

## Tariffs impact Indiana steel, agriculture

Rep. Visclosky glad Trump acted, but fallout could pose problems for Rep. Walorski

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – President Trump has ended the U.S. participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, is taking aim at NAFTA with blustery rhetoric aimed at Mexico and Canada, and is now about to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum. If you're U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky sitting in the +9 Democratic 1st CD without a credible opponent in November and chair of the Congressional Steel Caucus, this is a good thing.

If you're U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski in the +11 Republican 2nd CD with a Democratic opponent finding financial traction, the Trump tariffs are a potential political problem. Walorski sounded alarms this week, telling CNBC, "We're not against his tariffs. We're not against his ability



U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski joined President Trump in the Oval Office in April 2017 when he signed a memorandum investigating the impact of aluminum imports.

to make an executive decision where he sees fit in regard to tariffs. The issue is we're asking him to narrow the field significantly and allow for companies who can't find a domestic producer to be able to go and find ways that they can get this raw material to continue their business."

Walorski said the CEOs of recreational vehicle,

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## Finding school security

By **CAMERON CARTER**

INDIANAPOLIS – What if you skipped school one day and a shooting occurred?

That is exactly what happened when I was 13 years old and feigned illness on March 30, 1981. That day, President Ronald Reagan and others were shot by John Hinckley, Jr., a madman determined to kill in order to impress (implausibly) Jodi Foster. I watched with youthful fascination as it unfolded live on ABC News.

Those images remain vivid, their memory reinforced recently by some plucky meme-creators who helpfully pointed out that President Reagan was



**“This bipartisan legislation would help ensure that our background check system has as much relevant information as possible so that felons, domestic abusers ... who are not allowed to purchase a gun under existing law aren't able to do so.”**

*- U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly*



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surrounded by men with guns at the time – agents highly trained to both take a bullet and deliver lethal violence.

Thankfully, I've never suffered the trauma and grief experienced by the students, parents and teachers of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. Nor likely have you, but we are all now engaged in a national debate over – what, exactly? School safety? Gun control? Mental illness? Law enforcement? All of the above?

**Yes, all of the above.** It's unclear if we can reconcile our broken politics post-Parkland and meaningfully address school shootings. The issues are complex and the debate on the meaning and intent of the 2nd Amendment brings fundamental differences of political philosophy into emotionally charged conflict. But, we must at least attempt this reconciliation because the slaughter of innocents is abhorrent, and the frequency and lethality of mass shootings appears to be increasing. The status quo ante should be unacceptable.

It has been difficult to digest this latest tragedy while avoiding instant analysis and some of the more sophisticated policy arguments over these past three weeks. Yes, that's right: Parkland may seem like ages ago in our media-saturated age, but it occurred a mere 21 days ago – your next rent or mortgage payment is not yet due.

First, the facts of the horrific event itself: A young, mentally unstable Nikolas Cruz, armed with a semi-automatic rifle and high-velocity ammunition, killed 17 people, injured 14 others and left the school campus to grab a post-massacre Big Mac at a nearby McDonald's. He evaded law enforcement not just that day, but in the weeks and months prior to the shooting.

**He didn't have** to try very hard to evade law enforcement at the scene because, by all accounts, they did not engage him tactically. They, like the terrified Douglas students and faculty, "sheltered in place" – a regrettable addition to our national lexicon.

I don't know which is more outrageous: The fact that trained officers (sworn to protect!) stayed outside the school for nearly five minutes while shots rang out ending the lives of the young and younger. Or, the fact that not just one, but two agencies, the FBI and the Broward County Sheriff's Department, missed not red flags and warning signs, but explicit threats by Cruz, who had had dozens of run-ins with the sheriff's department involving both firearms and violent behavior. He was reported. Those who saw something said something, and yet...

"Mistakes were made" is a sufficient summary of the excuses offered by law enforcement – sworn officers all, some of whom should as a matter of decency resign in disgrace, but will not. (Prediction: No disciplinary action will occur at the FBI even though "protocols were not followed in this instance," begging the question, "By whom?" As for the faux virtue-signaling and excuse-making Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel, may the voters bounce him from office and may he be haunted by guilt for the rest of his life – a case study in shirking responsibility if ever there was one.)

**Regardless of** these abject governmental failures, more can and should be done to enhance the safety of schools, much like other public buildings. Veterans of the Statehouse and Capitol Hill can attest both are populated by armed law enforcement (with the former also having some armed legislators). As others have pointed out in this publication and elsewhere, "hardening" schools is an imperfect solution with significant fiscal costs, but so what? It's a far superior suggestion than arming school teachers, a lunatic idea.

Teachers are not the only ones in a classroom, and one need not have too much imagination to conceive that any firearm introduced to either classroom or campus can become a threat to its owner and others. A phalanx of trained agents couldn't guarantee the safety of a sitting president facing a determined lunatic

with a pistol in 1981; fat chance that a teacher focused on the demands of both students and syllabus will fare better when facing an armed threat. No, back to the drawing board with that idea, best to leave it there.

Likewise, it is useless to argue for a ban or confiscation of so-called "assault rifles" in the wake of Parkland. I know, Australia did it, but Australia is not the United States whose population is orders of magnitude larger and whose Constitution contains the 2nd Amendment. We implemented a ban once from 1994-2004 with no discernible decrease in gun violence; however emotionally satisfying, the policy does not work. Further, the mechanics of a semi-automatic hunting rifle are not different from that of an "assault rifle"; the differences are cosmetic. Further still, the jurisprudence is unsettled and only political stalemate awaits while our nation's children cannot.

**Background checks?** Useful if federal and local law enforcement coordinate information and do their damned jobs (see above). Gun violence restraining orders are promising and should be pursued with due process

guarantees.

A healthy society and political system would ignore extreme voices in this debate and arrive at something like this: Hold law enforcement accountable for their failures. Strengthen the system of background checks, denying gun ownership to those with a history of any violence or mental illness. Require training and licensing of all gun owners with periodic refresher courses. Restrict magazine capacity and monitor high-velocity ammunition sales. Harden existing and new schools while encouraging law enforcement's presence at same.

These reforms are achievable and would limit, but not eliminate, the threat of mass shootings at schools. Alas, I fear we never will. ❖

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## Tariffs, from page 1

boating and mobile home manufacturers in her district are worried. They all use steel in their products. "I ran into a CEO at the airport this morning who is already getting a 20% increase in the material from these domestic companies here because they know tariffs are coming and there's no choice," Walorski said on CNBC. "This industry is on an incline of momentous growth. I don't want to stop that growth."

In a March 2 letter to President Trump, Walorski explained, "Early feedback from manufacturers in my district has me worried that immediate, blanket tariffs could reverse the economic recovery and return of manufacturing jobs to northern Indiana. In the 24 hours since the tariffs were announced, one manufacturer has already canceled a new plant in my district. The owner told me he 'was expecting the savings on taxes to fund the expansion' but after yesterday's announcement, 'the risk is too high with the tariffs.'"

In a statement, Walorski explained further, "In Indiana and across the country, we are seeing stronger economic growth, more jobs, and higher wages as a result of historic tax cuts and regulatory reforms. Unfortunately, today's announcement threatens to undo the positive effects of these pro-growth policies by raising costs for American manufacturers, including many in Indiana's 2nd District. China's unfair trade practices are a serious problem, but I'm disappointed the president does not appear to be pursuing a more balanced solution. I urge him to work closely with Congress to minimize the harmful impact these tariffs

will have on American businesses, workers, and consumers."

Her probable Democratic opponent, Mel Hall, has yet to take a stance on the tariffs.

## Tariff impacts on The Region

Visclosky applauded Trump's tariffs. "It is time the president acted. Every day that our country waits to take decisive action is another day that threatens damage to our steel production capabilities and the livelihoods of our steel workers and their families," the Democrat said. But response from the steel industry was muted, with ArcelorMittal telling the Post-Tribune it was still evaluating the market dynamics of the decision.

Micah Pollak, an assistant professor of economics at Indiana University Northwest in Gary, told the Post-Tribune, "The industry has evolved a lot and employs a lot fewer people than it did in its heyday. Any effect the tariffs would have in terms of employment and wages may not be as high now as it would have been." The tariffs could negatively impact steel workers and other Region consumers. "Any increase in their pockets would likely be offset by the rising costs of certain products affected by the tariffs, such as automobiles," he added.

Prof. Thomas Grennes of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at North Carolina State University sees potential negative impacts. "Many products imported to the U.S. today are intermediate products, such as steel or lumber, and tariffs raise the cost of production for businesses that use these products. For



**U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky chairs the congressional Steel Caucus**



example, tariffs on steel raise the cost of producing cars in the U.S., and tariffs on lumber raise the cost of producing housing. These higher business costs are partially shifted on to consumers. Tariffs are inefficient for the economy as a whole, because they encourage buyers to shift from lower cost foreign sources to higher cost domestic sources. In other words, for every dollar gained by domestic producers, consumers lose more than a dollar."

