

Uncharted waters as Indiana reopens

Gov. Holcomb's 5-stage plan comes before COVID cases, deaths reach an apex

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Eric Holcomb had been getting wide praise for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic that has infected more than 20,000 Hoosiers, killing some 1,100. Criticism had been relegated to fringe Tea Party elements goaded by President Trump's "liberate" tweets. Indiana Democrats had not been particularly critical, nor had the business community, state editorial writers and columnists.

Then came his five-stage reopening plan, placing the state in "stage two" of five that he hopes will culminate with a final sequence coming on July 4, the same weekend as the scheduled NASCAR Brickyard 400. He is reopening a state that has one of the highest per capita rates of COVID-19 deaths (18 per 100,000) in the U.S., significantly higher than our neighbors. Indiana has not yet seen the 14-day decline



in infections or deaths that President Trump laid out as a precondition for state reopenings in April. On Friday, Holcomb cited that decline as one of "four principles" for reopening an economy on course to out-match Great Depression jobless rates.

While Holcomb's reopening plan has plenty of off-ramps if case numbers and deaths spike, he has entered uncharted waters. Epidemiologists like Dr. Tony Fauci have said that premature reopenings could rekindle the pandemic like a "wildfire." Conservatives and business leaders have been lobby-

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Praying for a vaccine

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS - When I pray, it usually goes something like this: "Dear Lord, give me the strength and courage to overcome the adversity I now face."

Today, I will pray for something very specific: A coronavirus vaccine ... the sooner the better.

I've been a professional journalist for 40 years and

have published HPI for a quarter century. I've covered the oil shock recession of 1979-82, the 1987 Wall Street crash, Sept. 11, 2001 terror attacks, and the 2008-09 Lehman Brothers collapse, Great Recession and domestic auto rescue.

None of these are in the same realm as what we are experiencing today with the coronavirus



"I am working on that. I've had numerous conversations with people around the state. We have, to date, not made a formal offer to anyone. I hope that will come very soon."

- Dr. Woody Myers, to HPI, on his lieutenant governor search.





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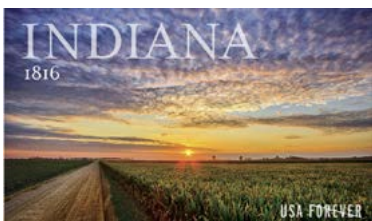
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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019



pandemic that grips Indiana, America and the entire globe.

While I give Gov. Eric Holcomb and his team much credit for their response and transparency, my take on President Trump is that he's mailed it in. There will be no viable national testing/tracing regimen needed to orchestrate a credible economic reopening. His refusal to wear a face mask at the Arizona face mask factory while "Live and Let Die" blared on the facility's audio system a week after Vice President Pence made the same mistake at the Mayo Clinic sets a defiant tone that will be mimicked by many of his MAGA supporters. He was in denial for the critical three months leading into the societal shutdowns of April. He is now poised to compound early mistakes in an effort to save his floundering reelection campaign. Most of his decisions appear based on his own political calculations.

With COVID deaths cresting at 1,100 in Indiana and 72,000 nationally, and a new University of Washington statistical model forecasting 6,200 deaths in Indiana by August, and up to 350,000 nationally if states continue reopening, the news on the medical front is alarming.

As for the economy, the incoming data is nothing short of catastrophic, as noted by the Economic Collapse Blog:

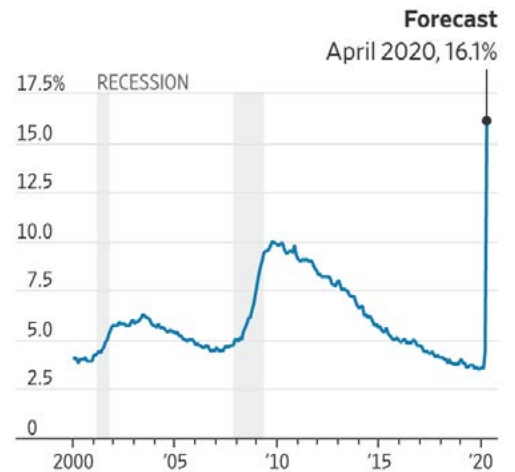
■ U.S. companies shed 20.2 million jobs from their payrolls in April according to the ADP Research Institute.

■ Economists surveyed by The Wall Street Journal forecast the new report will show that unemployment rose to 16.1% in April and that employers shed 22 million non-farm payroll jobs — the equivalent of eliminating every job created in the past decade. Ball State economist Michael Hicks forecasts it could reach 17.4%. "Since the March deadline, we've had a full 30.6 million additional workers added to jobless rolls, but only 22.3 million of them were reported between the March and April survey dates," said Hicks, director of the

Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER in the Miller College of Business. "Lags in the jobs report mean we are missing some 10 million unemployed workers in the April jobs report."

■ According to Zero Hedge, U.S. manufacturing orders just fell by the largest number ever. Amid collapsing employment, crashing sen-

Unemployment Rate



timent signals, and carnage in any hard data signals around the world, it is no surprise that analysts expected a 9.7% MoM plunge in factory orders in March (still before the major lockdowns in April). But the actual print, down 10.3% MoM, was notably worse and sent factory orders down 11.4% YoY - the worst since the great financial crisis.

■ U.S. gasoline consumption just dropped to the lowest level ever recorded.

■ Light vehicle sales in the U.S. just fell to the lowest level seen since the early 1970s. Edmunds is projecting that auto sales in the United States this month will be down by more than half compared to April 2019. "April auto sales took the biggest hit we've seen in decades," said Jessica Caldwell, Edmunds' executive director of insights. "These bleak figures aren't just because consumers are holding back on their purchases — fleet sales are seeing an even more dramatic drop as daily rental business has dried up.

Like many other industries, the entire automotive sector is struggling as the coronavirus crisis continues to cripple the economy."

- According to the CNBC/SurveyMonkey Small Business Survey released Monday, which surveyed 2,200 small business owners across America, while the \$660 billion Paycheck Protection Program was instituted to give them a lifeline through the coronavirus and economic shutdown, only 13% of the 45% who applied for the PPP were approved.

- The "coming meat shortages" are already here. According to the New York Post, Costco is now rationing meat and Kroger is warning customers of very serious supply problems.

- U.S. consumer spending was down 7.6% during the first quarter of 2020. Business investment was down 8.6%.

- Business confidence declined sharply in April (the seventh consecutive monthly decline) with the index now sitting deep within pessimist territory. The Manufacturing and Services PMIs also fell sharply in April, and are now at the lowest levels on record.

- More than 30 million Americans have already lost their jobs, and economists are projecting that millions more will lose their jobs in the weeks ahead.

- In March, U.S. home sales declined by double digit percentages in every region of the country.

- White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett warned that the U.S. GDP could fall by up to 30% during the second quarter of 2020.

Whew. This is a maelstrom, a Cat 5 hurricane with a fleet of Fujita Scale 4 tornadoes on the fringe for good measure.

The Trump administration didn't do the heavy lift-

ing needed for testing and tracing and is now intent on reopening the economy, which sets us up for bad outcomes of the second and third virus waves, if not the first.

On Tuesday, Vice President Mike Pence suggested the Coronavirus Task Force would shut down, something President Trump attempted to walk back on Wednesday, saying it would continue "indefinitely." But why was that notion even floated out when the nation is alarmed and scared? It's another indicator this administration is not up to the task at hand.

Thus, I pray for a vaccine. Soon.

Nature.com reports that more than 90 vaccines are being developed against SARS-CoV-2 by research teams in companies and universities across the world. Researchers are trialing different technologies, some of which haven't been used in a licensed vaccine

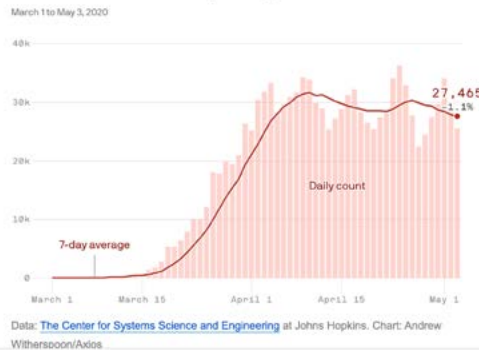
before. At least six groups have already begun injecting formulations into volunteers in safety trials; others have started testing in animals. Nature's graphical guide explains each vaccine design.

