



Mourdock meltdown, or detour?

Candidate says debate rape comment is motivating base, but he needs independents

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

BLOOMINGTON - The fallout from Republican Senate nominee Richard Mourdock's controversial comments on abortion and rape during the waning moments of Tuesday's debate is only now being gauged.

What is indisputable is that social and mainstream media reaction was overwhelming, followed by a scattered political reaction that saw presidential nominee Mitt Romney disavow the remark, while Indiana gubernatorial nominee Mike Pence and 2nd CD candidate Jackie Walorski called for Mourdock to apologize. He was the butt of jokes on the network talk shows. Former Republican Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour said Thursday on CBS's "This Morning" that Mourdock's statement "was kinda crazy." The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee has cued up a \$1.1 million buy in Indiana linking Mourdock to Romney, part of \$5 million spilling into the race in the final two weeks by the two senatorial committees, Club For Growth and Crossroads GPS. Total campaign spending is now expected to reach \$22 million.

An internal McLaughlin & Associates Poll for the Mourdock campaign released this morning showed the race



is tied at 44%, with Libertarian Andrew Horning at 6% and 4% undecided. "The political environment continues to be very favorable to the Republicans, as Mitt Romney leads President Obama, 55% to 41%," observed pollsters John McLaughlin and Rob Schmidt. The survey was conducted Wednesday and Thursday in the midst of the media firestorm.

In a Global Strategies Poll for Donnelly released earlier this week, Mourdock was trailing 40-38 - the same

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Pence, Gregg spar on autos

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. - The auto rescue became a point of contention between Republican gubernatorial candidate Mike Pence and Democrat John Gregg in Fort Wayne Thursday night in their final debate.

Gregg noted that the debate was taking place in Fort Wayne, "home of the Chevy Silverado." Gregg observed, "My opponent drives around the state in a red Silverado. The congressman uses that red pickup as a prop." But he noted that Pence did not support the auto rescue under President George W. Bush or the expedited



"It's sort of a vow of political celebacy."

- Gov. Mitch Daniels, refusing to comment on Richard Mourdock after Stephen Colbert pressed him on 'The Colbert Report'



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bankruptcy in 2009 under President Barack Obama. "That's 125,000 jobs," Gregg said of the potential loss. "The Pence/Mourdock ticket didn't lift a finger to help."

Gregg said that if Pence had had his way, "that plant would be empty right now. It would be the world's largest indoor flea market."

Pence responded, saying he "enjoyed campaigning in that truck." Pence said he supported a structured bankruptcy with federal loan guarantees. "I just will never believe we can borrow and spend and bail ourselves" to a good economy, Pence said. "We could have given them a backstop, not a hand-out."

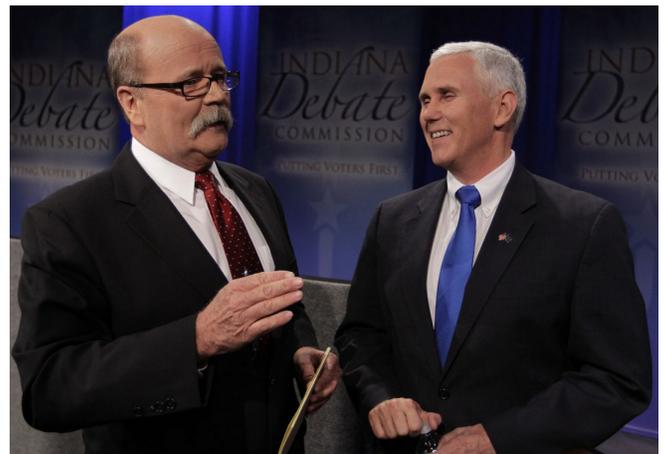
Pence said he stood up to President George W. Bush and other Republicans to the Wall Street bailout. "Let me make it clear, when a president of my party came to me and said he wanted to take \$700 million and transfer it to Wall Street, I opposed that. I lost that fight, but I fought it hard."

The two sparred over budgets. Pence accused Gregg for having five of six budgets in deficits. "You raided the reserves and delayed payments to local government," Pence charged. "After you left, our credit rating was downgraded twice."

Gregg shot back, saying, "If you had spent the last 12 years in Indiana and not in Congress, you would know our budget has to be balanced according to our Constitution." Gregg noted that all budgets he helped pass included votes from Senate President Pro Tempore David Long and Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman, both Republicans. "It's laughable you lecture on fiscal responsibility," Gregg said. "You voted five

times to raise the debt limit. I have no idea what you could possibly know about deficits."

Both Gregg and Pence said they would take a different approach to some of the issues that were raised by the Kernan-Shepard Commission on Local Government Reform. "People ask me if I am committed to local government reform," Pence said. "I'm committed to government reform at every level. We ought to think about a new approach. Is there a way in a bipartisan manner we could develop a framework to consolidate back office



Democrat John Gregg and Republican Mike Pence chat before their third and final debate in Fort Wayne Thursday night.

functions?" Pence asked.

Gregg said that as an attorney, he represents township trustees. "The problem with the Kernan-Shepard report was it was one of these top down deals. If I want to make the Allen County Courthouse better, I'm going to talk to the people in the Allen County courthouse."

While Gregg acknowledged that Indiana's government is based on a constitution written in 1851, he said, "I don't think there was any support" for Kernan-Shepard. About a third of the 27 recommendations, however, has been passed by the Indiana General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Mitch Daniels.



The three - including Libertarian nominee Rupert Boneham - were asked about SB87 that would have allowed for creationism to be taught in science classes in public schools. The bill passed the Indiana Senate last winter but was not given a hearing in the House.

Neither Pence or Gregg directly answered the question. "On issues of curriculum, they should be decided by parents and local schools," Pence said. "Not dictated out of Indianapolis."

Gregg talked about his proposal for pre-kindergarten, but never directly answered the question.

Asked about whether they would favor legalizing medical marijuana, which 18 states have done, Pence said he would oppose such a plan. Pence explained, "I would not support the decriminalization of marijuana. I've seen too many people become involved with marijuana and get sidetracked. We need to get more serious about confronting the scourge of drugs." He called marijuana a "gateway drug."

Gregg said, "I would oppose the decriminalization of marijuana. As for as medical use, that is something I would at least want to talk about."

Boneham noted that marijuana is "a plant." Boneham explained, "If it would help some of our suffering patients, we should let them have that plant."

The controversy surrounding Republican Senate nominee Richard Mourdock on the issue of abortion and rape came up early in the debate, though broadcast issues kept Hoosier voters from seeing the first 11 minutes of the debate.

"Yesterday, Congressman Pence tried to distance

himself from his ticket mate Richard Mourdock and the Tea party by saying he supports abortion for rape and incest survivors," Gregg said. "Well, that's not what he told Indiana Right to Life just this year. He changed his position for political points, like a true career politician."

After Thursday's debate, Pence said he has consistently opposed abortion except for in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother (Francisco, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). "I'm pleased that Richard Mourdock clarified his comments and apologized, and I think it's time to move on," Pence said, but he would not answer questions about what part of Mourdock's statement he disagreed with or what he needed to apologize for. "I support his candidacy for Senate," Pence said. "I look forward to standing with the whole Republican ticket."

The Gregg campaign released a Beneson Strategies internal poll (701 likely, Oct. 18-21, +/-3.7%) that showed the Democrat trailing Pence 44-38% with 6% going to Libertarian Rupert Boneham while 12% were undecided. In the September Howey/DePauw Indiana Battleground Poll, Pence lead Gregg 47-34%. The poll covers a time period after Gregg stopping running his Sandborn TV ads for those showing him at the Statehouse, and then a set of ads that link Pence to the Tea Party. The Pence campaign responded with a TV ad showing a female nurse talking about health care for women.

The Howey/DePauw Indiana Battleground Poll will provide new numbers on the presidential, U.S. Senate, gubernatorial and superintendent of public instruction races next week. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Pence ❖

Mourdock, from page 1

margin in September's Howey/DePauw Poll. Libertarian Andrew Horning was polling 8%, one point more than he did in Howey/DePauw.

Mourdock, appearing in Avon and Crawfordsville Thursday, was all about lemonade, saying he believed the episode would ignite his base. "I think the firestorm has largely passed," Mourdock said at an appearance with South Carolina U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, a powerful Tea Party advocate. Mourdock added that at two appearances, "it didn't come up at all."

At a time when campaigns normally seek to end with a rhetorical flourish

while stoking get out the vote mechanisms, the Mourdock campaign not only found itself sinking, but potentially sucking in other campaigns from Mitt Romney's presidential bid to the Mike Pence gubernatorial effort. Romney was asked about Mourdock three times during an appearance in Defiance, Ohio, and ignored the inquiries.

McCain, who appeared with Mourdock earlier this month, told CNN host Anderson Cooper on Wednesday that he is putting his support for Mourdock on hold. Asked whether he still supports Mourdock McCain said it depends on "if he apologizes and says he misspoke and he was wrong and he asks the people to forgive him." The 2008 presidential nominee added, "When you don't own up to it, the people will not believe in you."





McCain reversed his stance on Thursday, saying his endorsement was still valid.

Mourdock did not apologize for the remark when he met with reporters on Wednesday, but did apologize for being misunderstood. "I said life is precious. I believe life is precious. I believe rape is a brutal act. It is something that I abhor," Mourdock said Wednesday. "And that anyone could come away with any meaning other than what I just said is regrettable, and for that I apologize."