Grennes noted that Mexico has a free trade agreement with the European Union, but the U.S. does not. Canada and the EU have completed negotiations for a trade agreement, but they have not yet ratified the agreement. "This implies that auto companies, for example, have an incentive to locate plants in Mexico or Canada, rather than the U.S., because they could export autos to the EU without facing tariffs that they would face if exporting from U.S. plants," Grennes explained. "Another problem for U.S. producers: If the U.S. raises its tariff on steel, this would provide another incentive to move auto plants (and other steel users) to Mexico and Canada, where steel would be cheaper."

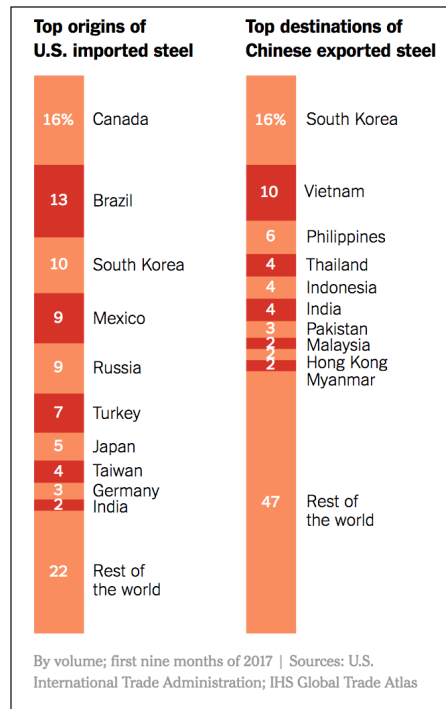
### Trump impacts on agriculture

Walorski's 2nd CD is an agricultural powerhouse, and Indiana corn and soy bean growers have been sounding alarms about tariffs, rescinding NAFTA and pulling out of the TPP. Outside of St. Joseph (47% for Trump) and LaPorte (50%) counties, her constituency emphatically supported the Trump/Pence ticket, winning with 64% in Elkhart County, 72% in Fulton, 75% in Kosciusko, 74% in Miami, 68% in Marshall, 71% in Pulaski, 69% in Starke and 73% in Wabash.

Former USDA trade adviser Paul Drazek said on the Hoosier Ag Today website that the tariffs are less about China and more about a connection with NAFTA and Canada, the largest steel and aluminum exporter to the US. "Once you start using national security for import protection, then what's to stop countries from saying, 'Well food security is national security,' for them and they need to make themselves more self-sufficient. Especially if the U.S. is no longer going to be a reliable supplier."

"We have repeatedly warned that the risks of retaliation and the precedent set by such a policy have serious potential consequences for agriculture," U.S. Wheat Associates and the National Association of Wheat Growers said in a joint statement. "It is dismaying that the voices of farmers and many other industries were ignored in favor of an industry that is already among the most protected in the country."

Indiana farmers are worried about a possible



U.S. pullout from NAFTA (Berman, [WIBC](#)). At a roundtable organized by the pro-NAFTA agribusiness coalition Americans for Farmers and Families, farmers used words like "devastating" and "catastrophic" to describe the impact of blowing up NAFTA. Joe Moore with the Indiana Beef Cattle Association says beef exports to Mexico have grown more than eightfold since the deal was signed. He said it's probably "the biggest success story in the history of U-S beef." Corn and soybean farmer Mike Beard, a former Clinton County commissioner, added loose talk from the White House about a possible withdrawal is already causing smaller problems. He argues soybean prices are lower than global supply would seem to dictate, and said there are reports Mexico is putting out feelers to import from other countries instead.

Hoosier farmers are already watching Mexico turn to Brazil for corn imports. Reuters reported in February that in the fourth quarter of 2017, Brazilian corn imports rose 970% over the same period in 2016 (see Brian Howey's column, page 6).

So, the Trump tariffs and his NAFTA negotiations that don't seem to be going well with ardent allies like Canada stand to pose problems for Indiana farmers. According to the Washington Post, Canadian leaders are "flabbergasted."

The American Farm Bureau Federation estimated that annual net farm income from the TPP would have increased by \$4.4 billion, driven by an increase of direct U.S. agricultural exports of \$5.3 billion per year upon full implementation of the TPP agreement. The TPP agreement had been expected to increase cash receipts and net exports from Indiana by \$196 million and \$98.3 million per year respectively. It is estimated that the increased marketing opportunities for Indiana's farmers and ranchers would add more than 740 jobs to the Indiana economy.

"Eliminating tariffs and other trade barriers on Indiana's agricultural exports to TPP-partner countries will increase trade for a range of Indiana agricultural products, including pork, soybeans, beef, and processed food products. Export sales make an important contribution to Indiana's farm economy, which had total cash receipts of \$13 billion in 2014," the American Farm Bureau Federation explained.

### Walorski writes Trump

In that March 2 letter to President Trump, Walorski explained, "A second concern is that immediate, blanket tariffs could ignite a trade war, which could also impact my district. A Brookings Institution study found that parts of my district have among the highest export intensity (the

export share of GDP) in the country. Of the 382 metropolitan statistical areas surveyed, Elkhart-Goshen ranks fourth, Kokomo fifth, Michigan City-LaPorte 48th, and South Bend-Mishawaka 64th.

Walorski continued, "Earlier this month, China suggested it could impose retaliatory tariffs on items like soybeans. Indiana is among the top soybean-producing states and exported \$26.7 million worth of soybeans to China in 2017, which is over half of the state's \$49.4 million in total soybean exports. Canada, Mexico, the European Union, and others have also threatened retaliatory measures that would surely impact farmers, manufacturers, and workers in Indiana's 2nd District."

And Walorski had other concerns: "A third worry is that immediate, blanket tariffs will upset on-going negotiations on NAFTA and the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS) and imperil any potential future negotiations. You and I both share the goals of modernizing NAFTA for the 21st century, improving certain provisions in KORUS, and opening up new markets for American exports. All this would no doubt benefit Hoosier job creators, workers, and consumers. However, tariffs on these countries will cloud or even stall current negotiations and deter future negotiations, all of which would have the effect of holding these benefits hostage."

[Politico](#) is reporting that Vice President Pence, while publicly supporting Trump on tariffs, has been "quietly delivering messages to the president from Republicans on the Hill" expressing tariff concerns. But Trump



U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski talks with 2nd CD farm-

is resisting GOP fears, according to the [New York Times](#), and is expected to sign the tariff order this afternoon. The [Wall Street Journal](#) reported this morning that Canada and Mexico will be exempt at the outset, and will remain so if a new NAFTA deal is reached.

### Political impacts

It's too early to weigh the political impacts. Probable Walorski challenger Mel Hall has been focused on DACA, accessible health care, the opioid crisis and good-paying jobs.

Walorski and House Speaker Paul Ryan have expressed concerns that the Trump tariffs will step on the message they were counting on, the pay bump from the tax reforms that passed in December 2017. At this writing, the HPI Horse Race rates the 2nd CD as "Likely" Walorski and will remain so until she has a definitive challenger. The Cook Political Report also moved the 2nd from "Safe" to "Likely" status.

Despite its +11 Republican Cook Partisan Index rating, the 2nd has a long history of being competitive, with a series of tight races that included Joe Donnelly's upset of Rep. Chris Chocola in 2006, and a narrow Donnelly victory over Walorski in 2010, both under previous maps. This is the fourth election under the 2011 maps and it may not be as reliably Republican given a potential Democratic wave dynamic. Walorski has a potent grassroots network, had a year-end \$829,311 to \$432,482 cash-on-hand lead over Hall, and it remains to be seen whether her challenger can close the money gap.

The Trump volatility, trade issues, and the historic headwinds facing the president's party in his first mid-term make the 2nd CD one to keep an eye on. ❖

## Apprehension looms on Hoosier farms

By **BOB KRAFT**

CARMEL – Back home in Indiana some Hoosiers are dreaming that they may soon see the welcomed light of steel furnaces once again shining through the sycamores.

But for many in the heartland that light is clouded by uncertainty because President Trump has promised to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. Concern that those tariffs may trigger retaliatory tariffs on



American products by key international trading partners is generating apprehension throughout Indiana's agricultural community.

**The uncertainty faced** by agriculture as farmers make their final planting decisions before the 2018 growing season are only exacerbated by the steel tariff proposal. Already bearing on those decisions are issues such as the outcome of the ongoing NAFTA renegotiation which hasn't really focused on agriculture yet, the upshot of ongoing discussions in Congress regarding the renewable fuel standard (the requirement that gas for cars contain 10 per cent ethanol), the future of the federal farm bill and, as always, long-term weather predictions. What, they ask, will be the demand for American agricultural products if the United States finds itself in trade battles with traditional buyers by the time of this fall's harvest?

In spite of the pride many Hoosier farmers take in our Indiana brand, it doesn't mean much in the interna-

tional market for raw bulk commodities such as soybeans and corn which comprise the majority of the state's agricultural exports. Consequently the impact of any trade retaliation will impact Indiana about the same as it will other states in the so-called corn belt. With the exception of the traditional blue states of Illinois and Minnesota, these states all cast their electoral votes for Donald Trump in 2016. In addition to agricultural producers, the proposed tariffs have generated opposition from a number of industries that rely on the tariffs' targets. Given the President's proclivity to consider his "base" in making policy decisions and the concern which much of his farm-state base has expressed about the proposed tariffs, hope remains that he may revisit the tariff proposal.

