



HPI Horse Race fall election forecast

Handicapping statewides, CD and legislative general races

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The major party conventions are over, as are the May primaries. Now it's time to make our initial general election cycle forecasts for statewide, Congressional and General Assembly races.



This being President Obama's second mid-term, and with his personal unpopularity as well as that of Obamacare in the state, we start with an overall template that would appear to favor Republicans. Factor in the lack of a major top ticket race featuring a presidential, gubernatorial or U.S. Senate contest, and this means we won't see nearly the amount of money that spilled into the state in 2006 when the Democrats picked up three Congressional seats,



or 2010 when Republicans began to forge their legislative super majorities.

Having said that, we've seen conventional wisdom fly out the window before. In 1998, with President Clinton facing the specter of impeachment, that midterm was supposed to favor the GOP. What happened was the Democrats ran the table on seven contested Indiana House seats and retook the lower chamber.

We've also seen the unsettled nature of Republi-

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Republicans and polling

By **CHRISTINE MATTHEWS**

WASHINGTON – Do Republicans know how to conduct polls anymore?

In 2012, many Republican polls presented a far rosier picture for their candidates than the public polls or those conducted by Democrats. This resulted in the infamous "uns skew" the polls movement in which Republicans insisted their polls were right and the others were wrong.



Romney's pollster argued that many of the polls showing Obama up did not screen properly for likely voters and that the 2012 electorate



"I think we get to the second ballot. All bets are off. Once we get to the second ballot, people are gonna say, 'You know what? Whoa. I didn't realize.'"

- U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman on today's House leadership vote for majority whip



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would differ in composition from the 2008 electorate.

Turns out that wasn't true. 2012 did look a lot like 2008.

Last week's shocking primary loss for House Majority Leader Eric Cantor once again raised doubts about Republican polling.

Eric Cantor's pollster, John McLaughlin (who was also the pollster for U.S. Senate candidate Richard Mourdock), released a pre-election poll with Cantor up 34 points (62% to 28%) over the ultimate winner, Dave Brat, a little known, underfunded Randolph Macon University college professor. Cantor claims he was "absolutely shocked" by his loss.

How could his polling have been so terribly off course?

Primary polling is always a challenge and general election polling - done right - is hard and becoming harder. However, this is not just a Republican challenge, it's a survey research challenge. So why do Republican pollsters seem to stumble more than Democrats?

Like a Facebook relationship status, it's complicated.

Many Republican pollsters are getting things right, but too many are not. There is definitely a polling problem on the Republican side, but there is also a gate-keeper problem.

Usually a campaign's pollster is chosen by the campaign manager or general consultant with little input from the candidate. In many cases the campaign manager or consultant decides on the basis of past relationships and not performance: "We've always used pollster X."

Although McLaughlin's Virginia polling in 2012 predicted victory for Romney and U.S. Senate candidate George Allen - both lost - there seemed to be no concern about hiring him for Eric Cantor's race. Even after last week's loss, the Cantor campaign's general consultant, Ray Allen, insisted that John McLaughlin is "one

of the absolute best in the business." So, performance is not always the metric.

So what is impacting the performance of Republican polls? There are countless sources of total survey error, including question wording,



question order and even calling on a night when everyone is at the big game. But, there are two key fundamentals that seem to be behind the Republican polling problem:

1. Incorrectly forecasting and modeling the electorate.

Calibrating the composition of the electorate is where art and science go hand in hand. It is this initial formulation (or recalibration of it during the campaign) that decides whether the information coming out of the survey will reflect what happens on Election Day. Otherwise, it's like asking the average person which movie should win an Oscar. All very interesting, but the only people who will decide are the 6,000 voting members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

In McLaughlin's polling for Cantor, he sampled only voters who had voted in a recent Republican primary. It is reasonable to posit that if a voter has not voted in a Republican primary in the past, then they are not all that likely to vote in this one. Like Indiana, Virginia has an open primary not limited to Republican voters and turns out 20,000 more people voted in 2014 than in 2012.

The Gallup organization in 2012 had a very high profile miss with their final pre-election poll showing Romney up 49%-48%. The polling firm employed a seven-part likely voter screen that, turns out, effec-

tively screened out actual 2012 voters.

Factors beyond past vote history or even expressed interest in voting impact who turns out – including the campaigns' outreach and turnout efforts.

So, is the lesson to loosen the likely voter screen and, in primaries, include those who haven't participated in the past? Yes and No.

In 2013, Gallup conducted methodological experiments in two high profile gubernatorial races in Virginia and New Jersey to test the accuracy of likely voter screens and found that, in New Jersey, their likely voter screens were all less accurate than a full sample of registered voters. In Virginia, they found the opposite: A likely voter model was the most accurate.

Democratic pollsters have access to better information right now to help them sort this out. Their voter lists contain not only past vote history, but individual voter scores, to help them determine the composition of the electorate based on several data points. Republicans are working to catch up in this area, but aren't there yet.

2. Failing to employ methods to reach the right people to interview

One of the biggest challenges facing pollsters is getting the right mix of voters to complete surveys. Survey responses rates to telephone interviews are about 9%. In their 2013 polling, Gallup experimented with three dif-

ferent methods: Telephone polls using a combination of landline and cell phones; online polling using Google Consumer Surveys, and online polling using an internet panel.

What Gallup found was that the combination of landline and cell phones was the most accurate. Online polling will evolve and pollsters will continue to incorporate online methods, but for now, landlines and cell phones are still the preferred method.