President Obama chided Mourdock with Jay Leno. "This is exactly why you don't want a bunch of politicians, mostly male, making decisions about women's health care," Obama said. "Women are capable of making these decisions in consultation with their partners, with their doctors, and for politicians to want to intrude in this stuff – often times without any information – is a huge problem, and this is obviously part of what's at stake in this election."

The true impact of the episode probably won't be known until the final Howey/DePauw Indiana Battleground Poll is published next Friday.

While Mourdock says it "fired up" his base, he already had those voters.

The bottom line is that Mourdock needs independents and Lugar Republicans to put him over the top. He needs Horning backers.

And for the first 45 minutes Tuesday night, Mourdock actually had Donnelly on his heels over Obamacare.

But that story line was obliterated by the abortion/rape comment.

It was the second time in this campaign that a Mourdock gaff made national headlines. Prior to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on Obamacare, the campaign posted four different video reactions, bringing Mourdock attention and ridicule on "The Colbert Report" and "The Daily Show."

Colbert lampooned Mourdock. "Fellas, you may not be aware of this, but in 1920, women got the right to vote." And since then, Colbert said, "among likely voters, rape's approval rating has plummeted." That didn't stop Indiana Republican Senate nominee Richard Mourdock this week from



A grim Richard Mourdock takes questions from the press at Indiana University Southeast in New Albany about 45 minutes after his

saying pregnancies from rape are part of God's plan. Sadly it is too late for Richard Mourdock," Colbert said. But don't shed a tear, he added. "Because I've come to realize this is just something God intended to happen."

Hoosier Republicans are reacting in several ways. Some are closing ranks, while others like gubernatorial candidate Mike Pence and 2nd CD candidate Jackie Walorski called for Mourdock to apologize. Others don't want to talk about it.

Asked by Politico if his views aligned with those of Rep. Todd Akin, the Missouri Senate candidate whose "legitimate rape" comments caused the GOP to abandon his bid, Mourdock distanced himself from Akin and joined much of his party in repudiating the statements. "His statement was ill-informed, wrong and just technically an error," Mourdock said, referring to Akin's comments that female rape victims rarely get pregnant because their bodies shut down. "Obviously, it was a statement that was just totally incorrect."

Indiana University political science professor Gerald Wright told Indiana Public Media that if polls are accurate, Mourdock's comment could swing the race in favor of Donnelly. "For the Hoosiers who were not paying a lot of attention to the campaign might have thought, 'Oh Mourdock's a Republican, I'm a Republican, I'll vote for him,' all of a sudden, without knowing about the candidates, you get this big blast of unfavorable publicity, and that is probably enough to turn a lot of them off."

While DeMint was in the state for Mourdock on Thursday, following Sens. Rubio, McCain, McConnell, Graham and Coats, the only senator who could be in a position to lift Mourdock to victory is . . . Sen. Lugar, who campaigned this past week for Attorney General Greg Zoeller, but won't be doing so for Mourdock.

Most telling was a Mourdock campaign sign at 96th Street and Meridian Street which had a sticker pasted on it saying, "Don't blame me. I voted for Lugar." ❖



Mourdock's rape remark set off a social media narrative snowball

By **CHRISTINE MATTHEWS**
Bellwether Research

WASHINGTON - The night of the final Indiana U.S. Senate debate between Republican Richard Mourdock and Democrat Joe Donnelly, we were monitoring social media and news coverage as part of our ongoing Bellwether Barometer for election 2012.



We have been conducting social media research on the candidates for U.S. Senate and governor in Indiana since early August and report weekly on our findings.

The Oct. 23 Senate debate started at 7 p.m. and for nearly its entirety, the candidates stuck to their main themes (Mourdock: Donnelly is a liberal who voted for Obamacare and would empower Harry Reid; Donnelly: Mourdock is an extremist who opposed the auto

rescue and I'm like Dick Lugar).

At the end of the debate, the candidates answered a quick question on abortion and Richard Mourdock said:

"I struggled with it myself for a long time, but I came to realize life is a gift from God. And I think even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something God intended to happen."

Social media exploded in a classic example of the new world order where a narrative snowballs on social media well ahead of news coverage. I was viewing the debate myself, while watching my Twitter feed on my iPhone and saw it take hold.

It started on Twitter with comments like this:



Yes, yes he did RT @PMT247: Did Mourdock just say that rape is "something that God intended to happen"? #INSen

Katie Mulhall Reply Retweet Favorite

Tue, Oct 23 2012 19:48:48

Then it was as if everything else fell away while Twitter processed Richard Mourdock's comments on rape, abortion and God.

As the night wore on, commentary became more visceral. Comparisons to Todd Akin were made. The discussion centered around pregnancy, rape, God, abortion - issues which had nearly entirely been off the table in the U.S. Senate race given that Democrat Joe Donnelly is also a pro-life candidate while favoring exceptions for rape and incest.

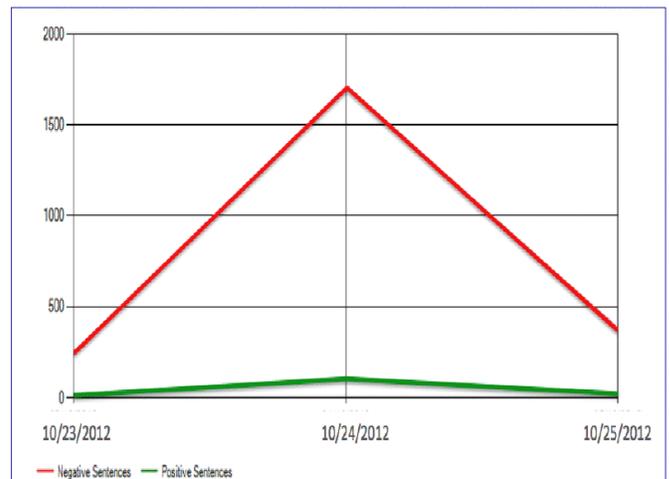
The key theme of the race had centered around extremism, with Donnelly arguing it was Mourdock who was too extreme and uncompromising for Hoosier common sense values and Mourdock arguing it was Donnelly who was too extreme in his embrace of Obama, Obamacare and Harry Reid.

In our September Howey/DePauw Indiana Battleground Poll, 18% of voters said Mourdock is extreme while 7% said Donnelly is extreme. We'll track this and measure reaction to Mourdock's comments on the final poll we conduct for the Howey/DePauw project which will be released in next Friday's edition of Howey Politics Indiana.

To read and view the charts from the Bellwether Barometer, click on the tab on the Howey Politics Indiana homepage at www.howeypolitics.com.

Indiana Senate Debate Social Media mentions

*Social mentions for the first Indiana Senate debate on October 15th PEAKED below 200. The volume of social media reaction to the second debate was tenfold.





Mourdock's own words

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NEW ALBANY – In the press filing room at Indiana University Southeast, the U.S. Senate debate was heading into the 45-minute mark, the candidates had been asked about abortion, and Republican nominee Richard Mourdock was speaking. In my estimation, he was winning this debate, pushing Democrat Joe Donnelly on his Obamacare vote.



But now, he was on the verge of tears.

Questions on abortion come up often in Indiana politics from public forums to questionnaires, and you expect the candidates to succinctly state their positions at this stage. Mourdock could have said, "I am a pro-life candidate and I have been endorsed by Indiana Right to Life." Period.

Instead, Mourdock took 10 seconds to say: "This is that issue that every federal or state candidate faces and I too certainly stand for life. I know there are some who disagree and I respect their point of view, but I believe that life begins at conception. Uh, the only exception I have for an abortion is in that case of the life of the mother. I struggled with it myself for a long time but I came to realize that life is a gift from God. And I think that even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape that it is something God intended to happen."

The reaction in the filing room was similar to that scene from the movie "Network" during the first Howard Beale rant. It took a few seconds to sink in, then someone asked, "What did he just say?"

Within seconds, social media exploded with reaction. Within a day, Mitt Romney's presidential campaign released a statement saying that Mourdock did not "reflect my views." Indiana gubernatorial candidate Mike Pence called on Mourdock to apologize, as did 2nd CD Republican Jackie Walorski. New Hampshire U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte cancelled an appearance with Mourdock.

At a time when a campaign should be finishing off the homestretch with a rhetorical flourish and concentrating on get-out-the-vote mechanisms, Mourdock had lobbed a cinder block into a big mud puddle, and it splashed across the GOP spectrum.

The lesson that Mourdock failed to comprehend occurred last August in Missouri, when Republican Senate nominee Todd Akin said in a TV interview, "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut the whole thing down."

The reaction was similar. Republicans deserted the

nominee in droves and essentially wrote off what had been a very winnable Senate seat. As Mourdock kept a low profile, refused to make joint appearances with Donnelly and Horning, and didn't agree to debate until just three weeks ago, there was speculation that his national special interest funders were wary of that "Todd Akin moment."

And then it actually happened.

Republicans booted U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar out of the nomination, with some seeking ideological purity, though my Howey/DePauw Indiana Battleground poll showed that most believed he was too old and had been in office too long. In our first poll in March, Lugar led Democrat Joe Donnelly 50-29%, while Donnelly and Mourdock were tied at 35%. It's been a virtual tie in every poll since.

Mourdock should have been reaching out to Lugar Republicans and independents, but he wasn't. In the September Howey/DePauw poll, he was winning only 71% of Republicans (he should have been above 80%) and only 60% of Lugar primary supporters were backing him. He continued to appeal to the Tea Party base instead of wooing the Lugarites, and appealing to independent voters, which survey after survey showed would determine the winner.

