

Freakish events buffet mid-term races

Lack of polling trendlines, 2016 upsets haunt prognosticators

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – On April 3, 1974, one of the most freakish weather events in recorded memory raked Indiana and the central U.S. It was called the “Super Outbreak,” and in one day at least 18 tornadoes gashed Indiana, from Monticello to Rochester to Madison.



The next day, I joined a Peru Daily Tribune photographer and headed up to Rochester and Talma to shoot and report the carnage. On Old U.S. 31, the Ghrist Motel was in shambles. There was one room

where the roof was torn off, a pickup truck was wedged in the walls, and on the dresser sat a plug-in soup warmer.

Sitting next to it was an empty can of corn, its top attached but peeled back. Both sat on the top serenely, unmoved, as a deathly maelstrom blasted the surroundings.

Indiana’s political reality feels quite as hectic as the “Super Outbreak” in the final weeks before the 2018 mid-terms. The data sets are freakish and wanton. The

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Mike & Joe nonsense

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – Will this nonsense never end? Joe Donnelly’s brother moved a plant to Mexico, like many other such plants. Joe earned some income and then sold his stock. It was a small percentage of his income. Oh yeah, and the axe he uses in an ad appears to have been made in Mexico.

Mike Braun’s company sold auto parts made in China and Mexico. Like every other auto parts store. And some of the boxes were even labeled in Chinese and English!

These incessant ads that badger us if we try to watch television or listen to the radio, since they cancel each other



“Those engaged in the political arena must stop treating political opponents as being morally defective. By the way, do you see how nice I’m behaving today? Have you ever seen this?”

- President Trump, reacting to bombs being sent to two former presidents, CNN



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out, now turn on "He lied, but he lied worse. No, he lied worse. No, you lied more." They act like six-year-olds facing off in front of their parents. Beyond these inane ads, there are a few other things going on in the campaign.

1.) Braun's campaign is among the worst Senate campaigns in my lifetime. I'm not saying that he is wrong on issues, not qualified to serve as senator, a poor businessman, or anything else. Just that he has run an awful campaign. No grassroots, little money beyond his own, and after his terrific primary ads, in the fall campaign they've been terrible, or boring.

2.) Braun's version of campaigning is the antithesis of a Holcomb-Daniels style effort. The general rule is this: Voters are more Republican the farther away you get from the courthouse. This tends to be true even in heavily Republican suburban areas. Therefore, Mitch went everywhere in his RV. Eric found every basketball court and interesting food spot in the state. It was not only to meet people, but also was important for symbolism: We care about everybody, not just the big cities. We are real people, not just television props. In off-year elections, turnout in those areas matters more than in the presidential years. You can win by ignoring the smaller counties, but you can also lose. When you're running against an incumbent, generally speaking you try harder.

3.) Braun's ad called "Won't Wait" is likely the worst Senate ad since Richard Roudebush, whose closing ad in his razor-thin loss to Vance Hartke in 1970 had pieces of the Republican elephant design coming together. I have seen his Google search, or whatever, ad many times and never once figured out a single point in the ad until I looked at it on-line. Even then, I don't understand what they are trying to do. Instead of the humor and clarity of his primary ads, Braun's fall ads are generally muddled, all over the place and worse than uninspiring: they are boring.

4.) Donnelly's ads, on the other hand, are crystal clear: Democrat, what's a Democrat? Joe is running as a sort of "Trump Lite." A little bit of wall, some changes in health care, some of the tax cuts (maybe). He was against Kavanaugh, but only chooses to stress that he was for Gorsuch, which is basically irrelevant. It was a free vote. Braun was for Kavanaugh, but that of course is apparently not as important as where Joe's axe was made. Both fear that actually talking about the Supreme Court is more politically risky than verbally assaulting each other over labels on boxes that include more than English.

5.) Donnelly, like he did against Mourdock (my way or the



highway criticism which was then reenforced by Mourdock's debate gaffe on abortion), has a thematic framework that has filled-in parts of his "What's a Democrat?" theme. He has walked across bridges, chopped wood and tried every other analogy to suggest that in Washington there are three parties: Republicans, Democrats, and Hoosiers (as in "I stand with the people of Indiana"). His committee assignments, amendments and what votes he casts will be determined by whether he organizes with the liberal Democrat leadership, not Hoosiers.

6.) If grassroots matter at all, Donnelly wins. He's likable. Not fake likable; Joe is actually likable. He chose to be a Democrat and I chose to be a Republican, but we were good friends, genuine friends. That said, while it is preferable that we have likable people representing us, the political votes one casts – especially

organizational ones – are more important than being friendly when running for senator in a closely divided Senate. You're not electing a Rotary Club president. Many people don't feel Braun is likable. I don't know him so I don't know. In his avoidance of grassroots campaigning, Braun appears to be like many successful businessmen, who know how to run a business but they don't especially like regular people. If this election is determined by who seems most likable, Donnelly wins in a walk.

7.) If the race is between Donnelly and Braun, Donnelly wins. If it is nationalized, Donnelly loses. That has been apparent since at least 2016, maybe since 2012. In other words, there is one issue that will motivate Republicans. We all know it. It is not 7,500 people marching toward the border like an invasion force, though that is part of it. It is not Judge Kavanaugh, or other court appointments, though that is part of it. It is not the turnaround of the American economy, though that is part of it. It is not rebuilding our national defense as the world becomes increasingly dangerous, though that, too, is part of it. The issue is this: Who is going to control the Senate? A single issue. Yet, somehow, even as people have begun voting, we are still mired in ads about who loves or hates Mexico the most. The Republicans, in particular, need to re-focus this right now or even the rightward tilt of Indiana will result in Indiana's vote in the Senate siding with the Democrats in how the body is organized. In other words, it is decisive in all the above issues. Joe would not have the

opportunity to vote for Gorsuch, or part of a wall, or some Obamacare reform, or some tax cuts, if the Democrats control the Senate. That is the issue.

8.) Anyone or any poll who projects this race at this point is guessing – pure and simple guessing. Turnout is critical. Turnout isn't a national question, or even a statewide stat. What matters is who turns out where in critical sub-sections of districts. It cannot be tracked with 370 people or 3,700 people polled. One poll claimed 90% of the voters intended to vote in this off-year election. Yeah, right. It may be high, but likely will be closer to the norm than it will be to 90%. And where turnout is high is what will matter – how many from which sub-clusters (e.g. will Republican conservative women vote more than Democrat-leaning women?) and from which specific geographical areas (which tend to be reflective of those sub-clusters). Right now, the only thing in Indiana we can predict with confidence is this: Joe Donnelly will either be reelected or defeated by a margin somewhere between significant or a cliff-hanger. But unless Braun and the Republicans get focused in these last two weeks, Donnelly will not only over-perform, he may actually win in a state that, on the surface, right now should be an easy GOP victory. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.

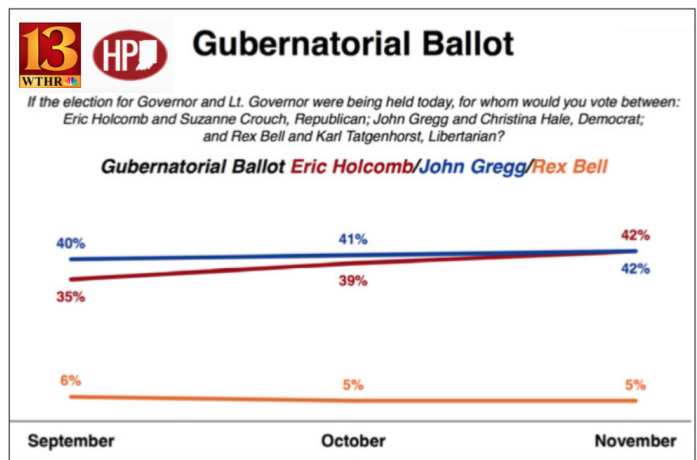
Freakish, from page 1

pundits and talking heads are confused. There's that Mexican caravan President Trump is hyping, and bombs are being sent to former presidents, vice presidents and CNN. Heading into the final days, about the only thing we can safely predict is that healthy Republican majorities will be maintained in the Indiana House and Senate, and the GOP will easily carry the three statewide races. In eight of the nine U.S. House seats, the incumbents or current ruling party should prevail (that includes Greg Pence in the 6th CD and Jim Baird in the 4th).

Senate race still a tossup

As for our marquee race, FiveThirtyEight gives Sen. Joe Donnelly a 71.6% chance of winning, but that's down from 80.9% on Monday and 77.1% last week.

There were two independent Indiana Senate race polls released this week, showing significantly different results. An IndyPolitics Poll of likely voters conducted by Mason Strategies has Republican nominee Mike Braun leading Donnelly 47-43% with Libertarian Lucy Brenton at 3% while 7% were undecided. Its MOE was 3.9% with 600 likely voters. A second by SurveyUSA (816 likely voters, 4.6% MOE) has Donnelly leading 41-40% with Brenton at 8% and 11% undecided. Donnelly had an 11% lead



These were the fall 2016 gubernatorial race trendlines from HPI/ WTHR in a race that Eric Holcomb won by by 6%, with 21% undecided vote breaking for emphatically Donald Trump, and pulling Holcomb in over John Gregg.

among women compared to his 10% plurality with women in his 2012 defeat of Republican Richard Mourdock. The Mason poll shows that 30% would vote for Donnelly because of his vote against Justice Brett Kavanaugh while 35% said they would oppose him and 32% said it didn't matter. By the way, Brenton received 5.4% in the 2016 race against Republican Todd Young and Democrat Evan

Bayh.

Unlike the Howey Politics/WTHR polling program in 2016 and the Howey Politics/DePauw program in 2012, these two polls are simply isolated snapshots. The two sponsors didn't coordinate their polling dates and releases to lend some semblance of trending. In our polling programs of 2016 and 2012, we conducted a cluster of two or three polls in the fall, allowing us to identify trends far below the head-to-heads. For instance, if you plot the trend lines from the 2016 gubernatorial, senatorial and presidential races, through our final poll three days prior to the election, and then the final results, the signs were very clear as Donald Trump, Eric Holcomb and Todd Young all carried the state. We don't have such data sets in the current Senate race.

The forecasting conducted by HPI and columnist Mark Souder leading up to the May Republican primary were based on FEC reports, media purchases, the behavior of the candidates and campaigns, and anecdotal evidence that brought us to the conclusion that Braun would defeat U.S. Reps. Luke Messer and Todd Rokita, even though we lacked polling data and we left the race as a "tossup" on primary day. Braun ended up winning with 41% (while the twins Rokita and Messer ended up at 30% and 28%). Late undecideds broke for Braun.

