

## Donnelly, Braun gird for INSen homestetch

Tossup race finds candidates making case in Kokomo

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

KOKOMO – In the span of five days the U.S. Senate campaign came here to the City of Firsts. Republican Mike Braun spoke to business folks at a Rotary Club meeting in a country club. Democrat Sen. Joe Donnelly talked to

a small gathering of auto

workers at a UAW hall on Friday.

These were late summer ramblings in a race that could determine control of the U.S. Senate, with future Supreme Court nominees and President Trump's agenda, or, possibly, the fate of his presidency hanging in the balance.

This race is a tossup in the estimation of Howey



Republican Senate nominee Mike Braun at Delphi Body Works and U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly aboard his campaign RV enroute to Kokomo. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howeyt)



Politics Indiana, Sabato's Crystal Ball, the Cook Political Report and Inside Elections with Nathan Gonzales. It could go either way, with at least \$100 million expected to spill in. Braun expects \$10 million to be spent by his and the Donnelly campaign each, with another \$35 million to

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## Walorski will debate

By **JACK COLWELL**

SOUTH BEND – Readers ask why Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, the Republican incumbent in Indiana's 2nd District, agreed to three televised debates with Democratic challenger Mel Hall. She refused televised debates with the prior two Democratic challengers and won big each time.

So, why change?

No mystery.

When refusing to debate became more damaging politically than any damage likely to occur in debates, Walorski wisely decided to "welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues that matter most to Hoosier families."

She declined televised debate in campaigns against the prior two Democratic nominees,



**"I oppose Attorney General Hill's intervention in the Marion County satellite voting case. I did not ask him to do this. He did not have the professional courtesy to provide me notice. I urge Attorney General Hill to drop this."**

*- Sec. of State Connie Lawson*



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Joe Bock in 2014 and Lynn Coleman in 2016, because their challenges were not serious threats. The candidates were serious, of course, and tried hard. But they lacked the resources and organizations to come close.

**Incumbents** with leads, Democrats as well as Republicans, traditionally are advised by their political consultants to avoid debates that give lesser-known challengers enhanced name recognition and a chance to hammer at some telling issue or silly mistake and perhaps catch up.

Not debating certainly didn't hurt Walorski last time. She won by a landslide, carrying nine of 10 counties in the district and coming very close in traditionally Democratic St. Joseph County. Who cared that she didn't debate? Not many voters, except for those who were not going to vote for her anyway.

This time it's different.

Hall, though still trailing Walorski significantly in funding and still regarded as the underdog, has an organization in place for a first-class challenge. He proved to be an able campaigner and built momentum and name recognition in winning all the counties in the Democratic primary election.

**He began harping** in the primary campaign about Walorski not debating and not holding public meetings, claiming she wasn't in touch with the district. In challenging for three televised debates, Hall said "accountable leadership" calls for giving voters "the chance to hear directly from us." He pointed out that Walorski, back when she was a challenger against then-Rep. Joe Donnelly in 2010, called for "no less than six debates."

Hall urged supporters to publicize his debate challenge on Facebook and Twitter. They did.

Walorski knew if she refused again to debate that Hall would for

the rest of the campaign portray her as afraid and unwilling to let voters see her answering debate questions. And groups seeking to sponsor debates also would be unrelenting in pressure. This time it could hurt. So, Walorski quickly accepted the challenge for three televised debates.

**Where and when** they might be held now is being negotiated. Debate negotiations often are difficult, with disagreements over formats. Who will be on a panel asking questions? Or will there be a panel? Will candidates be able to ask questions of each other? Who will be the moderator? Will there be questions

from the audience? Some debate negotiations even have involved differences over where candidates will stand and where cameras will be located.

Who will win? The reaction probably will be what is found after most political debates. Supporters of Walorski will believe she



won. Supporters of Hall will believe he won. Undecided viewers or ones only leaning one way or the other could be swayed over differences on some issue – the economy, health care, immigration, trade, whether President Trump should be fully supported or restrained.

Democrats who wanted Walorski to debate because of belief that she would self-destruct are likely to be disappointed. She didn't decline to debate before out of fear of blundering to defeat. In her last televised debate, in 2012, in a close race with Brendan Mullen, she had no blunders, maintained her lead and won.

Walorski wasn't ducking debates out of some debilitating fear. She didn't bother with debates because she didn't have to. Until now. ❖

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



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\$40 million and likely more to come from Super PACs and advocacy groups.

"If he can recreate the outsider vs. politician narrative along partisan lines, Braun will be in good shape," wrote Gonzales, a Huntington, Ind., native. "But if it's a personality contest, Donnelly should win reelection."

"I'm going to spend 10 minutes talking about the U.S. Senate and what I'll do when I get there," Braun told about 30 Rotarians. "What I get asked most often is, 'Why are you doing it?' My answer, very simply, is that I was on a school board for 10 years in Jasper. Schools boards are the place where you'll know if you have the temperament to interface with the public."

Hoosier U.S. senators have come from the U.S. House (Dan Coats, Dan Quayle, Todd Young and Donnelly) or were mayors (Richard Lugar and Vance Hartke), the General Assembly (Birch Bayh) or the governor's office (Evan Bayh). If elected, Braun would be the second school board member and second legislator to climb that ladder in the television age of Indiana politics, joining Lugar and the elder Bayh.

Braun's pitch was that he went to the General Assembly and worked on big things as a freshman. "I passed a bill because in my area, we had bad road infrastructure. I had the idea that rather than relying on Indianapolis, we're going to try and initiate our own road funds," Braun said. "I'll never forget Chairman Tim Brown and Chairman Ed Soliday ... told me, 'Mike, this is an ambitious project. You need to do your research and it will take two to three years to get it across the finish line.' One thing you learn as an entrepreneur is you always listen to everyone, take the advice and then run with the best you've got.

"I didn't have the patience to wait two to three years," Braun said. "Don't always ask something to be done for you. Put your own skin in the game, initiate, and control your own destiny as the result of it. We got that thing through, Sen. (Mark) Messmer and I, in one year. We were told to do it in one chamber, not both. We respectfully listened, and then did it in both.

"I'm doing this," Braun said of this race, "just like I went there, with the focus and purpose. I don't believe we send the cream of the crop to Washington, D.C. I think we send people there who talk a big game, go there, NS

end up making a career in politics. The Founders never intended it to be that way. They did this with the idea that people would be anxious to get back to the farm. When I go there, I'm going to focus on infrastructure, because it's falling apart across the country. Republicans and Democrats ought to be able to agree on that."

### Donnelly's skin in the game

Donnelly's pitch to the UAW came, literally, with a story of family skin in the game.

"I have two Jeeps," the senator said. "Two Grand Cherokees. My daughter was heading off when she was a senior in high school to go watch a movie with friends. I was half asleep on a Friday night when she said, 'I'm heading out, Dad.' We had a compact car, but I looked up and said, 'Take the Jeep. I'd feel much safer if you took



Sen. Donnelly with the UAW's Rick Ward in Kokomo while Mike Braun speaks to the Kokomo Rotary Club. (HPI Photos by Brian A. Howey)

the Jeep.' It was Good Friday. I get a phone call about two hours later and it was my daughter. She had been hit head-on by a drunk driver. The airbags went off, the car was crumpled. The policeman said, 'It's a miracle your daughter wasn't killed.' It was a miracle, but it was also a Jeep Grand Cherokee that you made, you built. Every time I see her, I think of Rick Ward."

Ward is the president of UAW Local 685. "As long as I'm a United States senator," Donnelly said, "I'm going to fight for you."

Donnelly played a big advocacy role with President Obama in 2009. Running for reelection in 2010, he found some UAW workers at the Chrysler plant gate wouldn't look him in the eye. Some would vote Republican on the issue of guns or abortion. Donnelly told HPI in his RV on the way from Zionsville to Kokomo, "One guy at the gate said, 'I love you, Joe, I'm not voting for ya, but I love ya.'" Donnelly laughed. "And I said, 'This could be a

rough Tuesday.” But he narrowly fended off State Rep. Jackie Walorski, and then in his upset Senate race against Treasurer Richard Mourdock two years later, he found strong support from the UAW. “Those folks have been incredibly kind to me,” Donnelly said. “In 2012, I won the 5th Congressional District – and that is Kokomo, that’s Marion, that’s Anderson, those cities and a good group of union folks and others who are salt of the earth – and I was blessed to have their support and win that district.”

**Business and emotion**

Braun’s pitch to voters is with a business-like, matter-of-fact and status-quo challenging demeanor, with the tenor of a curmudgeon. He explains things well.

Donnelly brings more emotion into his pitch, constantly reminding his audience and reporters that “my job” is to work for 6.5 million Hoosier bosses. He bends the normal arc for a Democrat. He’s pro-life, voted for Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, and he’d vote for President Trump’s wall. “I’m fine with providing him some more,” Donnelly told Politico. “I actually voted for border wall funding three different times. I’m fine with that. I’m fine with \$3 [billion], \$3.5, \$4 or \$5 billion this fall.”

