

## SEA80 crimping local meth production

ISP reports meth lab busts have declined 74%, number of kids in toxic home falls

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The dreary reality for the transformation of the Crossroads of America to “Indiana: The Methamphetamine State!” reached its low point in February 2014 when a Washington Post headline

stated: “Congrats Missouri, you’re no longer the nation’s meth-bust capital.” That

dubious distinction belonged to Indiana where 1,808 clandestine meth labs had been busted. For every one discovered, another three or four existed in the shadows.

Even more appalling were the 458 Hoosier kids

found living in these toxic cesspools and hovels.

It begged questions internally here at HPI: How is it OK that Indiana continually leads the nation in clandes-

**Continued on page 3**



In a dramatic demonstration on the House floor in February 2016, State Rep. Ben Smaltz shows colleagues how much PSE could be purchased at one time.



## The age of fake news

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – In the summer of 2000, some weissenheimer sent me an official-looking email that said Democratic presidential nominee Al Gore and wife Tipper were to be feted in some type of kiss-a-thon fundraising event. So I excerpted the release in the HPI Daily Wire.

The following day, I received a call from someone on the Democratic National Committee. I had been punked. The “story” was something lifted from The Onion. “How could you be so gullible?” the Dem flak asked. I responded, “Well, there was that long smooch between the vice president and Tipper at the Democratic Na-



**“Ground control to Major Tom, ground control to Major Tom, take your protein pills and put your helmet on.”**

*- The David Bowie sound track of Elon Musk’s SpaceX Tesla Roadster hurtling through the universe after Tuesday’s Falcon Heavy launch.*



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tional Convention. So this didn't seem to be such a stretch."

"I see your point," the flak conceded.

Since we began publishing the HPI Daily Wire in 2000, and the Howey Political Report since 1994, it's been rare that something from The Onion or some other cute or unsavory source has made it into our publications. I had been taught in journalism schools at Vincennes and IU to maintain a highly functioning BS-O-Meter. We've mostly kept out the fake news along with the gossip, rumor and innuendo.

**But just as Elon Musk's** Tesla Roadster now headed for deep space following the Falcon Heavy triple rocket launch on Tuesday, we as a society are now headed into a new era.

It's the Fake News era, as commenced by President Trump in 2016 and found on a Facebook or Twitter feed near you. Or, as some backers of the president will tell you, on the pages of the Washington Post and New York Times along with CNN.

Mike Allen in Axios captured the emerging dilemma on Jan. 28. It's one where we might awake some morning to video of a Hoosier legislator or congressman having sex with someone not his/her spouse.

Allen presents the narrative: Why this problem is getting worse, despite sudden attention from Washington and the platforms? A new app has flooded the web with AI-generated fake celebrity porn. In a potential oppo nightmare for 2020, machine-learning algorithms can generate convincing audio and video of fake events. Axios Science reported on a study this summer which found that we're not very good at spotting fake photos."

**The Economist** cites the "new battlefield between falsehood and veracity" where "images and sound recordings retain for many an inherent trustworthiness." We've already witnessed it, with Russian bots

instigating political rallies in the U.S. during the 2016 campaign.

In essence, we've come a long way from the U.S. Supreme Court case *Jacobellis v. Ohio* in 1964. That was a suit the state launched against showing the Louis Malle film, "The Lovers," and whether it constituted pornography. Justice Potter Stewart observed, "I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that."

The problem moving forward is that we may not know it when we see it. We may not know artificially produced porn creates a sensational



firestorm for a candidate, public servant or even a journalist.

**The reality we** face now traverses everything from mainstream media, to social media, where the New York Times reports in the "Follower Factory" by Nick Confessore that celebs and pols are paying for Twitter followers: "By some calculations, as many as 48 million of Twitter's reported active users – nearly 15 percent – are automated accounts designed to simulate real people, though the company claims that number is far lower."

I have yet to take stock on how many of my current 5,324 Twitter followers are real or Russian bots. It's

a weekend project.

We are now being bombarded with stories that "Russian-linked Twitter bots shared Donald Trump's tweets almost half a million times during the final months of the 2016 election," according to Bloomberg. Newsweek reported that The Alliance for Securing Democracy found that #SchumerShutdown had exploded among Russian influence networks.

The security group tracked approximately 600 Twitter accounts believed to be operated by Russian-tied groups and found the shutdown hashtag had surpassed popular Russian bot



hashtag #ReleaseTheMemo, reported The Hill. The Russians are creating chaos within American systems and having a good laugh.

So in the not-so-distant future, what we know about what we don't know could reach dangerous and unnerving levels. If I get an inbox video of Sen. Homer Simpson in the throes of passion with Rep. Jane Doe, the proof threshold could be elusive and daunting.

An old editor of mine would continually preach, "Be careful, there are real people out there." That is, be sure of sourcing. Because there are real bots out there these days. Real fake porn. And it could obscure the real truths we'll be needing to conduct a civil society. ❖

## Meth, from page 1

tine meth labs? Why are hundreds of municipal and state employees being injured at meth labs as firefighters, cops and code enforcers? Why is it OK that in 2013, 458 Hoosier kids were found in contaminated meth labs? Why is it OK that cities and towns are having to mitigate thousands of contaminated homes, cars and hotel rooms? Why, why, why? And are there solutions to be found in other states?

HPI reporter Matthew Butler, now working as a policy analyst for House Republicans, learned that Mississippi, Oregon, Missouri and Tennessee restricted pseudoephedrine sales at pharmacies. The impacts were dramatic. Mississippi saw meth lab busts decline from 692 in 2009 to eight in 2013. Why shouldn't Indiana follow this lead?

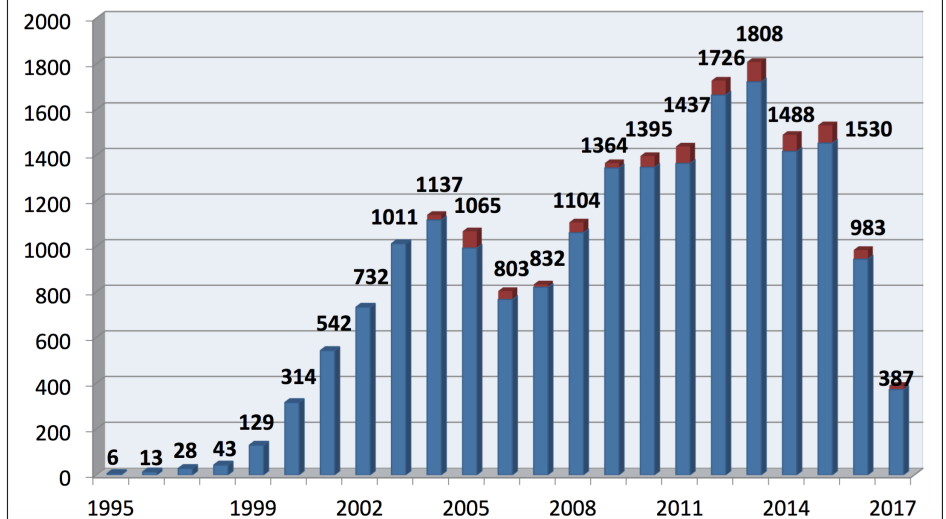
In 2016, a coalition that had been forming included State Rep. Ben Smaltz and State Sen. Randy Head; legislator pharmacists such as Sen. Ron Grooms and Rep. Steve Davisson; a bipartisan group of legislators that included Reps. David Ober, Martin Carbaugh, Wendy McNamara, Ron Bacon, Christina Hale, Dennis Zent, Charlie Brown and Gail Riecken; mayors with the Accelerate Indiana Municipalities; the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council; and the Indiana State Police Alliance. The coalition ended up paddling in the same direction, producing SEA80.

It was a long slog as the Consumer Health Care Association conducted a statewide radio ad campaign warning consumers they would not find a ready supply of pseudoephedrine products. Lobbyists for the industry threatened reporters and opinion makers who vowed to

take them on. In mid-January, House Public Health Chairwoman Cindy Kirchhofer and Senate Corrections and Criminal Law Chairman Mike Young at one point vowed not to hear bills that would alter access to the drugs. It was Speaker Brian Bosma who intervened, clearing the way for a floor vote on the issue.

In one of the more dramatic presentations in mod-

Indiana Law Enforcement Clandestine Lab Incidents 1995 – 2017



ern legislative history, Smaltz appeared on the House floor flanked by two easels bearing large posters showing how much PSE could be purchased at one time by one individual. "I think that was shocking for a lot of people," Smaltz said. "People could see the obscene amount of Sudafed you could buy. You could take the maximum dosage every day for nine and a half months if you wanted to, and that was totally fine and legal based on gram limits. That really struck home with people. Why do we have to have the

gram limit set so high? Maybe this was pharmaceuticals selling pseudoephedrine more than good policy and protecting our communities."