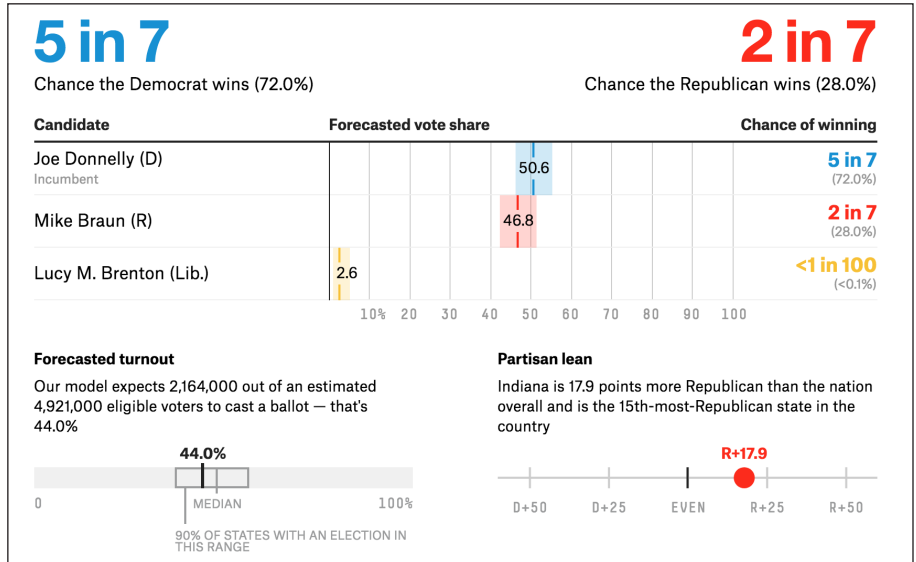
The Donnelly, Braun, Brenton race remains in our tossup category, but the anecdotal evidence is less clear than it was in May, and we're watching some \$70 million of independent media expenditures utterly engulf the process. Democrats hold a \$27 million to \$24 million lead over spending in the INSen race, according to Advertising Analytics, but the GOP has booked \$9 million in ads through Nov. 6, compared to \$7 million for Democrats. Hoosier TV viewers are now seeing a blur of China Mike and Mexico Joe ads and are tuning them out.

The final Senate debate at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 30, stands to take on out-sized importance.

Control for the Senate is playing out in states Trump won. Yet Politico, Howey Politics, Cook Political Report, Inside Elections and FiveThirtyEight give Donnelly a nominal edge. Sabato's Crystal Ball is more pessimistic on Donnelly's chances (see analysis, Page 15).

Early voting trends heavy, mixed

On the ground, we're watching record early voting in Republican counties such as Johnson and Hamilton. There have been early voting surges in Tippecanoe and Monroe counties, home to Purdue and Indiana universi-



DATES	POLLSTER	SAMPLE	WEIGHT	DONNELLY	BRAUN	MARGIN	ADJUSTMENTS			
							LIKELY VOTER	TIME-LINE	HOUSE EFFECTS	ADJUSTED MARGIN
OCT 15-20	Mason Strategies	600	LV 1.32	43%	47%	R+4.0	—	<0.1	<3.0	R+1.0
OCT 14-17	American Viewpoint R	800	LV 0.74	40%	44%	R+4.0	—	<0.1	<5.3	D+1.3
OCT 12-16	Gravis Marketing	377	LV 0.71	44%	40%	D+4.0	—	<0.1	<1.6	D+5.6
OCT 12-16	SurveyUSA	816	LV 1.91	41%	40%	D+1.0	—	<0.1	0.3	D+0.7
OCT 13-15	Vox Populi Polling	783	LV 1.11	55%	45%	D+10.0	—	<0.1	<0.6	D+10.6
OCT 7-10	American Viewpoint R	800	LV 0.40	40%	44%	R+4.0	—	<0.1	<5.3	D+1.4
SEP 30-OCT 3	American Viewpoint R	800	LV 0.22	39%	43%	R+4.0	—	<0.2	<5.3	D+1.5
SEP 29-OCT 2	Fox News	695	LV 0.80	43%	41%	D+2.0	—	<0.2	<1.4	D+3.6
SEP 12-19	Ipsos	1,181	LV 0.52	46%	43%	D+2.2	—	<0.1	<0.9	D+3.2
SEP 8-11	Fox News	677	LV 0.14	43%	45%	R+2.0	—	<0.1	<1.4	R+0.6

ties. Yet we've seen General Assembly level polling from Hamilton and suburban Marion counties that show President Trump and Braun sideways, with Donnelly's vote on Brett Kavanaugh having the opposite impact from what we expect to find in Kosciusko or Rush counties.

Republican-affiliated voters have outpaced Democratic-affiliated voters in early voting in seven closely watched states, according to data provided by TargetSmart and independently analyzed by the NBC News Data Analytics Lab. In Indiana, 51% of early voters had a Republican affiliation, compared with 39% who had a Democratic affiliation and 10% who were not affiliated with either party. The data also revealed women voters have outpaced men voters so far (53-46%), and suburban voters have outpaced rural and urban voters (45% suburban, 39% rural, 16% urban). Those trends, specifically suburban women,

would tend to favor Donnelly.

Donnelly, in our view, remains a slight favorite in this tossup race, but we say that with less confidence than when we forecasted a Braun victory in the Republican primary.

As for the Senate as a whole, FiveThirtyEight gives Republicans an 82.5% chance of maintaining a Senate majority. Conversely, Democrats have a 84.9% chance of taking control of the U.S. House. In House races, Democrats in suburban districts appear to have the edge in the post-Kavanaugh era. In Senate races, President Trump appears to be successfully stoking up the GOP base with fear and loathing on the immigrant caravan, while promising a 10% middle class tax cut before the election, even though Congress isn't in session.

Confused punditry

To watch the Sunday morning talking heads this past weekend was to witness utter confusion. Their errant 2016 prognostications haunt them, as almost everyone missed Donald Trump's epic upset. The NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll released on Sunday is full of curiosities that fuel the current confusion. Democrats lead the congressional generic 48-41, down from a 12% lead in September. But among likely voters, that lead is 50-41%, the first time that the likely voter screen has hinted at better Democratic odds. Women favor a Democratic-controlled Congress by a huge 25% margin. But President Trump's approve/disapprove is 47/49%, up from 44/52% in September. Yet, among likely voters (which is what we focus on), he stands at 45/52%.

A Quinnipiac Poll released Wednesday showed Democrats are winning over women voters 58% to 33%, while Republicans have men's support 50% to 42%. If those numbers hold, the 2018 midterms could have the largest gender gap since 1958, according to CNN. That would appear to be good news for Sen. Donnelly.

The Washington Post reported on Wednesday that congressional races are tightening. Post: "Most of the battleground House races are being fought on Republican turf (63 out of 69 seats, according to a new Washington Post-Schar School poll). That means that Democrats have a built-in edge that makes it easier to capture the net 23 seats needed to regain House control. But there's decent evidence those House races remain tight or could be tightening. Per The Post-Schar School poll from Oct. 15-21, Democrats hold a statistically insignificant lead over Republicans in the most hotly contested races. Fifty percent of likely voters support the Democratic candidate in the 69 surveyed races versus 47% that back the Republican candidate. Per an NBC/ Wall Street Journal poll from Oct. 14-17, Democrats hold a 9-point advantage over Republicans in which party likely voters would like to control Congress. But in the most competitive House battlegrounds, many of which take place on traditionally Republican turf, congres-

sional preference is tied."

The Cook Political Report's Amy Walter notes that Trump's current approval ratings pretty much mirror the 2016 vote. She suggested to Axios that the Talking Head's "Same As It Ever Was" song encapsulates the current state. For example, the president's white, non-college educated, mostly male supporters now give him a 65% approval rating, according to the WSJ/NBC numbers, compared to 64% of the 2016 vote. Today, white college voters give Trump a 38% approval rating; and in 2016, they gave him 38% of the vote.

Turnout will be huge, above 50%, as all demographics are energized, which is good news for Braun and Republicans. As of Tuesday afternoon, the New York Times



reported more than seven million people had voted early, according to data compiled by Michael McDonald, a professor of political science at the University of Florida who studies elections. "If these patterns persist, we could see a turnout rate at least equaling the turnout rate in 1966, which was 48%, and if we beat that then you have to go all the way back to 1914, when the turnout rate was 51%," he said. "We could be looking at a turnout rate that virtually no one has ever experienced." Publicly available data on early voting suggests more likely Republican voters than likely Democrats have so far cast their ballots, but it is too early to draw any firm conclusions.

U.S. House control volatile

NBC pointed that Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton both had 47% approval heading into 2010 and 1994 mid-terms, and their parties both lost dozens of House seats. But Axios reported Wednesday that after 2016, Sarah Chamberlain of the Republican Main Street Partnership who is "not a big fan of polling," sifted through 17,000 interviews conducted with Republican voters on the ground over the past six months by her group. She predicts that "Republicans will hold the House by two seats."

The Associated Press reported the emerging Democratic lack of confidence: In the closing stretch of the 2018 campaign, the question is no longer the size of the

Democratic wave. It's whether there will be a wave at all. Top operatives in both political parties concede that Democrats' narrow path to the Senate majority has essentially disappeared, a casualty of surging Republican enthusiasm across GOP strongholds. Leading Democrats now fear the battle for the House majority will be decided by just a handful of seats."

One of those could have been U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski fending off a challenge from Democrat Mel Hall. HPI lists that race as "Likely Walorski."

There was this warning from Mika Brzezinski on MSNBC's "Morning Joe": "This is hard to say. People don't want to hear it, but the (Democratic) party badly mis-played the Kavanaugh hearings. Like Hillary, they lack a message and their leaders lack heart and unless trends change, Democrats are going to wake up to the same kind of political reckoning they did two years ago."

Expect the unexpected

The unpredictable winds of 2016 continue to blow to this very day, just hours after pipe bombs were sent to two former presidents, CNN, Eric Holder, George Soros, Rep. Maxine Waters and, this morning, to former Vice President Joe Biden and actor Robert DeNiro.

It's an era where blue waves became crimson tides, when prospective Gov. John Gregg becomes a 2018 Twitter voice, where immigrant caravans course up the continent as Category 5 hurricanes glide by, as President Trump and Vice President Pence warn of non-existent Middle Easterners embedded in that movement misery, bombs show up at CNN and the homes of the Obamas, Clintons and Bidens, and Justice Kavanaugh tilts the Supreme Court to the right.

Our safest prediction: Expect some jaw-dropping moments to emerge from this epic whirlwind on Nov. 6. ❖

2nd CD ads now in full swing

By JACOB CURRY
and BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – With their debates finished and Election Day now less than two weeks away, the 2nd CD campaigns are in full swing, having released a flurry of recent ads. This week, both the Mel Hall and Rep. Jackie Walorski campaigns put out two new ads, each opting for one positive message and one ag-

gressive message. Their tone and direction reveal what the campaigns are focusing on in these final days, health care and character.