The pharmaceutical giant Pfizer has begun testing a new coronavirus vaccine in the United States. According to National Public Radio, the initial trial will involve 360 volunteers, and the first subjects have already received injections. Sir John Bell, the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University, told NBC's Meet the Press on Sunday, "We are gradually reeling it in, bit by bit and as every day goes by, the likelihood of success goes up." Bell called chances of success "pretty good."

Given the federal government's denial and sclerosis, the capricious nature of this evil microbe, and the historic economic havoc it has wreaked, a vaccine looks like the best bet to save some semblance of society as we've known it. ❖

2. Virus persists despite distancing

New COVID-19 cases per day in the U.S.



Reopening, from page 1

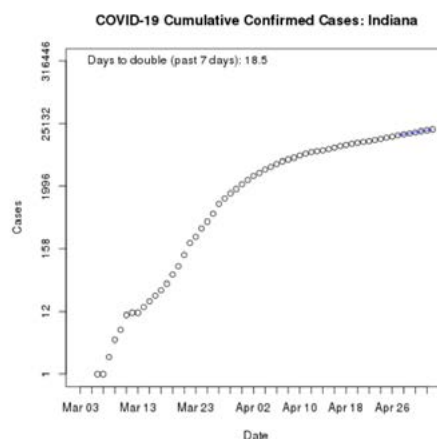
ing Holcomb, other governors and President Trump to reopen the economy, bracing for brutal Department of Labor employment statistics Friday that will put America on a Great Depression trajectory.

Last Friday, the U.S. had its deadliest day on record due to the coronavirus as states across the country begin to ease restrictions meant to curb the spread of the virus, according to data published by the World Health Organization (CNBC). The U.S. saw 2,909 people die of COVID-19 in 24 hours, according to the data.

By Monday, the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics

Confirmed Cases: 21033

Reported Deaths: 1211



and Evaluation model doubled the death toll for the U.S. and increased Indiana's estimate more than six times to 6,248. The Indiana State Department of Health on Tuesday said the number of positive cases for COVID-19 in the state had risen to 21,033, following the emergence of 526 more cases. The state reported 574 new cases on Monday, 638 on Sunday, 665 on Saturday, 795 on Friday, 653 on Thursday and 594 on Wednesday.

"I think we'll definitely see an increase in cases," Allen County Health Commissioner Deb McMahon told WANE-TV. "I hope it's not a

huge increase in cases because that reflects a lot on how much the community is adhering to the recommendations. The virus did not go away in the last two months. The virus is still out there. This is an extraordinarily contagious virus. You have to protect yourself."

Tuesday evening, a maskless President Trump touring an Arizona N-95 mask factory, was asked by ABC News anchor David Muir if state reopenings would increase the number of COVID deaths. "It's possible there will be some (deaths) because you won't be locked into an apartment or a house or whatever it is," Trump responded. "But at the same time, we're going to practice social distancing, we're going to be washing hands, we're going to be doing a lot of the things that we've learned to do over the last period of time."

Trump and Holcomb appear to be acknowledging that more COVID deaths are an acceptable tradeoff to reopening the economy. It will be the public and consumers who will ultimately validate or reject that dynamic.

Ominous trends

There were ominous reports from the Associated Press and Axios. The AP reported: Take the New York metropolitan area's progress against the coronavirus out of the equation and the numbers show the rest of the United States is moving in the wrong direction, with the infection rate rising even as states move to lift their lockdowns. Not counting the New York metro reveals the rate of new cases in the U.S. increased over the same period from 6 per 100,000 people to 7.5.

Axios' reporter Caitlin Owens wrote: "The evidence is mounting that America is steamrolling toward a nightmarish failure to control the coronavirus. We made a lot of mistakes at the beginning, and despite a month of extreme social distancing to try to hit 'reset,' a hurried reopening now raises the risk that we'll soon be right back where we started. The Trump administration is in 'preliminary discussions' to wind down its coronavirus task force, possibly in early June, Vice President Mike Pence told reporters yesterday. The U.S. is still seeing around 30,000 new coronavirus cases a day — and those are just the ones that we're catching, because we are still not testing enough people. Even with a robust contact tracing workforce, which we don't have, tracking down the interactions of 30,000 people a day would be an impossible task. Once we lift social distancing measures and people start interacting with one another again, the number of cases will inevitably spike, making containment

even more impossible."

At Monday and Tuesday's press conferences, Holcomb and Indiana State Department of Health Chief Medical Officer Lindsay Weaver made it clear that it is the state's own uptick in testing that has convinced them the state has hit a "plateau." They believe that COVID-19 won't swamp the state's medical system.

"As long as we can manage our way through this, which we have done, we know, facts certain, we have slowed the spread," Holcomb said. "That's what's most important, that we can continue to care for those who are in need. When those hospital levels are where we can manage it and care for every single person that needs care, whether it's COVID-19 or they have the flu or heart issues ... we're in a position where we can accommodate that right now."

Dr. Weaver explained, "When we first did modelings and predictions looking for that peak, that was based on information from other countries, from other states as to what the projection would look like. Because of all the hard work we put in Indiana, we never really saw that big spike. In fact it went up, then leveled off and is now kind of going down. So that is what we're going to continue to watch over the next weeks and months, to keep that level plateau."

Holcomb met with Pence at the Kokomo GM plant re-tasked to making ventilators last Thursday, then announced his five-stage reopening plan on Friday. The fact that the Holcomb administration had orchestrated a doubling of Intensive Care Unit beds and ventilators meant that the medical system avoided the mayhem that hit hospitals in New York City, the Seattle area and New Orleans. ICU beds remained at about 44% capacity,

while only about 20% of ventilators were in use.

On Monday, Dr. Weaver, standing in for Health Commissioner Kristina Box after the death of her father last week, said of the state's positive rate that appeared to be more than 10%, "In the beginning it was only people coming into hospitals, health care workers, long-term care facilities, so we expect those numbers to be much higher in those populations than the general public. Additionally, if we have a hotspot, we know the percentage is going to be much higher as those people are going to be in close proximity to each other. So we don't believe that is a reflection of our actual positivity rate in the State of Indiana.

"Now that we're going to have over 100 testing



sites across Indiana beginning on Wednesday, we'll see what our true positivity rate is. Based on other testing, the Fairbanks study, we believe we're below the 5% rate," she said.

Little bit of art, little bit of science

In announcing his reopening plan, Holcomb said he used "a little bit of science and a little bit of art" in an effort to balance the twin crises of public health and the economy. Holcomb announced that 89 counties will move into Stage 2 on Monday, while exempting Marion, Lake and Cass counties, which continue to experience a spike in COVID-19 cases. Cass County is home to a Tyson meat processing plant that became a virus hotspot this past week.

Holcomb, like other governors, has been under intense pressure to reopen the economy, as the state's jobless rate is expected to balloon from 3.2% in March to double digits for the month of April.

Holcomb said "the science will guide us" while calling his five stage reopening plan "A road-map." He added, "This is why we call it a roadmap. If the road washes out, we'll have to take a detour or we may put it in park."

INDems react

Presumptive Democratic gubernatorial candidate Woody Myers called Holcomb's reopening plan "premature" and "confusing."

"The steps taken by the governor today are premature and increase the likelihood of worsening the Indiana coronavirus epidemic," said Myers, the former Indiana health commissioner. "The steps fly in the face of recommendations created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and endorsed by the White House COVID-19 Task Force led by Vice President and former Indiana governor Mike Pence. We will likely see a higher number of new cases in Indiana than if we had waited longer to ease restrictions. We are simply not ready yet."

Statehouse Democrats also stepped up criticism. Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane expressed incredulity after Holcomb's Tuesday press conference. "Did I hear right that the governor said Vice President Pence commended Indiana's plan to reopen as the best in the country? How can Indiana have the best plan to reopen when this so-called plan doesn't even meet the standards set up by the president and vice president themselves?" Lanane asked. "Their plan includes seeing at least two weeks of decreased positive cases as a main benchmark for opening

businesses and reducing social distancing. This was one of the governor's original benchmarks. What happened?"

House Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta added, "With today's announcement, Gov. Holcomb has charted a path for Indiana that is significantly more aggressive than those of our neighboring states. I, like most Hoosiers, desire to return to normalcy as quickly and as safely as possible and hope that the governor's decision proves to be the best

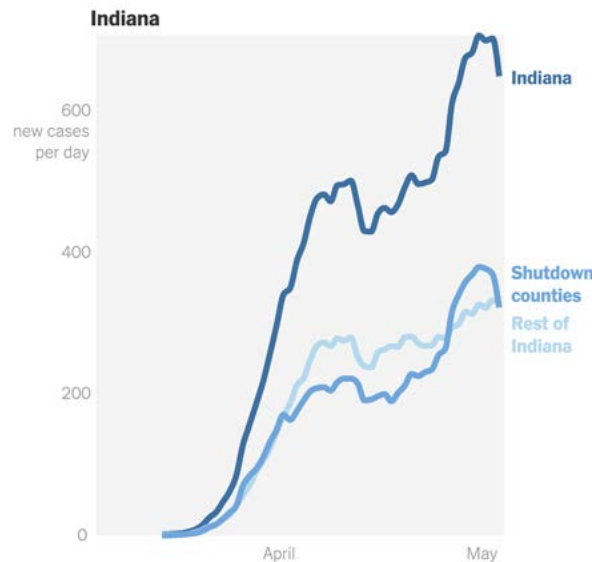
course of action. I know Gov. Holcomb and his advisors have difficult decisions to make each day, but gathering input from a diverse group of Hoosiers, relying on proven medical data and not succumbing to outside political pressure will ensure Indiana and all Hoosiers are healthy and safe."

Myers added on Saturday, "Today, the Indiana State Department of Health reported the second highest number (806) of new cases ever reported on any day. Cases in Indiana are on their way up, not down. The curve for newly discovered cases has not reached the top and is nowhere near flat. None of the newly announced testing and contact tracing capacity is in place."

Asked about Myers' criticism on Tuesday, Holcomb didn't mention his challenger. "I'm listening to the medical and scientific experts who have been around the table looking at this for 24 hours a day over the last two months. They are seeing real time data and that's what we'll continue to factor in to make decisions. It won't be a uniform statewide decision. That's evidenced by a different approach in Marion, Lake and Cass counties. It's evidenced by different approach for different sectors, for that rolling reopening across the State of Indiana."

Asked about his conversation with Pence in Kokomo last week, Holcomb said Tuesday, "He's said he's seen a lot of plans to reopen throughout the country and he's seen none better than ours. He called last night to talk about how thorough it was, how thoughtful, how it projected out, how we're able to adapt to principles on the ground. He held it up as a model, but I would suggest you call him to verify that."

Throughout the pandemic, Trump and Pence have appeared to be making assessments and decisions based on their reelection prospects, which had been based on a strong economy before it began tanking in March and April. The task of testing and tracing has been ignored by the federal government and has fallen to the states, which are now competing against each other, the feds, and foreign governments for scarce resources. Gov. Holcomb and Drs. Weaver and Box announced a testing and tracing regimen last week. The new data, they said, would likely cause a



spike in the number of cases. What remains to be seen is whether there will be an increase in deaths.

That Trump would even think about disbanding the coronavirus task force when epidemiologists are predicting subsequent COVID-19 waves has been taken as a sign that he's moving on.

In an interview with the New York Post, Trump declared "there's a great optimism" in America and predicted a strong economic rebound from the coronavirus crisis during the fourth quarter of 2020. "I think they're starting to feel good now. The country's opening again. We saved millions of lives, I think," said Trump. "People want the country open. I guess we have 38 states that are either opening or are very close. We'll open it up and I think your fourth quarter is going to be very good. We did the right thing and now we're bringing the country back. And I think there's a great optimism. I don't know if you see it, but I think there's a great optimism now."

"There's not too many states that I know of that are going up. Almost everybody is headed in the right direction," Trump said during a Fox News town hall on Sunday at the Lincoln Memorial. "We're on the right side of it, but we want to keep it that way, but we also want to get back to work."

According to a Washington Post/University of Maryland Poll, many Americans have been making trips to grocery stores and 56% say they are comfortable doing so. But 67% say they would be uncomfortable shopping at a retail clothing store, and 78% would be uncomfortable eating at a sit-down restaurant.

An April NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll found 58% saying they're more concerned that relaxing stay-at-home restrictions would lead to more COVID-19 deaths than they are that the restrictions will hurt the U.S. economy. A Monmouth University poll released on Tuesday showed that 63% of voters are more concerned that states will lift their restrictions too quickly, versus 29% who are more worried they won't lift them quickly enough.

U.S. Sen. Mike Braun, appearing on MSNBC's Meet the Press Daily on Tuesday, said, "I was all for, categorically, listening to the health care experts. We don't know anything about it. It's turned out to be a peculiar virus. Was it correct to do blanket shutdowns, a one size fits all? We won't really know that until we get this into the rear-view mirror. I think it would be something better from the get-go by targeting the most vulnerable people. Maybe that should have been the emphasis rather than broadly doing what we did."

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“That runs the risk of where we are now, which is to be over-exuberant to get back to the way it was and we’re not going to get that until there’s herd immunity and a vaccine,” Braun continued. “It’s critical of what we’ve learned from what we’ve watched over the past month and a half and putting more emphasis on protecting the most vulnerable and try to get this place back to where the economy isn’t going to be a double whammy for us.”

As for ending the White House coronavirus task force, Braun said, “You still need the vigilance out there. I’m OK with maybe adjusting the approach we take. Let’s take, for instance, my home county (DuBois), 43,000 people. I think we had 25 cases. We paid attention to the rules. We did the right thing. We showed you could do both things at the same time. I think somebody needs to pay attention as we try to reopen that we’re doing it in a way where we don’t backslide.”

Epilogue

President Trump, Vice President Pence and Gov.

Holcomb have moved into uncharted territory, with dire political consequences if they don’t get it right. A spike in first wave cases and deaths could lead to a disastrous second wave of “stay-at-home” orders. The Indiana and U.S. populations have been mostly compliant during the terrible April sequence when the pandemic reality hit home. A second shut down in June or July or next fall would be catastrophic to public morale, let alone the economy.

It would likely be the death knell of rescheduling Major League Baseball, keeping universities, businesses, corporations, local school districts and churches shuttered, and lead to the suspension of NFL and NCAA football in the fall.

The societal implications of this gamble would be unprecedented, historic and could lead to an unimaginable change in the way we live our lives.

As Gov. Holcomb likes to say, the proof will lie in the metrics, and the extraordinary datasets will come day-by-day, with trends and outliers much more clear in later this month and into the summer. ❖

Dr. Myers on Holcomb reopening; nears running mate decision

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS — Presumptive Democratic gubernatorial nominee Woody Myers is worried. He has mostly left the challenger mode to Gov. Eric Holcomb, following a rite of crisis that puts partisanship out to the curb.



But last Saturday, the day after Gov. Holcomb issued his four-step reopen-

ing plan, Myers weighed in. “The steps taken by the governor today are premature and increase the likelihood of worsening the Indiana coronavirus epidemic,” said Myers, the former Indiana health commissioner. “The steps fly in the face of recommendations created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and endorsed by the White House COVID-19 Task Force led by Vice President and former Indiana governor Mike Pence. We will likely see a higher number of new cases in Indiana than if we had waited longer to ease restrictions. We are simply not ready yet.”

On Wednesday morning, Howey Politics Indiana conducted this 20-minute

phone interview with Myers. Not only did Myers weigh in with more depth on the governor’s reopening, he also addressed several political elements.

His lieutenant governor nominee search is underway and could be announced within days. On Wednesday, the Indiana Democratic Central Committee had to extend the deadline for a nominee to be made to Friday in an emergency meeting.

He believes the Indiana Democratic Central Committee made the right call in conducting the June 20 convention virtually. And he made a case that Hoosiers should be able to vote by mail this November.