This past week, new Indiana State Police statistics revealed meth lab incidents have fallen 74% since 2015 after then-Gov. Mike Pence signed the law, declining from 1,452 in 2015 to 943 in 2016 and 371 for 2017. Even more dramatically, the number of children recovered in meth labs dropped precipitously. After 458 were found in 2013, some 291 were discovered in 2015, and 49 in 2017, an 83% decline.

Senate Enrolled Act 80 maintained rightful patient access to cold medications by empowering pharmacists to use their professional judgment in determining whether there was a legitimate medical need for pseudoephedrine before approving a sale.

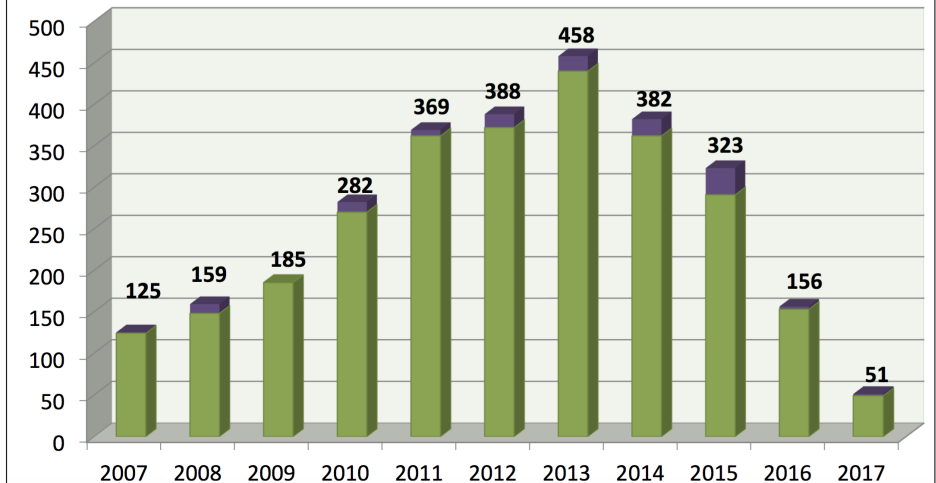
Rep. David Frizzell's House Enrolled Act 1157 required NPlex to issue stop-sale alerts after Jan. 1, 2017, for meth-related felons attempting to purchase pseudoephedrine without a prescription. In 2017, Courts and Criminal Code Chairman Tom Washburne's House Enrolled Act 1406 expanded the restriction to all drug-related felons effective July 1, 2017. And there was Rep. Martin Carbaugh's House Enrolled Act 1211, which improved the collection and accuracy of statewide meth abuse statistics.

"It seems like you can't do anything alone," Smaltz explained on Tuesday of the perfect legislative/executive storm that occurred in 2016, culminating with Gov. Mike Pence's signature in hard-hit Rochester that March. "What I found out was that other people were thinking the same thing: 'I can't do this alone. I need some help.' So I started working with Sen. Randy Head, and then the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, and just on and on. It just seemed like all of a sudden, everybody was pulling on the rope together to get meth labs and against kids getting caught up. Everybody just came together.

"It was Republicans' help and Democrat help," Smaltz continued. "There were a couple of committee meetings where Democrats like Charlie Brown and Pat Bauer helped me out. They weren't living in a community that had this problem but clearly Smaltz does, and so do other people. They were willing to help. I had Republicans do the same exact thing. They lived around Marion and Hamilton County where they just weren't dealing with it. We were in crisis in Nashville, Anderson, Auburn, Kendallville, these rural communities. It was one of the coolest



### Indiana Law Enforcement Children Identified in Clandestine Lab Environments 2007 - 2017



things I've seen politically, everyone pulling together."

Dr. Jennifer Walthall, secretary of the Family Social Services Administration, worked on SEA80 within the Pence administration. "The image that I recall most vividly, was having a room full of people, people talking about the same common goals," she said of the shaping of SEA80. "We've got health, health care finance, state police, the legislative, justice, and executive branches at the table. We asked, 'What are the things we can control right now?' We were all listening to each other."

When Gov. Pence signed the law, he noted, "I think it was a real common-sense solution that took into account the interest of parents and law-abiding citizens to be able to have access to pseudoephedrine when a family member is struggling with an illness, and at the same time creating new barriers for individuals who may be using those materials to create meth," Pence said.

"I think it's going to make a big difference in the number of meth labs in Indiana," Sen. Head added.

Asked if he has received complaints from consumers and pharmacists about accessing PSE, Smaltz said, "I haven't heard one complaint. I get the thumbs up from

pharmacists in my district.”

**A meth problem still exists**

Essentially, SEA80 has crimped the widespread collateral damage with the production of meth. This included the children, the toxic residences that needed to be mitigated, the loss of taxable property and the injuries to state and municipal employees. But meth is still readily available. It’s just being manufactured somewhere else.

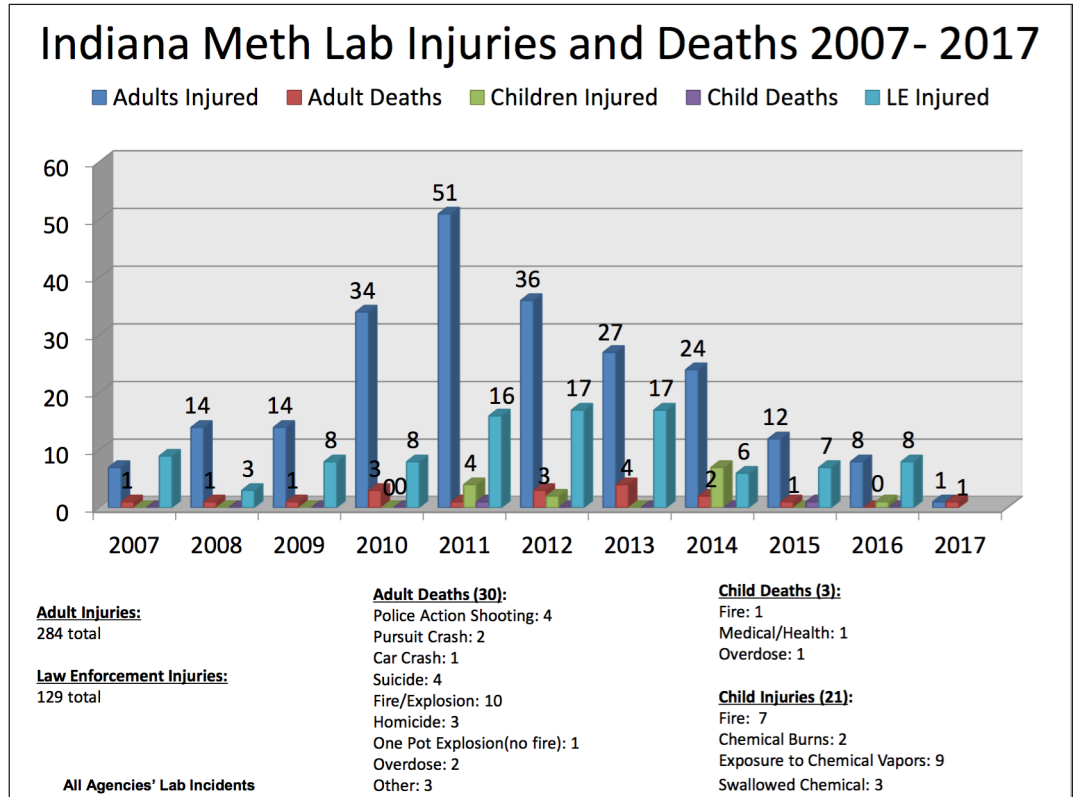
“While it’s safer with the decrease in manufacturing, we still have an increase in possession and use,” Dr. Walthall said Wednesday. “The thing that is hard is when we decrease one source, the supply seems to find its way from other sources. We still have a lot of work yet to do,” citing the need on a “call of action that includes treatment and prevention.”

Some of the decline comes with addicts pursuing heroin, opioids, fentanyl and other drugs, many supplied by Mexican drug cartels.

Indiana State Police Sgt. Jerry Goodin observed, “Law enforcement is encouraged about the reduction in the meth labs seized but understand that the fight is far from over and total victory over the problem would be zero meth labs seized. The reduction in the numbers is a direct result of the combined effort of enforcement, education and rehabilitation by police, the courts, jails and the overall community awareness. Unfortunately, another reason for the reduction is the increased flow of cheap methamphetamine being funneled into the United States and eventually into Indiana by Latin American criminal gangs. The increase in the rise of heroin use is also a factor and an extremely disturbing fact.”

“I’m still seeing meth, still seeing people taking meth, but not like I used to,” said Smaltz, whose HD52 includes parts of DeKalb, Steuben and Allen counties. “I was seeing hundreds and hundreds in my district. We were seeing the pots along roads, outside my business, in trash collections. That’s not how it is today. I’m not seeing meth lab homes, anything like I used to see. I’m not seeing kids getting yanked out of these hellholes. I’m a realist and there will be other problems with drugs. I’m a fighter and I’m in for the long haul. You can fight meth and knock it down and we’ll turn sights on illegal opioids and we’re going to fight that and knock it down and be ready for what else comes.”