In one, Rep. Walorski brings on [Julie Graham](#), the widow of Dr. Todd Graham, whose murder by a patient upset about withheld opioid medications provided the impetus for a provision added to a congressional bill to fight opioid addiction. Graham praises the representative's work as effective and an honor to her late husband. Walorski introduced the act in the spring and has made it a major point on her resume for this fall. Along with her work on dealing with sexual assault in the military and with veteran's affairs, the bill has formed the basis of Walorski's health care messaging, an area which has gained a great deal of attention this election.



Walorski has come under fire from Hall for her votes to take away coverage for pre-existing conditions throughout the campaign. Walorski has defended herself, saying in debates and ads that she has always supported such coverage. Recently, however, the South Bend Tribune reported that "Mary," a friend whom Walorski claims is the reason for her long-time support, is not at risk to lose coverage under the Republican healthcare plan because she is a public official with a guaranteed plan. The Hall campaign seized on the opportunity, calling Walorski "tricky" in one new ad. The ad title "[Not Always](#)" ends with an eyebrow-raising message: "Jackie Walorski: Voting against health care and then using a cancer patient to lie to us about it." That's pretty antagonistic language.

For his part, Hall has touted his background in health care to contrast himself with Walorski. In the ad "[Truth](#)," Hall raises his time at Press Ganey and as a health-care advisor to depict himself as someone who can move things forward on the issue. He also responds to accusations that he's not really a 2nd District Hoosier, saying that South Bend is his home and a place where he has created jobs as a healthcare executive. The South Bend Tribune makes another appearance in this ad, citing recent articles to say that the paper "rejects Walorski's attacks" on his Hoosier qualifications.

The Tribune yet again plays a role in another new

ad, this time from Rep. Walorski. In ["Residency,"](#) the congresswoman's campaign repeats many of the accusations they've thrown at Hall over his time living in D.C., citing a Tribune article from Oct. 15 that found discrepancies between the candidate's claims and his property and voting records. The ad also makes an unsourced claim that Hall took illegal tax breaks during this period. Like Hall's "Not Always," this Walorski ad questions the opponent's character. It ends simply: "You can't trust Mel Hall."



Hall, Walorski receive endorsements

The race for Indiana's 2nd Congressional District continues to heat up as both candidates receive national endorsements and awards less than three weeks before the Nov. 6 election (Straw, Elkhart Truth). Following Tuesday evening's debate, Hall was endorsed by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee as one of its "Red to Blue" campaigns, which focus on highly competitive campaigns across the nation. Walorski was at local retailer Stephenson's of Elkhart on Wednesday morning to receive the 2018 "Hero of Main Street" Award from the National Retail Federation for her support local small businesses and retailers. The South Bend Tribune endorsed Hall in his race against Rep. Walorski: "When the Editorial Board asked Jackie Walorski what the top issue is as she campaigns for reelection, she pointed to the federal tax cuts enacted last year. The 2nd District congresswoman described her vote on those tax cuts as "the most important vote I've cast" because of their impact on the economy, and for allowing people to keep extra money in their paychecks. When we asked Hall the same question, he pointed to health care, specifically, the fear of not having affordable health coverage. We believe Hall is right. And we believe he has hit the right notes on health care."

Walorski, Hall can't agree on format

Walorski and Democrat Hall initially had agreed to three live televised debates, the first time Walorski had ever agreed to such a challenge from a Democratic opponent, but the campaigns reportedly have been unable to agree on a format for the third event (Parrott, South Bend Tribune). Walorski has proposed a

third debate under the same format and rules as the first two — live, televised, in a studio with only the candidates and moderators present, but Hall has instead pushed for the third debate to occur before a live, in-person audience. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Walorski.

9th CD: Bernie Sanders stumps for Watson

Before an excited crowd of supporters young and old, and a few voices of opposition proudly waving signs, U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders railed against familiar targets late Friday morning. A fairly large crowd had gathered outside before a small stage set up for the rally at Indiana University's Dunn Meadow. The former candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination was visiting Indiana University's campus for the first time since his stop in the 2016 Indiana primary, this time to make an impassioned endorsement of 9th CD nominee Liz Watson, seeking to unseat U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth. Sanders, as he put it, cut to the chase quickly. "We are here for the very important purpose of electing Liz Watson as the next congressperson from this district," he said. The two shared the stage as Sanders spoke. The Vermont senator focused mostly on voter turnout, pushing his belief that high turnout would equate to success for liberal candidates come November. "What my Republican colleagues want is for people not to vote," he said as the crowd booed. Pointing to historically low turnout in the 2014 midterm elections, Sanders continued: "They were ever so happy because working people didn't come out to vote, young people didn't come out to vote, and billionaires like the Koch brothers were able to buy the election. Well, this is 2018, and things are going to change." Watson then gave her own 15-minute speech. She was sure to show her gratitude to Sanders before getting into stumping. "It is such a great honor that



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Sen. Sanders has decided to come here to join us," she said. "He is here today because he knows what we know, the election in just a couple of short weeks is the most important election of our lifetime." She especially targeted corrupt politicians and special interest groups, labels her campaign have tried to associate with her opponent Rep. Hollingsworth. In fact, Watson did not shy away from mentioning Hollingsworth specifically. She continued her routine of assailing the congressman for his vote to support last year's tax reform: "He voted to do this at the expense of Hoosier schools, Hoosier hospitals and Hoosier veterans. He doesn't work for us, he works only for himself and his wealthy special interest donors." But, as she concluded her remarks Watson told voters not to lose hope. "In this moment, your vote, your voice, is worth more than all of the money flooding Washington," she said. "Let's get to work. Let's take our place in history. Let's vote."

Hollingsworth endorsements

Hollingsworth for Congress campaign announced that the candidate has been endorsed by the Indiana Manufacturers Association. The Council for Citizens Against Government Waste, a non-partisan group representing over one million supporters dedicated to eliminating government waste and inefficiencies, also has endorsed Hollingsworth. Hollingsworth was one of only three individuals to receive this endorsement in Indiana, joined by Reps. Jim Banks and Jackie Walorski. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Hollingsworth.

U.S. Senate

Braun launches 'Blowin' in the wind' ad

Braun launched his "[Blowin' in the Wind](#)" ad aimed at Donnelly this morning. "Sen. Donnelly will tell Hoosiers anything, but he stands for nothing: he's just blowin' in the wind," Braun said. "You can't say you're with President Trump when you're standing with the extreme left on Justice Kavanaugh, Hillary Clinton & the Iran deal, and you can't keep fooling Hoosiers when you're the least effective Democrat Senator and shipped jobs to Mexico."

Donnelly's 'Axe' ad a copy

Donnelly aired his TV ad, "Axe." As the senator splits wood in his backyard (something I'll be doing this afternoon), the lumberjack incumbent says, "For the most part I'm an easy going guy, but not when Mike Braun keeps lying about my record." Donnelly stays in theme: "I split with my own party to support funding for President Trump's border wall. The liberal left wants to chop defense funding. No way. Mike Braun, he shifts jobs to China. We've got to cut that out." The Braun campaign cried foul, saying the idea was "stolen straight from a parody ad in HBO's Veep." (Psssst, in advertising and politics, stealing a good idea, mimicking a great ad happens all the time.) The Braun campaign adds, "As if ripping off a political ad

from a parody of bad political ads wasn't enough, Mexico Joe is proudly wielding a product made in the country where Donnelly profited from outsourcing American jobs: Mexico." It's a Truper Steel Michigan Axe. It's also one of the best ads of the general cycle.

Credit unions back Donnelly

The Credit Union National Association has launched its first round of independent expenditures Donnelly, who was an early supporter of the bipartisan regulatory overhaul bill enacted this Congress.

Holcomb to stump for Braun

Gov. Eric Holcomb, U.S. Senate candidate Mike Braun and Indiana's statewide Republican team will be making stops across Northwest and Southern Indiana this weekend as part of the Indiana Republican Party's Right Track Results Tour, according to a news release. The tour, which includes meet-and-greets and rallies, will visit LaPorte and Valparaiso on Friday with Braun and Secretary of State Connie Lawson, Auditor Tera Klutz and Treasurer Kelly Mitchell. Holcomb will then join the tour on Saturday with stops in Plainfield, Jeffersonville, Evansville and Washington. The tour, which runs through Election Day, showcases that Indiana Republicans – from the Courthouse, Statehouse and White House – are delivering results for Hoosiers. Through Republicans' work balancing budgets, growing the state's workforce and helping companies create jobs, Indiana is on the right track and America is getting back on the right track, the release stated. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

General Assembly

Most late money flows in 9 races

While final pre-election finance reports will be posted on the Election Division's website on Friday, the bulk of the late contributions to Republican House candidates have been reported in five races:

- **HD19**, where incumbent Republican Julie Olthoff is in a tight race with Democrat Lisa Beck. This is one of the few districts in the state that is closely split between the two parties. The House Republican Campaign Committee (HRCC) has given Olthoff \$65,000. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

- **HD89**, where GOP incumbent Cindy Kirchhofer faces former Democratic Rep. John Barnes. HRCC has given nearly \$36,000 to Kirchhofer and a host of health care-related PACs and GOP caucus contributions added about \$10,000 more. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

- **HD4**, where incumbent Republican Ed Soliday faces Frank Szczepanski in another Northwest Indiana area district seen as competitive. Soliday has reported over \$27,000 in late contributions. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Soliday.

- **HD5**, where GOP incumbent Dale DeVon is in a

tight race with South Bend area heart surgeon Donald Westerhausen. HRCC put another \$40,000 into DeVon's campaign. That makes a total of \$65,000 they've given to DeVon.

Horse Race Status: Tossup.

■ **HD88**, where House Speaker Brian Bosma usually has little trouble winning reelection. But a changing district and newspaper reports of a long-ago liaison with a House employee have made a sure thing a little less sure. Bosma has reported receiving a total of about \$21,000 in late contributions in the last few days, largely from business-related PACs. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Bosma.

House Democrats appear to be focusing late fundraising on two districts:

■ **HD15:** MoveOn.org gave Democrat Chris Chyung \$1,000 and Sang Chyung gave him \$26,160. Chyung is trying to unseat Republican Rep. Hal Slager.

Horse Race Status: Leans Slager.

■ **HD71**, where they hope to keep the seat of retiring House Rep. Steve Stemler in Democratic hands. The House Democratic Caucus gave Rita Fleming \$45,000 in her race against Republican Matt Owen. Reps. Terri Austin and Phil GiaQuinta added another \$6,000 in late money.

Horse Race Status: Likely Fleming.

■ **HD26**, where Democrats hope to knock off incumbent Republican Siegrist in this West Lafayette area district. House Democrats gave \$17,000 to the campaign of Chris Campbell. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

In all, House Republican candidates have so far received a total of about \$203,000 in late contributions while House Democratic candidates have received a total of \$83,000.