That Libertarian Andy Horning was getting 7% of the vote in our September survey and 8% in a Global Strategies poll last week shows that many Republicans didn't want to vote for Donnelly, but they didn't like Mourdock. When the Washington Post asked Mourdock last summer if he was seeking Lugar voters, he said "no," and insisted that Republicans would return to his fold.

Republicans can blame the "liberal" media and Democrats, but when you look at the most damning things said concerning Richard Mourdock, they came out of his mouth. There was the MSNBC interview the day after he upset Lugar when he said his favorite thing was to "inflict my opinion on someone else."

There was tracker video of him questioning the constitutionality of Medicare and Social Security before a Madison Tea Party group. Another time, he was shown saying the Republican Party "needs more zealots." He told the state's largest newspaper his emphasis would be to recruit and campaign for candidates like himself.

It will be a week or more before the full damage of Mourdock's debate statement can be gauged. But at this writing, there was speculation that it could reverberate into the presidential and gubernatorial races.

And, that my Republican friends, is inexcusable for a Senate nominee just two weeks before what many had posed as the most critical election this nation has faced in years.

Whether somehow, some way he pulls this thing out, or loses, the indisputable fact will always be . . . we've never seen a candidate quite like Richard Mourdock. ❖



Mourdock's ad message strategy is confusing

By **BLAIR ENGLEHART**

I'm starting my critique of Richard Mourdock's advertising campaign from an interesting position – confusion. It's not that I don't understand what the Mourdock movement is trying to do. My problem stems from the fact that I'm confused as to which ads are from the Mourdock

campaign and which are from the PACs that are supporting him.

It's become a game for me.

When an ad comes on that's throwing out negative information about Joe Donnelly – that's tying him to Obama, Reid and Pelosi, while tagging him with such titles as Obama Joe or Bailout Joe – I try to decide whether it's been paid for by the Mourdock campaign or



a PAC before it gets to the last four seconds (where the answer is revealed).

Sometimes I'm right. Sometimes I'm wrong. And I'm not sure if that's good or bad.

I'm guessing that it's good from the campaign's standpoint, since it demonstrates that their message is so well defined that even unassociated sponsors can effectively communicate it. But in the pit of my stomach, I still have an uneasy feeling, because it shows how unrelentingly negative this campaign has turned.

Now before I go off on some tirade about negative campaigning, let me start with the most positive ad that the campaign is running. It features Mourdock's dad and he speaks with the assurance and pride that a father has for his child. It's by far the brightest ad in the Mourdock repertoire – and for 30 seconds, it humanizes a candidate who has been accused of being challenged when it comes to conveying warmth and compassion.

Mourdock's dad conveys an important message about his son's policies in a positive, upbeat manner. That's why it sticks

out to me – because its tone is so different from most of the other ads. I truly believe that if the Mourdock campaign had used this approach more often, he would be perceived as a much friendlier candidate. And we've all heard how people tend to favor the candidate who they'd like to take out for a beer.

But with less than two weeks until election day, it appears that we'll continue to be inundated on TV with the incessant whine of negative messaging that supports Mourdock's candidacy. The question is: Will it work?

There's conflicting research about the effectiveness of negative campaign ads. On the one hand, television viewers increasingly complain about the mudslinging and the mean-spirited messages. One survey I read (from the bipartisan Project on Campaign Conduct) shows that a majority of people believes that some, most or all candidates make unfair attacks on their opponents.

On the other hand, research conducted in 2008 showed that although voters consciously disliked negative ads, the ads were judged as highly effective. Keywords placed throughout the ads affected the participants' responses to candidates. The participants' brains, in effect, believed the claims and those ideas "stuck" with them as they judged the field.

Which brings us back to the Mourdock campaign and the ads being run by his committee and the supporting PACs. Although the back-to-back-to-back ads that run during our local news become increasingly annoying to many people, the constant repetition of the keywords they've identified – bailouts, Obamacare, taxes, spending, Reid, Pelosi and so many more (including lobsters, for some reason) – may be having an effect.

If nothing else, they may be solidifying a Republican base that was deeply fractured during the primary election. And that would be a major accomplishment. But are they helping convert independents and dissatisfied Democrats to their cause? Or are they reinforcing an already

negative opinion of the candidate?

Research says yes. And research says no. And research isn't sure. And the ads keep coming.

In a race as close as this one, every move could turn on or turn off voters in one thirty-second message. The Mourdock campaign has calculated that going





negative against Donnelly will provide positive results. They've basically gone "all in" on this strategy and we won't really know if it's right or wrong until the late night hours on Nov. 6.

Whereas Joe Donnelly's ads have successfully introduced him to me, I can't say the same thing about the Mourdock ads. If I hadn't met Richard several times before, I'm not sure if I'd really have a sense of who he was based solely on this campaign. I would know his interpretation of Joe Donnelly and that he is not Joe Donnelly. But would I have an idea of the candidate himself? Would I have a positive feeling about Mourdock to contrast with the negative messages they tout about Donnelly?

To be honest, I'm probably a lot like you when it

comes to this current election cycle. I'm getting annoyed and somewhat confused by the onslaught of advertising (especially the negative ads) from the candidates, even though "advertising" is my chosen profession. I just keep reminding myself that elections are just one big game, with high stakes and winners and losers.

And, through all of the yelling and shouting and pontificating that happens day after day and hour after hour, I just keep hoping one simple thing: that the ultimate winners in all of this are the people of Indiana. ❖

Englehart is president of The Englehart Group, a strategic marketing communications firm located in Indianapolis.

Senate race sucking oxygen, ink and air

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – What does a \$15 million U.S. Senate campaign do to the overall picture in Indiana? It sucks the oxygen, ink and air time away from other races.

And what happens if the marquee race features a meltdown? You have a virtual media eclipse.

Campaigns outside the U.S. Senate race are telling HPI that the two Senate campaigns and the plethora of Super PACs are not only gobbling up TV air time, they are also numbing TV viewers as Richard Mourdock, Joe Donnelly and their proxies batter each other.



House Republican Campaign Committee director Mike Gentry told HPI he finally opted to have a TV ad of State Rep. Bruce Borders featuring him as an Elvis impersonator, simply because it was a way to break through the Senate race clutter.

WTHR-TV reported earlier this week that voters are "zoning out."

"When I see the ads come on TV now, I just zone out," said Dave Foster, an unemployed father of two. "This guy is saying 'My opponent is stupid' and he's saying the same thing back, 'He's stupid, too,'" said Bryan Hudson, a retired auto mechanic. "I turn off the ads when they come on," said Marcia Angstadt, a real estate worker. "I still think we haven't heard much of a plan from either candidate."

With Mourdock's comments on abortion and rape at Tuesday night's debate, that story quickly eclipsed just

about every other political story in the state through Thursday.

It even overshadowed much of the substance that was debated in the first 45 minutes. Donnelly tried to take Mourdock to task for his "inflict my opinion on others" comment. It was the remark that Mourdock made in a May 7 MSNBC interview the day after he upset U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar. Since then, the remark has become fodder for Donnelly and Democratic TV ads (Howey Politics Indiana). Mourdock, however, tried to turn the tables. "He says I like to inflict my opinion on others. I do. I love to get people to think about these issues. It's the future of our country," Mourdock added, "He says Richard Mourdock doesn't know how Washington works. Well, it doesn't work. We're not going to get Washington fixed if we keep sending the same people back."

Murdock said he was the candidate "who stands by his principles. Elections do have consequences. Sixty percent of Hoosiers oppose Barack Obama, but Mr. Donnelly will support him." Donnelly had charged that Mourdock's unique contribution to health care has been to say companies don't have to provide cancer coverage for employees. But Mourdock responded, saying Donnelly had taken the remark out of context. "I also said if a company did that, they wouldn't have any employees."

Murdock repeatedly took Donnelly to task for casting the "deciding vote on Obamacare. We saw his principles melt away like July ice cream." Donnelly defended Obamacare, saying it cut senior prescription drug costs by 50%, allows adult children to stay on their parents' insurance plan, and allows for coverage of people with preexisting conditions. He charged that Mourdock wants to repeal Obamacare, "and then he wants to put the good things back in." Mourdock said that "bipartisanship causes people to do the wrong thing" and cited earmarks.

"He said he was against national health care, but



when the chips were down, bipartisanship won," Mourdock said. "My opponent has a clear track record of saying one thing and doing something else in office." He said he opposed Obamacare at Notre Dame, saying it forced the university and the Catholic church to provide contraceptive care. "The guy from Notre Dame was not there to defend Notre Dame," Mourdock said. Donnelly said he has been a "strong independent voice. I voted for \$2.4 trillion in spending cuts. I support the Keystone pipeline. I support the balanced budget amendment. That's how I've tried to serve as well."

There was some political news before the debate onslaught. Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney recorded his first ad for a congressional candidate, urging Hoosiers to vote for Mourdock. "There's so much at stake," Romney says in the 30-second spot. "I hope you'll join me in supporting Richard Mourdock for U.S. Senate." The Associated Press reported last month that former President George W. Bush adviser Karl Rove's political action committee, Crossroads GPS, has spent nearly \$4 million on the Indiana Senate race this year. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and Reid's Majority PAC both have spent about \$2 million.

There are now nine tossup Senate races, according to The Hill's race ratings, and Democrats are seen as having a strong chance at holding the upper chamber. But three of those races – Nevada, Virginia and Wisconsin – are in hotly contested presidential swing states, where most voters will be turning out to vote for the top of the ticket. A Romney win in those states could trickle down the ballot to boost other candidates, meaning any tiny swings in momentum could flip the race for control of the Senate.

