



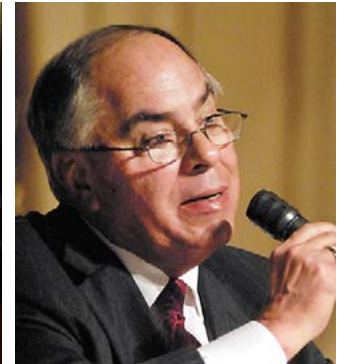
# Teachers, commissioners take aim

12 educators, 4 county commissioners challenging House, Senate incumbents

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The teachers are challenging in the House. The county commissioners are doing the same in the Senate.

Looking for trends heading into the November general election, 12 teachers, principals and school board members are seeking Democratic nominations in the House, with rematches coming in four districts: HD16 where Rensselaer School Board member Richard Ludington is challenging State Rep. Douglas Gutwein; HD35 where Melanie Wright came very close to upsetting State Rep. Jack Lutz; in HD46 where James Mann will face State Rep. Bob Heaton, and in HD62 where Democrat Jeff Sparks narrowly lost to State Rep. Matt Uebelhor.



Democrat teacher Melanie Wright (left) is in a rematch with State Rep. Jack Lutz)

In two other seats, HD21 where State Rep. Timothy Wesco is facing Democrat Jodi Buoscio and in HD29 where State Rep. Kathy Kreag Richardson is facing Joe Marcum, the Republicans ran unopposed in 2012. In HD28, State Rep. Jeffrey Thompson had no Democratic opponent in 2012, easily defeated a Libertarian candidate by more than 18,000 votes, and will face Sean Shanley



Continued on page 4

## The sine die primer

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – Legislators who are Indiana and Purdue basketball fans will be too busy Thursday afternoon to watch their respective games only blocks away at the Big Ten Basketball Tournament. Instead, they are trying to meet the self-imposed deadline of 5 p.m. to conclude the 2014 Indiana General Assembly's business. There is still a lot to get done and the typical last day maneuvers of waiving the Eight Hour Rule will almost certainly be required to move bills from the Rules Committees to the floor.



At press time Thursday morning the session's 'Big Four' pieces of legislation, SB1/



**“It’s completely optional for the mayors. If he’s not comfortable he doesn’t have to do it, OK?”**

*- Senate President David Long, responding to Indianapolis Mayor Ballard’s criticism of the business tax repeal*



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HB1001, HB 1002, HB 1004, and HB 1006, appeared to be agreed-upon products ready for final caucus approval and thus final floor votes.

**Business Tax Cuts:** During a Tuesday conference committee hearing the finalized compromises to SB 1/HB 1001 were unveiled. Starting July 2015, there would be local options for the following: To exempt small business personal property (under \$20,000); to eliminate the tax on new non-utility business equipment; and, to enact "Super Abatements" for new business personal property up to twenty years (as opposed to the prior 10 years allowed).

The other major component, which leadership seemed to be touting the most this week, is a cut in the corporate tax rate from 6.5% to 4.9% over six years. Between now and 2015 there will be a blue ribbon commission to investigate all of this before it goes into effect and, one assumes, advise the next session to make any necessary revisions to what was felt so imperative to pass this session — an interesting organizational timeline.

Angola Mayor Richard Hickman, who is president of the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns, reacted to the deal, saying, "When looking back at where this discussion started, it's clear progress has been made. We're pleased the legislature listened to some of the concerns raised by Indiana's city and town leaders. Now the real work begins. IACT looks forward to being an active participant in the blue ribbon commission; we're glad to have a seat at the table."

Hickman, a Democrat, continued, "It is some consolation that the deal struck between the House and Senate will not result in an immediate loss of local government revenues. The most significant issue remains; what the legislature calls a 'local option' to eliminate the personal property tax on new equipment is by no means a true local option. The result of this approach leaves too many without a voice and is a complete departure from the regional economic development efforts succeeding in our state. IACT will continue to make

its case against the county by county option during the blue ribbon commission process."

"Finally, we remain concerned about how this approach shifts the burden of another business tax cut on to Hoosier homeowners," said Hickman.

Senate President David Long, told of concerns by mayors - particularly Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard - reacted Wednesday afternoon, saying, "It's completely optional for the mayors. If he's not comfortable he doesn't have to do it, OK? But he does have, what we call, a 'Super Abatement,' I thought that was very important."

Long continued, "I come from a large county, Allen. You can argue, how can we compete with a small county? Take your pick, Hendricks or Marion? Marion can compete on any project with the 'Super Abatement' for any kind of equipment we're talking about. I think it's a great equalizer and if they're not comfortable, if they don't trust themselves, they don't trust their neighbors, what is it?"

As with the compromise income tax cut last year, Gov. Mike Pence will soon be able to say he pushed for and was able to sign into law some kind of business personal property tax cut (not elimination, however) and a corporate tax cut.

Here where other key legislation stands as of Thursday morning:

■ **Transportation Funding:** Another legislative priority for the Governor was to secure \$400 million in additional road funding. The House passed that amount (HB 1002) but a wary Senate cut it in half. The latest compromise appears to grant \$200 million now and a second installment of \$200 million contingent on later revenue and fiscal numbers. This could also be chalked up as a success for Pence. He asked for \$400 million and he can technically say he got that in a manner that addresses others' fiscal concerns.

■ **Pilot Pre-K Program:** Over the course of Tuesday it appeared the leadership might not have been exactly on the same page in regards to finalizing HB 1004, the Pre-K

bill. Earlier in the day Speaker Brian Bosma intimated there was an agreement in principle between leadership. Asked later, Sen. Long seemed to be pumping the brakes. "Well, since we haven't discussed it with our caucus completely yet I'm not going to completely say," he said. "That is not a finished product. There is some language we need to insert in it. We haven't finalized it." At mid-morning today, a pilot program for up to 3,000 at-risk children up to 127% of poverty line would be funded by state agency reversions (\$10 million) and from private donors (\$5 million). Over the last couple of weeks one could have safely guessed this effort was destined only for a study committee. Too little for early childhood education advocates but, one assumes, the Governor will be framing this as another 2014 legislative victory.

■ **Criminal Code Reform:** With a bipartisan group of legislators standing at the Statehouse Wednesday with Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard in praise of this year's revisions to the criminal code (HB 1006), one can assume there is solid agreement for passage.

Another key piece of legislation which appeared quite uncertain until late Wednesday afternoon was the Central Indiana mass transit bill (SB 176). Sen. Pat Miller met with reporters briefly to announce there was agreement. The finalized version would allow referenda in six counties on mass transit expansion with the following stipulations: No light rail, no corporate tax, and if the 10% in voluntary corporate funding is not met, the individual counties must make up the difference. After two years of sputtering, it appears mass transit advocates will at least feel their train, err, I mean bus, is moving forward.

## A controlled scramble

It has been a hectic, if still controlled, scramble the past four days. Last week leadership seemed to suggest everything would be wrapped up Wednesday. That proved overly optimistic as legislators waded into the work of 91 different conference committees.

On Tuesday morning, I overheard one senior Republican Senator heading to a committee room. "I have a dozen conference committees and none of them are settled. We haven't settled anything," he remarked shaking his head, sounding strangely both exasperated and in good humor.

Another example, the conference committee for SB 229, a bill that aims to allow guns on school property if they are secured in automobiles, had extremely testy deliberations and testimony. By midweek it was still at impasse.

Sen. Long acknowledged that he and Speaker Bosma assigned "some wise old owls" - Sen. Brandt Hershman and Rep. Jerry Torr - to get the committee moving again. Their efforts required a laborious rewrite of the bill. Nothing could be said definitively about it Wednesday afternoon.

Having talked privately with a handful of key legislators on both sides of the aisle, I got the impression they

were almost overwhelmed juggling so much conference committee work.

Perhaps they say this the last week of every session; perhaps 2014 is slightly different. As the session reached its last week crescendo, those in the (super) minority probably felt it had been especially long and less enjoyable. In an almost empty House Chamber I could hear from the press gallery one Democratic representative ask another, "You've been here a long time, is this the worst [session] one?"

"Yeah," came the reply, "this is the worst one."

The Republican leadership will seek to convincingly argue to the contrary.

However, those most pleased about outcomes might be the opponents of something settled over a month ago: HJR-3, the constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. For social conservatives who had such high hopes for this supermajority under a very socially conservative governor, this might be remembered as one of their most disappointing sessions yet. ❖

## Butler covers the General Assembly for HPI.

## Pence talks \$\$ at Road School

WEST LAFAYETTE (WLFY) – Gov. Mike Pence hit on funding needs and recent road projects in Tippecanoe County Wednesday at Purdue's Road School. Pence spoke



about a number of Major Moves 2020 projects impacting Hoosiers and businesses during day two of Road School after having lunch with Purdue President Mitch Daniels.

The Major Moves

2020 trust fund is used exclusively for major highway expansion projects, two of which are in Tippecanoe County.

