



HPI Interview: Brooks weighs safe schools

She experienced Parkland shooting with Rep. Deutch and then it happened in her district

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NOBLESVILLE – The May 25 shooting at West Middle School brought a déjà vu feeling to U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks. The ranking Democrat on the House Ethics Committee she chairs is U.S. Rep. Ted Deutch, who represents Parkland, Fla.



Two weeks prior, Brooks and Deutch had introduced HR5715, the Jake Laird Act, named after the Indianapolis police officer who was shot and killed in 2004 in the line of duty by a man who struggled

with mental illness. They introduced it a little less than three months after the Marjory Stoneman Douglas HS atrocity.

“We’ve worked together for six years,” Brooks said of Deutch in a Howey Politics Indiana Interview Tuesday morning. “So, I kind of went through Parkland with him. We were scheduled to have a meeting that week and



U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks greets West Middle School teacher Jason Seaman.

so I have talked with him extensively since Parkland.”

Sandwiched between Parkland on Feb. 14 and West on May 25 was the Santa Fe HS massacre that

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Welcome to Evansville

By **JOSHUA CLAYBOURN**

EVANSVILLE – As 1,500 delegates and their friends descend on Evansville for this year’s Indiana Republican Convention, it will mark only the second time in modern history that the GOP convention will take place outside of Indianapolis. Here’s what you need to know about the state’s third largest city.



Pardon our mess

Just as Indianapolis emerged in the 1980s from its negative reputation as “India-no-place” or “Naptown,” Evansville is now undergoing its own resurgence. The downtown alone has over \$500 million in



“The Indiana Republican Party is big and diverse with many different perspectives on issues we all care about. The debate over the past week regarding this year’s party platform only reinforces that fact.”

- Gov. Eric Holcomb saying delegates will decide family plank



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renovations simultaneously occurring, an unprecedented amount of investment.

Simply put, Evansville's downtown is poised for booming growth with renovations and new construction happening nearly everywhere you look. Some of this progress will present an unattractive annoyance – construction barrels, cleared lots and closed streets are common sights – but it all points to a promising renaissance.

Tropicana Evansville, the state's first land-based casino, opened 75,000 square feet of gaming fun in renovated space. Two new downtown hotels under construction will soon join the recently completed DoubleTree convention hotel, which rests next to the new Stone Family Center for Health Sciences, a collaboration for medical education by the University of Evansville, University of Southern Indiana and Indiana University.

Joining all of that are scores of new housing developments, small businesses, restaurants, and shops that recently opened or will open in the near future. It all may look messy now, but it's welcome progress for a vital Indiana region.

Evansville's long political shadow

As the city's chief executive, Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke will play a large role at this year's GOP convention. In a heavily Democratic city, he is the first Republican to be reelected as mayor since the 1970s and continues to boast high approval ratings. But visitors to this year's convention will also see signs of the city's long shadow extending to Indianapolis. Indeed, not since Evansville native Robert Orr occupied the governor's mansion has the city exerted such a strong influence on state policy.

Evansville resident Suzanne

Crouch leaves her fingerprints all over Hoosier policy and the modern GOP. After serving many years as vice chairwoman of the House Ways and Means Committee and then as state auditor, she now helps shape the Holcomb administration's agenda and shepherd it across the finish line during legislative sessions.

Crouch's replacement in the legislature, Holli Sullivan, is busy shaping her own legacy as a member of the Ways and Means Committee and chair of the Higher Education Subcom-



Evansville Mayor Winnecke (center) at the unveiling of plans for a new downtown Hyatt Hotel.

mittee.

Gov. Eric Holcomb spent most of his formative years up the road in Vincennes in Evansville's cultural orbit and later worked on the staff of Evansville-based Congressman John Hostettler.

Congressman Jim Banks, the state's fastest rising GOP congressional star, also worked on Hostettler's staff and lived for a period in Evansville, building notable connections with the region's political leaders.

On the Democrat side, former Evansville mayor Jonathan Weinzapfel and former congressman (and U.S. Senate candidate) Brad Ellsworth continue to be discussed as possible statewide candidates.

A regional approach

Cut off from the rest of the state, at least until the completion of I-69, Evansville rarely thought of itself as exceptional. But all of that is changing thanks to strong public and private partnerships. The city can serve as a model for the state's new regional approach.

Evansville has increasingly worked together with surrounding communities to transform the area as a destination to live, work and play. We were among the first to implement a unified, county-wide school district and library. The result has been both the school and library system excelling as among the very best in the state.

More recently, Southwest Indiana was selected as one of three regions to receive \$42 million in state matching funds under the Regional Cities Initiative geared toward talent-attracting projects. The region's success with implementing the project is directly tied to various

local governments working together as a region, not as separate silos. Admittedly, a recent push to unify city and county government failed in a referendum, but the bigger picture suggests a region committed to cooperation and efficiency.

Indiana cannot excel on the success of Indianapolis alone. As younger generations flock to urban centers for jobs and cultural amenities, we need areas like Fort Wayne, South Bend and Evansville to flourish as hubs of growth.

Evansville has started down a viable path to progress. This year's GOP convention provides a prime opportunity for state leaders to see its progress thus far, but also glimpse the additional steps needed to empower our state's regional urban hubs for sustained growth. ❖

Claybourn is a Republican attorney from Evansville.

Rep. Brooks, from page 1

claimed the lives of 10 Texans. In the wake of that, Brooks tweeted, "The horrific loss of 9 students & 1 teacher today in Texas is heartbreaking. I am working w/my colleagues in Congress to do more, b/c more must be done to prevent the loss of innocent lives."

HPI reached out to Brooks because the West shooting occurred in her 5th CD. She describes at length the many steps she had taken in the district to head off such an incident. She describes Noblesville schools and the community as one which had put an array of protocols in place to prevent a massacre. They seemed to work since only two were injured, compared to 17 deaths at Parkland and 10 in the Houston suburb.

Brooks echoed comments from Gov. Eric Holcomb and Indiana State Police Supt. Doug Carter that the protocols in Noblesville, part of a long-time, state school-safety strategy in place at the Indiana Department of Education, kept the injuries to student Ella Whistler (facing a lengthy and arduous recovery after suffering seven gunshot wounds to the face, chest and hand) and teacher Jason Seaman.

"Jason Seaman threw a basketball at the young man, which is what the protocol says," Brooks explained. "Throw something at a shooter. Kids are actually trained to pick up something to throw at a shooter so someone can try to tackle them. That's what the teacher did; they trained with that."

She acknowledges something HPI has written, that

the Noblesville shooter chose a classroom with a 6-foot-6 former Southern Illinois University defense lineman. Had it been in a classroom with a petite 5-foot-2 literature teacher, the outcome could have been far more cataclysmic.

Despite a number of conferences she had convened prior to Parkland and West Middle School, talking with Brooks finds a public servant with a heavy heart, in which the near tragedy in her district has taken a

toll. Brooks is very deliberate in walking through what had happened in Noblesville prior to the shooting, and the response of terrified students and parents who are now demanding "hardened" schools.

The proposed national version of the Jake Laird Act is what Brooks talks about most. It enables local law enforcement, with probable cause, to seize and retain firearms from individuals who are determined to be an imminent danger to themselves or others. It has been used in Indianapolis more than 700 times since 2005. At least one study shows that it has reduced the number of suicides in Indiana. No one knows if it headed off what the New York Times describes as the "allure" of the Columbine Syndrome,

the American version of the Islamic suicide bomber. A cult of martyrdom has built up around Columbine killers Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, who murdered 13 classmates and teachers while wounding 24.

She has only 13 co-sponsors, but has talked to West and Parkland students and parents, urging them to take an activist role. That's a fascinating development in deep red Hamilton County, one of the most Republican in





U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks meets with Noblesville students and parents to discuss school safety issues.

the nation.

In a May 9 letter, 24 Parkland parents wrote, “We are the families of the victims killed in the tragedy in Parkland on February 14, 2018. We write to show our support for the Jake Laird Act of 2018 and we strongly urge your colleagues in the United States of America House of Representatives to join with you to quickly pass this legislation. We request an expeditious hearing by the House Judiciary Committee, approval by the Committee and then passage of this bill by the entire House of Representatives. Frankly, we know much more needs to be done to prevent mass murder from ever again occurring in our schools. The safety of students, teachers and staff in our schools cannot wait.”

Here is our HPI Interview with Rep. Brooks:

HPI: After we watched 30 Hoosiers arrested for making school threats in the weeks following the Parkland, Fla., massacre, and then the West Middle School shooting occurs in your district, what are your thoughts about these developments?

Brooks: Obviously, it was horrifying that it would happen in any school district, anywhere in the state, but I have been talking with students and faculty and administrators since the incident and will continue to do so. Listening not only to what they went through, how they felt about it, but also what they want to see changed. What’s sad for me is it’s an issue I’ve been focused on for a very long time. I co-founded a school safety caucus in Washington with Congressman Rick Larsen a couple of years ago. I introduced the Jake Laird Act with one of my very good friends, Ted Deutch, who represents Parkland. I introduced that on May 9 before this happened. Quite frankly, it got little to no attention at home. I was disappointed by that.