"My guess is whoever has this majority is going to have 51 seats – a really good night for either party would be 52 seats," said Jennifer Duffy, the Senate editor of the nonpartisan Cook Political Report. Duffy said that there's no clear momentum for either party nationally, a big difference from the last three wave elections, so any minor breeze could push a number of Senate races toward one party or the other. "In any of these races, when we're talking about a little bit of an advantage we're still talking about within the margin of error," she said.

Democratic groups have booked over \$1.6 million in Indiana airtime for the next, and penultimate, week of the state's Senate race, according to a Democratic source (Politico). The Democratic outside-spending group Majority PAC has dropped \$1.1 million on ads to run between now and Oct. 30, while the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee is putting \$525,000 on TV between now and Oct. 29. That's a heavy, ongoing investment in a race that Democrats have managed, against their own expectations, to keep close in the home stretch. Morning Score reported on a poll taken for Democratic nominee Joe Donnelly that showed the race between him and Republican Mourdock

still too close to call. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup

2nd CD: Mullen, Walorski, Ruiz debate

WABASH -- The three candidates running for north-central Indiana's congressional seat were able to agree on one point early in their debate Thursday evening (Allen, South Bend Tribune). Democrat Brendan Mullen, Republican Jackie Walorski and Libertarian Joe Ruiz all said in their opening statements that Washington is broken, and each candidate said that he or she is a person who can help fix it. "I'm running for U.S. Congress because Washington is broken. It's not working for our families, it's not working for our friends, it's not working for our communities," said Mullen, an Iraq War veteran and businessman who lives in Granger. "I'm running because Hoosiers know that Washington is broken," Walorski, a former state representative from Jimtown, said next. "We've tried to spend our way out of an economic disaster. We have \$16 trillion of debt." Ruiz said that if Washington is broken, Democrats and Republicans are to blame. "This is the result we've got from our two-party system," said Ruiz, a Mishawaka man who works at the Family and Children's Center. An audience of about 100 people listened politely for 45 minutes as Mullen, Walorski and Ruiz sat side by side at a folding table in the Dallas L. Winchester Senior Center and responded to questions read by a moderator. The event, sponsored by the Wabash County Chamber of Commerce, is the only public debate in this year's 2nd District race where all three candidates were invited and agreed to attend. Mullen and Ruiz are scheduled to debate at 6 p.m. Sunday on WNIT Television and 6:30 p.m. Monday at Rochester Community High School. Walorski declined to participate in the WNIT and Rochester debates, but she and Mullen will debate each other at 7 p.m. Tuesday in an event scheduled to air on SBT2-TV and WSBT Radio as well as streamed online at wsbt.com. Ruiz was not invited to the WSBT debate. Mullen, citing a Walorski radio interview from 2010, charged that she has "championed" the concept of privatizing Social Security. "Under no circumstances will I ever risk your retirement in the New York Stock Exchange or on Wall Street," he said. Walorski responded, "I will not cut Social Security or Medicare." **Horse Race Status:** Leans Walorski

5th CD: Reske presses on Mourdock

Democrat Scott Reske wants Mourdock to apologize for his remarks and called on his opponent, Susan Brooks, to personally denounce Mourdock's views. "Richard Mourdock's remarks are wrong, plain and simple," said Reske. "Unfortunately, my opponent has continued to align herself with Mourdock and others who hold these extreme views that only serve to harm women. Just today, Ms. Brooks was scheduled to appear at a fundraising event with Mourdock in Carmel. In addition, her campaign finance report is filled with contributions from supporters of the



personhood amendment and life at conception legislation, which are based upon the same concept articulated by Mourdock, and would take away a woman's right to choose even in cases of rape."

Reske was also endorsed by former congressman Lee Hamilton. "The threats in our world are serious and we need members in Congress who understand these issues and know what's at stake," said Hamilton. "After getting to know Scott Reske, I believe he is the best person in this race for the job. Scott has served in combat, as well as at the Pentagon. He has the experience and background to know what our priorities should be when it comes to defense and our military. We should not send troops into harm's way unless vital interests are at stake, our goals and strategy are clear, and always with the support and resources needed to assure the job is done. Decision-makers should always be aware of how individual policies fit into a larger image of America's role in the world." Hamilton also said we need a 21st Century approach to military spending in Washington to ensure that we are listening to the needs of our military. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Brooks

4th CD: Rokita endorsed by RTL

U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita has earned the endorsement of the National Right to Life Committee for his 100-percent pro-life voting record and his support of key pieces of pro-life legislation during his first term in Congress. Rep. Rokita was to attend the Tippecanoe County Right to Life Celebration of Life Banquet at the Purdue Memorial Union (Howey Politics Indiana). "I am proud to accept NRLC's endorsement, as they are a valuable partner in the fight to protect the lives of the unborn. The fight for a culture of life has never been easy, but with the encouragement and support of so many dedicated Hoosiers, we are making great strides in ensuring that all of our children, from the moment of conception, are guaranteed the right to life that our founders intended," said Rokita. Indiana Right to Life PAC Chairman Mike Fichter said, "We are honored to endorse Todd Rokita. He is a firm and steady voice for the right to life of unborn children and has earned a 100% pro-life voting record as a member of Congress. We urge every pro-life voter to give their full support to Todd Rokita." **Horse Race Status:** Safe Rokita

6th CD: Cantor campaigns for Messer

House Majority Leader Eric Cantor isn't impressed by a White House threat to veto any tax cut extension that doesn't raise taxes on the wealthiest Americans (Berman, WIBC). There'll be a lame-duck session of Congress to try to avert the so-called "fiscal cliff," the expiration of Bush tax cuts coupled with automatic defense cuts. Cantor says President Obama's insistence on higher taxes is an argu-

ment for electing Mitt Romney – but even if Obama wins, he says it won't stop Republicans from lobbying to change the president's mind. He notes Obama relented the last time the tax cuts were due to expire, after the GOP first reclaimed the House majority in 2010. Cantor's home state of Virginia remains a tossup in the presidential race. Like Indiana, Virginia went for Obama four years ago after 40 years in the Republican column. Unlike Indiana, the state has remained competitive this year. Cantor concedes the state's economic and population growth have transformed it from a Republican stronghold to a battleground, but predicts strong conservative turnout in his own Richmond-area home base and votes from workers who depend on Pentagon and defense-industry jobs will tip the state to Romney. Cantor was in Shelbyville to boost the 6th District congressional candidacy of Luke Messer, who's running for the seat being vacated by Republican gubernatorial nominee Mike Pence. Messer faces Democrat Brad Bookout and Libertarian Rex Bell. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Messer

Statewides

BENNETT, RITZ AT FORUM: The candidates vying to be Indiana's next superintendent of public instruction took the stage at Wabash College in Crawfordsville during an election forum (Indiana Public Media). Republican incumbent Tony Bennett believes in holding students, teachers and schools accountable. So he'll give his first term in office a "B." He says his only mistake has been allowing his opponents to paint him as a politician who wants to privatize schools. "In terms of school turnaround, my bottom line is those children learn. I promise you, we're going to get my bottom line before the business gets its bottom line," Bennett says. If reelected, Bennett says he'll work to improve the initiatives he's pursued in the last four years. He also says he'll push for legislation that allows state intervention in struggling school districts. But Bennett's Democratic challenger Glenda Ritz is campaigning to roll back many of his key policies, like high stakes testing and teacher evaluations. She's opposed to a district takeover provision and doesn't think private companies should be running five turnaround schools in Indianapolis and Gary. "I'm not sure the Department of Education did its job to be proactive to be sure we had the proper bottom-up support that was needed in the first place," Ritz says. If elected, Ritz says she'll work closely with educators to ensure Indiana students receive quality instruction in reading and literacy. She also wants to see the state overhaul its standardized test. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Bennett

Presidential: Obama faces the 'cliff'

Republican Mitt Romney has edged ahead of President Obama in the new Washington Post-ABC News na-



tional tracking poll, with the challenger winning 50 percent of likely voters for the first time in the campaign.

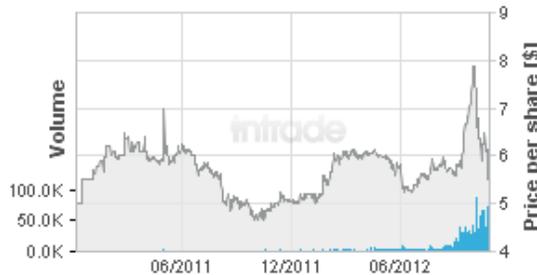
As Romney hits 50, the president stands at 47 percent, his lowest tally in Post-ABC polling since before the national party conventions. A three-point edge gives Romney his first apparent advantage in the national popular vote, but it is not one that is statistically significant with a conventional level of 95 percent confidence. Results from the tracking poll were first released Monday evening, and had Obama at 49 percent, and Romney at 48. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the results were flipped, with Romney at 49 and the president at 48.

President Obama has fallen off the Intrade cliff. Not, to be sure, on Wednesday, when his chances of reelection rose by about 2%. But take a longer look, and the president is in trouble with less than two weeks remaining before Election Day. To get a sense of Obama's falling fortunes, take a look at

three numbers from the prediction market. First, Obama's chances of reelection stood at 56% on Wednesday. That's not horrible news for a president seeking a second term, especially when opponent Mitt Romney's chances of being elected were 44%. Compare that to the second key number — 61.6%; Obama's chances at the close of Monday night's debate with Romney — and the picture darkens.