His appeal to this small group of autoworkers was that he was there for them in 2008 and 2009. “I’ll never forget coming to this union hall when the treasurer of Indiana tried to get Chrysler liquidated,” Donnelly said of Mourdock. “All of us thought we had no chance to win. But we fought it as one team and it went to the Supreme Court of the United States. We heard they weren’t going to take the case, so I made two calls to here, and said, ‘We won.’”

The Chrysler transmission plants in Kokomo had employed 5,000 people when the auto collapse approached in 2008 and 2009. It shrank to 100 as President Obama forced the restructuring, allowing Fiat to absorb Chrysler. Today, there are 9,000 Hoosiers working there. “My job is to fight for your job,” Donnelly said at Local 685. “I told Mayor Goodnight, Plan A is to try and get everybody back to work. Plan B is to go to church and pray that Plan A works.”

“You build the best products in the world,” Donnelly said. “We need to make sure we have everybody’s backs.”

**Key issues**

In addition to the \$100 million likely to spill in, the

Donnelly-Braun showdown will be fought over the several key issues. There’s Obamacare and what Donnelly calls the “sabotage” of the ACA, while Braun says his “real world” business experience gives him the tools to actually craft a market-based plan that will work. “I could walk into that Senate and probably know more about what to do than anybody that’s there,” Braun told me as we drove from Kokomo to Delphi.

There is the Supreme Court Brett Kavanaugh confirmation battle. Braun says Donnelly is in a classic “Catch 22” because either way he votes, “It’s going to look like a political calculation.” Donnelly vows to do his due diligence, explaining, “My job isn’t to rush a decision. This is someone who’s going to be there for decades and my job is to make the right decision; that’s what I’m trying to do.”

And there’s the tax reforms of 2017. Donnelly claims that the middle class is being ripped off, with more than 70% of the benefits going to the very wealthy while deficits and debt are exploding into the trillion-dollar range. Braun believes there hasn’t been enough time to accurately gauge the impacts. “If economic growth stays closer to 3% or a little above or even a little below, that’s a helluva lot better than 1.3% or 1.5% where you’re never going to go anywhere with that,” Braun said, believing that the current estimates of \$1.5 trillion in deficits over the coming decade will eventually become “revenue neutral.”

Braun believes he is carrying a “positive” message, decrying Donnelly and the Super PACs for targeting his

business, Meyer Industries, with “lies.” Donnelly emphasizes his work for his Hoosier “bosses” and claims he’s not beholden to presidents and special interests.

Then there is President Trump, who suggested over the weekend that the mid-terms should be a referendum on his first two years, adding there will be a “red wave” that will swamp Donnelly. Trump’s tariffs have put Hoosier farmers and manufacturers using steel and aluminum in the crosshairs. Donnelly said he brought up the tariffs to President Trump in the Oval Office a month ago. “I said, ‘Mr. President, the price these guys get is less than the price it costs them to put it in the field. Those numbers just don’t work. They had your back and we need to get this fixed.’ He said, ‘Well, you know, I think it’s going great.’ I said, ‘Well, not if you’re a farmer in Indiana.’”

Braun believes that Trump is playing the “long game” to rectify trade patterns that were instituted after World War II decades ago. “I’m hoping, and I believe, President Trump and those who are working with him hope it ends up addressing these baked-in problems without causing too much grief along the way,” Braun said.



**Mike Braun speaks with a Kokomo Rotarian on Tuesday as former primary rival Mark Hurt looks on. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)**



The obvious wildcard also aligns with President Trump, with the Russian collusion investigation of Special Counsel Robert Mueller throbbing just below the surface. Neither Donnelly or Braun can forecast how this could course through their campaigns or what the potential impacts could be.

There is little doubt, however, that this is a pure tossup, with the eyes of the nation trained once again on Indiana, which President Trump described in 2016 as "Importantville."

It is home to the most important U.S. Senate election this cycle. **HPI Horse Race:** Tossup. ❖

# Donnelly talks tariffs, health care, Putin, Coats and Trump

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

KOKOMO – Last Friday, Howey Politics Indiana linked up with U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly at the Avondale YMCA at the Meadows in Indianapolis where he defended insurance coverage for people with pre-existing conditions.



"Pre-existing conditions is a term, but it is a fancy term for what happens in life and that is, children get asthma and they need inhalers," Donnelly said as

he was surrounded by two doctors and three Hoosiers who struggled to get health coverage due to past medical histories. "Those with diabetes need to get insulin. People with arthritis need to get medications. That's what pre-existing conditions are. I was with a group of miners in Boonville and I asked how many had pre-existing conditions and every single hand went up. Over 30% of Hoosiers have pre-existing conditions. My job is to stand up and stop the retreat on these issues."

Donnelly then hopped on his campaign RV, purchased from a Granger neighbor and once adorned with a "Chris Chocola for Congress" sticker and headed to Zionsville where he talked to voters in a jewelry store, a lunchtime cafe, a Chicago-style bar and a pie shop, where he purchased a mixed-berry dessert.

From there, he headed to UAW Local 685 hall in Kokomo where he met with a couple of dozen auto workers. He would later attend a Kokomo Jackrabbits minor league baseball game in the city's new downtown stadium.

HPI conducted this interview with Sen. Donnelly as we headed from Zionsville, though Carmel and Westfield,

and then up U.S. 31 past corn and soybean fields to the UAW Hall.

**HPI:** Give us an overview of where you believe your campaign is as we head into late summer.

**Donnelly:** We're working non-stop across the state to see everybody. The best ideas and the best campaign is to be with the people of the state. Things seem to be going real strong. We're happy with the team we have together.

**HPI:** I've got this race as a tossup. There was one poll showing you trailing Braun by 2%. Is that what you're seeing internally?

**Donnelly:** We're doing OK. We're doing well.

**HPI:** In the Republican primary we saw that huge block of undecided voters. In this particular race are you and Braun fighting over the last 9, 8 or 5%?

**Donnelly:** I think there's a good chunk out there. The polling we've done is really encouraging. It's where I hoped to be at this point. I think the people have an open mind and that's what the polling shows, too.

**HPI:** The group I'm watching closely is the suburban females, the college-educated women, right



Sen. Donnelly walks to his campaign RV parked outside of the Avondale YMCA in Indianapolis. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

here (we were just departing Zionsville, traveling through Westfield) as well as Johnson County and the Louisville suburbs. A lot of them voted for Donald Trump and we've had issues like the immigrant child separation and what you call the "sabotage" of Obamacare. Do you see that group swinging more in your direction?

**Donnelly:** You have to look and say, "How does it make any sense for this administration to have the Department of Justice to be part of a lawsuit to take away coverage of pre-existing conditions? That is your little brother who has asthma, your little sister who has diabetes. That's your spouse who may be struggling with multiple sclerosis. It's almost unthinkable and it makes no sense to me. I said from the start it's critical we have strong, safe, secure borders. I voted for wall funding three times. But you don't need to separate families to have strong, safe and secure borders. I think parents understand that.

**HPI:** Are you seeing adverse reaction to that with independents and even some Republicans?

**Donnelly:** We want people working together and trying to do what's right; it's what I keep talking about when I'm out on the road. I'll be with President Trump when he's right. I voted with him 63% of the time. But when he's not, it's my obligation as a senator for Indiana, for the people of this state to say, "Mr. President, you're wrong on this and here's a better path." The absolutely critical thing to remember in this race is, whoever is the U.S. senator doesn't work for the president. I didn't work for President Bush or President Obama, or President Trump. I work for the people of Evansville and Richmond, and the people of Henry County and Angola. That's who my bosses are. The decisions I make are what's right for them.

**HPI:** The overriding perception is this state has always been against Obamacare. Yet we see the Healthy Indiana Plan well-received. There's a perception and yet there are 400,000 people on HIP 2.0 and another 200,000 like me who are on the exchange, and I've seen my rate double. Is it starting to sink in? Or is this another "What's the Matter with Kansas" where people will cling to a political perception or slogan and vote against their own economic interests?

**Donnelly:** We have over 400,000 now, or approximately, on HIP 2.0. Think of that. If the Affordable Care Act wasn't in place, all of that goes away. If that vote last year in the United States Senate had gone the other way, those 400,000 lose that coverage. I think Hoosiers understand that a family member who has a pre-existing condition gets coverage because of the Affordable Care Act, which required that pre-existing conditions be covered. Those things people look at and say, "You know, those are good things." This never was a perfect bill.

**HPI:** You were saying that from the beginning.

**Donnelly:** Absolutely. What I always asked was,

"Let's fix the parts that need fixing," and so that's why last year I was a partner with Susan Collins and other colleagues on legislation that would have given cost-sharing payments to insurance companies to lower premiums. That's what's called reinsurance; it helps share the burden of the insurance company with the federal government. That also lowers premiums. There are several steps that would make positive changes, as opposed to what is tearing coverage apart.

