

Young talks of COVID-19 impacts

Hoosiers will ‘adapt, improvise & overcome’

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – With Indiana and the nation heading up the steep incline toward a coronavirus apex expected to crest in mid- to late-April, Howey Politics Indiana conducted this interview with Sen. Todd Young, who finds himself in the biggest crisis he has faced since joining Congress nine years ago.

“We’re doing what Americans do in times of crisis,” Young explained, “identifying ways to adapt, improvise and overcome. Unlike the 2008-09 economic crisis, which is something Americans never wanted to relive, our economy was red hot as we headed into this pandemic. We literally have a public health crisis at the same time we have an economic crisis. It’s disrupted our society. So this has impacted every



facet of our lives and has inspired how Americans, and Hoosiers more specifically, have been responding.”

Young made a point of reaching out to local government officials reading this HPI Interview. “We are open for business; we are working seven days a week,” Young said of his Senate office. “We will respond to every email, every phone call, every letter and it will form my policy responses in the coming weeks and months.”

Other highlights on our half hour conversation focused on how this pandemic will likely reshape society, and whether the Trump administration mishandled the early stages of the crisis, with President Trump routinely saying

Continued on page 4

Pandemic, ICU & fear

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Fear.

That was the name of Bob Woodward’s first book on the Trump presidency. It’s been a theme of Michael Moore documentaries and a proven Madison Avenue marketing device. And fear has become an invasive pandemic element that has seeped into every family, every business, every school, and every circle of friends this spring.

Fear has planted itself in our collective psyche.

My explicit fear is the Intensive Care Unit. After suffering a subdural hematoma last November, I ended up in the St. Vincent ICU – then one of



“We think Italy may be the most comparable area to the United States at this point.”

- Vice President Pence, to CNN on Wednesday, after he was asked how severe the COVID-19 pandemic will get in the United States. The pandemic has hit Italy the hardest to date.



Howey Politics Indiana
WWHowey Media, LLC
 c/o Business Office
 PO Box 6553
 Kokomo, IN, 46904
 www.howeypolitics.com

Brian A. Howey, Publisher
Mark Schoeff Jr., Washington
Mary Lou Howey, Editor
Susan E. Joiner, Editor

Subscriptions

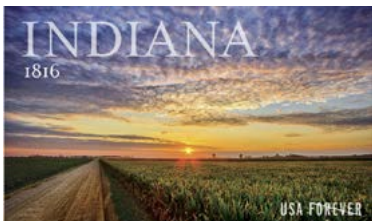
HPI, HPI Daily Wire \$599
 HPI Weekly, \$350
Lisa Houchell, Account Manager
 (765) 452-3936 telephone
 (765) 452-3973 fax
 HPI.Business.Office@howeypolitics.com

Contact HPI

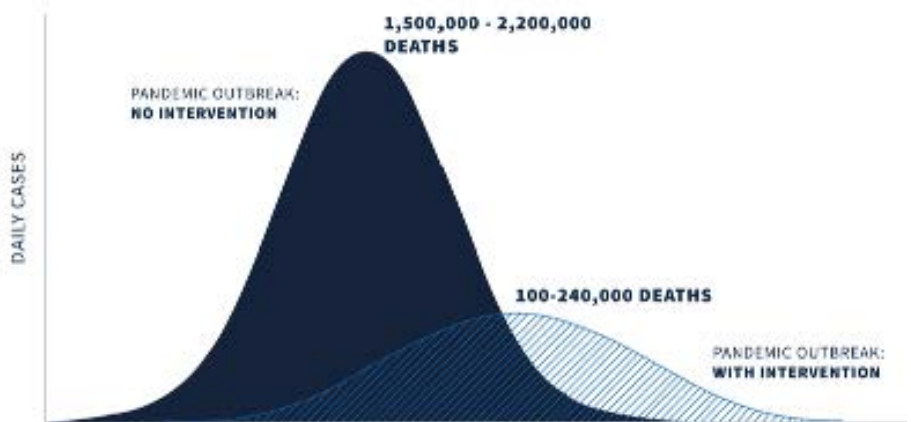
bhowey2@gmail.com
 Howey's cell: 317.506.0883
 Washington: 202.256.5822
 Business Office: 765.452.3936

© 2020, **Howey Politics Indiana**. All rights reserved.
 Photocopying, Internet forwarding, faxing or reproducing in any form, whole or part, is a violation of federal law without permission from the publisher.

Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



GOALS OF COMMUNITY MITIGATION



about 1,400 in the state – for about five days. I was on one of the state’s 1,100 ventilators for about 36 hours. When I came to, I couldn’t talk with the tube going down my gullet. I remember thinking, “How in the hell did I get here?” I had no idea. And the sounds of that ICU – the chimes and what seemed like an animated woodpecker working on a hollow log – haunt me to this day. I never want to go back to the ICU.

When this pandemic began, with Gov. Eric Holcomb and President Trump issuing stay-at-home orders early last month, I needed little convincing to remain holed up at our condo. Time in the ICU will do that to you. As Holcomb said on Monday, “It took a month for the United States to record its first 1,000 deaths, and then it took just two days to record the next 1,000. In Indiana we went from one COVID-19 case on March 6 to 1,786 today. Those are the ones we know of. Our first COVID-19 death in Indiana was two weeks ago today and we’re now at 35 Hoosiers who have passed.” By Tuesday, it was 49. By Wednesday it was 65.

The statistics are troubling. In a nation of 331 million, 2,000 deaths seem miniscule. Out of 6.85 million Hoosiers, the 65 fatalities reported on Tuesday seem the same. But this is before the wave hits us. The critical question now seems to be whether it will be a microbe tsunami.

On Tuesday, Dr. Kristina Box said, “The numbers represent a very

big increase in the total number of cases reported and also the number of deaths that have occurred.” The daily death toll, the health commissioner explained, reflects verified mortality going back days if not weeks. So the death toll is actually a delayed and lagging indicator.

“It’s a very sad reality that with this pandemic, the number of cases and numbers of deaths are going to continue to increase,” Dr. Box said. “I don’t want to minimize a single one of those losses. They are all someone’s spouse, grandparent, child or friend. I do not want Hoosiers to see these rising numbers (and think) the peak has arrived. We have a very long way to go before we reach the peak and I cannot say enough how important it is to continue to stay home.”

Fear now emanates from every facet of life. I went to Lowe’s to buy some quarter round for a flooring project and had to touch a keypad. I drove home holding my finger aloft until I could get hand sanitizer applied. A trip to the bank and interaction with the teller tube produced similar heebie-geebies. When I go Krogering, I look at every other person and the cashier as a potential vector. It’s classic social paranoia.

This pandemic possesses the hallmark of Shirley Jackson’s famed 1948 short story, “The Lottery,” where a town of 300 gathers on June 27 to sacrifice one citizen to

ensure the well-being of the community. Poor Tessie ends up getting stoned, and not by a bong or cannabis-infused chocolate. COVID-19 acts with a strange randomness. Some end up with sniffles; others have no symptoms but spread COVID-19's cruel fate; and yet others are isolated in ICUs and die alone. My wife Susan was with me in ICU daily last November. I cannot fathom what it would be like to end up there again ... alone.

Dr. Tony Fauci and Dr. Deborah Birx warned that 100,000 to 200,000 Americans will die of coronavirus even in "perfect" social distancing scenarios. A University of Washington model of Indiana puts our death toll at 2,400 by August. IU's Dr. Aaron Carroll warns that COVID-19 could storm back next fall and winter just like the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918.

What has ensued has been a jarring social disruption, with 75% of us in America in a shelter-in-place mode. Some 36% of us used to eat at a fast-food restaurant on any given day, and lockdown has created a run at our grocery stores, making them look like a Moscow market in 1999. Krogering is different during a pandemic surge.

CNBC reported that St. Louis Federal Reserve projections have 47 million jobs vanishing and a potential jobless rate of 32%. Another 67 million Americans are facing layoffs. The Department of Labor reported 6.6 million unemployment claims in its monthly report released this morning. "The speed and magnitude of the labor market's decline is unprecedented," Constance Hunter, chief economist at KPMG LLP, told the Wall Street Journal. She expected that millions more claims will be filed in the coming weeks and projects 20 million jobs will be lost. We've gone from record employment to 1929 in a matter of weeks. Goldman Sachs is forecasting a 34% plunge in GDP. The Dow just went through its worst quarter ... ever. These are Great Depression style stats. The news media is teetering, with scores of newspapers facing demise. Gannett announced a one-week-a-month payless furlough for newsroom employees. BuzzFeed dubbed the pandemic a "media extinction event."

We've watched the USNS Comfort moor in New York harbor, hospital tents springing up in Central Park, and President Trump turning the daily briefing into his own "Coronavirus Reality Show."

Holcomb was asked Tuesday when businesses could expect to reopen. "As I said yesterday, there's a beginning, a middle and an end to this all," Holcomb began. "We understand and are equally concerned about the pain that is being put upon all of us. What we're trying to do is make sure our health care system doesn't collapse under the weight of all the new cases. And to do that, we've had to change our behavior. We've had to socially distance our-

selves. We know that's how it negatively compounds itself on us all, our businesses and our family members. We're trying to push through this keeping in mind there's another phase to this. If you look at the numbers locally ... we're going up. We've got to get to that peak and then find our way down, and then not react too quickly.

"We could have a whiplash, or a double whammy," Holcomb said. "I spoke with a number of governors yesterday and we all concurred, 100%, that it may be the fact that it will be harder to de-escalate than escalate. We will keep in mind, of course, the humanitarian effect this is having, the adverse economical impact this is having on ... 512,000 other small business owners."