HPI: What does the Jake Laird Act do?

Brooks: It incentivizes states through a grant program to adopt a Jake Laird Law or their version. Florida adopted a version of the Jake Laird Law after Parkland and I believe it

is one more tool to give law enforcement to remove guns from the hands of someone who would be a danger to self or others. It’s been very successful in Indiana. That was done before the incident in Noblesville. What is so frightening to parents and teachers is the fact that these are very difficult incidents. That’s what concerns so many people right now.

HPI: Gov. Holcomb flagged for me that New York Times story on the allure of the Columbine Syndrome, that there’s now a cult celebrating the two Colorado shooters and inducing American kids into a martyrdom. I saw it as a breakthrough that might allow schools to gauge the tiny percentage of students who might fit that profile.

Brooks: I do welcome the need to study the school shooters. We need to go more in depth to that. Social media didn’t even exist when Columbine occurred. Now the reliance particularly by young people as a main mode of communication and where they get their information – and the fact that young people still follow the Columbine shooters – is something we really do need to study. I had no information that indicates the young shooter in Noblesville to know that was the situation. It’s too early to know that. Law enforcement hasn’t shared that

yet. When I was deputy mayor in the 1990s, we focused on homicides in Indianapolis. We did study it. When you study when the homicides are occurring and where they are occurring, what are the patterns, that could help school authorities and administrators to better understand what are the signs to look for. Just like gun crimes when it comes to homicides, it’s not just law enforcement’s responsibility, it’s everyone’s responsibility to understand what shooter motives are and what is causing it. We’re going to have to have a better understanding not just among school administrators and teachers, but parents and everyone of what might be motivating someone to want to inflict this kind of harm with the desire to shoot and kill people.

HPI: And there’s the mental health com-



The late IMPD officer Jake Laird.

ponent to all of this.

Brooks: We have not focused enough on the mental health challenges of our young people. I've tried to elevate the administration at Hamilton Southeastern has placed on mental health challenges. Assistant Supt. (Michael) Beresford just got hired by Carmel and the factors were No. 1, he's a trained school-safety specialist. We have safety specialists in all of our public school districts in the state. It's a requirement. No. 2, he's overseen the mental health partnership with Community (Hospital) North, from funding of the Lilly Endowment to the focus on mental health in school counseling. The kids started a "Stigma Free Club" with about 100 members that are trained to hear, mentor with mental health concerns of students. People can identify them. They were not aware of the Stigma Free Club over at HSE. I connected them with that club. We've got to do a lot more. The young people of Noblesville brought it up yesterday. They know this is not only an issue of mental health, it's an issue of young people's access to weapons. How did this young man get his hands on these handguns? They are very interested in elevating the importance of a lot more security when it comes to young people's access to guns. Young people cannot go in to register and buy handguns. I do think we need to focus on how young people get access to guns, as well as why are so many of these shooters deciding to shoot people in the first place.

HPI: Parents are now calling for the "hardening" of schools.

Brooks: It was very interesting to me that young people don't want their schools to be fortresses. The young people I was with yesterday didn't want metal detectors. This is a complex problem.

HPI: Indiana Supt. Jennifer McCormick described schools as "dangerous places to be" last week. It was a jaw-dropping statement. We have a lot of parents calling for hardened schools. President Trump wants to arm teachers. Is that a good idea?

Brooks: Most of the teachers and administrators I've talked to in the 5th District are not in favor of that. The districts I represent are very, very different, but almost everybody wants school resources officers in their schools, yet many communities cannot afford to hire more officers. That is a big discussion we need to have at the state legislature. We just passed in this latest omnibus (with) over \$2 billion for school security measures. Part of what I'm trying to do is get those funds pushed to the state as fast as possible. They're coming through the Justice Department and the Department of Education. They are coming through Health and Human Services. We have to make sure our state goes after those funds. It will be competitive. There are some rural schools where they might say, "We won't be able to have a school resource

officer," but maybe the principal will be armed or someone will have a weapon. I think those come down more to individual school districts. Those districts can be very, very different. That comes down to a more local decision.

HPI: We had a school referendum that passed in Brown County and as a result, my mortgage went up \$70 a month due to the tax escrow portion. That's a big hike. Hardening schools and hiring more resource officers is going to really cost taxpayers and property owners. The state came up with \$5 million and that's just a drop in the bucket. So "who pays?" is going to be a big and potentially volatile issue across the state.

Brooks: That's the exact type of debate communities are going to have to have. Are people willing to pay to harden their schools? I do think more needs to be done.



U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks introduces the national Jake Laird Act as Rep. Ted Deutch (far left) looks on.

Most newer schools are being designed to ensure better blocking mechanisms, fewer entry points, even classrooms have the ability to be locked. Not all schools have those capabilities. What are the security devices we give to teachers in classrooms to create emergency alert systems? There are technological solutions and that's part of what the Security Caucus has been focused on, short of having a lot of police officers in schools. But it will cost schools. I'm also interested in having more school resource officers.

HPI: What else is the House School Security Conference weighing?

Brooks: We're actually having another meeting at the end of the month where we're going to be doing the briefing to compare state security guidelines across the country and what kind of standards have been put in place. The Police Foundation is giving the presentation. I do think we need to do a better job of sharing best practices. I will tell you that Indiana is one of the few that has the School Safety Academy. Do you know much about that Academy?

HPI: No. Tell us more.

Brooks: It's been in place for more than a decade and Dave Woodward runs it out of the Indiana Department of Education. More than 2,000 educators have been certi-

fied. They have gone through specialized training. I would encourage you to reach out to Dr. McCormick and Dave Woodward to learn about our School Safety Academy. Every school district is required to have a trained school safety specialist and I would say that most of our public schools have someone within the school, not only just one in the district. These schools implement protocols and drills. They receive regular newsletters. When Noblesville happened, because of the concerns of copycats, which does happen, an email went to all school safety specialists around the state telling them that it happened and a reminder of the protocols. I think that's a terrific model. Most parents don't know it exists. When they know about it, they are hugely relieved to know our state has been doing this for some time. Noblesville has a strong school safety specialist. I actually convened a meeting in late April that Noblesville hosted. It's another reason this is breaking my heart. Noblesville has been very focused on this issue. They have parents focused on it, their school board has been focused on it and they hosted a meeting for 5th District school boards and their school safety specialists and their superintendents attended the meeting. They shared their concerns and talked about what was needed. I had similar meetings with law enforcement. I met with the Noblesville parents group about three weeks before this happened. That's what is really very tough for me to know that so many people in Noblesville have been very focused on trying to find ways to make their schools safer, yet it happened. That's what makes it sad, horrible. We all just have to go back to the drawing board to find ways to prevent it and make sure the protocols are in place.

HPI: Gov. Holcomb and Supt. Doug Carter cited those protocols that limited the carnage to the student and teacher.

Brooks: Jason Seaman threw a basketball at the young man, which is what the protocol says. Throw something at a shooter. Kids are actually trained to pick up something to throw at a shooter, so someone can try to tackle them. That's what the teacher did; they trained with that. Those are good things. These Noblesville High School students told me they know the protocol. They were doing it. It doesn't make it any less terrifying when they have to execute it. Let's not diminish how terrified these students are. We all have to know that. They knew what to do, and I don't think schools across the country know that.

HPI: Talk about the Jake Laird Act and the impact it has had in Indiana. If that gets implemented nationally, will it save lives or prevent shootings in the first place?

Brooks: In Indianapolis alone – and here is one of the strengths of the Jake Laird Law, it has been studied by a couple of groups. There has actually been an impact on suicides. Another study done in Indianapolis alone

has been used more than 720 times since 2005. That's a lot of times for one city to use it. I've talked to Supt. Doug Carter about this, but the state has not collected stats as to how it's been used around the state. I know it's been used in Boone County, in Hamilton County and extensively in Marion County. It's been used because law enforcement has been trained on it. It gives them another tool to remove weapons from the hands, through probable cause, of someone who is a danger to themselves or others, whether it's domestic violence or a neighborhood feud, whether it is someone concerned that a young person might commit a shooting someplace. It has been used effectively. There is due process. If there's not time to get a warrant, it removes the weapon(s) and it goes to court within 14 days. The state has the burden of proof. That's why it's been very effective. It had not been challenged by gun rights advocates. Unfortunately the NRA, which was neutral initially, opposed my bill. I have work to do. I've got only 13 people to sign on to it. I've spoken to my Republican conference three days before the Noblesville shooting, because Santa Fe had happened, and I said to my colleagues, "We have got to do something. We



have got to ask more questions about it."

HPI: How did your conference colleagues respond?

Brooks: Keep in mind when we introduce a bill, we blast out of a lot of information to our colleagues. I've got to do more education. I asked the Noblesville young people to help me. Help get young people across the country to help educate. Help me get more people to sign on to this bill. I have talked to the chair of the Judiciary Committee, Bob Goodlatte, who is actually very interested in the bill. We've talked to his committee staff because I'd love to get a hearing on the bill. It's going to take more work to get it passed this year.

HPI: Since February, we've seen the Parkland students get very active on policy and politics.

Brooks: I've met with the Parkland students.