**HPI:** Mike Braun talks about how he has been able to cut the cost of health insurance for his employees at Meyer Industries. Is there anything he's saying that is relevant with what's going on?

**Donnelly:** We're talking about 6.5 million who we have to figure out health care for. Any good ideas are



Sen. Donnelly with doctors and people who could lose health coverage due to pre-existing conditions, at the Avondale YMCA on Friday. (HPI Photo by Brian A.

more than welcome. But not everybody has a chance to be part of an organization and get coverage. You have people on the exchanges, people who have financial challenges, people who are trying to figure out my dad has lung cancer, how can I get coverage? This is a really important issue because you can be wiped out financially at the snap of a finger by one incident. You can spend a lifetime doing things right, being prudent and responsible, but if you don't have insurance to cover you in a situation that occurs, it can put you in a position where you can never catch up again.

**HPI:** I was fascinated when I was told you were going up to the UAW hall in Kokomo. One of the most fascinating stories you told me about 2010: You went to Kokomo a year after President Obama essentially saved the domestic auto industry, you did everything you could, and then you watched guys at the Chrysler gate who wouldn't look you in the eye. They were voting not in their economic interest, but on abortion or guns. Also, a lot of union guys voted for Donald Trump in 2016. What do you expect from these guys now?



**Donnelly:** The UAW has always been an amazing friend and we worked hard making sure we could get our auto industry through. One guy at the gate said, "I love you, Joe, I'm not voting for ya, but I love ya" (laughs).

**HPI:** And you said?

**Donnelly:** And I said, "This could be a rough Tuesday" (laughs). But those folks have been incredibly kind to me. In 2012, I won the 5th Congressional District – and that is Kokomo, that's Marion, that's Anderson, those cities and a good group of union folks and others who are salt of the earth – and I was blessed to have their support and win that district. A lot of voters who supported the president are also my supporters; police, fire, union workers, people who go into the fields every day as well. That's how I've been fortunate to do well in elections. We work well for working families. My job is to fight for their job and they've given me that chance.

**HPI:** Republicans tell me that President Trump is still as popular out in the hinterland as he was in 2016. But we've seen Survey Monkey/Axios and Morning Consult polls show that over the broader electorate, he's around 47% approve and 48% disapprove. Are you detecting a change across Indiana, that maybe people are changing? Nobody likes to be told they made a bad vote; there's a lot of people like that. They voted for Trump, they invested in him and ...

**Donnelly:** I never say that to people. I tell them the absolute truth, the more I can do to make President Trump a success and for him to see success, the better it is. If a policy he's pursuing is a success, that makes our lives better. On the Right to Try legislation he helped me with, we worked together from start to finish and as a result, people all over the country can get medications in very difficult circumstances. Those are things we can do together and work together on; it doesn't matter to me who gets the credit or how. It doesn't matter to me what that does to his numbers. He's doing good things for the country, for Indiana and you want that.

**HPI:** President Trump gave you a shout out at the Right to Try signing. Did you expect that? You're using that scene in your TV ad and you even have Mike Pence applauding.

**Donnelly:** We worked non-stop on that legislation with



**Sen. Donnelly speaks to UAW Local 685, standing with President Rick Ward in Kokomo. (HPI Photo by Bian A. Howey)**

Ron Johnson, my Republican friend from Wisconsin. Laura McLinn and the other families were amazing. They worked so hard; Laura would text me and say, "We can get this done," and I would text her back and say, "We're gonna get this done." It was mutual cheering and keeping everyone moving forward, same with Ron Johnson. When it passed, it was the power of the people of this country, and what I mean by that is some believe it's this big government far away. This legislation was the perfect example of a mom who decided to help her child. She came down to the office and I looked at her and said, "Let's do this." That's how it's supposed to be. This country works because everybody has a chance to have their voice heard.

**HPI:** You've been meeting with farmers. You were with the pork producers this morning. Put the tariffs in perspective. Do you think the president has a grand strategy? The Chinese just slapped tariffs on \$60 billion today. Do you think he's just winging it or is there a master strategy to use this as leverage to get a better deal?



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**Donnelly:** I had the chance to talk to the president about tariffs. He asked me to stop over to his office to talk about the Supreme Court and I did.

**HPI:** How long ago was that?

**Donnelly:** About a month ago. When we finished, I said, "Hey, mind if I bring up a subject?" He said, "Oh, no, not at all." I said, "Indiana's farmers go to work in the dark. They come home in the dark. They work non-stop. I am really worried about these tariffs and the effects it's going to have on them." I said, "I've always been supportive of the effort you have that our steel producers be treated fairly, because the Chinese have always cheated. I testified a number of times before the International Trade Court." That is a stovepipe we need to fix. We've turned this into a multi-hundred-billion-dollar all-out trade war. This needed to be fixed and now we've got this overall explosion. I said, "Mr. President, the price these guys get is less than the price it costs them to put it in the field. Those numbers just don't work. They had your back and we need to get this fixed." And so, I made the pitch to him. He said, "Well, you know, I think it's going great." I said, "Well, not if you're a farmer in Indiana."

**HPI:** So, do your Republican colleagues believe he has a master plan or do they think he's just winging it?

**Donnelly:** We had a vote in the Senate called Section 232 cases, and on Section 232 cases Congress should play a role. I think it passed 86-11, so I think there is real concern.

**HPI:** Judge Kavanaugh. The breaking news with his nomination is the National Archives said yesterday they wouldn't have all the documents Democrats have requested until October. You're under a lot of political pressure to take a stance. Do you need to see those documents from the National Archives to make an informed decision?

**Donnelly:** I want to get as much as I can. Right now, I've got notebook after notebook after notebook and an incredibly talented staff and wonderful counsel whom I'm working with. He has over 300 decisions that he's authored. I'm reviewing those and writings he's had. On August 15, I sit down with him. I've been getting questions prepared so we can have a really productive time together. And then there are the confirmation hearings. It's important to listen, and sometimes in hearings you'll think, "This person is amazing, what a great job he did," or, "Where did this person come from?"

**HPI:** Was Justice Gorsuch an example of the for-

mer?

**Donnelly:** I'm following the same exact process and at the end of that process I said, "He's certainly within the parameters of someone who's qualified, who has worked very hard, is not extreme one way or the other, and the president gets some deference because he got elected, he won, he gets to make the choice. You just don't want extreme one way or the other."

**HPI:** So, you'll meet with Judge Kavanaugh on the 15th and within 20 minutes of its conclusion, you'll

be peppered with calls to make a decision. Is that decision more likely to happen in October, after the hearings?

**Donnelly:** It all depends on when we have the hearings. Mitch McConnell determines that. I want to hear what he says in the hearings because it's critical. The whole country can get a flavor for who he is. My job isn't to rush a decision to make this job happy or this group happy. This is someone who's going to be there for decades and my job is to make the right decision; that's what I'm trying to do.

**HPI:** The hot story this past week was Leader Chuck Schumer urging you and Sens. Manchin and Heitkamp to "keep your powder dry" in order to put pressure on Sens.

Collins, Paul, Murkowski and others. Put that in perspective.

**Donnelly:** I haven't the slightest interest what Chuck Schumer has to say about Judge Kavanaugh. My loyalty, devotion and effort are to the people of Indiana. That's what I care about, that's who I listen to and at just about every stop today I had people talking to me about Kavanaugh one way or another.

**HPI:** We spent a lot of time talking about Donald Trump's temperament. Now here it is almost two years later; talk to me about President Trump's temperament. Like what we saw this past week in Tampa.

**Donnelly:** My focus is making sure we have good jobs in Indiana, good health care for men and women who serve in the military, are safe and in a position to have everything they need to be a success. That's what I'm focused on. His temperament I don't worry about. His rallies, I don't worry about. My focus is the job itself to make life better for you and your children every day.

**HPI:** Let's talk about Helsinki. You're on the Senate Armed Services Committee. You also have a key oversight role on strategic weaponry and strategy. Yesterday National Intelligence Director Dan Coats said he has no idea what Presidents Trump and Putin talked about for two hours by themselves. What do Hoosiers need to know



Sen. Donnelly chats with voters at a Zionsville diner on Friday. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)



from your unique vantage point?

**Donnelly:** Hoosiers need to know from my perspective that it's very concerning because it is hard to know exactly where we are with Vladimir Putin unless we know what was discussed in that room. I've supported trying to get as much information as we can because I am certain, although I don't have the tapes or documents, that the Russians know exactly. We're at disadvantage in not knowing.

**HPI:** Wow. I was wowing not about your driver, but the fact that the Russians know what was said in that meeting and Dan Coats doesn't.