In the Indiana Senate, the late money focus is so far on four races:

■ **SD38**, where GOP incumbent Jon Ford is in a very competitive race with Democrat Chris Gambill. Ford has received nearly \$100,000 in late contributions, the bulk of it from HRCC, the GOP State Committee, and fellow caucus members. Gambill, meanwhile, has received \$30,000 from Senate Democrats and another \$5,000 from I-PACE, the political arm of the Indiana State Teachers Association. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

■ **SD29**, Democrat J.D. Ford is making a second attempt to unseat Republican incumbent Mike Delph. Ford has received over \$67,000 in late contributions, most of which came from Senate Democrats and the Democratic State Committee. He also received \$24,000 from the Business Advocacy Committee, the political arm of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce. Delph, meanwhile, received about \$36,000 from SMCC. **Horse Race Status:**

Largest Late Money Contributors to Legislative Races

House Republican Campaign Committee	145,468
Senate Majority Campaign Committee	109,359
Republican State Committee	70,235
Indiana Senate Democrats	68,000
House Democratic Caucus	62,000
Indiana Democratic Party	31,143
Mark Messmer	25,000
Business Advocacy Committee	24,000
Indiana Business for Responsible Government	19,000
I-PACE	14,500
Insurance PAC	13,954
Build Indiana PAC	10,000

** As of 3 p.m. 10/24/2018*

Tossup.

■ **SD31**, Next door, incumbent Republican Jim Merritt is hoping to push aside an energetic campaign from Democrat Derek Camp. Merritt has so far received about \$30,000 largely from business-related groups and Camp has received nearly \$10,000 in late contributions from the Indiana Democratic Party. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Merritt.

■ **SD26**, Finally, in what appears to be a surprisingly close race, Republican Mike Gaskill is hoping to follow retiring incumbent GOP Sen. Doug Eckerty in this Yorktown area seat. Gaskill has received over \$45,000 in late money, mostly from SMCC, the GOP State Committee, and the campaign committee of State Sen. Mark Messmer. Democrat Dave Cravens has received over \$20,000 in late contributions from House Democrats and the Indiana Democratic Party. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

In all, Senate Republican candidates have received over \$275,000 in late contributions. Senate Democrats have received about \$137,000.

Nation

Trump, Pence in rally frenzy

President Trump will hold at least 10 rallies in the final week before the midterms, possibly bumping up to two events each day in two states (Axios). The White House and Secret Service are still working out the logistics. The first rally in the sprint will be held in Florida next Wednesday and Vice President Mike Pence will join on a couple of the stops, a source familiar with the rallies said. Why it matters: This is a heavy load of campaigning for a sitting president. But Trump wants to defy the historical pattern of presidents losing congressional seats in their first midterm election. Of Trump's 33 public midterm rallies, only eight have been in areas that voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016. ❖

Hill won't face charges, but Holcomb, others call for him to resign

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Two reports issued Tuesday on allegations of sexual harassment and assault by Attorney General Curtis Hill freed him from a potential criminal

indictment, but left him open to a civil suit while tossing the Indiana Statehouse into uncomfortable uncertainty as Gov. Eric Holcomb and bipartisan legislative leaders renewed calls for him to resign.



In their wake, Hill remains a deeply damaged Statehouse entity and a pariah with the majority of his own political party. His reaction of defiance can only be mitigated if he seeks a course of recognition of his now well-documented actions and redemption. Pending civil suits will keep him in the news with a harsh glare.

On Wednesday, Gov. Holcomb told Indiana Public Media, "I believe that resignation would be the proper course – now that this has been confirmed three times." But Holcomb says he doesn't have the authority to tell the legislature to impeach Hill – he says he can only offer his personal opinion. Late Tuesday afternoon, Holcomb had said, "I said I believed the women who stepped forward to report sexual harassment by the Indiana attorney general. The special prosecutor agreed and said, 'I have accepted the victim statements as true.' The findings show a disregard of the executive branch zero tolerance harassment policy. My position has not changed."

Special prosecutor Daniel Sigler and Inspector General Lori Torres both issued scathing reports describing Hill's behavior at the March 15 sine die party as "creepy" and predatory toward State Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon and four legislative staffers. But Sigler said Tuesday morning he did not have [enough information](#) to level criminal charges and secure a conviction against Hill. On a potential battery charge, Sigler explained, "I could not prove Curtis Hill to be rude, insolent or angry."

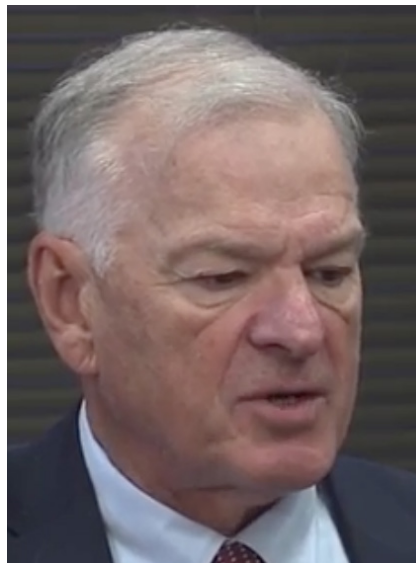
Torres released a 25-page report about an hour later, which said in part, "Multiple eyewitnesses provided statements that Hill's conduct was inappropriate, 'creepy,' unwelcome and made many of the women at the party uncomfortable. The women affected indicated Hill's actions caused emotional distress, family distress and anger. At least one woman left the sine die party in tears, others

were upset enough to actively avoid any contact with Hill the rest of the night, and still others sought the protection of men and other women who were there."

Hill was quietly defiant, speaking through attorneys Jim Voyles and Jennifer Lukemeyer: "The Special Prosecutor's investigation exonerates and absolves Mr. Curtis Hill of any factual and legal criminal behavior. Mr. Hill appreciates the diligence and thoroughness taken by Special Prosecutor Daniel J. Sigler in his investigation of his conduct on March 15, 2018, at Sine Die Party held at A.J.'s Lounge. Mr. Hill will continue to serve the people of Indiana in the capacity for which he was elected as the Indiana attorney general."

Holcomb is not the first governor to have his call for a Statehouse official in his own party to resign rebuffed. Gov. Mitch Daniels urged then-Secretary of State Charlie White to resign after he was indicted on felony election fraud charges. White resisted until state law required him to resign once he was convicted on six of seven felony counts.

Retiring Senate President Pro Tem David Long and House Minority Leader Terry Goodin renewed their calls for Hill to step down, as did House Speaker Brian Bosma through a spokeswoman. "The Attorney General's behav-



Special Prosecutor Dan Sigler (left) and Attorney General Curtis Hill. Sigler said he could not file felony sexual battery or misdemeanor battery charges against the attorney general.

ior that night toward the women involved is unacceptable. Hoosiers expect better from the people they elect to represent them in state government, especially when the individual involved is the chief law enforcement officer for the state of Indiana," Long said. "I called for the Attorney General to step down in July, and I continue to believe that is the right thing for him to do. However, it appears that he has no intention to do so, and that is his decision alone to make at this time. The people of Indiana will have the final say in this matter."

Encouraging others to read the reports, Goodin added, "Today's announcement does not change my belief that AG Hill should resign. It cements it."

The two reports tossed a bomblet into the civic conversation just two weeks before the mid-term. There has been much speculation on a wave of women candidates and voters reacting to the conduct of President Trump and sexual harassment allegations made against Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh during his confirmation process. The conduct of Democrats during the Kavanaugh confirmation hearings seemingly has resulted in a backlash by Republican voters, who are now matching Democratic voter intensity in opinion polls.

And just last week, the IndyStar reported that Speaker Brian Bosma paid \$40,000 to Democrat lawyer Linda Pence to investigate Kandy Green, who more than 25 years ago had a purported consensual relationship with the Republican. Bosma denies the allegation, saying he hired Pence to protect his reputation. Earlier this week, State Rep. Linda Lawson filed an ethics complaint against Bosma for violating House Rule 166 which requires "integrity" from its members.

All this comes after a record 57 women filed for General Assembly seats, and six Republican and Democrat women were nominated for congressional seats.

The confluence of the Trump, Kavanaugh, Hill and Bosma stories creates a huge unknown heading into Election Day. Will suburban women turn out in droves, shifting legislative races along with the U.S. Senate showdown between Joe Donnelly and Mike Braun? Or have Democrats overplayed their hands, prompting what Republicans like to call the "silent majority" poised to repudiate the various charges at the ballot box? And, do voters even care about extramarital affairs or sexual harassment? A growing number of women do, but the fact is, Donald Trump is president with wide support within the GOP.

Sigler considered 2 charges

Sigler said he considered two charges, sexual battery and "simple battery." He said the first charge "requires force" that was not evident. On the misdemeanor battery option, Sigler said, "That was the charge, to prove that, you have to prove the intent of the charge. What was in the person's mind? I could not prove Curtis Hill to be rude, insolent or angry."

Sigler said the I.G. agents and IMPD officers interviewed 56 people, including the four accusers. Hill was interviewed via video and Sigler said he followed up with additional questions. Asked if it was "normal" to conduct

such an interview via video and not under oath, Sigler said, "Is it normal to investigate an attorney general? No. We had to invent procedures. I just decided I wanted to be respectful in his position. Nobody had taken his story. I wanted to hear his story from him."

Asked about Hill's alcohol consumption, Sigler called it "significant." He also said that Hill didn't deny touching the women, some of whom were present at the press conference. He added, "They are intelligent ladies. They were very cooperative. I was impressed with them."

However, the special prosecutor made it clear that, falling short of a winning legal argument, he did not want to wade in a political one.



State Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon and legislative staffers said at the special prosecutor press conference they still want Attorney General Hill to resign and that they would file civil suits against him and the State of Indiana)

Torres report

The simultaneous [Torres report](#) gave the most thorough account of the allegations. It shed new light on the night of March 15 and subsequent review of the incident by legislators, including a July 2 meeting between Hill and legislative leaders three days after Hill learned of the allegations: "On Monday, July 2, 2018, all four Leaders of the IGA met with Hill in person to further discuss the allegations and to inform Hill that someone had leaked the outside counsel's letter to the Indianapolis Star. Various other staff members also attended the meeting. The leaders said that during this meeting, Hill's 'attitude had hardened' since the phone call on Friday and he was 'in defense mode' and 'indignant and defensive.' Three of the four leaders said Hill asked for a copy of the outside counsel's letter, but the leaders said they still considered the letter confidential and would not share it with Hill. The leaders explained that they did not do a criminal investigation but instead did a human resources review to ensure they 'did right by their employees.'"

