market-based and inevitable. Technology will make redundant many jobs. Ill-conceived labor market policies raise the cost of hiring lower wage workers, cutting off job opportunities. We also suffer from long neglect of educational attainment in the U.S., which leaves many men and women unprepared for an economically productive life.

This problem is cause for national concern, and ought to spur discussions around every dinner table in this country. For regions plagued by low educational attainment, this is a looming disaster. ❖

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

Waste district politics

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – Indiana Republicans are in lock-step on virtually every issue facing the state. But that wasn't the case for Northwest Indiana Republicans last week when it came to legislation involving the Lake County Solid Waste Management District. And it was rather refreshing.



At issue was Sen. Rick Niemeyer's bill to require Lake County commissioner approval of any major decisions by the county's Solid Waste Management District.

Niemeyer's proposal comes after the waste district came under fire for some questionable spending that amounted to less than \$1,000. And Niemeyer and others are still angry about the attempt to open the Hickory Hills landfill east of his

hometown of Lowell. Niemeyer's bill made little sense in that there are 27 members, representing every municipality in the county, sitting on the waste district board. The membership includes appointees of the county commissioners and county council.

Sen. Ed Charbonneau, R-Valparaiso, the chairman of the Environmental Affairs Committee that heard the bill, always has been a voice of reason. And he was last week. After a lengthy amount of testimony, Charbonneau declined to take a vote on the proposal.

Sens. Phil Boots, R-Crawfordsville, and Karen Tallian, D-Ogden Dunes, said Niemeyer's proposal made little sense since all county entities serve on the waste district

board. "You might as well get rid of the waste district altogether," Tallian said.

It seemingly makes more sense for 27 people to make decisions on solid waste than just three county commissioners. While it wasn't said, I suspect Niemeyer was attempting to minimize the chances for a landfill in southern Lake County in the future. When Hickory Hills was proposed a dozen or so years ago, there was an intense south county effort to kill the idea.

The waste district first approved Hickory Hills, but later changed its mind and killed the idea. That brought a massive lawsuit that cost Lake County municipalities and the county millions of dollars.

The thinking is that the waste district is top heavy with votes from middle and north county and would be more likely in the future to approve a landfill in south county. But with the need for two of three county commissioners to sign off on a landfill, south county opposition would stand a better chance of winning. A bill identical to Niemeyer's hasn't been assigned to committee in the House. It is sponsored by Rep. Michael Aylesworth, a Hebron Republican who lives near the Hickory Hills site.

It was an even worse day for Niemeyer. His bill to create a state rating system for solid waste districts deadlocked and failed to move out of committee. The bill would have authorized county councils to dissolve districts following two years of an "unacceptable" rating.

Next week is the deadline for Charbonneau to call for a vote on the bill to require commissioner approval on key waste district actions. ❖

Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for The Times of Northwest Indiana.

George Will, Washington Post: Although he is always preternaturally placid, Mike Pence today exemplifies a Republican conundrum. Sitting recently 24 blocks from Capitol Hill, where he served six terms as a congressman, and eight blocks from the White House, which some Republicans hope he craves, Pence, now in his third year as Indiana's governor, discussed two issues, Common Core and Medicaid expansion, that illustrate the following: Today's president, whose prior governmental experience was meager and entirely legislative, probably has strengthened voters' normal preference for actual executives — governors rather than legislators — as chief executives. Governors actually govern, which means continually making choices and compromises. So, with the Republican nominating electorate increasingly persnickety about ideological purity, governors often are more disadvantaged than senators as candidates. In 2001, as a freshman congressman, Pence was one of just 34 House Republicans to vote against President George W. Bush's pride and joy, the No Child Left Behind education legislation, which Pence considered a federal usurpation of a state and local responsibility, K-12 education. In 2010, with the Obama administration blandishing \$5 billion in Race to the Top funds as bribes, Indiana was among the 37 states that embraced Common Core standards. Under Pence, however, Indiana became the first to formally withdraw from Common Core. But because some critics consider the standards that Pence's administration wrote insufficiently unlike Common Core's, he is excoriated as insufficiently hostile to "Obamacore." The content of the Common Core standards is beside the point. Even excellent content would not redeem Common Core because it abets what Pence correctly says will eventually become federal micromanagement of K-12 education — unless Common Core is stopped. If Hoosiers want different standards, Pence says, they now are forever free to write them. Conservatives who despise any transaction with Barack Obama dismiss Pence's achievement. But Pence's plan is warmly endorsed by Grace-Marie Turner, a leading advocate of replacing Obamacare with consumer-directed health-care reform. She says conservatives should applaud Pence for making Medicaid more like a health savings account, under which purchasers of high-deductible insurance use tax-preferred savings to pay for routine medical expenses. ❖



