

Buttigieg makes ‘astonishing’ gains

Mayor Pete’s Iowa ‘victory’ is historic for this Hoosier

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – When you factor in where Pete Buttigieg was a year ago – poised as a potential Dennis Kucinich or Alan Keyes of presidential politics – and where he is today, poised as a top-tier candidate after what appears to be a

virtual tie in the Iowa caucuses (Buttigieg had a 26.2% to 26.1% lead over Bernie Sanders with 96.9% of precincts

reporting late last night), the pertinent question is whether the sky, or 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., will be his limit.

From a Hoosier perspective, “Mayor Pete” has already eclipsed the late Sens. Birch Bayh’s (13%) and Richard Lugar’s (4%) presidential campaigns in their 1976



and 1996 Iowa caucus runs. He has outlasted and out-raised Sen. Evan Bayh and Vice President Dan Quayle in their 2008 and 2000 presidential excursions.

“Official, verified caucus results from state of Iowa, they’re not complete but the results are the majority and they show our campaign in first place,” Buttigieg said

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Trump’s great week

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE — President Donald Trump has had a good week. The political standards have been lowered, so to phrase it another way, compared to any alternatives, the President has had an excellent week. It is reflected in polling numbers closer to 50s than the 20s.

In addition to the on-going strength of the economy, three things led to this mini-boom for Trump. 1.) The Democrats’ utter and complete failure on impeachment; 2.) His comparatively disciplined State of the Union address and; 3.) It was Democrat chaos. We’ll discuss those in order.



“The grave question the Constitution tasks senators to answer is whether the president committed an act so extreme and egregious that it rises to the level of a ‘high crime and misdemeanor.’ Yes, he did.”

U.S. Sen. Mitt Romney, saying he would vote to convict President Trump.



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Kokomo, IN, 46904
www.howeypolitics.com

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 HPI Weekly, \$350
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Jack E. Howey
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 1926-2019



Impeachment was cheapened by the Republicans going after President Bill Clinton. Disgust with his personal behavior and repeated abuses of his power, led to an anger that translated into a "gotcha" over his personal behavior and attempts to cover it up. The focus was on the first count of second-degree perjury and, unless you hated Clinton so much that you didn't care, it was merely a partisan exercise. Republicans knew going in that conviction was impossible.

In 2019-2020, the Democrats, frankly, did something even more misguided. The underlying motives were the same: They hated Trump, they believed he did a host of things wrong that were worse than the alleged Ukrainian abuses of power, and they knew that a Republican Senate was not going to convict.

The Democrats were even more misguided for several reasons. The Republicans at least had a proven case of a lie (i.e. stain on a dress) whereas the Democrats never established any base beyond the assertion of wrong-doing. It was inappropriate presidential behavior IF, a huge if, you assume his motive, you assume the Obama-Biden interventions were all good, you assume that the energy company was not key to the corruption, and you assume that the direct intervention of the administration to get Hunter Biden appointed to the energy company was not part of a deal leading to the Obama-Biden Administration putting the Ukraine government on a path to receiving aid they had not previously authorized.

The key words in their case were assume, assume, assume and assume. The failure was not because of a lack of witnesses in the Senate. It was the unwillingness of the Democrats to first establish and then emphasize the basic premises of their case by witnesses they could have called. It led to a failure to establish

that Trump's pressure on the Ukrainian government to investigate was totally political and unjustified except for personal political reasons.

They did not, frankly, even establish that asking for an investigation of a potential problem reached the level of an impeachable offense. They just assumed it for their cheering supporters. Trump was not demanding a reversal, but an investigation. Seriously, do people really believe past presidents didn't ask for investigations of partisan opponents or even major contributors to the other side, if there was any possibility of wrong-doing? Grow up.

Whether you approve of such behavior is not the question.



The point of impeachment is whether it rises to the level of overturning an elected government? That is the question.

The traditional media's anti-Trump bias was blatant. He has baited them and falsely accused them of being fake news. However, when that media responded with so much bias as to add credibility to the charge of fake news, they – not just the president – further undermined the whole premise of needing a free media for accountability. All media – left, right and the theoretical unbiased press – has become partisan. Open-minded people are the losers.

Impeachment will likely lead to the Republicans certainly taking the Alabama Senate seat, making Democrat control unlikely. It increased the chances of Trump getting

reelected. Republicans winning control of the House remains a long shot, but at least it is now a long shot. That said, with President Trump, tomorrow could implode.

But, with an opportunity to implode through tweets or his biggest prime-time moment yet, Trump stayed on a very effective script during his State of the Union address. If you want to know how partisan you are, ask yourself whether you thought his speech was ineffective. If you thought so, you are partisan. I never liked a Democrat State of the Union address. If I had, I would have been a Democrat.

Trump was speaking, first and foremost, to those who voted for him. He hit all those buttons. Then he further solidified his commitment to and honoring of veterans. He also further obliterated any traditional GOP ties to balancing a budget or libertarian opposition to things like paid leave with multiple costly proposals in attempts to strengthen his blue-collar supporters who don't like libertarian, upper income supported spending reductions.

The president also made consistent overtures to African-Americans. It may be a doomed effort, but maybe not, depending upon who emerges as a nominee. Pete Buttigieg, for example, would have a lot of work to do. Regardless, the political strategy is to force Democrats to promise even more extreme things trying to make sure there is no slippage in their African-American vote. They also need to make sure there is enthusiasm. It makes it almost certain that the Democrats will nominate Sen. Kamala Harris of California for veep, unless the nominee is a female. Otherwise, Sen. Cory Booker, Gov. Deval Patrick or even longer shots like Michelle Obama or Oprah Winfrey (either would electrify the campaign) are possible VP choices.

This brings us to the ending of Iowa as the official beginning of the presidential campaign season. Its demographic mix has made it increasingly undependable as a Democrat nominee forecaster. It lost that among Republicans long ago. Now the fundamental premise – the Vermont style town hall structure – has broken down spectacularly, as new technology failed to modernize the antiquated vote-counting. If Sanders wins the popular vote and loses again, expect not only President Trump to trumpet that “they” are trying to steal the nomination from Bernie again.

The Iowa Democrats’ incompetence was an incredible gift to Republicans giving surface credibility to the charge that they are not able to govern effectively. It very visibly demonstrated, in another way, the utter and total stupidity of the Democrats’ pursuit of impeachment. Of course, it was going to dramatically weaken Biden who likely is their strongest candidate. Lastly, it showed again the potency of the leftist flank of the party.

Trump, a dictionary version of not being a servant leader, again survived a failure to be the better person by shaking the speaker’s limp hand, because Speaker Pelosi ripped up his speech after it was over. Symbolically it was showing her disgust, in this case, not with him but the ideas he had just articulated. That symbol was a gift money cannot buy.

Trump doesn’t have to be loved by voters; he just has to be disliked less. Because of that, he had a great week. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.

Buttigieg, from page 1

at a rally at Laconia, N.H., minutes after the results began coming Wednesday. “We don’t know all of the numbers but we know this much, the campaign that started a year ago with four staff members, no name recognition, no money, just a big idea; a campaign that some said had no business even making this attempt, has taken its place at the front of this race to replace the current president.”

Buttigieg continued, “No matter what happens next, this much is undeniable: That fact represents an astonishing victory for this campaign, this candidacy and this vision you have all been a part of. This validates the message that connects the urban, the rural, and suburban communities, that we can reach out to Democrats, independents and even some future former Republicans ready to bring change to this country.”

Iowa was key in the inevitable

“electability” question for Buttigieg. He needed to demonstrate he could win in a Midwestern state, and conspicuously targeting Republicans dovetailed into his emerging narrative that he can go toe-to-toe with President Trump.

Tuesday night’s Iowa meltdown essentially deprived the former South Bend mayor of the polling bump the caucus winner would get. But he overcame Sen. Bernie Sanders’s pitchfork brigades, stands to feast on moder-



ate lane supporters of the swooning Joe Biden in the next few weeks, and faces the unprecedented wealth of a fellow former mayor in Michael Bloomberg. Biden said in New Hampshire on Wednesday, "I'm not going to sugar coat it. We took a gut punch in Iowa."

Take into account the extensive ground game he has laid in the Super Tuesday state of California, and the notion that Buttigieg has the potential to become the first Hoosier to win a Democratic presidential nomination is not particularly far-fetched.