**Donnelly:** Director Coats said yesterday or the day before, "I still don't know what happened in that meeting. It's hard to be the director of National Intelligence and not know what actually was discussed. That's part of the challenge for us who serve on the Strategic Forces Subcommittee. We're responsible for missile defense, missile development, nuclear warheads and nuclear developments, which naturally involve North Korea and Russians. One of their stated policies is to use low-yield nuclear weapons as part of their mix. It's called their "de-escalate policy." I have to be on top of that at every moment, but I don't know what was discussed with the premier of Russia. It's difficult to have a void like that because the person you're sitting across from knows everything. The Russians know everything and nobody in the United States Senate has any idea what was discussed.

**HPI:** From a historical perspective, how unusual is that?

**Donnelly:** I've never seen that before. You want everybody to be working as a team, pushing for the same goals, being there with President Trump being in that meeting, but having success in a way that protects our nation, helps with all the information he needs to be strong. He may well have been tough and strong in that meeting, and I sure hope he was. But that's the hope – we just don't know.

**HPI:** I have dropped the phrase, "Russian meddling in our elections." This is not "meddling." This is an assault. Do you agree with that? Here we have the press conference with Putin and President Trump said, "I take him at his word," and he seemed to side with Putin over U.S. intelligence. We saw Dan Coats on the previous Friday, the same day 12 Russian GRU intel officials were indicted by Special Counsel Mueller, and then another statement on the day of that press conference saying, essentially, no, we are being assaulted.

**Donnelly:** Director Coats has seen and reviewed

all the evidence and it indicates the Russians have been deeply involved in trying to be in the middle of our elections and to influence them.

**HPI:** As we watch this Senate race unfold on TV, we have ads on your behalf claiming that Mike Braun takes advantage of his employees and has been fined and gotten sideways with the government. You're being called "Mexico Joe" for your past ownership in a family company that out-sourced to Mexico. Are you comfortable with that aspect of the campaign?

**Donnelly:** I just focus on the people of the state and try to be with them on a non-stop basis.



President Trump's national intelligence team at the White House, where National Intelligence Director Dan Coats reiterated the election threat from the Kremlin.

**HPI:** So, what we're seeing is pretty much what you have to do to run a competitive race.

**Donnelly:** I have my own opinions as to what we're seeing. My focus is how can I make the lives of Hoosiers better. We're laser-focused on that. We're going up to see UAW Local 685 and we worked like dogs to make sure they could survive. They went from over 5,000 people in 2007, 2008 and 2009 to less than 100. Today they have over 9,000. That's what's really important. There are 9,000 families who are getting really good paychecks, who can support their families, who can send their kids to really good schools. That's what this job is about. Everybody is my boss. What I'm doing now is seeing the bosses, to let them know what's going on and answer any questions they have. Whether it was the diner in Zionsville, the ham breakfast this morning, this is my chance to be back home and see my bosses and talk to them.

**HPI:** On the week of July 4, we had the situation come up with Attorney General Curtis Hill. We heard the governor, the lieutenant governor and your opponent say there is "zero tolerance" when it comes to sexual harassment and have called on Hill to resign. Should that zero tolerance extend to President Trump, who has faced allegations from close to 12 women alleging similar conduct? We're expecting President Trump to come into the state to campaign for Mike Braun this fall. Are you going to call Mike Braun out if he appears on stage with President Trump?

**Donnelly:** I'll let them speak for themselves on that. I'm going to focus on farmers and the tariffs and making sure I can help create more good jobs. Everybody knows the facts and can judge for themselves. Sometimes you look at situations and say, "How does that add up?"

**HPI:** What are you expecting from the Mueller probe between now and Election Day?

**Donnelly:** I don't know. The special prosecutor, Robert Mueller, doesn't tell people what he's doing. He does this the right way. He takes care of his responsibilities. He doesn't talk. He doesn't leak to anybody. He just does his work. So, what I've said from the start is, I don't know how this turns out. I do know this though, he should be left alone to do his job and if there is information and evidence there, to follow it and take appropriate steps. And if not, he will exonerate the president.

**HPI:** Do you believe a sitting president can be indicted? I'm sure that will come up with the Judge Kavanaugh confirmation hearings.

**Donnelly:** There's a split decision on that. I'll look forward to hearing what everybody has to say and to see what Robert Mueller is going to do because answering that question is like pre-supposing he will have committed an indictable offense. I'm not willing to go there. I'm willing to see what the special prosecutor comes up with.

**HPI:** We could be on the cusp of sensational events. Nothing has been normal over the past two years. Any observations on that front?

**Donnelly:** I do. My job is to make things as normal, as predictable, as stable and as certain for the people of Indiana as I can. To make sure our economy keeps growing, to make sure our sons and daughters who are serving are safe, that they have the very best equipment with what I do on the Armed Services Committee. On the Ag Committee, to fight for our farmers every day to get this tariff situation resolved so they can get a fair price for their product. On the Banking Committee, where we just passed regulatory relief that helped our banks and our credit unions. That's my job to keep this country moving forward. There are always sideshows, always things going on. I have to keep my eye on the ball to make sure that for our children and grandchildren, the country is stronger and safer and better for them.

**HPI:** Anything you want to add?

**Donnelly:** Here we are, sitting on an RV heading up to Kokomo.

**HPI:** A lot of soybeans growing out there.

**Donnelly:** It looks like a record crop coming in and there's no more beautiful place on the face of the earth and I'm lucky to be a part of it. ❖

## Braun questions Donnelly's message and 'negative' tactics

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

DELPHI – HoweY Politics Indiana sat down with Republican Senate nominee Mike Braun for the third time this year. The first time was at the Republican Congress of Counties where he was a nominal underdog in the primary race against U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita.

In April we traveled with Braun to Greenfield and Richmond as he was on his way to an impressive primary victory, where he pumped more than \$5 million of his own money into the race. In that interview, Braun walked through his early winter calculations on launching a statewide TV and radio ad campaign. He believed that going up early would boost his name ID, crimp Rokita and Messer's fundraising, and build

the momentum that would carry him to victory in May. The primary proved those calculations were correct.

On Tuesday, we met up with the nominee in Kokomo, then conducted this interview as we traveled from the City of Firsts through the rich Carroll County farmland to Delphi where he toured a manufacturing facility.

We talked with Braun about President Trump's tariffs, whether he could appear with the president after calling on Attorney General Curtis Hill to resign due to sexual harassment allegations, as well as the Trump/Putin summit and the coming confirmation battle of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.

**HPI:** Give us an overview of where you believe your campaign stands as we head into late summer.

**Braun:** There's been a lot of stuff on TV. Of course in Joe's case, mostly coming from Chuck Schumer's PAC outlining his campaign. On our end we've been trying to stay with a positive message and talk about the good things out there, like the tax reforms. I think that's





backfired on them already. It's probably a disguise because he's got a voting record that we intend to expose that's going to be surprising to many Hoosiers. I, on the other hand, have gone through all the trials and tribulations of basically building a business over 37 years in (my) hometown. I've been successful at it. I think it's risky when you nitpick or take one little example and blow it into a campaign. It doesn't hold water. Whenever you're doing something on a negative approach, you better be darn sure it makes sense, and it doesn't in this case. I'm talking about things like solving the health care issue. I'm talking about rebuilding infrastructure. I have a track record that shows I've done something in those areas. For them, an idea of trying to sell more government when you're not paying for what you're already doing is a tricky thing. What is the message? That's the hardest thing for me to see in Joe Donnelly's campaign. What is the message they're trying to get across?

**HPI:** Have you polled internally? I've got the race as a tossup and we've seen a couple of polls that show it within the margin of error.

**Braun:** I think we're actually doing better than that. The two public polls had us up out of the gate a point, and the other a month later two points. That's obviously in the close category. But I think since then it's their lack of message and our having a message out there; it's not about going after Joe Donnelly personally, it's talking about issues, health care costs, infrastructure, the good news about what tax reform has done. That's what voters are looking for, not more of the same approach.

**HPI:** You mentioned to one of the Rotarians how Donnelly is conducting a negative campaign. They're taking aim at your company, at least the Schumer PAC is. Any company of the size of yours (900 employees) is going to have employment issues. Put that in perspective.

**Braun:** They obviously didn't do their research well, because what I've been able to do there is the American Dream. Build a company from very, very little into a national company over time, being able to tout the highest starting wages in the lowest unemployment county, where my employees haven't paid a nickel more in health insurance over nine years and where they actually got a family reduction of \$1,400. They weren't counting on that. The standard Democratic game plan is do or say anything to tear down your opposition, thinking there's nothing you can rebut it with. In this case, there's a long list of positive things I've done; I've never had a layoff in 37 years. It goes on and on and nothing they've done is any more than an exaggeration or an outright lie. Talk to anybody

who knows in my community and they will rebut it as well. That's a dangerous approach to take unless it were true, and it's not true.

**HPI:** The one TV ad point that really seems to stretch credulity is the Senate Majority PAC saying that you make all your parts in China.

**Braun:** Ninety-five percent of my suppliers are American companies. One hundred percent of my employees are Americans. Joe's only association to a business was they shipped the jobs to Mexico at a few bucks an hour. I would think they'd be smarter than exposing themselves to that kind of counter-punch.