It's the third number that the president's reelection campaign ought to be taking strongest heed of: 79.5%. That's the high his reelection chances hit this year, in late September, before the three debates with Romney. Use Intrade to download historical values. Wednesday's rise notwithstanding, the downward trend is reason enough for Obama to worry that losing on Nov. 6 is a real possibility.

The New York Times' FiveThirtyEight Blog puts Obama's chances of winning at 73%. ❖



Battlegrounds	Obama	Romney	Spread
Ohio	47.9	45.8	Obama +2.1
Florida	47.0	48.7	Romney +1.7
Virginia	47.3	48.7	Romney +1.4
New Hampshire	48.2	47.4	Obama +0.8
Colorado	47.6	47.8	Romney +0.2
Iowa	48.8	46.8	Obama +2.0

General Election: Romney vs. Obama

RCP Electoral Map | Changes in Electoral Count | Map With No Toss Ups | No Toss Up Changes

Polling Data						
Poll	Date	Sample	MoE	Romney (R)	Obama (D)	Spread
RCP Average	10/15 - 10/24	--	--	47.8	47.1	Romney +0.7
Associated Press/GfK	10/19 - 10/23	839 LV	4.2	47	45	Romney +2
Rasmussen Reports	10/22 - 10/24	1500 LV	3.0	50	47	Romney +3
IBD/TIPP	10/19 - 10/24	948 LV	3.5	45	47	Obama +2
Gallup	10/18 - 10/24	2700 LV	2.0	50	47	Romney +3
ABC News/Wash Post	10/20 - 10/23	1394 LV	3.0	49	48	Romney +1
Monmouth/SurveyUSA/Braun	10/18 - 10/21	1402 LV	2.6	48	45	Romney +3
NBC News/Wall St. Jrl	10/17 - 10/20	816 LV	3.4	47	47	Tie
CBS News	10/17 - 10/20	790 LV	4.0	46	48	Obama +2
WashTimes/JZ Analytics*	10/18 - 10/20	800 LV	3.5	47	50	Obama +3
Politico/GWU/Battleground	10/15 - 10/18	1000 LV	3.1	49	47	Romney +2



HPI projects 60 to 64 Republican House seats

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. - Our Indiana House forecast still has Republicans poised to win between 60 and 64 seats.

HPI's Horse Race has eight seats in either "Republican pick up" or "Tossup."

We've moved HD45 where State Rep. Bruce Borders is taking on State Rep. Kreg Battles, the only dual incumbent race being fought, and we've moved HD15 between Democrat Tommy O'Donnell and Schererville President Hal Schlager into Tossup, where HRCC has moved \$20,000 to the Republican.

And we've elevated the HD60 race involving State Rep. Peggy Welch and Morgan County Clerk Peggy Mayfield into Leans Republican from Likely Republican, and moved HD76 out of Tossup into Likely Republican. Mike Gentry of the House Republican Campaign Committee said that in four polls since last November, McNamara has maintained double digit leads over former state representative Trent Van Haaften.

Gentry cautioned that, "These state rep races can move very quickly."

Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker noted that many incumbents are running in vastly changed seats. "The Republicans may have out-smarted themselves with these maps," Parker said. "No incumbent should take anything for granted. So many have open seat type districts because there is so much new territory."

Clouding the picture are the overwhelming U.S. Senate race TV ads that can obscure legislative races. HRCC decided to use Rep. Borders' Elvis Presley impersonation career in a TV ad in the Terre Haute media market simply because it could pierce through the Senate race clutter. Gentry said that Borders has maintained close to a 10% lead throughout the campaign, but added, "Anything can happen." Borders has received \$64,000 from the House Republican Campaign Committee and House Democrats have steered \$17,500 to Battles. "That is the race that could be most impacted by the governor's race," Indiana Democratic Chairman Dan Parker said.

Republican Reps. Cindy Noe and Jack Lutz are facing tough challenges. Parker told HPI that both Noe and State Sen. Scott Schneider are "too conservative" for the northside Indianapolis district. "They are two peas in the Tea Party pod," Parker said, predicting that both Democrats Christina Hale in the House race and Tim DeLaney in the Senate race will win.

Democrats are using direct mail to attack Lutz, with one

saying that a Florida company is seeking to take over schools in the district. "There's not one school in Jack's district that's even close to being on the state takeover list," Gentry said.

Indiana House

Dist.	Candidate	DEM	GOP
12	Mara Reardon	1,000	
	William Fine		
15	Tom O'Donnell	2,500	
	Hal Slager		20,000
19	Shelli VanDenburgh	3,500	
	Ron Johnson		
31	Katie Morgan	4,000	
	Kevin Mahan		5,000
34	Sue Errington		
	Brad Oliver		2,000
35	Melanie Wright	4,900	
	Jack Lutz		6,500
42	Mark Speibring	6,000	
	Alan Morrison		9,500
45	Kreg Battles	17,500	
	Bruce Borders		63,800
56	Phil Pflum		
	Dick Hamm		20,500
60	Peggy Welch	11,000	
	Peggy Mayfield		27,500
66	Terry Goodin	11,500	
	Justin Stevens		36,500
69	Jim McCormick		
	Jim Lucas		19,750
72	Sharon Grabowski		
	Ed Clere		93,000
74	Mike Schriefer	3,000	
	Lloyd Arnold		85,000
76	Trent VanHaaften	7,000	
	Wendy McNamara		72,000
81	Win Moses	18,000	
	Martin Carbaugh		18,500
87	Christina Hale	9,500	
	Cindy Noe		9,500
92	Karlee Macer	5,000	
	Tim Motsinger		12,300
97	Justin Moed	3,000	
	AJ Feeney-Ruiz		
100	Dan Forestal		
	Scott Keller		
LDR	Linda Lawson	8,000	
	Brian Bosma		54,500
As of 8 a.m., 10/26/2012		115,400	555,850

This graph shows the late money - any donation over \$1,000 - flowing in the Indiana House races





Democrat incumbent Reps. Winfield Moses Jr. and Terry Goodin are also facing challenges, though Parker told HPI that both have polled over 50% this month in internal surveys. Parker also said he believes that State Reps. Kevin Mahan and Tom Dermody are facing homestretch challenges.

"Dermody is representing the most Democratic district held by a Republican," Parker said. Gentry invited the Democrats to spend money there.

Watching the late money flow tends to bear out some of the movement. HRCC has also dumped \$56,000 into McNamara's campaign, \$13,500 for Martin Carbaugh's challenge to Moses, \$85,000 for Lloyd Arnold in his race against Democrat Mike Schriefer in the seat being vacated by State Rep. Sue Ellspermann, \$18,750 to Jim Lucas, who faces Democrat Jim McCormick in HD69, the seat vacated by Dave Cheatham, and \$12,000 to Mayfield.

IPACE, the ISTA PAC has given \$7,500 to Christina Hale in her race against Rep. Noe, and \$4,500 to Rep. Terry Goodin against Republican Justin Stevens.

Former House Minority Leader B. Patrick Bauer is said to be sitting on \$200,000 and gave \$5,000 to Goodin and \$5,000 to Van Haaften. Sources also told HPI that Bauer is paying for his Indianapolis condo out of his campaign account. Current House Minority Leader Linda Lawson has only distributed about \$8,000.

Interestingly, Indiana Chamber PAC (IBRG) has - so far - made only one donation to a legislative race, \$5,000 to Ed Clere). The Indiana Manufacturers Assn. has been more active, giving \$22,000 to various House GOP candidates and \$5,000 to Sen. Scott Schneider. Collectively, labor has donated about \$60,000 in House races, \$19,500 of which comes from the teachers PAC (I-PACE).

Republican gubernatorial nominee Mike Pence has donated about \$27,500 to the candidates listed on the charts, but has made additional contributions in non-competitive races. GOP Lieutenant governor nominee Sue Ellsperman donated \$10,000 to Lloyd Arnold, the Republican who hopes to replace her in HD74.

As expected the biggest donors were the House and Senate GOP campaign committees. HRCC has donated over \$300,000 to the listed candidates and more to others. SMCC donated nearly \$140,000 to the three races listed and has donated more to candidates in non-competitive races. Though it is too

early to make any lasting judgements, it is interesting to see where the caucuses have so far made generous contributions in races not thought to be in doubt (note the \$88,000 to State Rep. Ed Clere), and where they have been less generous in cases of clearly endangered incumbents (i.e. no cash yet to Jack Lutz). Yet they did see their way clear to give \$62,800 to Bruce Borders.

Lutz and Melanie Wright debated last night in Anderson. Lutz said he supports the idea that parents and students should have a choice of what schools to attend. And he said he supported a new school funding formula in which money "follows the students" (Anderson Herald-Bulletin). He said he supports current standardized tests, although he realizes they're not perfect, and supports the need for teacher evaluations that stress accountability. His challenger, Daleville educator Melanie Wright said school choice coupled with the funding formula is problematic because if a child changes school after attendance is certified, the money stays with the first school. Wright said that she, too, believes in accountability, but said current testing methods focus on assessment, which has the effect of taking creativity out of the classroom.

Indiana Senate races

Democrats believe they are in a good position to pick up two Senate seats.

Democrat Tim DeLaney is leading in internal Democrat polling "right at the margin of error," said Chairman Parker. Both Schneider and DeLaney have been running TV ads for weeks and both campaigns are sending out a flurry of direct mail against each other. Schneider is trying to link DeLaney to the AFL-CIO, higher taxes and Bauer. The Democrat is trying to portray Schneider as a Tea Party extremist. That race is also impacting the HD87 race with Rep. Noe, with much of the two districts overlapping.