However, the mix of cell phones to landlines is important. In January, highly respected Pew Research decided to go to a composition of 60% cell phone and 40% landline for their surveys.

Many GOP pollsters call 25% to 30% cell phones, which is an improvement over 2012, but still rather arbitrary considering the population is 40% cell phone only and nearly 20% cell phone mostly – making 60% of the people you need to reach available only by cell phone.

Why don't pollsters on the Republican side follow Pew's example? It costs significantly more and, honestly, the market won't bear it.

There are plenty of pollsters willing to do it much cheaper and campaigns don't understand the methodological differences. ❖

Matthews is president of Bellwether Research and Consulting.

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can statewide races. In 2008 and 2012, there was a sharp dropoff between the top of the Republican ticket and the statewide offices, with the Democrats actually picking off the superintendent of public instruction in 2012. There have been three resignations, one due to the felony conviction of Secretary of State Charlie White, and then the auditor shakeups involving Tim Berry transitioning to Republican chairman and Dwayne Sawyer mysteriously resigning. This resulted in the ascension of Secretary of State Connie Lawson and Auditor Suzanne Crouch. So no one on the Republican statewide ticket – for the first time in history all female – has been before Indiana voters. So that adds to the potential unpredictability of this cycle.



There is only one congressional race that appears competitive, and a number of Democratic nominees in these federal races just aren't raising any money. It's unlikely that any of the statewide Democrats will tap into the

kind of money that could influence down-ballot legislative races.

Here are our early forecasts for the fall cycle:

Statewides

Secretary of State: Secretary of State Connie Lawson (R) v. Beth White (D), Karl Tatgenhorst (L).

Convention status: Both unopposed and unanimously nominated. **General forecast:** This is the one statewide the Democrats have a shot at. White is the Marion County clerk and can count on a big plurality in Indianapolis. Lawson, of Danville, was appointed to the position by Gov. Mitch Daniels after the convicted

Charlie White was forced from office with a felony. White will attempt to portray Lawson as a Republican making it harder for minorities to vote. Republicans will highlight White's first election as clerk when a number of polls did not open on time. With no presidential, gubernatorial and U.S. Senate race on the ballot this year, this race will be the focal point, but there will not be much money to run

a lot of gross rating points. This being President Obama's second midterm election and with his approval numbers low and the unpopularity of Obamacare and, perhaps, the new EPA regulations, it's hard to make the case that this will be a Democratic year. Having said that, the GOP track record in statewide races in the last three cycles is not what it used to be and the resignations of Charlie White and Auditor Dwayne Sawyer will give Democrats some talking points. In 2010, Libertarian Mike Wherry won 6% of the vote. Tatgenhorst is a technology executive from Porter County. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Lawson.

Treasurer: Kelly Mitchell (R) v. Mike Boland (D). Convention status: Mitchell won a three-ballot showdown over Marion Mayor Wayne Seybold and Don Bates Jr., 1st ballot: Seybold 519, Mitchell 512, Bates 467; 2nd ballot: Mitchell 564, Seybold 488, Bates 390; 3rd ballot: Mitchell 860, Seybold 497; Boland was unanimously nominated. **General forecast:** Boland is a former Illinois legislator and lieutenant governor candidate who moved to Indiana in 2012. That right there is an albatross around his neck, let alone that Illinois taxpayers were facing a \$100 billion pension shortfall. So Mitchell and Republicans will pound away at the Sucker Carpetbagger. Democrats will do everything they can to link Mitchell to out-going Treasurer Richard Mourdock, who has been a one-man wrecking crew with his fire aimed at fellow Republicans. His 2012 U.S. Senate nomination nearly cost Mike Pence the governorship, didn't help in Supt. Tony Bennett's upset to Glenda Ritz, and cost several Indiana House seats. Women fled the GOP in droves in the final days of the campaign, all due to Mourdock's debate comments on rape. Mourdock's comments comparing Nazi Germany to the U.S. stole some of Mitchell's rightful thunder (she ran a great floor campaign). But unless Evan Bayh decides to fork over some of his \$9.8 million war chest, it's hard to see Democrats putting much financial heft behind Boland. That money will likely go toward making some inroads in the Indiana House. There is one option, which would be to use the Mourdock vilification process to not only taint Mitchell, but the entire ticket. But as you've read above, this is not shaping up to be much of a Democratic year. It's hard to see Boland pulling this one off. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Mitchell.



Auditor: Auditor Suzanne Crouch (R) v. Mike Claytor (D). Convention status: Both were unanimously nominated. **General status:** That Claytor has returned from Florida to run for auditor gives Indiana Republicans two statewide races to stress the "carpetbagger" Demo-

cratic invasion. Claytor, of course, had a long accounting career in Indiana before retiring. His problem will be a likely lack of funds to make much of an impression. Crouch will do well in GOP areas and in the Evansville market, where she was a highly esteemed legislator. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Crouch.

Congress

1st CD: Rep. Pete Visclosky (D) v. Mark Leyva. Primary results: Visclosky 3,446; Leyva 12,738. **General forecast:** This will be yet another slam dunk for Visclosky over this perennial Republican candidate. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Visclosky.