Smaltz credited mayors like Warsaw’s Joe Thallermer, Auburn’s Norm Yoder and Columbia City’s Ryan Daniel with articulating what was at stake in local communities. “They were able to relay the message, this is what it costs,” Smaltz said. “We’ve got police fighting this, we had to clean it up. This is what the taxpayers in Warsaw or Columbia City or Auburn are paying for in allowing this to



continue. To have that message, to have that message at home fighting this while we were in Indianapolis fighting this. The prosecutors brought a lot of legal expertise to help us navigate.”

And Smaltz credited Speaker Bosma when the legislation appeared to be bottled up in committee for stepping up. “Without Speaker Bosma, there are hundred more kids found in meth homes,” Smaltz said. “Speaker Bosma was very timely and his support was key. It wouldn’t have happened without him.”

“I understand being a chairman, you think it and overthink it,” said Smaltz, who chairs the House Public Policy Committee. “Every chairman thinks, ‘What’s the right policy? What’s the right thing to do? Is what we want to achieve realistic?’ I’ve got 30 bills coming at me most of the time and every one has support from somebody. They had competing time. There’s only so much time. Speaker Bosma never told me no. He’s never said, ‘Don’t you do that.’ I’ve never heard those words to another chairman. He’s very pragmatic. He’ll ask, ‘If you do this, what happens? If we don’t do this, what happens?’ I made my case and he said, ‘What happens if we don’t do it?’ and I explained what I thought would happen.

“He said, ‘This is something we need to do.’

He was able to relay my message to the chair of public policy.”

And Smaltz credits Gov. Pence with allowing the legislating to proceed. “Gov. Pence was a little more arm’s length away. He came from a community that had a meth problem. We still have problems in Columbus,” Smaltz said. “He played his role which helped us. He didn’t get in the way. I know the other side was working real hard to try and trip us up and if Gov. Pence had wanted to get in our way, he could have, but he didn’t. I’ve learned in the Statehouse that neutral is just fine. If they stay neutral, I can operate. If they want to get in your way, it makes things a lot harder. He stayed in his role as an executive and didn’t interrupt what we were trying to do.”

HPI played its role as a media advocate for change, covering the issue frequently between 2013 and 2016 in this publication and in columns running in more than 30 newspapers and WTHR-TV. After Gov. Pence signed SEA80, he sent HPI a signing pen and letter, which stated, “I used the enclosed pen to sign into law SEA80. I hope you will accept it as a



Gov. Pence signs SEA80 in Rochester in March 2016 as Rep. Smaltz and Sen. Head look on.

small token of gratitude for your leadership on this important legislation.”

### Lessons for moving forward on opioids

Rep. Smaltz is sponsoring SB221 in the House this session as a new tool to combat the heroin/opioid crisis. It would amend the NPlex system to allow prescribing doctors to know if a patient is obtaining opioids from multiple sources. “If I’m an addict, I am able to doctor shop,” Smaltz said. “I can get five different scripts from different pharmacies. I’ve got the drugs to feed my addiction.” Or for sale.

Before leaving the Statehouse on Tuesday, he took State Sen. Erin Houchin’s SB221 and reached out to House Health Chair Kirchhofer to schedule a hearing.

He said that in order to combat the opioid crisis, “The first thing you have to do is goal setting. What’s our goal? What can we realistically achieve? And who’s going to play what role in the process? Anyone who grandstands and wants to do it all is going to be fraught with frustration and failure forever.”

“I met with Gov. Holcomb last Wednesday and we



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talked about this issue," Smaltz said. "I'm going to carry 221, an agenda bill. I felt like I was talking to somebody who was leading the team, somebody who was committed. It makes me feel good that the guy in the second floor is on board. I walked out of his office energized with a plan, knowing what to do and what he expects. I feel the second floor is on the same team as the third floor. When that happens, good things can happen."

Dr. Walthall is also preparing to confront the opioid crisis. While the state is still gathering data on the extent of the crisis, Walthall describes an administration that is not content to wait for the 2019 General Assembly budget session to deal with the situation. She noted that Drug Czar Jim McClelland established a plan in 2017. That included expanding treatment capacity. The federal waiver for Health Indiana Plan 2.0 granted by Health and Human Services Sec. Alex Azar last week gives the state "a great vehicle for treatment," Walthall said.

In accepting the waiver, Holcomb said, "A decade after it launched, Indiana's HIP program has become the national model for a state-led, consumer-driven health-care program that meets citizens' needs, provides choices and improves lives. This approval continues coverage for



FSSA Secretary Jennifer Walthall.

hundreds of thousands of Hoosiers and unlocks funding to expand resources to help people struggling with addiction."

Azar, a former Eli Lilly executive, said, "Today's approval is the result of the hard work of Gov. Holcomb, his team and our team at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and serves as a testament to Indiana's ongoing commitment to improving the lives of its Medicaid beneficiaries. We look forward to collaborating with Indiana on this next evolution of HIP, which serves as another example of the

Trump Administration's support of state-led efforts and innovative reforms to make our HHS programs really work for Americans."

Walthall added that the 21st Century CURES Act will provide a second year of funding. And she is excited about the coming "Open Beds 211 System" to be announced in the near future. This will allow addicts to dial 211 "24/7/365," as Walthall describes it, allowing them to enter a treatment protocol. She said that heading into the 2019 session, FSSA and the state will be looking for "sustainability" in developing a strategy across all three branches of Indiana government.

"We're pulling in the same direction," she said. "We're all on fire." ❖

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# Colt Edwin Jackson's tragic death becomes a Senate race issue

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The immigration debate promises to rage through Indiana's crucial U.S. Senate race. The death of Indianapolis Colt linebacker Edwin Jackson to a drunken illegal alien on Sunday was immediately politicized by Republican candidates Todd Rokita and Luke Messer, with President Trump and Vice President Pence also citing the tragedy to make points on immigration.

And U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly faces a harrowing month leading into President Trump's March 5 deadline for Dreamers to get an elusive deal. Donnelly voted to keep the federal government open last month, citing a promise by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to have the issue debated. But a deal proposed by Sen. John McCain and Chris Coons was quickly shot down by President Trump, who then vowed to perpetrate a government shutdown this week unless his immigration demands were met.

The day after Edwin Jackson died at the hands and pedal of a drunken Manuel Orrego-Savala, an illegal immigrant, U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita put it into the political arena, saying, "The loss of life at the hands of illegal immigrant criminals should make all Hoosiers sad, and ultimately angry. We must do more to get these dangerous illegal immigrant criminals off of our streets, and guarantee this never happens again by building a wall, ending sanctuary cities, and stopping illegal immigration once and for all."

He was followed by Messer, who said, "I echo the president's concern that it's long past time to deal with illegal immigration in this country. Clearly, the suspect in this case should not have been in the country, and this tragedy is yet another result of our broken immigration system. I have consistently advocated for stronger border security and am committed to working with President Trump to solve this issue."

Vice President Pence tweeted the Jackson death "was a senseless & avoidable tragedy." And Tuesday morning President Trump called it "disgraceful," tweeting, "This is just one of many such preventable tragedies. We must get the Dems to get tough on the Border, and with illegal immigration, FAST!"

There has been widespread analysis that Trump and Republicans believe they can suck Democrats into dangerous territory by playing the race card. It's something that has worked in the past, including 1988 when

Vice President George H.W. Bush used the "Willie Horton" ad to defeat Democrat Michael Dukakis.

Senate leaders announced a two-year budget deal on Wednesday, but there was no commitment to bring up the Dreamer deal. "Without a commitment from Speaker Ryan comparable to the commitment from Leader McConnell, this package does not have my support," House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said (Politico). McConnell promised to hold a floor debate on various Dreamers proposals later this month as long as the government remains open. Ryan has already said he would bring up a Dreamers' deal if Trump signs off on it. "We've been very clear about this," Ryan said at a press conference earlier this week. "We will take a bill that the president supports."

In addition to the dicey debate Sen. Donnelly faces between now and the March 5 Dreamer deadline, McConnell's Senate Leadership Fund launched a digital ad on the "Mexico Joe" theme that surfaced in 2017 after the Associated Press reported that a family company Donnelly had a financial stake in had out-sourced jobs to Mexico. Donnelly has sold any shares he once had in the company.

The Senate Leadership Fund declined to disclose how much it was spending but said the spot to the Washington Examiner, but the PAC said it was aimed at "key voters." The voice over in the ad says at one point, "Mexico Joe says one thing in public ... But behind the scenes



his family is still profiting from outsourcing jobs to Mexico."