**Many of America's major** agricultural customers such as China, South Korea and Russia are also major steel exporters to the United States and are most likely to be most affected by proposed tariffs. Politico has reported that the EU has already drafted a list of imports, including a number of agricultural products, on which it would retaliate by imposing a 25% tariff. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, with an obvious eye on our Congressional leadership, recently suggested Mitch McConnell's Kentucky bourbon and Harley-Davidson motorcycles and dairy products from Paul Ryan's Wisconsin as probable targets.

In addition to the potential loss of international markets, rural Indiana should also be concerned with the potential loss of foreign investment that could result from a trade war. Over the past 30 years or so, Indiana has benefited from the major investment of foreign capital across the state. This investment has provided a number of well-paying jobs and stimulated additional economic activity in a number of smaller, more rural communities. In an open global market Indiana can continue its efforts to attract this sort of investment; if a trade war should develop, that might not be the case.

In view of the negative reaction of much of his base to the proposed tariff and the pressure the president has received from Congress to back off his proposal, it remains to be seen if the president will actually impose the tariffs. There is also the possibility that Congress could act to rescind the tariffs or that the World Trade Organization could find them unwarranted. (Whether the Trump administration would respect a WTO ruling is also an open question.)

**Whatever the eventual** outcome may be, it is unlikely to happen any time soon. Accordingly, Indiana farmers will be left with uncertainty and apprehension on this as well as other issues as they ponder the upcoming growing season. ❖

**Kraft is formerly with the Indiana Farm Bureau.**

## Trump country is in rural Indiana

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Trump Country in Indiana is the country, the rural areas that radio host Mike Pence used to describe as the land of the "amber waves of grain." In Adams County Donald Trump won with 73.9% of the vote in 2016, in Benton County it was 70.6%, Clinton County 71.7%, DeKalb County 71.7%, LaGrange County 74.9%, Whitley County 73% and Daviess County, a whopping 79.6%.



And it was that way across most rural counties without a city of more than 15,000 population.

Patrick Pfungsten, then with the Corydon Group, noted in a November 2016 column for Hoosier Ag Today, that in 2012, Republican nominee Mitt Romney "won the rural vote by a roughly two-to-one margin. Overall, Trump topped Hillary Clinton by a three-to-one margin. Donald Trump would carry Indiana with 59%, a veritable landslide.

It was a sentiment we heard over and over: There were many ardent supporters of Donald Trump as well as Mike Pence. But a lot of it was a simmering loathing of Hillary Clinton. It was expressed in one of those portable signs in New Salisbury down in Harrison County in the summer of 2015: "No more Bushes or Clintons."

Pfungsten in his 2016 column asked the obvious "Why?" and noted, "Trump is no force on agriculture policy. He made a statement in favor of ethanol prior to the Iowa caucus, that he read from a prepared text. He's also made no mention of how he would approach a Farm Bill, which will likely be negotiated during his term. The most striking thing may truly be his fierce opposition to trade. Agricultural trade is essential for farmers from Indiana and the entire U.S. We simply grow more than we can use, so it has to go somewhere. That's why so many farm groups work so hard to grow trade markets around the world, and why many were so quick to support the Trans Pacific Partnership."

**And he wrote this gem:** "It's not because of Trump's deep understanding of agriculture or rural areas. In fact, singing the 'Green Acres' theme song with Megan Mullally during the Emmy Awards in 2005 may be the closest Trump has ever come to a farm."





You recall the lyrics, don't you? "Green acres is the place for me. Farm livin' is the life for me. Land spreadin' out so far and wide, Keep Manhattan, just give me that countryside."

**The Manhattan** billionaire's draw in 2016 was the economic populism that resonated across rural America, because, as Pfingsten wrote, "Commodity prices are low, inputs are high, jobs are leaving, kids aren't staying home after college, schools are struggling and infrastructure is crumbling." Or as Public Opinion Strategies pollster Gene Ulm, who surveyed in 2016 for WTHR and Howey Politics, observed, Hoosier folks were wondering why their grown children were still living in their basements.

Pfingsten made this prescient observation: "Moving forward, farmers and small town residents may be happy with the populist economic message of the new president-elect, but they must speak up to elected officials on important agriculture issues."

Fast forward to last week when President Trump, described as isolated, raging and "unglued" after his fifth communications director Hope Hicks bolted, abruptly used the steel and aluminum tariffs to lash out at his own West Wing demons who argued mightily against the tariffs. It was so unhinged that most federal agencies who deal with import/export issues had no time to prepare.

It was a debate when Vice President Pence, once an ardent free trader, seemed to be missing in action. Mike Allen of Axios observed Saturday, "The tariffs call was also a big middle finger to economic adviser Gary Cohn, who has fought for more than one year to kill tariffs that would provoke a trade war or higher prices for consumers, a de facto tax increase." Cohn resigned on Tuesday.

Allen adds of Trump: "You can't accuse (Trump) of springing a tariffs surprise on the American people; this is what he campaigned on, day in and day out."

**So this fits in with** Thomas Franks' thesis in the book, "What's the Matter with Kansas," that people will vote against their own economic interests if they perceive a figure is "telling it like it is" and saying what they had secretly been muttering.

The Hoosier agriculture community was already wary of Trump's threats to rescind NAFTA. Indiana Corn Growers Association President Sarah Delbecq of DeKalb County said if the U.S. pulls out of NAFTA it "would be particularly catastrophic for Indiana corn farmers."

Purdue University has



estimated that corn prices would fall as much as 50 cents a bushel a year without NAFTA. Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director Bruce Kettler said 42% of Indiana's nearly \$1.5 billion in yearly agriculture exports goes to Canada and Mexico. The steel tariffs now bring the specter of a trade war. Brian Kuehl, Farmers for Free Trade executive director, added, "History shows these consequences are paid for by American farmers in the form of retaliatory tariffs on agriculture exports that farmers rely on to make ends meet."

If the alarms bells were ringing conspicuously after Trump pulled the plug on the TPP, giving China an easy route to fill that void, they were in full clang when Reuters reported on Feb. 22 that Mexican imports of Brazilian corn jumped 970% – yes, 970% – over 2016 in the last quarter of 2017. Mexico Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo, who is overseeing Mexico's NAFTA negotiating team, encouraged the country's major grain buyers to explore South American corn to strengthen his hand at the negotiating table, saying the country needed a "Plan B" in case Washington pulled out of the trade deal.

**"We bought from Brazil** for two reasons," Edmundo Miranda, commercial director of grain merchant Grupo Gramosa, told Reuters. "One, because it was competitive. Two, to see how practical and profitable it was to buy from Brazil or Argentina given the possibility of trade tariffs because of NAFTA renegotiations."

To the plight of Hoosier farmers, Miranda's hand is still quivering.

So after two years of enduring Trump's nasty rhetoric on Mexico's "criminal illegal immigrants" streaming in the U.S., and his calls to "build that wall" with Mexico footing the bill (which ain't gonna happen), this is Mexico's response to Hoosier farmers and Trump backers in Adams and Clinton and Daviess counties.

Is Zsa Zsa Gabor chanting "Build that wall" on Park Avenue a few blocks away from Trump Tower? The fateful response from down Mexico way seems to be that Plan B: OK, we'll buy Brazilian corn. ❖





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# GOP Senate candidates line up behind tariffs

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON – Defying Republican orthodoxy to stay aligned with President Donald Trump knows no bounds in Indiana’s Senate GOP primary.



For the first time in his presidency, many congressional Republicans are splitting with Trump following his announcement last week that he wants to impose import tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminum.

The GOP normally espouses free trade and resists barriers to global commerce. In keeping with that tradition, House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., has indicated opposition to tariffs.

But the GOP candidates competing for the nomination to face incumbent Hoosier Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly this fall – and eager for the backing of Trump’s core supporters – are for the most part endorsing Trump’s trade policy.

“I support President Trump’s efforts to put American workers first and re-position the United States as a more aggressive trade negotiator,” Rep. Luke Messer, R-6th CD, said in a statement. “Many Indiana businesses are dependent on trade, but others have suffered from poorly enforced trade deals, which have closed factories and hurt hardworking Hoosiers. We have a duty to go after bad actors and stop China from dumping products into our economy, and I will work with the president to make sure we don’t hurt other Indiana jobs in the process.”

Rep. Todd Rokita, R-4th CD, also is supporting Trump on trade but using language that is more careful than Trump’s. Trump has hinted that he would apply tariffs broadly, asserting in a Tweet that trade wars are “good” and “easy to win.”

Rokita is interpreting Trump more narrowly.

“I support free-trade, but it must be fair and put Hoosiers first,” Rokita said in a statement. “President Trump is standing up for the forgotten men and women of this country, and I support his efforts to fight for fair trade deals and targeted tariffs in certain cases. Right now, I’m reviewing his recent trade proposals, but I believe we can strike a balance to protect our steel and aluminum industries while also allowing Indiana manufacturers to continue to export their products to the rest of the world.”

GOP state Rep. Mike Braun touts his background as a business leader in contrasting himself with Rokita and Messer, whose careers have centered on politics. Braun

is founder and chief executive of Meyer Distributing and owner of Meyer Logistics, an auto parts distributor based in Jasper.