2nd CD: Rep. Jackie Walorski (D) v. Joe Bock (D). Primary results: Walorski 28,641; Bock 11,103, Dan Morrison 3,540, Bob Kern 2,634, Douglas Carpenter 1,837. **General forecast:** Walorski won a closer-than-expected 134,033 to 130,113 victory over Democrat Brendan Mullen in a district that was supposed to have been much more friendly to Republicans. In 2010, Walorski nearly upset U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly in the old 2nd, losing by less than 3,000 votes. Walorski is known as a tenacious campaigner with a loyal Tea Party following, though after entering Congress continually stressed her willingness to work in a bipartisan fashion. Her vote to shut down the government in 2013 gives Bock an opening to paint her as part of the



problem in Washington. But in recent months, beginning with her work to highlight the military sexual assault issue, and then morphing into her tearful outrage over the Veterans

Administration, has earned Walorski a national reputation. Those are powerful issues (and ones also espoused by Sen. Donnelly) that give 2nd CD voters an evolving view of the freshman Republican. Walorski has raised more than \$1.1 million, almost four times that of Bock. Given the election dynamic that appears to be trending away from Democrats, this has the potential of being Walorski's most successful congressional race to date, but the cycle has not set up yet, and this is the lone Indiana CD race to watch. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Walorski.

3rd CD: U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman (R) v. Justin Kuhnle. Primary results: Kuhnle 2,893, Jim Redmond 2,597, Tommy A. Schrader 28,05; Republican: Stutzman

48,837, Mark William Baringer 5,868, James (Jim) E. Mahoney III, 5,094. **General forecast:** Stutzman should cruise to an easy third term in what has been an eventful second term in the House. He was an early proponent of the strategy which resulted in the government shutdown in 2013, one that was widely seen as backfiring on the GOP and earning the House Republicans the "Worst Week in Washington" designation from the Washington Post. Stutzman was punished by House leadership, but now finds himself vying for Republican majority whip following the stunning upset of Majority Leader Eric Cantor last week. Stutzman has the luxury of a supportive, ardently conservative and evangelical district, and he has espoused the Tea Party strain of leadership in the House. Kuhnle is simply the Democrats' sacrificial lamb who has raised under \$1,000 for the cycle while Stutzman has passed \$800,000. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Stutzman.

4th CD: U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita (R) v. John Dale (D), Joe Bowman (L). Primary results: Rokita 43,179, Kevin Grant 17,472; Dale 3,742, Roger Day 3,742, Jeff Blaydes 1,332, Howard Polichik 778, John Futrell 754. **General**

Race	All Candidates	Amount Raised
District 01	Pete Visclosky (D)*	\$596,796
	Mark J. Leyva (R)	\$2,630
District 02	Jackie Walorski (R)*	\$1,147,590
	Joe Bock (D)	\$334,105
District 03	Marlin Stutzman (R)*	\$832,704
	Justin Kuhnle (D)	\$816
District 04	Todd Rokita (R)*	\$964,945
	John Dale (D)	\$4,454
	Joe Bowman (L)	\$0
District 05	Susan Brooks (R)*	\$941,891
	Shawn Denney (D)	\$225
	John Krom (L)	\$0
District 06	Luke Messer (R)*	\$688,551
	Susan Hall Heitzman (D)	\$0
District 07	Andre Carson (D)*	\$699,892
	Catherine Ping (R)	\$0
District 08	Larry Bucshon (R)*	\$749,190
	Andy Horning (L)	\$2,416
	Tom Spangler (D)	\$0
District 09	Todd Young (R)*	\$1,302,206
	Bill Bailey (D)	\$23,134

Data last updated: 06/16/2014.

forecast: It's a bit of an eye-opener that 17,000 Republicans voted against Rokita in the primary. But he sits on a hefty war chest and faces an unknown opponent, though David Brat was pretty much in the same position in Virginia 7 last week. Dale is a social studies teacher at Western Boone High School who lives in Tippecanoe County. If something astounding like the Cantor upset were to happen in Indiana, this could be the district, but we're not betting any money on it. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Rokita.

5th CD: U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks (R) v. Shawn Denney (D), John Krom (L). Primary results: Brooks 34,996, David Stockdale 7,327, David Campbell 5,790; Denney 6,041, David Ford 4,856, Allen Davidson 3,660. **General forecast:** Brooks easily swatted away Tea Party opponents and will easily win reelection as the Democrat has raised less than \$500. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Brooks.

6th CD: U.S. Rep. Luke Messer (R) v. Susan Hall Heitzman (D). Primary results: Messer 49,094; Heitzman 9,078, Lane Siekman 5,574, Corinne Westerfield 4,151. **General forecast:** The freshman class president should easily defeat Heitzman, a former educator who runs a bed-and-breakfast inn in North Vernon. She also ran for Congress in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Messer.

7th CD: U.S. Rep. André Carson v. Catherine "Cat" Ping. Primary results: Carson 19,446, Curtis Godfrey 1,209, Pierre Quincy Pullins, 390, Mmoja Ajabu 782. **General forecast:** Carson will effortlessly return for a fourth term. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Carson.

8th CD: U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon (R) v. Tom Spangler (D), Andrew Horning (L). Primary results: Bucshon 30,967, Andrew McNeil 10,405; Spangler 23,055. **General forecast:** Spangler is a furniture company executive from Jasper challenging the two-term heart surgeon from Newburgh. Bucshon recently generated headlines with teaming up with Indiana House Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown to probe Hoosier health care. Spangler has reported less money raised than Libertarian Horning's \$2,416. Key highlight of the fall campaign will be the opportunity to listen to Horning bloviate once again. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Bucshon.