"There's really no better example than very close here in the Lafayette area. If this is your first time traveling to Purdue since last year's Road School you may have driven on the beautiful new Hoosier Heartland from Lafayette to Logansport," Pence said to the crowd at Road School. "Or you may have noticed less truck traffic near campus on U.S. 231 that's been realigned just west of the city."

"I'm seeking to free up some 400-million dollars in additional funding for roads through the so-known Major Moves 2020 endeavor," Pence said. "I remain cautiously optimistic that we will get a favorable response from the General Assembly, but the reason I will be hurrying back through the snow is to finish making that argument." ❖



## Teachers, from page 1

this time around.

Another race has the potential for being close. In HD4, State Rep. Ed Soliday narrowly defeated Democrat Gregory Simms 14,971 to 14,010 two years ago, and he now faces Democrat Deb Porter, a Valparaiso educator who lost to State Sen. Ed Charbonneau 30,039 to 24,766 in 2012.

The education community is still intrigued by Democrat Supt. Glenda Ritz's upset of Republican incumbent Tony Bennett in 2012. Many of these teachers gathered recently to discuss campaign tactics that will rely heavily on social media such as Facebook and Twitter, keys to the Ritz upset. Wright posted on her Facebook page, "Please spread the word among your teacher friends so that we may gain momentum as Supt. Glenda Ritz demonstrated in 2102. We would all be appreciative of any volunteers and financial support for our campaigns to spread the message."

"We had a few who ran in 2012 and just didn't quite make it over the line," said Indiana Democratic Chairman John Zody. "Democrats look to teachers who are on the ground, and know how to get things done. They are members of their community."

It's tough to repeat election dynamics from one cycle to the next. Republican candidates are very aware of the keys to Ritz's upset and many of these campaigns will evolve into the social media world this year.

With no presidential, gubernatorial or U.S. Senate races, these legislative races will be isolated and will be driven by state issues within a local context. Many of these races won't take a definitive shape until mid to late October. Zody said the teacher candidates will focus on the controversial education reforms of the Daniels/Bennett era, as well as "creating opportunities to grow the middle class while staying away from divisive social issues. Democrats need to talk about what we're for."

Ritz won in 2012 by attracting Republicans not on board with the Bennett reforms, female voters and independents. In 2012, there were a number of political cross currents in Indiana. President Obama won reelection, but was unpopular in Indiana with Republican Mitt Romney carrying 56%. But Gov. Mike Pence won with only 49% and Democrats Ritz and U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly won, capitalizing on controversial rape/abortion comments made by Senate nominee Richard Mourdock.

Democrats will seek to exploit the controversies

surrounding HJR-3, but they will lack a united driving force that a statewide campaign brings. A drag on the ticket could be President Obama's unpopularity in his second mid-term election, as well as that of Obamacare, which is extremely unpopular in many of these rural districts.

Multiple sources tell HPI that Peter Hanscom, wrapping up business with Indiana Freedom, will oversee the House Democratic campaigns.

Gov. Pence could also be a factor. He campaigned ardently on behalf of House GOP candidates in 2010, helping forge a 60% majority. In 2012, he ran well behind many House Republicans. His message this fall on behalf of House Republicans will be one of stay the course on reforms, while heralding his regional work councils, where TV ads are being developed to promote that program that passed in 2013 with overwhelming bipartisan support.

Here are the House races with Democratic teacher candidates that are potentially competitive:

**HD4 Porter vs. Rep. Soliday:** Democrat Deb Porter is challenging Rep. Soliday. She is a career elementary music teacher and president of the Portage association of teachers. She has been a delegate to the National Education Association convention. "A strong, fully-funded public education pre-K through age 21 is necessary for our students to be prepared for their future," she said. "We need public schools that help every student achieve his or her potential and have the necessary background knowledge to apply skills to be successful." Soliday's narrow victory in 2012 in his newly redrawn district will make this race worth watching.

**HD21 Buoscio vs. Rep. Wesco:** Jodi Buoscio is challenging State Rep. Timothy Wesco, who ran unopposed in 2012. Buoscio a teacher at Elkhart Memorial High School and is on the ISTA board of directors while chairing the ISTA District Council 1E. "I have been working since age 14, through high school and college, and I know what it means to live within a tight budget," Buoscio explains. "I believe that if you work 40 hours a week you should be able to afford housing, food, healthcare and save for your children's education." Her campaign is drawing help from former Democratic State Rep. Bruce Carter. She was critical of Wesco's efforts on behalf of HJR-3, the constitutional marriage amendment. "I believe at a time when our families continue to struggle to live with smaller paychecks or find jobs, and schools are having to beg for funds to fix roofs, HJR-3 is a clear example of misplaced priorities and limited vision which continues to plague our Statehouse," she said.

**HD35 Wright vs. Rep. Lutz:** Rep. Lutz defeated Melanie Wright by less than 500 votes in 2012. Wright, a teacher at Daleville Junior High School, was



Elkhart teacher Jodi Buoscio is challenging State Rep. Timothy Wesco)

recruited by State Rep. Terri Austin. She decided to get involved in politics when House Republicans cut \$300 million out of public education in 2011. Indiana Democratic Chairman Zody cited the Wright/Lutz rematch as well as defending State Rep. Christina Hale in Indianapolis as top priorities. "I had never considered running for public office until the legislative session of 2011," Wright said on her Facebook page. "Once collective bargaining was eliminated and teacher pay was tied to student test scores, I was determined to fight for my beloved profession. Adding to the turmoil was a commercial stating that a veteran teacher was preventing those teachers who were the 'best and brightest' from staying in the classroom due to seniority. The veteran teacher was depicted by a woman who appeared to be in her early 30s! That session lit a fire in me to fight for education!"

**HD33 Byrum vs. Rep. Beumer:** Democrat Shon Byrum will face State Rep. Greg Beumer, who was chosen by caucus late last year to replace State Rep. Bill Davis. Davis defeated Charles Schemenauer 14,669 to 10,726. So while this isn't exactly an open seat, Beumer is new to the ballot in the district. Byrum is a social studies teacher in Jay County and announced his candidacy the same day that Rep. Davis resigned. "The issues do not change, regardless of my opponent," Byrum said on his website. "The people of District 33 desperately need a leader to stand for them in the General Assembly. From upholding the value of the people's vote on how we educate our students, to creating jobs and communities that our children will want to be a part of and contribute to, we must educate ourselves on the issues and hold our elected officials accountable. When the per capita income for Hoosiers is lower than the national average and half of Hoosier children under nine are in poverty, we can do better." Rep. Beumer, R-Modoc, served two consecutive terms as a Randolph County commissioner. From 2001-2004, he served as the Region 8 director for the former Indiana Department of Commerce, which consisted of six counties in east central Indiana. He has also served as the director of community development for the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) and as the executive director of the Randolph County Economic Development Corporation.

**HD46 Mann vs. Rep. Heaton:** Rep. Bob Heaton defeated Democrat James Mann, a South Vigo High School government teacher, 14,630 to 10,771 in

2012, so this is a rematch. Mann has been critical of the fast pace of government reforms. "We need a pause," he told StateImpact in 2012. "You have to evaluate. Some programs may be good. Some programs aren't so good," says Mann, a social studies teacher at Terre Haute South Vigo High School. "You need to reevaluate every step of the way." Heaton was elected in 2010, upsetting State Rep. Vern Tincher. The former Indiana State basketball star is president of a financial services company in Terre Haute.

**HD62 Sparks vs. Rep. Ubelhor:** This is the rematch between Democrat Jeff Sparks, the principal at Linton-Stockton Junior High School, and State Rep. Matt Ubelhor. In 2012, Ubelhor defeated Sparks 13,993 to 12,477, so this race has the potential to be competitive. "In public education, teachers and schools need to have some of the respect and honor they deserve restored, rather than all this constant criticism," Sparks told the



Greene County Daily World. "I would like to see public schools refunded the way they ought to be, and the respect returned to public schools that they so richly deserve." If elected, Sparks told the Daily World he wants to enact the teacher's bill of rights, an overview of the specific abilities and rights educators have which will enable them to do work more effectively. "It's more about giving teachers the tools they need to do the best job they can," he said, adding he's seen teachers spending an increasing amount of time doing paperwork imposed by the state. "They're

spending less time on teaching," he said, adding that the state's pattern of imposing unfunded mandates while increasing requirements poses problems. He's watched a steady stream of experienced teachers leave the profession. "A lot of good teachers are leaving in the next year," he said, "and at this point, I don't think you've even seen the tip of the iceberg if things don't turn around."