**HPI:** We're driving through farmland as we drive from Kokomo to Delphi, so let's talk about tariffs. Does President Trump have a master plan in place, and we're looking at the tactics to get a broader deal with China, the E.U., the Canadians and Mexicans?

**Braun:** Yep.

**HPI:** Walk us through how you believe President Trump will play this out.

**Braun:** I always look at it this way, because it's the way I look at my business over the years. You have a long run and a short run. Most businesses, you focus on the short run, knowing that to accom-

plish your main goal down the road it's hopefully going to be better. That goal would be to have no tariffs anywhere. Free trade is based on no one having a leg up or a leg down. You do what you do best. President Trump is trying to unravel what's been embedded for 20, 30 or 40 years. Some of that was done because we cut slack to trading partners back when their economies were being rebuilt from World War II. Now the world arena has matured. We have a lot of large, healthy competitors out there. He uses as an example, you should be willing to relinquish some of the tariffs you imposed and we allowed many years ago because it was kind of like aid to get you going. He now believes, and I think he's correct, you get rid of those, we get rid of ours, we do what's supposed to happen. It's called comparative advantage, you do what you do best. Put yourself out in the marketplace and compete accordingly.

**HPI:** So, in your view, we're seeing the short game right now.

**Braun:** Yes.

**HPI:** Are you hearing that the negotiations are underway and are fruitful?

**Braun:** I think the first sign will be the European Union coming back to have a discussion. Nothing concrete



**Braun talks with an executive at Delphi Body Works in Delphi. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)**

is coming from it, but the idea that they both, unilaterally, start eliminating tariffs, if that happens, Mexico and Canada quickly follow suit. With the Chinese, it's a whole different issue. They now have an economy that is classified differently than (a) developed economy. They are the presence out there, an economic juggernaut. You have to address built-in issues and things they've been doing when they were small enough to get by with it. I think they're going to be easier to negotiate with five or 10 years down the road, for doing things like intellectual property theft, manipulating currency, subsidizing industries, tariffs, the whole laundry list. It's time their behavior conforms to the rest of the global economy.

**HPI:** When you talk to Hoosier farmers, do they seem committed to the long game?

**Braun:** All the farmers I talk to philosophically know what President Trump is doing. They know the feeling of pain from it because the Chinese are smart in targeting them because they are Trump's most significant backers across the board. It is a game that you have to be careful with, because I don't think anyone wants it to persist without some type of resolution. I'm hoping that what happened with the E.U. starts happening with the rest. I don't know how the Chinese can think they can be exceptional and get by with stuff that is not only bad behavior but illegal when it comes to intellectual property. They ought to be smart enough to know that's not going to ben-

efit them in the long run. They are digging because they know we have the upper hand at this point. They depend more on us than we do on them and they are probably waiting to see who's going to blink first. I'm hoping, and I believe President Trump and those who are working with him hope it ends up addressing these baked-in problems without causing too much grief along the way.

**HPI:** The first time we talked in January, you related how you address health insurance and costs for your employees at Meyer Industries. How would you translate that into policy in Washington? How are you going to take what you did and apply it into a national context? I've seen my own monthly health care costs double since 2013. You've talked about repealing Obamacare and replacing it with something. We don't have the replacement of Obamacare, just the systemic dismantling of it.

**Braun:** The replacement part: If you look at other health care systems around the world, they are some form of government, one-payer systems. Some have nationalized health care, as in Cuba. So, you've got all sorts of variations. They've all accomplished reducing costs to 10 or 12% of GDP. Ours is more like 18% and that's because it's the worst of both worlds. It's got a non-transparent, non-competitive industry, it's got government involvement/payer policy market, which I said earlier was doomed to fail because it was big health care and big government together. That never gets less expensive. It's got all kinds of

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rules and restrictions that Americans didn't want. All we've done in my business, and it's not mysterious, is basically harness human nature. If you have skin in the game and you feel the cost of something, you shop around. The day my plan went live, a guy who had \$200-a-month medication with a \$10 co-pay, costing him \$120 a year, was then going to go to \$2,400 a year, and he would have been impacted by a plan that wanted to bring costs down and make it sustainable and not break the bank. I pointed that out and said, "Have you ever shopped around for your medicine?" He said, "Why would I? I have a \$10 co-pay." I said, "Go do it," and he found it in 30 seconds for \$99. Not by going to Canada, but just from a mail order pharmacy. It would be a better value than spending 30 minutes to get a prescription filled. I didn't think it would be the case, but it has been. Lasik surgery was \$2,500 an eye 10 years ago and it's now \$250 an eye. It has no element of insurance, just doctors applying a service to patients. It's 90% lower than 10 years ago. You have to make it consumer-driven. All employees have to shop around, they have to have some skin in the game, and they have to start dragging costs down. If health care providers started embracing competition, you'd see an unbelievable thing occur. Right now, it's been paternalistic, whether through employers or government. It's insulated the user from making it consumer-driven. Does that make sense?

**HPI:** So, should voters expect in your first term you would author, or find an ally ...

**Braun:** I could walk into that Senate and probably know more about what to do than anybody that's there, simply because, duh, what have they given us? Even Republicans have been timid about how to bring costs down. You ought to be able to buy and sell insurance across state lines. That's a joke because of the health insurance lobbies in each state and because laws say you can't. Only Sen. Cassidy has actually done some conceptual discussions on what needs to be done and he covered some of my points. We're the ones who have actually put it into play to see if it works.

**HPI:** President Trump talked about coming up with an infrastructure plan and he hasn't, but you talked about that with the Kokomo Rotarians.

**Braun:** You know why he hasn't?

**HPI:** No. The Trump/Pence team refuses to communicate at all with me or any local media, so I have no clue what they're doing.

**Braun:** There's nothing harder to do when the federal government is broke than spending that amount

of money which would be on par with the most expensive thing government has ever had to tackle. When you're running trillion-dollar deficits, now \$1.2 trillion, that's the last thing the federal government can talk about credibly. The best they can do is take the funding levels they've already got and dish them out on a 50/50 basis. I like that better than 80/20. They have no ability to finance 80% of our country's infrastructure projects. Not many of them are getting done because they don't have the money. Fifty/fifty was what we did in Indiana with the state and communities working together, and everybody loves it.

**HPI:** Will you introduce some type of infrastructure bill?

**Braun:** Some type of infrastructure bill based on the states shouldering more of the load is the only way that we're actually going to see stuff done. Quit looking to the federal government to pay for stuff when you're already broke; it makes no sense. Have you ever heard a Democrat make that statement? No. Because they actually think you can prolong living with the status quo. That's why they don't like what Trump is doing because he shakes up business as usual. Many Republicans would have to be guilty of some of that, too, because they've been part of the problem over the past 20 or 30 years.

**HPI:** Your business and your employees have benefited from the tax reforms, but it's a double-edge sword because we're also seeing the deficits explode to \$1.5 trillion.

**Braun:** The original calculation figured it would be revenue negative to the tune of \$1.5 trillion over 10 years. I think you're going to find that if this thing stays in place, it's going to be closer to revenue neutral. That's because even though the rates are lower, if economic growth stays closer to 3% or a little above or even a little below, that's a helluva lot better than 1.3% or 1.5%. In Obama's eight years, I don't think they ever had a quarter over 2%.

**HPI:** Did the Helsinki summit concern you, with Presidents Trump and Putin alone for two hours and no one in the U.S. knowing what they discussed? Dan Coats said a couple of days ago he still has no idea what they talked about.

**Braun:** That's because, No. 1, I think the president and our intelligence community know that the

Russians are our adversary. President Trump calls them a competitor, but they are our adversary. I think that what went going on in that closed-door meeting is hopefully going to lead them to change their behavior. That's part of his style and tactic. I don't think he was duped into something because it was behind closed doors. That's the media



Mike Braun takes questions from Kokomo Rotarians. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

relitigating things from the past without giving benefit of the doubt to President Trump, because they're still not reconciled to the election of 2016.

**HPI:** At the Trump/Putin press conference the president was asked about Russian election interference. Dan Coats released an extraordinary statement on the Friday before, the same day Special Counsel Robert Mueller indicted 12 Russian GRU intelligence agents. Yet Trump seemed to side with Putin and his denial. We had Coats issue another statement later that day reemphasizing his belief the Russians are still assaulting our election process. Then last Thursday we saw the entire U.S. national security team come to the White House briefing room and make similar assessments that we're under assault. What are your thoughts on the Russian interference in this election? And, you want to talk about skin in the game, you've got skin in the game on this one.