Normally, an executive connected to the auto industry might be wary of higher priced steel. But with Trump in the White House, this is no normal political atmosphere, and Braun praises Trump’s approach to the global economy.

“I’m definitely for free trade, but it needs to benefit Americans first,” Braun said in an HPI interview. “President Trump is looking at deals that are lopsided, and I’m glad we’re doing something about it.”

He sees Trump’s trade policy as a work in progress that’s going in the right direction.

“You need to call out the bad players in the marketplace,” Braun said. “What [Trump] has proposed is different. It reflects his leadership style. At this state of the game, I’m happy with where it’s at. I think he’ll articulate [a policy] and get it worked out.”

Donnelly has a history of supporting policies designed to combat illegal dumping and foreign subsidies for steel and aluminum products but he has not taken a position on the Trump tariffs.

The details of Trump’s proposal could be released as early as Thursday. While the administration is hammering out the plan, Republican Sen. Todd Young is trying to limit the tariffs.

In a March 6 meeting with White House chief of staff John Kelly, Young said in a statement that he advocated for “a targeted, balanced approach to protect Hoosier jobs from countries like China that are violating international trade rules.”

He noted that Indiana manufacturers are both big producers and users of steel and aluminum.

“The president is right to address unfair trade practices, but I am hopeful that the measures imposed will be balanced and implement a targeted approach that reflects the degree to which individual countries have violated international rules and thereby protect essential global supply chains with key U.S. allies,” Young said in a statement.

**Hoosier GOP** Reps. Jackie Walorski (2nd CD), Jim Banks (3rd CD) and Susan Brooks (5th CD) were among 107 House Republicans who sent a letter to Trump on March 7 urging him to make the tariffs tailored and targeted.

Last week, Walorski was as tough on Trump’s trade position as Republicans traditionally were on barriers to trade before Trump took over the party as its presidential nominee in 2016. During the campaign, Trump promised to do what he is doing now – impose a protectionist trade policy.

In a March 1 statement, Walorski warned that Trump’s tariffs could undermine economic gains that she said have resulted from tax reform and deregulation.

“Unfortunately, today’s announcement threatens to undo the positive effects of these pro-growth policies by



raising costs for American manufacturers, including many in Indiana's 2nd District," Walorski said. "China's unfair trade practices are a serious problem, but I'm disappointed the president does not appear to be pursuing a more balanced solution."

It takes someone who's not burdened by a Senate race to make that kind of traditional Republican trade argument. ❖

**Schoeff is HPI's Washington correspondent.**

## Messer to begin TV ad campaign today

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – U.S. Rep. Luke Messer's campaign told HPI on Wednesday that it will begin its statewide [TV ads](#) today, according to campaign manager Chasen Bullock. He becomes the final Republican Senate candidate to begin airing ads.



Mike Braun has run five flights of ads beginning late fall 2017 and U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita began his ads last week.

The 30-second spot is narrated by Messer's daughters, Emma and Ava, who tell voters the truth about their dad before "fake news" from negative TV ads takes over. Emma Messer: "Before you know it your TV will be jammed with the news about the Senate race." Ava Messer: "You mean fake news?" Emma: "That too. That's why we're here to give you the truth about our dad, Luke Messer. He's a conservative, a big advocate for President Trump's agenda."

Bullock said the TV and digital ad begins with a six-figure buy. It kicks off Messer's message to Republican voters that he's the candidate who will fight for Indiana's families and pass the Trump agenda.

The Republican U.S. Senate race has been simmering over earlier TV ads the past couple of weeks. Mike Braun's latest TV titled, "[Made in America](#)," blames the "disappearance" of Indiana manufacturing jobs on "career politicians." Rokita took immediate umbrage, accusing the Jasper industrialist of "hypocrisy." Braun says in the ad that began running statewide on Monday, "It used to be easy to buy made in America... but not anymore. I'm Mike Braun. I approve this message because jobs won't come back until the folks we elect have our back." Rokita responded saying that Braun's company, Meyer Distribution, sells products out-sourced to Mexico and China. "It is hard to rival Mexico Joe's out-sourcing hypocrisy, but Mike Braun is trying his best," said

Hoosiers for Rokita spokesperson Nathan Brand. "Braun's out-sourcing hypocrisy is not only blatant in his new ad, but proves he is the most shameless, duplicitous politician in this race."

The Rokita campaign cites the AP noting that "dozens of the companies listed on Meyer Distributing's website either sell or make products from foreign countries, among them China, Canada, Germany and Mexico." And U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly's campaign characterized the ad as "lies about Donnelly's connection to his brother's company. Joe hasn't had an active role in his brother's company in over 20 years. Last year he sold his stock in it and donated the proceeds to 10 food banks across Indiana."

The emerging perception is that the GOP Senate race is coming down to Rokita, who has won two statewide races, and Braun, who is running his fifth ad, compared to one for Rokita and none from Messer. The Braun campaign believed it had pulled into a name ID lead in January.

### Trump approval above Donnelly's

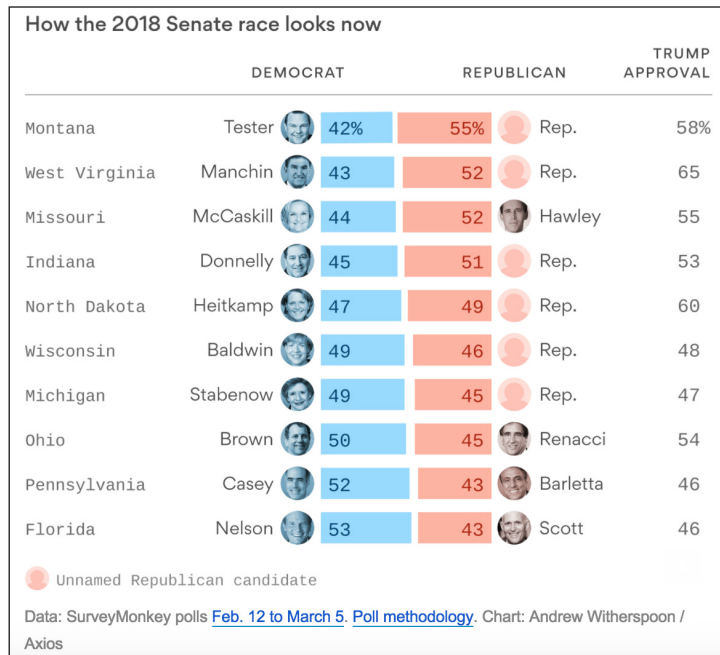
A series of 10 state polls for Axios by SurveyMonkey finds that President Trump isn't a drag on the Republican brand in key Senate races, despite his historically high national disapproval ratings. Trump's approval is higher than Democratic senators up for reelection in six of the states (Indiana, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio and West Virginia). It shows Donnelly with a 45% approval, compared to 51% for a generic GOP nominee and 53% for President Trump

### Braun pulled controversial ad

Braun told KPC Media Group on Saturday he has pulled his controversial campaign ad about illegal immigration that used the name and photo of a killed Uber driver without the family's permission (Marturello, Angola Herald-Republican). The ad focused on an alleged drunken driver who killed Jeffrey Monroe and Indianapolis Colts linebacker Edwin Jackson and how the country needed to strengthen its borders to protect the country from people like Manuel Orrego-Savala, a Guatemalan who has twice been deported from the U.S. and was in the



country illegally when his car struck the pair who were on the side of a highway on Feb. 4. "There was no anticipation that there would be such a negative reaction on the part of the widow," Braun said, adding that most people thought the ad was a strong message about illegal immigration and border security. Braun admitted that sometimes you get things wrong, you learn a lesson and move on. "You're not going to get everything right," he said. On Feb. 22 Deborah Monroe said she had called on the Braun campaign to pull the ad, the Indianapolis Star reported. The story ended up getting picked up by many major news outlets, including the Washington Post. The ad, which started running Feb. 20, stirred much conversation in Indiana as people watch a heated, three-way campaign for the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate. Braun and U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita are battling for the nomination to take on Democratic U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly in the General Election.



**Rokita calls Gary a 'sanctuary city'**  
U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, R-Brownsburg, declared in a tweet Friday that Gary is a "sanctuary city," and he accused Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson of ignoring state and federal law to "harbor illegal immigrant criminals" (Carden, NWI Times). The four-term congressman, originally from Munster, is vying for Indiana's Republican U.S. Senate nomination. He provided no justification for his claims beyond a link to a news article detailing Gary's defense

of its "welcoming city" ordinance in a lawsuit filed last year by a conservative attorney who has previously donated to Rokita's campaigns. That attorney, James Bopp Jr., of Terre Haute, alleges the 2017 Gary ordinance runs afoul of a 2011 Indiana law prohibiting sanctuary cities by mandating that local officials cooperate with federal authorities enforcing the nation's immigration laws. The city said in its reply brief, filed Wednesday, that while it exercises its "home rule" right not to investigate the immigration status of individuals interacting with city employees, particularly police officers, it has not declared itself a sanctuary city and never has failed to fully cooperate with federal immigration authorities. A hearing in the case is set for 11 a.m. March 14 at Lake Superior Courtroom 5 in Hammond.