9th CD: U.S. Rep. Todd Young (R) v. Bill Bailey (D). Primary results: Young 30,402, Kathy Heil 4,607, Mark Jones 3,293; Bailey 10,394, McClure 5,737, J.S. Miller 3,561. **General forecast:** Young will easily win a third term. This district could become competitive, but Bailey, the former mayor of Seymour and legislator, has shown virtually no traction on the fundraising front, with only an anemic \$23,000 raised as of June 16, according to Open Secrets. **Horse Race Status:** Safe Young.

General Assembly

HD4: Deb Porter (D) v. Rep. Ed Soliday (R). **General forecast:** Soliday defeated Democrat Greg Simms by just over 900 votes in 2012 in a redrawn district. Porter 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. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD11: James Metro (D) v. Michael Aylesworth (R). **General forecast:** This is the open seat being vacated by State Rep. Rick Niemeyer, who is seeking a Senate seat. Aylesworth is a Hebron farmer, a state employee who has served on Porter County Council and has run for state rep before. He defeated Michael Mears, the police chief in Lynwood, Ill., by more than 500 votes, thanks to a strong showing in Porter County. Metro, a 10-year Cedar Lake Democratic Party chair and a member of the Lake County Plan Commission, edged out Phillip Kuiper, a three-term Lowell town councilman, by a little more than 180 votes in the Democratic primary. Niemeyer won this seat by more than 6,000 votes in 2012. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Aylesworth.

HD15: Rep. Hal Slager (R), Jim Wieser (D). **General forecast:** Slager defeated Democrat Tommy O'Donnell by just 554 votes in 2012. Wieser is an attorney, a former Lake County councilman, and a longtime Democratic operative who will have resources. So this race could be a pickup opportunity for the Democrats. **Horse Race**

Status: Tossup.

HD21: Jodi L. Buoscio (D) v. State Rep. Tim Wesco (R). **General forecast:** Wesco 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, will attempt to tap into the education social media network that helped Supt. Glenda Ritz upset Tony Bennett in 2012. "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. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Wesco.

HD22: Curt Nisly (R) v. David Kolbe (D), Michael L. Stinifer (I). **General forecast:** This is an overwhelmingly Republican district and Nisly would have been expected to easily win after defeating State Rep. Rebecca Kubacki in the May primary, 4,623 to 2,516. But Stinifer, a 34-year-old Republican from Warsaw, is running as an independent. He joins former Kosciusko County Democrat Prosecutor Kolbe in the race. So while Nisly is still favored and can count on the Tea Party network of Monica Boyer, this three-way race bears watching with angered Kubacki backers potentially having an avenue of revenge if Stinifer can siphon off GOP support from Nisly. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Nisly.



Republican nominees Christopher Judy (left) and Curt Nisly at the Indiana Republican Convention. Both defeated House incumbents in the May primary. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howe)

HD32: Rep. Eric Turner (R) v. Bob Ashley (D). **General forecast:** Turner has gained notoriety in the wake of a House Ethics Committee probe which cleared him. But following that, the Associated Press reported his family and company would make more than \$1 million in a nursing home deal that was at the heart of the probe. Turner had a much closer primary race than anyone expected, edging out political newcomer Parvin Gillim 2,037 to 1,751. He now faces Ashley, a former Statehouse

reporter for the Post-Tribune. Ashley has contacts and “knows where the bodies are buried” and could make this a competitive race in a very Republican district, particularly if Ashley can tap into the Statehouse donor network and cajole Republicans who voted against Turner in the primary to clean house. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Turner.

HD33: Shon Byrum (D) v. Rep. Greg Beumer (R). **General forecast:** Byrum will face 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. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Beumer.



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

General forecast: Rep. Lutz defeated Melanie Wright by less than 500 votes in 2012. Wright, a teacher at Daleville Junior High School, was 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 profes-

sion. 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!” Wright will attempt to tap into the Ritz political network. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

HD45: State Rep. Bianca Gambill (D) v. Bruce Borders (R). **General forecast:** Borders lost this seat to State Rep. Kreg Battles by less than 50 votes in the only 2012 race pitting two incumbents after redistricting. Battles resigned the seat earlier this spring and Gambill was unopposed in a Democratic caucus last weekend. She was sworn into office on Tuesday. The newest member of the Indiana House has nearly 40 years of experience in nursing, including time as a general practice physician’s nurse, supervisor of a long-term care facility, hospital floor nurse in both PCU and ICU, a rehabilitation center floor/charge nurse, and a nursing consultant. “I firmly believe that we have an obligation to do what we can to make the lives of those around us better, and my primary goal as a state representative will be to address the needs of the people who live and work in the 45th House District,” Gambill said shortly after taking the oath of office. “Now that I have taken office, one of my first priorities will be traveling the district and giving folks a chance to meet



HD35 Democrat Melanie Wright (left) and HD45 State Rep. Bianca Gambill will both be in competitive races.

with me, tell me what they expect from state government, and get their priorities for what we need to be doing for them in the Indiana General Assembly,” she continued. “Since I have extensive experience in health care, I want to see what I can do to make it more affordable for all Hoosiers. As a parent, I want to provide the best possible chance for our children to get a quality education. As someone who has spent time working in the community, I want to do everything I can to make sure that government works to create an environment where critical services are provided at the lowest possible cost. Finally, I want to bring good-paying jobs

to our state to help our middle class thrive again.” Gambill has run unsuccessfully against State Rep. Bob Heaton in nearby HD46. Borders is the former mayor of Jasonville and known as an Elvis Presley impersonator. He might have a slight edge, but this looks like a tossup to us.