## Henderson endorses Braun

Former Republican U.S. Senate candidate Terry Henderson has endorsed Mike Braun. "Washington is broken, and we'll never fix it by promoting the career politicians that got us into this mess in the first place," said Henderson. "We Hoosier Republicans need Mike Braun, a proven conservative businessman who has the skills needed to make a difference in Washington." Braud said, "I very thankful for Terry's support, I think shows that more Hoosiers believe in my message that real solutions don't come from the swamp," said outsider Republican candidate Mike Braun. "Indiana business owners know all too well that Washington's incompetence has cost our country trillions, and I'm proud to have a conservative businessman



like Terry joining my mission to shake things up in D.C.”

### New Messer digital ad

Messer’s Senate campaign rolled out a five-figure digital ad narrated by Luke’s two daughters Emma and Ava, a news release announced. This ad kicks off Luke Messer’s media effort to Republican voters across the state. In the video, Messer’s daughters tell voters who their dad really is before the airwaves become dominated with election coverage, or as Ava jokes “fake news.”

### Sparring over the Irish

Messer and Donnelly mixed it up over the Irish last weekend. On Thursday, Luke Messer attacked ESPN host Max Kellerman’s political correctness tirade to change the “Fighting Irish” mascot because it may be offensive by saying, “This is political correctness gone crazy. The Fighting Irish mascot represents the fighting spirit of Notre Dame’s sports teams over the last century. Clearly, ESPN has lost its mind. They’ve given up on sports and now only care about being politically correct. They ought to change their name to ESPC.” Hours later, Joe Donnelly’s campaign attacked Messer saying: “Wabash football players once made a name for themselves by beating Notre Dame on the football field, but now it seems their alumni are seeking attention by trying to yell about them on twit-

ter. Sadly for Congressman Messer, anyone looking for a senator who’ll be a good steward of the Fighting Irish’s legacy will probably vote for the two-time graduate of Notre Dame, Joe Donnelly.” Now, Luke Messer is calling on Sen. Joe Donnelly to stand with the Notre Dame Fighting Irish mascot. “Sen. Donnelly, do you think the Fighting Irish nickname should be changed? This isn’t hard, stand up for your two-time alma mater against ESPN and the PC police.”

### Messer, Rokita backed Nunes memo

Messer, campaigning in Kokomo Thursday, said he had read the Nunes memo that in recent days spurred debate throughout the nation (Myers, Kokomo Tribune). The memo, which Messer believes should have been made public, was released Friday. Messer was in town on a whirlwind tour one day after filing his Senate candidacy petition. He made the statement on the Nunes memo after a guided visit of Bona Vista Programs’ therapies and preschool initiatives.

Rokita told WIBC, “I think there is criminal culpability here. I think this deserves an investigation. There needs to be accountability. Individuals in our government were so hyper political that they were using the government to go after their opponents.” ❖

# Trump, GOP see bounce in polls, but then came Missouri

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – In the wake of President Trump’s State of the Union address and as the tax reforms begin to sink in and show up on paychecks this month, Republicans began heaving a sigh of relief. The polls were getting better.

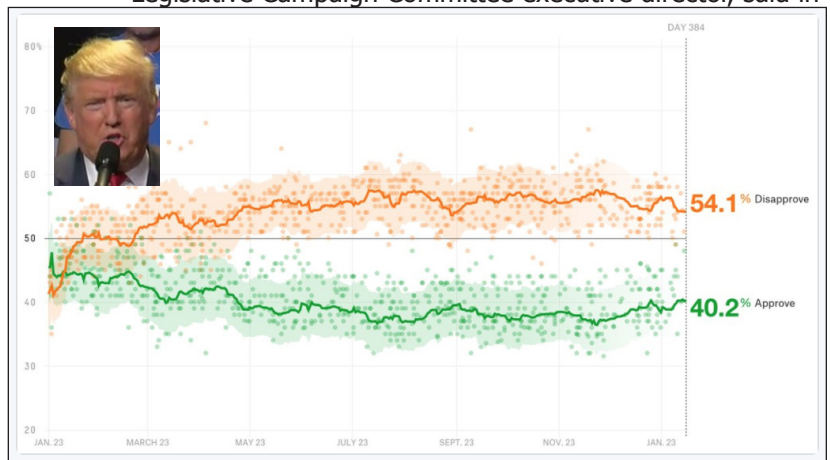


Monmouth put Trump’s approval at 44% approve, 48% disapprove; Reuters/Ipsos had it at 41/53%, Rasmussen had it 48/51% and Economist/YouGov had it 45/53%. Monmouth put the Congressional generic ballot at 47-45% in favor of Democrats, Reuters had Democrats leading 37-31% and Economist/YouGov put it at 43-37% for Democrats. All of these were significant improvements for Republicans from recent polling.

“I just looked at some numbers, you’ve even done better than you thought,” President

Trump told Republican lawmakers last week at a retreat in West Virginia. NRCC Chairman Steve Stivers (R-Ohio), added, “The numbers are pretty good and that’s one example of how things are getting better.”

Then came Tuesday, when a Missouri House seat where President Trump had won by 28% in 2016 flipped to Democrat Mike Revis, who won 52-48% over Republican David Linton. “Representative-elect Mike Revis’s victory tonight will undoubtedly send another shockwave through the GOP as we continue to run the best candidates focused on addressing local issues and improving their neighbors’ quality of life,” Jessica Post, Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee executive director, said in



a statement.

This Democratic pick up in deep red Missouri comes on the heels of Alabama Republican Roy Moore losing a had red U.S. Senate seat, and in Wisconsin where Democrat Patty Schachtner flipped a state Senate seat that had been held by Republicans since the start of the century in a district that Trump carried by 17%. Republican Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker called the results a "wake up call" for the party. House Speaker Paul Ryan said the party should take interest in why it lost the election. "Typically, we've held this seat, and we lost this seat last night. So, yeah, I think we should pay attention to it," Ryan told reporters last month, The New York Times reported.

There were some other telltales. The Hill reported that Democratic U.S. House campaigns "made significant fundraising gains." Of the dozens of Democratic challengers who outpaced GOP incumbents, 22 of them are in races listed on the nonpartisan election handicapper Cook Political Report's 86 top battleground House races. And the DCCC's "On the Radar" candidate raised about \$153,000, and has about \$300,000 cash on hand.

In Indiana, 31 Democrats are seeking nine congressional seats, including nine women candidates. The latest to announce was Jennifer Christie in the 5th CD, where she will face Dee Thornton in the primary along with Dion Douglas, Kyle Moore and Eshel Faraggi.

"As a patriot and mom of four children, I am

deeply concerned about the future of Indiana's communities and our nation," Christie said when she filed on Tuesday. "As a woman, I am saddened by the way our commander-in-chief speaks about women and endorses candidates like Roy Moore. As a scientist, I am appalled by 'alternate facts' that have no validity scientifically, the president's disregard for truth, attacks on our public lands, and denials of climate change. As a citizen, I am worried about the assaults on our democratic institutions and traditions, including partisan attacks on our free press as well as the U.S. Constitution's system of checks and balances. Moreover, like the majority of Americans, I am deeply concerned about our president's lack of transparency regarding his financial entanglements and his refusal to release his taxes."

U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks's 5th CD is +9 Republican on the Cook Partisan Index, one of only two single-digit party advantages in the state (the other is Rep. Pete Visclosky's 1st CD at +8 Democrat). She raised \$107,462 in the fourth quarter and has \$1,499,705 cash on hand. HPI still rates the 5th CD as "Safe" Republican, but that could change if a Democratic wave develops.

As HPI reported last week, Democrats in deep red districts are raising money, with Liz Watson in the 9th CD raising \$372,000, Dan Canan raising \$309,000 for the year, and Courtney Tritch in the 3rd CD raising \$101,000 in the fourth quarter. All of these candidates are out-performing

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Democrats running in these districts in recent cycles. In the 9th CD, Rep. Trey Hollingsworth reported \$297,796.56 cash on hand, and in the 3rd CD, U.S. Rep. Jim Banks has \$306,239.93 cash on hand.

**Congress**

**2nd CD: Walorski files**

U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski filed for reelection and posted \$829,311.19 cash on hand after raising \$1,252,787.23 in 2017, including \$260,103.10 in the fourth quarter. In contrast, the perceived Democratic frontrunner Mel Hall posted \$432,482.49 cash on hand.

**4th CD: Morales money lead over Braun**

Republican Diego Morales had a \$355,251 to \$153,760 over Steve Braun in the Republican primary race. Morales reported raising \$413,852 in 2017 to Braun's \$323,435. Jared Thomas raised \$17,137 and had \$7,034 cash on hand, while State Rep. Jim Baird raised \$6,460, loaned his campaign \$200,000 and posted \$203,002 cash on hand.