Matt Tully, Indystar: Just to be sure, I checked. And, yes, I can confirm that the election of Nov. 8, 2016, is still on. You almost had to wonder, given the continuing effort by Statehouse Republicans to use cynical means to accomplish what they could do in a more productive and American way by winning next year's election for superintendent of public instruction. I don't know how to say this more clearly to the governor and his Republican allies in the legislature, but let's say it again: Glenda Ritz won. She

put her name on the ballot in 2012, she campaigned and she won. She won easily because many Hoosiers, whether you agreed with them or not, had grown tired of the way education policy was being conducted. That's apparently a pill that, for some, still won't go down. And, so, Statehouse Republicans are intent on doing something, anything, to overturn as much as they can the impact of the last education superintendent's election. And while plenty of people are furious about the nonstop petty board fights — I know I am — few teachers, parents or other rank-and-file Hoosiers I've talked to see a political power play as the solution to the mess. (Actually, if a vote were held on this issue today, I'm fairly certain Ritz would win.) ❖

Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier: Indiana Senate President David Long proved this week he's a stand up guy. Not that that was ever in doubt. Still, the Fort Wayne Republican went out of his way to make sure Glenda Ritz — the target of a handful of Senate bills Long is touting to strip bits of authority from the superintendent of public instruction's traditional role — understood that he meant no offense when an offhand comment about her qualifications was blown up by what he considered selective, "gotcha" accounts. His words were twisted and misstated, as he told members of the media Thursday morning. He liked Ritz personally, he said. Respected her, too.

He put it in a letter to Ritz, to clear the air. Long's comment in question came in the midst of a call-in show on a PBS station in his hometown. It was plenty juicy enough, in or out of context — "In all fairness, Superintendent Ritz was a librarian, OK?" It seemed to frame just one of the fundamental problems that doomed the relationship between Ritz and the governor-appointed State Board of Education. Specifically, Ritz didn't have experience running a large operation when she arrived at the Statehouse. She hadn't been a superintendent. She hadn't been a principal. She was, as Long said, a librarian. And there have been times, even Ritz's most staunch, blind faith followers have to admit, when the learning curve has been apparent. Long definitely didn't have to apologize for that statement of fact. That he took the time to personally say he was sorry was an upstanding move. Meanwhile, a few hours later, another bill in the Indiana House moved along, also looking to marginalize Ritz, the lone Democrat in state-wide office and an obvious thorn in the side of Gov. Mike Pence. But if all Sen. Long or anyone else in the General Assembly took from that was a snarky commentary on one particularly snarky comment, they're missing the bigger point. Like her or not — librarian or not — Glenda Ritz stands for something in the minds of Hoosier voters who put her there. You mess with that, well ... Maybe nothing happens. Life and public education go on with Ritz in the background. But more likely, maybe something does happen that leadership and a Republican majority either can't see or simply don't want to see. ❖