HPI: They really had an impact in Florida with Gov. Rick Scott, who I believe had an A rating from the NRA, and the conservative and Republican Florida legislature. Is that a model Republicans in Congress or even the Indiana General Assembly ought to be looking at?

Brooks: I believe so. I encourage these young people to be advocates. I do believe law enforcement found it to be a very good tool in Indiana and I do believe young people all across the country could influence their members in Congress, Republicans and Democrats. I encouraged the Noblesville young people to help with that. I know the Parkland students have reached out to them. Parkland parents have reached out. The member I've dropped the bill with is Ted Deutch. He represents Parkland. I chair the House Ethics Committee and he's the ranking Democrat. We've worked together for six years. So, I kind of went through Parkland with him. We were scheduled to have a meeting that week and so I have talked with him extensively since Parkland. He's my colleague on that bill. He connected me with the Parkland parents before we dropped that bill and the Parkland parents wrote a letter with a number of them signing the bill. But I've had to educate Hoosier parents and work with people here that we have dropped this bill. It's one important step forward. It's just one, but it's an important step forward.

HPI: In meeting with West Middle School students, teachers, parents, have any had any profound advice or observations?

Brooks: Everyone I've talked to is extremely concerned about how a seventh grader got access to the weapon and what do we do to have more of an educa-

tional effort with adults as to how to secure their weapons. I have not had a huge outcry of removing all weapons. It's been a very balanced, good discussion about protection of 2nd Amendment rights while making sure that guns don't get in the wrong hands.

HPI: When I met with kids from Fort Wayne, Carroll, Leo and Huntington last month, one of the consensus points was if a kid gets a gun from home and takes it to school and shoots the place up, the parents or guardians should bear some of the legal consequences.

Brooks: I suppose it is something we should be looking at, but I also know – and I shared this with the kids from Noblesville – if someone really wants to get a gun, they can get it illegally. They don't just get it from a parent. But, I do believe parents have a responsibility to secure the weapons at home. They absolutely do. Everybody agrees with that. The question does become, though, if you end up charging a parent when a child is a shooter ... what if that parent had done all the right things and somehow you have a person who is so focused on getting to a weapon, they are going to find a weapon, whether it's at grandma and grandpa's house, or at another relative, or illegally? So, then I move into my prosecutor mode. They would have to demonstrate and prove that parent should be held liable. It's tough, but it's an important discussion.



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Gov. Holcomb says 'big, diverse' GOP can handle marriage plank

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – Even though same-sex marriage is legal in Indiana and the United States, Indiana Republicans are about to wade into the divisive issue at their convention in Evansville this weekend, potentially exposing fissures between Gov. Eric Holcomb and social conservatives.



But in a statement to HPI on Wednesday, Holcomb said, "The Indiana Republican Party is big and diverse, with many different perspectives on issues we all care about. The debate over

the past week regarding this year's party platform only reinforces that fact. Ultimately, though, the process of adopting a platform will end the way it always ends, with the delegates who attend and participate making the final decision."

Holcomb allies such as Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer and key adviser Mike O'Brien are pushing for an end to the 2014 platform plank that calls for marriage to be between one man and one woman. The proposed plank reads: "We believe in strong families. We believe that strong families are the foundation of society and that such families bring forth citizens capable of self-government, as well as properly motivated public servants so essential for a successful republic. We support traditional families with a mother and father, blended families, grandparents, guardians, single parents and all loving adults who successfully raise and nurture children to reach their full potential every day."

"I do think it reflects a view we should be supportive of," Hupfer said, calling the proposed plank "inclusive." O'Brien tweeted of GOP social conservatives, "They lived through grabbing women and Stormy Daniels but supporting blended families and single parents is too much, huh?"

But Attorney General Curtis Hill, Speaker Brian Bosma and incoming Senate Majority Leader Mark Messmer are joining Right to Life attorney Jim Bopp Jr., former state chairman Jeff Cardwell and about 18 county Republican chairs in opposition to the new, inclusive language. In

a video statement, Hill said the decision to delete a clear commitment to opposite-sex marriage "conflicts with the beliefs of a broad majority of Hoosiers."

O'Brien downplayed the controversy. "I don't think it's pitting the governor against anybody," O'Brien told HPI on Wednesday. "People in the party and delegates have gone back 10 or 15 years on this question. We've sought to expand the strong families in that direction. I think the platform is going to be expanded to single parents. I think we're making progress. That's a tough room to go have a fight about gay marriage even though it's legal in Indiana. I'm excited the platform is being expanded."

Hupfer sent a letter to the 1,494 delegates Tuesday evening, saying, "Since the release of the draft 2018 Indiana Republican Party Platform, we have received hundreds of emails and calls from every side regarding the strong families section. From the beginning of this months-long process, we have tried to be very clear that delegates are the ultimate and final decision-makers on the language in the platform. However, over the past couple of days, we have heard some concerns that delegates will not have the opportunity to vote to determine how the strong families section reads in the final platform. Let me assure



Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer calls the proposed strong families plank "inclusive" while Gov. Eric Holcomb says the GOP is "big and diverse" and can handle the decision. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

you: That's not how the process should be conducted, nor is that how it will be conducted. There will be a vote by delegates on this issue."

Hupfer said that delegates will have a choice. "After consultation with leaders on all sides of this issue ... I am recommending to the Rules Committee, the Resolutions Committee, and Permanent Chairman Ed Simcox that delegates be given a choice between a platform that includes the 2016 language on strong families, and a document that includes the drafted 2018 language."

The 2016 language reads: "We believe in strong

families. We believe that strong families, based on marriage between a man and a woman, are the foundation of society. We also recognize that some families are much more diverse and we support the blended families, grandparents, guardians, single parents and loving adults who successfully raise and nurture children to reach their full potential every day."

There were rumors that Hill was not invited to the convention. GOP spokesman Seat told HPI, "All the statewides were invited to attend." He said he expects Supt. Jennifer McCormick to be at the convention on Saturday.

The "About Us" website of the Republic Victory Committee includes a list of Republicans backing the 2016 language. It includes Bopp, Cardwell, Hill, Bosma, Messmer, former chairman Rex Early, former national committeewoman Marsha Coats, and U.S. Reps. Jim Banks and Todd Rokita. Also on the list are CD chairs Judy Buck, Don Hayes and Misty Hollis. Legislators supporting the 2016 language include Sens. Eric Koch, Erin Houchin, Dennis Kruse, Jim Buck, Greg Walker, John Crane, Jim Tomes, and Mike Delph, along with Reps. Peggy Mayfield, Jeff Thompson, Don Lehe, Woody Burton, Tim Wesco, Jeff Ellington, Martin Carbaugh, Dave Wolkins, Bruce Borders, Bill Friend, Dale DeVon, Doug Gutwein, Curt Nisly, Heath VanNatter, Bob Morris, Ben Smaltz, Milo Smith, Denny Zent, and Chris Judy.

So, that list includes eight of 41 Republican state senators and 19 of the 70 Republican representatives.

Statewides

Democratic ticket emerges

Indiana Democrats prepared for their June 16 state convention this past week with their proposed statewide ticket. Joining secretary of state candidate Jim Harper will be former Marion Common Council President Joselyn Whitticker for auditor and former state legislator John Aguilera for treasurer. Harper is a Valparaiso attorney, while Whitticker is a former teacher and school administrator. Aguilera represented East Chicago for eight years in the Indiana House and served two terms on the Lake County Council.

Whitticker launched her candidacy by saying, "Hoosier taxpayers deserve a real watchdog. Hoosiers have lost faith that their government represents their best

interests. I'm running because I believe we can restore that trust through accountability and transparency." Whitticker cited the potential conflicts one-party control of state government, including the auditor's office, could create for taxpayers as a reason for running and noted her intention to run an inclusive campaign. "Every Hoosier deserves a seat at the table," said Whitticker. "Some communities are feeling invisible and taken for granted. I intend to make this campaign about empowering them by engaging Hoosiers across the state on the issues." Indiana Democratic Party Chairman John Zody believes Whitticker's experience in local government, as a small business owner and as a career educator lends her a unique and much-needed perspective. "When Republicans are in complete control of state government, as they are now, they put political considerations before taxpayers," said Zody. "As we move toward state convention, I look forward to our delegates hearing from Joselyn as she ramps up her campaign."

U.S. Senate

Dems push Braun on same-sex marriage

The GOP marriage platform controversy has Indiana Democrats pressing Republican Senate nominee Mike Braun on where he stands on the issue. "Does Rep. Braun support GOP hardliners' push to keep discriminatory language in the Indiana Republican platform?" reads the headline on commentary posted to the Indiana Democratic Party's website. "Does Rep. Braun support the new language, or does he side with the hardline conservatives hellbent on keeping discriminatory Pence-era language locked into the GOP platform?" said Michael Feldman, spokesman for the Indiana Democratic Party. "Rep. Braun's silence over the fight threatening to rip apart his new party speaks almost as loudly as his history of supporting harmful policies like RFRA and marriage discrimination." Braun told HPI on Wednesday, "I believe in traditional marriage, between a man and a woman. I support the efforts of grassroots leaders to have their views represented in the party platform. I am happy our party allows for open and vigorous debates to reach consensus."