That peak, according to Dr. Box, won't happen until later this month, making for the grimmest April Indiana has endured since the Super Tornado Outbreak of 1974.

Dr. Box described the surge that Holcomb and health officials forecast on Monday. "I really do think the surge is starting, but are we at the peak of that surge?" Box asked. "Knowing when that peak is will be kind of an

after-effect. We see the numbers go up ... and then one day we see actually see the numbers go down. We don't celebrate that too much. We kind of say we'll see what happens the next day. So we start to see that trend and eventually know we reached the peak. I will say that other states and other countries have seen little peaks that come and go. We'll have to be on the lookout for that as we go forward."

So this our new, collective reality. It's with us every day, every minute.

On Sunday, CBS broadcast the replay of the 2010 Duke vs. Butler NCAA national title game at Lucas Oil Stadium. It was a chance to get that sports fix missing since March Madness was cancelled, the NBA has suspended play, and MLB may not commence action until June or July. The Masters won't be played this week. Ditto for the Indy 500 and Wimbledon in May and July.

At the 2:35 mark in the second half, with the Bulldogs down by three points, CBS broke in with a "Special Report." President Trump appeared with his COVID-19 update, saying, "Nothing would be worse than declaring victory before the victory is won."

I simply couldn't escape the scourge even for a couple of late Sunday afternoon hours. I knew that Gordon Hayward would end up missing what could have been a Hoosiers-style game-winning shot; that Duke would win. When the "Special Report" ended, the Blue Demons were celebrating their title. It was the 21st Century version of the 1968 AFL "Heidi" game (Google, "Heidi", Jets, Raiders if you don't know what I'm talking about).

I didn't shoot my TV set. I was just sad at our new reality.

Fear had returned. ❖



Sen. Young, from page 1

"who would have believed" such an event could happen.

"Public health experts, some of whom were sited in the bowels of the national security establishment, were warning about this sort of disaster for decades," said Young, who "war-gamed" a pandemic a few years ago with the Center for Strategic International Studies. "Clearly there will be a lot of lessons learned as we prepare for future pandemics after we overcome the current one. My own office is preparing a punch sheet of different things they are learning along the way so that on the back end we might do our part to optimize the system."

Here is our HPI Interview with Sen. Young conducted Monday morning:

HPI: How is your family holding up during this pandemic and shutdown?

Sen. Young: My kids can get their homework done in two and a half to three hours. They play during the rest of the day. They've found other outlets like music and arts, which is not bad. I think we're going to be rethinking a lot of things on the back end of this; things like distance learning and remote working, and, hopefully, even rediscovering how important community is to us. I think there's been a lot of reflection on that. Spending time away from one another is being reminded that we need one another, right?

HPI: Absolutely. Talk a little more about how this pandemic is likely to change American society. What do you expect, or is this evolving territory?

Young: I do have some expectations that have been reinforced. They've just been reflections of what I've thought before, reinforced by what we've seen recently. One reflection, of course, is people can work digitally, remotely and effectively and are discovering they can do both with online platforms. They can remotely teleconference and work out the kinks on that front, figure out ways to divide up work among teams, and remotely manage projects. I think a lot of people will be choosing remote work, or at least recognizing that as an option. On the educational front, I think we're going to have to rethink things over a period of time of how K-12 and higher ed are structured. There still is some place for some social interaction. Just ask my 13-year-old; she misses her friends. We need to develop our children socially and intellectually. It's remarkable how effectively a young person and older learners can do their work remotely in consultation with a diligent teacher – and her teacher is incredibly diligent – that doesn't require a human presence. There could be economic benefits, there could be familial benefits for those who want to spend time at home with elderly parents, with young children. This could have environmental benefits when we think about the reduction in emissions

associated with remote learning. I think we're all trying to learn from this grand social experiment which is a byproduct of a very difficult economic crisis.

HPI: All of the medical experts and epidemiologists are saying that testing is the key to identify and isolate vectors and victims, so we can reopen society. How does the CARES Act address that and when do you see widespread testing?

Young: I think those experts are absolutely right that if we are able to clamp down on the public health challenges, ultimately the economic challenges will take care of themselves. In fact, as everyone knows we're coming off one of our best economies in five decades, but we're telling people they can't go to work. There are many jobs that cannot be performed remotely. We are telling our young Americans they can't go to school, so all of this is the function of the requisite social distancing associated with the crisis. With regard to testing, I'm listening to our governor and leaders as well as those who are trying



to coordinate the response at the federal level; trying to determine the inventory of masks, test kits, of PPE and of ventilators and other necessary items. I've spent the last three weeks seemingly non-stop on the phone to get a sense of the needs and concerns of rank and file Hoosiers, businesses and hospitals. I've learned that our government leaders have been able to work effectively with our health care providers and businesses to begin making many of these products. One of America's pre-eminent workshops, the State of Indiana, is the most manufacturing-intensive state in the country; we have face shields being produced in Madison, ventilators are hopefully going to be manufactured at a GM plant in Kokomo. There are increasing number of examples around the state, and I know around the country as well. At the same time, our diplomats have been working with other countries to source as many of these essential items as possible. We're doing what Americans do in times of crisis, identifying ways to adapt, improvise and overcome. A precise timeline is unclear to me. I have received reassurances from all levels of government that the pipeline of these materials is going to continue to increase. I'm also hearing at the ground level we're starting to see test kits and masks come in.

HPI: Should Congress be prepared to fund a vote-by-mail system in November? Epidemiologists are describing a "W" shaped pandemic that could flare up next autumn.

Young: I've been in contact with colleagues on both sides of the aisle about changing the rules for an emergency situation, perhaps like the one we're about to encounter, when we may not have enough senators present to perform a quorum. The change in rules would

require an agreement by the Senate majority leader and Democratic leader to approve emergency technology, a verification for individual senator's vote. I think it's important to prepare ourselves for these contingencies. This would not be a vote-by-mail system per se. Instead it would involve a much more rigorous verification system.

HPI: I'm asking about conducting the General Election by mail next November.

Young: It's my understanding these are state-by-state decisions. That's how our elections have always been conducted. I know our leaders have been quite attentive and responsive to the needs of Hoosiers as relates to voting, which is manifested in the recent decisions to the primary election.

HPI: Funding a vote-by-mail system for the state is a state and local function and possible impediment. Would you be interested in congressional legislation that would fund state-by-state vote by mail if the pandemic reared its ugly head next autumn?

Young: Some sort of remote voting system, whether it's mail or other more secure means might be appropriate, if that's the decision of our state leaders. Yes, I'd give strong consideration to their request, of course.

HPI: We went into this pandemic crisis with a federal budget deficit of \$1 trillion and we just added \$2.2 trillion with the CARES Act and there is speculation on a fourth piece of rescue funding legislation if this shutdown lasts into May or June. How are we going to pay for all of this, particularly with the damaged economy?

Young: The first thing we're going to do is try and shore up the jobs people go back to after we have addressed that major challenge. So if we're able to get our economy moving again, we stop bleeding red ink, we start bringing revenue back in, hopefully we'll resume the growth level allowing us to bring in more revenue than before this pandemic hit. We continue to identify areas where we can make government more efficient and optimize more sustainable government. That's how we do it. We come up with a plan to improve our balance sheet over time. I think right now is not a time to think of the dollar figure associated with feeding people, allowing them to pay their rent with these circumstances, or making people whole with the government mandating they not show up for work. The social obligation and my solidarity with all Americans and Hoosiers is to help people out at this time.

HPI: Did the Trump administration drop the ball on this by disbanding the National Security Council's pandemic team in 2018?

Young: The administration has been responsive since the early stages of this crisis. President Trump banned flights coming in from China, which was the epicenter of this pandemic. He's assembled a coronavirus task force where we've found the health experts leading the policy response, which is what you want. He's worked

in historically rapid fashion with congressional leaders and other stakeholders to provide relief to the American people, in contrast to the 2008-09 situation when it took four months to get a stimulus package out the door. We were able to complete the same sort of mission in just a few weeks. So I think between that response and the regulatory relief that has allowed our private businesses to be able to get people the help they need in time of crisis, Republicans, working with many members in the House, have taken swift actions to provide emergency relief the people need to live on.

HPI: President Trump has said on several of occasions something like "who knew" this type of pandemic was possible? But there are scores of health experts and your predecessor in the Senate, Dan Coats, who talked about the potential for pandemics. We've seen the system come up short in the early stages with lack of testing, PPE and ventilators. The U.S. has the National Petroleum Reserve, but had no stockpiles of medical materials. How should we prepare for the inevitable next pandemic?

Young: Public health experts, some of whom were cited in the national security establishment, were warning about this sort of disaster for decades. Clearly there will be a lot of lessons learned as we prepare for future pandemics after we overcome the current one. My own office is preparing a punch sheet of different things they are learning along the way so that we might do our part to optimize the system. I know the administration and some of the others are doing the same. I was involved in a war gaming exercise a couple of years ago with the Center for Strategic International Studies. It's not like this has been off radar. The president did provide funding for pandemic response that we haven't historically provided a year ago. With all of that said, this has clearly exposed the vulnerabilities associated with having extensive supply chains where we rely on other countries to provide national security essential equipment, on such things as rudimentary as surgical masks and personal protective equipment that needs to be produced here. We're going to have to think more critically about that moving forward. We're going to have to have more plans on how we scale up production quickly. All of these things go back a number of years. In light of this administration, this Congress, the response has been quite appropriate and quite rapid.