**Republican primary Horse Race Status:** Tossup

**Donnelly supports background check bill**

Sen. Donnelly announced his support Wednesday for bipartisan legislation, the Fix NICS Act, which would improve the nation's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) for firearms purchases. Currently, many federal agencies and state governments often fail to provide NICS with relevant information on dangerous individuals or violent criminals, leaving the system open to significant error. The Fix NICS Act would improve federal agency compliance through new accountability measures and would incentivize states to transfer all of their relevant information by rewarding them with federal grant preferences. Donnelly said, "This bipartisan legislation would help ensure that our background check system has as much relevant information as possible so that felons, domestic abusers, and other dangerous individuals – who are not allowed to purchase a gun under existing law – aren't able to do so because of missing information." In addition to efforts to increase compliance from federal agencies and state governments within the existing background check system, the Fix NICS Act would create a Domestic Abuse and Violence Prevention Initiative to ensure that states have adequate resources and incentives to share all relevant information with NICS showing that a felon or domestic abuser is excluded from purchasing firearms under current law. And it would provide technical assistance to federal agencies and state governments that are working to comply with NICS.

**Congress**

**4th CD: Rep. Negele endorses Steve Braun**

The Steve Braun for Congress campaign distributed an announcement that the candidate has received the endorsement of State Rep. Sharon Negele (R-Attica). "Steve's experience and record as a job creator make him exactly the type of leader our state, district, and county needs in Congress," said Negele. **Republican Primary Horse Race Status:** Tossup

**8th CD: Bucshon/Moss race gets personal**

The 8th District congressional race is getting personal, entangled in the powder keg issues of domestic abuse and political betrayal (Langhorne, Evansville Courier & Press). Rep. Larry Bucshon and Richard Moss are accusing each other of inappropriately dragging wives into the political fray of the Republican primary election. The two men acknowledge having a confrontation over the issue

Feb. 17 at a Vanderburgh County GOP event, but each accuses the other of belligerent behavior that day. The fuse was lit when Moss began making an issue of Bucshon's decision in 2016 to move his wife, anesthesiologist Kathryn Bucshon, and preteen daughter to Washington, D.C. to live with him. Against that backdrop, Bucshon saw red when Moss pointed out Kathryn Bucshon's presence at the GOP event last month. "You don't call out people's family," Bucshon said Wednesday. "I said, 'Leave her out of it.'" That's not all he said. The four-term congressman acknowledged he warned Moss in "a private conversation" afterward that if he persisted in mentioning his family and pointing out Kathryn Bucshon at political events, he should be prepared to talk about his own family. "And we know what that is," Larry Bucshon said. Moss, a Jasper-based head and neck cancer surgeon, was charged with battering his wife in 1993. According to an affidavit filed with Dubois County Superior Court on March 16, 1993, Moss "pulled her hair and shoved her down onto some broken glass." But Moss and his wife, to whom he is still married, said there is no basis for those 25-year-old allegations. She described the charges as a "misunderstanding," and the charges were later dropped. She supports Moss. Bucshon pointed out he hasn't mentioned Moss's domestic incident to date. "Have you seen me bring it up?" he said. **Republican primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Bucshon

### 9th CD: Watson poll shows big lead

A recent survey of likely 2018 Democratic Primary voters in the 9th CD shows Liz Watson leading Dan Canon 40-27% with 33% undecided. The poll was conducted by the Democratic polling firm of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. It was conducted by live telephone interviews on both landline and cell phones March 3-5 with a margin of error at +/- 4.9 percentage points. The winner of the May 8 primary will challenge Republican U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth. "This poll proves what we already know. Democrats are ready to vote for Liz in May, and they see Liz as the best candidate to take on Trey Hollingsworth in November," said Watson campaign manager Brian Peters. "Not only do the poll numbers show our campaign with a large lead, but we also have the resources to get Liz's message out to every voter in this district. That is a good thing, because they like what they're hearing."

### Canon picks up endorsements

Fresh off a 13-county Town Hall tour, Dan Canon, picked up two endorsements Tuesday. The Floyd and Clark County Stonewall Democrats endorsed Canon. Canon received the endorsement of SoINdivisible, the Southern Indiana Indivisible chapter. **Democratic primary Horse Race Status:** Leans Watson ❖

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# The ‘Black Day’ in the Indiana Senate

## The Making of the Modern State Senate Pro Tem: Part 2, The “Black Day” of the General Assembly

By **TREVOR FOUGHTY**

INDIANAPOLIS – As covered in last week’s Part 1, under Indiana’s 1816 and 1851 Constitution – as well as State Senate rules dating back to the First General Assembly – the lieutenant governor as president of the Senate was the chamber’s true presiding officer. The lieutenant governor had the power to create committees, name members and assign legislation to committees, and to manage the operations of the Senate on a daily basis. The pro tem position was an afterthought, serving in a ceremonial capacity only when the lieutenant governor was absent, rarely for more than a few days at a time, and only elected on the first day the lieutenant governor was gone. But, the move toward the modern understanding of the two roles can be pinpointed with remarkable accuracy: Feb. 24, 1887.



Before that day, one of the few times a pro tem was able to exercise any power was in 1869. A freshman Republican senator named Isaac P. Gray was elected pro tem during a five-day absence of the lieutenant governor, and in that short span used the limited parliamentary power he had to essentially trick Senate Democrats in to giving him a quorum and ratifying the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Legislative Democrats never forgave Gray for that move, not even when he renounced the Republican Party and was elected governor as a Democrat in 1884. When Gray started lining up support for a U.S. Senate bid ahead of the 1886 election, they were hell-bent on stopping him.

**Prior to** the ratification in 1913 of the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, U.S. senators were appointed by state legislatures. Therefore, one of

the first votes the Democrat-controlled Senate would cast in the 1887 session was to replace outgoing Republican Sen. Benjamin Harrison. In order to avoid having to vote against Gray, a governor of their own party, Democrats in the legislature convinced Lt. Gov. Mahlon D. Manson (elected in 1884 alongside Gray, and a former legislator himself) to resign. Once he did, they informed Gray they couldn’t appoint him U.S. senator because there was no sitting lieutenant governor to succeed him, which would trigger a constitutional crisis.

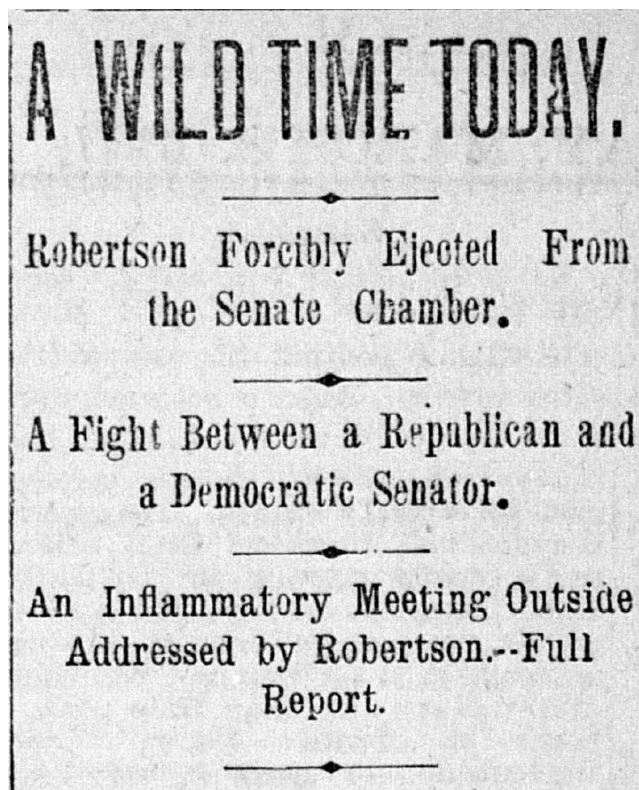
**Gray, after consulting** with Democrat Attorney General Francis T. Hord, ordered a special election to fill the lieutenant governor vacancy despite no clear constitutional or statutory authority to do so. This only added to the distrust of Gray by legislative Democrats, as did rumors that Gray was secretly helping Republican Robert S. Robertson win the governorship. While Gray’s actual involvement on behalf of Robertson is a matter of historical debate, he was quietly hoping for the Republican’s victory; with a Republican set to ascend to the governorship, he was banking on legislative Republicans supporting his bid for the U.S. Senate.

Gray got more than he bargained for when the dust settled on the November elections. Robertson won the special election for lieutenant governor, and the Republican Party erased a 35-65 deficit in the House to claim a new 56-44 majority. Along with the 18 Republican votes in the Senate, Gray wouldn’t just have Republican support, but potentially he would need only two Democrat votes to ascend to the U.S. Senate.

Furious and eager to stop Gray in his tracks, the Democrats filed legal proceedings to declare Robertson’s

claim on the lieutenant governor’s office unconstitutional and prevent him from being seated. When the session began in January with litigation still pending, the Democrats elected Alonzo Green Smith as the president pro tem, which they claimed also made him the rightful lieutenant governor.

**This led** to legal proceedings by Republicans in order to declare Green’s claim on the office unconstitutional and prevent him from being seated. Despite a circuit court ruling against Robertson’s claim, the Marion County Appellate Court ruled that neither Robertson nor Green could be seated as lieutenant governor until the Supreme Court issued a final ruling. Near the end of February, the Supreme Court finally settled the matter: The election was legitimate with Robertson



the rightful office holder.