Here is the HPI Interview with Dr. Myers:

HPI: I’d like to begin this interview with you putting your doctor’s hat on. AP reported that COVID-19 cases are rising across the nation while Axios is calling the state-by-state reopening sequence as a potential “failure.”

Speak to the citizens of Indiana as to what the people need to know.

Myers: I remain worried. I’m worried today because the sense was conveyed that this is over or close to being over, or will be over soon. That’s just wrong. The data don’t support that in any way. The number of cases continues to rise. Although the testing has gone up some, we’re nowhere near the level we need



it to be. Even with the announcing tracing and testing contracts, implementation will take weeks if not months. Citizens of this state continue to die. One of the good things that is happening is our hospitals have not been overwhelmed. But as people look at it, it's the people who are just staying home. They are scared to go. People are electing to die at home. The fear of being at a hospital is very real. I'm just now very concerned that young people will see this as an opportunity to escape confinement and do what young people do, which is to socialize and because of the age divide, they become carriers and carry that virus home to their parents and grandparents. That's just going to increase the number of cases. The cat's out of the bag and I'm very worried.

Institutions in our state, the nursing homes where we're seeing a rapid rise in cases and staff, and patients and deaths related to those cases we're seeing now, and with respect to prisons and jails, we know the virus has found its way into the Department of Corrections. And I worry about institutions that are deemed essential with workers in close quarters. The best example are the meat processing plants where the virus has shown to have penetrated very efficiently. A large number of those workers are taking it home to their families. So we're just not ready. Everyone wants the economy to reopen, for things to return back to normal, but the facts and data are not supportive of that. I think we're taking unnecessary risks. It's a matter of judgment and balance. I believe that if we waited longer, fewer people would die. People over 60, our parents and grandparents, don't deserve this. This is a country where compassion should rule. Decisions are being made that fly in the face of reason. As a physician, as a father and grandfather, as a public health leader, I am very worried.

HPI: The state almost doubled its ICU capacity. We're seeing that capacity in the 40 to 44% range, which has kept the medical system from being swamped. What are the associated costs of that conversion?

Myers: It includes No. 1. equipment, and No. 2. personnel. What hospitals did was to recruit new personnel. They came from closing their out-patient surgery centers. They brought in additional ventilators and equipment. The patients that would have been there for their knee or hip replacements, for all the things people would normally do. Because there were beds they would normally use, they were prepared for a surge in COVID patients. Another factor now is physicians are two months into this. Physicians are voracious readers and consumers of knowledge of new diseases. Physicians are far

more comfortable today than they were two months ago in out-patient management of COVID-19. The reason you go to a hospital is to get something you can't get at home. It could be medication, it could be breathing capacity with ventilators, it could be patients that couldn't be managed properly at home. This disease can be effectively treated at home. Hospitals are now just open to the more critical cases. One decision I agree with the governor is to reinstate elective hospital admissions. But there's still that fear out there that people still have. I think it's going to ramp up very slowly. Until then, I think the public is going to remain very cautious. The people who are protesting and not wearing their masks are a very small percentage of the



6.6 million Hoosiers who are out there. Even though they don't like social isolation, they are still willing to practice it.

HPI: Gov. Holcomb was asked about your criticism of his reopening plan and his response was, "I'm listening to scientific experts who have been around the table looking at this for 24 hours a day over the past two months." What kind of access have you had to current medical expertise regarding this pandemic? Are you seeing similar data sets that the governor and Drs. Box and Weaver are seeing?

Myers: I don't know all of what they're seeing. I participate in presentations that Dr. Weaver does on Fridays for health care professionals. I think they are excellent. I try to stay close. I've read many of them, but not all of them. She gives a pretty good update. There's nothing in those that I disagree with. It's what you do with those facts and how you make decisions based on them. If you

look at the coronavirus task force headed by Vice President Pence, there were decent criteria laid out as to what constitutes a sufficient cause to reopen. I don't think we're there yet. The fact that the testing capacity isn't there. The Harvard Global Institute advises for a state our size we should have the capacity to test 10,000 people a day. We've been in the 2,000 and



4,000 range. So were not close to 10,000 at this point. There was supposed to be a two-week sustained drop in the prevalence of the illness. There are all sorts of ways to look at this pandemic. The numbers are going up, not down. We're not there yet. I believe strongly the mandates for social isolation are still important. It's always good to look at two-week increments. I think that's fine. I think over time you have to adjust somewhat the details of what is or is not essential. I just don't think we're ready yet for the complexity of the time table that was laid out by the governor's plan. Now he did say that adjustments could be made. It's the psychology that I worry about. What I worry about is the upbeat, "We're through the worst of this" enthusiasm that I heard. I think that is confusing. The details of which businesses and which counties can open, at what day and what capacity was incredibly confusing. It's a recipe for ineffective policy because even if you want to follow it, you don't know how to follow it and there's no enforcement mechanism. It's not clear who's responsible for what. It's not just in Indiana, other states are doing the same thing. It's just too far, too fast. The problem is the people who pay that price are at the bottom of the economy, the people that have the jobs with the most risk. The people who can't afford to isolate themselves. That's what is most troubling for me.

HPI: The tendency is not to play politics during a crisis. Talk about what it's been like to run a campaign during a pandemic. How are you going to approach the next couple of months?

Myers: Brian, I did Google "How to run a campaign during a pandemic." There are no books I could find. You have to adjust the campaign appropriately. You can't have the kind of campaign with rallies that you'd like. You can't the rah-rah speeches to get people riled up to help you. And you can't go out and do the normal fundraising. We had to cancel about 15 fundraising events. We have transferred some of those events to virtual events. I'm fairly proficient in using Zoom! now. I'm making a lot of phone calls; I talk to as many people as I can talk to during the day and evening. We're using more email and texts. We're doing what we can during the constraints to get our message out so that people know there's an alternative to the decision-making apparatus that's in place.

HPI: The virtual convention in June is another unprecedented aspect this year. How are you going to ap-

proach that?

Myers: I'm good with it. I think that it's going to be streamed on a couple of TV stations and that the company has stations in other parts of the state, that will be good for us. That will help get our messages out, get people involved. The planning for that is moving forward. I'm glad we have a way to do it that won't put a lot of people at risk.

HPI: Your next big decision will be to select a lieutenant governor. Where are you in that process and when will you make that known?

Myers: I am working on that. I've had numerous conversations with people around the state. We have, to date, not made a formal offer to anyone. I hope that will come very soon. I know there's a great deal of interest and the time frame of it would normally be in the two weeks before the convention. We're doing our homework now. It's difficult to get people together. We are trying to get it done this week, but that's my goal.

HPI: Vice president Biden says he's going to choose a woman. Are there any search parameters you can tell me about?

Myers: Yes. The parameters are basically somebody who can lead and serve in that role extremely well. Someone with knowledge and experience who could manage the state and push us in an aggressive position. That's the No. 1 criteria. Number 2 is you actually want to do it. You'd have to be ready to make the sacrifice that's required for public service. It's not a 9-to-5 job. You work weekends and holidays.

HPI: Are you looking for someone with State-house experience or private sector.

Myers: Yes and yes on both of those. I haven't found the ideal person who checks off every single box, so that's why I've cast a wide net and I've had lots of great conversations around the state.

HPI: As for the political dynamic, the governor has a \$7 million money lead and high approval. Do you see an opening to make this race competitive during this pandemic?

Myers: I see an opening, period. As I say to people, we're close to the end of the beginning. We're not even in the middle rounds of this. We've got an unemployment rate in this state that's about 20% and could go higher. We have an unprecedented number of people who have applied for unemployment; we've got businesses who are not able to reopen, who've not gotten their checks. I just believe that the circumstances, how we're doing, the difficulty of reopening, the ramping up of testing, the ability to obtain personal protective equipment, all of those issues have yet to be managed well or resolved. They are all going to be at the forefront when the voter goes home and checks off a mail-in ballot this November, and that's obviously an issue as well. I'm hopeful we'll come to our senses as a nation and allow no excuses voting by mail. There are many good reasons for me to fight for the next 181 days, eight hours and 19 minutes. ❖

Marks, Hackett fight for 2nd CD nomination

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – If it were not for the coronavirus, Democrat primary voters would go to the polls Tuesday to pick either Pat Hackett or Ellen Marks as their nominee to oppose Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, the 2nd District Republican incumbent.