Young calls out Sen. Donnelly

WASHINGTON - U.S. Rep. Todd Young is calling out Democratic U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly over immigration. In a Facebook posting Wednesday, Young noted that in November, Donnelly said, "It is clear the immigration system in this country is broken, and only Congress has the ability to change the law to fix it. ... I am as frustrated as anyone that Congress is not doing its job, but the president shouldn't make such significant policy changes on his own." But Young said on Facebook: " Now, Senator Donnelly is a nice guy, but he can't say he's frustrated that Congress isn't doing its job on immigration and then vote to block Congressional debate on immigration. Unfortunately, that's exactly what he's been doing for the last week as Senate Democrats have blocked a House bill to beef up border security and to fund the Homeland Security Department. They've done it just to protect the President's executive actions on immigration--actions that Senator Donnelly says he doesn't have the authority to make. As one of his constituents, I urge Senator Donnelly to do the right thing: He should vote to allow debate on the House border security and Homeland Security funding bill."

Henry touts thriving Fort Wayne

FORT WAYNE - Keeping with the theme of city growth and momentum, Mayor Tom Henry on Wednesday highlighted Fort Wayne's progress and development in 2014 while looking ahead to the rest of 2015 during the annual State of the City address (Gong, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). "I've lived in Fort Wayne almost all of my life," Henry said, speaking to a crowd of more than 250 people at



Grand Wayne Center on Wednesday afternoon. "And there's an excitement in our city that I've never seen before, and I suspect you've seen it, too." Last year, Fort Wayne saw \$166 million in private investments and 1,100 new jobs, Henry said. The city also retained 2,600 jobs, he added. "Dana, Deister Machine, Fort Wayne Metals, Lutheran Shared Services, Sweetwater Sound and Valbruna Steel are examples of just some of the companies who are enhancing the business climate in Fort Wayne," Henry said. On economic development, Henry said growth in downtown Fort Wayne and improvements to the city's neighborhood infrastructure took major strides forward last year, and residents can expect the same level of investment in 2015. "We must continue to make these needed improvements to help our neighborhoods succeed," Henry said.

CBS reporter Bob Simon killed

NEW YORK - Award-winning CBS News correspondent Bob Simon died in a car accident, the news organization reported Wednesday evening. Simon, 73, covered news for CBS for five decades and had been a regular on "60 Minutes" since 1996. He was a passenger in a livery cab traveling in New York City at the time of the crash, according to the New York Daily News. Simon served as a prominent war and foreign correspondent. His war reporting career began with his coverage of the Vietnam War, according to his CBS bio. Simon had covered many overseas conflicts, and his efforts included being captured by Iraqi forces during the Gulf War in January 1991. He spent 40 days in Iraqi prisons, according to CBS.

House passes doomed Keystone

WASHINGTON - The House easily passed a bill on Wednesday that

would allow construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, setting up President Barack Obama to issue the third veto of his presidency. The vote capped off a four-year Republican effort to force Obama to approve the Alberta-to-Texas oil artery, but the weeks of debate in the Senate and two votes in the House this year on the \$8 billion project are likely be little more than a political exercise. Keystone backers lack the votes to override the veto. Following the expected veto, the fate of the Keystone will remain solidly in the hands of the Obama administration, which has spent six years examining the oil sands pipeline project but has set no deadline to make a decision. The 270-152 vote in the House saw 29 Democrats voting in favor of the measure, while every GOP House member except one voted to push Keystone through.

Obama seeks ISIS war powers

WASHINGTON — In seeking authorization for his six-month-old military campaign against the Islamic State terrorist group, President Obama on Wednesday did something that few if any of his predecessors have done: He asked Congress to restrict the ability of the commander in chief to wage war against an overseas enemy (New York Times). The proposed legislation Mr. Obama sent to Capitol Hill would impose a three-year limit on American action that has been conducted largely from the air and, while allowing Special Operations commandos and other limited missions, would rule out sustained, large-scale ground combat. It would also finally repeal the expansive 2002 congressional measure that authorized President George W. Bush's war in Iraq. But even as Mr. Obama proposed some handcuffs on his power, he left behind the key to those shackles should he or his successor decide they are too confining.