Monday, Feb. 24, 1887, was the first session day after the ruling. Robertson appeared in the Senate chamber for the first time, and attempted to take his place at the dais. Green, still serving as pro tem, refused to seat him, and Democrat senators formed a human blockade to keep Robertson from the dais. After fighting and shoving his way to the front of the chamber, he began to ascend the steps of the dais before a doorkeeper grabbed him by the throat and shoulder, picked him up, and threw him back down. As he got up and again tried to take his seat, he was tackled by a group of Democrat senators, then beaten as they dragged him out the door, which Green promptly ordered locked.

**Aghast at what** had just transpired, Senate Republicans physically confronted their counterparts and a giant brawl erupted. In short order, a Democrat senator pulled out a pistol and fired a shot into the ceiling. Unless the fighting stopped immediately, he said, he would begin shooting again, only this time at Republicans. While the tactic had its intended effect, the gunshot attracted the attention of some members of the House of Representatives who quickly ran across the hall to find out what was going on. There they encountered a bloodied and bruised Robertson, who explained what had happened when he tried to take office, and Republicans locked inside the Senate chamber shouted through locked doors filling them in on the rest.

Word quickly spread to the House chamber, which in turn led to a brawl erupting between the parties in that body. Before long, the entire Statehouse devolved into one large, riotous fight, that included not only elected officials and state employees, but also a mob of several hundred local Republicans who descended upon the capitol building after the news quickly spread around town.

**Four hours after** the fight began, a group of Republicans – who by this point greatly outnumbered the Democrats, having detained many of their rivals – managed to end it by breaking down the doors of the Senate and dragging the Democrats to the front lawn. Gov. Gray had already called local police as reinforcements, which helped ensure that Republican threats to immediately and publicly execute the Senate



Democrats were not carried out.

The next day, Robertson returned to the Senate, was denied entry by the doorkeeper, and promptly went back to his home in Washington County, never to return. The seat sat vacant for the next two years, and Green continued to preside over the Senate as pro tem. It turned out to be a short-lived stint; Senate Republicans refused to show up to provide a quorum, and House Republicans passed a resolution declaring the Senate an unconstitutional body, cutting off communication between the chambers and refusing to consider any legislation from the Senate. Effectively, the session was over.

The ramifications were more profound than just ugly headlines declaring it the "Black Day" of the General Assembly and an abrupt end to any legislating for two years. Gray not only lost his shot at a U.S. Senate seat, but his involvement also cost him the Democrat nomination for vice president

in both 1888 and 1892 (races he would lose only after stories about his involvement in the 1869 and 1887 dramas were derisively told from the national convention podium), earning him the nickname "Sisyphus of the Wabash." The episode set the stage for the modern power structure in the Indiana State Senate, though that day was still 80 years away. ❖

**Next Week: Part 3, Taking Back the Senate.**

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# Let's create an Indiana service program

By JAY RUCKLESHAUS

OXFORD, England – We need a service program for the state of Indiana. It is my firm conviction that there are few better things we could do for our state, our political culture, and the next generation of Hoosiers than to enact a program that gathers a selection of high school graduates from every corner of Indiana and gives them a year of structured service.



Such a program would manifest political ideals from both the right and the left. It would help our communities and shore up the kind of civic bonds necessary for sustaining democracy – precisely those most threatened in this

precarious political moment. I believe Indiana can lead the way toward a more constructive politics, and we can do it with a statewide service program.

My inspiration stems from the urgency of the need: The polarization afflicting American politics. Much has been made recently of the specter of extreme partisanship. We are supposedly more divided than we've ever been, not only offering different answers to political questions, but asking different ones.

I tend to push back against some of these worries. Political conflict itself isn't a bad thing. In fact, it's necessary. "To serve the common good," the political philosopher Russell Muirhead wrote recently, "implicates us in a contest" because there is no such thing as a comprehensive conception of "good" common to all. Healthy political communities allow argument over competing visions of society.

**But "political communities"** – that's the tricky part. The good kind of democratic contestation can only occur among citizens who share a degree of commitment to the same political project, even if they disagree on particulars. Every successful political community must achieve a balance between disagreement and commonality.

Increasingly, our country is failing this test. There's a vast body of social science research on polarization which shows that, even if most Americans have not diverged significantly on political issues, they have grown increasingly resentful of political opponents. This type of polarization – often called "tribalistic" or "affective" – is polarization not so much by ideology, but by identity, which is even worse. We are separated by chasms of mistrust and suspicion that risk rendering Democrats and Republicans unintelligible to each other.

And these antipathies have spilled over into social life. Identity polarization is associated with unprecedented political self-segregation by ZIP Code, media sources, even grocery stores. One of our most urgent problems is a lack of connection among citizens of different stripes.

**Enter: A statewide service program.** For this program to begin to work against these polarizing trends, the organizing details are crucial, so let me spell out what I mean. I take inspiration from national service programs like AmeriCorps, but I want to localize them. I envision high school students applying to the program fall of senior year. A committee will select a group that represents to the greatest extent possible the diversity of our state. We need kids from downtown Fort Wayne, Warren County, the south side of Indy. We need those well-off and those facing hardship. Democrat, Republican, indifferent. All races. All genders. All creeds.

GPA and test scores? Irrelevant. The sole admissions criteria will be enthusiasm, curiosity, and willingness to work hard.

Accepted students will then be divided into groups of, say, 10, ensuring each is maximally representative. Each group will then spend the year rotating among different service opportunities all over the state. Imagine: Four months at an Evansville homeless shelter, four months on a dairy farm, four months revitalizing the White River. They will be housed together and benefit from guest speakers who will teach them more about this place they had no choice but to be born into, but retain the chance to embrace.

The program will be prestigious, launched by the governor, so that students will want to participate. Colleges and employers will scramble to recruit graduates of the program, whom they know have spent a formative year learning new skills and learning from each other.

Perhaps participants could even receive money for college tuition or job training. Which raises the funding question: Where will the money come from? The program won't be cheap. It must be financially secure enough to allow people of all stripes to participate. Philanthropic and private partners can be sought, but it's crucial that the state also cover at least some of the cost. Only through government can we achieve the necessary scale and contribute to the ennobling of the public sector that would be part of this program's guiding mission.

**Securing political support** may not be insurmountable, because this kind of statewide service program will instantiate ideals both conservatives and liberals cherish. Where conservatism traditionally values local engagement, the program will instill a firm sense of embeddedness and community spirit. And where liberalism encourages respect for diversity, the program will foster a deep appreciation of our state's beautiful differences.

Self-government isn't something that just happens. It requires work. And while this program won't address any of our very real structural-institutional democratic ills, it will go some measure toward inculcating the kind



of virtues necessary if we are to remain our own sources of political authority.

But the program won't feel like some urgent political project to the participants. That's because it's not, first and foremost, even about politics. It's about friendship, trust, and late-night dinners at IHOP after a day's work. And even if that month's service rotation sucks, or their supervisor is a jerk, those moments of commonality will endure.

**That's my claim – it's precisely** by not focusing on politics that we develop the kind of relationships necessary to improve our politics. It's hard to hate up close.

I recognize this won't happen overnight, but I'm

optimistic. I've described exactly the sort of program I myself would have loved to do following high school, and I suspect many around the state will agree.

Tribalism threatens the health of our democracy. There are no comprehensive answers to addressing it, but there are particular solutions, and an Indiana statewide service program is one. Here's a chance for Indiana to lead the way. Let's create it. ❖

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

## Township reform creates people demand

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – "Psstt." The sound came from behind the statue with my name on it, right there on the steps of the Statehouse.



I peered and saw a grubby, shabby-looking man, presumably a lobbyist for a small organization, not the well-heeled spokesperson of a major corporation, university, or foundation.

"What?" I asked, fearful he would need bus fare.

"You got a need for a few folks?" he said.

"What do you mean?" I was flustered. Was he offering me illegals, some members of a minority group, like Democrats in

Hamilton County, to perform gardening or other domestic labor?

"HB1005," he said in a conspiratorial manner. "It's the bill to force consolidation of small townships. If a township didn't have 1,200 people in the 2010 Census, then it must find a township that is willing to merge. There's now a drive on to get people to stay or move to those condemned townships before the next census in 2020."

"I know about this," I confessed. "It's part of the vision advanced by big-city, big-business, politicians who are committed to eradicating rural institutions."

"Do you have any idea how many townships this puts on the block to disappear by 2023?" He asked and then answered his question. "It's 309 townships that fall under the legislative knife of 1,200 persons. That's about one-third of all townships."

"Where did the 1,200 number come from?" I ask.

"Who knows?" he answered. "Where do the lawmakers pull out the numbers they use to mandate conformity to their will? How did you like that short noon to 8 p.m. window for Sunday booze sales? That was crafted so folks in the Eastern Time Zone could stop in on the way home from church and get a six pack before the NFL games start."

"Surely, there must have been some research behind that number," I said.

**He laughed, one of those** uncontrollable laughs, a high-pitched ululation unexpected from Hoosier vocal cords. "Research," he stumbled over the word and began laughing again.