The primary election is delayed until June 2. But the question that became so relevant in March remains for the Democratic contenders: How do you campaign for Congress during a pandemic?

Not the way they thought they would be campaigning. Instead, no rallies, fundraising events, debates, talks to service clubs, door-to-door campaigning, volunteers at phone banks. No

open headquarters.

The Democratic contenders make the most of opportunities online and with techniques for visual gatherings. They hope to do more, perhaps TV ads and eventually more contacts with social distancing.

The two Democrats seeking the congressional nomination both are attorneys from South Bend.

They are different in terms of their law practices, their views on how to campaign against Walorski, their dealing with Donald Trump and their fundraising. They are:

Hackett, 60, with a South Bend law practice and with experience of running for the Democratic nomination in 2018. She finished second to nominee Mel Hall, who was soundly defeated by Walorski.

Marks, 53, law partner in corporate and finance departments of a large national firm, Latham & Watkins. She wasn't involved in politics until the "terrifying" tone of Trump's 2016 campaign caused her to decide she "couldn't stay on the sidelines anymore."

"I'm a peacemaker," says Marks. She cites her style as a lawyer in seeking solutions where two sides are just shouting at each other. "I really don't want to go out and say negative things about the president or Jackie Walorski," she says. "I do want to talk about their records and leadership."

Hackett doesn't hesitate to say negative things about Trump and Walorski, blaming them for an ineffective

response to the coronavirus, seeking to dismantle the Affordable Care Act and posing a threat to democracy. "Donald Trump and Jackie Walorski with him and Mike Pence do not represent the values of the district," she says.

How do Marks and Hackett get along?

Well, their South Bend debate was cancelled, and they had only a few joint appearances before the coronavirus shut-down. They don't engage in personal attacks in telephone interviews. They do talk of differences.

Marks describes their relationship as "cordial but not warm." She says Hackett was very displeased when she told her about deciding to seek the nomination.

Hackett says having a primary opponent is "not helpful." She says it will require spending more in the primary "against an opponent who would not be an effective opponent of Jackie Walorski."

Fundraising is different. Hackett counts on small individual contributions and won't take money from corporate PACs. She says Marks is too dependent on big contributions from lawyers from outside the district, adding a description that "Ellen is a Chicago lawyer."

Marks says she is proud of contributions from lawyers she has dealt with, some on opposing sides, and adds that her experience in global finance is a better qualification for Congress than Hackett's as "a family lawyer."

On health care, Marks says her views are similar to those expressed in presidential debates by Joe Biden and Pete Buttigieg, saving and expanding the Affordable



Care Act and preserving a private-plan option for those who want it in achieving universal coverage. Hackett says she is for universal health care but won't get into labels such as "Medicare for all." She does label Walorski as damaging health by "voting 60 times to repeal the Affordable Care Act."

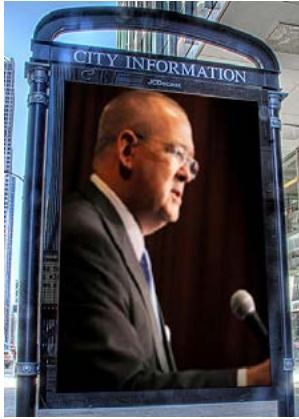
"We are very different people," Marks says. "But our policies are very similar. It's not a battle, just two options." Hackett agrees they are very different - including with policies. ❖

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

Determining who's an 'essential' worker

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE — In the one car trip I made over the past week, I passed by a sign proclaiming, "A Hero Lives Here." I don't know who it was, or what occupation they may be engaged in — perhaps it was someone in the healthcare sector, a police officer or a grocery store clerk.



These are all folks we believe provide an essential service. Still, I confess that in my 21 years as an economics professor, I'd never once considered the idea of there being anything like a distinction between "essential" or "non-essential" worker.

True, during these trying times, such a distinction is useful in helping guide who should remain at home during the pandemic, but even that won't

quite do justice to the idea. After all, there are many people today doing important work from home. These may be mayors, teachers or epidemiologists. In normal times there is no such division as "essential" or "non-essential" workers. That truth has important lessons for today.

We might suppose that some jobs are more important to the economy than others, but I'm not sure that's true. There are clearly wage differences between occupations, but wages don't reflect what importance. Wages capture the interaction between the value a worker provides her employer and her willingness to do the job. Jobs that aren't important just don't make money for employers. The exception is for public sector workers who don't have a clear money-making prospect for the government. Police officers, school teachers, sailors and soldiers don't earn money for their employers, even if their labors make the rest of us better off.

Workers choose to supply their labor based on thoughtful personal calculus. They consider the risk of the job, the time away from family, the enjoyment of the tasks and even such esoteric matters as the pleasantness of a boss. But neither employers nor employees know with certainty how much they are worth to one another or what the alternatives might be. These uncertainties sustain a constant churning of labor markets as workers try new jobs in new places.

Many jobs come with non-pecuniary benefits that compensate for the pay and working conditions. The military is the clearest example of that. At no rank is the pay equal to that of a civilian with similar duties, and combat pay is an extra \$7.50 a day. It's a sure bet that something

more than pay attracts young women and men into the service. The same is true of many government occupations, where the pay is low but respect and job satisfaction are high. Think of school teachers or police officers.

At the other end of the spectrum are professional athletes and entertainers, whose earnings may be astronomical to play a game or sing a tune. These folks earn more because they are very good at their profession and technology enables everyone to consume their services. Pay clearly isn't a determinant of the essential nature of a job.

Many of us might be tempted to make that distinction based on what we think we need to buy, but that won't do either. Most of what we consume during this shelter-in-place is not essential to sustain life. Most of us are healthy and do not need medical services. If we were honest with ourselves, most of our trips to the grocery are motivated not from hunger, but from a desire to avoid eating that 2016 can of Spam with a side of ramen noodles from the shelf. And it is an unavoidable truth that we can live without Netflix, wine or hair coloring.

All this means that the definition of an essential job is one that someone else is willing to pay for. What we are discovering these days is that many jobs we think are essential are performed by workers who are compensated little for their efforts. Low-wage workers in nursing homes, food processing factories and grocery stores are three examples.

If we possess lasting memories of our current troubles, there will likely be stronger calls for a higher national minimum wage. I wish boosting earnings for low wage workers was that easy. It is not, and whatever happens to minimum wage we need to consider other policies.

What we should do is use this opportunity to revisit a broad set of policies that affect low wage workers. We must ask ourselves a number of questions. Can we do a better job of making them more productive through K-12 schooling? Could we better connect business tax incentives to wages and working conditions? Should we re-focus our workforce development programs toward workers instead of employers?

If we are lucky, our current troubles will have a more lasting influence on many jobs. Maybe employers will feel a bit more anxious about keeping these workers employed. Maybe we'll see a new type of labor movement replacing the failed models of the past. I doubt we'll have parades for nursing home staff, grocery store clerks or chicken factory workers when this is over, but maybe we'll be just a bit more respectful of those who do that work. ❖

Michael Hicks is the George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Economics and the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at Ball State University.

Prioritizing education referendum needs

By **MORTON J. MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS -Last week I planned to extend my discussion of Indiana regionalism, if nothing more exciting comes along. Two referenda on the June 2nd Indiana primary ballot in my area diverted me from that course.



Washington Township Schools, (WTS, Marion County) seeks approval of two school district bond issues. You may have similar matters to decide on your ballot.

Because I respect the educators, their programs and results at WTS, I will vote for the Operating Bond issue. This provides \$16 million annually for eight years in the WTS budget. Those funds enable both improved compensation of all personnel as well as additional teachers.

However, I will vote against the \$285 million Construction Bond issue to revamp and improve classroom, athletic, and transportation facilities. It is time to think and act big on changing American education. And I'd start at home where good education is already available.

Why?

Rightly or wrongly, Americans blame schools and parents when children are not adequately prepared as citizens or workers. The consequence: our everyday quality of life (our culture) is diluted.

"A Nation at Risk" in 1983 declared, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and as a people."