HPI: Normally in the winter, there is a congressional hearing on the national intelligence assessment that your predecessor, former National Intelligence Director Coats, as well as the CIA and FBI directors, participate in. That hearing in 2019 produced some fireworks between President Trump and Coats. There was no such assessment this past winter that could have flagged the still nascent pandemic due to opposition from the White House. Should such an assessment be restored?



Young: I'm not sure what the president's rationale is for that. I assumed he has some rationale, so I would want to hear that first. As a former intelligence professional myself, I've got great respect for and place high value in the great work product of our intelligence professionals.

HPI: Anything you want to add to what I have asked?

Young: Maybe some of your readers might be interested in what my office can do for assistance with state and local authorities.

HPI: Absolutely. I have a lot of mayors and city councilmen who read this.

Young: We are working very hard to be responsive to all of the needs across the state, and that means helping them navigate assistance programs we've been able to stand up. That also means I'd like to augment what state authorities are providing as it relates to the public health situation. That means, amidst all the other challenges, dealing with the regular functions of a Senate office. That means assisting veterans ... and other entities with emergent needs. We are open for business; we are working seven days a week. We will respond to every email, every phone call, every letter and it will form my

policy responses in the coming weeks and months.

HPI: Is this the biggest crisis you've faced in your decade in Congress?

Young: Without question. Unlike the 2008-09 economic crisis, which is something Americans never wanted to relive, our economy was red hot as we headed into this pandemic. The economy in 2008 was lethargic and when the financial crisis hit, our businesses had been in debt, shoring up their balance sheets, and putting aside some cash for a rainy day. This economy is strong in contrast. What happens is people are investing in the future on property, on plants, equipment and workforce training. And so our companies didn't have any cash, or much cash, so in a number of days a number of Hoosier businesses were going out of business and without the where-with-all to keep our economy going. We were within days of decimating our Hoosier economy and we are still working hard to ensure that doesn't happen. All of this is conflated with a public health situation that makes it difficult to assess the severity. We literally have a public health crisis at the same time we have an economic crisis. It's disrupted our society. So this has impacted every facet of our lives and has inspired how Americans, and Hoosiers more specifically, have been responding. ❖



The Prosper Group's overarching approach focuses on developing relationships and creating value by delivering rightsized digital solutions for every client.

HOME GROWN IN INDIANA

WITH INDIANA ROOTS, THE PROSPER GROUP HAS GROWN INTO THE GO-TO DIGITAL FIRM FOR CONSERVATIVE CAUSES AND REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES

DIGITAL STRATEGY THAT **GETS RESULTS**

- FUNDRAISING & GOTV
- DIGITAL ADVERTISING
- STRATEGY & AUTOMATION
- ADVOCACY



"Working with The Prosper Group to execute a robust digital advertising campaign was one of the best decisions we made for our re-election effort."

DAN SCHUBERTH
ROBBINSVILLE TOWNSHIP COUNCILMAN, NJ

President Trump, Gov. Holcomb quotes during pandemic crisis

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — The COVID-19 pandemic is becoming the story of our time. As Sen. Todd Young explained, unlike the Great Recession of 2008-09 and the Oil Shock recession of 1979-82, what we are experiencing today is a double hammer: A pandemic and a severe economic panic.

The Hoosier State is poised to go from a historic low 3.1% unemployment rate to double digits in the span of a month. At least one pandemic model says 2,400 Hoosiers will die.

Tough times shift our attention to leadership. Here are quotes from President Trump and Gov. Eric Holcomb as the pandemic approached the U.S. and then impacted our nation and state.

President Trump

Jan. 22: "We have it totally under control. It's one person coming in from China, and we have it under control. It's going to be just fine." – CNBC interview.

Feb. 10: "Looks like by April, you know, in theory, when it gets a little warmer, it miraculously goes away." – New Hampshire rally.

Feb. 24: "The coronavirus is very much under control in the USA. ... Stock market starting to look very good to me!" – On Twitter.

Feb. 25: "China is working very, very hard. I have spoken to President Xi, and they are working very hard. If you know anything about him, I think he will be in pretty good shape. I think that is a problem that is going to go away."

Feb. 26: "We're going to be pretty soon at only five people. And we could be at just one or two people over the next short period of time. So we've had very good luck." – At a White House news conference.

Feb. 27: "It's going to disappear. One day, it's like a miracle, it will disappear." – News conference.



Feb. 28: "The Democrats are politicizing the coronavirus. One of my people came up to me and said, 'Mr. President, they tried to beat you on Russia, Russia, Russia.' That did not work out too well. They could not do it. They tried the impeachment hoax. ... They tried anything. ... And this is their new hoax." – At a MAGA rally in South Carolina.

Feb. 29: "If you are healthy, you will probably go through a process and you'll be fine. Healthy individuals should be able to fully recover, and we think that will be a statement that we can make with great surety now that we've gotten familiar with this problem." – At a press conference after the first American COVID-19 death was reported in Washington state.

Feb. 29: "I would rather because I like the numbers being where they are; I don't need to have the numbers double because of one ship that wasn't our fault. And it wasn't the fault of the people on the ship either, OK? It wasn't their fault either and they're mostly Americans. So, I can live either way with it. I'd rather have them stay on, personally." – At a White House press briefing.

March 3: "I would view it as something that just surprised the whole world. Nobody knew there would be a pandemic or epidemic of this proportion. I just think this is something ... that you can never really think is going to happen." – At a news conference.

March 4: "I think the 3.4% [fatality rate] is really a false number." – Fox News interview.

March 4: "Some people will have this at a very light level and won't even go to a doctor or hospital, and they'll get better. There are many people like that." – Briefing with airline CEOs.

March 6: "Anybody right now and yesterday, anybody that needs a test gets a test. They're there. They have the tests and the tests are beautiful." – At the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

March 9: "The Fake News Media and their partner, the Democrat Party, is doing everything within its semi-considerable power ... to inflame the coronavirus situation." – Twitter

March 9: "So last year 37,000 Americans died from the common flu. It averages between 27,000 and 70,000 per year. Nothing is shut down, life & the economy go on. At this moment there are 546 confirmed cases of coronavirus,



with 22 deaths. Think about that!" – Twitter.

March 10: "We're prepared, and we're doing a great job with it. And it will go away. Just stay calm. It will go away." – Meeting with Republican senators.

March 13: "I don't take responsibility at all." – At a news conference after he was asked about a lack of testing, blaming an unspecified "set of circumstances" and "rules, regulations and specifications from a different time."

March 14: "We're using the full power of the federal government to defeat the virus, and that's what we've been doing." – News conference.

March 15: "This is a very contagious virus. It's incredible. But it's something that we have tremendous control over." – News conference.

March 16: "So it could be right in that period of time where it, I say, wash – it washes through. Other people don't like that term. But where it washes through. We have an invisible enemy. This is a bad one. This is a very bad one." – At a news conference.

March 17: "I felt it was a pandemic long before it was called a pandemic." – News conference.

March 18: "I always treated the Chinese Virus very seriously, and have done a very good job from the beginning, including my very early decision to close the 'borders' from China – against the wishes of almost all." – Twitter.

March 19: "We took the best economy we've ever had and we said 'Stop. You can't work. You have to stay home.' ... Here's a case we're paying a lot of money to stop things because we don't want people to be together so that this virus doesn't continue onward." – News conference.

March 23: "America will again, and soon, be open for business – very soon – a lot sooner than three or four months that somebody was suggesting. ... We cannot let

the cure be worse than the problem itself." – News conference.

March 23: "Our country wasn't built to be shut down." – News conference

March 24: "I would love to have the country opened up and just raring to go by Easter. Wouldn't it be great to have all of the churches full? You'll have packed churches all over our country." – Fox News virtual town hall.

March 26: "I don't believe you need 40,000 or 30,000 ventilators. You know, you go into major hospitals sometimes they'll have two ventilators, and now all of a sudden they're saying, 'Can we order 30,000 ventilators?'" – Fox News interview.

March 28: "WE WILL WIN THIS WAR. When we achieve this victory, we will emerge stronger and more united than ever before!" – Twitter.

March 29: "Nothing would be worse than declaring victory before the victory is won." – News conference.

March 29: "I haven't heard about testing in weeks. We've tested more now than any nation in the world. We've got these great tests and we're coming out with a faster one this week." – In conference call with governors.

March 30: "We're going to have a great victory." – News conference.

March 31: "This could be a hell of a bad two weeks. This is gonna be a very bad two – or maybe even three – weeks. This is going to be three weeks like we haven't seen before. This is going to be a very painful – a very, very painful – two weeks." – Task force briefing.

March 31: "I knew everything. I knew it could be horrible, I knew it could be maybe good. I don't want to be a negative person. This is really easy to be negative about. But I want to give people hope too. You know I'm a cheer-

leader for the country – we are going through the worst thing that the country has probably ever seen.” – Coronavirus task force briefing.

Gov. Eric Holcomb

Feb. 27: “Look at the numbers right now. This is a remarkable turnaround. When my immediate predecessor was in office when this was unfolding, he took unprecedented action in declaring a health emergency down in Scott County, and when you look at the statistics now, this is a before-and-after case study.

And the rest of the story is, folks are looking at how we did address that.” – Gov. Holcomb defending Gov. Mike Pence’s handling of the Scott County HIV outbreak after President Trump named Vice President Pence head of the coronavirus task force.

March 7: “With the help of our federal, state and local partners, Indiana is responding to this case as we have planned and prepared for weeks. The Hoosier who has been diagnosed has taken responsible steps to stay isolated.” – On signing an executive order declaring a public health emergency after the first COVID-19 cases was reported.