**HD68 Gill vs. McMillin:** Democrat Rick Gill is challenging State Rep. Jud McMillin. Gill is a retired Indiana State Police trooper, a former Franklin County coroner, and is on the local school board. McMillin was reelected over Democrat Jerome Hoog 19,068 to 8,943 in 2012. McMillin resigned from the Lawrenceburg Regional Grant Committee last December. That committee is being investigated by the FBI. An Indianapolis Star investigation in May found that millions of dollars have been wasted on risky startup companies, many of them with ties to government officials. The FBI has confirmed it has launched a criminal investigation, but has not named a target. McMillin told the Indianapolis Star he resigned

to spend more time with his infant child. "Over the past half year to 18 months, I have been reading a lot in the papers about a guy who's in the seat in the 68th District," Gill said. "I was upset and thought instead of complaining and complaining about it, why not just go out and try to run for the district." Gill opposes vouchers, saying, "Last year we had 5,000 vouchers. This year there were 72,000, taking away funds from the public schools. Being on the school board, I see that the public school system needs all the money it can get to sustain what it has and go forward in the future.

Here are the other races where educators are challenging Republican incumbents.

**HD16 Ludington vs. Rep. Gutwein:**

Rich Ludington is a seven-year member of the Rensselaer School Board and is in a rematch State Rep. Douglas Gutwein. Gutwein defeated Ludington 14,409 to 10,029 in 2012.

**HD60 Brodhacker vs. Rep. Mayfield:**

Rep. Peggy Mayfield defeated State Rep. Peggy Welch 15,254 to 12,886 in a redrawn district that became distinctly more Republican. Democrat Daymon Brodhacker is a former Morgan County Democratic chairman. "My campaign slogan is: "Brodhacker: He's for Indiana...He's for You!" he explained. "I have chosen this slogan because I stand in support of an Indiana government that serves the essential needs of all Hoosiers and not just the needs of special interest groups and big money donors who have bought and are buying Indiana. I stand in support of an Indiana government that is for the prosperity of all Hoosiers."

**HD70 Sellers vs. Rep. Rhoades:**

Heidi Sellers is a Memphis Democrat who is challenging Rep. Rhonda Rhoades. In 2012, Rhoades defeated Democrat Terry Miller 16,866 to 12,828. There was little information on the web about Sellers.

**HD72 Bailey vs. Rep. Clere:**

Democrat Kevin Sue Bailey is challenging State Rep. Ed Clere. Bailey is an English professor at Indiana University Southeast who previously taught at Floyd Central High School. She is seeking her first elected office in her challenge to Clere, who won reelection in 2012 by defeating Democrat Sharon Grabowski 16,177 to 13,557. "I think it finally became a moral imperative to run because I believe the dismantling of public education has gone too far," Bailey told the News & Tribune when she filed. She disagrees with efforts backed by Gov. Mike Pence to move some of the powers of the Indiana Board of Educa-

tion to the governor's control. "It's a strange stance for a Republican governor to want to make government bigger," Bailey said. This district is trending Republican; Clere won it in 2008 when he upset State Rep. Bill Cochran. Clere has stood out from many House Republicans. The chairman of the House Public Health Committee has questioned the state not accepting federal Medicaid funding. He also opposed the constitutional marriage amendment in 2011 and 2014.

**HD84 Haigh vs. Rep. Morris or Barranda:**

Democrat Fred Haigh will take on the winner of the Republican primary where State Rep. Robert Morris is facing Fort Wayne attorney Michael Barranda. In 2012, Morris defeated Democrat Lee Jordan 18,193 to 10,693, with Libertarian James Hanson getting 1,379. Haigh has served as an educator in public and private schools, a financial planner and adjunct faculty member to Manchester University and Ball State University. "I am passionate about our community and the future of education in Indiana," Haigh said. "Throughout my career I have seen Fort Wayne grow and have been an advocate for the revitalization of our downtown. But I strongly believe that the 84th House District has not been represented fairly, wisely, or with an open mind. We need a new representative who will focus on area jobs, economic growth, and middle-class values, not someone who is focused on distracting social issues."

**Commissioners for Senate**

The fight over the business personal property tax came after at least four county commissioners had announced their intentions to seek Indiana Senate seats. But the fight over local options and state replacement money could play into their hands. A number of county councils, commissioners and the Association of Indiana Counties pressed Gov. Mike Pence and legislative leaders to provide state replacement revenues on the tax repeal. While the current legislation will only impact local governments by about \$6 million in 2015, municipal officials view this as a "slippery slope" that could impact local governments in the future.

**In SD45,** former Jefferson County Commissioner Julie Berry will attempt to unseat first-term Indiana state Sen. Jim Smith. Berry, is a Democrat who served three terms as the first female Jefferson County commissioner. "I have been approached by Republicans, Democrats and Independents throughout southeastern Indiana asking me to consider running for this position," Berry told the Madison Courier. "I have



**Former Jefferson County Commissioner Julie Berry (right) is challenging Sen. Jim Smith.**



decided to go forward based on these conversations and bring with me the experience gained from serving locally and statewide. I will bring my perspective as a mother, a local government official and a private sector business person to Indianapolis to represent the majority views of southeastern Indiana," she said in the news release." Smith won his first term in 2010 when he upset longtime Democratic State Sen. Jim Lewis 22,299 to 20,494. The district was not substantially changed during the 2011 reapportionment.

**In SD46**, Republican State Sen. Ron Grooms faces a rematch from Floyd County Commissioner Chuck Freiberger, who lost 21,019 to 18,965. Both candidates were within 1,100 votes of each other in both Floyd and Clark counties. Freiberger is a Floyd County teacher and will make education funding a key issue.

**In SD48**, Democratic DuBois County Commissioner Larry Vollmer will face State Rep. Mark Messmer in the open seat being vacated by State Sen. Lindel Hume. The district is considered competitive with both Ritz and Donnelly winning in 2012. Hume ran unopposed in 2010.

Of these three southern Indiana Senate seats, while two are held by Republican incumbents, there is still Democratic strength in local and county elections.

**Up north in the SD6** open seat being vacated by State Sen. Sue Landske, former Newton County Commissioner Roxanna Hanford is running, facing Lon P. Childress in the Democratic primary. Hanford served two separate terms as a Newton County commissioner, from 1999-2002 and 2007-2010, focusing on economic development, child protection and drug prevention. She was elected County Commissioner of the Year in 2009 by the Indiana Association of County Commissioners and was similarly honored by her fellow commissioners. "I truly love working for the people," Hanford said, "which is why I want to go to Indianapolis and give the people of District 6 a voice at the Statehouse. We face great challenges as a state, particularly as it relates to our children and their futures. I'll protect our children by ensuring they have every chance to succeed, and I'll fight for our families by expanding educational and economic opportunities so they can share in the economic prosperity that too often eludes them."

Landske won SD6 with 67% of the vote in 2010, so this district is very Republican. State Rep. Rick Niemeyer faces Chris Shepard in the Republican primary. Niemeyer won his HD11 seat with 61% in 2012.

### **SD39: Economic group endorses Bassler**

A key education group has endorsed Eric Bassler for SD39 in his race against State Sen. John Waterman. "At Hoosiers for Economic Growth, we are optimistic that Indiana can be a leader in the competitive national and international economies if we continue to develop a first-rate education system and a skilled workforce," said Fred Klipsch, who chairs Hoosiers for Economic Growth.

"In furtherance of this mission, we support public policies designed to promote economic growth, competitiveness, and a highly-prepared workforce. We believe ensuring high quality K-12 education opportunities for all Indiana students should be a top priority for our state. Thank you for your support of this mission and for your strong stance in favor of educational policies that provide all Hoosier families with a quality education regardless of their family income, zip code or any other circumstance." Bassler is a Washington city councilman.

### **SD43: Chamber endorses Perfect**

The Indiana Chamber of Commerce announced today its endorsement of Chip Perfect (R-Lawrenceburg) for the Republican primary election to the Indiana Senate, District 43. "Chip Perfect is a Hoosier small business success story and will bring a positive, get-things-done approach to the Indiana Senate," explains Jeff Brantley, vice president of political affairs for the Indiana Chamber. "As a small business owner, Chip knows what it means to build and motivate a team, provide first-rate customer service and create jobs and economic growth in Indiana."

Said Perfect, "I agree with the Chamber that free enterprise, reducing excessive regulations and a having topnotch education system are all critically important to Hoosier prosperity."

A self-described "serial entrepreneur," Perfect is the owner/operator of Perfect North Slopes in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, as well as several other small businesses in the area. Perfect is running for the open Senate District 43 seat currently held by Sen. Johnny Nugent (R-Lawrenceburg), who is retiring this year and has endorsed Chip Perfect as his replacement.