Donnelly seeks Braun tariff position

Donnelly's campaign says that Republican Senate nominee Mike Braun "continues to remain silent on what he thinks the impact of President Trump's escalating tariffs will be on either his own business or the Hoosiers he hopes to represent even as other Indiana political leaders continue to react." Last week, President Trump announced that his administration would be imposing steel and aluminum tariffs on key U.S. trading partners, including Canada, Mexico and the EU. The decision followed the White House's announcement last Tuesday to impose a 25% tariff on \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods. "While Hoosiers are making their voices heard on the president's tariffs, Rep. Braun's silence continues to display his utter lack of leadership on such an important issue and what it



John Aguilera and Joselyn Whitticker will join Jim Harper on the Democratic ticket on June 16.

Joining secretary of state candidate Jim Harper will be former Marion Common Council President Joselyn Whitticker for auditor and former state legislator John Aguilera for

means for Hoosiers," said Michael Feldman, spokesman for the Indiana Democratic Party. "Is Rep. Braun concerned at all about the tariffs' impact on Hoosiers, or even their impact on his business's Chinese imports? Rep. Braun wants to lead Hoosiers, but he can't even be found to take a position on how these tariffs will affect them."

Dwindling labor rallies for Donnelly

According to the Donnelly campaign, Sen. Donnelly and Hoosier labor leaders launched "Labor for Joe" at IBEW 481 in Indianapolis to celebrate Donnelly's work fighting for the rights of Hoosier workers in the Senate and discuss how he'll continue that effort after November. But the Washington Examiner reports that Indiana had 266,000 dues-paying union members in 2017, a sudden 12.5% plunge from the 304,000 union members the state had in 2016. Supporters of Indiana workers helped launch "Labor for Joe," a constituency group that will help inform, persuade and mobilize Hoosiers throughout the election. Joe and his campaign will work with the founding members of "Labor for Joe" and those who join in the coming months to focus on issues that matter around the state through direct voter contact, media opportunities and in-person events. Whether it's his decision to speak out in support of renegotiating NAFTA, or his End Outsourcing Act that encourages companies with government contracts to keep jobs in the U.S., Joe will continue to make sure hard-working Hoosiers come first in the Senate. AFL-CIO President Brett Voorhies wrote, "Donnelly works for Hoosiers. More than 2,200 Hoosier jobs have been or will be outsourced to other countries at nine different companies across Indiana. Some of them made national headlines, like the more than 600 workers at Carrier in Indianapolis who were laid off, many of them leaving work for the final time just days before Christmas. Or the 700 workers laid off at Rexnord's Indianapolis facility."

Biden endorses Donnelly

In an email to supporters, the Donnelly campaign announced former Vice President Joe Biden has endorsed the Indiana Democrat. "Joe Donnelly has been a champion for Indiana's working families in the Senate," Biden is quoted as saying. "Indiana needs a fighter like Joe to advocate for the middle class, protect Social Security and Medicare, and make sure everyone gets a shot at the American Dream." **Horse Race Status:** Leans Donnelly.

Congress

2nd CD: Walorski blasts Trump tariffs

U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski, facing a potentially tough fall reelection battle against Democrat Mel Hall, bluntly criticized the Trump administration over tariffs that are poised to hammer 2nd CD farmers and manufacturers. And the Wall Street Journal reported that Mexico is taking aim at Indiana, home to Vice President Mike Pence.

A week ago, the Trump administration announced it would impose tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Canada, Mexico and the European Union. "Steel and aluminum tariffs are already doing serious harm to American businesses and workers, and this decision will only make matters worse," Walorski said. "Imposing tariffs on our allies will do nothing to solve the problem of China's unfair trade practices, but it will further raise costs for American manufacturers, hurt their global competitiveness, expose farmers to damaging retaliatory tariffs, and put American jobs at risk. The administration needs to work with Congress to fix the product exclusion process and find a more targeted, balanced solution that does not threaten to undo the economic momentum driven by tax cuts." In the hours after the announcement, Mexico said it would retaliate on U.S. pork and steel products. Walorski crafted a bipartisan letter with 38 of her colleagues asking Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross to implement changes to streamline the process and provide certainty and relief to small businesses impacted by the tariffs. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Walorski.

3rd CD: Internal poll has Banks with lead

A WPAI poll by Chris Wilson shows U.S. Rep. Jim Banks with a 55-34% lead over Democrat Courtney Tritch with 10% undecided. The poll included 401 live phone interviews and was conducted May 29-31 with a +/- 4.9% error margin. Banks' favorable/unfavorable stood at 52/26% and 92% name ID while Tritch stood at 20/6% with 42% name ID. In the 3rd CD, Republican Mike Braun had a 50-42% lead over Sen. Joe Donnelly with 8% undecided.

The real eye-opening stats from the poll were that President Trump's favorable/unfavorables stood at 58/40% in the deeply Republican 3rd CD while Vice President Mike Pence stood at 61/36%. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Banks.

6th CD: Pence announces campaign hires

The Greg Pence for Congress campaign announced in an email that two new hires have joined the organization. Molly Gillaspie joins the campaign as communications director. Gillaspie previously served as communications director for Congressman Luke Messer and as press secretary for Messer's U.S. Senate campaign. Jamie Weber joins Greg Pence for Congress as Indiana finance director. Weber previously served as the finance director for Congressman Todd Rokita's congressional and U.S. Senate campaigns. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Pence.

General Assembly

In last week's HPI, we omitted the open HD23 from our initial Indiana House forecast.

HD23: Open (Rep. Bill Friend (R) is retiring).

Republican: Miami County Councilman Ethan Manning.

Democrat: Terry Doran. **2016 Results:** Friend 15829,

Rose (D) 6,642. **Analysis:** Manning of Peru is president of



the county council, and is a farmer and small businessman. He faces Doran, Logansport, a Chrysler employee in Kokomo. He was president of the Logansport Parks Foundation. Manning should hold this seat in the GOP column. **Horse Race Statis:** Safe Manning.

HD90: Jeffers critical of Speedy

HD90 Democrat nominee Tim Jeffers leveled criticism at State Rep. Mike Speedy for missing a vote on school board authority (Howey Politics Indiana). "The most important and far-reaching bill, in my judgment, was HEA 1335 which was proposed in response to ongoing financial challenges within several school corporations here in Indiana," Jeffers said. The bill removed the authority of the local school board and transferred it to another public entity which will now appoint the school board members instead of having them duly elected by citizens in the district. "This action is an outrageous and troubling precedent set by this General Assembly," Jeffers said. "Our current representative, Mike Speedy, did not vote to protect the authority of local school boards. Instead, he was excused. It strikes me that a bill of such consequence deserves a yes or no vote. In the future, if the Perry Township, Beech Grove or Franklin Township school corporations get into financial trouble, a precedent now exists which would allow for any school board to be stripped of its power and authority." **Horse Race Status:** Likely Speedy.

National

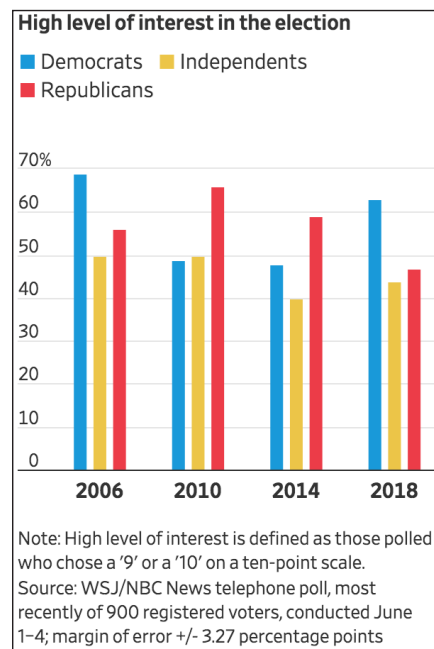
Trump at 44% in NBC/WSJ Poll; Dem interest high

Democrats are showing considerably more interest in the fall elections than are Republicans, and voters overall are signaling they would like control of Congress to flip to the Democrats, a new Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll finds.

The Democratic advantages come at the same time President Donald Trump's approval rating has improved to 44%, one of its highest marks since he took office. Nearly two-thirds of voters are satisfied with the economy, one of the strongest showings since 2001. Some 53% of voters disapprove of Mr. Trump's job performance, however. His approval rating is similar to that of Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Ronald Reagan at this point in their tenure, ahead of substantial losses

in House races during their first midterm elections. The survey of 900 registered voters "points to a repudiation of Donald Trump, to the benefit of Democrats," said Fred Yang, a Democratic pollster who conducted the survey with Republican Bill McInturff. President Trump's approval rating has improved, but more voters prefer Democratstaking control of Congress from Republicans. For his part, Mr. McInturff said that poll numbers have been "bouncing around" in recent months, making it difficult to know with certainty where voters "are going to land."