March 10: “They made the right decision for them and that should underscore the main point that we all need to take from this: We need to adapt to the facts on the ground and there is no ‘one size fits all.’” – On Avon schools closing after a COVID-19 case was reported.

March 10: “We’re remarkably prepared and you’re seeing that play out right now in our coordination. Again, this is all about staying informed to the facts on the ground as they change and they will continue to change. We plan to, through the state department of health, continue to put out up-to-date information on a daily basis.”

March 12: “This is a time when we must do all we can to reduce the spread of COVID-19, protect our most vulnerable populations and reduce their potential to acquire or spread this virus. While some actions are drastic, now, not later, is the time to act. I fully expect there will be additional actions warranted in the coming days. Just as we have since the beginning of the year, we are working with partners at all levels to secure all necessary resources for any escalation of this virus.”

March 13: “Everything is on the table. While we are not there yet, for the reserve action, it’s comforting to know that we are one of the most recession-resilient states in

the country. We have over two billion in reserves. We’re living in a new normal. That isolation may seem extreme, it’s not. Not in the world in which we live in today. And like I said, this is the new normal and we have to take it seriously and if you’re not, you’re out of step with reality.”

March 16: “This is the beginning. This is real. To those who think we may be overreacting, I can assure you we are not. We are – make no mistake about it – at war with COVID-19. A family today is suffering the ultimate loss due to COVID-19, and this sadly underscores how severe the virus can be, especially for some high-risk Hoosiers. The

state is taking unprecedented actions to slow the spread of COVID-19, and every Hoosier should follow the precautionary measures.”

March 19: “That’s under discussion. I have been in communication of Secretary of State Connie Lawson. I personally support postponing the primary election. The details have to be worked out.”

March 19: “We’ll make that call down the road.” – At a news conference on whether the school shutdown would be extended.

March 21: “All Hoosiers have a right to elect our leaders in a safe and open environment.” – Announcing the re-scheduling of the May 5 primary to June 2 with Secretary of State Connie Lawson, Republican Chairman Kyle Hupfer and Democratic Chairman John Zody.

March 21: “My plea and my hope is that we all understand the gravity of what’s surrounding us on a 24-hour basis. The more people practice what we’re preaching, the faster we’ll get through this.”

March 23: “I’ve signed another executive order that calls on all Hoosiers to hunker down, stay at home, unless you’re going out on an essential errand, or essential work or essential business and operations. If you’re watching this at home, I’m grateful. That means, hopefully, you’re social distancing, not spreading the contagious coronavirus COVID-19, for which there’s still no cure. That means, you’re being part of the solution, not the problem. So on behalf of the state, I thank you. Other states have recently come out with similar directives. Ohio has stay at home. Kentucky yesterday evening rolled one out. Illinois a few days before them both. We’re all seeing the same trends or waves coming, especially in the dense areas, but it is spreading to all counties. So, stay home, get groceries only when you really need them and buy only what you really need. I’m telling you, the next two weeks are critical – that’s March 24 through April 7 – if we’re going to slow the spread, and we must slow the spread.”



March 26: "I hope this will remind us that this isn't just a marathon. This is a triathlon. This is something that will require us to not let up. We need to do more, not less. It's all in an effort to get through this so that 100% can go back to work, not just the essential companies."

March 26: "I, 110%, support the decision to postpone it. I'm just tickled we're still going to have it – and we will have it. We'll welcome the world back to the state of Indiana at that time." – On the postponing of the Indy 500.

March 29: "We don't see the peak yet. I'm pleased to have the Department of Correction joining the ranks of Hoosier businesses, large and small, stepping forward in the fight against COVID-19. Production of these items will lessen the strain on the supply chain, leaving more of these products available for Hoosiers."

March 30: "It took a month for the United States to record its first 1,000 deaths, and then it took just two days to record the next 1,000. In Indiana we went from one COVID-19 case on March 6 to 1,786 today. Those are the ones we know of. Our first COVID-19 death in Indiana was

two weeks ago today and we're now at 35 Hoosiers who have passed. I want to thank everyone doing your part to help contain this uber-contagious and lethal virus. Just hunkering down is making a huge difference. It's literally saving lives. We see a surge coming and we're calling in the reinforcements, bolstering Indiana's capacity to provide additional health care services during this emergency."

March 31: "What we don't want to do is be premature about just reflexively jumping back after we hit that peak and come down. ... You've seen around the world where it'll (the infection rate will) slip back up again. We'll always be in this new normal. Things will be different going forward."

April 1: "Every time I talk to anyone I say, 'We need more. Pour it on.' We're not content right now. We can always use more." - Asked about President Trump's assertion that he doesn't hear that testing is an issue.

April 1: "We need to act now and in doing so we will save lives. We are all in this together." – At daily COVID-19 briefing. ❖

Indiana descends from jobs peak into valley

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — While there's Mount Baldy in Michigan City, Fort Wayne is known as the "Summit City" and Brown County features Browning Mountain a few miles past the Story Inn, Indiana is essentially sans prominent elevation.

But February 2020 will become known as Indiana's peak when it comes to employment. It was that month that a record number 3.29 million of us went to work. There was an estimated 105,177 unemployed and seeking jobs. On Feb. 29, the United States also recorded a fateful milestone: It's first coronavirus death.

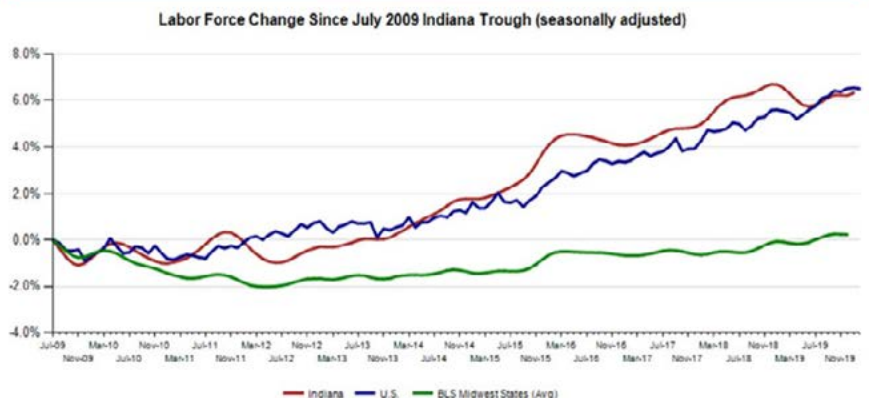
It wouldn't be until March 6 that the first Hoosier was reported with the virus, with just a dozen reported cases on March 12, and with an ominous pause, no new cases on Friday, March 13. Since then they've exploded, to 338 a week ago and 2,565 Wednesday.

According to Indiana Workforce Development Director Fred Payne, the week ending on March 21 saw 62,777 new unemployment insurance claims. That compares to the 23,000 claims filed during the entire month of January. It mushroomed to 120,000 claims this week.

Friday morning, The Indiana State Department of Health announced that 338 additional Hoosiers have been diagnosed with COVID-19 through testing at ISDH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and private laboratories. That brings to 981 the total number of Indiana residents known to have the novel coronavirus following corrections to the previous day's total. Twenty-four Hoosiers have died. Expect those numbers to continue to double in the days ahead. To date, 6,936 tests have been reported to ISDH, up from 4,651 on Thursday. Marion County had the most new cases, at 192. Lake County had 16 new cases, while Allen, Decatur and Hamilton counties each had 13.

From peak employment, Hoosiers are now rapidly descending into the COVID-19 valley. February will be-

Indiana's February seasonally-adjusted labor force is now at 3,396,036 and the number of employed is at 3,290,859. An estimated 105,177 individuals are currently unemployed and seeking employment.



come known as the month of Indiana's employment peak. It prompted Gov. Eric Holcomb to lament on Wednesday, "Oh, what a difference a month makes."

"In February we had a record number of people working in the state; more people working in the state of Indiana than ever before," Holcomb said, adding that the jobless rate of 3.1% is likely to rise for at least a couple more months. With the Indianapolis 500 delayed from May until Aug. 23, the trough is going to be a steep descent. "It will compound itself over a 60-day period," Holcomb said.

As for the recovery, which he is hopeful will com-

mence before the "start your engines" declaration on Aug. 23 with the Indianapolis 500 and its \$500 million plus economic impact for the state, Holcomb said Wednesday, "The good news is, as Sec. (Jim) Schellinger mentioned, we went into this in a strong position. The business community went into this in a strong position. They play things through. Our fundamentals were sound going into this. This is a virus we're dealing with. This is not our economy pulling us back or dragging us down. So we will bounce back. The pent up capital, when we sail through this ... as a state, it will play to our strengths of certainty, predictability and continuity." ❖

Teaching my Notre Dame class online

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Teaching my Notre Dame journalism class when there are no students in class is interesting. Not difficult. Handling assignments in a different way doesn't seem to be difficult for the students either. They come through superbly with online classes, just as they did in person in classrooms before the campus closed.



But this sudden disruption in their college lives has been difficult. Very difficult. Terribly difficult for seniors. Seniors now miss out on the last half of their last semester on campus, deprived of what should be fun times after all those hours, days, weeks, semesters

of study at a very demanding school. No celebrating now with friends. Instead, worry about whether bright futures after graduation will be delayed by a pandemic and recession. Disappointment over missing the excitement, emotion and fulfillment of commencement events.

Undergraduates worry, too. When will classes ever resume? Will their families still be able to afford tuition? Will they be cheering in the stadium in the fall? Or will football start as basketball ended early, with no games?