### **HD48: Miller emphasizes education**

Indiana House hopeful Doug Miller backs educational vouchers and says education would be a priority for him as a lawmaker (Vandenack, Elkhart Truth). "Like every parent, I have always wanted what was best for my children. I don't ever recall, however, a time when the government knew my kids better than my wife and me," the Republican said on March 6. "I am a strong advocate for choice and I want all Hoosiers to be able to use their hard-earned tax dollars to fund the educational process as they see fit." Miller, one of three Republicans vying for the District 48 post in the Indiana House, also touted the importance of cooperation between the business and education sectors, with the aim of luring new business to the state and encouraging Hoosier kids to remain in Indiana when they finish school. "As a parent and grandparent, I recognize the importance of young Hoosiers being able to stay near their families and to continue to call Indiana home. That will only happen if leaders in economic development and education pursue similar goals," Miller said. "The key is to have our graduates ready with the necessary skills to entice business and industry to locate here." ❖

# GOP change of guard fueled Lauer to take on Rep. Milo Smith

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

COLUMBUS – In the last half of 2013, a number of Bartholomew County Republicans asked Ryan Lauer to consider a challenge to State Rep. Milo Smith.

In January Lauer, president of the Bartholomew County Council, jumped into the primary just as the constitutional marriage amendment and proposals to end the business personal property tax began to pick up momentum. Both issues are likely to color this primary race.

As council president, he's had to deal with an array of taxation, budgetary and economic development issues.

"The business personal property tax should be eliminated," Lauer said. "It puts us at a disadvantage in the Midwest and surrounding states. At the same time, we have to be responsible about it. Doing it overnight would be a significant impact on local taxing units. I think phasing it in over 10 years is something the legislature should review."

He is concerned about the "local option" that emerged in the final hours of this General Assembly session. "It should be expressed uniformly across Indiana. We should be competing with neighboring states and countries and not the county adjacent to us."

Lauer is a supporter of the constitutional property tax caps and as council president, has looked for efficiencies in his jurisdiction. "Bartholomew County has been frugal with our resources," said the senior engineer at Cummins Engines. "We have been able to manage just fine and save, while not spending more than we take in. I know on the city side, (Columbus) Mayor Brown has done the same and has been able to increase services, like veteran services administration. We did not have a full-time veteran services officer. Bartholomew County's economy has been steadily improving and creating jobs, and I fully support tax caps, which provide stability to business and homeowners."

Lauer has not framed his campaign around HJR-3, even while Rep. Smith as chairman of the House

Election Committee played a key role in moving the stalled resolution to the House floor after it couldn't muster votes in House Judiciary. Smith appealed to Speaker Brian Bosma to move the legislation to his committee, and subsequently earned the public rebuke from his gay son living in California. Lauer has not publicly commented on the internal Smith family controversy.

His employer, Cummins, was one of the most conspicuous corporate opponents of HJR-3, but that is context that Lauer does not expound upon. "I am for traditional marriage between a man and a woman," he explained. "I think we need to focus on the jobs and economy moving forward. I did support being clear to the voters on marriage between men and women, the second sentence notwithstanding." Lauer said that he believes voters should have a say in the marriage matter, but calls the second sentence, removed from the House floor, "unnecessary and unclear. We should be clear about what we put into the constitution."

Lauer talks about other items championed by Senate President Pro Tempore David Long, including the extended reach of the federal government into state affairs.

"We could use new, strong leadership to bring a new perspective to the Statehouse and hold back the overreaching arm of federal government," Lauer explained, "whether it is the National Security Agency snooping, collecting emails, or the ramifications of Obamacare. As a public official, we continue to see those effects."

He cites Obamacare and Environmental Protection Agency regulations: "I think it's time the states wake up to the encroachment of the federal government in our lives. I think government should be closest to the people."

Lauer is against the Common Core standards, saying, "Parents and their children should have their choices for schools they attend. I am against the education by committee and the Common Core direction. It's important that education remain local. Our communities should have discretion on what our children learn and how they learn."

Lauer added, "Indiana should excel at our standards and we can do better than Common Core. The emphasis on instructional text reading is a disservice to the goal of education that Ben Franklin and Thomas Jefferson espoused; the goal is happiness. A well-educated individual is taught English, mathematics, art and music. We can't forget about



Bartholomew County Council President Ryan Lauer.





**Councilman Lauer with former Vice President Quayle.**

these things. Instructional text reading is 70 percent and that pushes out literature. I think we need more innovation and flexibility. We in Bartholomew County know the challenges our students face. I believe the state is important in making sure that the schools are adequately funded and classroom sizes are low."

**Lauer would not divulge** where his campaign financing stands at this point. He announced his candidacy in January, after the year-end 2013 reporting deadline. "Things have been going very well," Lauer said. "I have had meet-and-greets with healthy attendance. I'm very comfortable in that I believe people would like to see a change."

Approached by many constituents, Lauer said, "I had to seriously consider it. The Republicans will have a choice for their state representative, a choice they have not had for over a decade. Having choices strengthens our system and is healthy for the Republican Party."

Lauer is part of an emerging new wave of Republicans in the Columbus area. He was on the campaign of Columbus Mayor Kristin Brown who was elected in 2011 with the goal of shaking up the local "good ol' boys network." Lauer himself was a new face on the county council.

Rep. Smith has a reputation as a pragmatic legislator. Local sources tell HPI that people view him as responsive and a good listener.

Smith told HPI he will discuss his campaign following the end of the current Indiana General Assembly session.

**As one local observer** told HPI on background, "Lauer has a base and a record, and we've seen a lot of change in recent elections. But, I think he's got a tall task to convince enough people to vote for him instead of Smith."

House Republican Campaign Committee sources tell HPI that in early polling, Rep. Smith has a considerable lead. That's not to say he's home free. Legislative races tend to get traction in the final two or three weeks when voters begin paying attention. The turnout will also be fairly low. **Primary Horse Race Status:** Leans Smith. ❖



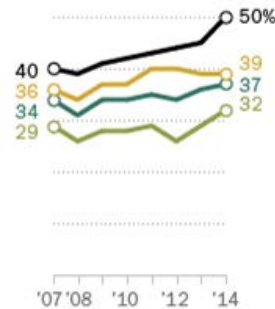
**GALLUP DAILY**

Mar 9-11, 2014 – Updates daily at 1 p.m. ET; reflects one-day change

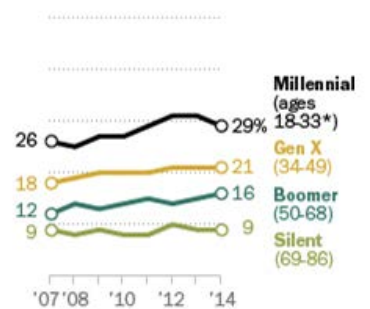
Obama Approval	43%	-2
Obama Disapproval	52%	+1

**Millennials: Unmoored from Institutions**

Percent who consider themselves political independents

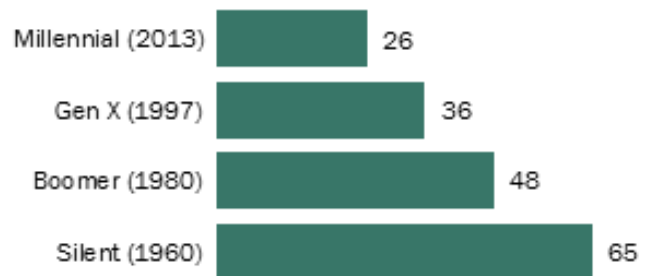


Percent of adults in each generation who are religiously unaffiliated



**The Decline in Marriage Among the Young**

% married at age 18 to 32, by generation

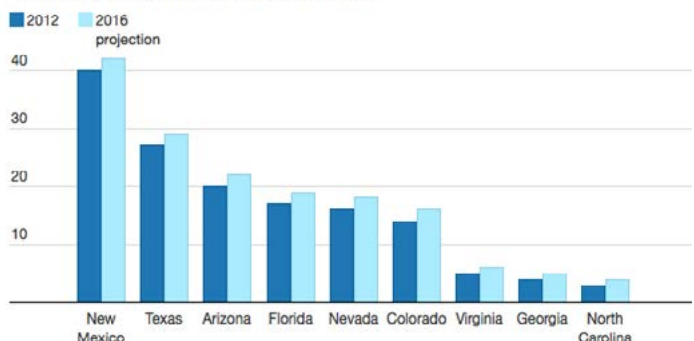


Source: Data from 1980, 1997 and 2013 are from the March Current Population Survey; 1960 data are from the 1960 Census

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER**

Latino electorate projected to grow in key states

Percent of eligible vote that is and will be Latino by state



# Language change stalls hunt/fish amendment

By MAUREEN HAYDEN  
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – A much-debated ban on same-sex marriage wasn't the only proposed constitutional amendment to get knocked off this November's ballot. Gone, too, is the less contentious proposal to protect Hoosiers' right to hunt and fish.

Backers of the measure say enshrining the right to "hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife" in Indiana's Constitution will protect the state's heritage from animal rights and anti-hunting activists. Without it, they fear, future generations of sportsmen will see limits on hunting seasons, more restrictions on hunting weapons, and increased protections for prey.



"There are people that don't believe you ought to hunt or fish," said Sen. Brent Steele,

R-Bedford, a longtime champion of the cause. "We need protection from them." But similar to the fate of the same-sex marriage amendment, a change to the hunting and fishing resolution's language – removing a phrase covering the right to farm – postpones any public vote until at least 2016.