We talk about reform, but we have achieved too little. I urge opposition to the construction referendum based on our collective, persistent disappointment and our abiding hope for schools nationwide.

We seem to have forgotten, the job of a school system is to educate, not to entertain students, their parents, grandparents, graduates, or the citizenry in general. The entertainment activities, called co-curricular by WTS, are wonderful in many ways, but they need not be supported by tax dollars.

Football and basketball are the first activities I would have funded locally by booster clubs, alumni, local businesses, and other interested parties. Putting another \$285 million into the physical plant of WTS, or any comparable amount into your school district, is not a step forward. It only reinforces the weakened education system of today.

How do we go about changing education? Just as we recognize the importance of pre-, peri-, and postnatal care, we need to extend our involvement with parents and children in their homes and at school.

What would WTS be able to achieve if it had an added \$285 million over the course of eight years (\$35.6 million per year)? Those funds could support mentoring and tutoring families wanting to see their children achieve higher levels of development.

Today's education needs to give students the tools to excel in their world, not in the one we know from yesterday. WTS might win fewer championships, but let's not return to normal. Let's blaze a trail to an era of excellence.



Marcus is an economist. wherever podcasts are available or at mortonjohn.libsyn.com.





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Partisan Congress reflects the nation

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON - If you feel like Congress has become less productive, less functional, and more partisan... you're right. I've been thinking a lot lately about how it's changed over the years since I served there in the '60s to the '90s, and several issues help explain why it often struggles to get things done.



Heightened partisanship may top the list. Congress has always been a partisan organization; we've seen tense battles throughout its history. But now they're more intense and occur more frequently. Members tend to see issues predominantly, though not completely, through a partisan lens.

This is reflected in their voting patterns. In the 1960s and 1970s, votes in which a majority of one party opposed a majority of the other occurred roughly one-third to one-half the time. Starting in the early '90s, that percentage rose into the 60 and 70% range. Add to this increasingly split control of Congress, with one party controlling the House and the other the Senate, and agreement becomes exceedingly difficult to find.

In many ways, this reflects the country at large. Though identification with a party or as an independent has tended to move a few percentage points over time, Americans of each party seem ever more firmly stuck in their own camps. It has become more difficult to resolve our differences, and this has undoubtedly contributed to congressional gridlock.

Years ago, the question that pervaded discussions on Capitol Hill was, "What can we do to resolve this problem?" Members were unwilling to accept stalemate or lack of agreement. Leaders at the time — people like Carl Albert and Tip O'Neill on the Democrats' side and Bob Michel and John Anderson on the Republicans' — certainly had partisan differences, but these did not dominate the discussion. Behind closed doors they would discuss them civilly and politely, even going so far as to share private polling numbers.

At the same time that polarization has increased, Congress's ambition has generally lessened. It's almost inconceivable today that Congress would tackle a big issue—say, how to provide health care for older people—by trying to create something like Medicare. You see this same trend in oversight of the executive branch. There were committee chairmen who knew the ins and outs of the departments they oversaw down to the finest detail. They would spend days grilling administration wit-

nesses (of even their own party), creating an extensive record of what an administration and its political appointees were trying to accomplish — information that helped ordinary Americans understand and judge the government's approach. That is much harder to find today.

I think you can also detect the same trend at work in a diminishment of Congress's oratorical ambitions. There was a time when members of Congress on both sides of the aisle considered Congress to be equal in stature to the President and the executive branch, and their speech-making reflected this: they saw strong oratory as a chance to encapsulate ideas and inspire Americans to rally behind them.

A key thing to remember is that this wasn't just the speaker of the House or the majority leader of the Senate. Power and influence were spread more widely across both chambers. As the leadership in recent years has come to dominate the process, ordinary members find far fewer chances to shine. The collapse of what was known as the "regular order," the committee work and amendment process that allowed ordinary members to participate in the deliberative work of Capitol Hill, has thoroughly concentrated power in the hands of leaders and made Congress less representative as a whole.

That trend has been accentuated by the extent to which money now talks at every stage of the process. It's not just that members are constantly trying to raise campaign funds. It's that the mix of who funds those campaigns has changed dramatically. In the late 1970s, according to the Brookings Institution's Vital Statistics on Congress, labor and corporate PACs gave about equally. Now, corporate PACs account for the vast majority of all the money flowing to members' campaigns.

The result of all this? Congress is still a vital part of our democracy, but it is by most measures a less effective one. ❖

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Democrats' double standard on #metoo

By **KELLY HAWES**
CNHI News Bureau

ANDERSON — Democrats are struggling to deal with a sexual assault complaint against presumptive presidential nominee Joe Biden. Biden denies former Senate staffer Tara Reade's claim that he touched her inappropriately during an encounter in the early 1990s.



"I'm saying unequivocally, it never, never happened," Biden said during an interview Friday on MSNBC's "Morning Joe."

He denies even that she filed a complaint, saying that if such a document existed it would be stored in the National Archives.

"I'm confident there is nothing," he said. "No one that I'm aware of filed a complaint. No one in my office at the time is aware of any such request or complaint."

The show's co-host, Mika Brzezinski, reminded Biden that he had contended during Brett Kavanaugh's 2018 Supreme Court confirmation battle that when a woman went public with such an allegation it was likely true. She asked if he still believed that.

"From the very beginning, I've said believing women means taking the woman's claims seriously," he said. "Then vet it, look into that. That's true in this case as well. Women have a right to be heard, and the press should rigorously investigate claims they make. I'll always uphold that principle. In the end, the truth is what matters. And in this case, the claims are false."

Republicans, meanwhile, accuse Democrats of a double standard. "The left, and their media allies, has one standard for Republicans and another standard for Democrats like Joe Biden," said Steve Guest, a spokesman for the Republican National Committee. "The double standard is appalling."

Among those supporting Biden is House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. "He is the personification of hope and optimism and authenticity for our country — a person of great values," she said. "So I'm going to remove all doubt in anyone's mind. I have great comfort level with the situation as I see it, with all the respect in the world for any woman who comes forward, with all the highest regard for Joe Biden."

She suggested that it was possible to support the #Metoo movement while still standing behind Biden. "There is also due process," she said. "And the fact that Joe

Biden is Joe Biden."

Pelosi's remarks didn't sit well with Briahna Joy Gray, former national press secretary for the Bernie Sanders campaign. "And with that went any moral credibility Democrats may have had on this issue," she tweeted. "I just hope that other Democrats, especially women, don't feel compelled to follow Pelosi off this cliff."

Gray bristles at efforts to diminish Reade's allegation. "I wish these people understood that the story is the cover up as much as the event," she tweeted. "It's unlikely anyone will be able to prove what happened between Biden and Reade, but the hypocrisy from the Democratic establishment is on full display. Kavanaugh was only a year and a half ago."

Gray thinks party leaders would be reacting differently if the second place candidate were someone other than Sanders. "If Kamala Harris or Pete Buttigieg were second in the delegate count, do we think we'd be having more of a public conversation about Biden dropping out?" she tweeted.

Regardless of the allegations, Sanders supporters are not exactly flocking to the Biden campaign. A recent survey for USA Today found that 60% of those who backed the Vermont senator were not very excited or not excited at all about Biden's impending nomination.

"What will the Democratic establishment do about it?" Gray tweeted. "Will it work to earn back the trust of those demoralized by its hypocrisy? Or will it keep shaming voters until none are left?"

I guess we'll find out in November how it all works out. ❖

Kelly Hawes is a columnist for CNHI News Indiana. He can be reached at kelly.hawes@indianamedia-group.com. Find him on Twitter @Kelly_Hawes.

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

Battle for legislatures and GOP ‘trifectas’

By **KYLE KONDIK**
and **J. MILES COLEMAN**

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – There’s a lot at stake on the federal level this year: the presidency, the Senate, and the House are all up for grabs. While there has (rightfully) been considerable attention and speculation dedicated to these larger races, the upcoming state legislature elections have not received the same level of consideration.

With more than 5,000 districts at stake this year, there are many opportunities at the state level for either party to maintain or improve their advantage. We at CAnalysis acknowledge the importance of these elections; we are currently casting ratings for most of these districts – 5,233 to be exact – as well as their respective state legislative chambers.