Horse Race Status: Tossup.

HD56: Rep. Dick Hamm (R) v. Phil Pflum (D). **General forecast:** After several challenges, Hamm finally

defeated Pflum in 2012 by a 11,568-to-10,470 margin. Libertarian Mark Brimm polled 1414 votes. So this is another rematch and while it could be close, Hamm might have an edge due to what looks to be a fairly Republican year. But without any coattails up ticket that could influence things, this could turn into a local referendum. This could go either way, but we give Hamm an early edge. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Hamm.

HD62: Jeff Sparks (D) v. Rep. Matt Ubelhor (R). **General forecast:** This is the rematch between Sparks, the principal at Linton-Stockton Junior High School, and Rep. 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 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 they deserve returned to them." If elected, Sparks told the Daily World he wants to enact the teachers' bill of rights, an overview of the specific abilities and rights educators have which will enable them to 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." **Horse Race Status:** Leans Ubelhor.

HD68: Rick Gill (D) v. State Rep. Jud McMillin (R). **General forecast:** 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



Vanderburgh Commissioner Steve Melcher (left) will challenge State Rep. Holli Sullivan in HD78.

in the 68th District," Gill said. "I was upset and thought instead of 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. So Gill has the potential to tap into the Ritz education social media network and McMillin has some ethic challenges, which makes this race worth watching. **Horse Race Status:** Leans McMillin.

HD72: Kevin Sue Bailey (D) v. Rep. Ed Clere (R). **General forecast:** 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 by Gov. Mike Pence to move some of the powers of the Indiana Board of Education 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, which might cost him some conservative support, but he was unopposed in the primary. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Clere.

HD78: Rep. Holli Sullivan (R) v. Vanderburgh commissioner Steve Melcher (D). **General forecast:** Sullivan won a caucus replacing Auditor Suzanne Crouch just before the General Assembly commenced last January. Melcher is a long-time officeholder and has a real shot at picking this seat up for the Democrats. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.



SD29: Sen. Mike Delph (R) v. J.D. Ford (D). **General Forecast:** Delph is sitting on what is likely to be more than \$200,000 and should easily win reelection. But after his Statehouse meltdown over HJR-3 last February in which he criticized churches in his district as well as Senate President Pro Tempore David Long, he lost committee assignments and was reelected among Democrats. He faces

Ford, a gay Democrat who works on behalf of a national fraternity. We are keeping this out of the "safe" designation because of all the peculiar circumstances. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Delph.

SD45: Sen. Jim Smith (R), Julie Berry (D).

General forecast: Former Jefferson County Commissioner Julie Berry will attempt to unseat the first-term Sen. 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 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. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Smith.

SD46: State Sen. Ron Grooms (R) v. Floyd County Commissioner Chuck Freiberger (D). **General fore-**

cast: This is a rematch, with Grooms defeating Freiberger 21,019 to 18,965 in 2012. 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. **Horse Race Status:** Leans Grooms.

SD47: Sen. Richard Young (D) v. Erin Houchin (R). **General forecast:** This is Sen. Young's first campaign in the redrawn SD47 and he faces Houchin, a former congressional district Republican chair and aide to U.S.

Sen. Dan Coats. Houchin will have resources and a good district to run in. This could be a GOP pickup. **Horse Race Status:** Tossup.

SD48: Rep. Mark Messmer (R) v. DuBois County Commissioner Larry Vollmer (D). **General forecast:** In an open seat being vacated by the retiring State Sen. Lindel Hume, the redrawn district is distinctly Republican and Rep. Messmer has an excellent chance of picking up this seat for the GOP. **Horse Race Status:** Likely Messmer.

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Gauging the Pence presidential option

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – When it comes to whether Mike Pence runs for president in 2016, only deep in the mind of the Indiana governor and a few close advisers lies the answer to this mysterious question.

A general consensus of delegates at the Indiana Republican Convention earlier this month had most believing that Pence will seek reelection and is using the cultivated national exposure to position himself for a potential vice presidential nomination. And delegates at the Indiana Democratic Convention seemed to think the governor will run for president.



Another consensus among the many Republicans we talked to in Fort Wayne is that Gov. Pence needs to make a decision by late this year. Some expressed concern over the notion that he might "pull an Evan Bayh" and shift to a presidential race while leaving Indiana Republicans groping for a replacement late in the process. Indiana Republicans have a deep bench with a potential field including Speaker Brian Bosma, Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann, Senate President David Long, and Attorney General Greg Zoeller.

Pence will have to file for reelection by mid-February 2016 to meet the state deadline. In the 2008 and 2012 cycles, this time line might have allowed the governor to test the presidential waters and if he didn't find traction in Iowa and New Hampshire, come back home again to seek reelection.

But as RNC Chairman Reince Priebus said to Indiana delegates in Fort Wayne, the RNC is moving to a much more compact and later starting caucus and primary process lasting just 60 to 70 days, and an earlier national convention in June. So this has the potential to crimp any dual time lines for the governors.

Gov. Pence will have his hands full this year as he works to get his Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0 accepted by the U.S. Health and Human Services, and have it implemented by April 1, 2015. That process received a jolt when FSSA Secretary Debra Minott abruptly announced she was quitting on Monday, with Pence hinting that "implementation" of HIP 2.0 was a problem. Informed and reliable sources tell HPI that it is very unlikely a revamped HIP can meet those deadlines.