As falling support and rising court challenges create doubts about the future of the marriage amendment, supporters of Senate Joint Resolution 9, the hunting and fishing amendment, predict success in the next legislative session.

"This thing has passed with a lot of support in the past, and it will again," said Steele.

At least 17 states have guaranteed the right to hunt and fish in their constitutions, with all but one of those measures passed since 1996 with support from hunting and gun advocacy groups. Backers in Indiana include the National Rifle Association and Protect the Harvest, an organization founded by Forrest Lucas, owner of Lucas Oil.

**Opponents of the** amendment say it addresses a threat that doesn't exist. "We think it's unnecessary," said Erin Huang, state director of the Humane Society of the United States. "Those rights aren't under attack."

The Humane Society is a target of criticism from the amendment's advocates. Steele says the organization is quietly working to undermine hunting and fishing rights, a charge the organization denies.

"They'd like you to think this is a manufactured crisis," said Steele, an avid hunter. "But if I were a virus and I wanted to kill the world, the way I would want you to believe is that I didn't exist. That way you'd never wash your hands, you'd never do anything to prevent me."

"I'm just trying to inoculate us," he added.

Huang's response: "We've never taken any measures to end traditional hunting."

The organization has, however, worked to shut down Indiana's high-fenced hunting preserves, which charge hunters for the chance to shoot deer confined inside the fences. A lawsuit challenging the legality of Indiana's five preserves is pending.

The Humane Society has also supported Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller's crackdown on puppy mills.

Huang says these positions aren't radical. "We're very mainstream," Huang said.

**The General Assembly** has been wrangling with the proposed hunting and fishing amendment since 1998, when now-retired Goshen lawmaker John Ulmer first proposed it. Ulmer was inspired by efforts he'd seen in other states. "I've hunted all my life, and I've hunted all over the world," Ulmer said. "I thought, this is something I could get behind." Dozens of legislators were willing to sign on as co-sponsors to the measure, but it didn't go anywhere that session.

It stayed stalled until 2005, when both legislative chambers passed it. But it needed to be passed again by a separate Legislature before it could go to voters – a requirement for any constitutional amendment to get on the ballot in Indiana. The measure failed the next time it was up in 2007.

It returned in 2011 with new language that sought to protect the right "to engage in the agricultural or commercial production of meat, fish, poultry, or dairy products." That version passed, though rules for amending the Constitution require the Legislature to twice pass identical language.

**Earlier this year**, lobbyists representing farmers pulled their support after opponents, led by the Hoosier Environmental Council, argued the amendment would prevent future laws protecting private landowners and regulations limiting factory farms and puppy mills.

Steele reluctantly pulled the farming language, blaming agricultural interests as gutless. "I told them to grow some horns because they're going to get run around the pasture, and there's no language that's going to mollify the opposition," he said at the time.

A newly worded resolution, minus the farming language, starts the process anew.

**MASS TRANSIT DEAL WITHOUT LIGHT RAIL:** Key legislators say they have reached a compromise on a bill that gives local officials in several counties the authority to expand mass transit in parts of central Indiana (Indianapolis Business Journal). Sen. Pat Miller, R-Indianapolis, who authored Senate Bill 176, said she plans to sign the conference committee report on mass transit, which makes it eligible for votes in the House and Senate. The bill will need a final vote in both chambers Thursday to move on to the governor's office for final consideration. The compromise language does not include a provision to establish a light-rail system or an increase in corporate taxes.

However, the legislation would still allow for an increase in individual income taxes pending voter approval. Both the Indiana House and Senate passed similar legislation to expand mass transit, but each version contained slightly different requirements, which resulted in the creation of a conference committee to iron out the critical details. Rep. Ed Delaney, D-Indianapolis, described the decision to exclude light rail from the bill by the conference committee as "a major blow, in my view, to the idea of transit." "I'm very disappointed," Delaney said. "This is supposed to be a local bill, where people can tax themselves locally for a system they want, and legislators decided what system we can't have. I think it's very unfortunate."

#### **CRIME CODE REFORMS POISED FOR PASSAGE:**

The Indiana House passed an update Wednesday to last year's massive criminal code reform, a measure Rep. Greg Steuerwald, R-Avon, called a "culmination of one of the largest collaborations on one bill in Indiana history." The Senate is expected to vote on the measure Thursday, the last day legislators are scheduled to work this session (Statehouse File). Aaron Negangard, the Dearborn and Ohio County prosecutor and chairman of the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Legislative Committee, said he is pleased to be at the end of the "long and difficult process." "Passage of this bill is critical for the public safety of the citizens of Indiana," he said.

**BOSMA SAYS \$400M COMING FOR ROADS:** Indiana would spend heavily on new road construction and launch a preschool pilot program under a pair of last-minute deals that Statehouse Republican leaders reached Wednesday (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The state would release \$400 million in two disbursements of \$200 million, with the second pending a review by budget leaders before the 2015 session begins. And the state would rely on \$10 million in funding saved in part through budget cuts and \$5 million in private donations to launch a preschool program for low-income residents. Republican House Speaker Brian Bosma said Wednesday night that legislative leaders had agreed on the compromises with Gov. Mike Pence. "The Senate was very creative and cooperative in helping us address some of their issues that they had about the program, and we just were persistent on it and stuck with it and kept providing solutions to the questions," Bosma told The Associated Press.

**REVISIONS IN GUN BILL:** A controversial bill allowing guns in parked cars on school property is being revised to address some concerns of gun opponents (Berggoetz, Indianapolis Star). But the final proposal was still being considered by lawmakers seeking a compromise late Wednesday. Even as revised, it's far from acceptable to gun opponents. The primary change made by lawmakers negotiating Senate Bill 229 is intended to clarify language that opponents thought would have allowed people to carry guns while on school parking lots or in school build-

ings. "There is no opportunity for people, other than those who are authorized by schools, to have firearms within school buildings or in school parking lots, unless they are locked in parked cars," said Sen. Brandt Hershman, R-Buck Creek, who helped rewrite the bill.

#### **ALLEN GOVERNMENT REVAMP MEANS VOTE IN**

**FALL:** Allen County residents will likely vote this fall on whether they want to move to a single county executive system of government (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). The Indiana Senate gave final approval Wednesday to a bill setting up the referendum. Gov. Mike Pence still has to weigh in when House Bill 1346 reaches his desk. "This is probably not a good thing for some of the smaller counties," said Sen. Tom Wyss, R-Fort Wayne. "But Allen County is unique because of its size. Some citizens have been asking for this for a couple of decades." Under the plan, a single county executive would exist alongside a larger county council with legislative and fiscal powers. It is similar to how a mayor and city council run a city.

**AGREEMENT NEAR ON PRE-K:** House Speaker Brian Bosma said Wednesday legislative leaders are near agreement on a pre-kindergarten pilot program that would go into effect next year (Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Senate Republicans still hadn't finalized the deal, though today is the final day of the 2014 session. Bosma said the proposal is for a five-county pilot program providing preschool to poor Hoosier children. The cost of the program is unknown, but Bosma said it would be funded by Gov. Mike Pence through reversions from the Family and Social Services Administration. Bosma said there would be a matching component to the program from private donors.

**SENATE ENDS COMMON CORE:** The Indiana Senate voted 35-13 Wednesday to void Common Core academic standards (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Senate Bill 91 now goes to Pence for his signature. The legislation is effectively moot because the State Board of Education has been writing new standards set to be approved possibly next month. The bill requires those new standards to be in place by July 1. Some Hoosiers have complained that the draft of new standards are eerily similar to Common Core. Sen. Scott Schneider, R-Indianapolis, withdrew his name from the bill he has championed for two years because of a reference in the bill to a federal waiver. He also voted against it, expressing concern that the process is being used to adopt Common Core under a different name. "In my opinion that will be a monumental violation of the public trust," Schneider said.

**BLIGHTED HOME BILL ADVANCES:** A plan to speed up the process of abandoned and vacant homes gaining new owners received final approval by the Indiana General Assembly on Wednesday and is now headed to Gov. Mike Pence for his consideration (Schneider, Evansville Courier & Press). ❖



# Applause for Pence, legislature on Pre-K

By **DAVE KITCHELL**

LOGANSPOUR – First, we should applaud Indiana lawmakers and Gov. Mike Pence for broaching the issue of pre-school education and using state money to pay for it. Generations of Indiana government officials from both parties have ignored this issue for too long, and at least they are willing to start the discussion over what we can do to help at-risk kids succeed in school.



The Indiana General Assembly, however, will not provide funding this year. Gov. Pence has indicated it should be time to at least provide “voucher scholarships” for children who really need pre-school education.

What’s sad about this story is that what Indiana is scratching the surface of doing is what the majority of other states already have done for many years. In fact, 40 states already provide some funding for pre-school education. This isn’t funding for parents who need babysit-

ters. It’s funding for at-risk children who will start school behind their peers and struggle from the outset, unless the government provides for them what their parents cannot or will not.