Buttigieg has already made history, becoming the first openly gay major party presidential contender to make it into the top tier campaigns. That he made his late Iowa campaign push in a series of Obama-to-Trump counties in mostly rural portions of the Hawkeye State is equally impressive and portends an evolving electorate. Buttigieg has targeted what he calls "future former Republicans," who have the ability to vote in New Hampshire next Tuesday.

William Saletan writing in Slate, observed, "Several candidates, including Biden and Klobuchar, have promised to beat Trump by building a coalition that reaches beyond the left. But in Iowa, Buttigieg proved that he can put together that kind of coalition. He won decisively among caucusgoers who called themselves 'somewhat liberal' — a segment that represented more than 40% of attendees — and he tied Biden for the lead among moderates. Among independents, he trailed Sanders but outpolled Biden."

As of Wednesday morning, Buttigieg was winning 60 of Iowa's 99 counties. Sanders had 18 counties. Biden had seven. With 96.94% of Iowa results filed, Buttigieg had 26.2%, Sanders at 26.1%, Elizabeth Warren was 18.2%, Joe Biden at 15.8% and Amy Klobuchar at 12.2%. Buttigieg had a four delegate state equivalent lead.

NH supposedly Sanders country

The Granite State is expected to be friendly territory for Vermont's Sanders and Massachusetts' Warren, but Sanders' army of supporters did not create what many had projected to be a record caucus turnout. In a continuation of movement picked up in last night's [WBZ/Boston Globe/Suffolk University tracking poll](#), it's another day of good results in New Hampshire for Buttigieg (CBSBoston). Sanders continues to lead the field with 25%, but Buttigieg is closing in with a 19% showing, his best yet in this poll. Buttigieg is up 8% from last week. Biden dropped three points from last night to 12%, and Warren is holding



steady at 11%. Looking deeper into the crosstabs, Buttigieg appears to be siphoning voters away from Biden in a couple of key areas. He's up by 4% among women while Biden is down by 4%, with a similar scenario among registered Democrats, a crucial demographic for Biden.

A Saint Anselm College Survey Center had Sanders and Biden at 19%, followed by Buttigieg at 14%, and Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Amy Klobuchar at 11%.

On Thursday, Buttigieg will sit down with "The View," hold a conversation with New Hampshire veterans, join CNN for a live town hall, and appear on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert." On Friday, he will step onstage for the ABC/WMUR Democratic Primary debate. On Saturday, Buttigieg will speak at the "Our Rights, Our Courts" forum, host GOTV rallies in Keene and Lebanon, and join the McIntyre-Shaheen "100 Club" event. And on Saturday, the former South Bend mayor will host GOTV rallies in Nashua and Dover.

Sanders had a \$5 million-to-\$3 million TV ad edge over Buttigieg, according to MSNBC. Politico reported that Sanders raised \$25 million on January, prompting Buttigieg to schedule several fundraisers in the coming week.

Buttigieg told the Manchester Union-Leader, "I recognize I am competing with not one but two New England senators from states touching New Hampshire. We recognize this is a competitive challenge but I think that the independent nature that is so important here in New Hampshire also allows us to prove once again that this is a campaign that can bring in many different kinds of people across the spectrum and form the coalition that can defeat Donald Trump."

Winning the spin

Buttigieg is clicking on several key attributes that should take him into Super Tuesday in a little less than a month. His communications guru Lis Smith continues to land the candidate on the talk shows. He was the only contender to make the full round on last Sunday's shows (sans Fox News Sunday, though he did a town hall with that network earlier in the week).

While he was the fifth candidate to enter the dead air space after the Iowa caucus debacle was realized around 11 p.m., he made Wednesday morning headlines, declaring, "Because tonight, an improbable hope became an undeniable reality. So we don't know all the results, but we know by the time it's all said and done, Iowa, you have shocked the nation because by all indications, we are going on to New Hampshire victorious."

Politico reported that he was winning the post-Iowa spin game; for the second straight day, Buttigieg

captured the limelight, at one point choking back tears during a nationally televised news conference where he seemed to acknowledge the triumph of ascending to this place in a presidential primary without specifically saying so. If his lead holds, Buttigieg will have accomplished a phenomenal feat, catapulting from little-known mayor with an unusual name to a formidable national figure who would go on to edge out some of the most recognizable names in Democratic politics.

"If you watched all the speeches last night with the sound down, you would say Mayor Pete won and gave a victory speech and everyone else gave a regular speech," Iowa consultant Jeff Link told Politico. "It just looked like a victory speech, the crowd was fired up, he was fired up, he was energetic."

That contrasted with poorly attended Biden rallies and Sanders' cranky demeanor. Axios reported Wednesday, that Buttigieg sees a moment to overtake Biden with an electability message after the scrambled Iowa results left some top Biden supporters distraught. If the partial results released yesterday by the Iowa Democratic Party had been trumpeted Monday night instead of being delayed by the app snafu, Buttigieg would have been a national sensation. Instead, Buttigieg's kinda-victory declaration before results

Democratic Presidential Nomination					
RCP Poll Averages					
National		New Hampshire		Nevada	
Biden	27.0	Sanders	25.6	Biden	21.0
Sanders	21.8	Biden	17.1	Sanders	17.5
Warren	14.4	Buttigieg	15.0	Warren	11.5
Bloomberg	10.6	Warren	13.9	Steyer	10.0
Buttigieg	7.0	Klobuchar	7.2	Buttigieg	7.0
Klobuchar	4.0	Gabbard	4.7	Yang	4.0
Biden +5.2		Sanders +8.5		Biden +3.5	
South Carolina		California		Betting Odds	
Biden	30.5	Sanders	25.8	Sanders	37.8
Sanders	17.0	Biden	21.0	Bloomberg	21.1
Steyer	16.5	Warren	19.8	Biden	18.3
Warren	10.5	Buttigieg	7.3	Buttigieg	16.4
Buttigieg	5.5	Bloomberg	4.3	Warren	7.6
Biden +13.5		Sanders +4.8		Sanders +16.7	

were out – which his rivals' surrogates criticized as presumptuous and shady – was drowned out by the macro story of the Democrats' embarrassing disaster."

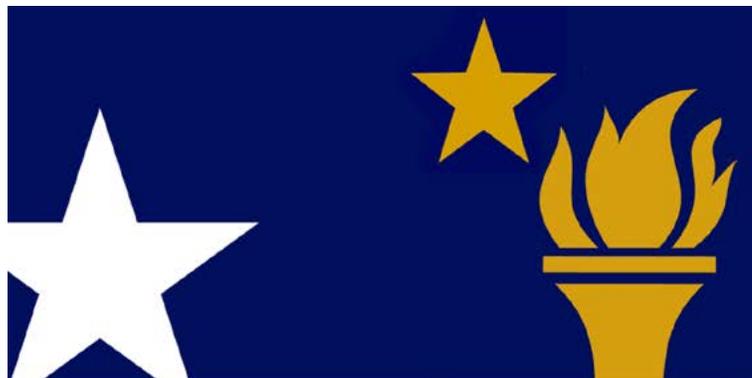
If Buttigieg answered some of the electability questions surrounding his candidacy, Biden fired this salvo at Sanders: "If Sen. Sanders is the nominee ... every candidate in our party will have to carry the label he's given to himself, Democratic socialist. You've already seen what President Trump will do with that. Donald Trump is desperate to pin the socialist label of socialist, socialist, socialist, on our party. We can't let him do that." Biden also said of Buttigieg, "I have great respect for

Mayor Pete and his service to this nation. But I do believe it's a risk, to be just straight up with you, for this party to nominate someone who's never held an office higher than mayor of a town of 100,000 people in Indiana."

That didn't work so well in Iowa.

Hogsett to file Pete's paperwork

Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett and Pete for America volunteers will submit over 8,300 signatures to officially place Pete Buttigieg on Indiana's Democratic primary ballot at the Indiana Secretary of State's office at 11:45 p.m. today. ❖



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Mayor Pete can go the distance

By SHAW FRIEDMAN

LaPORTE – Having just returned Tuesday afternoon from an extraordinary trip to Iowa to campaign for Mayor Pete, I'm here to add an addendum to my April 11, 2019, column titled "Taking Seriously Buttigieg's candidacy" to state in no uncertain terms – Mayor Pete can go the distance.