"I remember the Kernan-Shepard report of 10 or so years ago. That kick-started local government consolidation," I said. "That report, which came from two respected state leaders and was the product of a fine university staff, must have had research to support its conclusions."

"Listen," he said, recovering from his attack of hilarity. "If you can find copies of the research behind that report, let me know. We're now talking about taking away a form of government that serves people in sparsely populated areas; 235,000 of them in 76 of our 92 counties,"

"Well," I said, "it would save tax money."

"How much have your local taxes declined since we eliminated many township assessors? Where are the savings from merging fire departments?"

And so saying, he darted behind Gov. Morton's statue and was gone. ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an economist. His views can be followed on a [weekly podcast](#) or reached at [Whogetswhat4@gmail.com](mailto:Whogetswhat4@gmail.com)**

# Holcomb to sign SEA360 today

## Howey Politics Indiana

INDIANAPOLIS – The governor's office announced that Gov. Eric Holcomb and State Health Commissioner Dr. Kristina Box will join state Sen. Ed Charbonneau and Rep. Cindy Kirchhofer at 12:15 p.m. today at Peyton Manning Children's Hospital at St. Vincent for the official bill signing of SEA 360 (Howey Politics Indiana). The bill requires the Indiana State Department of Health to certify levels of care for mothers and babies at hospitals and birthing centers. Address is Door #4, 2001 W. 86th St, Indianapolis, 46240.



## Senate approves CBD oil measure

The Indiana Senate approved a bill that could lead to the loosening of restrictions on the sale of cannabis-derived CBD oil ([Associated Press](#)). The measure was approved Tuesday on a 37-12 vote and previously passed the House. But because changes were made in the Senate, the House must still sign off on the measure, or seek to negotiate the details further. Cannabidiol, commonly referred to as CBD oil, is derived from marijuana and hemp, but lacks the stuff that gets people high.

## Senate Dems call for gun violence study

Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane (D-Anderson), along with the other members of the Indiana Senate Democratic Caucus, introduced Senate Resolution (SR) 49, according to information provided to Howey Politics Indiana. The resolution calls on the Legislative Council to assign the topic of reducing gun violence and other deaths by firearms in Indiana to the appropriate summer study committee. "We can't accept these tragedies as a part of everyday American life," Sen. Lanane said. "We need to create common sense legislation to secure the safety of our children while balancing the Second Amendment rights of responsible firearm owners as well as those rights guaranteed under the Indiana Constitution." "When Hoosiers were asked to prioritize public safety issues in a WTHR/HPI Indiana Poll in 2016, the top two responses were safety in schools with 37 percent and gun violence with 27 percent," Sen. Lanane said. "I think this demonstrates a will on behalf of Hoosiers for legislators to act." "This resolution will allow the legislature to study topics including closing the loopholes in our background checks law, banning bump stocks, banning assault weapons or raising the minimum age to purchase an assault weapon from 18 to 21, and child-access protection laws," Sen. Lanane said. "This study, if the resolution is actually assigned to

a summer study committee, will evaluate common sense policies that Hoosiers support to keep people in our state safe."

## School management bill waits conferees

A bill that involves granting Ball State University the authority to manage Muncie Community Schools and further trims the responsibilities of the elected Gary Community School Corp. board has been approved by the Indiana Senate (McGowan, [Inside Indiana Business](#)). House Bill 1315 now heads to conference committee, where members of both chambers will hammer out a final version that would need to receive another vote in each the House and Senate by March 14. Additional measures in the bill involve oversight of the public school district in Gary, including shifting trustees to an advisory board that would consult with the state-appointed emergency manager. Under the Senate-approved version, the board -- or advisory committee as the House-passed version of the bill calls it -- would meet four times per year publicly and have its authority diminished even more.

## Sexual harassment policy changes

Changes to sexual harassment policies are coming for all three branches of Indiana state government (Cook, [IndyStar](#)). A measure that would require Indiana lawmakers to set a sexual harassment policy for themselves — including procedures for investigating harassment allegations against lawmakers — is poised to become law after the House voted unanimously Wednesday to give it final approval. The legislation, House Bill 1309, now goes to Gov. Eric Holcomb, who has said he plans to sign it into law. Holcomb and Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Loretta Rush have also been working on changes to sexual harassment training policies for the executive and judicial branches. They plan to announce those plans in conjunction with the signing of HB 1309.

## Abortion bill on governor's desk

A bill that would require more reporting by abortion clinics is heading to the governor's desk — a measure touted as a win by anti-abortion groups (Lange, [IndyStar](#)). Senate Bill 340, which passed the Senate Wednesday by a 37-9 vote, would require abortion providers to annually report 26 listed complications to the state, including issues such as sleeping disorders or anxiety. The legislation also would require annual inspections of the clinics and other changes to "bring code up to date with current practices," according to bill sponsor Rep. Peggy Mayfield, R-Martinsville.

## Bill addresses teacher shortage

A new bill aims to remedy Indiana's teaching shortage by allowing public schools to fill up to 10 percent of their teaching staff with unlicensed teachers. The bill passed the Senate on a 35-12 vote and cleared the House

66-29 ([Associated Press](#)). It was modified since it passed the Senate. The changes will be discussed during conference committee in the next week. "We don't have enough qualified teachers and we don't want to pay to have enough qualified teachers, so we create a teacher facsimile," said Democratic Rep. Ed Delaney of Indianapolis.

**Congress**

**Donnelly supports background checks**

U.S. Senator Joe Donnelly (D-IN) announced his formal support in a news release for bipartisan legislation, the Fix NICS Act, which would improve the nation's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) for firearms purchases. Currently, many federal agencies and state governments often fail to provide NICS with relevant information on dangerous individuals or violent criminals, leaving the system open to significant error. The Fix NICS Act would improve federal agency compliance through new accountability measures and would incentivize states to transfer all of their relevant information by rewarding them with federal grant preferences.

**Young says banking bill will help Hoosiers**

U.S. Senator Todd Young (R-Ind.) announced in a news release that he "is keeping his promise to roll back harmful Dodd-Frank financial regulations by supporting

the bipartisan Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act, S.2155." "When the burdensome Dodd-Frank Act was enacted during the Obama administration, it was Indiana small businesses, community banks, credit unions, and the people who rely on them that suffered. I have long advocated for rolling back these harmful regulations, and the reforms in this bipartisan bill will provide needed regulatory relief, while maintaining important consumer protections," said Young.

**Rokita backs sanctuary city suit**

A press release announced that U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita (R-IN) praised the Trump Administration's Department of Justice for filing suit against California's dangerous sanctuary city policies. Rokita recently introduced legislation aimed at sanctuary city policies, the Stopping Lawless Actions of Politicians Act, which has been endorsed by NumbersUSA. "The Trump Administration is absolutely right to go after lawless politicians in California for their dangerous sanctuary city policies," said Rokita. "We must put an end to sanctuary city policies that ignore the rule of law and put the interest of illegal immigrant criminals ahead of American citizens. I'm proud that we have a President in the White House who fights for the safety of Americans and is taking this issue head-on." ❖

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# Rokita offends Gary Mayor Freeman-Wilson

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – It’s easy to be critical of Gary, Ind. After all, it’s a city with a history of crime, a failing school system and old, decaying housing stock.



Firing a shot at Gary is easy. It’s also cheap.

No one knows that better than U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, who is a candidate for the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate. Rokita, who represents Indiana’s 4th CD, lives outside Indianapolis. He grew up in Munster.

I’m not terribly sure why he took a shot at Gary last week. Maybe it was because he thought

it would garner the favor of the majority of Hoosiers. Rokita said Gary is a “sanctuary city” whose officials “harbor illegal immigrant criminals.”

**As it turns out**, Rokita messed with the wrong woman, raising the ire of Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson. Gary has never called itself a “sanctuary city,” but instead says it is a welcoming city. It also is a little unfair of Rokita to imply that illegal immigrants are criminals.

Terre Haute attorney and Rokita friend James Bopp Jr. filed a lawsuit last year against Gary alleging that the city violates state law banning sanctuary cities.

In its response, the city said it never has declared itself a “sanctuary city” and always has fully cooperated with federal immigration authorities.

**There will be a hearing** on the lawsuit in Lake Superior Court in Hammond next week.

Mayor Freeman-Wilson said she is perplexed by Rokita’s attack on Gary because she said he told her last month that he wouldn’t focus on Gary in his legislative efforts opposing sanctuary cities.

“I told him I was confident of that because Gary is not a sanctuary but a welcoming community,” Freeman-Wilson said.

The mayor added that the city’s 2017 ordinance is about home rule and has nothing to do with being a sanctuary city.

Rokita, who is a strong supporter of President Donald Trump, is in the midst of a tough race for the Senate nomination. In a television commercial last week, Rokita pledged to “build the wall” and “make English our official language.”