The federal government identified this problem in the 1960s. It produced a program known as Head Start which has been used in Cass, Pulaski, White and other Indiana counties to provide support for children.

**So why is this so** important? The pre-school years are when critical development occurs in a child’s brain. Their behavior, their reasoning and their ability to learn are all related to what their pre-school world is like. Perhaps most importantly, research finds that children learn to read until the third grade, but after third grade, they read to learn. Unfortunately, those children who don’t learn to read by the third grade don’t always get the help they need, and some never catch up. Is it their fault? Not really. But it’s their fate unless we do more to provide for this group of children.

A pilot program for preschool vouchers is probably not the answer, though well-intended. In fact, it’s like expecting a child’s chemistry set to do what a national laboratory does. We wouldn’t underfund research that’s vital to national interests, but we are underfunding the area that could produce future researchers, right here in Indiana. Expanding Head Start, which was specifically designed for at-risk children, is one answer that has proven to work. The urgency for using it is at hand because the poverty rate the nation faces now is worse than in 1965

when the program began. The nation’s population is much larger than in 1965, which means there are more children at risk when they enter school. In fact, we’re multiplying the at-risk child population because of the kind of child neglect that the Department of Family and Children doesn’t enforce, neglecting a child’s cognitive development.

**Lessons have been** learned from Head Start, and the national organization can support Indiana officials in creating programs specifically targeted for at-risk children. What’s more, there is federal funding available for Head Start programs that would defray the costs to Indiana taxpayers. If state and federal funding can be leveraged to provide greater opportunities for preschool education for at-risk children, we all win. At-risk children have a better chance of succeeding. Taxpayers pay less for providing the program. Education budgets will most likely be saved millions in remediation costs, including mandatory summer school and retention.

Let’s not just serve 1,000 children with a pilot program. Why not save all children at risk and get them off to the best start they can possibly have in elementary school by giving them a Head Start that millions of other American children already have. Yes, there are those who say Head Start doesn’t save every child, but shouldn’t we try? Shouldn’t Gov. Pence and Supt. Glenda Ritz be able to put their differences aside for this cause and let that be a new beginning for a collaborative, effective education policy for this state?

We’ve heard for several years now, “leave no child behind.” If we fail to act again to promote preschool education through programs such as Head Start, we’re intentionally leaving behind the children who need help the most. We’re making it harder for them to succeed in school, to graduate, to get a job and to become self-sufficient citizens who are going to raise their own children some day. It’s sort of like being the child who’s never chosen for a team to play kickball, or basketball, football or baseball. The people choosing up sides in education are choosing not to pick the kids who need it the most, and that kind of school funding bullying is starkly wrong.

The discussion has started, but the deliberation continues. Gov. Pence’s wife is a teacher, and if our First Lady takes the lead on any issue in this state, let’s hope it’s this one. If Glenda Ritz and the State Board of Education agree on one issue, let’s make it this one. If we want to improve our college attainment rates, let’s start here, starting now.

**If we can’t invest in** our children, we won’t invest in our future or theirs. We all see at-risk children in our neighborhoods, stores and school events. It’s time for us all to look at them and say, “There but for the grace of God go I” and help them, if only in this way.

The time has come to jump start education by expanding Head Start in Indiana. ❖

**Kitchell is an educator and columnist based in Logansport.**

# A longer view on the role of Congress

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – At a public gathering the other day, someone asked me how I’d sum up my views on Congress. It was a good question, because it forced me to step back from worrying about the current politics of Capitol Hill and take a longer view.

Congress, I said, does some things fairly well. Its members for the most part want to serve their constituents and the country. They may be ambitious — it’s hard to be a successful politician if you’re not — but they’re not motivated primarily by personal interest. Most are people of integrity who have chosen to try to advance the national interest and are willing to work within our agitated political environment.



They also strive to reflect their constituents’ views. They’re not always successful at this — I think members of Congress tend to under-appreciate voters’ pragmatism and over-estimate their ideological purity. Still, they’re politicians; their success rests on being accessible to their constituents, understanding what they want, and aligning themselves with that interest.

For all the attractive individual qualities that members of Congress display, however, their institutional performance falls short. Talented though they are, the institution they serve does not work very well. They argue endlessly, pander to contributors and powerful interests, posture both in the media and in countless public meetings, and in the end produce very little. They discuss and debate a lot of problems, but don’t create effective results.

**This may be because** many members of our national legislature have a constricted view of what it means to be a legislator. They’re satisfied with making a political statement by giving a speech, casting a vote, or getting a bill through the chamber they serve in, rather than writing legislation that will make it through both houses of Congress, get signed by the President, and become a law. Their aim seems to be partisan and ideological, rather than a constructive effort to solve the nation’s problems.

Similarly, they undermine their ability to oversee

the executive branch by conducting hearings for political gain rather than to scrutinize government activities or develop effective policy directives. Many of our representatives have become so reliant on their staff for knowledge about public policy and the details of federal agencies that in off-the-cuff debate they can be untethered and misinformed. Small wonder that Congress has had trouble being productive. The days appear to be over when members of Congress strove to be masters of their subject matter and legislators in fact as well as in name.

**Forced to spend so much time** raising money and listening to well-heeled people and groups, they also seem to have trouble seeing current affairs from the perspective of ordinary people. They fall captive to the politics of any given issue, rather than thinking about the much harder question of how you govern a country with all its residents in mind. They don’t see the necessity, in a divided Congress and a divided country, of negotiation and compromise.

Congressional tradition has created a legislative process that should encourage fact-finding, searching for remedies, and finding common ground. It should not work solely by majority rule; decisions spring from consultation with many voices, balancing minority and majority views, and fair-minded process. This is not what today’s members of Congress do, however. Instead, they short-circuit the committee process; fail to do their homework; dwell on talking points put together by staff and others; give too much power to their leaders; pay too little attention to deliberation; allow insufficient opportunity to debate and

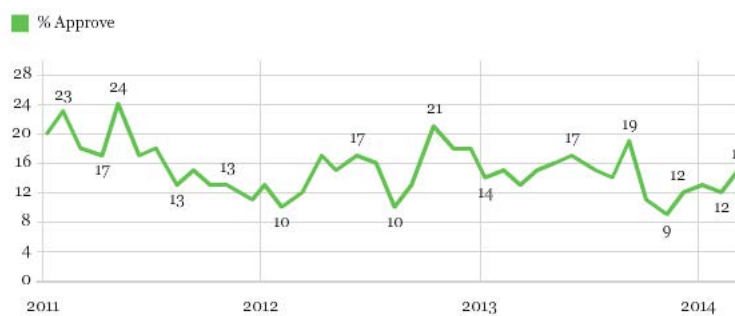
vote on major policy amendments; and in general make a mess of the budget — the basic operating instructions for the government.

Process may not be everything, but good process enhances the chance of getting things right — and with each passing year, Congress forgets more and more about what good process looks like.

Plenty of forces are responsible for this state of affairs, from the outsized role of money in the political process to today’s hyper-partisanship to TV-driven sound-bite debates. But in the end, it’s still a source of great frustration to the American people, me included, that well-meaning, talented individuals cannot make the institution work better. ❖

**Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.**

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?



Trend since January 2011; for earlier trends, see Gallup.com

GALLUP

# Steve Johnson was a voice of reason at the Statehouse

By MAUREEN HAYDEN  
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – When Steve Johnson, longtime advocate for Indiana’s county prosecutors, died unexpectedly last week at the age of 66, I tweeted that the Statehouse had lost “a quiet voice in a place of bombast.” Lisa Swaim, Cass County’s chief deputy prosecutor, described it differently. For prosecutors, she said, losing Johnson was like losing Superman.



Both are true. For the nearly 15 years that Johnson led the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council – and the 25 years he spent as its research director – he exhibited both the mild manner and man-of-steel qualities admired by so many.

“He was the most knowledgeable man I ever met about Indiana criminal law,” said lawyer and state Senate President David

Long. “And his word was his bond.”

Being one of the smartest guys in the Statehouse is impressive. Being one of the most trusted, even more so.

On criminal law Johnson was a go-to expert for legislators from both parties.

As his successor, David Powell, told me: “He didn’t embellish.”

That was Johnson’s value. He was an effective advocate for prosecutors and victims of crime, but he didn’t make his case with hyperbole.

Three years ago, then-Gov. Mitch Daniels named Johnson a Distinguished Hoosier, a high honor given at the discretion of the governor to citizens who bring admiration and respect to the state through their character and accomplishments.

**There was some irony** in the award. That same year, it was Johnson who helped stop the legislative locomotive that Daniels was driving to slash prison costs and ease the state’s budget woes. Quietly but persistently questioning the bill’s premise, Johnson argued that there had to be a better way to reduce the prison population without endangering public safety.

His work continued even after retirement. Still consulting for the Prosecuting Attorneys Council, Johnson was laboring over a legislative rewrite of Indiana’s antiquated criminal code when he died at home in Hendricks

County.