I spent all of this past Saturday and Sunday canvassing for Mayor Pete in neighborhoods in Des Moines (with my new canvas 'buddy' South Bend native Claire Gasparetti, who flew in from her home in Charlotte, NC) and participated as an "observer" for the Buttigieg campaign at a caucus in Johnston, Iowa, about 10 miles outside of Des Moines

on Monday night. Mayor Pete's win in the state in delegate count (which is the true barometer of a 'win' in that state) is proof positive that his message of unity and a renewed national purpose is resonating with average voters.

It's not just the organizational and training effort that Mayor Pete's staff and volunteers put into Iowa that was rewarded with this win, it's his personal story and his commitment to restoring decency, honor and a sense of 'belonging' to the White House that won the day for us there.

My door-to-door canvassing with Claire on Saturday and Sunday turned up numerous voters who were "undecided" at that point but also willing to give us a listen when it came to Pete's story. I'm also of the belief that Mayor Pete is probably the only candidate who can stitch together the diverse parts of our party to fashion a willing coalition. Exit polls showed him doing well not only with older voters but holding his own with younger voters, who have been Bernie's base. Furthermore, I came across several Republican voters who told me that the ONLY Democrat that they would consider voting for was Mayor Pete. He's got that rare ability to cross party boundaries with his persistent and authentic calls for national unity.

In addition to the canvassing, I participated with many others in a training at the Pete field offices on Saturday night to prepare to be caucus observers. We were given instructions to obey the "Prime Directive" which is "non intervention" in our assigned caucus and Pete's "Rules of the Road," also to be as helpful as possible for party officials putting on the caucus and to work with the precinct captains there; Iowans assigned by Pete's campaign.

After arriving at my assigned precinct in Johnston early as instructed, I offered to help set up chairs and tables. Once the gymnasium inside Beaver Creek Elementary School was ready, I moved to the doors of the school where I was able to leaflet for Mayor Pete in the hour leading up to the caucus. It gave me a great opportunity to tell his story to those waiting in line, many of whom were candid in saying they were still undecided up to that moment.

Once 7 p.m. rolled around, the doors to the school were locked and the 375 caucus goers inside the gym began separating into groups for the various candidates. As an observer I was tabbed to assist with the count for those in the first alignment and then worked alongside Pete's hardworking precinct chairs for Johnston 4 – Ryan and Emily Osweiler – as we began wooing caucus goers from candidates who were not deemed "viable" in the first round. This was fascinating, retail politics at its best, and was conducted in tremendously civil fashion as neighbors sought to convince neighbors to jump over into committed groups. (At this particular caucus, observers and media weren't penned into a specific area but were allowed to mix with the caucus-goers.)

Because of the hard work by the Osweilers and so many Pete volunteers who had door-knocked, made phone calls and gained commitments, we had 107 pledges for Pete on the first ballot, compared to 64 for Warren, 74 for Klobuchar and 58 for Biden. Sanders at 46 was not deemed "viable." We immediately went to work trying to woo, coax and cajole caucus goers in non-committed groups like Tom Steyer to jump to Pete on the second ballot. We were able to gain 16 from other groups on the second ballot with Warren picking up most of the Bernie supporters. Mayor Pete won Johnston Precinct 4's balloting with 123 votes, Warren in second with 93, Klobuchar in third with 80 and Biden rounding out the field with 62. Because of the formula and rounding though, both Pete and Warren each picked up 3 delegates from that caucus to the district convention with Klobuchar and Biden each receiving 2 delegates.

It's clearly a shame that some vendor sold the Iowa state party on a smartphone app, for reporting numbers, when this kind of complex calculation turned out to be difficult to enter into the app whereas old-fashioned phoning, faxing or even scanning the worksheets would have prevented the mess that delayed the reporting of results by nearly a day.

Anybody who says Democrats are divided need only have attended a caucus like the one I was fortunate to participate in to know that the camaraderie and shared desire by caucus goers to remove Donald Trump from office and end Trumpism once and for all overwhelms any other sentiment. I count folks like Marty (who was there organizing for Elizabeth Warren) along with Kevin O'Malley (Biden's observer at the precinct who once served as U.S. ambassador to Ireland) as new friends. I'm already making plans to connect again with Ryan and Emily Osweiler

who did such a great job of mobilizing their friends and neighbors to help us win Johnston Precinct 4 for Mayor Pete.

The opportunity to canvass in Des Moines neighborhoods and attend and assist at a caucus at Beaver Creek Elementary in Polk Township was an extraordinary experience for this battle-hardened political veteran who thought he'd seen it all.

The enthusiasm for Mayor Pete was palpable. As I wrote back in April, 2019, "there's a boldness, an assertiveness, a fresh vision in Mayor Pete's candidacy that addresses the anxieties and partisan anger of our era."

Voters I spoke with in Johnston Precinct 4 understood that and rewarded Mayor Pete with a win.

The crowd of Mayor Pete supporters that gathered Monday night for the rally at Drake University to celebrate victory knew it as well. We're all involved in something very special and something that all Hoosiers can be proud of. ❖

Shaw R. Friedman is former legal counsel for the Indiana Democratic Party and a longtime HPI contributor.



Pete was robbed by Iowa caucuses

By **JACK COLWELL**

SOUTH BEND — Pete was robbed. Not by criminals. Not by conspirators. Not by anyone wishing him harm. But former South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg was robbed of the momentum that should have come on election night from his impressive showing, arguably a win, in the Iowa caucuses.



Results dribbling in a night later showed that Buttigieg actually led in the first official totals for capturing delegates from Iowa and was battling Sen. Bernie Sanders for the lead in total votes of caucus goers after

their two rounds of deliberations.

If the same results had been available Monday night, Buttigieg would have been the big story on television coverage of the caucuses. And his spectacular showing in the first test with voters for the presidential candidates would have been in headlines in the papers the following morning.

It would have been the big story. Instead the big story was about the debacle of the vote count in Iowa. No vote count was available Monday night. Or Tuesday morning. Nothing until late Tuesday afternoon. Even then, not complete returns.

So, instead of gaining the bounce in polls and publicity a winner or even a candidate far exceeding expectations traditionally gets heading into the New Hampshire primary and beyond, there was no bounce Monday for Buttigieg. Instead of positive coverage of a winner, there was criticism of Iowa Democrats for not being able even to add up numbers to determine a winner. Lots of jokes, too. And why not? There were no results on which

to base serious analysis?

Now, with it clear that Buttigieg did have the most impressive showing in Iowa, he is getting some of that positive coverage of which he was deprived on election night. It comes, however, after national attention shifted to the State of the Union address and the impeachment acquittal. He gets some bounce and clearly remains as a top-tier contender. Could it have been a bigger bounce if it began with full national attention on election night?

Of course. Lack of election night clarity also did no favors for Sanders, who would have been able to claim a win in one or more of the tabulations on caucus votes and delegates captured. Sanders had been expected to win, however, so a win proclaimed that night wouldn't have been as spectacular as the unpredicted rise to top of the top tier by Buttigieg.

The tabulation debacle actually helped two candidates. If the totals had been available Monday night, the poor showing of former Vice President Joe Biden would have been a big story. While he was not expected to win in Iowa, where he got a late start, fourth place was not exactly a boost for his national status as the frontrunner. He has been able to brush off Iowa with focus on the questionable process.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who staked all on an impressive showing in Iowa, might have been on the verge of withdrawal if election night totals showed her in fifth place. With no official word on where anybody finished, she was able to say she was pleased with Iowa and heading to New Hampshire. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, apparently third, goes on still viable, but in real danger that the end will be near if she trails far behind Sanders in New Hampshire.

The end of the road does appear to have been reached for the Iowa caucuses as a traditional first-in-the-nation test with voters in a presidential year. That test needed to include some math skills, such as adding up the vote totals. ❖

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CD money leads usually translate to momentum

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Money is the mother’s milk of politics and shapes the 2020 cycle’s two open seat congressional races. With year-end FEC reports posted, Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. in the 1st Congressional District and Christina Hale in the 5th appear to be poised to win their respective Democratic nominations with six-figure funding leads over their closest competitors.