Students went on spring break and found the break lasting for the rest of the semester. I went during spring break, as usual, to Arizona for spring training baseball games and some nice weather. With rain first and then cancellation of games, I saw only one Cubs game. A son, a grandson and I got a flight back early as virus totals and worries grew in Arizona.

Notre Dame had to cancel classes on campus. To bring back students who had just traveled all around the country and also overseas would have been a virus disaster.

But education goes on. Students need credits to

graduate or to advance to another year in college. It's owed to them, morally as well as because they paid tuition.

Thus, teaching online – classes without students in the classrooms – began last week. It's not difficult to give and receive assignments online. There's lots of time now, with staying home, to devise more individual assignments rather than giving the same assignment for everybody. That's always a goal, and it's easier to be more creative now with oodles of time. A student interested in sports reporting gets to analyze "the worst hockey story ever written." Another who does well with challenging assignments will research something I'm sure she never heard of, Dyngus Day. Others will learn and write about some monumental blunders in journalism and why they occurred.

I've disregarded university advice to hold online classes at the same time that regular classes were scheduled. Students are scattered in different time zones. Class for one student at the regular time would be 3 a.m. where she is, in South Korea. She flew back home at the urging of her parents. She should be safer from the virus in South Korea, where they quickly instituted widespread testing and tracing of the outbreak to drastically reduce cases.

Also, students face other responsibilities that could conflict with regular class time. They may have found jobs as they and their families struggle financially. They may need to care for younger siblings or other family members. They may be volunteering in efforts to alleviate the dangers and suffering.

It's a small class. I can arrange individual times. It'll work. For larger classes? Probably not. I'm not insisting on hard deadlines for assignments. A journalism class not demanding deadlines? They already know the importance of deadlines in journalism. And their assignments aren't needed for when a publication goes to press or a newscast goes on the air.

Nor is there need to be tough on grading in these tough times. The obligation is to offer instruction that is expected when tuition is paid. And to refrain from making life more difficult for students whose college lives are disrupted, a terribly difficult time for some. ❖

Behind Trump's opposition to mail vote

By CHRIS SAUTTER

WASHINGTON — Virtually everything President Trump says or does includes a calculation of its impact on his re-election chances. On Monday Trump told the co-hosts of "Fox and Friends" that proposals by House Democrats to make it easier for Americans to vote during

the coronavirus outbreak would harm Republicans at the polls. "They had things, level of voting that if you ever agreed to it you'd never have a Republican elected in this country again," Trump claimed.

Those proposals included billions in funding for states to be able to carry out mail-in voting systems as Americans are urged (and in some states, required) to stay home to prevent further spread of the virus.



Characterizing Trump's comments on Fox as "sad," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi countered that America needs to move toward a "vote by mail" system to give citizens a safe way to elect their lawmakers while the coronavirus makes it dangerous to congregate. Pelosi said Trump lacks the "confidence that Republicans can convince the American people about a path to go forward."

Trump is alarmed that the coronavirus crisis is prompting both Republican and Democratic officials in many states, including Indiana, to set aside long held differences on election reform issues to push for an expansion of absentee ballot or mail voting. Trump opposes expansion of vote-by-mail because it could result in high voter turnout. States like Colorado, Oregon and Washington that are all vote-by-mail have the highest voter turnout in the country. Trump is in effect sending a warning to GOP legislatures to back off of expansion of mail voting.

Many Republicans have long believed that their candidates do better when fewer people vote. Paul Weyrich, the founding father of the modern conservative movement, explained this in a 1979 speech: "I don't want everyone to vote. Elections are not won by the majority of people. They never have been since the beginning of our county. As a matter of fact our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down."

That view has been the basis for GOP efforts over the past several decades to restrict voting, including voter ID laws and attempts to limit early voting, voting registration drives and provisional voting.

There have been clear indications before the coronavirus overwhelmed country's politics that Republicans

were organizing a massive voter suppression campaign to reduce turnout of likely Democratic voters in the 2020 presidential election. A political advisor and senior counsel to President Trump's re-election campaign — Justin Clark — is caught on tape discussing 2020 voter suppression efforts while at a Wisconsin chapter meeting of the Republican National Lawyers Organization. "It's going to be a much bigger program, a much better funded program," Clark said as reported by the AP. "(Trump) believes in it and he will do whatever it takes to make sure its successful."

Especially concerning, 2020 will be the first presidential campaign since 1980 that the Republican National Committee will be free from a court order prohibiting them from engaging in voter intimidation and other "ballot security" measures including "dirty tricks." Universal or heavy reliance on mail voting would eliminate the kinds of Election Day systematic shenanigans that Republicans were found by a federal court to have engaged in.

In the wake of the corona virus pandemic, Sens. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) began pushing a bill in the Senate to expand voting by mail through November. Twelve states still don't allow voters to vote by mail without an excuse. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is blocking the legislation in the Senate.

The stage is set for a showdown in the next round of coronavirus relief legislation.

The \$2.2 trillion stimulus bill passed by Congress last week and signed by President Trump included just \$400 million to help states grapple with 2020 voting amid the coronavirus pandemic. The funds would allow states some ability to increase vote by mail, and expand early voting and on-line voter registration. But election experts argue the money in the bill is insufficient. The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU estimates it will cost \$2 billion to cover "equipment, supplies, staffing, training and other costs of adapting our voting process to withstand the coronavirus," according to its president Michael Waldman.

Most states are currently not set up to handle large scale mail voting. Many states, for example, do not have the high speed scanning equipment used by those states that do large scale centralize counting of mail ballots but instead rely on slower and smaller machines used by Election Day voters that are at the precincts. In addition, most states that allow considerable mail voting have additional postage costs and make efforts to make it easier for voters to get their ballots turned in.

Some states have already moved toward reliance on mail-in ballots. An April 28 special election in Maryland to fill the seat of the deceased Elijah Cummings will be conducted by mail with no in-person voting at the polls. Georgia has announced it would send absentee ballot requests to all registered voters ahead of its May 19 presidential primary that was postponed from March 24, allowing all ballots to be cast by mail.

The bi-partisan Indiana Election Commission voted last week to allow voters to vote by mail in the June 2 pri-

mary without having a specific excuse. At this time in-person early voting and traditional voting on Election Day at local polling places will still be available. Voters desiring to vote by mail must submit an application by May 21 either by mail, email, fax, or hand-delivery, if the office is open to have a ballot sent to them. But the decision falls short of containing the kind of efforts as with Georgia to ensure that all voters have a realistic opportunity to participate.

What is emerging is a hodgepodge of rules and procedures that will almost guarantee that states have

different levels of voter participation depending upon the difficulty to vote under such rules. So far the pattern is that some Republican controlled states have obstacles to full participation while Democratically controlled states are moving toward expansive vote-by-mail procedures. Meanwhile, the courts rather than legislatures will increasingly play a role as most legislative bodies are adjourned, postponed or suspended. ❖

Sautter is a Democratic media consultant.

Socialism comes ashore

By **PETE SEAT**

INDIANAPOLIS — I looked out the window and immediately thought, "I'm not supposed to be here." It was January 2019, just four days after I returned from a trip to the more opulent parts of the Middle East – Oman and the United Arab Emirates – and I was in Havana, Cuba, passing by a giant poster emblazoned with Fidel Castro's face and the words "Socialism or Death" written in imposing block letters. I couldn't help but think each taxi was mandated to drive Americans by this sign as a reminder that while only 90 miles from the border of freedom, we were in a much different place.



What I saw that weekend left an indelible impression on me. I saw with my own eyes the drab and lifeless food rationing outposts where

Cubans stand in line to get the small amount of chicken, rice, beans and other staples the government divvies up to them each month. I saw with my own eyes the crumbling and decaying infrastructure along the coast where the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean meet, further torn apart by Hurricane Irma two years prior. And I heard with my own ears how Cubans are practically forbidden to eat beef and seafood, luxury items that are instead sold directly to foreign visitors for mere pennies on the dollar to shape our perceptions of the island nation.

All this came back to me in vivid detail as I walked up and down the bare aisles of my local grocery store this week. Gone was the ground beef. There was no chicken to be found. Bread was only available in bun form. And toilet paper? Forget about it. Although rationed to only two packages per customer, there was not a square to spare.

Is this what Bernie Sanders finds so appealing about Cuba? Although the Vermont senator is effectively out of the race for president, the debate over socialism continues because for the Democratic Party, many of the young voters they need to secure victory in November are entranced with the idea and won't vote for former Vice

President Joe Biden unless he plays along. This is a problem for their party and for our country.

Rather than address the true fate of socialism – a despondent reality met by one nation after another – and correct the record, Sanders contorts himself to praise Castro for, among other things, launching a literacy program following the revolution. But what good is literacy if citizens are nevertheless defenseless against their government? Reading and writing is a necessary life skill, but if the citizens have no rights to petition their government or to use their education to better their lives, then they might as well be illiterate.

Political punditry scoffed at President Donald J. Trump when he declared in his 2019 State of the Union address that the United States would "never be a socialist country." Well, it turns out he was more prophetic than analyzed. The battle lines being drawn will determine whether we fully embrace the fact that the free market, while not perfect, has been the catalyst for worldwide growth that has lifted millions from poverty and into the middle class. Or if we give up on ourselves and allow the government to control the rights of access and the means of production.

This all may sound far-fetched, but Joe Biden, as safe as he may seem to some, will be unable to ignore the demands of the "Bernie Bros" who will refuse to cast their ballots unless they hear some Sanders-esque language. Biden's path to the White House includes amassing a coalition that includes young people. Without them, without those who live and breathe by every word uttered by Sanders, Biden can't win.