Before getting into the specific ratings, let’s take a look at where things stand right now. Map 1 shows the current party control of state legislative chambers. Notice that there are only two states where party control of chambers is divided: In Minnesota, Democrats control the state House and Republicans hold the state Senate, while in Alaska, Republicans hold the state Senate while Democrats nominally control the state

House thanks to a coalition of Democrats, Republicans and Independents (Republicans actually hold more seats in the chamber). Also, Nebraska’s unicameral state legislature is technically nonpartisan, although functionally it’s GOP-controlled. Overall, control of state legislatures aligns with 2016 presidential partisanship: Democrats control all the chambers in states won by Hillary Clinton except for the Minnesota Senate, while Republicans control all the chambers in states won by Donald Trump except for the Alaska House.

Overall, Republicans control 58 chambers, and Democrats control 40. Again, this tally excludes Nebraska. The term “trifecta” is used by analysts to denote states

where both chambers of the state legislature and the governorship are controlled by the same party. Map 2 shows the states that have either Democratic or Republican trifectas versus those where there is some split in power. Republicans have 20 trifectas, Democrats have 15, and 14 states are split. Again, Nebraska is excluded, but functionally the state could be counted as one where Republicans control both the governorship and legislature.

With that, here are our current CAnalysis ratings of the state legislative chambers. States not listed either are safe for the incumbent party or do not have state legislative elections this year.

As our ratings indicate, Republican-controlled chambers are more competitive than those held by Democrats. While Republicans hold an advantage in the number of chambers they control, the certainty of Republicans maintaining such a lopsided control of chambers is not assured. Of the competitive chambers that Republicans control, most are closer to the Toss-Up category than the competitive chambers Democrats control. Excluding

the “Likely” chambers – where the chances of a chamber flipping are possible but slim – there are 11 competitive chambers remaining: nine held by Republicans, and just two held by Democrats.

This is largely due to the so-called “blue wave” of 2018, where Democrats had a net gain of 65 state Senate seats and 240 state House seats in the midterm elections. Given what might be a more even-handed electoral environment we’ll see in a presidential election year compared to a midterm election, which almost

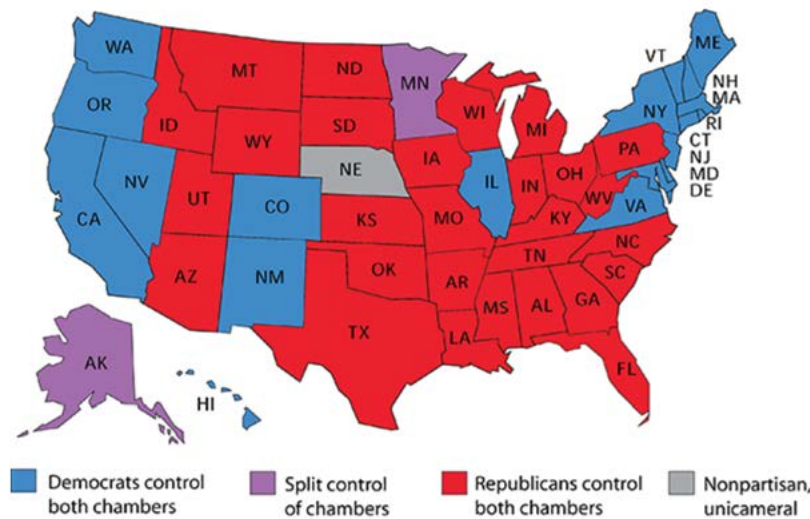
always delivers rebukes to incumbent presidents, we will likely see far smaller net gains for either party.

In 2016, Republicans had the overall net gain in state legislative seats, with many newly-elected Republicans being carried by Donald Trump’s coattails in rural areas, where he dominated. Republicans had a net gain of 31 state Senate seats and a single state House seat nationwide. Currently in the CAnalysis forecast of over 5,000 single-member state legislative districts, Democrats are favored to have a net gain of 11 state Senate seats, and Republicans are favored to net 11 state House seats. Given how many seats are being contested, this would be a very modest shift in seats.

The projected Democratic net gain in state Senate



Map 1: Control of state legislative chambers



seats is mostly due to two reasons: staggered terms and open seats. In the staggered term districts, where there hasn't been an election since the 2016 elections, there are several districts that have drifted sharply leftward since then, mostly in suburban areas. The projected Republican net gain in state House seats is also mostly due to two reasons: open seats and seats that went uncontested in 2016 and/or 2018. The districts that are projected to flip to Republicans are almost entirely in rural areas.

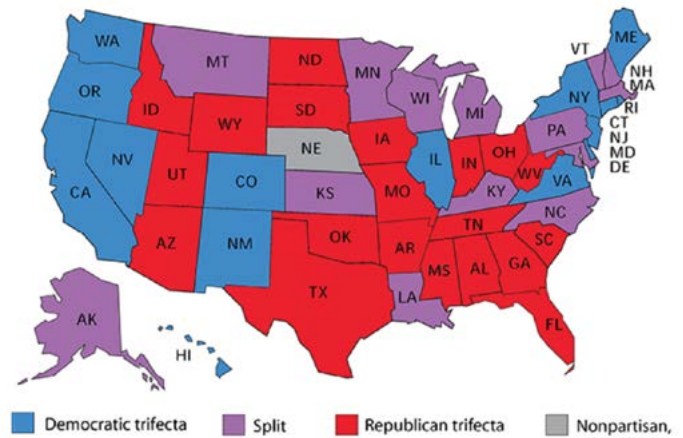
Currently, in the CNAlysis ratings for 5,233 single-member districts in both state Senates and state Houses around the country, only about 20% of all the districts are competitive, with the remainder either safe for one party or the other or uncontested. The uncontested districts, where only members of one party are running, will continue to increase as more candidacy filing deadlines pass in more states throughout the year. More than 90% of these uncontested districts would not have been competitive. So just like in the U.S. House of Representatives, a strong majority of state legislative seats do not really feature much two-party competition.

Of the 17 competitive state legislative chambers, nine are in states where there is not a state government trifecta: The Minnesota House and Senate, the New Hampshire House and Senate, the Alaska House, the North Carolina House and Senate, the Michigan House, and the Pennsylvania House.

Minnesota is the greatest opportunity for Democrats to create a trifecta in state governments this year, with only the state Senate standing in their way. North Carolina and New Hampshire double as trifecta opportunities for both parties, because both states have competitive state legislative chambers and gubernatorial races. Alaska Republicans only have to flip the state House to create a trifecta in the state, though that will depend on how they fare against Republicans in the chamber who caucus with the Democrat-aligned majority coalition (more on that here).

Eight of the competitive state legislative chambers are in states where there is either a Democratic or Republi-

Map 2: State trifectas



can trifecta: the Connecticut Senate, the Maine House and Senate, the Iowa House, the Arizona House and Senate, the Texas House, and the Florida House. If any of these chambers flip, with some more likely to than others in this list, it would create a divided state government. A few of these states have historically practiced gerrymandering, with Texas being the biggest offender. So depending on the state, a divided government could help combat gerrymandering during the redistricting processes next year.