**Smith, Atterholt endorse Morales**

Two men who each served as chief of staff to then-Gov. Mike Pence, Jim Atterholt and Bill Smith, have officially endorsed Diego Morales for Congress in Indiana's 4th District. Smith served as Pence's chief of staff from 2013 to 2014, with Atterholt holding the position from 2014 to 2016. Both men are considered to have been effective and committed conservative leaders within the Indiana Republican Party for more than three decades. "Having worked directly with Diego when he was Gov. Pence's senior advisor, I know he is a strong conservative who will bring his servant-heart leadership to Washington," said Atterholt, who most recently served Gov. Eric Holcomb as Indiana Regulatory Commission chairman. "His quality of character, relentless work ethic and commit-

ment to faith, family and country make Diego Morales the right choice for Congress and I enthusiastically endorse his candidacy." Smith, president & CEO of Sextons Creek, agreed with Atterholt. "Diego brings a strong combination of public and private sector experience to this race. He blends his background as an Army veteran with years of business management, government relations, economics and international outreach to create a unique perspective that will serve us well. Along with his rock-solid stances on the sanctity of life, the 2nd Amendment and support of homeschoolers, Diego is, without a doubt, the right person to represent the 4th District in Congress."

**Baird hires operations director**

State Rep. Jim Baird announced the addition of Brittany Daniel Wallace as director of operations for his congressional campaign in Indiana's 4th District.

**6th CD: Lamb runs Super Bowl ad**

Republican Jonathan Lamb took his message to a wide audience Sunday when his newest commercial aired during Super Bowl LII in the Indianapolis market on the NBC affiliate, WTHR, Channel 13. "Let's face it, while we've already clearly shown that money will not be an issue in deciding this race, I have a little catch-up to do in the name recognition department," said Lamb, referencing his opponent's family name that's been in Congress, the governor's mansion and in the White House for nearly 20 years. "But the Super Bowl will help continue to close that gap. I simply want this race to be about who is the best candidate, not who someone's brother is."

**Pence files in 6th CD**

Greg Pence, brother of Vice President Mike Pence, filed for the Republican 6th CD primary on Monday (Howey Politics Indiana). "I got in this race because I was encouraged to step up after Congressman Luke Messer announced his candidacy for the Senate," Pence said. "But



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before I would even consider such an important role for my community, I reached out to Republican leaders across the 6th District to better understand what type of congressman they want to represent this important area of our state."

### 8th CD: Moss cites 'broken' GOP

"We have a broken Republican party in Congress that is a disappointment to the conservative base," said Dr. Richard Moss (Grant, Washington Times Herald). "The conservative Republican base is frustrated. They don't see their party representing them and that is bad for both the party and the country." For Moss, 63, of Jasper, who practices in Jasper and Washington, that is one of the big reasons he has filed to seek the 8th District congressional nomination for the Republican Party. "We have hard line Democrats, socialists and big-spending, big-debt Republicans running the country," said Moss. "They are ruining it. I want to be part of a movement of strong constitutional conservatives to create an impact on Congress and rein it in." This is not the first time Moss has taken a run at Congress. He was a candidate two years ago. "Sometimes it takes an election cycle or two to get your name out," he said. "We are building a structure and name identification. I feel if I can add a few percent more people, I have a real chance at the primary." Republican incumbent Dr. Larry Bucshon has already filed with the Indiana secretary of state to run for reelection for the seat. Moss says Bucshon's actions in the House are another reason he is seeking the office. "First, he has taken a page out of the Evan Bayh-Richard Lugar playbook and moved his family to the Washington, D.C., area," said Moss. "He still has a home in the district, but they live in Virginia. Hoosiers want the people that represent them to live in the area." Moss also had a complaint about Bucshon's voting record. "Like a lot of Republicans he campaigns as a conservative at home, but when he gets to D.C., he votes with the mainstream Republicans," said Moss.



### General Assembly

#### HD45: Publisher Exline files

Jim Exline, president of Kelk Publishing LLC, which publishes the Sullivan Daily Times, said he filed this morning on the Democrat ballot to run for the District 45 seat in the Indiana House of Representatives (Terre Haute Tribune-Star). In an email and news release, Exline said he would kick off his campaign at 1 p.m. Thursday in Sullivan. Incumbent Bruce Borders, R-Jasonville, has filed for reelection on the Republican ballot for the District 45 seat. Exline is a graduate of Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in finance.

#### HD62: Swain announces v. Ellington

A two-term elected member of the Indian Creek Township board is setting her sights on the Indiana Statehouse (Rollins, Bloomington Herald-Times). Amy Swain has announced her candidacy for Indiana House District 62 — which covers the majority of Greene County and portions of Monroe, Martin and Daviess counties. She is running as a Democrat. The seat is currently held by Republican Jeff Ellington. Swain had filed for re-election to the Indian Creek Township board last month. She said she is withdrawing from that race to pursue election to the Statehouse. "Having lived in a rural Hoosier community for more than 20 years, I believe that rural residents are often left out of the conversation at the Statehouse, and I will bring that perspective to the job," Swain said in a news release. As an Indian Creek Township board member, Swain voted to restore fire protection and emergency medical services to a centrally located fire station within the township. "By taking necessary steps to join with neighboring townships in a fire district, the township will be better staffed, including full-time protection for fire and emergency services, and will be able to purchase newer equipment to protect its citizens," Swain said in a news release.

#### Primary filings

**Congress, Democrat:** U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly, U.S. Senate, Larry Chubb CD1, Courtney Tritch CD3, Rolland Ellis CD4, Lane Siekman CD6, Dion Douglass CD5, Jennifer Christie CD5, Kyle Brendan Moore CD5, Jeanine Lee Lake CD6. **Republican:** U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, U.S. Senate, Jeremy D. Belko CD1, Nicholas Pappas CD1, U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski CD2, Mark Summe CD2, Darin Patrick Griesey CD4, Greg Pence CD6, Stephen M. MacKenzie CD6, Mike Campbell CD6, Donald Eason, Jr CD7, J D Miniear CD7, Rachael Covington CD8.

**Indiana Senate: Democrat:** Chris Kukuch SD1, Christina Fivecoate HD11, Sheryl Shipley SD22. **Republican:** Sen. Rick Niemeyer SD6, Zaki Ali SD25, Corrie Meyer SD29, Sen. James W. Merritt, Jr SD31.

**Indiana House: Democrat:** Rosa Maria Rodriguez HD2, Sean Fitzpatrick HD9, Pamela R. Eanes HD12, Christina L. Zacny HD16, Maurice Oakel Fuller HD25, Deanna I. McMullan HD26, Rep. Sheila Klinker H27, Jim Exline HD45, Joseph Lannan HD63, Nick Brown HD80, Mike Wilber HD82, Curtis Nash HD84, Greg Rathnow HD93, Nichole M. Thomas HD98. **Republican:** Dan Granquist HD9, Jennifer Culp HD36, Rep. Tom Linkmeyer HD39, Mark Bacon HD55, Rep. Daniel J. Leonard HD50, William Carlin HD52, Shane Lindauer HD63, Buford L. Dewitt HD73, David H. Abbott HD82, Paula L. Finch HD87, Cindy Kirchofer HD89, Rep. Mike Speedy HD90, Rep. Ed Clere HD72, Speaker Brian Bosma HD88, Rep. Robert W. Behning HD91. ❖

# Biden comes to Indy to help Donnelly

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – The endorsement of a candidate by a prominent political figure is kind of like the endorsement of a commercial product by a prominent celebrity. There usually is no solid proof that it was of monumental help, even though it seems to have a positive effect.



There sometimes is a situation where it backfires and hurts. Jared Fogle became a celebrity whose endorsement still haunts Subway.

There always is a quest by candidates and product marketers for praise in attention-getting endorsements. U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly will be praised and endorsed by former Vice President Joe Biden at a fundraising event Friday in Indianapolis. That endorsement, though not with

monumental effect, will help Donnelly in two ways. It will raise money he needs for what will be one of the costliest election contests in the nation this year. In addition to getting the contributions from those attending, the Donnelly campaign also will profit from asking its supporters around the state to donate \$20.18 to win a chance to personally meet with Biden.

It will link Donnelly with one of the most popular Democratic figures, someone quite acceptable to Hoosier Democrats and not frightening to the independents and Republican moderates Donnelly must sway to his side in order to win in a red state President Donald Trump won by nearly 20 percentage points.

**Republicans already** are hammering at Donnelly's image as a moderate Democrat who will work across the aisle for compromise solutions. One of the latest is a Facebook ad with messages that "Indiana voted for President Trump" and "Donnelly has voted against Trump 65% of the time."

Just imagine the portrayal of Donnelly as some kind of a wild-eyed leftist if he was featured at a fundraiser with Sanders or Warren. That would help with Democratic progressives in Indiana who would like to see Donnelly opposing Trump on just about everything. But what good

would that be if he lost decisive voters in the middle ground?

On the other side of the political coin, Republicans face their own decisions on which endorsements would help or hurt. Would Congresswoman Jackie Walorski welcome an appearance to endorse her by President Trump? My guess is that she would say, "Couldn't you send Vice President Mike Pence instead?"

**While Trump hasn't sunk** in approval in Indiana to the depths he has in some other states, he is shown in Gallup Poll findings in 2017 in Indiana at 44% approval, 51% disapproval. Although Trump would fire up his base, draw a big crowd and raise a lot of money, he now turns off a lot of voters in that decisive middle ground. Pence would fire up Hoosier Republicans, draw a crowd and raise funds. And with his more pleasant, less abrasive personality, he wouldn't frighten as many independents and others in that decisive middle.