Torres also reported that the women involved had been satisfied with the legislative leadership's handling of the matter, seeking only to bring Hill's unacceptable behavior to his attention and stop any future such behavior by the attorney general. However, Torres' report also noted

that the women only decided to come forward publicly once Hill called them 'liars' and 'showed no remorse.'

Hill faces civil suit

On Tuesday, the four women involved said they would file a civil suit against Hill and other parties. One of the victims, Niki DeSilva, noted that the special prosecutor made clear that "we were credible." Their attorney said that the women faced a "hostile work environment." Gabrielle McLemore, communications director for Senate Democrats, reacted, saying, "This has told women that when we come forward, tell what happened to us, we can be believed. But it doesn't really mean anything. We've put ourselves out there, our jobs and reputations on the line. We can be believed."

Rep. Reardon called for a "cultural change at the Statehouse." Asked if Hill should resign, Rep. Reardon said, "We've said that in the past." All agreed he should resign. Reardon added that she will, "Work on actual concrete change we can make to protect people in the workplace. This is unacceptable. The report is clear, and the IG report will be clear as to what occurred. The point is the more voices we have, the closer we'll be to ending this. When you shine a light on a predator, you stop the predator."

What if Hill doesn't resign?

However, Hill appears to be digging in, making things awkward for an Indiana Republican Party at the apex of its power and influence. At the GOP's fall dinner earlier this month, Hill was ignored by Gov. Holcomb and Vice President Mike Pence, even though he sat at a sponsored table. (State GOP Chairman Kyle Hupfer later refunded the \$5,000 table sponsorship to Hill's campaign.)

Earlier this month, Hill asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review Indiana abortion laws signed by then-Gov. Mike Pence and subsequently ruled unconstitutional in lower federal courts. Hill has a significant constituency in the GOP's social conservative wing. At this year's Indiana Republican State Convention, Hill played a conspicuous role rallying delegates to oppose a change in the party's marriage plank that was supported by Gov. Holcomb and Chairman Hupfer. By convention's end, there was talk in conservative circles about Hill mounting a 2020 primary challenge to the governor. When the allegations first surfaced against Hill, Gov. Holcomb returned from a Montana vacation and quickly called for him to resign. Politically, he stepped on the attorney general's throat.

But what if, as seems likely for now, Hill stays on? Indiana Code, Title 5, Article 8, Chapter 1 provides



for "Impeachment and Removal From Office." It requires the Indiana House to pass a resolution of impeachment and calls for a "concurrence of two-thirds of the members elected, or 34 members" of the Senate to convict and remove the officeholder.

Republicans currently hold 41 Senate seats and 70 House seats. If Holcomb, Bosma and soon-to-be Senate GOP leader Rod Bray decide to force Hill from office, as things stand today, they could conceivably have enough votes within their caucuses. Senate and House Democrats would be likely to support. Unclear is whether the Nov. 6 election will alter the Republican super majorities and there is some question as to whether the office of the attorney general is subject to the Indiana Constitution's impeachment provisions. At least one Republican senator told HPI on Tuesday that there has been no discussion of impeachment and little appetite to proceed down that road.

"I don't think it's possible for the attorney general to continue to do his job for the state of Indiana in legal matters," Rep. Ryan Dvorak, D-South Bend, told the South Bend Tribune. "It's my sincere hope that other members of the General Assembly will see that it's impossible for Curtis Hill to continue on. It's not a partisan issue."

State Sen. David Niezgodski, D-South Bend, told the South Bend Tribune said he was going to trust the legislative process and not make a decision prior to the completion of an impeachment investigation.

State Rep. Dale DeVon, R-Granger, said he wasn't prepared to comment on potential impeachment or actions during the legislative session on the issue. "I'd have to see more about the details of the investigation," DeVon told the Tribune.

State Rep. Pat Bauer, D-South Bend, said, "We need to have a hearing. I think this session is going to have a lot of turmoil." Bauer Bosma allegations in the IndyStar amounted to a "pretty unusual start" for a legislative session.

"We're going to have a plateful," Bauer predicted.

Holcomb could run his own candidate against Hill at the 2020 GOP convention. Gov. Daniels tried that, too, backing Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas for the open seat after Attorney General Steve Carter decided to retire. But delegates responded by nominating Greg Zoeller, who went on to serve two terms. That was a political reaction to Daniels, who while popular with the public, had aroused some pushback within the party over education reforms. Holcomb could face political peril if, like Daniels, he pursues this path but fails to consolidate enough support to defeat Hill.

Holcomb seems to be in a good political position with no obvious 2020 challenger for Democrats and a majority approval rating (52%) earlier this year. Hill won a four-way battle for the attorney general nomination in 2016, and easily defeated his Democrat opponent that fall. Some sort of political reckoning is in the not too distant future. ❖

Beware the alligators in the lobbying swamp

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON – In one of the most hard-hitting ads of the 2018 election cycle, Republican Rep. Jackie Walorski, R-2nd CD, castigates her Democratic challenger, Mel Hall, for his association with a Washington law firm that also does a substantial amount of lobbying.



The ad mentions a pharmaceutical manufacturer that it asserts engaged in price gouging on a medicine that prevents premature births. "Mel Hall's D.C. firm lobbied for this evil drug company," the narrator says.

The D.C. firm alluded to in the ad is Dentons, which has become the largest law firm in the world under the leadership of former Indiana Democratic Chairman Joe Andrew. In Dentons' sprawling operation, you'll find many different activities, including lobbying.

But that doesn't mean that everyone under the Dentons roof is a lobbyist. In fact, a Dentons spokeswoman said in an Oct. 8 statement said that Hall worked as a senior adviser to the firm from 2012 through 2014 after he left Press Ganey in South Bend.

"During the time with our law firm, Mel was not a registered lobbyist," the spokeswoman said.

The Walorski campaign said that it is irrelevant that Hall never lobbied because it never asserted he did.

"Mel Hall's campaign just confirmed what we already knew: He worked for a big D.C. firm that lobbied for a fraudulent pharmaceutical company, predatory payday lenders and other special interests," Walorski campaign manager Stephen Simonetti said in an Oct. 9 statement.

He added: "Mel Hall is...lying about the campaign contributions he's taken from lobbyists."

But when you throw your opponent in the lobbying swamp, beware of alligators that could bite you.

If an association with or taking money from a lobbying firm links you to all its clients, most politicians will run into trouble. Take the explosive situation with Saudi Arabia, a country being accused of brutally assassinating a dissident journalist earlier this month.

Walorski is one of many Hoosier politicians who have received campaign donations from lobbying firms that have had contracts with the Saudi government, according to data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics.

In addition to Walorski, Rep. Susan Brooks, R-5th CD, Rep. Trey Hollingsworth, R-9th CD, Republican House candidate Greg Pence, Republican Senate nominee Mike Braun and Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly have all raised

money from lobbying firms such as Glover Park Group, BGR Government Affairs, CGCN Group and Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck.

In the wake of the allegations about the death of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, some of those firms have ended their Saudi lobbying contracts. Nevertheless, when they made their contributions to Hoosier office holders and aspirants, they were working for the Saudis.

In today's campaign atmosphere, that means that it would be conceivable for an opposing campaign to cut a commercial casting aspersions on a Hoosier politician or candidate related to Khashoggi's death.

Would that be logical or fair? No. But it would it be similar to the attack linking Hall to Dentons' clients.

"You could make up any kind of twisted connection like that," said a Washington lobbyist and former Senate aide with ties to Indiana.

It's currently in fashion to attack "the swamp," which has become shorthand for Washington and its denizens. But it's a political cheap shot to demagogue lobbying.

For one thing, most former politicians follow Hall's approach and assiduously avoid registering as lobbyists.

Former Hoosier Democratic Sen. Evan Bayh, for instance, was never a lobbyist when he worked for Faegre Baker Daniels, according to David Gogol, vice chair of the firm's consulting division. Bayh's contract was set up that way at his request.

In fact, there's been a general decline in the population of lobbyists over the last several years. Most register to lobby when representing particular clients rather than registering to lobby in general.

Like Hall, former politicians often join firms as advisers in particular areas in which they are experts. For instance, Gogol points out that former Indianapolis deputy mayor Skip Stitt, a Faegre Baker Daniels Consulting principal, works on projects involving local governments. He does not lobby.

When accusations fly about the dark arts of lobbying, it's a good time to remember that the activity is enshrined in the Constitution, where it goes by its most fundamental definition: Petitioning the government.

Politicians who attack lobbyists often have industries in their states or districts or favorite social causes that benefit from hard-nosed lobbying. In Walorski's case, RV manufacturers employ D.C. lobbyists.

Another example is the Right to-Life movement, which brings hundreds of advocates to the nation's capital each year. Who is setting up their meetings with lawmakers and leading them around the Capitol? Professional lobbyists.

There will always be opposition to the policies some lobbyists promote. The answer is to deploy lobbyists fighting for the other side – not to cast the lobbying process into the swamp.

Schoeff is HPI's Washington correspondent.

Oppo research shapes the Walorski/Hall race

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Opposition research enables Congresswoman Jackie Walorski to portray challenger Mel Hall in a far different way than he was defining himself all summer with his TV spots about youth on a Hoosier farm, service as a minister and experience as a successful South Bend business executive.

“Oppo research,” as political consultants call it, is the search for something negative that can be used against an opponent, especially in the TV ads that seek to inflict a negative image.



The search for useful information about Hall found that he had for a time lived in Washington and was an advisor on health care there for a large global law firm that does lobbying for some clients. Thus, in TV ads and debates, Walorski, the Republican incumbent in Indiana’s 2nd District, portrays the Democratic challenger as a lobbyist, a liar and a “Washington insider.”

As Hall was defining himself in a positive way with effective TV ads, some naïve Democrats thought that Walorski couldn’t counter with negative attacks because Hall, a newcomer to politics, had no legislative voting record or government credentials to attack. Nonsense, of course. Opposition research goes beyond voting records, often finding things in a candidate’s past that tarnish an image, fairly or unfairly.

If Walorski had just let Hall paint a positive image of himself and define her as unresponsive to voters and afraid to debate, she would have faced defeat, even though nine of the 10 counties of the district voted Republican in 2016. Walorski agreed to two televised debates – even a third that neither side now seems anxious to hold. Smart decision by Walorski. She showed she could and would debate. And she won the first debate.

The opposition research helped Walorski to take the offensive. Hall seemed taken aback by her claims that he had been a lobbyist, that he lived in a luxury condo at the Ritz-Carlton in Washington and that he had voted in Washington. There is no indication that he ever lobbied. But he did live in the condo, although he says it was for a short time, and he did vote in D.C., an indication that he regarded himself as a D.C. resident.