The 5th CD Republican race is not as clear cut, with Republican Dr. Chuck Dietzen holding a nominal money lead over businesswoman Beth Henderson and Treasurer Kelly Mitchell, posting \$228,248 in receipts. But he forged that money lead over Henderson with a \$120,000 loan from himself. Henderson loaned her campaign \$79,600. Without these candidate loans, Dietzen raised \$108,248 while Henderson raised \$117,273 of her posted \$196,873.

Self-funding candidates such as U.S. Sen. Mike Braun (who pumped more than \$6 million into the 2018 Senate primary), U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth and to a lesser extent U.S. Rep. Jim Baird, have found traction in recent cycles. But it’s not an ironclad route. Republican Steve Braun put a substantial amount of his own money in his 4th CD race against Rep. Baird, held a \$919,000 to \$215,000 money advantage, but lost on a controversial mailer and Baird’s extensive farm network.

Neither Dietzen or Henderson has much name identification, though Henderson made a five-figure radio and TV ad buy in January, which continues through mid-February. The ID leader might be Indiana Treasurer Mitchell, who posted \$186,950.12. But statewide office holders do not possess high name ID, and we would be surprised if polling showed Mitchell in the single digits.

What Mitchell does have is a vibrant donor list. Her receipts include donations from Nathan Feltman, Catharine Langham, Elaine Bedel, Secretary of State Connie



5th CD Republican candidate Chuck Dietzen.

Lawson, Auditor Tera Klutz, Bill Soards, Micah Vincent, Jason Dudich, Lawren Mills, Whitney Foughty, Brian Burdick, Deborah Daniels, Bill Salin and Kathryn Hubbard, among others. But that list will not be enough to pull the Republican 5th CD race out of the tossup zone.

Holding a statewide constitutional office is not a tried and true path to higher office. Secretaries of state Evan Bayh and Todd Rokita used it to win gubernatorial and congressional races in 1988 and 2010, Attorney General Linley Pearson won a GOP gubernatorial nomination in 1992, and Auditor Suzanne Crouch was selected to be Eric Holcomb’s running mate in 2016. So the jump Mitchell is trying to accomplish is relatively rare.

The other 5th CD Republican to keep an eye on is Rev. Micah Beckwith, who posted \$95,432 and is expected to run in the social conservative lane. He has donations from former congressmen Marlin Stutzman and Jack Hiler, former legislator Eric Turner, as well as from John Popp, and Fred Glynn, among others.

Hammond Mayor McDermott posted about a \$70,000 lead over State Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon. McDermott just won his fifth term, is mayor of the district’s largest city and is the former Lake County Democratic chairman. Reardon got substantial earned media from her sexual harassment allegations raised against Attorney General Curtis Hill.

Hale’s \$595,421 in posted receipts is the gold standard of the early money wars, with her donor list reading like the who’s who of Indiana Democratic Party politics. While 2018 nominee Dee Thornton complained that the DCCC’s addition of Hale to its “Red to Blue” program was guided by the “age-old Washington tradition: Money,” she was able to post a mere \$51,041. Hale has set the table for an easy primary win and an attempt to shift the reliably red 5th CD into the Democratic camp.

As for the other seven CDs, only Rep. Jackie Walorski’s 2nd CD has been in play historically, though not with the current maps. She has a \$955,000 money advantage over Democrat Pat Hackett.

None of these seven incumbents appears to be in any danger, unless a Watergate-style tsunami were to raise up by November. All incumbents have six-figure money leads.

Here is our roundup of year-end FEC reports:

1ST CD: Hammond Mayor Tom McDermott (D) \$170,130 in receipts; \$45,792 in disbursements; and \$124,338 cash on hand. State Rep. Mara Reardon (D) \$98,692 in receipts; \$2,233 in disbursements; and \$96,459. James Harper (D) \$84,744 in receipts; \$21,580 in disbursements; and \$63,163 cash on hand; North Township Trustee Frank J. Mrvan (D) \$53,916 in receipts; \$4,271 in disbursements; and \$49,645 cash on hand; Sabrina Haake (D) \$40,867 receipts; \$3,750 disbursements; and \$37,117 cash on hand.

Primary Horse Race Status: Likely McDermott.

2ND CD: U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski (R) reported \$1,179,063 in receipts; \$440,417 in disbursements; and \$856,677 cash on hand. Pat Hackett (D) reported \$223,961 in receipts; \$85,345 in disbursements; and \$139,814 cash on hand. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Likely Hackett.

3RD CD: U.S. Rep. Jim Banks (R) reported \$592,868 in receipts; \$384,380 in disbursements; and \$219,997 cash on hand. Chris Magiera (R) reported \$100,300 in receipts; \$93,872 in disbursements; and \$6,428 cash on hand. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Banks.

4TH CD: U.S. Rep. Jim Baird (R) reported \$168,495 in receipts; \$99,490 in disbursements; and \$178,806 cash on hand.

5TH CD: Christina Hale (D) \$595,421.08 raised, including \$490,887 from individuals; \$98,833 from committees; \$176,682 in disbursements; and \$418,739 cash; the 2018 nominee Democratic Dee Thornton reported \$51,041.87 raised, \$36,247.93 spent and \$52,156 cash on hand; Jennifer Christie reported \$20,121 in total receipts; \$15,728 in disbursements; and \$6,585 cash on hand. Fifth CD Republicans: Chuck Dietzen posted \$228,248 in receipts, disbursements of \$35,851; and \$192,397 cash on hand. Beth Henderson: \$196,873.54 including \$79,600 in loans; \$57,874.90 in disbursements; and \$138,998.64 cash on hand; Treasurer Kelly Mitchell reported \$186,950.12 in receipts; \$90,811.49 in disbursements; and \$96,138.63 cash on hand; Rev. Micah Beckwith reported \$95,432.39 in receipts; \$57,782.20 in disbursements; and \$37,650 cash on hand; Kent Abernathy: \$46,817 receipts; \$10,582 in disbursements; and \$36,235 cash on hand; Andrew Bales reported \$7,122 in receipts; \$4,182 in disbursements; and \$2,939 cash on hand; Matthew Hook reported \$10,610; disbursements of \$684.71; and \$9,925.29 cash on hand. **Democratic Primary Horse Race Status:** Safe Hale; **Republican Primary Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

6TH CD: U.S. Rep. Greg Pence (R) \$1,225,101 in receipts; \$1,209,183 in disbursements; and \$216,445 cash on hand.

7TH CD: U.S. Rep. Andre Carson (D) reported \$532,161 in receipts; \$417,052 in disbursements; and \$965,607 cash on hand.

8TH CD: U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon (R) reported \$493,643 in receipts; \$397,342 in disbursements; and \$330,531 cash on hand. Thomasina Marsili (D) posted \$8,793 in receipts; \$3,480 in disbursements; and \$5,313 cash on hand.

9TH CD: U.S. Rep. Trey Hollingsworth (R) posted \$668,108 in receipts; \$243,579 in disbursements; and \$431,855 cash on hand. Republican Dale Dorris reported \$195 raised; \$8 spent; and \$187 cash on hand. **Primary**

Horse Race Status: Safe Hollingsworth.

5TH CD: Sen. Spartz enters race

State Sen. Victoria Spartz announced her entry into the race Wednesday morning. She had previously dropped out of her reelection bid. "We must reverse our country from the socialistic course we are on and return to the founding principles of limited government and individual freedoms," stated Spartz. "Our country is run by special interests, large corporate groups, and the Washington political machine. The politically connected and rich keep getting richer and everyone else is becoming more and more equally poor. Our debt is out of control, our immigration system is broken, our education system is substandard, our health care system is destroying the middle class, our criminal justice and welfare systems are suppressing the poor, our higher education system is bankrupting young people, yet Washington, D.C., is more concerned with the 'circus' and political drama."

Spartz, a native of Ukraine, immigrated to the United States 20 years ago after meeting her future husband on a train in Europe. Spartz also worked as a CPA in the Big Four public accounting firms where she handled some of the most complex Fortune 500 companies, taught at the IU Kelley School of Business in Indianapolis, and served as the CFO of the Indiana attorney general's Office. "My unique life experiences, financial and business expertise, legislative experience, and willingness to fight against the status quo are exactly what we need in Washington, D.C. I will stand and fight with conservative and freedom-loving legislators and President Trump for liberty, justice, and opportunity for all Americans."