**Braun:** Yes. So, I think they meddled with our elections. We know they did that. We have to be very diligent that doesn't happen again. The idea that Coats and the intelligence community were doing this counter to President Trump's thinking, that's a leap. Obviously, he works in concert with them. Remember, every problem we're dealing with didn't occur overnight. For two decades, Republicans and Democrats in D.C. have delivered these problems onto his doorstep. People are struggling with the style in which he's trying to change that dynamic. This idea about becoming sanctimonious all of a sudden – remember, everybody who was complaining was part of what delivered it to us in the first place. I believe there's a method here and it's playing itself out and it's different from the dynamic that was around a long time before. That's why he got elected. People lost faith. Why would you want to keep reelecting people who had been there for a long time when they've got a 15% approval rating. You've got to, minimally, start trying different things, because we've had a bad product, not only on foreign affairs, but domestically. Living within your means has been laughed at year after year. With \$20 trillion in debt, interest rates are going up 2% and all of a sudden that's \$400 billion, so your \$1 trillion deficits go to \$1.4 trillion.

**HPI:** As far as economic cycles go, we're a lot closer to the next recession than the last one and thus, we may see deficits explode into the \$2 trillion range.

**Braun:** Maybe the only thing that will stretch that out is tax reform, because that was a unique piece of

legislation that gives conservatives what they always asked for. I think it's going to be the extender of the current good economy. What do you hear every Democrat say? They want to reverse it. It is benefiting up and down the spectrum; if businesses do what we did, share the savings with employees, it's going to have the multiplier effect no one counted on.

**HPI:** Donnelly said he urged President Trump to focus the tax cuts on the middle class and instead most of them went to the wealthy. Obviously, this is going to be a huge issue down the homestretch and will come up in the debates. Frame your contrast with Sen. Donnelly?

**Braun:** His cohort, Nancy Pelosi, referred to it as crumbs. Remember that. We can see it's not crumbs. She may have been talking about the first few checks folks got because the withholdings had not added up. Going over the last eight months everybody I talked to not only is measuring that they can see higher benefits in terms of 401K, or in our case, where we've lowered health care costs or doing the first mid-year bonus. I'd hate to be on the other side pooh-pooing that. That is going to be more done for the middle class than anything the government has done over the last few decades. We've got a program that's going to benefit enterprisers, share the benefits with employees and see if it's going to work out.

**HPI:** You've passed along your corporate tax cuts to your employees. Yet we're still seeing wages languish ...

**Braun:** Well, not everybody's wages. In our own business, truck driver wages we've paid 20% more. That's a lot. The market demands it and we've got the ability to do it. Our wage increases in my own business have been measurable. Hey, it's only been seven or eight months. Give this time to get into the economy and I think the proof will be in the pudding. If those results don't come along, then you have an opportunity to say it didn't work. I don't think

that will be the case.

**HPI:** You've called for the resignation of Attorney General Curtis Hill over the sexual harassment allegations. We've had 11 similar allegations leveled against President Trump. The governor has called for "zero tolerance."

**Braun:** Zero tolerance for sexual harassment; I wouldn't tolerate it in my workplace. I have two daughters, one of whom works in the business. There's just no place for it in this day and age. It is something that at any level is something that's going to need to be taken seriously. We would in my own company and I think what was





done in our state was the right thing to do.

**HPI:** Is that going to be a problem for President Trump to come in and campaign on your behalf when there are all these allegations surrounding him?

**Braun:** Yeah. I think in his case, most of that is tabloid kind of anecdotal stuff. Everybody should have the process to push it legally. In this day and age if that happens, clearly you need to be accountable. What happened with Curtis as opposed to what happened there is different for the reason I just mentioned. If there's anything there and anybody wants to go forward, there's a process to go through.

**HPI:** I don't believe Attorney General Hill has gotten a fair shake. There was the Taft memo, but he wasn't included in that investigation. They didn't even talk to him. That's problematic. If I had been the governor, I would have called the Indiana State Police in to investigate and say, "I want a report on my desk in six weeks."

**Braun:** It was regrettable that it occurred in the first place. It's going through a process. Speaker Bosma and David Long looked at it and it's in motion.

**HPI:** I know this is out of the congressional purview, but the governor has called for the passage of hate crime legislation. If you were in the Indiana House, would you support that?

**Braun:** I think the governor is right, because it is something only five states don't have some form of. It's going to be out there for discussion and go through the committee process. I'm OK with that being looked at. I think the governor studied that extensively and determined it was an issue.

**HPI:** The big story coming up this fall will be the confirmation of Judge Kavanaugh for the U.S. Supreme Court. Sen. Donnelly has told me he wants to study his record and listen to the committee process. The National Archives is saying it won't have much of the material on his decisions until October. Obviously, you would vote to confirm him.

**Braun:** I think this is emblematic of Joe Donnelly's difficulty. He's tried to position himself as a middle-of-the-road, conservative Democrat. When I heard that 77% of the time he votes with Bernie Sanders, 84% with Chuck Schumer, 98.5% with the Obama agenda, we know



Mike Braun appears with President Trump in Elkhart two days after his Republican primary victory.

where he's getting his marching orders. I don't think he would have voted for Judge Gorsuch unless (his confirmation) would have been over the hump. I think that was politically motivated. He's got a very difficult position. He's got to straddle the fact that his base wants him not to vote for Kavanaugh and if he would be reflective of what most Hoosiers think, he should. We've asked him to not only to meet, but to take the vote. Either way, it's going to look like a political calculation. You owe it to your core philosophies where you don't straddle like that. In this case, it's a Catch

22. He hasn't had the gumption to really be reflective of Hoosier values. It puts him in that prickly spot where he's been 100% lockstep with Chuck Schumer, but wants to portray otherwise to Hoosier voters.

**HPI:** Anything you want to bring up that I didn't?

**Braun:** We're going to win this Senate seat because, most simply, Hoosiers are looking for somebody, as I said early on when I got into the race, who has done something in the real world, where you had to actually address the problems of infrastructure and health care costs and are not doing it from the stance that you have no experience there. You're doing it by being briefed by your staff. It looks like the people we're sending to D.C. are there for the pay and the perks and the trappings. When I signed the term-limits pledge, I clearly wasn't interested in any of that and I was fed up that we sent people there who never get anything done and we still have those same results. This year, if Rick Scott, myself and Mitt Romney get elected, we'll actually have almost doubled the business caucus in the Senate. I believe there should be more people who have solved problems in the real world than talk a good game and have no idea what to do because they've never had any experience at it.

**HPI:** In the television age of Indiana politics, every senator has stayed in Washington, or in Dan Quayle's case, Arizona. They haven't come back to Indiana. Would you come back home to Indiana once you're finished, if elected?

**Braun:** I'll tell you with absolute certainty, I will be back in Indiana. The hardest thing I'm doing is giving that up. ❖

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# Surveying hate from Budapest to Carmel

By **CRAIG DUNN**

**KOKOMO** – The taxi driver in Budapest looked at me with an expressionless face as I asked him to take my wife and myself to the place where the Arrow Cross fascists murdered hundreds of Jews on the banks of the



Danube River toward the end of World War II. Not sure of what else to tell him, I simply told him, "You know, the place with the shoes."

"Ah yes, the shoes, the shoes, I take you there!"

Our time was going to be limited on our first trip to Budapest and we wanted to pack in as many of the sights as possible. While most tourists rush to visit Fisherman's Bastion, the Széchenyi Chain Bridge, St. Estevan's Ba-

silica, the amazing Hungarian Parliament building or one of the other better-known tourist attractions, my wife and I tend to dig a little deeper for some of the lesser known sites. From the time when I first began planning for this visit to Budapest, I knew that there was one pilgrimage that we had to make.

During the latter months of 1944 and into early 1945, over 3,500 Hungarians, mostly Jews, were rounded up from the Jewish ghetto of Budapest by the fascist Arrow Cross group, marched down to the banks of the river, forced to remove their shoes and then lined up and shot so that they would fall into the river. In this way, the evidence of the Arrow Cross crimes would be swept away by the icy Danube.

**Of course**, most of the 400,000 Jews and 26,000 Romansch who were killed during World War II in Hungary were more efficiently disposed of through the efforts of Adolph Eichmann. Although many of Hungary's Jews were saved through the kind efforts of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, kind Roman Catholic priests who issued Catholic birth certificates to Jews, and by a few righteous individuals in the Budapest police, the vast majority of the Jewish population was loaded onto box-



cars with a final destination of Auschwitz.

As we made our way down the stairway from Zoltan Street to the memorial, I couldn't help but try and imagine the freezing cold and the fear that must have gripped each victim making their final walk to the edge of the Danube. For these unlucky, innocent human beings, there would be no remembrance of Strauss' "Beautiful Blue Danube," only the finality of man's inhumanity to man.

The monument to the victims of the Arrow Cross was erected in 2005, more than 50 years after the murders. The monument consists of 60 pairs of iron shoes arranged on the edge of the Danube River, as if they had just been removed prior to their owners' murder.

**It was a moving sight** and not one that I will ever forget. Those visiting the monument with us were old and young from just about every corner of the world. There was no laughter, giggling or omnipresent selfies that I've seen at other European memorials. Here, there was nothing but silence, no sound except for the lapping waters of the Danube.