Pence is also dealing with the new implementation of the post-Common Core standards, which are having an array of residual and unexpected impacts on such things as the No Child Left Behind waiver. And his administration,

while using the Common Core repeal as a national political talking point, has yet to explain how much the new standards will cost to implement (Legislative Services Agency puts the price tag between \$30 million and \$125 million), and how much the state and local districts spent between 2010 and 2014 to implement the discarded standards. Some estimates put the cost of Common Core and post-Common Core implementation in the quarter billion dollar range. That would be one of the most expensive political talking points in Hoosier history.

Pence must also craft his second \$15 billion biennial budget with a new Chief of Staff Jim Atterholt at the helm.

Is Pence picking up traction in a potential presidential race?

Thus far, he's been a bit of a darling with such figures as Bill Kristol, Grover Norquist and the Koch Brothers. But he's not recognized as a potential suitor by polling organizations.

In a CNN/Opinion Research Poll on May 29-June 1, Pence wasn't even among those sampled. That poll had Sen. Rand Paul leading at 14%, followed by Jeb Bush at 12, Mike Huckabee at 11, Gov. Chris Christie at 8, U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan at 10, Sen. Ted Cruz at 9, Sen. Marco Rubio at 8, Gov. Rick Perry at 6, Gov. Scott Walker at 5 and Rick Santorum at 4.

The message there – which might play into the notion prompting a Pence presidential – is that there is no heir apparent and that the race is wide open. Bush is expected to make a decision late this year on whether to run, and that will be an important milestone for this race.

But there are some problems for Pence on the issues side. Prior to the NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll this week, numerous national surveys show increasing support for gay marriage, an issue Pence opposes. In the NBC/WSJ Poll, 45% of conservatives support Common Core and 46% are against it. And on the proposed EPA carbon regulations, which Pence has described



Then congressman Mike Pence speaking outside of the White House.

as “devastating” to the Indiana economy while vowing to “oppose these regulations using every means available,” NBC/WJS finds that 67% either strongly or somewhat support the new regulations, while only 29% oppose them. More than half, 57%, would support a proposal requiring companies to cut greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming even if it means higher utility bills. That figure is up 9% since October 2009.

On the Democratic side, Wednesday's NBC/WSJ poll shows that Hillary Clinton is a “juggernaut among Democratic voters. But she's hardly a juggernaut for the general election. Americans are split, 38%-37%, over whether they definitely/probably will vote for her or if they definitely won't;

23% are in the middle saying there is 'some chance' they might vote for her. What's more, her fav/unfav numbers – not surprisingly – have come back down to earth since her secretary of state days. Back in January 2013, her score was a whopping 56%-25%. Now it's 44%-37%.”

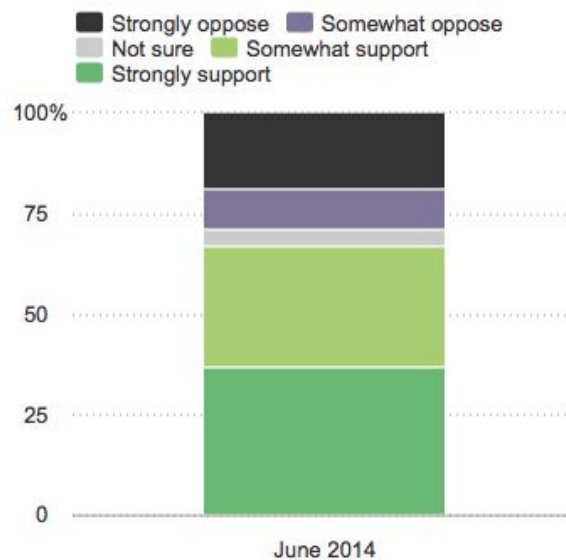
NBC's Chuck Todd and Mark Murray observe, “Any politician who's above water in today's political climate is doing something right. (After all, Jeb Bush, Rand Paul, and Chris Christie have all been under water in our poll.) But it's also a reminder that Hillary isn't a sure bet for the White House in 2016.”

So in the Pence presidential calculus, he's looking at an open White House, a muddled GOP field with no front runner, and the probable Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton coming off a bumbling book tour (as well as poor sales). There is evidence that American voters are having “Bush/Clinton fatigue” and are ready for something new. But from the polling perspective, Pence isn't even poolside to date.

So when Gov. Pence looks in the mirror these days while shaving, he might see a fresh face (and the next president). The question is whether he has the time and ability to convince other key players to take him seriously. ❖

Obama Carbon Rule Backed by Most Americans

Two-thirds of Americans favor new EPA rules limiting carbon emissions from coal-fired power plants. [Read more »](#)



Iraq: Valor and malfeasance

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – We should remember Staff Sgt. Richard Blakley of Plainfield. And Lance Cpl. Matthew R. Smith of Anderson, Spec. Gregory Paul Sanders of Hobart and Sgt. Craig A. Boling of Elkhart.



These were Hoosiers who answered their nation's patriotic call to duty, left their families behind, went to the Iraq War, and paid the ultimate price. As did Pvt. Robert L. McKinley of Kokomo, Sgt. Kyle William Childress of Terre Haute, Cpl. Cody A. Putnam of Lafayette and Sgt. Brock A. Babb of Evansville.