Nominee or not, Sanders has left an indelible mark on the Democratic Party over two runs for president. And while he has yet been unable to bring the change he desires through legislative means, he is well positioned to color outside the lines of the party's platform and force a further lurch to the left. Because of that, there is a real chance that some elements of his plan will come ashore if the election goes blue in November. That could make a lot of us look around and say, "I'm not supposed to be here." ❖

Pete Seat is a vice president with Bose Public Affairs Group.

Pandemic question: What's a granny worth?

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO — "What's a granny worth?" My next door neighbor correctly judged that I was baiting him with the question. This discussion occurred while several neighbors were having a safe social distance happy hour outside of our homes. I'm sure it was an interesting sight as neighbors sat in lawn chairs spread out on both sides of our neighborhood street drinking a glass of wine or a bottle of beer.



After much discussion over the issue of toilet paper and sanitizer stockpiles, the talk gradually turned to the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the virtual shutdown of our economy. I turned to my next door neighbor and asked

the question about how much we were willing to spend to save a granny, when my neighbor across the street yelled out, "Hey, watch it, I'm a granny too!" The truth be known, we were all of the age to be either grannies or grandpas. Before we could hash out a consensus answer, the heavens opened up on us and drowned out our little neighborhood attempt at maintaining some normalcy.

The question still hangs in the air. With the staggering loss of incomes, jobs, market valuations and \$2 trillion stimulus bills, just what is the dollar value of a higher risk person?

We all intuitively know that there is no simple answer to this question, but that won't stop economists from totaling up the cost of depressing the curve and then asking whether the cost was worth the effort. There will be other economists who will try and calculate the incremental cost of saving just one more life. No matter what the answer may be, the perception of what is the correct answer will drive governmental decisions for many generations to come.

How many reserve ventilators, masks and hazmat suits above normal demand should each hospital maintain? Who pays for them and their storage? Should cities, counties and state governments stockpile and maintain their own stash of these critical items? Should the federal government create an enormous strategic reserve of vital items similar to the national oil reserve? Should the reserve be large enough so that 50% of our population is covered, or should it be 100%? Every time a new strain of a virus rears its ugly head, should government immediately focus attention on creating 700,000,000 test kits? Does government mandate earlier shut downs of our economy

in an effort to get the jump on depressing the curve? Just about every question leads to another, ad infinitum.

Government at all levels does an amazing job of figuratively locking the barn door after the horse is long gone. Our military is always busy fighting past wars. Government is generally not equipped to take preemptive action on the biggest threats that we face. The cost of advance action always seems greater than we are willing to pay, yet usually only a fraction of the cost of locking the barn door. A good example of this is the mountain of money we spent to rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

Here are four rhetorical questions for your consideration:

- Since we know that an earthquake-induced tsunami striking off the coast of Washington and Oregon is not a question of if, but when, should government create a zone of non-occupation within five miles of the coastline of those two states?

- Since we know that "the big one" earthquake is long overdue in Los Angeles, should any further building permits be allowed?

- Since we know that Yellowstone National Park is actually the immense caldera of a very active super volcano, should development within 100 miles be sanctioned by government?

- Since we know conclusively and absobloomingly that global warming is melting all of the ice caps and the sea level will rise to dangerous levels and that hurricanes are a natural annual occurrence, shouldn't we move everyone living along the southeastern coast into the heartland of our country?

You accuse me of baiting you? Well, of course I am.

The fact is that not only does government not have the financial resources to address every Armageddon scenario, it most assuredly lacks the willpower and fortitude to act in advance of the multitude of potentially cataclysmic events that make COVID-19 look like a head cold.

This brings us back to the original question, what are we willing to spend to save granny?

I imagine that there are three possible questions with most people instead of just my simple query. What am I willing to spend to save your grandmother? What am I willing to spend to save my grandmother? What am I willing to have you spend to save me?

If your answer is the same for all three questions, congratulations, you are a truly compassionate human being. Unless your answer is to spend nothing and then, well,

My guess is that people might have different answers for each of the three questions. I suspect the answers might be something like this. I would take a week off work and watch Netflix on the couch to save your grandmother. I would stay at home, self-isolate and endure toilet paper shortages for as long as possible to

save my grandparent. I would self-quarantine, observe all health department instructions and advocate that the president send in the army, navy and marines to keep people from breathing anywhere near me. I would also like a private hospital dedicated exclusively to my recovery.

All kidding aside, it is much too early to calculate the cost of each potential life saved. COVID-19 may cost our country as much as \$15 trillion before we are done. The ultimate question will be is the final dollar figure too high to have been spent based on those who were potentially saved from death. The only way society can even remotely answer this question is to know the difference between how many would have died if we had taken no action and what the final number of deaths from the virus were. Only after knowing how many net lives were saved can we accurately answer the question of what's a granny worth.

There will be those of you who are squeamish about asking such a crude question. Many of you who were fine with the rationing of health care with the Affordable Care Act will be appalled at such a brazen question. However you feel about the cost, it will be discussed and turned into a political football. The sad thing is that because you won't know if depressing the curve saved your life or the life of someone you love, you will find it nearly impossible to give an unbiased answer.

Be honest.

Did you really care that much about a person dying in Wuhan, China, from some mysterious respiratory

problem? But when that nasty bug comes to your neighborhood, it's a completely different matter. We the people will have the final say as to what granny's life is worth, but we'll have to wait for the final bill to make that call.

Stay safe, wash your hands and practice safe social distancing. ❖

Dunn is the former Howard County Republican chairman.

ANTELOPE CLUB

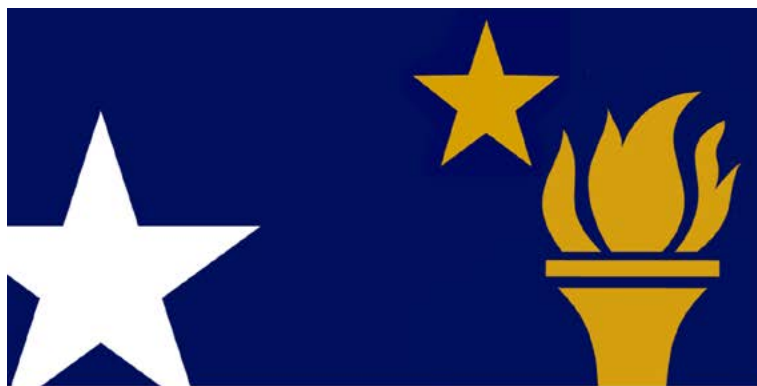
615 N. DELAWARE ST. - DOWNTOWN INDY

antelopeclub@hotmail.com



- >> Lunch & dinner 6 days a week
- >> Cigar lounge
- >> Beautiful view of Downtown from our 2nd floor patio

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



The Crossroads Report

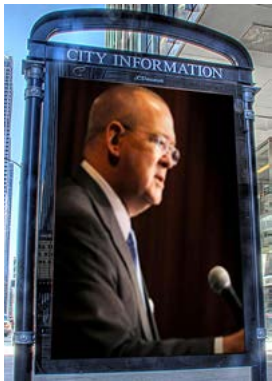
Linking You to the New Center of Indiana Media

POLITICS - ELECTIONS
AG NEWS - ECONOMY
SPORTS - OPINION

Long-term changes from COVID-19

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE — The nation's monthly jobs report published earlier this week was jarring. I write before its publication, but expect the unemployment rate to more than double. Monthly job losses are sure to crush the previous record of September 1945. Despite this, it is worth noting that September 1945 was surely the most welcomed month in all of human history, marking the end of World War II. We would be wise to view the unemployment rate and other short-term economic data as imperfect measures of human flourishing.



Last week, Dr. Tony Fauci, a man who no longer requires introduction, predicted 100,000 to 200,000 deaths from COVID-19.

This eye-popping figure accounts for the extreme measures now being taken in many parts of the nation. Business as usual would've likely resulted in a tenfold loss of life. Faced with these large numbers, we need to place a more personal context on this tragedy, and muse upon the potential change this will lead to in our economic lives.

At the top range, Dr. Fauci's estimates are more than five times the annual American deaths from automobile accidents. This means that by late April, nearly every adult will know someone who has died of COVID-19, and someone in every neighborhood, school and place of work will have been sick with it. Such suffering cannot fail to have broad effect on the structure of our economy.

Like Americans in the Civil War and world wars, the COVID-19 imposes sacrifice upon nearly everyone. This is far different from 9/11, or other recent shocks. Today, we face weeks, if not months, of home isolation. The risk of spreading the disease will influence matters great and small in all our lives. As an economist, I see several things open to meaningful change.

Federalism has been too ignored in American politics and budgeting. I've long argued that state and local governments are more critical to securing the general welfare than is the federal government. This crisis makes that clear. Likewise, the role of the presidency has grown too strong, and must be limited by Congress. Whatever else his flaws, Mr. Trump provides a singularly exquisite example why we need to devolve power away from the federal government and place more limits on the presidency.

Our wisdom on state and local budgets will also evolve. Many state and municipal governments pursued

low tax rates as a source of enduring prosperity. Places with large, unfounded pension debts, like Illinois and specifically Chicago, are viewed as especially imprudent. COVID-19 reveals new unfunded liabilities in state and local governments who believed in error that their low tax rates marked them as fiscally responsible. Today, millions of students nationwide are out of school with no meaningful instructional alternative. Their schools don't own sufficient computers for use at home and faculty don't have the software for instruction.

The inability to meet Constitutional requirements of public education is a more damaging unfunded liability than a grossly underfunded government pension system. Moreover, the students least likely to have instructional material are more likely to face other economic and educational challenges. The aftermath of this disease will necessitate tough choices on both higher taxes and unpopular cost-cutting in education.