There are other locations in Budapest that serve as solemn reminders of what transpired during 1944-1945. The trendiest restaurant and music area of Budapest is in the Jewish Quarter. Of course, there aren't many Jews remaining to partake in the amazing Hungarian cuisine or to listen to the blaring rock music. The evident lack of Jews in the Jewish Quarter speaks louder than the happy voices patronizing the area's hot spots.

The Dohany Street Synagogue is a beautiful place that will forever bear the scars of the Holocaust. Its grounds are full of monuments and memorials to the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were herded there before being shipped to their death. The message plainly delivered by most of the monuments is simple, "We will never forget."

In the gardens behind the synagogue there is a sterling silver memorial tree with countless silver leaves hanging down from it, each bearing the name of a victim of the senseless genocide of the war. The American actor Tony Curtis donated the memorial. It is another quiet testament to the suffering of a people because of their heritage and religion.

I don't speak of these locations in Budapest as some maudlin travelogue of bucket list sites that you must see before you die. I call your attention to these memorials because living here in the United States, we have largely been blessed with avoiding the modern ravages of war and the massive inhuman-



ities experienced by the Jews during World War II. Our children have little or no understanding of the Holocaust. As the greatest generation of American servicemen who witnessed the evidence of the wholesale slaughter of a people pass into eternity, there will be few who will remember the days of terror.

There are those who, at this time, are trying to destroy our understanding of the Holocaust and replace it with the lies that they spew on the internet. One can go to YouTube and enter "Jewish Lies" and be inundated with the vilest form of hate you could encounter. One continual story after another that the Holocaust never happened, that Jews control the world, that Israel should be destroyed.

**I even watched a video** the other evening where the grandson of Auschwitz Commandant Rudolph Hoess was forced to disavow his family because they refuse to believe that the horrors of Auschwitz ever happened, and he wants nothing to do with them. What makes this all amazing is that Rudolph Hoess himself testified to his guilt in the murder of over 2 million Jews at Auschwitz. It's easy to understand why the Hoess family doesn't want to sit around at reunions and talk about Grandpa Rudy's crimes, but to deny them altogether should be a crime.

This brings us to the burgeoning City of Carmel. Who would have thought that mindless cretins would deface Congregation Shaarey Tefilla with Nazi symbols? I certainly expect more of my fellow Hoosiers than that kind of conduct and yet, as one who has done a lot of work with people in my career and in politics, I am less and less surprised as time goes by.

In my younger years, I wasn't sure about the efficacy of hate crimes legislation. To me, it made sense that a crime is a crime is a crime and is made no worse by the reasons for the commission of the crime. Murder is murder. Assault is assault. Vandalism is vandalism. As time goes on I have come to believe that crime committed against a people solely based on race, religion or national origin does rise to a higher level of egregiousness. The time to stop a hate crime is at its first opportunity. A stern uncompromising message must be sent to those who carry hate in their hearts that no crime with hate at its core will go unpunished.

**I commend Gov. Eric Holcomb** for calling for hate crimes legislation this coming General Assembly session. It is time that Indiana join the other 45 states that have hate crimes legislation. I call on Republican and Democrat members of the Indiana House and Senate to unanimously pass a hate crimes bill that clearly sends a message that Hoosiers will not tolerate hate.

The haunting memory of the iron shoes on the Danube is a story told in Budapest, but it is a lesson that should be learned by each of us. ❖

**Dunn is the former chairman of the Howard County and 4th CD Republican parties.**

## Greater implications in Lake precinct change

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – There are greater implications than either Democrats or Republicans are talking about in terms of the elimination of a third of Lake County's precincts.

Democrats are saying the biggest losers are the people in Gary, Hammond and East Chicago, cities that represent the backbone of the party. Republicans say the reductions will result in the annual saving of \$117,300 because fewer election workers will be hired. Republicans don't say the cuts will weaken Democrats.

Each party is right. But neither party is talking about the biggest impact the cuts will have. Hardest hit will be north county Democrats, who have pretty much controlled the direction of the party until now. The impact won't be known until there is a vacancy in a county office that will be filled by one of the county precinct organizations. We only have to go back to the fall of 2017 to get a feel for the impact of filling vacancies.

Lake Democrats convened some 10 months ago to fill the vacancy created by the conviction of former Sheriff John Buncich. The precinct organization met to fill the remainder of Buncich's term, which runs through 2018. County police officer Oscar Martinez won that caucus largely because of the support of Hispanic committeemen in East Chicago and that of Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott, who controls the Hammond precinct organization. Hammond at the time had 79 precincts and East Chicago had 31. McDermott was Martinez's largest supporter and lined up most of the Hammond organization behind him.

**Hammond today has 33 fewer** committeemen than it did when Martinez was selected. East Chicago has 14 fewer precincts. That could have resulted in a 47-vote shift away from Martinez and resulted in the selection of then-Schererville Police Chief David Dowling as the sheriff.

Besides the cuts in Hammond and East Chicago, Gary lost 54 of its 105 precincts. Precincts with fewer than 600 registered voters were eliminated by Secretary of State Connie Lawson, a Republican.

Countywide, 170 precincts – or 33% of the total, were eliminated. In Gary, Hammond and East Chicago, 47 percent of the precincts were eliminated. ❖

**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.**



# Our manufacturing ranks high in nation

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – There are many positive things to say about Indiana and its manufacturing activities. However, most of those good points are by comparison with manufacturing across the nation. Our manufacturing jobs rank among the top 10 of all states in 10 of the 26 sectors reported by the Annual Survey of Manufacturers.



We are first in the number of jobs in Primary Metals (steel and aluminum). Our employment in Transportation Equipment is second only to Michigan. Indiana’s manufacturing employment ranks fourth nationally in furniture, sixth in plastic and rubber products, seventh in both wood and petroleum products, and 10th in the vital area of machinery production. Pretty good for a state

that is 17th in population.

It’s also true that value added by Indiana manufacturing grew from 1998 to 2016 by 41% compared to 27% nationally. Indiana had 17 of 20 industries that experienced increased value added in those 18 years; the nation had fewer (15) growing sectors.

Indiana manufacturing jobs declined less than those in the U.S. as a whole. We lost 25% of our production workers and 20% of non-production employees, compared to 32 and 29% respectively for the nation.

Our positives, built on doing better than the nation, is akin to having a touch of poison ivy while your neighbor has shingles.

Nationally, non-production manufacturing workers saw 1.9 million (40%) of their jobs fade away, while their average pay increased by 65%. But subtract from that figure 47% for inflation; thus, the real gain approximated 18% over 18 years. At the same time, the income relationship between U.S. manufacturing production and non-production workers remained stable with the former earning just 57% as much as non-production workers.

**In Indiana, non-production** workers lost nearly 30,000 manufacturing jobs (20%), but production workers lost 124,000 or a quarter of all their jobs. Only two of 20 industries within manufacturing gained of jobs.

Wages of Hoosier production workers rose by 49%, leaving a real gain of less than 2% over 18 years. The gap between Hoosier production and non-production workers widened from \$18,400 to \$29,800.

Wasn’t there a scenario where automation would cause job losses, but workers, particularly production workers, would benefit? Yes, it might take extra training,

but no one suggested that the people on the factory floor would see virtually no real gain in wages during the transition period.

**Is there some lingering** doubt of why Indiana high school students choose not to follow Mom and Dad into the plant? Even the gains made by non-production manufacturing workers, the white-collar crew, aren’t very attractive to labor market entrants.

We hear about how good money still can be made in manufacturing, but our students seem to be asking for proof and it doesn’t lie in the data. ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an economist. His views can be followed on “Who gets what?” wherever podcasts are available. Or reach him atmortonjmarcus@yahoo.com**

## Hall makes \$100k TV ad buy

SOUTH BEND — Rep. Jackie Walorski’s (R-IN) Democratic challenger in Indiana’s 2nd District announced Wednesday an ad buy worth more than \$100,000 (Garcia, [Roll Call](#)).



Democratic businessman Mel Hall’s latest ad highlights his time as a minister in inner city Detroit. The campaign said Hall’s second ad of the general election would play in South Bend on broadcast and on cable in Chicago. Inside

Elections with Nathan L. Gonzales changed the rating of the race from Solid Republican to Likely Republican in May.

## Baird endorsed by Farm Bureau PAC

The Jim Baird for Congress campaign has announced the endorsement of the Indiana Farm Bureau ELECT PAC, the nonpartisan political action committee associated with Indiana Farm Bureau, for the 2018 General Election ([Greencastle Banner Graphic](#)). Baird is opposed by Tobi Beck, an Avon Democrat in the District 4 race. “We are pleased to endorse Jim Baird who not only has extensive knowledge of agriculture but worked closely with Indiana Farm Bureau during his time in the Indiana General Assembly on numerous ag issues,” the Indiana Farm Bureau ELECT PAC said. “He always kept the interests of individual farmers as his priority and we are confident he will do that in DC.”