Governor

Myers files signatures; Owens withdraws

Indiana Democratic gubernatorial candidate Dr. Woody Myers will be the party's nominee after Josh Owens announced he was suspending his campaign to avoid a primary showdown. "During this primary, I've had many discussions with Dr. Woody Myers about the future of Indiana and the desperate need for new leadership in the governor's office. While we have some differences, I'm encouraged that like me, he's not a career politician," Owens said. "Dr. Myers brings an outsider's perspective to our politics, which is urgently needed. One of the things Dr. Myers and I have agreed on is the need to avoid a divisive Democratic primary. As of today, I will be suspending my campaign and supporting Dr. Myers as he becomes the presumptive Democratic nominee for governor." Owens' campaign denied that he didn't have enough ballot signatures. Myers said, "Over the past several months, like thousands of Hoosiers, I have been impressed by Josh Owens and his campaign for governor. His vision and passion for Indiana has been seen around this great state. I'm humbled and honored by his decision to withdraw from the race so that we can all focus on bringing new leader-

ship to the governor's office to create solutions to benefit every Hoosier this November." The final number of certified signatures will be released this week as county clerks complete the certification process. "I'm excited to announce we have enough certified petitions to turn into the Secretary of State & qualify for the ballot!" Myers tweeted on Wednesday. "Thank you to our supporters across all 92 counties who helped us collect petition signatures & spread the word about our historic campaign for governor."

Republican Party Chairman Kyle Hupfer, who also serves as the campaign manager of Gov. Eric Holcomb's campaign, said, "I know Woody Myers has spent a lot of time outside of Indiana the last 30 years, so he doesn't know that Hoosiers like what Republican leadership has meant to our state. Indiana is on a roll and Governor Holcomb isn't taking his foot off the gas. Unemployment is down, wages are up, job commitments are up and governor Holcomb is just getting started."

Presidential

Karen Pence files for Trump

Vice President Mike Pence's wife returned Wednesday to the Indiana Statehouse where her husband used to serve as governor, filing paperwork to put President Donald Trump's name on the state's presidential primary ballot. Karen Pence walked with Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb and about 50 supporters to the secretary of state's office for the formal filing, then touted Trump's actions as president in urging his reelection this year. Pence boasted in seven minutes of remarks about national economic growth, the low unemployment rate and new foreign trade deals under Trump, saying "we are getting things done."



Weld qualifies for Indiana ballot

A Republican challenger to President Donald Trump and at least eight Democratic presidential candidates are poised to appear on Indiana's May primary ballot (AP). The campaigns for Trump and former Massachusetts Gov. William Weld have collected enough petition signatures to qualify for the Republican ballot, according to figures provided Friday by the Indiana secretary of state's office. Weld's candidacy has gained little traction across the country and Trump will almost certainly have his renomination secured by the time of Indiana's primary. Trump easily won the 2016 Indiana primary and later

selected then-Gov. Mike Pence as his running mate on his way to handily carrying the state in the general election. The Democratic primary ballot could be crowded as former South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg leads those meeting Indiana's requirement of 500 voter signatures in each of its nine congressional districts. Others that have apparently qualified are former Vice President Joe Biden, Sens. Amy Klobuchar, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and businessmen Tom Steyer and Andrew Yang. Hawaii congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard could also qualify as she had enough signatures in eight of the nine districts.

Trump Jr. to address Allen County GOP

At the request of U.S. Rep. Jim Banks, President Donald Trump's eldest son is set to be the keynote speaker at an annual Republican event (WPTA-TV). Donald J. Trump Jr. will be the keynote speaker at the Allen County GOP's Lincoln Day Dinner this spring, Party Chairman Steve Shine announced. "There is no one better to represent the President, both in presence and philosophically than Donald J. Trump Jr., one of the most sought after speakers in the country," Shine said. Chairman Shine said Trump Jr. agreed to appear thanks to an invite from Congressman Jim Banks. The dinner is set for Thursday, April 23, at 5 p.m. at the Grand Wayne Convention Center. It sets up a potential preview of the 2024 presidential race.

Vice President Mike Pence is expected to run, and Trump Jr. hinted in his book "Triggered" that he sees himself as an heir to his father, both in business and politics.

General Assembly

SD7: Councilman to challenge Buchanan

A Carroll County Councilman is now in the race for state senate district seven. Ethan Brown is the latest to challenge incumbent Brian Buchanan in the Republican primary. As of Tuesday afternoon, Brown joins State Senator Brian Buchanan and Vernon Budd in the race.

HD27: Hass to challenge Klinker

There's a Republican newly on the ticket for state representative in District 27. That's the seat currently held by Sheila Klinker, who filed for reelection on the seat she's held since 1982 (WLFI-TV). James T. Hass previously ran for West Lafayette City Council in 2015 and District 26 State Representative in 2010. Right now, neither Klinker nor Hass is opposed in the primaries.

HD100: Forestal passes on reelection

State Rep. Dan Forestal (D-Indianapolis) will not seek reelection this year. Forestal is facing felony charges of impersonating a police officer. Democratic City-County Councilor Blake Johnson announced that he had filed his candidacy for the District 100 seat (IBJ). Johnson, 33, is the CEO of IndyHub, a not-for-profit. ❖

Impeaching reality

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Some called it the State of the Union address. But Tuesday night was another episode of Donald Trump's White House reality show, coming just hours before the U.S. Senate acquitted him in his impeachment trial.

He was greeted by Republican Nixonian chants of "four more years" in a Chamber that voted to impeach him less than two months ago. He refused to shake Speaker Nancy Pelosi's hand. Pelosi dropped the normal "distinct pleasure and high honor" part of her greeting. After the speech that claimed the historic great economy (which is growing at a modest 2.3%) and portrayed himself as a defender of pre-existing health conditions (his administration is doing the exact opposite in the courts), the speaker tore up his speech. She described it as a "manifesto of mistruths."



But this was a classic made-for-TV moment. "In just three short years, we have shattered the mentality of American decline and we have rejected the downsizing of America's destiny. We have totally rejected the downsizing," President Trump said in a speech during which he honored Rush Limbaugh with the Medal of Freedom and reunited a military family. "We are moving forward at a pace that was unimaginable just a short time ago, and we are never going back."

"He has had existential political threats facing him from the moment he was elected until tomorrow," Texas-based Republican consultant Matt Mackowiak told Reuters, referring to the impending acquittal vote on impeachment charges.

But last time Trump dodged such an existential threat (last July 24 after Special Counsel Robert Mueller testified before Congress), he sowed the seeds for his impeachment the very next day.

The unintended consequences of impeachment came to light earlier Tuesday. Gallup put his job approval at an apex for this president, at 49% with 94% of Republicans on board and 42% of independents. Those approval numbers were still 30% below President Clinton's impeachment polling windfall 21 years ago, but at a high for President Trump. The Democratic nomination process

was going through its Iowa meltdown, with Democratic socialist Sen. Bernie Sanders essentially tied with Mayor Pete Buttigieg. "It's a fiasco that just plays right into us," the president told television network TV anchors during an off-the-record lunch earlier in the day.

"We will never let socialism destroy American health care!" Trump said at one point in his address, a shot over Sen. Sanders' (and Democratic voters') bows.

Trump's efforts to smear former vice president Joe Biden via the Ukraine scandal were bearing fruit in Iowa, paid for by the cost of impeachment. Biden is poised for an anemic fourth place finish and is just about out of funds. So if Biden falls away and Democrats end up nominating Sanders, it will have been worth the taint in the cunning mind of this president.

From an Indiana perspective, the White House laid out its markers: Since President Trump's election, 75,000 jobs have been created in Indiana, including 11,000 manufacturing jobs. Some 13,000 Hoosiers have been lifted out of poverty. The 156 opportunity zones in Indiana are attracting investment to previously forgotten communities, including in Allen, Lake, and Marion counties. Entrepreneurship is booming, as new business applications in Indiana are up 23% since the election. As more Hoosiers are working, unemployment insurance claims are down 18% since the election. At \$55,000, real median household income in Indiana is up 3% under President Trump.

While 40% in a recent New York Times poll revealed surging optimism, the Real Clear Politics right/wrong track polling composite, only 39.3% see the nation on the right track, while 55.5% perceive a wrong track.