The poll, conducted June 1-4, offered some encouraging news for Mr. Trump and Republicans who believe the party should be rewarded for the strong economy. Nearly three-quarters of voters said the economy had improved under Mr. Trump, and 44% said the president deserved credit for it—up six points from a year ago. Mr. Trump also remains a popular figure within his party. His job approval among Republicans stands at 84%, about as high as at any point in his tenure. Still, 50% of voters said they wanted to see Democrats control Congress, compared with 40% who preferred the GOP. ❖



Photography With Punch
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Reforms reduced convention nominees

By **TREVOR FOUGHTY**

INDIANAPOLIS – When the Indiana Republican and Democratic parties meet this weekend and next, respectively, for biennial state conventions, the main attraction of each will be the selection of candidates for secretary of state, state auditor and state treasurer. Then again, these may only be main attractions in the nominal sense as both parties have unopposed slates and will likely endorse their top-of-the-ticket standard bears by acclamation.



But whether we're talking about the mid-term year conventions that select the three constitutional offices, or the gubernatorial year conventions that select the statutory offices of attorney general and superintendent of public instruction (the latter will happen only once more before being removed from the ballot), uncontested races have become more or

less the norm. Exhibit A: I suspect that most readers didn't realize I omitted the lieutenant governor as a convention-selected candidate, because in practice it has become merely the ratified choice of the primary election-selected gubernatorial candidate (and no longer occupies its own ballot spot in November, to boot).

Of course, it's no secret that modern convention politics lack the drama of a bygone era. In order to generate more enthusiasm around the events, Indiana Democrats now market their conventions as "Big Dem Weekends" and have moved their annual fundraising dinner to the first night to attract donors and others who might not otherwise serve as delegates. Meanwhile, Republicans now hold their mid-term conventions outside of Indianapolis to create more of a destination getaway feel around them, and to give regional delegations reason to become fully invested in the festivities.

But while we might never again see the high stakes drama of, say, an Edgar Whitcomb-Otis Bowen convention floor battle for governor like we had in 1968, spirited contests do emerge (ask our last two attorneys general or our current treasurer). Even then, however, the expectation of modern convention delegates is that the selection process will be over quickly, which is why punditry (and even strategy) around contested elections revolves around who can keep which delegates from heading home early.

So, while modern conventions lack the intensity of their historical counterparts, perhaps the greater difference is the sheer number of responsibilities granted to convention delegates. Regardless of the year, modern

state conventions will adopt a party platform and select exactly three candidates. In gubernatorial years, they also elect national convention delegates and presidential electors.

Contrast this with the reality of 100 years ago. At the 1918 Indiana Republican Party convention, delegates selected candidates for secretary of state, auditor and treasurer, just as they will do this year. But they also selected candidates for attorney general and superintendent of public instruction, offices which came with two-year terms at the time.

Perhaps a bit ironically, all five offices that year were unopposed contests on the GOP side, but that didn't mean the convention lacked drama. That's because there were contested races for clerk of the Supreme Court and state geologist, both of which were statewide elected offices at the time. (Two years prior, delegates also had to elect the state statistician and the reporter of the Appellate Court, also offices that are no longer elected.)

The state geologist race had an added layer of drama that year because the Republican Party platform included a new plank calling for removal of the position from the ballot. Indiana University professor Lewis F. Rourke would ultimately win the GOP convention battle, then lose to Democrat incumbent Edward T. Barrett in the fall election. But Rourke got the last laugh: The Republican-controlled legislature followed through on the platform promise the next year, making it an appointed position, with the requirement that the appointee must be a staff or faculty member of Indiana University through what's now known as the Indiana Geological and Water Survey (though it doesn't appear Rourke was ever appointed to the post, IU is still statutorily obligated to carry out the functions of the office on behalf of the state).

In addition to choosing more than twice as many executive branch candidates as today, convention delegates a century ago also chose judicial candidates. In 1918, Republicans nearly had a contest for 1st District of the Supreme Court that was avoided when a rumored second candidate was not nominated. They had only one candidate for the 2nd District of the Appellate Court, but delegates had to select two of three candidates for spots on the 1st District of the Appellate Court.

Over the next 50 years, various reforms would limit the number of candidates selected at conventions. The same 1919 law that removed the state geologist from the ballot also removed the state statistician. Judicial reforms that began in the late 1960's and early 1970's would take judges off the ballot in favor of the current Judicial Nominating Commission (and would eventually remove the reporter and clerk spots from the ballot). Around the same time, Hoosier voters passed constitutional amendments that extended term lengths for the executive offices from two to four years, reducing the number of candidates selected every two years; they required gubernatorial candidates to be nominated in a primary election; and they removed the office of lieutenant governor from its own

ballot slot.

It's easy to claim that conventions have largely become humdrum, stage-managed affairs because a small group of party leaders conspires to control the selection of candidates as much as possible.

But such a claim misses the obvious fact that various governmental reforms, made in the name of democracy, government efficiency or both, have limited the number of offices chosen by the broader electorate and, by extension, convention delegates. A hundred years ago, a dozen or more contests could be sent to the convention floor each year; today, there could never be more than

three. With the horse race intrigue of conventions largely neutered by such reforms, party leaders on both sides probably deserve more credit than derision for creatively trying to make the convention process relevant and appealing to broader audiences. After all, whether there is drama over the next two weekends or not, the selection of candidates and the adoption of party platforms necessarily shapes the future governmental decisions that will impact the lives of all Hoosiers. ❖

Foughty is an Indiana University employee and publishes at www.CapitolandWashington.com.

GOP family plank is an innocuous change

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – Never in the history of Indiana Republican politics has so much been said by so many about so little.

I'm speaking about the proposed changes to the Indiana Republican Party Platform regarding marriage and families that will be voted on by delegates to the Indiana Republican Convention this coming weekend in Evansville.



To hear some vocal critics tell it, you would think that Beelzebub himself drafted the rather innocuous change that drops the Pence era "marriage is between a man and woman" affirmation and replaces it with a sentence that looks amazingly benign.

The proposed new wording states, "We support traditional families with a mother and father, blended families, grandparents, guardians, single parents and all loving adults

who successfully raise and nurture children to reach their full potential every day."

Now I don't know about you but that is a sentence that I could support anywhere, anytime. When it comes to children and all of the problems that we have in our society with drug abuse, gang violence, depression, education and nurturing, who wouldn't be in support of any type of family that provides love and support for our children? Well, I could name names, but they tend to be the usual suspects when it comes to thumping a Bible to suit their purposes.

This may come as a shock, but I have a substantial number of friends who don't think anything like I do when it comes to equal rights for the LGBT community. Some of those friends are just downright hostile if you don't approach LGBT issues with a meat cleaver instead of a paring knife. No gray areas. No shading. No waffling. No hedging. They just want a simple message politicized

in the Republican platform that LGBT people don't matter because ee-i-ee-i-o the Bible tells me so.

One leader from the Immaculate Biblicist Family Organization went as far as to declare that the Indiana GOP eliminated more than half of Indiana households in their platform; the media called it "inclusive."

I don't know what leaked copy of the platform document this guy was reading, but what I read said, "We support traditional families with a mother and father..." That doesn't sound like it tossed out traditional families. It sounded to me like a sentence that embraced all the possible ways that children might be raised in a loving environment. But I guess understatement just won't make people open up their checkbooks and send money to groups that will advocate for discrimination based exclusively on sexual preference.

The whole concept of a political party platform is pretty laughable in and of itself. Very few people work to create it. Very few vote to approve it. Miniscule numbers read it. Fewer still follow it. An awful lot of energy goes into creating a document that goes into the bottom drawer of some party leader's desk immediately after the Republican State Convention.

The most significant message that can be delivered by the platform requires understanding how the whole platform process works.

The platform committee is assembled by the Indiana Republican Party chairman. The Indiana Republican Party Chairman is Kyle Hupfer. He serves at the pleasure of our Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb. It is safe to say that the platform committee will have a mix of political beliefs represented, but the majority will be in sync with the governor's beliefs. The committee holds a few hearings and then drafts a document that could have been written without all the fuss of holding hearings. The document gets voted on by the platform committee at the state convention and then goes to the assembled delegates for an up or down vote. There are ways to amend the document, but there are plenty of procedural roadblocks to ensure that the platform committee report will be adopted as written.

Gov. Mike Pence stamped his personal beliefs all over the 2016 Indiana Republican platform and it was passed without a considerable number of delegates being

able to do anything about it. Trust me on this one, I was one of the delegates favoring inclusion and we got our hats handed to us by a system that is structured to cater to the governor's wishes.

Therefore, this current proposed Indiana Republican platform language tells us a lot about the man who leads this state, Eric Holcomb. As I have always suspected and respected, Gov. Holcomb has the best interests of all Hoosiers at heart and is moving to bring our state up to contemporary standards when it comes to realizing that we live in a world of immense diversity that must be inclusive in order to achieve important economic and societal goals. You simply have to have all of your horses pulling together if you are going to succeed in the modern world. White, black, brown, gay, straight and religiously diverse horses pulling in the same direction to make a better state for everyone.

Indiana is on the verge of being greatly imperiled by its own success. Our pro-growth environment of lower taxes and less government regulations has created an unparalleled business boom in this state. We will not only need to create our own workforce with critical technological skills, but we will need to attract talent from other locales both domestic and foreign. This will be needed to meet our current growth projections, let alone the massive increased demand that a new Amazon headquarters might present us.