Michigan and Pennsylvania, two crucial states in the Electoral College for both parties, will not become either a Republican or Democratic trifecta this year. Michigan's state Senate isn't up until 2022, and there's no path to a Democratic majority in the Pennsylvania state Senate thanks to a Democrat who switched parties last year and caucuses with Republicans (though they could get a tied chamber with Democratic Lt. Gov. John Fetterman as the tiebreaker). However, both of their state Houses are competitive, with Michigan looking like the better target. If Democrats flip the state Houses, they'd be one step closer to a trifecta that they could create in 2022, although they will have to defend the governorships of each of those states that year as well. ❖



Lauren Dezenski, CNN: While Joe Biden has moved online and been relegated to TV hits and fundraising out of a basement studio, President Trump and his surrogates are still able to pay visits to key states on the electoral map, even if it's not an official campaign event. The President got in on the action on Tuesday with a visit to Arizona (which just so happens to be a swing state!). But Vice President Mike Pence's travel is even more telling. Consider his recent visits to Minnesota (a swing state), Wisconsin (another swing state) and Indiana (Pence's home state, which leans Republican). Pence's travel isn't over, either. He's headed to Iowa on Friday (you guessed it -- also a swing state). Notice a theme about these stops? Hint: It has little to do with masks. They're all states Trump (and Pence) need to win in November. ❖



S.E. Cupp, New York Daily News: Every parent has warily confronted the hypothetical question: What would you do if you suspected your child was unwell? Not physically, but emotionally unwell, or mentally unstable? Imagine learning your teenager, for example, had been yelling demeaning slurs at the girls in his class, harassing them and calling them names. Or that he'd been increasingly susceptible to bizarre and otherwise implausible conspiracy theories, and was spreading them unprompted to anyone who would listen. Presumably, you'd be very, very concerned. And what if this were the president of the United States? Not only are these behaviors the norm for President Trump, but they seem to have worsened at one of the most precarious and critical times for our country, as we face a global pandemic that has killed nearly 70,000 Americans. Less than two weeks after unimaginably suggesting injecting disinfectants might help kill off the coronavirus, the past few days have seen him spiral out of control, proving utterly incapable of staying focused on the biggest crisis a president can face. Instead, he has: Spread unfounded conspiracy theories about the origins of the coronavirus, about former President Barack Obama and about an MSNBC cable-news host; Made statements that can only be described as delusional, like comparing himself to Abraham Lincoln, inventing a non-existent letter of apology from Joe Biden, and spewing non-science about his favorite drug, hydroxychloroquine; Attacked two female reporters for doing their jobs, lamenting that they didn't behave like "Donna Reed," an actress synonymous with the gender role-abiding, kitchen-dwelling 1950s housewife she played on television more than 60 years ago; Attacked another female cable-news host, calling her a "3rd rate lapdog"; And in the middle of the night on Tuesday, at 12:45 a.m., gone on a 234-word rant on Twitter, complaining about an ad released by a Republican anti-Trump group whose leaders include George Conway, husband of his staffer Kellyanne, in which he used words like "deranged loser of a husband," and "Moonface" to describe him. It's a frightening commentary on the slow normalization of this completely abnormal behavior that

we can greet the undeniable deterioration of the president of the United States with mere shrugs.

Lis Smith, New York Times: If Joe Biden plays his cards right, the death of the traditional presidential campaign will turn out to be a blessing in disguise. The 77-year-old Mr. Biden, whom the president derisively calls "Sleepy Joe," can become the hottest bad boy and disrupter in the media game. It seems likely that social distancing will force the presidential campaign to be played out entirely on our screens. That will free Mr. Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, of the burden of running a grueling, expensive campaign involving incessant travel. Instead, he can be digitally omnipresent — at a small fraction of the cost and physical toll — and create a new paradigm for how presidential campaigns communicate in the press for years to come. Mr. Biden's greatest asset as a campaigner is his palpable empathy. Politicians can learn a lot of tricks — talking points, debate and interview strategies — but personal warmth is something that cannot be taught. It also happens to be a trait that translates well on TV. This human touch is especially important at a time when voters are looking as much for a "healer in chief" as they are a commander in chief. It also sets up a stark contrast with Trump, who in crisis after crisis has demonstrated a lack of empathy and inability to feel Americans' pain. ❖

Gerald Seib, Wall Street Journal: If there was any doubt remaining, it has been eliminated: With precisely six months to go before voting in November, the country is headed toward a coronavirus presidential election. The virus crisis and its economic aftershocks not only consume the country today, but are making the question of how President Trump handles them the defining campaign issue. An election that always was destined to be a referendum on the incumbent now will be even more so. That framing isn't doing President Trump any favors right now. In fact, it's easy to see the significant liabilities he is carrying. Less obvious are some key assets he still holds. Yet they also are considerable, and shouldn't be overlooked in this moment. As fears of the novel coronavirus spread through the U.S., the high-contact tradition of presidential campaigning came to a halt. For now, the crisis appears to be a drag on the president's re-election hopes. "Donald Trump's chances for reelection have diminished significantly due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus," argues Doug Sosnik, who was White House political director for President Bill Clinton, in a new analysis of the 2020 election landscape. More Americans disapprove of Mr. Trump's handling of the coronavirus than approve of it. One of the Trump campaign's main lines of attack—that Democrats have become a party of big-government, big-spending socialists—has been eroded as the president leads a robust government response to the pandemic, complete with trillions of dollars of new government aid to all quarters of society. ❖

Indiana Citizen launches vote drive

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana Citizen Education Foundation launches One More Voice – a nonpartisan, statewide campaign to increase voter registration, education and turnout. Participation in voting is a key measure of a healthy democracy, and Indiana historically ranks low. In fact, Indiana has been in the bottom 10 states for voter turnout in four of the past five elections. With the goal of reaching 750,000 of the state's estimated 1.7 million unregistered voters, One More Voice has three primary goals:



- Register new voters at OneMoreVoice.com. It takes only a couple of minutes.

- Help Hoosiers understand the issues and know the candidates on the ballot. The campaign website will include unbiased information about the Nov. 3 general election.

- Increase voter turnout in 2020.

"Your voice adds value where you call home, and it's even greater to the people and issues you believe in – they depend on it," said Bill Moreau, president and co-founder of The Indiana Citizen Education Foundation.

Chamber seeks relief for businesses

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana Chamber of Commerce is pursuing a public policy agenda to help businesses across the state rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic (Pete, NWI Times). It is calling for legislative action related to economic stimulus, employment, health, tax and unemployment, as well as federal initiatives. The lobbying group that represents more than 25,000 businesses across the state is specifically asking the state to make low-interest business loans, provide legal protections for employers that followed established

safety guidelines, invest in high-speed broadband to aid in working remotely, limit liability for manufacturers that switched to personal protective equipment and offer incentives for reshoring manufacturing, especially from China.

CDC reopening guidelines shelved

WASHINGTON — A set of detailed documents created by the nation's top disease investigators meant to give step-by-step advice to local leaders deciding when and how to reopen public places such as mass transit, day care centers and restaurants during the still-raging pandemic has been shelved by the Trump administration (AP). The 17-page report by a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention team, titled "Guidance for Implementing the Opening Up America Again Framework," was researched and written to help faith leaders, business owners, educators and state and local officials as they begin to reopen. It was supposed to be published last Friday, but agency scientists were told the guidance "would never see the light of day," according to a CDC official.

Big10 uncertain about grid season

CHICAGO — Less than four months before the scheduled kickoff of the college football season, not one of the 14 schools in the Big Ten Conference can say for sure if it will have students back on campus this fall—a crucial step for sports (AP). Uncertainty about how the coronavirus pandemic will unfold through the summer has kept universities from making a definitive decision about the fall semester, which typically begins in late August. The football season, for now, is due to begin Aug. 29, though Big Ten schools don't begin play until the following week. Commissioners of the nation's major college football conferences told Vice President Mike Pence

last month that college sports cannot return from the coronavirus shutdown until campuses have reopened. Those decisions will lie with individual college presidents working with state and local health officials. Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren told the Chicago Tribune the conference is at least six weeks away from making any determinations about the fall sports season. Organized team activities are on hold until at least June 1 and the situation will be re-evaluated then. Warren's office didn't respond to a message seeking further comment. Indiana University President Michael A. McRobbie wrote in a email to the university community last week that it "would not be realistic or even responsible to promise a full resumption of in-person activity in the fall."

Daniels video hints campus reopening

WEST LAFAYETTE – Purdue President Mitch Daniels continued to make it clear that a fall 2020 semester will happen with students on the West Lafayette campus, dropping more hints in a video released by his office Tuesday afternoon (Lafayette Journal & Courier). Among the ideas, some of which could start taking shape later this week during a special Purdue trustees meeting, Daniels laid out Tuesday: A "likely early decision" to change the fall semester calendar "to remove breaks and therefore the extent of coming and going from campus." Purdue President Mitch Daniels released a video hinting at changes that might make it possible to bring students back to the West Lafayette campus for the fall 2020 semester. Daniels, in a five-minute video filmed on the steps outside his Hovde Hall office, again maintained his contention that "to a place like Purdue, the consistent finding everywhere that the young people who make up over 80 percent of our campus population are at near zero lethal risk."