Parker calls the HD36 race between State Sen. Brent Waltz and State Rep. Mary Ann Sullivan and pure toss-up. Note that unions representing operating engineers

have donated \$35,000 to two Senate Republican candidates (\$17,500 each to Ed Charbonneau and Brent Waltz). The Indiana Democratic Party has donated about \$93,500 to Senate candidates (about \$81,500 to Tim DeLaney and about \$12,000 to Mary Ann Sullivan).

The party has yet to make a contribution to a House candidate. ❖

Dist.	Candidate	DEM	GOP
5	Deb Porter		
	Ed Charbonneau		18,000
30	Tim DeLaney	81,548	
	Scott Schneider		158,954
36	Mary Ann Sullivan	24,839	
	Brent Waltz		45,000
LDR	Tim Lanane		
	David Long		3,000
		106,387	224,954

As of 8 a.m., 10/26/2012



Indiana House Races

Democrats Republicans

40 60

Republican Pickup

HD5: Dale DeVon (R) v. Jerod Warmock (D)

Tossup

HD15: Tommy O'Donnell (D) v. Hal Schlager (R)

HD35: Rep. Jack Lutz (R) v. Melanie Wright (D)

HD81: Rep. W. Moses (D) v. Martin Carbaugh (R)

HD92: Karlee Macer (D) v. Tim Motsinger (R)

HD42: Alan Morrison (R) v. Mark Spelbring (D)

HD45: Rep. B. Borders (R) v. Rep. K. Battles (D)

HD87: Rep. Cindy Noe (R) v. Christina Hale (D)

Leans D

HD12: Rep. M. Reardon (D) v. Bill Fine (R)

HD56: Rep. Phil Pflum (D) v. Dick Hamm (R)

HD74: Mike Schriefer (D) v. Lloyd Arnold (R)

HD19: Ron Johnson (R) v. Rep. S.VanDenBurghD)

HD66: Rep. Terry Goodin (D) v..Justin Stevens (R)

Leans R

HD69: Jim McCormick (D) v. Jim Lucas (R)

HD72: Rep. Ed Clere (R) v. Sharon Grabowski (D)

HD60: Rep. P. Welch (D) v. Peggy Mayfield (R)

HD76: T. Van Haaften (D) v. W. McNamara (R)

Likely D

HD34: Sue Errington (D) vs. Brad Oliver (R)

HD100: Dan Forestal (D) vs. Scott Keller (R)

Likely R

HD20: Rep. Tom Dermody v. Karen Salzer (D)

HD31: Rep. Kevin Mahan (R) vs. Katie Morgan (D)

Safe

Democrats (23): Austin, DeLaney, Klinker, Lawson, Harris, C. Brown, Bauer, Niezgodski, Dvorak, Pelath, V. Smith, Moseley, Kersey, Pierce, Stemler, GiaQuinta, Pryor, Bartlett, Porter, Reicken, Summers. **Incoming freshman:** Justin Moed, Robin Shackelford

Republicans (58): Heaton, Davisson, Karickhoff, Rhoads, Lehe, Kirchofer, Baird, Ubelhoer, McMillan, Bacon, Truitt, Morris, Heuer, Kubacki, Van Natter, Frye, Speedy, Messmer, Neese, Gutwein, Wolkins, Friend, J. Thompson, Richardson, Turner, Davis, Lutz, Torr, Steuerwald, T. Brown, Culver, Leonard, Cherry, Saunders, Soliday, Eberhart, Burton, M.Smith, Koch, Crouch, Lehman, Pond, Wesco, Bosma, Behning, Frizzell.

Incoming freshmen: John Price, Todd Huston, Steven Braun, Timothy Harman, Rick Niemeyer, Sharon Negele, Dennis Zent, Ben Smaltz, Cindy Meyer Ziemke, Thomas Washburne, David Ober,

Horse Race Notes: We've moved HD15 and 45 into Tossup, and three races involving State Reps. Ed Clere (who has seen an influx of HRCC money), Wendy McNamara and Peggy Welch into the "Leans R" category. ❖

Bold faced races denote status change.



The new maps and Indiana House Democrats

By **RUSS STILWELL**

BOONVILLE – It is increasingly difficult to live in the ever-growing red state of Indiana if you are a working family labor advocate, a woman or someone who wants the Indiana House to boost the number of Democrats in that chamber. Let's review these one at a time.

Working families & labor: As a longtime advocate for folks who believe in labor unions and the right to have a union, it is sad to say that Indiana has been joined at the hip with Wisconsin. I will admit that the indifferent



majority Republicans performed this blood-spattered surgery without a surgical scalpel approach. They treated everyone equally. Teachers, building trades, factory workers, state workers and more were brought to the legislative slaughterhouse and stripped. And I was foolish enough to think that jobs with a union representation were the kind of jobs we wanted, jobs that pay better, jobs with health care and maybe a pension and jobs that do not

allow discrimination on pay or gender. Maybe these legislative surgeons will put down their scalpels after the 2012 surgeries. My guess is they will place somebody else on the gurney as they expand the social agenda.

Women: As many political junkies do, I woke up Wednesday morning and turned on CNN to catch up on the news. Our wannabe U.S. Senator Richard Mourdock's political mug shot was front and center. Oh, if we could take those frightful words back. Mourdock's ill-fated statement at the end of the debate: "I struggled with it myself for a long time, but I came to realize that life is that gift from God. And, I think, even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something that God intended to happen."

And this man wants to represent me in the U.S. Senate? What is far more alarming is that he wants to represent the three million plus females in our state. A guy who set out to destroy the Hoosier auto industry is now dictating to Hoosier women who are violated that God intended it to happen. Sure hope my granddaughters never have to say that their U.S. senator is Richard Mourdock. And if they ever join the Girl Scouts, I sure hope they never come face to face with a guy in the legislature with the last name of Morris! Yes, the same lawmaker who was one of 100 House members who refused to support a nonbind-

ing resolution celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts because he feels the group is a "radicalized organization" that "sexualizes" young girls and promotes homosexuality. Wow, it sure is nice to know that the Hoosier M&M boys are out there protecting our Hoosier girls and women! Good grief, I cannot even believe I live in a state where we elect the likes of these M&M extreme ideologues.

Indiana House: A couple of months after the disastrous (for Democrats anyway) 2010 elections, Brian Howey asked me for my thoughts. I said that it would be nearly impossible for the House R's to keep 60 seats and that there was not enough political talent in the state to keep them all. I went on to say the river counties (that would be the Ohio River) and Southern Indiana would have several competitive seats and things could get back to normal somewhat quickly. The river counties and Southern Indiana have historically been conservative, but somewhat reliably Democrat at the local and statehouse level.

I went on to inform the Howey Report that, "Southern Indiana is a gun-toting, Bible belt conservative blue collar area that doesn't think kindly of folks who don't think like they do; and they will punish you at the ballot box every time from top to bottom." They sure proved this point in 2010 when they linked the entire Democrat ballot with the then unpopular president and Obamacare.

A whole lot has changed since I made those ill-fated comments. What a difference mapmaking, the disintegration of the Democrat caucus and a decided money advantage can make!

I have always believed that Democrats cannot control the House without the South. It will not happen this election year, or anytime soon, until a firm leadership team is in place that has a strategy much like that of former Speaker Michael Phillips. They went from 27 seats to a majority in a little over a decade.

The new House maps, coupled with unprecedented retirements of a dozen long time Democrats, have made 2012 impossible. When you factor in the money advantage, the race for the House is a Republican House quorum-proof election.

As recently as 2008, House Democrats had a 19-5 Southern Indiana advantage. Today, that relates to a 16-8 Republican advantage. If the R's run the slate on tossup races in this area, then they will have the same advantage House D's had for decades. With 25% of the House seats in Southern Indiana, you cannot win the House if you lose the South! There must be a Democrat Southern Indiana strategy before one even thinks about increasing the caucus numbers.

The Republican caucus has the money to win elections. Unlike close financial parity in years past, the R's own the political money chest, and they are passing out their booty in a lot of races and a lot of places.



Even in HD74, the seat of LG candidate Sue Ellspermann, and the only R seat that got more Democratic (54%), House R's have dumped nearly \$100K in late television and mail in a district where the challenger was selected by a caucus only a couple of months ago. It appears that they are not only trying to win the House with the

South, but to win a quorum-proof chamber in the process. ❖

Stilwell is the former Indiana Democratic House Majority Leader.

Indiana's gas tax & roads

By **LARRY DeBOER**

WEST LAFAYETTE - There's been concern in Indiana about paying for road maintenance and construction. Candidates and legislators are looking for new sources of revenue. Maybe you wonder: What about the "good old" gasoline tax? It's the biggest of the motor fuel taxes, and those taxes have always paid for Indiana's state and local road spending.



The good old gasoline tax just isn't what it used to be, because people aren't buying as much gasoline as they used to. We can estimate the number of gallons of gasoline sold in Indiana just by dividing gasoline tax revenue by the tax rate. In fiscal year 2011, the state collected \$543 million from the gas tax at 18 cents a gallon. That's just over 3 billion gallons of gasoline.

That's a lot of gallons, but sales in 2007 were 3.2 billion gallons. Sales dropped 5 percent in four years. The recession started at the end of 2007, and recessions always reduce gasoline sales. People lose their jobs and must economize on driving. Business travel falls off. But expansions come after recessions, and expansions usually increase gasoline sales.