There are those of you sprinkled around the great Hoosier State who like things just as they are. You are perfectly comfortable with living a life devoid of change, devoid of color, devoid of diversity of opinion. The B. I. B. L. E. is your daily roadmap and you will respond in a variety of ways to protect your views and way of life. I respect your views and beliefs. There are just times like these where I can only encourage you to collectively chill out and listen to your hearts and your children.

I have read what many of my Facebook friends have been saying about the Republican Party because of this proposed platform change and it is troubling. Those of you calling for an end to Republican majorities in the legislature fail to understand that your interests will be far better served by the Republican Party than by the Democrat Party. Those loudly promising to support the Libertarian Party just don't understand what the Libertarian Party represents.

Once the Indiana Republican Party Convention in Evansville concludes, the platform will rarely see the light of day and we can all go about our business of making the Republican Party, "the party of ideas" and Indiana, "A State That Works." I commend the leadership of the Indiana Republican Party for making this small, but significant, change to our party platform in the name of inclusiveness. Thank you, Gov. Holcomb for giving this the nudge it needed. ❖

Dunn is the former Howard County and 5th CD Republican chairman.

Sheriff Martinez is inconsistent

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – Newly elected Lake County Sheriff Oscar Martinez doesn't exactly practice what he preaches. For a number of years, Martinez made a name for himself as part of a drug interdiction task force that cruised interstate highways in Lake County, particularly Interstate 65, which was a major route for drug couriers.



Martinez seemingly had an uncanny ability for nabbing those hauling drugs through Lake County. So gifted did Martinez seem, that some came to question his ability to nab drug runners. Many came to believe that Martinez had a connection in Mexico that informed him as to

when drugs would be flowing through the county, making it easier for him to nab couriers. And suddenly, Martinez's party was over.

"I was transferred out of the task force for political reasons..." Martinez said. "I couldn't do something I loved doing and it was done without any regards to the health or safety of the people of Lake County."

Ironically, Martinez was moved out of the interdiction unit by Sheriff John Buncich. Buncich later was indicted and convicted of accepting bribes from towing contractors.

Martinez won a Democratic caucus last fall to fill the remainder of Buncich's term. Last month, Martinez won the Democratic primary and is expected to easily win a four-year term in November.

So, what did Martinez do when he took office following the precinct caucus? He did the very thing he said he despises.

Martinez started moving effective, competent people out of their jobs. Deputy Commander Jamie Harris, who had straightened out the drug task force after being put in charge, was moved to patrol on straight midnights. And Matt Eaton, who was acting chief when Buncich was removed, was put in charge of making sure the department had enough gas, oil and wiper blades to keep the patrol cars equipped.

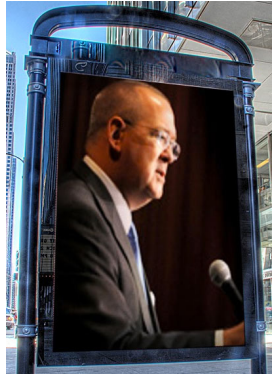
So, Martinez can complain all he wants about being moved out of the interdiction unit, but it rings hollow when he did the very thing he complained that his predecessors did. ❖

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.

On cusp of relearning trade war blunders

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – To be honest, it appalls me how many good meaning people misunderstand international trade. In normal times, it would not matter because the role of peaceful trade has been a largely settled intellectual consensus for close to a century. It is a background issue to most of our lives. Today, the consensus has vanished for all the wrong reasons. It wasn't challenged on facts or theory. It disappeared because so many folks just don't understand the issue and are succumbing to demagogues exploiting that lack of knowledge.



I think a good analogy to this is vaccinations for polio. Within a generation of the last trade war, the polio vaccine radically altered the lives of Americans. Prior to that, young healthy people routinely died of a disease whose appearance led to citywide panics, and the closing of schools, parks and pools. That has not occurred for more than 60 years, so today only parents in their very late 80s or older recall the visceral fear of the disease killing or maiming their children. Today, demagogues spread lies about vaccines to a public rendered susceptible through ignorance. The number of children who avoid vaccines is becoming dangerously high.

As with polio pandemics, the deep damage of the last trade war has passed from common memory. Only a few centenarians will remember it. So, with the distance of time, we are all at risk by not schooling ourselves on the benefits and costs of trade. Now, I don't know how much of the ignorance on trade is willful and how much of it is casual, but I like to assume the best of folks. So, let me explain briefly and plainly what trade is and what it is not.

First, all trade deals exist to reduce the barriers to trade between people and businesses. Countries don't trade. When you hear someone say we are trading with China, that is simply a shorthand expression for households buying and selling to one another. We Americans buy and sell things to the Chinese with minimal government involvement. As consumers we buy based on value, and as producers we sell based on value. Cost is only a part of that value proposition. It is that simple.

Second, no household, city, region or nation runs a balanced trade with other places. The reasons for this are simple. Each of us specializes in some sort of production (e.g. barbering, teaching, doctoring) but do not specialize in consumption of just one good. We'll buy different items from different people who make these items in different regions. It is that simple.

Third, the balance of trade does not affect the level of jobs or production in the United States. The reason for this is that every dollar spent on an imported good must be offset by either an exported good or foreign investment in the United States. So, if we import a trillion dollars of goods each year, the sum of our exports and foreign investment in the US must equal a trillion dollars. It is that simple.

Obviously, these three facts are easily to twist and confuse a public not thinking deeply about the issue. It is easy to talk about 'bad trade deals' as if it was akin to buying a used car. It is easy to sound deeply sophisticated by talking about 'balanced' trade, when no such thing exists anywhere. Or, it is simple to tell folks a half-lie by talking about imports costing jobs. After all, we see factories closing all the time, right? Well, not so much now because we are currently experiencing the longest uninterrupted manufacturing employment growth in history. This is happening at the same time as record trade deficits. You have to lie about facts to convince folks trade is bad.

Now, it is also good to note that trade tends to lower prices and add abundance to our choices. At the same time, it shifts the demand for labor away from certain occupations and into other ones. The occupational shift is from low-productivity jobs to high-productivity jobs. While the lower prices benefit us all, the shift of occupations benefits only some workers and imposes a cost on others. The problem is that we only really see the costs. That makes us susceptible to lies about the overall effect of trade. In the end, the anti-vaccine and the anti-trade crowd represent two sides of the same problem; a raw lack of understanding coupled with a lifetime of distance from the last deep negative consequences.

This brings me to a hopeful point. With the United States careening mindlessly towards a global trade war, we have the chance to re-learn an important lesson. It will be costly, of course, but we are likely to be reminded of the benefits of trade in the same way an outbreak of polio will remind us of the benefits of vaccines. ❖

Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University.

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Trump tweet violates jobs data protocols

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – This weekly column is focused on Indiana’s economy, rarely commenting on national issues. But this time, we must make an exception.



Early morning, Friday, June 1, President Trump tweeted, “Looking forward to seeing the employment numbers at 8:30 this morning.” This most unusual national leader was telling his tweetees that he knew the closely guarded monthly employment data and he liked them.

Presidents do get advance looks at all types of key data. Prior to this, presidents kept their mouths shut about economic data until an hour after the official

release time. It wasn’t just tradition, it was a policy set down for a wide group of government employees by the Office of Management and Budget to avoid insider trading. But now, this president was wiggling his toes in the stock market bathwater. His words were enough of a favorable hint to send ripples of glee through the regular bathers in those waters where the big boys surf and the little guys drown.

If the president was suggesting that the news to be released at 8:30 a.m. would be favorable, then stock prices would rise. They did, as the eager denizens of Wall Street jumped to that conclusion and stock prices bounced up. Following Wall Street tradition, good employment news

was expected to fuel inflation. This shot interest rates up in the belief that the Federal Reserve Board would continue restoring positive real interest rates. Higher interest rates mean U.S. dollars are more attractive compared to other currencies and the value of the dollar rose accordingly.

These effects tended to disappear as the day progressed. But there it was, another sign of the intemperate, adolescent presidency.

How far are we from having a Trumpian command to our statistical agencies to give him “good” numbers and to avoid public release of “fake” data? Distortions of reality are the standard tools of many political leaders. But interference with information about reality is a disservice to mankind.

Most of the data produced by government and private parties are subject to question. There are valid disputes about what should or should not be included in any data series. Should we count RVs, autos, and boats as they leave the factory or as they leave the dealers’ lots? Is a person released from the hospital after just 23 hours to be counted in the daily census? Should attendance at a sporting event include unused season tickets?

However these issues are decided, they do not have the importance of the employment and unemployment data released monthly for the nation, states and counties.

Meddling with these data for political purposes must not happen. Worse still is violating policies established to protect the public from the ego gratification of the unbalanced mind. It reminds us of Jimmy Cagney saying, seconds before immolation in the 1949 movie, *White Heat*, “Made it, Ma! Top of the world!” ❖

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

Dems avoid CD shutout in California

By **KYLE KONDIK**
Sabato’s Crystal Ball

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va.– While final results will not be available for weeks, Democrats appear poised to advance candidates to the general election in all of their targeted races in California. Based on a seat-by-seat analysis of House targets, we have thought the Democrats needed to squeeze an additional five seats or so from California to be on track to win the House. They are still capable, though certainly not guaranteed, of meeting

that lofty goal.