COVID-19 will influence how we perceive the rural and urban divides. Rural places will be short on key infrastructure, like broadband internet, but urban places are likely to bear the brunt of economic dislocation. The most "at risk" sectors are clustered in cities. This is a very different turn of events from the Great Recession and will alter the political economy of government interventions.

Much of this seems like 'bigger government,' but I suspect the reaction will be more nuanced. The CARES Act has many deep flaws that will unroll over the coming weeks. The bill does far too little for the most disrupted workers, small to medium-sized companies and state budgets. It is bad enough that this might be the relief bill that influences all future relief bills. I predict Americans are about to be incensed over bail-outs to highly profitable not-for-profit hospitals and tourism industries, while Main Street business disappear in droves.

COVID-19 also uncovered more than usual bureaucratic problems. The Food and Drug Administration is an agency begging to be entirely reworked, preferably into a not-for-profit like Underwriters Laboratories. Likewise, states now scramble to undue licensing restrictions on healthcare workers and foreign physicians. These should be permanently undone. We can find other ways to ensure provider quality without building tools for anti-competitive labor markets.

We will also find that many neglected social institutions matter more deeply to our lives than most of us expected. The disoriented feeling that grips so many of us today is nearly identical to what I felt as a young soldier heading to war. My comrades and I had only days to prepare, possessed little idea of what to expect and had no idea when it would end. We depended on one another, more than at any time in our lives. Strong social institutions haven't been this important to the well-being of Americans in almost 80 years.

I have been watching COVID-19 since early January as it threatened domestic manufacturing production. The only enduring feature of the past three months is that

the outlook worsens every day. As that continues, nearly every institution, every government, every business and every family will be affected. One day the outlook will be

better, and we can look forward past these tough days. Then, we must be introspective. The changes this disease brings will be crafted by us, for good or ill. ❖

National conventions face endless uncertainty

By LOUIS JACOBSON

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Will there be Democratic and Republican conventions this summer? The coronavirus pandemic, and the social distancing needed to combat it, are putting these quadrennial festivities in doubt, an unprecedented situation that is leaving party officials, politicians, and the media in a quandary, with a fast-ticking clock.

Officially, both parties' conventions remain on. The Democratic National Convention had been scheduled for July 13 to July 16 in Milwaukee. The Republican convention is later, Aug. 24 to Aug. 27 in Charlotte, but both confabs face a seemingly endless list of uncertainties. But Joe Biden said last night that he expects a one-month delay for the Democratic convention, which is scheduled to begin July 13 in Milwaukee. "I think it's gonna have to move into August," Biden told Jimmy Fallon on "The Tonight Show."

"While we continue to closely monitor this fluid situation, the Democratic National Convention Committee will remain focused on planning a safe and successful convention in Milwaukee four months from now," Joe Solmonese, CEO of the Democratic National Convention Committee, told Sabato's Crystal Ball in a statement. "As we prepare these plans, we will remain in constant communication with the local, state, and federal officials responsible for protecting public health and security – and will continue to follow their guidance as we move forward."

Meanwhile, Blair Ellis, a spokeswoman for the Republican National Convention, told the Wall Street Journal, "We recognize and will take additional steps to ensure the safety and health of all attendees in light of the spread of

COVID-19 and will continue to communicate with federal, state and local health experts in our planning. We have fantastic partners in Charlotte and beyond helping us plan a successful convention." For his part, President Donald Trump told Fox News' Sean Hannity, "No way I'm going to cancel the convention. We're going to have the convention, it's going to be incredible."

Political observers, however, aren't so sure. The Rev. Leah D. Daughtry, who headed the 2008 and 2016 Democratic conventions, told Sabato's Crystal Ball that canceling the in-person convention is "a rising possibility, especially now that the Olympics are postponed for a year.

It will be difficult to justify gathering 50,000 people in one place when the very next week it would have been the Olympics and they've been canceled."

If some positive event occurs, such as a very early vaccine or drastically improved testing, "then maybe an in-person convention can be pulled off successfully," said Colorado State University political scientist Kyle Saunders. However, he added, "I have to think a convention is unlikely if we are assessing things today."

Among the countless factors to consider are whether hotels near the convention site will be open and staffed. That's unclear for now.

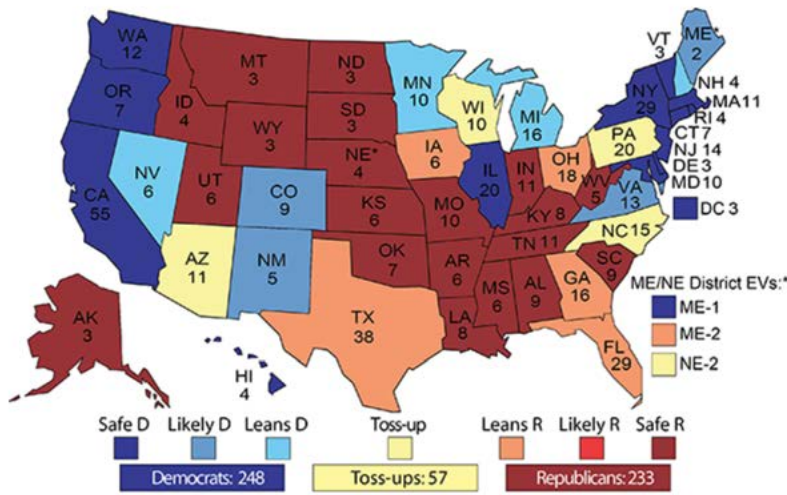
Daughtry estimated that the final date to move ahead or cancel the Democratic convention is probably around June 1. That's about three weeks before the final delegates are due to be elected by voters, due to coronavirus-driven primary election

delays. There also needs to be time for local, congressional district, and state committees to choose some of the individuals to fill the delegate slots.

In this regard, the Democrats have a complication the Republicans don't, the ongoing primary contest between former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). Due to the rash of delayed primaries, Biden may not officially reach the nomination threshold of 1,991 delegates until June, not long before the convention is supposed to be held. State and local delays in naming



Map 1: Crystal Ball Electoral College ratings



delays. There also needs to be time for local, congressional district, and state committees to choose some of the individuals to fill the delegate slots.

In this regard, the Democrats have a complication the Republicans don't, the ongoing primary contest between former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT). Due to the rash of delayed primaries, Biden may not officially reach the nomination threshold of 1,991 delegates until June, not long before the convention is supposed to be held. State and local delays in naming

the people to fill the delegate slots could add extra time to the process.

If Sanders were to exit the race early and concede the nomination to Biden, that would make it easier to plan a remote convention, since it would rule out a second ballot that includes voting by "super delegates," experts say. Super delegates are lawmakers and other senior Democrats who, under the current rules, don't vote unless no candidate wins a simple majority of delegates in the first round. If Sanders remains in the race until the convention, that could add wrinkles to the planning for a remote convention. How can you build a remote convention?

A remote convention could be structured around a series of events on broadcast and social media, Saunders said, adding, "You could do speeches and floor votes, with watch parties at local and state party headquarters. That could be a unifying, positive event that builds party rapport and purpose, if the parties could find a

way to pull it off."

The official business conducted at the convention – the certification of the delegates, the passage of convention rules, and the nomination of the presidential and vice presidential candidates – can probably be redesigned to be handled online, with appropriate planning, experts said.

Daughtry said the biggest obstacle is that the rules currently do not allow for proxy voting; for now, all votes must be cast in person. To fix that, Putnam said, the DNC could meet remotely and change the rules to allow remote voting for conventions. ❖

Join Crystal Ball Editor in Chief Larry J. Sabato, Managing Editor Kyle Kondik, and Associate Editor J. Miles Coleman for a livestreamed assessment of the 2020 landscape from noon to 1 p.m. (E.T.) today. The livestream will be at: <https://livestream.com/tavco/sabatocrystalball> and is free.

On-going decay? Who cares?

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS — State Senator Barry Ballyhoo called last week. "How ya doin', boy?" He asked the familiar question during this era of sequestration. "OK," was my reply.



"Well, youngster," he said. "I was ruminatin' about this here computer census. We done filled out our online form. 'Twasn't any problem. But it done left me wonderin' if anybody really cares."

"Oh, Senator, you can bet they do," I replied. Then I repeated the many reasons Hoosiers have a stake in the census: The federal and state money distributed by formulas using population data, the

drawing of political boundaries, and not incidentally, the issuance of permits by the alcohol and tobacco commission.

"Yes, yes, I know all that," he said impatiently. "But do Hoosiers care? Does it bother them last week's figures show 55 of our 92 counties shrank in population between the census in 2010 and the estimates for 2019?"

"Well, sir," I answered. It depends...."

"Oh, Lord," Barry shouted. "I shoulda known better than ask an economist a question he could answer, 'it depends'. The disturbing facts are 37 counties gained population by 299,000 people and the 55 losers lost 57,200."

"But," I tried to say.

"But nothing," he shot back. "Those losses are fewer than the additional 60,000 people crammed into Marion County alone. Six counties had increases of 10%

or more, while the state grew by just 3.7% since 2010. Five of those six were in the ring around Marion County; the sixth was Tippecanoe."

"True," I agreed.

"The problem, young fella," he insisted, "is the Flailing 50 of those 55 losing counties lost less than 2,000 in those years; that's a mere 200 a year."

"No, sir," I broke in. "That's 222 on average in nine years. It's just more than four persons, maybe a whole family, per week."