In the expansion of the 1980s, gallons increased from 2.3 billion in 1982 to 2.7 billion in 1990. In the expansion of the 1990s, gallons increased from 2.6 billion in 1992 to 3.3 billion in 2001. But during the 2000s, gasoline sales didn't grow. They decreased a little, from 3.3 billion gallons to 3.2 billion.

During the 2000s, Indiana population grew and road maintenance costs grew, but gasoline tax revenue fell. As they say on Mythbusters, "Well, there's your problem." Why aren't people buying gasoline? Here are three reasons:

■ Cars are more fuel-efficient. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Review, the average fuel efficiency of light vehicles rose 6 percent between 2001 and 2010, from 22.1 to 23.5 miles per gallon. That's a pretty big saving when spread over

millions of cars. Still, fuel efficiency increased more during the 1980s, and back then gallons increased. Fuel efficiency accounts for just a small part of the gasoline sales drop in the 2000s.

■ Gasoline prices increased. Drivers are notoriously slow to cut their gasoline use when the price goes up. In Indiana, a 10 percent rise in gas prices above inflation results in just a 1 percent drop in gasoline sales. But the Energy Information Administration reminds us that gasoline averaged \$1.51 a gallon in 2001. By 2010 it was \$2.61. (It's higher now. I'll bet you've noticed.) Even with a small response from drivers, a price increase that big will cut gasoline sales. Prices adjusted for inflation dropped in the 1980s and 1990', and sales increased. The price hike is a big reason for the sales drop in the 2000s.

■ Then there's income. Indiana income growth during the 2000s recovery was pretty sluggish. Income adjusted for inflation grew 1.2 percent per year on average from 2001 to 2007. Growth was 3 percent per year during the 1980s and 2.8 percent per year during the 1990s. The whole Great Lakes region grew slowly during the 2000s, partly because of manufacturing job losses. If income had grown in the 2000s like it had in earlier expansions, gasoline sales would have increased.

What's the outlook for gasoline tax revenue? Income growth may recover. That would be a plus. Gasoline prices may not increase, but rising world demand probably means they won't fall. Fuel efficiency will only increase, maybe faster in the future than in the past. Gasoline sales may grow with the recovery, but high prices and rising fuel efficiency will keep growth slow. That means gasoline tax revenue isn't likely to recover its previous growth rates.

What can we do? We could shift money from other state programs to roads. We could raise the gasoline tax rate. We could create new road tax options for local governments. We could find other ways to pay for roads, like tolls or long-term leases of state assets. We could even convert some rural roads back to gravel to reduce costs. I can imagine pretty stiff opposition to all of these policies.

But Indiana's new governor and Legislature will find the road funding problem on their desks when they move in. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Statehouse. ❖

DeBoer is professor of agriculture economics at Purdue University.



Donnelly travels on the Chrysler issue

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND - Joe Donnelly travels on the wheels of Chrysler toward the U.S. Senate. If he gets there - and it's about a 50-50 chance - it will be because of the jobs issue, specifically, the jobs saved at Chrysler and beyond in the vital automotive-related industry in Indiana.

Chrysler lives, its government loans repaid.

And prospers. And hires.

Auto sales highest in four years. September sales up 11.5 percent from that month a year before.

This spurs other automotive-related industry as well. That's the reason why Indiana, though not doing well in all employment sectors, ranks second in the nation in manufacturing jobs added since the mid-2009 low point in employment.

Michigan was first in manufacturing jobs added, Ohio

third, proof of the positive impact in Midwest automotive-reliant states of the successful effort to save the American auto industry.

Donnelly, the moderate Democratic congressman from Indiana's 2nd District, is his party's nominee for the Senate. Yes, Donnelly is a moderate, even though campaign attack ads portray him as a wild-eyed liberal and liberal Democrats grumble that he really is a Republican. Criticism from both extremes helps to cement the moderate definition.

Donnelly supported the federal effort for recovery of the American automotive industry. And in driving the Chrysler issue, he says that his Republican opponent, Tea Party favorite Richard Mourdock, would have killed Chrysler and 100,000 Indiana jobs if Mourdock had prevailed as state treasurer in seeking to block the Chrysler restructuring. There was indeed concern at the time that the only alternative to the restructuring was liquidation.

Murdock defeated Sen. Dick Lugar in the Republican primary after gaining Tea Party and conservative super PAC attention and support by taking on the "evil" government in a suit to block the Chrysler restructuring. Mourdock says it was a matter of principle, protecting state pension funds he invested in Chrysler as treasurer. Sure wasn't an economic principle. He turned down a deal that would have provided a better return on the pension funds than he would have received if he had won the suit.

Using taxpayer money and hiring a New York law firm, the treasurer took the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. He couldn't back away politically because settling even for a better deal would have looked like retreat to Tea Party voters he needed to win the Republican nomination.

As the Lugar campaign said, though being drowned out by super PAC attacks: "Murdock gambled Hoosier pensions on junk bonds, wasted millions covering up his mistake and risked thousands of Hoosier jobs."

Murdock, seeking to paint night as day, portrays his failed and costly court adventure as a battle against President Obama. No, it was a battle against the American auto industry, against legislators protecting pensioners and workers, such as Lugar and Donnelly, and against President George W. Bush, who understood the need to save the auto industry and avoid depression.

Murdock could not have won in his contentious Republican primary race with Lugar if he had failed to capture that attention and support as a crusader against the federal government _ though also against the best interests of his own state and its workers and pension funds.

Now, however, because of that effort to kill what has turned out to be a successful recovery of the American auto industry, especially with Chrysler in Indiana, Mourdock is in a tough race, a close race, for a seat that had been regarded as "sure Republican."

Lugar, who voted for the effort to save Chrysler and General Motors and automotive-related jobs, would now be well ahead of Donnelly, with moderate Republicans and independents again solidly in support and many Democrats voting for him as they had done in past elections.

In their first debate, Donnelly stressed the Chrysler issue as well as Mourdock's controversial declarations of a "my way or the highway" philosophy of no compromise. Donnelly did well in the debate. So did Mourdock, avoiding any of the gaffes and strange statements of the primary and right after his nomination.

Murdock's claim that there is too much bipartisanship in Washington didn't play well with voters who think there is instead too much partisanship, rancor and gridlock. The consultants now keep him in check and limit appearances where he could slip back into Mourdockese. They want him to be quiet and let the negative 30-second TV ads do the talking.

Those ads work.

So, as Donnelly travels on the wheels of Chrysler, trying to reach the Senate, it will be a bumpy ride. No fault of Chrysler. Or of the jobs issue. The super PACs, with so much invested in Mourdock, don't want to lose the seat they thought they had bought. They will spend what they believe it takes to put obstacles on the road and dump a whole lot of mud on the driver. ❖





A new low in Region unity

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – In terms of uniting Northwest Indiana for the common good, the area may have hit a new low last week.

At issue was the hiring of a new executive director for the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission.

This is the guy who will lead an organization of about 50 elected officials charged with a whole lot of things, but most importantly with planning the region's future. It is the one organization that should be filling the leadership void in NWI.



It is the one organization made up of the representatives of Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties and all the municipalities therein. So when it came to voting on the new executive director recommended by the search committee, things fell apart. And, its easily understandable.

Hammond Mayor Thomas M. McDermott Jr., the leader of the most populous city in NWI, objected because he hadn't had a

chance to meet the proposed new director who had been selected a month before but not named publicly, not even to the NIRPC members. "At this point I still don't know this person's name," McDermott said. "I've never met this person. I have never felt like a rubber stamp until last night." Amen, mayor.

NIRPC Chairman Geoff Benson, a Beverly Shores town councilman, told the Times of Northwest Indiana that all executive board members and officers were invited to meet the proposed new chairman on Wednesday night before the full commission was to vote the following morning. Because of the short notice, McDermott said he couldn't make the Wednesday night meeting. As he wiped a good bit of egg from his face, Benson hastily called off the Thursday morning vote to confirm Tyson Warner as the new executive director. Instead, Benson said there will be an executive session of the whole commission by the end of the month to consider Warner's appointment. An open vote would come in November. Warner formerly was Will County (Illinois) planning director. He now is executive director of the Flint Hills Regional Council in Kansas.

Warner may well be the most qualified candidate interviewed by the search committee, but one has to wonder about how effective he will be if he ultimately is named the new head of the planning agency.

I wonder if Warner has a clue as to what he is walking into. And if he does, I've got to believe that he thinks he can unite this corner of the state. He'd be the first to do it.

* * *

There has been a lot of Republican activity in NWI over the last week, and as usual, not much of it has been positive. First was a rally for GOP Senate candidate Richard Mourdock – the darling of the Tea Party - at the Radisson Hotel in Merrillville. The event drew a heck of a crowd. Blythe Cozza a resident of Lakes of the Four Seasons tried to dupe a reporter by saying the turnout was because of President Obama's performance in office.

No, that collection of Tea Partiers and birthers hasn't liked Obama since before he was elected. It has nothing to do with the president's performance.

The crowd showed up for the appearance of New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who is quickly becoming the rock star of the Republican Party and continues to show that he will seek the GOP president nomination in 2016.

While there was nothing strange about Christie drawing a large crowd, the Republican reaction after the cancellation of a Lake County Solid Waste Management District meeting last week was bizarre.

The meeting was cancelled because there wouldn't be a quorum since Democrats were gathering that evening for the party's annual Unity Dinner. But some Republicans said the meeting was called off because Democrats didn't want to talk about the controversial garbage-to-ethanol proposal just a few weeks before the election.