We have no House ratings changes in California to announce from the results we have so far. Again, that’s a victory for Democrats: Had they been shut out in one or more races, some current Toss-ups would have gone to the Safe Republican column.

Perhaps the biggest surprise in California House races came in CA-10, held by Rep. Jeff Denham (R). Denham won close races in 2012 and 2016 and his seat is perpetually swingy.

On one hand, CA-10 turned into a surprising Democratic shutout scare: While Denham has received 37.7% of the vote, unheralded veterinarian

Ted Howze -- the only other Republican on the ballot, and someone who local Democrats thought might be in



the race as potential top-two spoiler -- has 14.4%, just a little less than a point behind the leading Democrat, venture capitalist Josh Harder, who is at 15.7%. One would expect Harder to hold on, particularly because the late votes in California generally skew Democratic (again, votes will not be finalized for many weeks).

On the other hand, another way to look at the results so far in CA-10 and across most of the competitive California landscape is that in nearly all of the seats we currently rate as competitive, the total Democratic vote share in the primary is up from the party's averages from 2012-2016 (the first three cycles where California used the top-two primary).

Table 2 shows the 11 districts we rate as competitive. Nine are held by Republicans, and two are held by Democrats. It compares the average Democratic share of the vote from the June primary those years with the incomplete 2018 results so far (results are as of Wednesday afternoon). As is clear, the Democratic share is higher -- and in most cases, significantly higher -- than the recent average in all but CA-21, where Rep. David Valadao (R) again appears to be in good shape in a heavily Hispanic, low-turnout district that Democratic presidential candidates carry by double digits. But in other districts, the Democratic share is up, and it likely will increase at least slightly in most places as the primary vote is finalized (at least that's what usually happens in California). This table builds off an analysis of recent California House voting trends that we published a few weeks ago.

We will revisit this table when the results become final, but there are some encouraging signs for Democrats. For instance, let's go back to CA-10. The GOP share of the vote (Denham plus Howze) is just 52% right now, down several points from the 2012-2016 average. That might augur well for Harder, assuming he makes the general election. In fact, applying the average Democratic vote share increase from the primary to the general over the past three cycles to the partial 2018 results would suggest Democrats could be in range of netting a half-dozen new seats in California. Now, we are NOT saying that is what will necessarily happen in the fall. But we also couldn't blame Democrats for looking at these numbers with some degree of optimism.

One other important caveat before one just assumes big Democratic gains in California: Many of the districts the Democrats are targeting in California are not ones they have targeted in the past. Orange

Table 2: Comparing California Democratic House two-party primary vote share in 2018 to recent elections

District	Incumbent	Rating	12-14-16 D primary share avg	18 D 2-party share	Growth in D primary share over 12-14-16 avg	12-14-16 D share avg general growth
CA-4	McClintock (R)*	Likely R	36.9%	41.0%	4.1%	1.2%
CA-7	Bera (D)	Likely D	48.5%	53.3%	4.8%	2.6%
CA-10	Denham (R)	Toss-up	41.2%	47.9%	6.7%	5.3%
CA-21	Valadao (R)	Likely R	42.0%	36.1%	-5.9%	0.6%
CA-22	Nunes (R)	Likely R	28.0%	40.9%	12.9%	4.8%
CA-24	Carbajal (D)	Likely D	50.5%	52.6%	2.1%	2.9%
CA-25	Knight (R)*	Toss-up	37.1%	47.2%	10.1%	9.0%
CA-39	Open (Royce, R)	Toss-up	33.4%	45.0%	11.6%	5.5%
CA-45	Walters (R)	Leans R	33.9%	45.5%	11.6%	5.3%
CA-48	Rohrabacher (R)	Toss-up	35.3%	46.5%	11.2%	3.6%
CA-49	Open (Issa, R)	Leans D	39.6%	51.2%	11.6%	4.2%

County districts like CA-39, CA-45, and CA-48 did not seem like Democratic targets in recent years, but Hillary Clinton carried all three, which put them on the board. The very fact that Democrats had competitive candidates and primaries in these districts surely drove extra turnout in these districts, and so one can't confidently say that the Democratic vote share in these districts is guaranteed to grow in the fall by the same level as it

might have in the past. But the Democratic share certainly could grow, which could allow Democrats to flip one or more of these districts. Meanwhile, Democrats already almost won CA-49 in 2016, the open seat that Rep. Darrell Issa (R) is leaving behind, and the fact that Democrats have apparently outvoted Republicans there is another signal justifying our Leans Democratic rating. While the Democratic field is still uncertain, lawyer Mike Levin (D) is leading among the Democrats and could face state Board of Equalization member Diane Harkey (R) in the fall.

The Republicans, meanwhile, are happy that they advanced a nominee, businessman John Cox (R), to the gubernatorial general election, which they hope will help with turnout in the fall. Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) is a huge favorite to be the next governor, though. Republicans also have taken note of a state Senate recall election where a Democratic state senator who provided the key vote for a gas tax increase was handily defeated and will be replaced by a Republican, knocking out a Democratic supermajority in the state Senate. A proposition to repeal a gas tax increase likely will be on the statewide ballot in the fall, and Republicans hope that this too juices their turnout.

So, in other words, nothing is guaranteed for Democrats in their quest to add to their already large 39-14 edge in the Golden State's House delegation. But Democrats have apparently avoided the top-two shutouts that they so feared, and thus they survived what was their most important primary election of the cycle. ❖



CONTENT BY CARTER
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Donald the Dem and Ralph the Repub return

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – For you readers asking when my Donald the Democrat and Ralph the Republican characters will reappear, the answer is: Now.

They meet at their favorite breakfast place almost every weekday morning to sip coffee and argue politics.



Their loud conversations remind some of you of what you hear at your own favorite coffee shops.

Each enjoys irritating the other, all in fun, of course – sort of. Ralph the Republican arrived first. He spoke in a rare sympathetic tone in his greeting as Donald the Democrat arrived.

R: Good morning, Donnie. Sorry that you must be feelin’ blue.

D: Yep, feelin’ it. A blue wave a-comin’ to sweep Republicans out of Congress, Ralphie. Glad you finally recognize it.

R: Not what I mean. I’m talkin’ about you feelin’ blue, like sad. Another poll just found our president still edging up in approval. Not gonna be that big blue wave for Democrats this fall.

D: Stop sayin’ “our president.” He’s yours. Not mine. And Trump’s got a lot of edging up to do to get from worst-ever in those polls.

R: Hey, Donnie, show respect. Trump is your president, too, president of the whole United States of America. I remember how you jumped all over me when I said Obama wasn’t my president. I finally called him “Mr. Temporary President.”

D: Temporary? Well, Ralphie, Obama served two terms. Trump ain’t gonna make it through one.

Just then, Susie, their favorite waitress, came with their usual order of bagels and coffee.

S: Sounds like you guys are already into your Trump impeachment debate.

D: Right, Susie. Did you hear what Rachel Maddow disclosed last night about Trump’s cabinet and family? More waterin’ the swamp. More conflicts of interest. Illegal stuff.

R: Well, Susie. Did you hear what Sean Hannity said last night about that special counsel’s witch hunt? All that collusion stuff is just fake news. Talk about illegal. The FBI planted a spy in the Trump campaign.

S: I don’t listen to those cable news commentators. But if you guys do, why don’t you listen to both sides?

Donald and Ralph both looked confused, startled about such a drastic possibility.

R: Anyway, Donnie, those things you Democrats call scandals don’t shake our base. Look at the polls. Gettin’ better. We know Trump’s workin’ at it. Didn’t you hear those thunderous “Drain the Swamp” chants and cheers for Donald at the Elkhart rally?

D: OK, so you don’t believe Trump’s in the swamp. But how about Stormy Daniels? Proof about payments to a porn star? You don’t believe all the stories about Stormy and those other women?

R: Sure, I believe ‘em. But nobody cares. We knew Donald was a playboy. We weren’t votin’ for a saint. We wanted somebody to shake up Washington. Well, he sure has.

D: You don’t even care if he doesn’t tell the truth?

R: We care that he’s puttin’ a whole bunch of fine conservative judges on the courts. We care that he cut our taxes. We care that he eliminated regulations and scaled back Obamacare to get the economy goin’ good. Do you think Crooked Hillary would have done more?

D: It’s what she wouldn’t have done. She wouldn’t have nominated Neanderthals for the courts, wouldn’t have pushed tax cuts for the rich, wouldn’t have done away with our environmental protections, wouldn’t have sabotaged the Affordable Care Act.

Susie returned with more coffee.

R: Hey, Susie, do you believe that Trump actually talked to Putin, plotted how Russia could swing our election?

S: No.

D: Susie! You sidin’ with Ralphie? You really think there was no collusion? Russians didn’t mess with our election?