In political lore there are stories about controversial national figures telling candidates of their party: "I'll endorse you or denounce you. Whichever helps you the most." There are races in both parties where endorsement by a party leader could hurt the endorsed candidate. Many Republican candidates for the Senate would plead with Mitch McConnell to stay away. Many Democratic candidates for the House wouldn't welcome Nancy Pelosi in their districts.

Does David Duke really help any Republicans with all his words of support for President Trump? Maybe he appeals to a very small part of the Trump base, but he



turns off far larger segments of voters. Some Republican candidates had been hoping for an endorsement by Steve Bannon. Not now.

**Donnelly appears** to have a safe bet with Biden. Still, Republican attacks likely will deplore the appearance as proof that Donnelly is more allied with President Barack Obama's vice president than with President Trump. ❖

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

# The Democrats' linguistic gymnastics

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – The disingenuous prattle of the Democrats never ceases to amaze me. The spinmeisters of the Democrat Party, when called upon, can crank out more bull excrement in an afternoon than the PBR (professional bull riders) can in a decade.



For example: If you have been beating a drum for decades about the evil threat of global warming and find yourself continually confronted by Punxsutawney Phil presenting weather information such as record freezing temperatures, record snow falls and expanding ice flows, then you conveniently rebrand your same old anti-industrial, anti-fossil fuels mantra as "climate change." Cold yesterday, hot today! It's got to be climate change!

Most clear-thinking Americans with real jobs and no pet polar bears have not been taken in by the linguistic gymnastics that much of the Democratic message comprises. That's why Republicans control the White House, the House of Representatives, the Senate and a majority of governorships and statehouses across America.

The Democrats' current political and linguistic dilemma is immigration. Facing a continuing loss of their traditional organized labor base to the Republicans, necessity has driven Chuck, Nancy and the brie cheese crowd on the left coasts to pivot on an issue that Democrats used to campaign on. Back in the day of traditional lunch-pail worker support for the Democrat Party, let's say about 12 years ago, you didn't have to tell Chuck, Dianne Feinstein, Ron Wyden, Bill Nelson, Tom Carper or Debbie Stabenow what their position was on immigration and border walls. Heck, even Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton knew which side their bread was buttered on when it came to the critical illegal immigration issues.

**The typical blue collar**, union worker who had for so long supported Democrat Party candidates didn't care for illegal immigration. The official union line, and by extension, the Democrat line was that illegal immigrants take jobs that would normally go to Americans and, worse, serve to drive down wages. The increased crime, increased welfare costs and social costs that go hand in hand with illegal immigration didn't particularly bother them, but when you start messing with union jobs and wages, whoa Nellie!

Because of this desire to take care of their union friends, Democrat senators, including all of the aforementioned ones, 23 in all, joined with their Republican brethren,

in 2006, to pass the Secure Fence Act. It authorized the Bush Administration to construct 700 miles of fencing along certain stretches of land between the border of the United States and Mexico. The bill also called for the increase in vehicle barriers, checkpoints and lighting to curb illegal immigration. The bill even authorized the use of advanced technologies such as satellites and drones to help fight illegal immigration.

**Let me state this** for the record one more time. Chuck Schumer, Hilary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Barack Obama all voted for a barrier to keep illegal immigrants out of this country! Were they racists? Nope. They were just trying to represent their base and its massive political contribution money machine. What has changed in the 12 years since overwhelming Democrat support for increased border barriers and surveillance to a point where anyone who calls for controls on illegal immigration is a racist, bigot or heartless monster?

I'm sure that you have guessed the right answer by now. The political winds have changed over the past 12 years and Democrat leaders and strategists see the salvation of their threadbare party as the burgeoning Hispanic population, both legal and illegal. Life in politics is all about getting to 50% plus one vote and with other traditional Democrats bolting their party for the relatively more practical Republican Party, the survivors have coalesced around a strategy that increasingly panders to their shrinking base.

The current Democrat Party now panders almost exclusively to blacks, Hispanics, social activists and the something-for-nothing crowd. The once proud Democratic message of building America, increasing jobs, increasing incomes through economic expansion and patriotism now lies on the floor like confetti at the 1980 Democrat National Convention. The linguistic calisthenics necessary to craft and spin the current Democrat message is a wonder to behold. It makes Bill Clinton's, "It depends what you mean by the word is" answer to a federal grand jury look almost rational by comparison. So, as a service to my Republican and Trump-hating Hispanic friends, I will lay out for you the simple truth on the issue of immigration. Whether you choose to believe it or not is up to you.

Democrat politicians are using the plight of undocumented immigrants and the issue of a border wall for unvarnished political gain. Democrats don't care any more or less about the Dreamers than Republicans do. Democrats have played the numbers game and they believe that they have more to gain now by using immigration as a wedge issue than they did in 2006 when they supported the Secure Fence Act. Most of your favorite Democrat politicians are gross hypocrites and would desert you in a heartbeat if it worked to their political advantage.

**There is a sadness that** comes from watching this hypocrisy unfold before my eyes. Never was a more sickening and disgusting political spectacle beheld than the Democrat performance at the State of the Union address. Historically, a message that included the news

of record low black unemployment, record low Hispanic unemployment, wage growth, stock market records and patriotism would have been warmly received by Democrat members of Congress. This year television viewers were treated to the most sour, negative and sickly looking bunch of Democrats in the history of televised politics. It was a sad sight to behold when good news for America is bad news for the Democrat Party.

**Which brings me to Indiana.** Indiana Sen. Joe Donnelly sat through the State of the Union address with the same sour puss expression as the rest of his liberal buddies. I'm sure the Sen. Donnelly that we see campaign in Indiana this year will be a much different man than

the one who sat on his hands on national television. Just remember that the Joe Donnelly that you see on the campaign trail in Indiana is a chameleon. The real Joe Donnelly is not happy about decreasing unemployment and increasing wages unless the message is being delivered by Barack Obama.

Putting it simply: When the good news about the economy and America was given, Joe Donnelly took a knee! ❖

**Dunn is the former chairman of the Howard County Republican Party**

# Pursuing Amazon's HQ2 the right way

By JAY RUCKLESHAUS

INDIANAPOLIS – I was thrilled to see Indy make the list of finalists being considered for Amazon's second corporate headquarters (HQ2). Like many across the city, I began salivating at the prospect of 50,000 high-paying jobs and an influx of dynamic and diverse citizens. And I love what our shortlisting represents: Conviction among city and state leaders that we can run with the big dogs and vindication from one of the world's most powerful companies that, yes, in this sense, we can.



But these bright prospects haven't kept me from having a few

worries, too. Pursuing a prize this big carries risks – for Indy, and for the other cities involved in the incentive-based competition that the HQ2 sweepstakes has ignited.

In a recent Wall Street Journal op-ed, urban studies scholar Richard Florida voices perhaps the most common concern. Florida takes issue with the lavish incentive packages cities have been offering Amazon – most in the hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars. There's no good in offering "corporate welfare" to a wealthy company, he argues. Cities like Indy "should say no to this kind of reverse Robin Hood."

Florida doesn't address the fact that, if successful, Indy would be compensated with a significant new source of tax revenue – how much compensation, however, is precisely the question. If Indy offers a fortune and Amazon underwhelms, we have a problem.

**This worry gets** at the larger mechanics of what's at stake in this inter-city incentive war and reveals the importance of distinguishing good competition from bad. Politicians often talk as if all competition is good, but the reality is different. It's true that competition among cities is often highly beneficial; citizens' and businesses' ability to "vote with their feet" by moving encourages cities to provide the best services they can. It's a great strength of America's federal system that cities and states can engage in just this sort of constructive competition.

But not all competition takes this form. Economists have long recognized that when local governments compete for scarce capital, they risk running a race to the bottom. Each city is pressured by the others to up the ante – ensuring maximal benefits for the pursued company and minimal payback for the winning city.

In pursuing HQ2, Indy finds itself implicated in such a potentially damaging contest. Critics of Amazon's competitive search process like Richard Florida say mayors should band together in a "mutual nonaggression pact" that limits the incentive packages offered. And, failing that, Indy should withdraw rather than suffer the indignity of being an expensively dressed guest at another city's red carpet event.

I disagree.

Entering inter-city incentive competitions won't always be in our interest, but this opportunity is simply too big to pass up. Snagging HQ2 would transform Indy.

But while we should pursue Amazon, we must be clear-eyed about what we are doing. We shouldn't

**Amazon narrows HQ2 cities list to 19 American cities, 1 Canadian**



get caught up in the frenzy of incentive-giving for its own sake, and we should be fiscally responsible about what we offer.