**That may all play well in** much of Indiana, but Freeman-Wilson took exception to Rokita’s attack on her city. In responding to Rokita’s statement that his legislative efforts on sanctuary cities would not include an attack on Gary, Freeman-Wilson said, “Must be election time.” ❖

**Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is retired from the Post-Tribune.**

**Photography With Punch**  
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**Matt Tully, Indystar:** Todd Rokita has topped himself. And when you're talking about Todd Rokita, that's not a good thing. The most cynical cheap shot artist in Indiana politics today, the 4th district congressman took his behavior to a new low in recent days. He did so by taking an unfair shot at an Indiana city he should be trying to help, but one he couldn't help himself from trying to hurt in his quest for political gain. Rokita is running for the Republican U.S. Senate nomination, of course. So he clearly saw nothing but upside — cheap and divisive political upside — when taking a shot at Gary, a steel city of about 76,000 Hoosiers that gives few votes to Republicans. The Northwest Indiana city has struggled for decades like few others in America. A prospective senator should want to help it. But befitting his campaign of empty red-meat rhetoric, Rokita went to Twitter last week to unfairly and inaccurately label Gary a "sanctuary city" in "our own backyard." There could be only one goal in doing this: To infuriate what will likely be a small primary electorate by exploiting the negative feelings many in Indiana feel toward Gary. Rokita's angry and laughable "we're-not-going-to-take-it-anymore" campaign has been based on little more than inciting ill will toward liberals, Democrats, those who disagree with him, and now, apparently, entire cities. Still, this is a new low. Real leaders who seek to represent the state try to bring us together. They remind us that we are better off when all of our state's communities do better. Not Rokita. And while it is not the least bit surprising given his past rhetoric, it is jarring after years of watching true Republican leaders, such as former Gov. Mitch Daniels, work to help Gary move forward. It's also unfortunate given the positive steps the city has taken in recent years under its innovative mayor, Karen Freeman Wilson. But this is the Rokita Way. His cheap personal attacks against GOP rival Luke Messer led to the primary being labeled the nastiest in America this year. Like I said, we shouldn't be surprised. This is Todd Rokita, after all. ❖



**Pat Buchanan, Townhall:** From Lincoln to William McKinley to Theodore Roosevelt, and from Warren Harding through Calvin Coolidge, the Republican Party erected the most awesome manufacturing machine the world had ever seen. And, as the party of high tariffs through those seven decades, the GOP was rewarded by becoming America's Party. Thirteen Republican presidents served from 1860 to 1930, and only two Democrats. And Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson were elected only because the Republicans had split. Why, then, this terror of tariffs that grips the GOP? Consider. On hearing that President Trump might impose tariffs on aluminum and steel, Sen. Lindsey Graham was beside himself: "Please reconsider," he implored the president, "you're making a huge mistake." Twenty-four hours earlier, Graham had confidently assured us that war with a nuclear-armed North Korea is "worth it."

"All the damage that would come from a war would be worth it in terms of long-term stability and national security," said Graham. A steel tariff terrifies Graham. A new Korean war does not? "Trade wars are not won, only lost," warns Sen. Jeff Flake. But this is ahistorical nonsense. The U.S. relied on tariffs to convert from an agricultural economy in 1800 to the mightiest manufacturing power on earth by 1900. Does Senator Flake think Japan rose to post-war preeminence through free trade, as Tokyo kept U.S. products out, while dumping cars, radios, TVs and motorcycles here to kill the industries of the nation that was defending them. Both Nixon and Reagan had to devalue the dollar to counter the predatory trade policies of Japan. ❖

**Jack Colwell, South Bend Tribune:** Once upon a time and not so very long ago, Republicans in Congress bellowed against deficit budgets and warned of looming catastrophe from a spiraling, out-of-control national debt. Also, boys and girls, Democrats in Congress told the Republicans to shut up as they supported lots of additional presidential spending proposals. Not so very long ago? Yep, all during the Obama administration. Actually, the difference in fiscal philosophy between the parties had developed historically. The Republican Party was viewed as the fiscally conservative party — for smaller government, less spending and balanced budgets. Republican presidents didn't always follow that philosophy — not even Ronald Reagan — but most Republicans endorsed it. The Democratic Party was viewed as the fiscally liberal party — for big federal programs going back to Social Security and continuing through the decades to enactment of Obamacare. Democrats also could waver from that philosophy, but most Democrats approved it. And now . . . President Trump — elected as a Republican, although never known previously as a conservative — has proposed a budget wildly out of balance. The Republican-controlled Congress passed a budget deal eliminating spending caps and adding a projected additional \$1.5 trillion in debt over the next decade. We toss around totals in trillions now with few warnings about record debt. Back in the 1960s, there was a warning about mere billions attributed to Republican Sen. Everett Dirksen of Illinois, even though the exact quote is questioned: "A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking about real money." A billion here and a billion there is fiscal pocket change today. We talk trillions. The tax cuts, most economists say, could add another \$1.5 trillion in debt through revenue loss while the national debt already exceeds \$20 trillion. Democrats, who now denounce big deficits, used to scoff at Republican warnings about balanced budgets as they supported big programs of Democratic presidents. Now, President Trump wants a big infrastructure program. And Democrats find fault with the way it's structured and funded. President Obama long pleaded for an infrastructure program. And Republicans always found fault and blocked it. ❖



## Pence is last hope to roll back tariffs

WASHINGTON – In public, Vice President Mike Pence is loudly praising his boss’ proposed tariffs on steel and aluminum — while gently urging him to scale back the policy behind the scenes ([Politico](#)). Pence was in Council Bluffs, Iowa, this week, where he gave Trump a shout-out for a policy decision that alarmed legions of White House aides, including the vice president, a lifelong advocate of free markets and free trade. “Whether it’s in renegotiating NAFTA, or protecting our steel and aluminum industries, President Trump is always going to put American workers, American companies and American farmers first,” Pence said in a speech touting the administration’s tax reform. But back in Washington, the vice president has been among the legions of top administration officials pushing President Donald Trump to back off the sweeping protectionist plan he put forward during a March 1 meeting with industry executives. Pence, according to more than a half-dozen White House and Capitol Hill aides, has been quietly delivering messages to the president from Republicans on the Hill, who have publicly opposed the tariffs plan set to be announced as early as Thursday — though he’s made sure to maintain a studiously neutral position, to the frustration of some who had hoped he would do more to exert influence over Trump.

## Prosecutors push back at Mayor Snyder

PORTAGE – Federal prosecutors in Portage Mayor James Snyder’s public corruption case say his claims of constitutional rights violations are unfounded (Russell, *NWI Times*). Snyder’s defense team filed a motion in U.S. District Court last week claiming a “taint test” to review emails for potential attorney-client privilege had failed, allowing prosecutors to read certain privileged emails. The failure, the motion claimed, had violated



Snyder’s Sixth Amendment rights to a fair trial. The motion asked for the government’s trial team to be dismissed and/or that the federal case against him be dropped. Snyder was indicted Nov. 18, 2016, on two counts of bribery and one count of tax evasion. A hearing on the matter has been set for 10:30 a.m. March 15 in Hammond federal court. His trial is scheduled for June 4. Federal prosecutors

Wednesday filed a response asking for the court to rule against Snyder’s motion without a hearing. A spokesman for the U.S. Attorney’s Office declined further comment on the filing.

## 3 Hoosiers on billionaires list

PORTAGE – Three Hoosiers have landed on the Forbes World’s Billionaires list. Carl Cook, Herb Simon and Jim Irsay all appear again on the annual list compiled by the magazine (Parker, [Inside Indiana Business](#)). Bloomington-based Cook Medical’s CEO is the most wealthy Hoosier, coming in at no. 190 on the list. The 55-year old Cook has \$8 billion in net worth, which is over \$2 billion more than when he appeared at no. 82 on the list in 2015. Chairman Emeritus of Simon Property Group (NYSE:SPG) Herb Simon, is the second Hoosier on the Forbes list. Simon is no. 791 with \$3 billion. Colts owner Jim Irsay is no. 887, with an estimated \$2.7 billion. The top 5 richest billionaires in the world are Jeff Bezos at \$112 billion, followed by Bill Gates at \$90 billion, Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett is third with \$84 billion, LVMH’s Bernard Arnault of France is no. 4 at \$72 billion and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg rounds out the top five with \$71 billion.

## Gun bill passes Florida House

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – The Florida House passed a school safety bill Wednesday that includes

new restrictions on rifle sales and a program to arm some teachers, sending the measure to the governor for his signature. The vote of 67-50 reflected a mix of Republicans and Democrats in support and opposition ([Associated Press](#)). The measure, a response to the shootings at a Parkland, Florida, high school that left 17 dead, is supported by the victims’ families. Andrew Pollack, who lost his 18-year-old daughter, Meadow, in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, and Ryan Petty, who lost his 14-year-old daughter, Alaina, said there was enough good in the bill that it should pass. Democratic Rep. Kristin Jacobs said she did not like the idea of arming teachers, but she voted yes.

## Centaur gives tax bonuses

ANDERSON – Centaur Gaming is reinvesting some of the money it will be saving under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act back into its employees by giving them a \$500 bonus (WRTV). The president of the company, Jim Brown, announced at a meeting Wednesday morning that all full, part and seasonal employees would be receiving a one-time check for \$500. The company will also be paying all taxes and the employee and company 401K portions of those bonus checks.

## Cuban denies sex allegations

DALLAS — Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban is denying a 2011 allegation of sexual assault after a weekly alternative newspaper in Oregon published details of a case that prosecutors didn’t pursue, saying they didn’t believe there was evidence to support the claim ([Associated Press](#)).