S: I never side with either of you in your politics. Not sayin’ there was no collusion. Not sayin’ there was. I’m just sayin’ that if there was, Putin is too smart to talk to Trump about it. ❖

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





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Brian A. Howey, The Atomic!: In my mind I can still hear the guitarist sing, "The Wabash Cannonball," as Robert and Ethel Kennedy looked on. "From the great Atlantic ocean to the wide Pacific shore; She climbs a flowery mountain o'er the hills and by the shore; She's mighty tall and handsome, she's known quite well by all; She's a regular combination on the Wabash Cannonball." RFK came to Peru, Ind., on an old-fashioned whistlestop tour as he campaigned in the 1968 Democratic primary. Peru was a Republican town. I was a young GOP foot soldier of Betty Rendell, handing out fliers for Congressman Richard Roudebush. The '68 primary played out in our home. My father was managing editor of the Peru Daily Tribune and came home one night saying he had spent the day traveling with Sen. Eugene McCarthy, battling Kennedy for the Democratic presidential nomination. When Kennedy came to town on the N&W tracks, a huge crowd turned out. The musician sang. Kennedy spoke for about 10 minutes. And then the train pulled out and there stood Bobby and Ethel Kennedy, waving goodbye as they disappeared down the tracks. It was the most haunting moment of my life. He would be assassinated about six weeks later, shot in L.A. 50 years ago today. I can hear Johnny Cash singin' ... "Here's to daddy Claxton may his name forever stand; And always be remembered in the courts throughout the land; His earthly race is over and the curtains round him fall; We'll carry him home to Dixie on the Wabash Cannonball." ❖



Bob Greene, Wall Street Journal: When Robert F. Kennedy, a day after being shot in a Los Angeles hotel kitchen, died in the early hours of June 6, 1968, his wife, Ethel, was by his side. Most of their 10 children — she was pregnant with an 11th — were back at the family home in McLean, Va., waiting for their parents to return. A woman who lived nearby and who was a friend of the family had come to the house to help watch over them. The children knew their father had been badly wounded, but were hoping against hope that he would somehow recover and come home to them. It was 1:44 a.m. in California when Kennedy was pronounced dead. On the East Coast, it was 4:44 a.m. The children were asleep. Who was going to tell them the worst news they could ever hear? Their mom couldn't do it; this wasn't something to say over a long-distance telephone line. But if they awoke in Virginia and turned on the television set to watch cartoons, they would be greeted instead by coverage of their father's death. To whom do you turn? Who do you ask to take on such a dreadful, heartbreaking duty? Who would have the gentleness and the strength? Ethel Kennedy and Bobby's brother Ted, who was also at the hospital, knew that there was one such person. And so the call from California was made, and John Glenn, in the darkness before a June dawn, steeled himself to look those children in the eye and tell them, one at a time, what had to be told. Which is

what he did. As the children stirred to wakefulness, Glenn sat on the edge of their beds and said there was something he needed to talk with them about. They all knew him. When Glenn, as one of the original Mercury astronauts, was preparing to become the first American to orbit the Earth, he met President John F. Kennedy. After President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, Glenn maintained friendships with the rest of the family. He was in California on the night Robert Kennedy was shot, as were many of the children. In the hours afterward, some of the older ones went to their father's bedside. But Glenn and his wife, Annie, had accompanied the younger children back to Virginia aboard a plane sent by Vice President Hubert Humphrey, so they wouldn't have to wait for word in the Los Angeles hospital. Because of all the well-known public acts of heroism in Glenn's life — his two trips into space, his valor as a Marine combat pilot in two wars, the 12 times that his fighter planes were hit by enemy anti-aircraft fire — what he did that Virginia morning didn't make it into most of his obituaries in 2016. And Glenn himself, not wanting to violate the privacy of those boys and girls, chose not to elaborate on it. In his memoir, all he wrote was: "It was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do." ❖

Terry Curry, NWI Times: The horror of yet another school shooting occurring at our front door was inevitable. Parkland, Florida. Santa Fe, Texas. And now Noblesville, Indiana. No community is immune. The successive deadly mass shootings have again ignited a national conversation about regulation of firearms. Advocates for improved regulation of the sale and possession of firearms have called for a ban on the sale of assault rifles, enhanced background checks, better screening of those with mental illness, and other familiar proposals. We would hope that the public outcry over mass shootings and tragedies in our schools would move Congress to action, but Congress continues to show no appetite for sensible regulation of firearms. On the contrary, pro-gun legislation continues to dominate in the halls of Congress. We should all be outraged by the refusal of Congress to act. While it is disheartening to admit that those of us who witness the horrible consequences of gun violence every single day are unable to overcome the gun lobby stranglehold on Congress, hopelessness and despair are not an acceptable response. On March 24, I attended the March for Our Lives organized in Indianapolis and saw the reaction by students, parents, educators, and even members of my own family when I described these realities of Congress. In the aftermath of Parkland, school children throughout the country have demanded action by Congress and state legislatures. The organization, sincerity and maturity in their actions should inspire us all. We can only hope that members of Congress will be willing now, if ever, to listen to those young people who have lost their friends and classmates to senseless gun violence. ❖

Bosma urges review of criminal code

WASHINGTON – House Speaker Brian Bosma says legislators are taking a close look at the Indiana Criminal Code in the wake of the Noblesville West Middle School shooting suspect not being charged as an adult ([IndyStar](#)). On Tuesday, the Hamilton County prosecutor's office announced that the 13-year-old boy accused of shooting a teacher and classmate on May 25 will be tried as a "delinquent juvenile" because of his age. Prosecutor D. Lee Buckingham said the boy would have faced 11 counts, including two felony charges each of attempted murder, aggravated battery and battery by means of a deadly weapon, if he were an adult. In an email to [IndyStar](#) Wednesday, Bosma said the decision has motivated legislators to review the current procedures. "In light of the Noblesville West Middle School incident and the recent charges brought against the shooter, we are reviewing current state law in regards to juveniles being charged as adults," Bosma said. "Given the heinous acts that led to a teacher and student being seriously harmed, I think it's important for us to take a thoughtful look at our criminal code and whether changes to the law are appropriate."

Ryan backs Gowdy on 'spygate'

WASHINGTON – House Speaker Paul D. Ryan has joined those disputing President Trump's assertion that federal law enforcement planted a spy inside his campaign, telling reporters Wednesday that he has seen "no evidence" to support such claims ([Washington Post](#)). Ryan (R-Wis.) said he thought "Chairman [Trey] Gowdy's initial assessment is accurate." He was referring to last week, when Gowdy (R-S.C.), chairman of the House Oversight Committee, said on Fox News that "the FBI did exactly what my fellow citizens would want them to do" in investigating information alleging certain Trump campaign advisers had suspicious

ties to Russia, "and that it has nothing to do with Donald Trump."

Family of West MS shooter 'in shock'

INDIANAPOLIS — The family of a 13-year-old boy accused of shooting a classmate and a teacher at a suburban Indianapolis middle school said they are "still in shock" from the attack and are thinking of the victims, students, school staff and others shaken by the shooting ([Associated Press](#)). A law firm representing the boy issued their statement after prosecutors said late Tuesday that the suspect would not be tried as an adult in the May 25 shooting. The Associated Press typically does not identify juveniles who are not being charged as adults. In the statement, the family requested privacy, while acknowledging there are many lingering questions about the shooting at Noblesville West Middle School, including where the boy got the handgun used in the attack and a second handgun that was found in his possession. "We understand the public has unanswered questions at this time. We will await the outcome of the investigation and judicial process before speaking publicly about these events," the Eskew Law firm said in the statement.

88 candidates for Muncie School Bd.

MUNCIE – Ball State University provided the names of an unheard-of number of candidates — 88 — for Muncie School Board on Wednesday ([Slabaugh, Muncie Star Press](#)). For context, during the past decade, just 25 candidates have sought election to the Muncie School Board — three in 2014, four in both 2010 and 2012, six in 2016 and eight in 2008. Terry Spradlin, director of the Indiana School Boards Association, called the long list of applicants a demonstration of "a fantastic level of interest in supporting Muncie Community Schools." The

list of candidates includes parents, clergy, attorneys, a former mayor, a bank CEO, the principal of an Indianapolis accelerated school and the current school board president (the mayor has nominated another current school board member).

Ex-Councilman sentenced

MERRILLVILLE – A former Merrillville councilman will serve 15 months in prison for accepting bribes to help a tow operator secure a contract with the town ([Lyons, Post-Tribune](#)). Judge Joseph Van Bokkelen sentenced Tom Goralczyk, 51, of Merrillville, to federal prison, though he rejected a recommendation that the former councilman serve a minimum of nearly four years.

Trump winging it on Kim summit

WASHINGTON — National Security Adviser John Bolton has yet to convene a Cabinet-level meeting to discuss President Donald Trump's upcoming summit with North Korea next week, a striking break from past practice that suggests the Trump White House is largely improvising its approach to the unprecedented nuclear talks. But since Trump agreed on a whim to meet with North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un on March 8, the White House's summit planning has been unstructured, according to a half-dozen administration officials. Trump himself has driven the preparation almost exclusively on his own, consulting little with his national security team outside of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un got "on his hands and knees and begged" for his meeting with President Donald Trump to be rescheduled after Trump canceled it, former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani said Wednesday.