In the second debate, Walorski started strong. But she lost that one by the end by hammering away again and again and again, no matter the question, on a contention that there was something sinister about Hall being an advisor on health care matters at Dentons, the giant global

law firm with something like 7,700 lawyers. She kept citing lobbying for a pharmaceutical firm accused of products harmful to pregnant women. Hall, no registered lobbyist, didn’t lobby for the pharmaceutical firm or for any of the other clients for which Dentons has provided lobbying, from Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers, to the Recreational Vehicle Industry Assn., to the World Wildlife Fund. Bringing up oppo research findings about Hall for a time recently living and voting in D.C. and still having a Ritz condo there was fair game to counter his farmer-minister image. Accusing him of involvement in harming pregnant women certainly was not.

Despite being taunted as a liar, Hall remained calm, answered debate questions and stayed on message, especially on health care, a key issue. Hall wasn’t just passive, as he seemed too often to be in the first debate. He accused Walorski of constantly referring to her negative “talking points.” Hall also constantly cited his criticism that Walorski voted 11 times to repeal the Affordable Care Act insurance protections for people with pre-existing conditions.

The debates won’t decide the election. Nor will reaction either way to the opposition research. But it’s all part of defining candidate images. And image will be what it’s all about in the TV war going right up to Election Day.



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

Chyung could pull off another upset

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – Every once in a while, an upstart candidate files for office, gets organized and shocks the electorate by beating an incumbent. It even has happened in Lake County where Democratic incumbents have little to worry about when it comes to re-election.



One of the most memorable election upsets came in 1978 when Jack Crawford stunned Lake County Democrats and ousted county Prosecutor Ray Sufana in the primary. Crawford was young, good-looking and had an army of volunteers knocking on doors around the county.

Chris Chyung thinks it can happen again. Chyung is the Democratic candidate for state representative in House District 15. Unlike Crawford, Chyung is facing an incumbent Republican in Rep. Hal Slager, who is seeking a fourth term. And House District 15 was tailor-made for

Slager by the Republican-controlled General Assembly that drew new district lines following the 2010 census.

To a casual observer, it would be easy to think Chyung has a pretty good shot at pulling off an upset. While driving through the district that includes Dyer, Schererville and St. John as well as a piece of Griffith, the number of Chyung signs easily out paces those bearing Slager's name. And Chyung ads frequently appear on cable television while Slager can't be found on the airwaves.

While Chyung is young and energetic, Slager has the benefit of having been around for a good period. Prior to being elected to the legislature, Slager spent more than a decade on the Schererville Town Council. Slager also has defeated two prominent Lake County Democrats; in 2012, Slager edged Thomas O'Donnell whose Lake County Council district encompassed much of the 15th House District. Since then, Slager has trounced Jim Wieser,

who now is county Democratic chairman, as well as beating O'Donnell a second time.

Not surprisingly, Chyung opposes the precinct consolidation engineered by Slager through special legislation. Chyung also embraces other Democratic issues such as jobs that can't be outsourced, universal pre-kindergarten and transportation solutions to keep up with a growing community. He also has vowed not to take corporate money.

No one is saying Chyung is going to win – probably not even O'Donnell or Wieser. But, no one thought Jack Crawford was going to oust Ray Sufana 40 years ago. ❖

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

Donnelly, McCaskill appear to be vulnerable

By KYLE KONDIK

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – There has been buzz over the past few weeks that not only is Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO) in serious danger, but also Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-IN). We've long been more bullish on Donnelly than McCaskill in large part because he is more of a moderate than McCaskill, on abortion and other issues, but Donnelly may now be trailing too.

The president's approval rating has gotten a little better nationally lately, which probably means in states like Indiana and Missouri his approval is higher than his disapproval. And while pinpointing a specific effect is difficult, we feel confident in saying that the polarizing Brett Kavanaugh fight didn't help and possibly may have hurt Donnelly and McCaskill, both of whom voted no on his confirmation (Donnelly backed Neil Gorsuch in his confirmation last year, McCaskill did not).

More broadly, it may just be that Indiana and Missouri can only elect Democrats statewide anymore in the worst of national conditions for the GOP, and this year doesn't qualify for Republicans because despite their challenges, the nation isn't in a recession and is not waging a massively unpopular foreign war, two ingredients that sometimes contribute to big midterm waves. All that said,

we're holding Indiana and Missouri as Toss-ups, so we're not writing off Donnelly or McCaskill at this point.

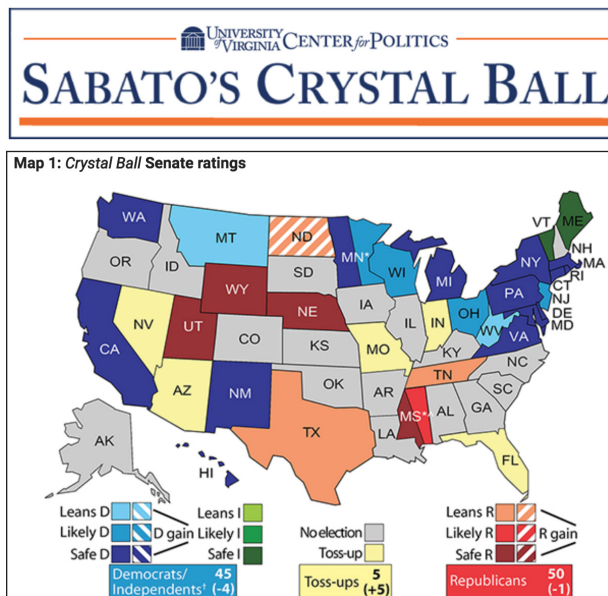
If Republicans beat McCaskill and Donnelly, they likely would be netting at least one seat overall, because they also remain in good position against Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND), who has long been trailing, and Democrats still seem to be behind in Tennessee and Texas, one of which they would need to win in order to break even in

the Senate if they were otherwise losing three of their current incumbents (Donnelly-Heitkamp-McCaskill, in this scenario). Then there is the open GOP-held seat in Arizona, as well as the difficult reelection bids of Sens. Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Dean Heller (R-NV). If Democrats can't win all three, they likely will be losing multiple seats, allowing Republicans to pad their majority to 53 seats or more, which would insulate them on next cycle's Senate map.

The bottom line: If Donnelly and McCaskill truly are down, Democrats' hopes of playing to a draw on this year's challenging Senate map become

much harder. At this point, Republicans are in a better position than Democrats to go into the next Congress holding more seats than they hold now (51), and Democrats' chances to win the overall majority are tiny.

One other thing about a lot of these key Senate races: As a shrewd Republican source reminded us recently, at least five of the top Senate races -- Arizona, Indiana, Missouri, Montana, and Nevada -- could be won by pluralities as opposed to majorities. ❖



Will Trump's fear tactics prevail?

By **CHRIS SAUTTER**

WASHINGTON – Will the 2018 midterm election turn out more like the 2017 off-year elections or more like the 2016 presidential election? It could be a bit of both.

Donald Trump won in 2016, in large part, due to his ability to stoke racial and sexist resentment. From the day of his announcement when he claimed Mexico was sending rapists and drug dealers across the U.S. border to his constant attacks on women, particularly black women, Trump has used denigration, hate and fear mongering to energize a predominantly white male political base.



In 2017, however, this tactic failed to gain traction as

Democrats won nearly everywhere an election was held. In Virginia, for example, Republican attempts to use MS-13 gangs and sanctuary cities as a wedge issue bombed as Democrats easily won a gubernatorial race some pundits believed was slipping away. They also erased a 32-seat Republican majority in the House of Delegates.

Going into the 2018 midterm cycle Democrats were favored to take control of the U.S. House of Representatives while Republicans were favored to hold on to the Senate. Now, with less than two weeks to go, there has been little net change. Democrats look to gain roughly 30 seats in the House while Republicans appear poised to hang on to their two-seat Senate majority and perhaps even add a seat or two. Democrats also have a legitimate shot at winning as many as 10 gubernatorial races — victories that would help undo heavily gerrymandered legislative districts in many states.

Still worried about Democratic gains, Trump has stuck to the script that won him the presidency. With the economy and tax cut arguments failing to energize his base, the president has taken his low road politics on the road, campaigning almost nonstop in deep red states like Texas and Montana in an attempt to bail-out struggling Republican Senate candidates.

Everywhere he goes, Trump employs fear to motivate Republican turnout, firing off practically every wedge missile in his arsenal. His speeches are invariably laced with racial rhetoric and sexist putdowns. Middle Eastern terrorists have infiltrated the caravan of Honduran migrants. Women who come forward to allege sexual misconduct are creating a “very scary time” for innocent young men. At a recent rally, Trump even declared himself a “nationalist,” using a racially charged term that evokes white supremacy and prompting a Twitter endorsement

from David Duke.

While there is evidence the Trump fear strategy is working in a few races, overall the results are mixed. In Florida, for example, Democrat Andrew Gillum appears headed to victory after the Republican nominee Ron DeSantis running as a Trump clone stumbled repeatedly over his own racist rhetoric. At the same time, Gillum’s momentum may have coattails, aiding Senator Bill Nelson in his re-election bid against Governor Rick Scott and Democratic House candidates in Florida.

Similarly, Democrats appear to be rebounding in the Midwest. Gubernatorial races favor Democrats in Iowa, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin while Ohio is a tossup. All would amount to Democratic gains. Meanwhile, previously thought to be vulnerable Senators running for reelection — Wisconsin’s Tammy Baldwin and Ohio’s Sherrod Brown — appear to be in good shape. In Pennsylvania, Gov. Tom Wolf and Sen. Bob Casey are coasting to reelection. Democrats have put multiple GOP-held House seats in play in nearly every Midwestern state.

In Indiana, where Trump won by 19 points, Democratic incumbent Sen. Joe Donnelly continues to hold on to a narrow lead. Businessman Mike Braun won the Republican nomination against two better-known congressmen with clever advertising. But in the general election campaign, Braun’s ads have fallen flat while he has been forced to play defense to attacks on his business practices. Meanwhile, Donnelly has deftly neutralized the immigration issue while his vote against the Kavanaugh Supreme Court nomination appears to have helped with the critical suburban women vote.

Of course, Trump isn’t the first Republican to use race as a wedge. Since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, Republicans have made little to no effort to compete for the African American vote, in effect writing them off to maximize the vote of disaffected whites. In 1968, Richard Nixon used his “southern strategy” to win over white voters with coded language designed to exploit racial fears. Following Nixon’s lead, nearly every Republican presidential candidate since has tried to exploit racial anxiety in an attempt to drive up the white vote. What Trump brought to the calculation are his sensational appeals to race — a proposed ban on Muslims, impugning the patriotism of black professional athletes, and the use of social unrest and gang violence in his attacks on Democrats.

Now Trump is resurrecting debunked claims of voter fraud as a way to delegitimize the 2018 election if things go badly for Republicans. The rallying cry of voter fraud, of course, is really a dog whistle for voter suppression aimed at people of color. Republican voter suppression is playing out in states all over the country.