Today, we watch in horror as an army of terrorists, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, sweep down from the failed state of Syria into the teetering state of Iraq, stealing millions of dollars from banks in Mosul and slaughtering thousands of "infidels" in their midst. They are so brutal ISIS has been denounced by al-Qaeda. The Iraqi troops we spent billions of dollars training and equipping laid down their arms, climbed out of U.S. built tanks, slipped out of their uniforms and fled, leaving a cache of military hardware for the invaders.

What is so painful about all of this is that in addition to the nearly 100 Hoosiers and 4,300 Americans who laid down their lives in Iraq, the more than 32,000 more who were wounded, the estimated 134,000 Iraqi civilians killed and millions who became refugees, we spent an estimated \$1.7 trillion on a clueless adventure. We owe another \$490 billion to Iraq war veterans in benefits.

A Brown University Costs of War Project by the Watson Institute for International Studies estimates that the ultimate cost could grow to \$6 trillion. Reuters reported that a 2011 study found U.S. medical and disability claims for veterans after a decade of war totaled \$33 billion. Two years later, that number had risen to \$134.7 billion.

Imagine if that \$1.7 trillion had been invested in infrastructure, education, research and development at home?

And then there's the wasted money. In its final report to Congress, the Commission on Wartime Contracting reported an estimated \$60 billion of U.S. taxpayer money had disappeared by fraud and waste due to lax oversight, poor planning and payoffs to warlords and insurgents.

Even more appalling is the Veterans Administration scandal that has our surviving veterans consigned to long waiting lists and, in some cases, shoddy treatment.

All of this was set up by the administration of

President George W. Bush based on cherry picked intelligence, outright lies and an appalling lack of intellectual curiosity from people who should have known better. It has been compounded by the Obama administration that told us we were leaving behind a stable and secure democracy when we pulled out the last of our troops in 2011.

It was anything but.

The deteriorating Iraq situation is a disaster for the U.S. and a disgrace that now spans two presidencies. In the era when the U.S. military commenced the Iraq War by talking about "going in with overwhelming force," what we quickly learned was that there were no weapons of mass destruction. Instead of rose-petal parades, our troops ended up in a classic quagmire. We "won" a shallow military war and lost the political battle. We created a vacuum that is now being filled by religious fanaticism and brute sectarian violence. The notion of the U.S. going in to get our hands on the gas pump now finds most of that fuel going to China. The terror state of Iran is now bolstering our ally. Presidents, congressmen and generals, Republicans and Democrats, Bushes and Clintons, Lugars and Bayhs, and the press all got it wrong. Mistakes were compounded. What an appalling disaster of this era of American governance.

And this is just a preview for Afghanistan. We never learned the lessons of Vietnam.

When I graduated from high school in 1974 (the same year as former Sen. Evan Bayh), my classmates and I had watched more than 50,000 Americans die, hundreds of thousands more wounded, and in 1973, Henry Kissinger's declaration of "peace is at hand." In 1975, we watched North Vietnamese tanks and the Viet Cong sack Saigon. It begged the question, "For what?" What did we earn for all the lost life and treasure? Why serve under such reckless leadership? Our generation vowed to never let it happen again. And now we're in the process of doing it not once, but twice more.

We should remember Spec. Nicholas Idalski of Crown Point, Spec. Christopher Monroe of Kendallville, Sgt. James Faulkner of Clarksville, Spec. Roy Buckley of Merrillville and Cpl. Bryan Wilson of Otterbein.

They made the ultimate sacrifice. But now we find American taxpayers and a recalcitrant Congress unwilling to properly care for their surviving colleagues. Hey, it's about low taxes and prudent spending, right?

Our leaders set up the premise of invading a country to protect us from terrorism, and now we watch helplessly as terrorists engulf places like Falluja and Ramadi we spent so much blood and treasure to secure.

In the wake of blood and valor from our Hoosier patriots, from our leaders in Washington and, by the silence of the masses, we find a gutless and appalling squander of the sacrifice. We are failing to invest in those who stepped up. Applauding our uniformed men and women at NFL games and at parades is not enough, folks.

America is the home of the brave, and a shelter for the disgraced in our highest reaches of power. ❖

Minott forced out due to implementation issues around HIP 2.0

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – Debra Minott, Family Social Services Administration secretary, was forced out by the Pence administration, informed and reliable sources tell Howey Politics Indiana.

A source familiar with the FSSA told Howey Politics that Jim Atterholt, new Pence chief of staff, told Minott last Friday to begin transitioning out over issues involving the implementation of perhaps the most important first-term issue facing Gov. Mike Pence, the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0.



This Medicaid expansion program is high stakes, involving complex negotiations with the Obama administration, impacting between 350,000 and 600,000 Hoosiers, with billions of dollars at stake.

Minott was scheduled to host an informational session at Indianapolis' Community East Hospital on the state's proposed expansion and reforms to Medicaid on Monday morning. Many of Minott's answers to audience questions involved her promising to monitor a specific aspect they were concerned about or follow through with an especially complex detail. Only a few hours after speaking with health care providers and the media, the governor's office confirmed Minott's resignation.

Late Monday afternoon the office of Gov. Pence, who appointed Minott in the first month of his administration, told the Indianapolis Star they had "begun discussions with Secretary Minott about a change in direction at FSSA." Later, Minott, through the FSSA, released a statement in which she said, "I will be transitioning out of my role as secretary over the next month or so and look forward to working with the governor's office to ensure an orderly transition to new leadership."