"Do we really care, my friend?" he continued, "And look at those remaining Flailing Five losing counties: Madison (Anderson), Wayne (Richmond), Delaware (Muncie), Grant (Marion), and Lake (Gary-Hammond)."

"Yes, sir," I said with continuing deference.

Suddenly, his emotions erupted. "Those were among the proudest, progressive, distinguished places in our state. Now, they're strugglin', they're battlin', they're fightin' decay."

"You're just discovering this?" I asked. "Your Indiana General Assembly, in desperation, throws money for the latest fads (now it's 'quality of place') to every so-called multi-county region. In Lake County it's a century-old rail line extension.

"What would you do?" Barry challenged.

"Put every available dollar into education and infrastructure," I said firmly. "That means effectively involving the under-educated and well-educated parents who do not demand higher academic quality. Stop construction of more glorious sports facilities. Reinvigorate teachers who drift into fatalistic cynicism."

Before I could get to my tirade on water systems, sewerage, roads and the environment, the senator hung up. For me, just another day in isolation. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at mortonj-marcus@yahoo.com.

Mary Beth Schneider, Statehouse File:

Each daily briefing from Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb and State Health Commissioner Dr. Kristina Box starts with numbers. Each day they grow. The first death came on March 16. Ten days later, there are 17, and the only thing anyone knows for sure is that those numbers will rise. "I hope we're not becoming numb to those updates," Holcomb said. "I hope it's more of a reminder that this isn't just a marathon. This is a triathlon. This is something that will require us to not ease up, especially in this critical time." "We need to do more," Holcomb said. "Not less." That has been the message of most of the nation's governors, men and women from both political parties. It's the message we need to hear. Cold hard truths said with firmness. We don't need fantasies about miracle cures materializing overnight any more than we need panic. We need our leaders to lay out the facts and tell us what they are doing about it and how we can help. And Holcomb, with Box and other state officials giving no-nonsense briefings about soaring unemployment numbers and the expectation of plunging revenue numbers, is doing just that. So thank goodness for the governors — from New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo to Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine; from Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan to, yes, Holcomb. He can be criticized for perhaps being too slow to react. As coronavirus cases began to skyrocket in China and Italy, as the first cases began to appear in the United States, there was silence from Indiana. Trump, in contrast, was quite vocal — denouncing news accounts of a coming pandemic as a Democratic hoax and assuring Americans that the numbers of cases here would soon drop to zero. But in the past couple weeks, Holcomb has risen as a leader. He's shut down K-12 schools until at least May 1 and issuing a statewide stay-at-home order. Holcomb answered critics in his March 19 remarks to Hoosiers, saying: "To those who argue these policies will be disruptive, my answer is simple: They better be." It sounded like what a wartime president should say. ❖



Bill Gates, Washington Post: There's no question the United States missed the opportunity to get ahead of the novel coronavirus. But the window for making important decisions hasn't closed. The choices we and our leaders make now will have an enormous impact on how soon case numbers start to go down, how long the economy remains shut down and how many Americans will have to bury a loved one because of covid-19. First, we need a consistent nationwide approach to shutting down. Despite urging from public health experts, some states and counties haven't shut down completely. In some states, beaches are still open; in others, restaurants still serve sit-down meals. This is a recipe for disaster. Second, the federal government needs to step up on testing. Far more tests should be made available. We should also aggregate the results so we can quickly identify potential volunteers for clinical trials and know with confidence when it's time

to return to normal. Finally, we need a data-based approach to developing treatments and a vaccine. Scientists are working full speed on both; in the meantime, leaders can help by not stoking rumors or panic buying. Long before the drug hydroxychloroquine was approved as an emergency treatment for covid-19, people started hoarding it, making it hard to find for lupus patients who need it to survive. We should stick with the process that works: Run rapid trials involving various candidates and inform the public when the results are in. Once we have a safe and effective treatment, we'll need to ensure that the first doses go to the people who need them most. To bring the disease to an end, we'll need a safe and effective vaccine. If we do everything right, we could have one in less than 18 months — about the fastest a vaccine has ever been developed. But creating a vaccine is only half the battle. To protect Americans and people around the world, we'll need to manufacture billions of doses. ❖

Marc Chase, NWI Times: How will history judge our collective response to COVID-19? The answer to that question seems to be as hazy as any definitive timeline on when this crisis might finally be history. But we all deserve extremely harsh judgment if we continue to dishonor our front-line health care workers — people already ridden with anxiety, fatigue and a documented lack of the best protective equipment with which to do their jobs. Nowhere is the angst of the COVID-19 scourge more keenly felt than among health care workers who make contact with potential coronavirus cases each day and then have to worry about contracting the virus themselves — or worse, bringing it home to their families. ❖

William Galston, Wall Street Journal: In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned the Trump administration that the next severe outbreak, a "surge of medical resources" would be needed. "Given uncertainty in the timing and severity of the next pandemic, as well as the time required to manufacture medical countermeasures," the CDC article concluded, "stockpiling is central to influenza preparedness." Again, the stockpiles didn't increase. As the coronavirus spread earlier this year, the CDC chose not to use tests created by the World Health Organization and then bungled the development of its own, costing the U.S. its best chance of containing the spread. The Trump administration made a bad situation worse. It was slow to establish a chain of command for an all-of-government response to Covid-19, and to use the full range of its legal powers to ramp up production of supplies. In the wake of 9/11, Congress created a bipartisan commission to examine what went wrong and to make recommendations. Once the dust settles and passions cool, Congress should constitute a similar commission on emergency health preparedness and commit to act in a timely manner on its legislative recommendations (as it didn't with the 9/11 commission). ❖

Dr. Box makes appeal for PPE

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana is continuing to seek donations of personal protective equipment from shuttered doctor, dentist and veterinary offices, as well as other industries, such as construction, that may be able to spare medical gloves, masks and gowns (Carden, [NWI Times](#)). Dr. Kristina Box, the state health commissioner, said Wednesday Indiana so far has been able to supply every hospital, long-term care facility and emergency medical services provider that has asked the state for PPE gear during the coronavirus pandemic. She said a large portion of the PPE provided by the state has come from donations by Hoosier companies and individuals, along with supplemental PPE from Indiana's share of the Strategic National Stockpile. "PPE continues to be in high demand, so we have a whole team of individuals who are working on trying to allocate and to receive and buy ... anything that we can get," Box said.



Holcomb, Hogsett form coalition

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Eric J. Holcomb and Mayor Joe Hogsett – and a coalition of statewide business and community partners including Eli Lilly and Company – announced a social distancing campaign to help flatten the curve for COVID-19 in Indiana. The #INthistogogether campaign will help Hoosiers understand the importance of social distancing, provide access to helpful tips and information and galvanize communitywide commitment to flattening the curve. Gov. Holcomb launched the #INthistogogether social distancing campaign at his daily press briefing on COVID-19 and through a statewide public service announcement. Mayor Hogsett released a public service announcement showing his support for the campaign and its importance for residents of India-

napolis, one of the nation's growing hotspots for cases of the virus. Other partners launched their own contributions to the campaign, including videos and social media posts from Indiana Pacers shooting guard, Victor Oladipo, Indiana Fever player and vice president of basketball operations, Tamika Catchings, and Indianapolis Colts linebacker Darius Leonard.

Dr. Fauci receives security detail

WASHINGTON — Anthony S. Fauci, the nation's top infectious-diseases expert and the face of the U.S. response to the novel coronavirus pandemic, is facing growing threats to his personal safety, prompting the government to step up his security, according to people familiar with the matter ([Washington Post](#)). The concerns include threats as well as unwelcome communications from fervent admirers, according to people with knowledge of deliberations inside the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice. Alex Azar, the HHS secretary, recently grew concerned about Fauci's safety as his profile rose and he endured more vitriolic criticism online, according to people familiar with the situation.

Testing is up, but more is sought

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana officials say the state's capacity to test people for COVID-19 is increasing, even as the growth in testing slowed over the last few days ([Indiana Public Media](#)). State Health Commissioner Dr. Kris Box says some of that is because the state can't control when outside labs report their testing numbers. She says she's confident testing is increasing. "I can just tell you that I know that we had Deaconess Hospital come online with testing," Box says. "We have individuals working at Purdue University to get more testing. We have the new lab in the northwest

part of the state that is doing testing." President Donald Trump recently said he hadn't heard from any governors recently about a need for more tests. Gov. Eric Holcomb says he's always asking. "Every time I talk to anyone I say 'We need more. Pour it on.' We're not content right now," Holcomb says. "We can always use more."

Lilly expands drive-thru testing

INDIANAPOLIS — Eli Lilly is expanding its drive-through coronavirus testing ([WIBC](#)). Initially, Lilly only offered drive-through testing to health care workers and first responders. It will also offer drive-through testing to the following groups: Workers in essential businesses who have regular contact with the public as part of their job. People 65 and over who are showing symptoms of coronavirus or those under 65 with symptoms who have a serious underlying illness and those with uncontrolled medical issues. The drive-through testing site remains closed to the general public. To receive a test, you must have an appointment and a physician's written order. There is no charge for the testing.

Hogsett extends stay at home order

INDIANAPOLIS (WTHR) - Indianapolis officials are extending the stay-at-home order for Marion County through the month of April. Mayor Joe Hogsett and Dr. Virginia Caine, director of the Marion County Health Department, announced the order is now in place until May 1. It was initially set to expire on April 6. "As the spread of COVID-19 continues in Marion County, the medical data makes clear that our fight against this deadly outbreak must continue for another month," Hogsett said. "These historic efforts are making a difference, and I want to thank residents and businesses as we come together as one city and make sacrifices that will flatten the curve and save lives."