Efforts to suppress the minority vote is no more apparent than in the Georgia gubernatorial race where former Democratic legislative leader Stacey Abrams is facing off against Secretary of State Brian Kemp. Political forecasters at FiveThirtyEight project this as the closest state-

wide race in the nation. Abrams would be the first female African-American governor of any state.

Kemp as secretary of state has put on hold 53,000 recently registered voters (70% of whom are black according to an analysis by the Associated Press) because their information doesn't match exactly as they are listed in other government databases. Some lack no more than a hyphen or a middle initial. Many of those voters will be forced to cast provisional ballots which have a reduced chance of being counted.

Hardball politics in American political campaigns is as old as the Republic, as are efforts to suppress or manipulate the vote. But presidents have generally served as unifiers, trying to stay above the fray while leaving the dirty work to others.

Yet, Donald Trump's polarizing rhetoric is what is driving the growing racial and gender divides in America

just as his attacks on Democrats as "evil" and the media as "enemy of the people" and his general willingness to excuse violence is giving permission to radicals and crazies to commit violence.

Americans often use elections to put a check on one party rule and out-of-the-mainstream politics.

Today many Americans are worn out and frightened by a presidency that seems out-of-control and filled with hate. If those Americans show up at the polls on Nov. 6, there is a chance to get our politics back on course. ❖

Sautter is a Democratic consultant based in Washington, D.C.

Facts and context replaced by rants, rage

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – The 2018 elections are upon us. Just turn on your TV if you don't believe me. But why should you do that? Facts, context and experience are old fashioned ideas in today's world. They have been replaced by rant, rote, and outright lies.



Normally, this column is over-stuffed with data. Not this time. Instead we'll stay in the stratosphere where there isn't enough oxygen to support facts.

Tonight (which may be several days before you read this), I'll deliver a talk on fear in our nation. Since I have no qualifications as a psychologist, I am perfectly positioned to deliver this lecture.

Fear is often based on ignorance and the willful disregard of facts, context and experience. Thus, Shakespeare kills off Polonius, the character in Hamlet who advises his son, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be." The Bard knew better. Borrowing and the resultant debt are rational, healthy aspects of economic life.

The issue is not the borrowing, but how the money borrowed is spent. If it finances tickets to a punk-rock band performing at an over-priced, mosquito-infested concert, then borrowing is just another link in a chain of poor judgement. Borrowed funds spent by government for education and infrastructure make sense. Borrowed for the enshrinement of an ideology is foolery. That's why most

monuments in Washington are privately funded whether it be FDR, Martin Luther King Jr. or Senator Robert A. Taft.

Our national debt is not comparable to household or corporate debt. Nevertheless, the fear of a national collapse because of the debt is rampant. Fear and paranoia of a stock market collapse is quite popular these days. But there is no movement to reduce the "irrational exuberance" of investors that inflates stock prices. Nor are we prepared to halt the manipulation of stock prices by repurchases that ultimately increase the compensation of executives. Remember the corporate tax cuts that were intended for investment or higher wages?

Diversity of assets is the best protection against a stock market "correction" we are told. It also provides protection with regard to inflation, deflation, and other concerns. It's avoiding the placement of all your eggs in one basket.

According to many fear-mongers, artificial intelligence is the enemy of mankind. So too was the horse-drawn harvester, the sewing machine, and anything that replaced good old-fashioned walking, like elevators or electric scooters. There are real concerns in each of these examples. But even mild agitation may set the stage for inappropriate corrective or preventive actions. Laws requiring a man to walk with a red lantern in front of automobiles proved unproductive.

To be overwhelmed by the thought of risk is as foolhardy as being exclusively enamored with the rewards. It is like breaking off an engagement when you see your prospective mother- or father-in-law and fear that your intended will transform into one of them. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at mortonj-marcus@yahoo.com. Follow his views and those of John Guy on "Who gets what?" wherever podcasts are available.

Will Indiana be last to dance with Mary Jane?

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – Tom Petty wrote the unofficial Indiana state song back in the 1990s:

“She grew up in an Indiana town
Had a good lookin’ momma who never was around
But she grew up tall and she grew up right
With them Indiana boys on an Indiana night ...”

But, rather than a last dance with Mary Jane, the dance has only begun.

Indiana will soon face a legislative issue that will make Sunday alcohol sales and riverboat gambling seem like quaint anachronisms. The issue that I believe will eventually rattle the halls of the Indiana Statehouse is the legalization of marijuana.



I know you are thinking that there is no way in Hagerstown that a conservative state like the Hoosier State will ever legalize marijuana for medical or recreational use. I’m here to tell you that it will eventually happen and the wheels of change are already starting to turn.

Before we go any further, it is important for me to state that I have never used marijuana or even tried it. I am no marijuana expert. Nor am I a marijuana legalization advocate. I am, however, a fairly good observer of John Q. Public and of the legislative process. For these reasons, I feel fairly comfortable peering into my crystal ball and predicting the future.

As a life-long Hoosier, you get accustomed to watching change start somewhere else and then slowly move to Indiana. In my lifetime we’ve seen a slow change of public thinking and legislative action on anti-misogyny laws, the lottery, riverboat gambling, pari-mutuel gambling, off-track betting, Sunday liquor sales, banking across county lines, and LGBT rights. Change, in the halls of the Indiana legislature is like pulling teeth, but significantly more painful.

I remember when factory workers from Kokomo would pool their money and designate someone to drive to another state to buy lottery tickets each week. These people were going to buy lottery tickets no matter how far they had to drive. The ready availability of the tickets just across the state line made this practice only slightly inconvenient. Obser-

vant legislators saw potential state revenue slipping away across an imaginary line designating a state border. The mentality of our legislature changed from “we must avoid the scourge of gambling” to “how do we get our hands on that money?”

Lest I be judged as overly cynical, it isn’t always about money. Sometimes the critical mass of public opinion just overwhelms the legislature. It seemed perfectly reasonable to the Indiana legislature to pass legislation (RFRA) that appeared to deny certain rights to the LGBT community. That changed in a heartbeat when the roar of vox populi nudged our reluctant elected representatives into a rewrite of the legislation.

So now we come to the issue of marijuana legalization.

Marijuana legalization is gathering momentum around the country and soon will be knocking on those big oak doors at the Indiana Statehouse. California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington and five other states have legalized both medical and recreational marijuana. Twenty states, including neighboring Illinois and Michigan, have legalized marijuana for medicinal purposes. It would be safe to say that the Hoosier State is already behind the curve when compared to the rest of the Union.

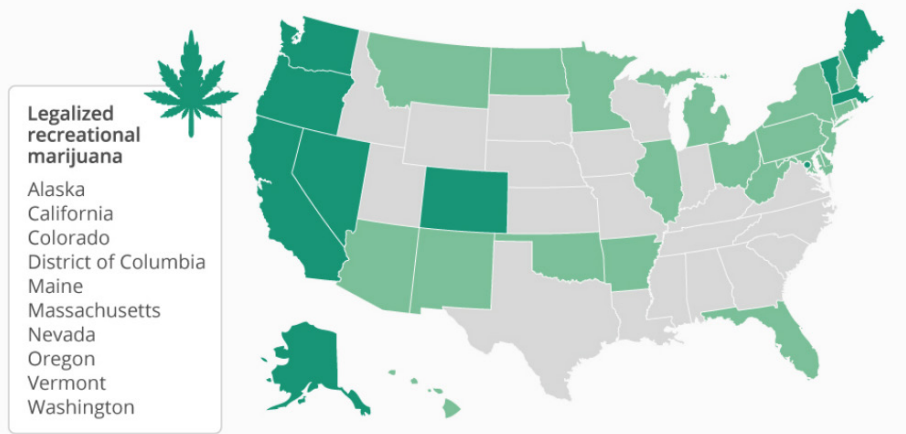
As I write this I can hear my late mother say, “Just because your friends poke their eyes out with sticks doesn’t mean you have to do it!” That’s right mom. Just because those other states have legalized marijuana does not force us to do it, too. However, the expansion of legalized marijuana by other states and other countries does put the Hoosier State in a quandary.

Recently, I visited Amsterdam on a European vacation. I was curious to check out the ready availability of marijuana and its effects on the Dutch population. I fully expected to find a purple haze of semi-catatonic people just getting stoned while the dikes were all leak-

The States Where It's Legal To Smoke Marijuana

Laws on recreational and medical marijuana use in the US*

■ Legalized for recreational & medical use ■ Medical use only



- Legalized recreational marijuana**
- Alaska
 - California
 - Colorado
 - District of Columbia
 - Maine
 - Massachusetts
 - Nevada
 - Oregon
 - Vermont
 - Washington

* As of July 01, 2018. Some states not highlighted allow limited medical marijuana access
@StatistaCharts Sources: NY Times , Business Insider



ing. I expected to find marijuana cafes more prevalent than the Golden Arches and edging out Stroop Waffles as the national treat.

Neither was true.

The Dutch people, for all of the availability of marijuana cafes, are an amazingly energetic and productive people. In a country where there are more bicycles than people, it is hard not to admire the speed and intensity at which the Dutch approach their work and life. To step off a street corner in Amsterdam is to invite death on the horns of a commuter's bike handles.

The marijuana cafes are prevalent but discreet.

There are significantly more pastry and raw herring shops than dope dens. You could walk down the street and catch a whiff of marijuana wafting out from the cafes, but it was not as overpowering as I had expected. The souvenir shops all sold marijuana tee shirts and what-nots, but all in all, the whole marijuana scene was pretty much understated. In the cafes you could choose from a variety of types of weed, similar to a Baskin-Robbins. They also sold baked goods like brownies and cookies laced with an herbal infusion. There weren't long lines of stoners queued up like at Starbucks.

The only real indication of the overt popularity of the availability of marijuana came from an Uber driver. My wife asked him if he was from Amsterdam. He said that he lived out in the country, but moved to Amsterdam so that he could be closer to the marijuana shops.

Much closer to home, the legalization of marijuana poses some interesting and powerful dilemmas. In Michigan, if you are struggling with the pain of cancer or the nausea connected with chemotherapy, you can get a doctor's prescription for marijuana to deal with your symptoms. Legal to get relief in Niles, Michigan, but illegal in South Bend.

In Colorado, as an entrepreneur, you can start a store selling recreational marijuana, pay taxes on your profits and be a proud member of the Chamber of Commerce. In Marion, Indiana, you'll be arrested and sent to the state prison system. In California, you can smoke dope on the weekend while you watch football games and then go to work like everyone else on Monday. In Indiana, you may be tested for marijuana use and denied employment. In Seattle, you can eat a marijuana brownie on the way to the airport, fly to Indiana, and be arrested when the police dog at the airport sniffs an extra brownie in your carry-on bag.