As for impeachment, Trump dodged Senate witnesses last week, setting up yesterday's acquittal and didn't mention it Tuesday night. But in doing so, the key vote from Sen. Lamar Alexander was accompanied by his terming the July

25 phone call with Ukraine President Zelensky "inappropriate." He added in a late night tweet: "The question then is not whether the president did it, but whether the United States Senate or the American people should decide what to do about what he did."

Alan Dershowitz, the Harvard law professor emeritus, said on the Senate floor last week, "Every public official that I know believes that his election is in the public interest. And mostly you're right. Your election is in the public interest. And if a president did something that he believes will help him get elected, in the public interest, that cannot be the kind of quid pro quo that results in

impeachment. It cannot be impeachable.”

On Wednesday afternoon, U.S. Sen Mitt Romney made history when he became the first member of an impeached president’s party to vote to convict. “There’s no question that the president asked a foreign power to investigate his political foe,” Romney said. “That he did so for a political purpose, and that he pressured Ukraine to get them to do help or to lead in this effort. My own view is that there’s not much I can think of that would be a more egregious assault on our Constitution than trying to corrupt an election to maintain power. And that’s what the president did.”

U.S. Sen. Todd Young explained his vote for acquittal by saying, “After hearing all counsel arguments and reviewing all evidence in the record, including 17 witnesses, 192 witness video clips, and 28,578 pages of evidence, procedural rules, and Constitutional concerns, I will vote to acquit the president. I have worked to remain impartial and openminded throughout this trial, but it must be acknowledged that a political fever permeated this process from the beginning, dating back not just to the start of the House of Representatives’ impeachment efforts, but all the way back to November 2016.”

Young echoed a 1999 complaint by then Republican U.S. Rep. Mark Souder after President Clinton’s acquittal, that the process had been “rushed.” Or as Young put it, “The House’s rushed impeachment process denied the president due process, and House managers failed to meet their heavy burden of proof to remove a president from office and from future ballots. This week, Americans begin the presidential election process. It’s time for the Senate to resume its legislative work on behalf of the American people, and to allow the voters to register their opinions about this administration in the coming election. The Founding Fathers, who warned of the political nature of impeachment, also provided us a means to address dissatisfaction with our presidents, frequent elections.”

With the restraint of impeachment and internal “guard rails” gone, President Trump has been emboldened. Where that will lead us is anyone’s guess. ❖

Reaction to Trump trial, acquittal

US. Rep. Larry Bucshon: “Mitt Romney is a sore loser who is trying to get retribution on @realDonaldTrump for doing what he couldn’t do, become President. It’s even more clear now why he lost. Romney’s high and mighty holier than thou attitude is unacceptable to the vast majority of the American people.”

U.S. Rep. Jim Banks: “Now that President Trump has been cleared, we need to investigate the apparent corruption within the Democrat party. Democrats need to be held accountable for dragging our country through historic, unprecedented, partisan impeachment. We know Rep. Adam Schiff lied about his interactions with the whistleblower. We know the whistleblower went to Schiff’s committee before he wrote the complaint. We know the whistleblower worked for Joe Biden. That’s why the next step for Republicans is to investigate.”

U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski: “Now that President Trump has been acquitted by the Senate, the country can finally move past this divisive impeachment charade. Speaker Pelosi’s failed attempt to have the president removed from office and the ballot was driven by the worst kind of partisan politics, and the American people deserved better. Now it’s time for Congress to focus on the optimistic agenda President Trump laid out in his State of the Union address.”

Mike Bloomberg: “The trial was a charade, and the vote is a disgrace. I have no doubt that historians will ultimately convict this president, along with the Republicans who lack the courage to do it themselves. But we cannot wait for history to render its verdict – that is our job.”

Treasurer Kelly Mitchell: “The United States Senate rejected the use of articles of impeachment as a political weapon and fully acquitted President Trump. As I’ve said before, now is the time for House Democrats to put aside their personal and political animosity for our duly-elected President and get back to fulfilling their constitutional obligation to serve the American people.” ❖



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GDP and our counties

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — Most folks have an intuitive understanding of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). They know GDP measures the current activity of the nation's legal economy. The change in annual GDP is the definitive statement about our national economic performance.

It's far better than the monthly unemployment rate or the jobs numbers to assess that performance. At the same time, Hoosier politicians seem unaware that GDP figures from the US. Bureau of Economic Analysis are now out there for states and counties.



Indiana's GDP figures don't tell the same story as we get from those officeholders. Simply put, in the last 20 years (1998 to 2018), Indiana has exceeded the national GDP growth rate only six times. And not once since 2014.

We have seen Indiana's share of national GDP fall from 2.05% to 1.77%. Doesn't seem like much? That insignificant 0.28% was \$57.6 billion in 2018 alone, an amount which would have raised our state GDP by 16%.

Let's take a closer view: We'll look at Indiana's 92 counties over two shorter periods of time, 2008 to 2013 and 2013 to 2018. We can proudly say 44 of our 92 counties had no decrease in Real GDP (that's GDP adjusted for inflation) in either half of the decade 2008 to 2018.

These fortunate counties had a sweet 16 of their own, including eight you might not expect to be among any elite: Grant, Tipton, Washington, Jackson, Howard, Shelby, Jay and Steuben.

However, with 44 counties escaping a decline in Real GDP over the decade from 2008 to '18, that left 48 counties without such good fortune. Eight counties declined in both the first and second five years of the decade. These were Ohio, Posey, Miami, Newton, Switzerland, Clinton, Union, Jasper.

Another eight counties had declines in the 2008-2013 period that overwhelmed the better times of the last five years. These were Cass, Blackford, Harrison, Fayette, LaPorte, Vigo, Marion and Henry. Hence, for the decade they had lower GDP in 2018 than they did in 2008. It's easy to dismiss Marion County's little 0.14% decline, until we realize it's over \$1.2 billion.

In summary, all the happy talk emanating from the hype of the present tends to neglect the damages of the Great Recession. Many places and persons in our state and throughout the nation have open wounds from the devastation of Wall Street's failure.

In addition, that failure was compounded by congenial collusion with government agencies meant to

regulate Wall Street in all its many disguises. Now, a dozen years after the fall, there are continuing attempts to remove or weaken the remedial efforts taken on the heels of the panic.

GDP has no metric for incompetence and cowardice in the private and public sectors. ❖

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It should be back to education basics

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

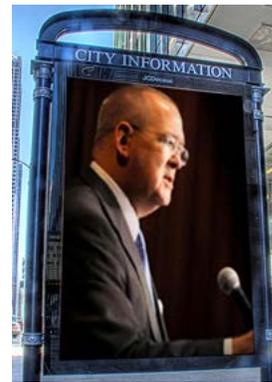
MUNCIE — Indiana's economic future will be primarily determined by the share of Hoosier adults who graduated from college. If that share remains low, our economy will languish, our incomes will continue to fall further behind the national average and our best-educated citizens will relocate elsewhere. This truth cannot be too often repeated, but it begs other questions, mostly about schooling, and the needs of citizens who do not go to college.

For most of us, the bulk of our formal education comes in K-12 schools, rather than college or graduate school. Public schools remain the most common preparation for college and life afterwards. A good K-12 experience can prepare us to learn throughout our life, while giving us the basics of science, mathematics, literature and the arts.

For kids heading to college, rigorous high school programs are important. But, for kids not heading to college, the rigor and substance of K-12 is even more critical. This is the last time those students will receive formal education designed to make them a learned person. That fact is reason enough to question the way Indiana now focuses vocational education. Yet, the General Assembly has legislation before it to align curriculum from primary to college to meet workforce needs.

Now, to be clear, I don't know what specific skills today's middle school kids will need in two decades, but neither does anyone else. I am merely being honest about my inability to know the unknowable. For the record, acknowledging such limits to knowledge used to be a feature of conservatism.

Continuing labor market changes, including automation, artificial intelligence and much more widespread adoption of today's technologies make it nearly impossible



to predict job specific skills of the future. Asking business leaders these questions is folly. A full half of today's businesses will be gone by 2030, and they are as ignorant as the rest of us about these changes.

To accentuate the point, imagine today's labor markets and technologies from the vantage point of 2000. The first Blackberry phone was two years away, China was a modest importer, and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg was a high school sophomore. Now imagine how a committee in Indianapolis is going to design an effective, integrated curriculum to meet workforce needs two decades into the future. They are not. The state's recent track record on such matters should generate significantly more humility.