Tears were shed for him at the Statehouse. Some came from a Logansport lawmaker, Sen. Randy Head, who’s married to that Cass County prosecutor who called Johnson “Superman.”

Head said Johnson had to come to his rescue years ago, when as an inexperienced young prosecutor Head was embroiled in a difficult drug case involving a witness threatened with death. Head said Johnson’s expert



knowledge of the law helped save the day.

Years later, as a legislator, Head saw Johnson’s other role as one of the Legislature’s respected expert witnesses. “If there was an issue that aroused a lot of passion, if there was controversy and people upset, Steve Johnson always brought calm to the debate,” Head said. “He was able to correct things so people were having a discussion about the

issue and not about the personalities.

“That’s incredibly valuable here, where we have a lot of strong personalities and a lot of controversy,” Head added.

**Evidence came in** the form of Larry Landis, longtime advocate for Indiana’s public defenders, who was one of Johnson’s most trusted partners in the crime-and-punishment debates. Together they illustrated the role of civil debate in our messy democracy.

Johnson loved his work, but he loved his family more. He spoke often of how proud he and his wife of 47 years, Susie, were of their four children and eight grandchildren.

Their loss is Indiana’s loss, too.

“He was such a gentleman,” Head told me, paying his colleague what may be the ultimate compliment. “More people ought to raise their sons to be just like Steve Johnson.” ❖

**Maureen Hayden covers the Statehouse for the CNHI newspapers in Indiana. She can be reached at [maureen.hayden@indianamedia.com](mailto:maureen.hayden@indianamedia.com). Follow her on Twitter @MaureenHayden**



# City transit questions go unanswered

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS - Trust those witty folks in the Indiana General Assembly to keep confounding us simple Hoosiers.

Last week, I praised the passage of HB 1020 calling for a study of economic incentives. I made the unforgivable mistake of working off a press release. What I discovered later was the bill itself is a 160-page document laying down the law for all sorts of matters dealing with economic development. Naïve as I am, I had endorsed a whole bill, most of which I could not understand.



As this column is being written, the legislature has yet to decide if the voters of selected Central Indiana counties will be allowed to vote on a mass transit proposal. Presumably, this bill would improve bus service within, into and out of Marion County. Some new type of bus would be used to swish commuters to and

from Hamilton County. Johnson County also might get similar swooshing service.

Note that the idea of rail (light or heavy) has been deleted from the current discussion. That does not mean it will not reappear in the final bill. Our incredible legislature is capable of adding or subtracting anything about anything up to the final act of passage, which occurs whenever the leadership deems it appropriate.

It is difficult to be against improving public transit in the Indianapolis area. The past and current IndyGo system is a model of inadequacy. Improvements, made elsewhere decades earlier, are still not in place in Indianapolis.

Northwest Indiana too is debating important questions about bus and rail service.

**Should the South Shore** Line from Chicago to South Bend be extended into the wilds of Munster and beyond? Here, unlike Indianapolis, a rail line exists that already provides mediocre service to commuters and inferior service to off-peak riders.

Will an extension of the South Shore from Hammond improve the existing service? Or will such an extension merely draw off existing commuters?

The idea behind the South Shore extension is that more Lake County residents will have access to high-paying jobs in the central business core of Chicago. As far as I know, no one knows where in Illinois Indiana residents work today, and where the job growth will occur tomorrow.

Who currently rides the South Shore? Are they low- or high-paid workers? How will these destination jobs fare in the future? How does the remarkable growth of housing in the core of Chicago influence the future job market for Indiana workers?

And that's only the start of the questions needed to be asked and answered before citizens of Lake County can be expected to make informed decisions about using their taxes for this project.

South Bend, Terre Haute, Fort Wayne and Evansville – plus many smaller cities – have transit agonies and aspirations. The only (small) hope for funding is the federal government, since the state shows little interest in the serious problems of our urban areas. ❖

**Morton Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at [mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com](mailto:mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com).**

# 2 Region mayors deal with land issues

By **RICH JAMES**

MERRILLVILLE – Two of Northwest Indiana's newest and most progressive mayors are battling through controversies that involve land issues. And someone who used to report on the political doings here and around the state is looking at a career in the General Assembly.



But first, the mayors. In Hobart, Mayor Brian Snedecor faces a constituency that is irate over the possibility of an immigration detention center coming to town. GEO Group, a Florida-based company that builds and operates correctional and detention facilities around the world, purchased Hobart property in November. The firm acquired 40 acres of land east of Interstate 65 near Robinson Lake, property formerly owned by St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church. The land and its possible future use has been a center of controversy for years.

**Snedecor, in an attempt** to quell an uprising, recently told opponents of a detention center that the city was "not even close" to a formal proposal with GEO on a possible plan to build such a facility. But the mayor's comments haven't pacified residents who don't like the idea of what they call a "prison" being built in their city.

The opponents said at a rally last week that they

plan immediate action despite what the mayor had to say. Within a week, the opponents said petitions will be circulated around the city, and signs will appear in windows and on lawns.

On the other hand, the facility would bring about 250 high-paying jobs to an area that continues to battle high unemployment and would mean additional revenue for the city.

**Ten miles to the southwest,** Mayor David Urban has a different kind of problem. At issue is property immediately to the west of the award-winning downtown square that houses the grandest county courthouse in the state. The 2.7 acres of land owned by the Crown Point Community School Corp. once housed the school's bus garage. When the schools built a new high school a few years back, they essentially abandoned the property, which has become an eyesore.

Urban wants the property to serve as a year-round venue for city festivals and concerts that currently are held on the town square. He also plans an ice rink for winter. The property would provide parking that isn't now avail-

able for events on the courthouse square.

Urban wants the school corporation to turn over the property to the city, but the schools have said no. They want to be paid. Urban rightly said it makes no sense for city taxpayers to pay a second time for what they had bought years ago.

On a final note, longtime Post-Tribune reporter and editor Robert Ashley is venturing into politics. Ashley, who has been a freelance writer for 20 years, is the unopposed Democratic candidate for District 32 state representative. He will face longtime Republican Rep. Eric Turner, the author of the constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage and one of the state's most conservative legislators.

Ashley covered the General Assembly for almost two decades. He lives in Tipton. ❖

**Rich James has been writing about state and local government and politics for more than 30 years. He is a columnist for The Times of Northwest Indiana.**

## Dave Bangert, Lafayette Journal & Courier:

During this General Assembly session, John Zody, chairman of the Indiana Democratic Party, hasn't missed many chances to paint a Republican supermajority in the House and Senate as a problem voters can't let go unchecked — a problem his party needs to fix. Zody isn't suggesting Democrats can erase his party's minority status in the 2014 midterm elections in November, not when Republicans have a 69-31 split in the House and 37-13 advantage in the Senate. "A goal would be to help chip away at that supermajority," Zody said. "We have to be realistic. ... We have to know we're not going to be back in the majority overnight." But where are the candidates? By Feb. 7, the filing deadline to get a name on the May 6 primary ballot, Democrats came up blank on 11 of 25 Senate seats up for election in November and 37 of the 100 seats in the House. (Comparison: Republicans fielded candidates in 23 of 25 Senate races and 82 of 100 House races.) Both parties have until June 30 to fill those open slots on the ballot. But for a party looking for some bounce in 2014, staring at a 38 percent vacancy rate is funny way to start.

Look no further than Tippecanoe County for your case in point, where the choices could be sparse in November. Four of the five General Assembly seats that are held by Republicans, have districts in Tippecanoe County and are up for election in November have no Democratic challenger. That includes races featuring Sen. Ron Altling (District 22), and Reps. Randy Truitt (District 26), Tim Brown (District 41) and Sharon Negele (District 13). (Rep. Don Lehe, a Brookston Republican, faces a primary and

general election opponent in District 25. Sen. Brandt Hershman, a Buck Creek Republican, doesn't face re-election until 2016.) In a year when an incensed left coalesced to hold off a proposed constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage — for 2014, at least — why the thin crowd at election time? Is it a lack of motivation? Zody said that wouldn't be fair, at least to those who have been approached to run in Tippecanoe County and across the state. "It's never a matter of, 'I don't want to be part of what you're doing,'" he said. He chalks up the rejections to family matters, careers and time, on the campaign trail and in public office if victorious. Heather Maddox, chairwoman of the Tippecanoe County Democratic Party, said she's still trying to coax some people to run. (She and Zody didn't name names.) "But it's hard, I can tell you that," Maddox said. "People really aren't anxious to

get in there, what with how expensive it can be and how much time you're talking about. I think people understand the commitment and want someone who really gets that to get in the race. Whether they think that's them, that's a whole different story." Is it a lack of a bench of Greater Lafayette Democrats being groomed to run later? "There's probably some of that," Maddox says. Is it a certain satisfaction, regardless of party, with the incumbents Greater Lafayette has? That certainly has carried Lafayette Democrat Sheila Klinker through the years. Despite fielding opponents of varying qualifications since she was first elected in 1982, Klinker has earned a reputation among local Republicans as a Democrat not worth chasing down in any concerted way. ❖