As the legalization of recreational marijuana spreads ever closer to Indiana, three considerable economic issues will arise. You will read stories

that our young, tech-savvy college graduates are leaving the state to go live and work in marijuana legal states. You will read stories that companies promising the employment of thousands are being denied their opportunity because of Indiana's "archaic" laws. Finally, you will learn from your legislator about the millions of dollars of lost tax revenue that could pay for better education, health care and roads due to marijuana not being legalized.

All of these issues and more will rise up around the Hoosier State like wild hemp along a northern Indiana railroad track. Like gambling and Sunday liquor sales, the inexorable movement toward marijuana legalization will consume the state until our conservative home is dragged into the present.

The legalization of marijuana will be formulaic. The Indianapolis Star will have a story about Billy Negroni who suffers from severe migraine headaches caused by long division. The story will tell how only marijuana brownies relieve his pain. You'll see headlines about Zip Johnson-Yablonski who has had his promising professional football career derailed by being busted at his junior prom for a cummerbund stuffed with a dime bag. WRTV will scream a story during sweeps week about the potential SAT score benefits to Indiana if pot is legalized due to fewer students taking the exam.

The governor will call a press conference and announce that Engulf and Devour Corporation is considering Indiana for its fourth national headquarters, but that potential drawbacks are lack of a light-rail commuter system and legalized pot for its millennial software engineers. The governor hypothesizes that legalized marijuana that is taxed would provide the funds to build a light-rail system and satisfy the employment needs of Engulf and Devour.

Finally, Rep. Vern Pussbucket will introduce legislation naming hemp as the state weed.

I am totally neutral on the subject of marijuana legalization, but I believe that it will come in the not-so-distant future. It will pick up its first critical momentum when marijuana producers hire the lobbying arms of the top four or five Indiana law firms to take up their cause. The money and favors will flow and before you can


say, "They're off!" at Hoosier Downs, they'll be tokin' and smokin' from Bean Blossom to Fort Wayne.

Change is inevitable and I am afraid that marijuana legalization is just another societal change that will come kicking and screaming into our state. I'm going long on Doritos futures!. ❖

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

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YOUR FRIENDS ALL HANG OUT HERE... DO YOU?

Gerald Seib, Wall Street Journal: Regardless of the outcome of the midterm election, this much already has become clear: The battle for the soul of the Republican party is over, and President Trump has won. Mr. Trump was long resisted by his party's establishment, and rejected by a large swath of the GOP's core ideological conservatives, many of whom formed a kind of never-Trump resistance. Now, as the second anniversary of his election approaches, both of those opposition fronts have crumbled. For Republicans, for better or for worse, it's Mr. Trump's more-populist party now. At the grass roots, Republicans have united behind Mr. Trump with surprising solidarity. In this campaign season, establishment GOP candidates have accepted his help and endorsement and, in many cases, mimicked his style and themes. The furious Democratic opposition to Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh has galvanized even many Republicans dubious about Mr. Trump. They see him as a flawed but preferable alternative to a Democratic Party they dislike and fear, and appear to regard him as a useful shield against it. Perhaps most surprising, conservatives who disdained Mr. Trump and considered his views on trade, immigration and national security to be heretical are increasingly drifting toward him. "I do think Trump right now is winning," says Peter Wehner, who is a critic of the president. "He is consolidating. People are acclimating themselves to him.... The Kavanaugh hearing made it visceral." ❖



Liz Peek, Fox News: Nikki Haley has said she will not run for president in 2020. But would she run for vice president in 2020 and then president in 2024? That could be the right path for the U.N. Ambassador, who has announced she will retire at the end of this year and who is definitely presidential material. It's a long time until 2024. Some speculate that Haley might run for the Senate should fellow South Carolinian Lindsey Graham be appointed to replace Jeff Sessions as Attorney General after the midterm elections. Barring that opportunity, she runs the risk of fading from view and missing her moment, as Chris Christie did in 2012. Whether or not the president is reelected two years from now with Haley as his running mate, she would naturally emerge as the frontrunner in 2024. For Trump, too, putting Haley on the ticket makes all the sense in the world. Many think that in 2020, President Trump is once again likely to face off against a female candidate. Whether it is Kamala Harris, Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand or, God forbid, Hillary Clinton, his opponent (male or female) will surely attack Mr. Trump for his alleged philandering and supposed mistreatment of women. Nobody could better deflect such accusations than a woman who has worked for the president, and who can speak from personal experience of his support for capable and outspoken females. Haley is also a minority, the daughter of immigrants from India. Her mother started quite a successful retail business in the U.S.

Haley's experience working in that enterprise informs her pro-business platform, which she shares with Mr. Trump. Her background also allows her to champion intelligent immigration policies, and the benefits this nation derives from people who enter the country legally. Nikki Haley's U.N. tenure has received high marks, even from the left-leaning media. The New York Times lamented her resignation in an editorial titled "Nikki Haley Will Be Missed," mainly because they portray her as a bulwark against what they deem "Mr. Trump's worst policies and instincts." By now you're probably wondering; what about Mike Pence? Mike Pence has been a loyal number two in the Trump administration. He has rarely made waves, reliably defended the president in times of turmoil (often, in other words) and has fulfilled the critical role of bolstering the White House's relationship with the evangelical community. During the 2016 election, the religious right eyed Mr. Trump with understandable skepticism. He had few Republican or conservative credentials, and though he professed to be pro-life was visibly bewildered about what that meant. Moreover, his various scandals and numerous wives caused heartburn amongst evangelicals. During that race, he needed Mike Pence, a Catholic altar boy in his youth and born-again Christian, to woo the evangelical community. Now he just has to find another job for Mike Pence which would allow him to gracefully step down, and encourage Nikki Haley to sign on. Both those steps will require some artful deal-making, to be sure. But we've already seen that the president is capable of doing just that. ❖

Mike Allen, Axios: Pipe bombs sent to prominent Democrats were a wired manifestation of the toxic trajectory of the country's politics, with President Trump and the media blaming each other for the worst terror-by-mail campaign of the post-9/11 era. With President Trump fanning fear ahead of the midterms a dozen days from now, the nation's political discourse is on track to be even hotter and more volatile during the 2020 campaign than it was when he ran the first time. We are playing with fire — and there are piles of dry kindling stacked throughout America and American politics right now. Right wingers, led by radio hosts, quickly claimed (without evidence) a conspiracy against them. "On the pro-Trump Internet, ... the once-fringe idea of politically motivated 'false flag' attacks [was pushed] into the mainstream," per the WashPost. Extreme language can inspire extreme deeds, Jonathan Swan emails. When Trump calls the media the "enemy of the people," some are bound to take that literally. Why it matters: "The discovery of pipe bombs targeting prominent Democratic politicians and CNN is raising the threat of election-season violence largely unknown in the U.S. — and prompting uncomfortable questions about the consequences of leaders' increasingly vitriolic rhetoric," AP's Steve Peoples and Ken Thomas write. The WashPost's Dan Balz calls it "a time of the politics of the apocalypse." ❖

Bombs intercepted for Obama, Clintons

WASHINGTON – The Secret Service said Wednesday that it had intercepted packages containing “potential explosive devices” addressed to former secretary of state Hillary Clinton in New York and former president Barack Obama in Washington, while authorities also rushed to investigate a suspicious package sent to CNN’s headquarters (Washington Post). This morning, bombs were discovered addressed for former Vice President Joe Biden and actor Robert DeNiro. The packages were discovered not long after an explosive device was found in a mailbox at the Bedford, N.Y., home of George Soros, the liberal philanthropist who is a frequent target of criticism from far-right groups. The devices sent to Clinton and Obama were found during screening and did not make it to them, officials said. “The packages were immediately identified during routine mail screening procedures as potential explosive devices and were appropriately handled as such,” the Secret Service said in a statement Wednesday. “The protectees did not receive the packages nor were they at risk of receiving them.” The Secret Service said the package addressed to the Chappaqua, N.Y., home of Clinton and former president Bill Clinton was recovered late Tuesday. The package sent to Obama’s Washington home was intercepted early Wednesday, authorities said. Both packages were intercepted by Secret Service personnel working at off-site facilities near their homes in New York and in Washington, according to a person familiar with their work. All mail and packages addressed to former presidents and their immediate family are pre-sorted and screened by Secret Service personnel.



American intelligence reports indicate that Chinese spies are often listening — and putting to use invaluable insights into how to best work the president and affect administration policy, current and former American officials said ([New York Times](#)). Mr. Trump’s aides have repeatedly warned him that his cellphone calls are not secure, and they have told him that Russian spies are routinely eavesdropping on the calls, as well. But aides say the voluble president, who has been pressured into using his secure White House landline more often these days, has still refused to give up his iPhones. White House officials say they can only hope he refrains from discussing classified information when he is on them. Trump is supposed to swap out his two official phones every 30 days for new ones but rarely does, bristling at the inconvenience.

Lawson touts election security

INDIANAPOLIS – Secretary of State Connie Lawson distributed a news release touting her “great care to prepare for each election. Voters should know that no piece of Indiana’s voting equipment is online,” the release stated. “The machines and tabulators are not connected to the internet.” “I take the security of our elections process very seriously,” said Secretary Lawson. The release noted the following tools and precautions being taken in Indiana to ensure secure elections: Testing voting equipment prior to use; Risk and vulnerability testing; Multifactor Authentication Protocol; Intrusion Detection Systems; Security Protocol; and, Information Sharing.

Election officials warn of false hacks

ANDERSON – State and federal officials say they are well prepared for the possibility of a cyberattack on American election

systems Nov. 6, but experts warn that even a false claim of interference by foreign actors on Election Day could undermine the public’s faith in the voting process (The Hill). The top cyber official at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said it’s a very real possibility that groups will announce they successfully hacked certain election results. That would require swift action from federal authorities to decisively refute any unsubstantiated declarations of election meddling, analysts say. “I could absolutely envision a scenario where someone claims to have had access or claims to have hacked” an election, Christopher Krebs, the undersecretary of the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), told reporters last week. Krebs said if such a claim were made, federal officials would contact the state and local officials running the election to see if they could verify it. If the allegation is shown to be false, he said federal officials would do their best to help spread the word.

Trump nominates Skipworth

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump says he is nominating a former executive at agribusiness giant Monsanto to head the Fish and Wildlife Service (Associated Press). Aurelia Skipwith of Indiana is currently deputy assistant Interior secretary for fish, wildlife and parks. A biologist and lawyer, Skipwith spent more than six years at Monsanto and has worked at the Agriculture Department and U.S. Agency for International Development. If confirmed by the Senate, Skipwith would be the first African-American to head the wildlife agency, which has 9,000 employees and a \$2.8 billion annual budget. pen.”

China, Russ listen to Trump’s iPhones

WASHINGTON — When President Trump calls old friends on one of his iPhones to gossip, gripe or solicit their latest take on how he is doing,