Griffith Clerk-Treasurer George Jerome, a Republican and vice-chairman of the waste district, strongly suggested that the meeting was called off to push further talk about the issue until after the election. The Republicans also said the cancellation was aimed to protect County Commissioner Gerry Scheub – a supporter of the garbage-to-ethanol project – who is seeking re-election.

Well come on Republicans. This proposed plant has ebbed and flowed for four years. Seems you have had plenty of time to make political hay. In terms of cancelling the meeting, I think GOP paranoia runs deep.

And finally, the Save the Dunes Council is celebrating its 60th anniversary of protecting the greatest wonder in Indiana. We are reminded as to what the late U.S. Sen. Paul Douglas, D-Ill., who made the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore a reality, had to say.

"When I was young, I wanted to save the world. In my middle years, I would have been content to save my country. Now I just want to save the dunes," Douglas said. There are a whole lot of Hoosiers who are glad he did. ❖

Rich James is the former editorial page editor and columnist for the Post-Tribune in Merrillville.



Irin Carmon, Salon: Dear everyone asking what it is about Republican candidates and their clumsy talk about rape: This is a feature, not a bug. The latest entrant into the Republican rape insensitivity bake-off is Indiana Senate candidate Richard Mourdock, who said tonight that “even when life begins in that horrible situation of rape, that it is something that God intended to happen.” He, of course, joins fellow Senate candidate Todd Akin, with his now-canonical “legitimate rape” comment, and Rep. Joe Walsh, running for election in Illinois, who claimed there was no reason a woman would ever need an abortion to save her life or preserve her health. The trailblazer was Tea Party candidate Sharron Angle, who failed to unseat Harry Reid in Nevada two years ago, and famously said that if a hypothetical teenager was raped and impregnated by her father, it was an opportunity to turn “a lemon situation into lemonade.” Here’s why this is happening: The newer crop of Republican candidates and elected officials are, more often than not, straight from the base. They’re less polished than their predecessors; they’re more ideologically pure. As a result, they’ve accidentally been letting the mask slip and showing what’s really at the core of the right-to-life movement. For years, the movement has fought plausible charges that it is anti-woman by repackaging its abortion restrictions, in Orwellian fashion, as protections for women. They’ve done it so successfully that until recently, when so many alleged “gaffes” went viral, no one really noticed. What is the so-called Women’s Health Defense Act? A proposed ban on abortion before viability. What are “informed consent” laws purporting to give women all the information they need before having abortions? Forced ultrasounds, transvaginal, and some of them involving the forced viewing of the ultrasound, at the woman’s expense, under the stated supposition that she has no idea what’s growing inside her unless someone makes her look. (Never mind that 60 percent of women who have abortions have already given birth at least once.)

Where does rape come into this? If you doubt that the abortion obsession in this country is about sex more than it is about “babies,” just look to all this agonized public parsing about “legitimate rape” and “forcible rape.” Americans are, at least in theory, sensitive to survivors of rape, whose bodies have been cruelly used against their will, and they see a forced pregnancy as further suffering. The corollary, of course, is that pregnancy is the just punishment for consensual sex, or, if you think an embryo or fetus is the same as a person, that rape justifies capital punishment. But most people don’t think in those consistent absolutes, which is the reason that the antiabortion movement has sometimes conceded to rape exceptions, as Mitt Romney has — they’re willing to suffer them, occasionally, as a sort

of gateway drug toward stigmatizing and marginalizing all abortion. For now, antiabortion absolutists have some explaining to do, and they’re doing it very, very badly. That’s because they aren’t used to cloaking their views in the rhetoric of compassion, something George W. Bush was so much better at. They’re used to how the base talks about this stuff among themselves, when it’s open about seeing women as vessels whose decision-making is subsumed to God’s plan or to baby making. But every time a Republican politician says what he (usually he) really thinks about all this, we can ask ourselves the following: What are you if you think women have no idea what they’re doing when they have an abortion, that they need the law to bully them, if not to change their minds, then to make things as difficult as possible for them? What are you if you think a woman’s right to her own body should be entirely subordinate to the possibility of an hours-old fertilized egg, and thus want to ban emergency contraception, as Akin does? What are you if you essentially render a pregnant woman an incubator, as Akin did when he described pregnancy as, “All you add is food and climate control, and some time, and the embryo becomes you or me”? What with all of the double-talk, I’ll be plain. You’re a misogynist. ❖



Matt Tully, Indianapolis Star: In politics, as in sports, there are unforced errors. And often, they are the worst errors of all, because they expose a candidate’s worst flaws and lack of discipline. The series of unforced errors dished out this year by U.S. Senate candidate Richard Mourdock has made him a laughingstock. It has also made the Republican nominee vulnerable in a year in which any Republican who possesses a pulse should be able to win easily in Indiana. But over and over, Mourdock has handed gifts to Democratic nominee Joe Donnelly who has been the better candidate and would clearly be the better senator. Mourdock said in April that if elected to the Senate but in the minority, his top job would be to travel the country campaigning for Republicans. He also said around that time that the problem on Capitol Hill was “too much bipartisanship.” But Mourdock’s 2012 follies go beyond statements made in the heat of his primary battle. Although the anti-compromise, dig-in-your-heels comments he made during the primary offended the senses of many moderate voters, they were at least understandable in a partisan election that would be determined by the most loyal members of the Republican base. But since the primary, Mourdock has continued to offer comments that turn off moderates and independents — saying on national TV, for instance, that bipartisanship should be defined as Democrats caving to the wishes and policies of Republicans. On Tuesday evening, Mourdock outdid himself, and that is a monumental feat considering his past. ❖



Daniels punts on Mourdock

NEW YORK - Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels declined to say whether he backs Richard Mourdock in his state's Senate race, punting because of his upcoming job running Purdue University. "I'm a non-combatant actually, in deference to my new job at Purdue," Daniels told Stephen Colbert on his late-night comedy show Thursday. "I'm not trying to duck your question." "You're not trying to but you are," Colbert quipped. "With some justification, on the day I accepted the new job at Purdue, out of respect for their non-partisan status, I said I would recuse myself from anything partisan, and I have: I haven't taken a role for or against anybody," Daniels said. "It's sort of a vow of political celibacy." The position gives Daniels an out from weighing in on Mourdock's controversial comments on rape and abortion that threaten to unravel his Senate bid.



Vigo absentees concern GOP

TERRE HAUTE - A western Indiana GOP leader says the lack of Republicans on a board overseeing absentee ballots violates state law, but the county clerk says the party didn't appoint any. Vigo County Republican Chairman Randy Gentry tells WTHI-TV he has no evidence of fraud but there's no guarantee that ballots weren't compromised. County Clerk Pat Mansard says the GOP didn't appoint any members to the absentee ballot board, but Gentry says he didn't learn he needed to name any until this week. Gentry said Thursday he

already has appointed one member and has received paperwork from two other possible appointees. Mansard says more than 1,000 absentee ballots sent to her office stay sealed until Election Day. She says they're protected by a series of safeguards and an extensive paper trail.

Indy settles in Bisard case

INDIANAPOLIS - The city of Indianapolis will pay \$2.3 million to two people seriously injured when their motorcycle was struck by a police cruiser driven by an officer allegedly driving drunk. The Indianapolis Star reported Thursday the settlement entered in Marion Superior Court this week will pay Kurt Weekly \$1.35 million and \$975,000 to Mary Mills. The two married after the August 2010 crash by Officer David Bisard that also killed motorcyclist Eric Wells. The city settled separately in June for \$1.55 million with Wells' family. Bisard faces charges of operating a vehicle while intoxicated, reckless homicide and criminal recklessness. He allegedly had a blood-alcohol level of 0.19 percent at the time, but the blood draw was improper under state law, so it might not be allowed as evidence.

Consolidation vote coming in Vandy

EVANSVILLE — It is a subjective question with a subjective answer — but it goes to the heart of the debate over Evansville-Vanderburgh County government consolidation (Evansville Courier & Press). How much government is too much? Vanderburgh County voters will have two competing visions of local government from which to choose when they decide the fate of a referendum on consolidation on Election Day. Supporters of consolidation say maintaining two

local governments in one community is cumbersome and unwieldy, likening it to using more than one school system or library system. Opponents say the current city and county governmental structure — three bodies of elected officials plus one mayor — provides the necessary checks and balances to prevent any one of them from wielding too much power. In a news conference Thursday, County Commissioner Joe Kiefer said elected officials in the separate city and county governing bodies take advantage of unnecessary layers of government. "Right now there's a game that's played between city and county elected officials. City officials will say (to individuals seeking money), 'Well, you get something done from the county first. Then we'll look at it,'" said Kiefer, a longtime advocate of consolidation. "The county official says, 'Well, you get something done from the city first. Then we'll consider it.' "It's a great strategy. It delays a lot of things. It puts off a lot of things. And it frustrates citizens."

Ballard faces veto deadline today

INDIANAPOLIS - Mayor Greg Ballard must sign or veto the City-County Council's 2013 budget proposal for the city today. The biggest issue - how the city should pay for more police officers and firefighters (WTHR-TV). This is a political battle as much as anything. The City-County Council is controlled by Democrats. Ballard is a Republican. The Council wants to take money from the Capitol Improvement Board, the agency that operates Lucas Oil Stadium, Bankers Life Fieldhouse and other venues, by charging the CIB a one-time payment of \$15-million to cover police and fire recruit classes for the upcoming year. Those classes were not funded in the mayor's budget. "We're trying to set up a budget for the long-term," Ballard said.