## Chelsea Schneider, Evansville Courier &

**Press:** A new report showing Indiana's tax collections continue to fall below projections may play a role in final negotiations as the Indiana General Assembly prepares to wrap up this week. More than halfway through the fiscal year, Indiana's revenue is down \$90 million than anticipated compared to a forecast released in December. Even more concerning to the Indiana Senate's lead budget writer is the report showing revenue is still behind what was collected the previous year — a trend Republican Sen. Luke Kenley called unusual. Gov. Mike Pence contributed February's numbers — which alone fell about \$54.1 million below projections — to the severe winter weather and said the report was not "unexpected." Responding to the report on Friday, Kenley acknowledged the weather's role but cast a broad view on the position of the state's tax collections eight months into the fiscal year. "When I talk, I'm talking about the eight month figure, I don't know how much snow we had last July, August and September but it wasn't much," Kenley said. "I'm focusing on the bigger picture, and I'm still seeing things that are concerning." Kenley has scaled back two of Pence's proposals — creating a study of early childhood education before agreeing to fund prekindergarten vouchers and halving the governor's original request for road funding to \$200 million. In those moves, Kenley has argued the state needs to take a wait-and-see approach on revenue as lawmakers head into the 2015 session where the next state budget will be written. "When the governor presented his plan — and he has a different style than any governor that we've had since I've been here in this regard — he posed these different ideas the pre-K, the personal property business plan, but he didn't put a lot of guardrails around it," Kenley said. "He just sent it to the Legislature and said give me your thoughts on these subjects." Executing those plans depends on having the money to do it, Kenley said in a briefing on Friday. "It may not be quite according to his timetable or wishes on some of those things but he didn't put it to us that way," Kenley said. "He said let's get this thing right." ❖



**Doug Ross, NWI Times:** Calumet Township Trustee Mary Elgin is running for re-election, but she's not running from controversy. Neither should Indiana Gov. Mike Pence. Elgin met Thursday afternoon with The Times Editorial Board to address criticism — by me, among others — over township spending. Elgin was spotted using her township-owned vehicle to visit her campaign headquarters. That raised all sorts of questions about the township's fleet. The fleet has shrunk dramatically since Elgin took office 11 years ago. But cutting spending remains urgent. The township is under the gun to reduce spending on poor relief to no more than 12 times the state average. If not, Griffith could hold a referendum on seceding from Calumet Township. That would ease the tax burden in Griffith

but exacerbate it elsewhere. Between property tax caps and the incredibly low property tax collection rate, hitting that target is harder than it looks. Calumet Township has to ask for twice as much as it expects to collect because the tax collection rate is so low. That's a rare problem in Indiana. Elgin is suing Indiana to set aside this state law. She makes a good argument in saying the township needs more guidance from the state in determining eligibility for assistance. "The statute says every 30 days they're eligible, but the state says we do too much," she complained. She said each intake interview with a client to determine eligibility takes 45 minutes. That's 60,000 man-hours a year for Calumet Township, she said. It's also an opportunity for Pence. Then-Gov. Mitch Daniels tried to streamline the welfare intake process by hiring IBM to handle it. It was a failure. Pence could capitalize on this situation. He should appoint a blue ribbon panel to study welfare in its various forms, including township assistance, with an eye toward making the process more efficient. Daniels did that for local government reform. Not all of the Kernan-Shepard recommendations were implemented, and I'll keep reminding both elected officials and the public about the remaining reforms Indiana needs. But that report did set the bar for reform, which is what welfare — everything from urgent rent and utility bill assistance to health care bills — needs. ❖

**Cecil Bohanon, Muncie Star Press:** As a former cigarette smoker, I have a nightmare. Somewhere down the road I get a diagnosis of lung cancer. The doctor tells me the the cancer is treatable, the prospects for a full recovery are better than 60 percent and the costs of the treatments will be around \$250,000. Now let's change the scenario. The doctor tells me the cancer is difficult to treat but there is hope. A regimen is available at a cost of \$5 million with the chance for recovery under 10 percent. Most people would make the following call: I should get the treatment in the first case, but should prepare to meet the Lord soon in the second case. But wait, isn't health care a right? Aren't I entitled to the best health care available independent of costs? What constitutes a "right" is a place where classical liberals (aka libertarians) and progressives dramatically part ways. To classical liberals, rights are God-given or natural and "negative" in form. A right implies one is free to engage in an activity. A right does not guarantee, however, the resources necessary to engage in the activity. My right makes no claim on your property. An instructive example is religious liberty. I am free to practice my Anglican faith and you are free to be a Wiccan. Religious liberty, however, does not entail — is in fact at odds with — the Wiccan being coerced to pay for my chapel. Neither of us is entitled to a place of worship but both us can, along with our compatriots, build and support our respective places of worship. ❖



## Ballard unveils violence measures

INDIANAPOLIS - Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard and Public Safety Director Troy Riggs joined a host of other city and community leaders Wednesday to unveil an anti-violence initiative six months in the making that he characterized as a much-needed, community-led step toward reducing crime and creating a path to success for the city's most criminally inclined residents (Indianapolis Star). Dubbed "Your Life Matters," the initiative specifically targets the reduction of black-on-black crime, Ballard said, and will rely on a series of public service announcements to turn troubled youths toward mentorship programs, job opportunities, family counseling services and re-entry services for ex-offenders. "We lose more young men of color to murder than we do to car crashes or disease," Ballard said. "This current pattern of violence is robbing us of an entire generation of young men of color, and it must stop." Ballard pledged a \$75,000 investment in the Connect2Help 211 telephone service. New public service announcement spots highlighting the initiative and its anti-violence message are airing every hour on Radio One networks.



County, passed by a 5-2 margin while the resolution to go out for up to \$21 million in bonds to pay for it all moved through with a 4-3 margin. Councilwoman Christine Cid, D-East Chicago, and Councilman Dan Dernulc, D-Highland, opposed both measures. Cid said she cannot support the consolidation and its budget as currently outlined because the annual operating budget exceeds the property tax transfer from the 14 participating communities and the amount the county was expecting to contribute from the public safety income tax revenues. "Right now the public safety income tax is over-committed," Cid said.

## 50% of students on lunch program

TERRE HAUTE - Nearly 50 percent of Indiana public school students receive free or reduced-cost meals through the federal school-lunch program (Loughlin, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). That's up from 34.7 percent in 2004, according to the Indiana Youth Institute. In the Vigo County School Corp., 56.4 percent of students are on free/reduced-cost lunches; two schools have 90 percent or more on free/reduced lunches; and another six schools have a rate of 80 percent or more. The increasing rate statewide "closely mirrors the increase in child poverty rates," said Bill Stanczykiewicz, IYI chief executive officer. One quarter of Indiana kids now live in poverty, he said, a trend that goes back to 2000, not the Great Recession of 2008-09, which "poured fuel on a fire that was already burning."

## Connersville in fiscal crisis

CONNERSVILLE - The City of Connersville is in financial trouble and the mayor said immediate cuts at the

expense of public safety are necessary to get back on track. Connersville Police Department Chief David Counciller oversees 20 officers that patrol the streets of Connersville to keep the city safe. To get the job done, those officers ring up \$12,000 a month in overtime at times. That is money that will not be available anymore. "We're going to have to tighten up our financial strings on the police department," Counciller said. Mayor Leonard Urban declared a financial emergency this week. He said it is a formal and necessary process to make immediate budget cuts. Urban said at the beginning of the year, the city had just over \$2 million in its general fund, but by May, that fund will be reduced to just more than \$14,000 unless changes are made. That means no overtime for public safety, no money for new uniforms, a rationing of fuel costs and all city projects will be halted. "Hopefully I don't have to lay anybody off, but that would be the next step here. We would lay people off," Urban said.

## Ex-Bloomington official indicted

BLOOMINGTON - A former Bloomington projects manager who federal prosecutors allege stole hundreds of thousands of dollars in public funds has been charged with embezzlement and conspiracy (Associated Press). The U.S. attorney's office in Indianapolis said Wednesday that 43-year-old Justin Wykoff faces 24 counts of embezzlement for allegedly approving fraudulent invoices, often for concrete work that was never done. He also has been charged with one count of conspiracy. Investigators say Wykoff, who was taken to Marion County Jail prior to an afternoon hearing, stole more than \$800,000 from the city and split it with two other men involved in the scheme. He could face up to 10 years on each count if convicted.

## E-911 agreement in Lake County

CROWN POINT - Crown Point - A divided county council Tuesday was able to approve both the final interlocal agreement for the E-911 consolidation and the resolution authorizing the bond to pay for the anticipated \$21 million project (Post-Tribune). The interlocal agreement, which has been signed by 14 of the 18 public safety answering points in Lake