**Most importantly,** though, we must ensure our bid fits into a larger vision of what we want our city to become. Positioning Indy as an attractive option has already accelerated conversations about serious issues we need to address. We need better public transit. We need ambitious urban planning that invites the creative class while minimizing disruption to those who have called Indy home for decades. We need to carefully think how the addition of

thousands of white-collar jobs could contribute to shared prosperity and growth that is truly inclusive.

So, the best way for Indy to pursue HQ2 is to use it as an opportunity to think seriously – and strategically – about our long-term future. That’s the only way we’ll be primed when Amazon – or the next big opportunity – comes knocking. ❖

**Jay Ruckelshaus is a Rhodes Scholar from Indianapolis and a graduate student in politics at the University of Oxford.**

## House right in taking power from Gary school trustees

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – Sixty-five members of the Indiana House did the right thing last week when they essentially rendered the Gary School Board trustees powerless. A variety of school trustees for decades have failed to bring school spending in line with revenue. You can say the



same for a handful of school superintendents over the same years.

Legislation that now heads to the Senate reaffirms that state-appointed emergency manager Peggy Hinckley now holds all the school board’s former powers and classifies the elected school board as advisory. And, the board can hold only four public meetings a year.

There are a host of reasons why it has come to this. For decades, a host of school trustees have failed to face the fact that families were leaving Gary in droves, causing a dramatic drop in school enrollment. Yet, for years, the school trustees failed to act on the fact that a massive decline in enrollment meant there were too many teachers and school buildings.

**With a revenue decline** and a failure to reduce costs, the Gary schools financial woes began to mount. And at the same time, school buildings, including the once-proud Gary Roosevelt High School, fell into disrepair. The lack of action by the schools is similar to the lack of action by city government to embrace the fact that the city enrollment steadily declined from 185,000 to about 80,000 today.

So the schools moved on as an employment agency when it should have been laying off workers. The trustees themselves compounded the problem because

of their personal gain. The school trustees began paying themselves for attending committee meetings. And there were plenty. Some trustees also took extended vacation trips by tacking on days to conventions in exotic locations. One trustee even catapulted a convention into a trip to meet her fiancé who was stationed in the Navy off the coast of Japan.

**Democratic State Reps. Charlie Brown** and **Vernon Smith** of Gary criticized the Legislature for the takeover. That’s understandable but misguided. All the while, the quality of education in the Gary system declined. Parents began moving their children out of the Gary schools into a host of charter schools.

The school system is now \$120 million in debt, and judging by past performance, the school board wasn’t about to turn that around anytime soon. While I’m generally opposed to the state taking over anything local, it certainly is justified in this case. The state ought to maintain control until the books are balanced. The school board then could return with the state taking on the role of monitor. ❖

**Rich James has been writing about politics and government for almost 40 years. He is retired from the Post-Tribune, a newspaper born in Gary.**

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# Township mergers, redistricting bills die

By **SCOTT MILEY**  
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – A legislative bill that would have merged about 300 of Indiana’s townships has died for this session amid concerns whether consolidation would save tax money and make government more efficient.

House Bill 1005, authored by Rep. Cindy Ziemke, R-Batesville, was eligible for third reading Monday and, if passed, would have moved to the Senate. However, the bill was not called up by House Speaker Brian Bosma, R-Indianapolis.



Ziemke (pictured) will introduce similar legislation in the 2019 session. “I’ll try again,” Ziemke said. “I will continue to work on it because it’s extremely important.”

Ziemke’s initial bill intended to push townships with a population of fewer than 1,200 to merge with a contiguous township in the same county. About 300 of the state’s 1,005 townships would be impacted. “We’re looking for ways to streamline, to reduce layers of government where possible,” Bosma said on Tuesday. “This one may not be possible, I don’t know, but I don’t want to toss in the towel on it yet.”

The bill had been perhaps the closest in years to reshaping the role of township trustees, a change pursued by some legislators following a 2007 report by the gubernatorial Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform. The report led to the merger of township assessors with county assessors. Township trustees generally provide fire protection services to residents in unincorporated areas, maintain cemeteries and provide relief to the poor.

Ziemke’s initial bill to force townships with a population of less than 1,200 to merge with a contiguous township in the same county was a compromise between elected officials seeking consolidations and the Indiana Township Association, which recently shifted from its longstanding opposition to forced consolidations.

House Bill 1005 didn’t have the full support of the Republican caucus. As of last week, amendments were still being proposed. For example, one amendment passed by voice vote attempted to clarify where fire equipment, if purchased by a smaller township, would be stored in

the event of consolidation with another township. Sticking points developed early among fire department representatives and from rural townships where trustees consider themselves the closest link to government services.

“I think you have to have more predictability about what’s going to happen to both the volunteer fire department contracts and to tax levies in the consolidated entities,” Bosma said. “Questions were raised about low-taxed small townships and will their tax rates go up through consolidation,” he added. “There wasn’t an effective measure in the bill to address that.”

Other legislators said referendum measures currently allow townships to merge. “As we move forward, folks need to determine their own future,” House Minority Leader Terry Goodin, D-Austin, said.

“I’ve got to be honest with you, I’ve not heard any clamoring for township consolidation either from my constituents or really heard much discussion at all about it in the Senate,” said Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane, D-Anderson.

## Bill would head off I-69 fiasco

State lawmakers are using the I-69 construction project mess to push their efforts to require more information when the state hires contractors for large projects ([WRTV](#)). The bill, co-authored by Rep. Ed Delaney and Rep. Tim Brown would require the Indiana Finance Authority to only consider potential contractors who have “experience and quality performance in comparable projects in North America” in the previous two years. The original



Gov. Eric Holcomb discusses the second half of the General Assembly with Speaker Brian Bosma and Senate President Prom Tem David Long this morning.

completion date for section five of the I-69 project, between Martinsville and Bloomington, was October 2016. Delaney claims that the contractor, Isoflux Corsan, not having experience building similar roads in the U.S. caused multiple delays in the timeline for completion and eventually a state takeover.

## Senate passes on independent redistricting

Hoosier lawmakers seemingly are not prepared to hand over control of the once-a-decade redistricting

process to an independent commission (Carden, [NWI Times](#)). But the Indiana Senate has agreed that the General Assembly's redrawing of legislative district boundaries, following the 2020 U.S. Census, should generally follow the same standards that a commission likely would use in making new maps. Senate Bill 326, which passed the chamber 42-6, sets specific requirements for how lawmakers in 2021 must create the state's nine congressional districts, 50 Senate districts and 100 House districts.

### Workforce bill advance

House and Senate lawmakers waited until the final day of the session's halfway point to advance their top priority for 2018: workforce development measures (Smith, [Indiana Public Media](#)). Bills in both chambers make dozens of changes to the state's workforce development and career education system. Those include the creation of new career counselors in job centers throughout the state. Lawmakers want to create a state Secretary of Workforce Training and a board of Technical Education. And they hope to consolidate workforce dollars, which are currently spread across 30 programs in nine different agencies. The measures also aim to significantly increase reimbursement of private companies for job training and education, which Rep. Ryan Dvorak (D-South Bend) says is the wrong step. "This gets back down to what we call corporate welfare. It's throwing money at businesses for things that they used to pay for themselves," Dvorak says.

But House Speaker Brian Bosma (R-Indianapolis) says it's not a handout. "Should we assist employers in this important issue, because it's also assisting Hoosiers – not just the employers but Hoosiers? I think we should," Bosma says.

### End of life bill a non-starter

Indiana is not among the seven jurisdictions in the country that authorize medical aid in dying (Burgess, [Indiana Lawyer](#)). California, Colorado, Montana, Oregon, Vermont, Washington and Washington, D.C. do, however. For the second year in a row, a legislative push for an End of Life Options Act failed to gain traction. Rep. Matt Pierce once again took on the issue this legislative session when he introduced HB 1157. This year, the bill was instead assigned to the Committee on Courts and Criminal Code, which Pierce said was "a little bit of a strange place to send it."

### Bumpstock restrictions proposed

An Indiana lawmaker is looking to restrict a gun accessory used in the Las Vegas mass shooting last year that killed dozens and injured hundred (Jacobs, [Post-Tribune](#)). Sen. Greg Taylor, D-Indianapolis, submitted a bill that would make the possession of a "multiburst trigger activator" a Class A misdemeanor. If a person has a prior conviction, it would be a Level 6 felony, under the proposal. "I think this is a common sense thing," Taylor said. ❖

**Photography With Punch**  
 Mark Curry On Indiana Politics  
 mark1tcphotography@gmail.com  
 http://mark1tc.smugmug.com/Political/

The collage includes several photographs: a man at a podium with a 'TRUMP' sign, a man in a suit, a man in a blue suit, a woman with red glasses, a woman with glasses, a man in a suit, a man holding a 'LEGALIZE SUNDAY' sign, a woman in a blue jacket, two men in suits, a man in a suit, and a man in profile.