## Rep. Lucas studies Colorado pot

Following his trip to Colorado to learn about the state’s medical and recreational marijuana programs, State Rep. Jim Lucas said “it removed all doubt in my mind that this is the right thing to do for Indiana” (Milz, WTHR-TV) Asked why, Lucas replied “because it saves lives,” referring to the opioid epidemic. Lucas authored a bill last session calling for the legalization of medical marijuana. ❖



**William D. Ruckleshaus, Washington Post:**

President Trump is acting with a desperation I've seen only once before in Washington: 45 years ago when President Richard M. Nixon ordered the firing of special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox. Nixon was fixated on ending the Watergate investigation, just as Trump wants to shut down the Mueller investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election. A lesson for the president from history: It turned out badly for Nixon. Not only could he not derail the investigation, but also, 10 months later, he was forced to resign the presidency. In fact, in some ways, Trump is conducting himself more frantically than Nixon, all the while protesting his innocence. Nixon fought to the end because he knew that what was on the tape recordings that the prosecutor wanted would incriminate him. We don't know what Trump is hiding, if anything. But if he is innocent of any wrongdoing, why not let Robert S. Mueller III do his job and prove it? Trump might attempt to shut down the Mueller investigation, but if he fires the special counsel, he could face the same result Nixon faced. He would look like a president with something to hide. He would unleash forces bigger than one man, because Americans believe no one is above the law, not even the president. Nixon was brought down by his disrespect for the rule of law. The hundreds of letters I received after my refusal to fire Cox enshrined this thought in my head for the rest of my life. It's hard to believe that, 45 years later, we may be in store for another damaging attack on the foundations of our democracy. Yet the cynical conduct of this president, his lawyers and a handful of congressional Republicans is frightening to me and should be to every citizen of this country. We are not playing just another Washington political game; there is much more at stake. We need leaders who tell the truth. This is not now happening. ❖

**Emery McClendon, NWI Times:**

In the era of social media, President Trump has taken Twitter to a new level by using it to not only address his supporters but also to help set his agenda with the media and his opponents. Trump uses Twitter like no other politician to express his point of view and answer his critics. The president's tweets can be patriotic or responding to criticism of his family members. Some are complements for good deeds the president wants to recognize. And sometimes they respond to those opposing his administration's policies. Trump has learned to use Twitter to his advantage in a very masterful way. Like it or not, it is a line of communication the president seems to have no intention of giving up — in the same way President Obama refused to give up his Blackberry after entering the White House. But is the president's tweeting helpful? Many would argue it is, but there is a competing chorus of dissenters who think his tweeting is too divisive. Such views tend to be divided along partisan lines. For those who still refuse to accept

him as president, everything he does seems to be wrong — and his tweets will forever be looked upon as an affront to their worldview and agenda. To Trump's ardent supporters, the tweets are a fresh alternative to the sound of crickets in the mainstream media when it comes to hearing good news about the president's agenda and record. ❖



**Michael Morell, Washington Post:**

What would Russian sanctions look like? A Senate bill introduced on Aug. 2, again with sponsors from both parties, is a good start: Prohibit any transaction related to Russian energy projects and bar the purchase of new Russian sovereign debt. Washington should encourage its allies to join in these efforts. Putin is afraid of one thing. He is afraid that one day the Russian middle class will finally rebel against his regime and rush into the streets demanding change. It happened in Tunis, Cairo and other Middle Eastern and North African cities between 2010 and 2012, and it happened most alarmingly, from Putin's perspective, four years ago in Kiev when Ukrainians threw out a government beholden to Moscow. Sanctions that bite at the heart of the Russian economy — sanctions that increase the risk that Russia's middle class will become restive — will get Putin's attention. The leaders that the United States has chosen, and the security experts they have appointed and confirmed, are aware of the threat. A failure to defend the nation as well as possible, and failure to impose severe costs on those attacking our democracy, would be seen by history as a major abdication of responsibility. The statements from intelligence officials at the White House last week were an excellent first step. More steps, and stronger ones, are urgently needed. ❖

**Clarence Page, Chicago Tribune:**

Racial eruptions have become so common in the news of the Trump era that they can exhaust one's capacity to remain perpetually outraged. Almost. Yet, as a new twist on these tribally turbulent times, the case of Sarah Jeong deserves special attention -- and it has been receiving plenty. Right-wing commentators erupted in high, full-blown dudgeon outrage after Jeong, a highly regarded 30-year-old tech writer and author hired for The New York Times editorial board, was found to have a history of ridiculing "white people" on Twitter. The questionable tweets, dating back as far as five years ago, included: "White people! You were already running a karmic deficit but now we're sending it to collections." "I hope the third travel ban forces white people to undergo additional screening before boarding municipal transportation." "The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing white people that folk music is good." I could go on but the tweet that sparked the most responses -- and anger -- by my estimation went like this: "Oh man it's kind of sick how much joy I get out of being cruel to old white men." ❖

## Hill challenges Indy satellite voting

INDIANAPOLIS – Marion County’s decision to open additional voting centers is being contested by Attorney General Curtis Hill, but the Marion County Election Board disputes his assertion that the agreement to offer more early voting sites is contrary to Indiana law or that the board lacked a unanimous vote (Oden Dahl, [Indiana Lawyer](#)). Hill, on behalf of the state, is challenging the consent decree that opens additional satellite voting centers in Marion County for the 2018 general election. He filed a motion Tuesday asking the federal court to withdraw the agreement. The board last month announced six early-voting sites around Indianapolis would be open in time for November’s mid-term election. The state asserts the decree violates Indiana law because the election board does not appear to have unanimously approved the agreement. The Marion County Election Board responded to the state’s motion Wednesday, describing its allegation as “factually incorrect.” In response, the board maintains its support for the consent decree is unanimous. Providing a link to a video of its public meeting July 25, the board gives the time in the video where all the members voted in favor of the agreement.



## Hill’s defense fund questioned

INDIANAPOLIS – Amid allegations of sexual misconduct against State Attorney General Curtis Hill, his supporters have established a nonprofit in his name to help pay his legal bills (Oden Dahl, [Indiana Lawyer](#)). Terre Haute attorney James Bopp and retired Indiana court of Appeals Judge Linda Chezem announced July 23 the creation of Fairness for Curtis Hill, a legal defense fund. The formation of such a defense fund to collect contributions brought a fresh round of inquiry. Nonprofit law attorneys questioned the legality of starting a charity to raise money for one specific

person and how the fund would be monitored in Indiana. Under state statute, the Indiana attorney general is the watchdog over nonprofits operating in the state. Hill’s office did not respond to a question asking how the attorney general’s office will address the possible conflict of interest and ensure an objective investigation if a complaint is lodged against the Fairness for Curtis Hill organization. Furthermore, a nonprofit organized under 501(c)3 requirements must serve a charitable class, rather than a single individual. But some have pointed out that the Fairness organization raises concerns because Hill seems to be singled out as a beneficiary.

## Security guards hired for reporters

WASHINGTON – Notebooks, mics, cameras, hairspray — those are all things TV reporters are used to having with them at political rallies. Now, in the age of President Donald Trump, they’ve added another: security guards ([Politico](#)). The networks are employing them, according to reporters, at Trump’s high-octane political rallies, where the media often serves as the No. 1 rhetorical punching bag. Last weekend, NBC News White House correspondent Geoff Bennett posted a picture on Instagram of himself with a member of the NBC security detail at Trump’s Ohio rally, commenting, “We need security guards when covering rallies hosted by the President of the United States. Let that sink in.”

## Trump imposes Russian sanctions

WASHINGTON – The Trump administration said Wednesday it would impose extensive new sanctions against Russia, banning a wide range of exports and other measures, as punishment for its use of a nerve agent in an attempt in March to assassinate British citizen and

ex-Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal and his daughter ([Washington Post](#)). The sanctions again highlighted the gap between President Trump’s conciliatory language toward Russia and the tough position taken by many in Congress and within the administration itself. Trump, who has resisted congressional insistence on additional sanctions on Russia for election interference and other activities, appeared to have had little choice in the matter, however. Under a 1991 law, he was required to act once the administration determined Russian responsibility.

## Russ penetrate Florida election

TAMPA – Russian operatives have ‘penetrated’ some of Florida’s voter registration systems ahead of the 2018 midterms, U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson said Wednesday, adding new urgency to concerns about hacking. The state, however, said it has received ‘zero information’ supporting his claim ([Tampa Bay Times](#)). ‘They have already penetrated certain counties in the state and they now have free rein to move about,’ Nelson told the Tampa Bay Times before a campaign event in Tampa. He said something similar a day earlier in Tallahassee but declined to elaborate. ‘That’s classified,’ the Democrat said Tuesday.

## Tribune quits Sinclair merger

CHICAGO – Tribune Media Co. terminated its merger agreement with rival TV station-owner Sinclair Broadcast Group SBGI 4.23% and sued the company for failing to make sufficient efforts to get their \$3.9 billion deal approved by regulators ([Wall Street Journal](#)). The deal would have included Fox59 and CBS4 in Indianapolis.