The only skill that we are certain will be needed by today's kids in 20 years is the ability to learn and master new skills. Our certain ignorance about the specific skills needed in 2040 is a compelling argument for more focus on basics in K-12 education; stronger basic math, science and literacy. The focus on vocational schooling is

stunning hubris.

We will always need workers with skills that differ from those taught in a college classroom. Workers with different types of education bring to bear different skills into labor markets. But, it is a remarkable fact that both wages and productivity for high school graduates are highest in places with large shares of college graduates. Today, the worst employment options for non-college graduates are in cities with few college graduates. This suggests that labor markets reward non-college skills that complement those of college graduates. These skills are almost certainly not those we are presenting to unwitting middle and high school students as a gateway to non-college careers. ❖

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

How Iowa chaos could be July DNC preview

By **KYLE KONDIK**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. — A much-longer-than-expected vote count featuring confusing and opaque rules that produces a mixed, divisive outcome. That sums up the Iowa caucus, the first event of the Democratic nominating season. Might the description also apply to the last event of the nominating season -- the convention itself?

The Iowa debacle and its muddy result seemed to make a contested convention at least a little more likely.

With just a few votes left to count as of Thursday morning, Bernie Sanders received the most votes from actual caucus participants in the first round of voting -- the closest thing we have to a true popular vote in Iowa. Meanwhile, Pete Buttigieg and Sanders had nearly the same number of state delegate equivalents, which is what is traditionally used to measure success in Iowa. Elizabeth Warren, Joe Biden, and Amy Klobuchar rounded out the top five. Regardless of the final numbers, the ultimate pledged delegate allocation among Sanders and Buttigieg probably will end up being very similar, if not the same.

While the early caucuses and primaries do not award that many delegates -- see our preview of the primary season for the specifics -- they do often serve the purposes of winnowing the field. As of this writing, no one has dropped out of the race following Iowa. Even a candidate like Klobuchar, whose competitive but apparent fifth-place finish in a state she had long targeted, will trudge on

to New Hampshire, even though she does not appear to have much of a path to winning the nomination.

Biden's sagging performance foreclosed one possible outcome to this primary season: A quick victory by the former vice president. Had Biden won Iowa, which seemed possible albeit unlikely headed into the voting, it's possible that he would have grabbed hold of the overall nomination battle, perhaps winning three of the first four contests (Nevada and South Carolina, in this scenario), and effectively wrapping up the nomination when the big states start voting in March.

That no longer seems possible.

It is easy to note, as we and many others did months in advance, that overly white Iowa and New Hampshire presented demographic challenges for the national polling leader, Biden, who is the leading candidate

among black voters.

It is another thing to actually see the universally-known Biden getting only about 15% of the first-round voting and apparently finishing fourth.

Biden seemed to put a lot into Iowa and came away empty-handed. New Hampshire is not very promising for Biden either, although the Granite State sometimes likes to zig when the Hawkeye State zags. There is a real danger that Biden, who already is running low on money, peters out over the next few weeks. He needs a big win in South Carolina, where he has polled well, at the end of the month, and ideally he needs to perform well in Nevada as well.

Michael Bloomberg looms as a possible replacement for Biden as the champion of the center-left/establishment part of the Democratic Party.

Could that champion also be Buttigieg? Maybe, although his nonexistent support among black voters could



render him an afterthought following New Hampshire. New Hampshire seems like a must-win for both Sanders and Buttigieg – polling has pointed to Sanders there, but perhaps Buttigieg gets a boost (it seems fair to say that Buttigieg was the only candidate who really seemed to outperform pre-caucus expectations). Meanwhile, Warren did OK overall in Iowa, but the results were hardly a breakthrough for her. She can't keep finishing behind Sanders and Buttigieg.

The bottom line here is that there are pitfalls and problems for all of the candidates, and whatever slight frontrunning advantage Biden had may now be gone.

New Hampshire may help clarify the race, particularly because the chaos in Iowa paired with the flood of news (the State of the Union and the Senate acquitting President Trump in his impeachment trial) may dilute whatever public relations boost the eventual winner of Iowa might have expected to receive.

However, if New Hampshire doesn't help winnow the field, and the race remains a multi-pronged one into and through March's delegate-rich contests, it may be hard for anyone to get a firm enough grip on the race to accrue a delegate majority in the primary season.

That could lead to a protracted battle at the convention, the mechanics of which might make Iowa seem like a well-oiled machine by comparison.

GOP to 'nationalize' House races

Republican weakness in 2019 fourth-quarter congressional fundraising reports released late last week has spurred much gloomy commentary about the GOP's prospects to retake the House this year. Politico's Jake Sherman started a story last week on the Republican money troubles thusly: "House Republican leaders privately conceded in a closed meeting Tuesday morning that they are in the midst of a full-blown fundraising crisis, which would imperil any chance they have at regaining their majority in 2020." Sherman quoted both House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R, CA-23) and National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Tom Emmer (R, MN-6) as expressing major concern at fundraising, and imploring their members to do better.

If winning the House was just about fundraising, Republicans would have no chance to win the majority.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee outraised the NRCC by \$40 million last year, and another major Democratic outside group, House Majority PAC, ended the year with a \$38 million to \$28 million cash-on-hand edge over its Republican counterpart, Congressional Leadership Fund (because of the nation's crazy quilt campaign finance laws, each party has multiple outside House campaign arms). Individual Democratic members have continued their incredible fundraising pace from last

cycle, as Roll Call's Bridget Bowman and National Journal's Kirk Bado documented in detail following the full posting of campaign finance reports on Friday.

That said, House elections are about more than money. Republicans are not favored to win the House -- but it doesn't take much imagination to figure out how they could.

Long-term national trends point to increases in straight-ticket voting and a waning power of incumbency. Despite losing the national popular vote in 2016, Donald Trump carried 226 of the 435 congressional districts that will be in place for this year's election (this includes the newly-redrawn maps in North Carolina). Democrats hold 30 districts that Trump carried, while Republicans hold only five that Hillary Clinton carried.

Our current ratings favor Democrats to win at least three of the five current Clinton-won GOP districts, while Republicans scored a pickup themselves when Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R, NJ-2) switched parties. Put it all together, and the Republicans likely will need to win at least 20 or so currently Democratic seats to get to the magic number of 218 seats for a majority. The Trump-won districts held by Democrats provide a path to reaching that number, and Republicans also have some targets in marginal Clinton-won districts as well.

So far as bleak as things may look for Republicans in the House, the targets are there for them to win the majority, particularly if Trump wins again.

This reality helps explain why despite Trump's weak overall approval ratings -- though his approval has been up a little lately -- House Republicans have rallied around him. Their best chance to win the majority back is if Trump maximizes his electoral potential in November and if there is very little electoral daylight between House



Republicans and the president. If impeachment is a major issue in the fall -- and that is an if -- one can see the danger it poses to House Democrats in Trump-won districts who will be trying to localize their races against opponents who in all likelihood will be urging voters to

back Republicans up and down the ballot.

We can see this in party messaging: Republican outside groups have been hitting Trump-district Democrats on impeachment -- spending that has spurred some vulnerable members to defend themselves on the airwaves too -- while Democrats are talking about prescription drug prices, a non-nationalizing issue.