**Mike Freeman, Bleacher Report:** The NFL is now the WWE, and Josh McDaniels, along with the Patriots, has become the top heel. The Indianapolis Colts announced Tuesday that McDaniels had agreed to become their next head coach, prompting them to call a press conference to introduce him Wednesday, according to Dakota Crawford of the Indianapolis Star. On Tuesday night, McDaniels reversed course and went back to the Patriots, per ESPN's Adam Schefter. This prompted a league reaction unlike few I've ever seen before. It was fast, vicious and unrelenting. The reaction was also sanctimonious and over-the-top. In other words, it was typical NFL. "He's a weasel," one NFC assistant coach said of McDaniels. "Such a gutless thing to do," another NFC assistant said. "He knows he can't win without Tom Brady," an AFC front office executive said, "Hoo boy. Told you this was rough." ❖

**Walter Shapiro, The Guardian:** The Piltdown man – perhaps the most famous fraud in the history of paleontology – combined a 600-year-old skull, an orangutan's jaw and a chimpanzee's tooth to feign being the remains of the Missing Link between man and the apes. Now, more than a century later, the Piltdown man has come to U.S. politics with Friday's release of a declassified memo by Devin Nunes, the chairman of the misnamed House Intelligence Committee. The Nunes memo connects mismatched shards to suggest a missing link between Robert Mueller's Russia investigation and the Hillary Clinton campaign's efforts to discredit Donald Trump. The triggering event was a 21 October 2016, foreign intelligence surveillance court (FISA) warrant for electronic surveillance of Carter Page, an energy consultant and sometime Trump adviser who had been under FBI scrutiny since 2013. According to the Nunes memo, a dossier prepared by Christopher Steele and partly funded by the Clinton campaign was "an essential part" of the rationale for the warrant. We can quibble about what "an essential part" means. Especially since the FBI in an unprecedented Wednesday press release stated: "We have grave concerns about material omissions of fact that fundamentally impact the memo's accuracy." Unmentioned by Nunes were all the other documents that the FBI and the justice department presented to the FISA court to justify eavesdropping on Page. But even if you accept the world according to the House Republicans (a personal plea: don't), Page represented a circuitous route to get at Trump. Page had withdrawn from the campaign a month earlier in the wake of news stories about his suspicious meetings in Moscow. And Trump himself later belittled Page as "a very low-level member of I think a committee for a short period of time." To summarize: in a document that the FBI called inaccurate, House Republicans claim that the Democrats had some shadowy role in a pre-election FISA warrant against a "very low-level" Trump adviser who had already left the campaign. Compared with

the Nunes memo, the never-ending, dry-hole Republican Benghazi investigations look like textbook examples of prudent congressional oversight. To Trumpian true believers, the Nunes memo proves that the FBI and the rest of the Deep State were conspiring to throw the election to Hillary. Of course, this omits the pesky detail that on 28 October 2016, the FBI director, James Comey, announced that he was reopening the Clinton email investigation based on what had been found on Anthony Weiner's computer. Guess which late October event had more effect on wavering 2016 voters: Comey's dramatic public statement raising fresh doubts about the Democratic nominee or a secret warrant against a peripheral Trump adviser? The Nunes memo makes one major concession to reality – the FBI opened its Russian investigation three months before the Steele dossier was used, in some fashion, to justify the Page Fisa warrant. In a scene that might have been lifted from the 2016 version of *All the President's Men*, a young Trump foreign policy adviser named George Papadopoulos had the foolish notion of trying to drink an Australian diplomat under the table. Instead, Papadopoulos (who later pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI) blabbed that the Russian government had a trove of hacked Hillary Clinton emails. Once the Australian government passed this nugget on to Washington, the FBI opened up its Russian front. Ever since Watergate, the standard for any scandal is whether there is a smoking gun left next to a corpse. In the case of the Nunes memo, we lack a body and the gun is a child's toy pistol. ❖



**Steve Forbes, Forbes Magazine:** In 1987 Treasury secretary James Baker pushed for a weak dollar to – you guessed it – sell more U.S. products abroad and "mend our trade deficit." That October he told Germany: "Either inflate your mark [the German currency at the time], or we'll devalue the dollar." He vowed to "drive the dollar down." Combined with Congress pushing through protectionist measures that could prompt a trade war, Baker's moves triggered a ghastly stock market crash. Thankfully, the Reagan administration backed off, and the markets recovered. Unfortunately, in the early 2000s the U.S. was back at it. President George W. Bush's Treasury chiefs thought that a slow-motion devaluation of the greenback would stimulate more growth. The weakening of the dollar--as it always does--triggered a fake housing and commodities boom, as markets flee to hard assets when money becomes unstable. We all know how that ended. Secretary Mnuchin, sadly, has learned nothing from all this. What Nixon, Connally, Mnuchin and their ilk never grasp is that money isn't wealth. It measures value, in the same way a clock measures time or a scale measures weight. Imagine the difficulties in cooking if the standards for measuring cups and spoons changed each day. The same is true for money: Volatility makes commerce and investing more uncertain, and economic progress is hurt. ❖

## Russians hacked election systems

INDIANAPOLIS — The U.S. official in charge of protecting American elections from hacking says the Russians successfully penetrated the voter registration rolls of several U.S. states prior to the 2016 presidential election. In an exclusive interview with [NBC News](#), Jeanette Manfra, the head of cybersecurity at the Department of Homeland Security, said she couldn't talk about classified information publicly, but in 2016, "We saw a targeting of 21 states and an exceptionally small number of them were actually successfully penetrated." Jeh Johnson, who was DHS secretary during the Russian intrusions, said, "2016 was a wake-up call and now it's incumbent upon states and the Feds to do something about it before our democracy is attacked again." NBC News reported in Sept. 2016 that more than 20 states had been targeted by the Russians. There is no evidence that any of the registration rolls were altered in any fashion, according to U.S. officials.



## Fired Indy council staffers fire back

INDIANAPOLIS — Fired Indianapolis City-County Council Clerk NaTrina DeBow on Tuesday afternoon defended herself and other council staffers against allegations from President Stephen Clay that employees had acted improperly, causing him to call for an audit of the office (Colombo, [IBJ](#)). Earlier in the day, Clay continued the local Democratic civil war by alleging that two council employees were improperly given large raises and that certain personnel files were missing from the council office—and shredded—after Clay fired council staff members. Clay, who is facing removal from office at next month's council meeting by his fellow Democrats shortly after being elevated to the top

position with the help of Republicans, said he discovered one former staff member was given a 24 percent pay raise and another was given an 18 percent pay raise in 2016. DeBow, who appeared at a press conference with her lawyer, Octavia Snulligan, said she and deputy clerk SaRita Hughes were given large pay raises in 2016 because they assumed additional duties in light of attrition of other staff members. She said the pay raises were outlined in a memo sent to the human resources department, and that she presented information about the raises before a City-County Council committee in August 2016.

## Amazon tweet praises Holcomb

HAMMOND — A Twitter account associated with the online retail giant Amazon praised Indiana's governor for his leadership on workforce development, raising more than a few eyebrows (Herron, [IndyStar](#)). "Thank you for your leadership on #WorkforceDevelopment issues, Governor," the tweet said in part. Gov. Eric Holcomb visited Amazon's fulfillment center in Whitestown on Friday to learn more about Career Choice, Amazon's workforce development program. In return, Amazon's public policy account retweeted the governor and thanked him for his leadership on workforce development issues.

## Senate leaders forge 2-year budget deal

WASHINGTON — The Senate's top Republican says there's Senate agreement on a two-year, almost \$400 billion budget deal that would provide Pentagon and domestic programs with huge spending increases ([Associated Press](#)). Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced the pact, joined on the Senate floor by top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York. It would contain almost \$300 billion more than current limits

on defense and domestic accounts. McConnell said the measure would rewrite existing defense limits that have "hamstrung our armed forces and jeopardized our national security." The measure, aides said, also contains almost \$90 billion in overdue disaster aid and an increase in the government borrowing cap that would prevent a first-ever U.S. government default on its obligations. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi says she and many fellow Democrats will oppose such a deal unless Republicans allow the chamber to vote on legislation protecting immigrants.

## Curry assails Trump on deaths

INDIANAPOLIS — Inside a courtroom Wednesday, Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry's office filed criminal charges against the twice-deported man arrested in a drunken-driving crash that killed two men, including an Indianapolis Colts player ([IndyStar](#)). Outside, Curry issued a statement blasting President Donald Trump. "We are disheartened that ghoulish and inappropriate public commentary has politicized this tragedy," said Curry, a Democrat. "Much of such commentary, including tweets by the president, fails to acknowledge that both Edwin Jackson and Jeffrey Monroe lost their lives on Sunday." Friends and family of Jackson and Monroe have echoed similar sentiments.

## Ex-township trustee arrested for theft

NEW CARLISLE — Former Olive Township Clerk Sherri Houser turned herself in to authorities on Tuesday to face a charge of forgery for allegedly misusing the township's checking account (South Bend Tribune). The charge comes after the Indiana State Board of Accounts determined last fall that Houser used taxpayer money to pay more than \$4,000 in personal checks and overpaid herself by about \$11,500.