The danger for Republicans is that Trump craters in the fall and drags the GOP down with him. But at that point, House Republicans would be in the minority -- just like they are now -- and they'd also have the opportunity to benefit from possible backlash against a Democratic president in the 2022 midterm. ❖

Doug Masson, Masson's Blog: Iowa isn't important because of the delegates it produces. It's important because it's the season premiere of Presidential Election. Rather than reporting on the news, with Iowa, the political media creates its own weather. The media isn't reporting on Iowa because it's significant. Iowa is important because of the reporting. Here we have a 538 story with the headline: "Iowa Might Have Screwed Up the Whole Nomination Process." Nate Silver notes that Iowa accounts for 41 of the 3,990 Democratic pledged delegates. That's one percent. But, he calculates that, because of the media coverage surrounding it, it's worth more like 20%. He calls "the failure to release timely results" "a colossal shitshow." Keep in mind what we mean by "timely" here. That was written approximately 8 hours after the caucuses started. Eight hours — in a process that will drag on until mid-July. Listening to CNN and MSNBC last night, there was a great wailing and gnashing of teeth as they'd failed to get the "wins" and "losses" they so desperately wanted to feed into the narrative machine. Compare how strident the complaints are about the delay in Iowa results to the relative indifference when, say, a politician stonewalls an investigation or fails to respond to a question. To me, that underscores where the biases really are. ❖



Mark Bennett, Terre Haute Tribune-Star: City elections mean more when more people vote. Elected officials pay more attention to a wider variety of residents as turnouts increase. And one sure way to boost voting for city offices is to shift those off-year elections to even-numbered years, right alongside candidates for state and federal offices. If Indiana had such a system, Hoosiers would be deciding the race for mayor and city council this coming fall, as well as for president, Congress, governor and state legislature. More people traditionally vote in presidential or even midterm elections than municipal elections, which are conducted in odd-numbered years in Indiana. State-wide, 23% of registered Hoosiers voted in their local city elections last November. By contrast, 51% voted in the 2018 midterm election and 58% in the 2016 presidential election. Three Indiana counties had city election turnouts below 10%. With turnouts so low, the positives for isolating city elections on off-years dwindle in relevance. Giving races for mayor and city council center stage, alone, does let voters focus on local issues. Yet, with so few participating, the weight of special-interest groups who do vote in significant numbers — to their credit — overwhelms the other sectors of the population. It also would be more cost-effective for cities to shift their local elections to the same cycle as state and federal voting. A bill authored by state Rep. Alan Morrison would allow Indiana's smallest towns and cities to adopt ordinances, moving local elections to even-numbered years. It focuses on cities and towns with fewer than 3,500 residents. The Indiana House passed his proposal 93-5 last week, sending it onto the

Indiana Senate for its consideration. Morrison would like to expand the bill to include second-class cities (with populations of 35,000 to 499,999) and third-class cities (35,000 or smaller). Six years ago, Morrison tried to give all Indiana cities (aside from Indianapolis, the state's only first-class city) the option of adopting even-numbered-year municipal elections. "I couldn't get a hearing on it," Morrison said. Prior to introducing his current small-town bill, Morrison pursued a bill to let third-class cities and smaller coincide their elections with state and federal. "There was bipartisan pushback on that," he said. So, he opted for the small-town bill. ❖

David Leonhardt, New York Times: It wasn't the most notorious part of the "Access Hollywood" tape, but it was the most revealing: "And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything." Donald Trump was talking in 2005 to Billy Bush, then a host of the celebrity-news program "Access Hollywood." It was hardly a private moment. They were wearing microphones and surrounded by a camera crew. In the more than three years since the tape emerged, it's become clear that the you-can-do-anything line wasn't only describing Trump's attitude toward women. It was describing his attitude toward everything: If you're rich, famous or powerful, you can get away with much more than most people understand. You just do it. You don't need to worry about ethical niceties or even, sometimes, the law. You use your advantages to bulldoze any obstacles. For anyone trying to make sense of the impeachment trial, this attitude is central. It's why Trump pressured Ukraine to conduct a smear campaign in the first place: Because he could. And it's how Trump organized his defense in the Senate. His lawyers offered a brazenly inconsistent series of arguments, from "He did nothing wrong" to "There was no quid pro quo" to "There were no witnesses to the quid pro quo" to, finally, "If a president does it, it's O.K." You could almost hear the echo of the "Access Hollywood" tape in the Senate last week: When you're president, you can do anything. That, of course, is the ideology of autocracy. ❖

William Galston, Wall Street Journal: As Iowa Democrats streamed into their local caucuses Monday evening, they told pollsters by a margin of 61% to 37% that they would rather see the Democratic Party nominate a presidential candidate who can "beat Donald Trump" than one who "agrees with you on major issues." But according to partial returns released Tuesday afternoon, their votes have made Sen. Bernie Sanders once again a leading candidate for the Democratic nomination. It is difficult to believe that Mr. Sanders's supporters consciously placed ideological commitment above victory in November. They must believe, as Mr. Sanders does, that his nomination will catalyze a "political revolution" in which millions of previously uninvolved voters will surge into the electorate and replicate the Democratic sweep of 1932.. ❖

Senate votes to acquit Trump

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Wednesday voted to acquit President Trump on impeachment charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress over his dealings with Ukraine, marking the beginning of the end of the months-long saga (The Hill). Senators voted 48-52 on abuse of power and 47-53 on obstruction, falling well short of the two-thirds requirement for convicting and removing him office. But in a blow to Trump, and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's efforts to keep Republicans unified, Sen. Mitt Romney (Utah), the party's 2012 presidential candidate, announced less than two hours before the vote that he would vote to convict Trump on the abuse of power charge, while acquitting him on the second article involving obstruction of Congress. Refuting months of GOP predictions, no Democratic senators voted to acquit Trump. Sens. Doug Jones (D-Ala.), Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Krysten Sinema (D-Ariz.) — all seen as potential swing votes — announced earlier Wednesday that they would vote to convict.



Romney votes to convict Trump

WASHINGTON — Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah) sealed a place in history Wednesday with his announcement that he will vote to convict President Trump of abuse of power, becoming a rare lone voice in a Republican Party that otherwise has marched in lockstep with the president throughout the impeachment proceedings (Washington Post). Romney said he will vote against the second article of impeachment, which accused the president of obstruction of Congress. But on the first article, the Utah senator said in a telephone interview that he found the evidence against Trump overwhelming and the arguments

by the president's defense ultimately unconvincing. "There's no question that the president asked a foreign power to investigate his political foe," Romney said ahead of the floor statement he delivered Wednesday. "That he did so for a political purpose, and that he pressured Ukraine to get them to do help or to lead in this effort. My own view is that there's not much I can think of that would be a more egregious assault on our Constitution than trying to corrupt an election to maintain power. And that's what the president did."

Holcomb says state prepared for virus

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric Holcomb is promising Hoosiers that state and local health officials, along with Indiana health care providers, are prepared to identify and treat any infections associated with the coronavirus that originated in China (Carden, NWI Times). The Republican announced Wednesday there continue to be zero confirmed cases of 2019 novel coronavirus in Indiana. A suspected case last week in Porter County turned out to be a false alarm after laboratory testing on the patient was negative for coronavirus. Holcomb said a second person in Indiana, whom he declined to identify but said is not symptomatic, is following federal self-quarantine guidelines after recently traveling to China. "While there is no need for immediate concern, the state will remain on alert to ensure Hoosiers are protected," Holcomb said.

DNR's Clark to retire

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric J. Holcomb today announced that Director Cameron Clark will retire from the Department of Natural Resources at the end of March. "I want to thank Cam for leading one of our state's largest agencies with great dedication," Gov. Holcomb said. "He has faithfully served Hoosiers by ensuring

our state parks and recreation areas offer incredible experiences for decades to come." Clark was appointed as the director of the DNR in 2013 by then-Gov. Mike Pence and reappointed by Gov. Holcomb in 2017. As director, Clark stewards more than 500,000 acres of land and water.

Pence cites 'new low' from Pelosi

WASHINGTON — Vice President Mike Pence on Wednesday accused House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of hitting a "new low" by tearing up a ceremonial copy of President Donald Trump's State of the Union address at the conclusion of his remarks before Congress on Tuesday night (Politico). "I didn't see her do it. I found out just a few moments later, and I think it was a new low. I wasn't sure if she was ripping up the speech or ripping up the Constitution," Pence said in an interview on "Fox & Friends."

McDermott talks up College Bound

HAMMOND — The best thing he's ever done as a public servant is helping 5,000 students go to college, Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. said in his 16th State of the City address Wednesday (NWI Times). The highlight of his municipal administration, he told the gathering at the Dynasty Banquets, was creation of the College Bound Scholarship Program. The program has delivered \$10,500 a year in college tuition for the eligible children of city homeowners since 2006. "It's helped 5,000 students go to college. It's the best thing I'll ever do as a public servant," he said. He spoke of construction of the \$20 million Sportsplex, which repurposed the old Carson Pirie Scott shopping mall at 165th and Indianapolis Boulevard. He reminisced about the demolition of the crime-riddled River Park Apartments at Kennedy Avenue and the Borman Expressway more than a decade ago.