The media pressed the governor's office Tuesday on the reasons behind a "change in direction" and what would be the timetable for the "transition" in leadership. The latter appears to be uncertain, but Gov. Pence did hint that preparations underway to implement HIP 2.0 were a key motivation. "It's just, as we look toward moving into more of an implementation phase, it's my judgment as

governor that moving to a different direction in leadership at FSSA would be appropriate," Pence told Indiana Public Media. He also said several persons were interested in the position.

HPI sources say there is speculation that Michael Gargano, who led the FSSA during the final years of the Mitch Daniels administration, has been approached for the position. Gargano has experience in initiating large state-wide programs and, it is said, maintains good rapport with existing staff, thus potentially easing a leadership handover.

HPI sources suggest a major sticking point between Gov. Pence and Minott was the expected rollout date for HIP 2.0, assuming the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) approves the necessary waiver. The day before Pence publicly unveiled the program in mid-May, his health care policy aides intimated they were aiming to begin enrollment in January 2015. Minott told the media Monday that FSSA was looking toward April 2015. "It's the target that we're shooting for," Minott told the media, "and, obviously, from the governor's perspective, the sooner, the better. We're working pretty hard to make that happen."

The key impediments to an early 2015 enrollment period are multifaceted but stem mainly from incomplete rulemaking on the part of the federal government, incomplete rulemaking on the part of HIP 2.0, programming and testing the necessary IT systems, and hiring and training sufficient staff.



FSSA Secretary Debra Minott was asked to resign last Friday after implementation issues surrounding the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0 surfaced, sources have told HPI.

"We recognize that we're getting started ahead of the game, but if we wait until we hear definitively, we will definitely not have enough time," Minott said Monday. It is generally expected the HIP 2.0 waiver will be approved with caveats and stipulations. Minott also said the state was flexible and prepared for a range of responses from CMS. "There are a few things we think are probably grow areas," she elaborated, "a lot of it is I think pretty well defined and won't change. We're feeling pretty optimistic that much of what we're doing will be productive."

If the state already has programming and IT system preparations well under way, they could require

drastic revision once CMS returns the waiver. Unfortunately, not only is the outcome of the waiver unknown, but the federal government has yet to complete rules for a system like HIP 2.0. Moreover, argue HPI sources, using the already existing HIP structure leaves unresolved eligibility rules questions endemic to the increased complexity of HIP 2.0. For example, both rules and the necessary IT systems are lacking on how to drop people from, for example, HIP PLUS to HIP BASIC as well as how to deal with delinquent payments and policyholders appealing their being relegated to HIP BASIC or dropped altogether from the program. HIP as it exists now, one source told HPI, "is flying by the seat of its pants – no hard and fast rules."

Minott, however, assured the media on Monday that preparations were in place for these IT difficulties. "We have put together three separate tracks within FSSA," she said, "all focused on implementation: Systems working, there are six different IT systems that have to be changed; operations, to analyze the kinds of interactions that have to be developed; and, policy. Different work groups have been identified in initial meetings and they are all working under the direction of my chief of staff, Shawn Walters." Whether he will remain on staff is, of course, quite uncertain.

HPI sources said a minimum programming time for such a new, complex system would be six to nine months after nearly all of the details regarding eligibility and rules are known, that is after the waiver's approval at the earliest. "There is no way you can do systems programming in that amount of time," the source told HPI in relation to the April 2015 date. And, in trying to do so, "it's going to be a huge cost to develop this system." Big-box IT firms will be required to assist FSSA but even after a programming scramble, there will need to be several months for dedicated testing and troubleshooting of the systems.

Besides IT systems, expanding a program from 45,000 to an estimated 350,000 enrollees (and potentially upwards of 600,000) will require expanded staffing at FSSA. HPI asked Minott Monday how many new employees she expected to hire and how would they be trained before April. She said there are estimates but would not share them as the figures could change. "We do believe there are some efficiencies we can do from a systems standpoint that may help us need fewer people," she answered. "So early on, there were large projections of new folks I would need to hire and there will definitely be more folks we need to hire, but our plan right now is to get through the system changes and while we are in the midst of testing those changes, (we will) evaluate how many people we need to hire, and get those folks hired before

the end of this calendar year so that we could then spend the first three months of the year [2015] training them."

According to HPI sources, this staffing timetable is as unlikely as that for the IT systems. Currently FSSA has roughly 800 staff maintaining its health care enrollment programs and another 1,500 to 1,600 private contractors. A speculated bare bones hiring figure for HIP 2.0 is an additional 200 staff but it will likely need to be at least several hundred more. Advertising, interviewing, and hiring for those positions will require at least six months, especially given the state government's personnel procedures and the lack of health care talent within the state. In addition to augmenting FSSA's staff, there will need to be a massive training program on how to enroll and maintain



HIP 2.0 while preexisting staff must also work their existing caseloads. Sources tell HPI such a hiring and training period should probably take a year, at least a minimum of six months. Estimates these positions could be hired by January and trained by April, according to our sources, are undoable.

Given the early 2015 timetables voiced by Minott and suggested earlier by Pence aides, HPI's knowledgeable sources say implementing HIP 2.0 is "mission impossible" for a variety of reasons. The expert source believes a more modest rollout in which a region of the state, for example, would enter the program first, would be more feasible and provide for a more manageable shakedown period. This was the method in which the state transitioned from the IBM FSSA welfare deal under Gov. Mitch Daniels, to the "hybrid" system that has since been lauded.

It should also be noted that given the political machinations between the Republican-controlled Indiana Statehouse and the Democratic-controlled federal executive there could be all kinds of unforeseen changes and delays. ❖

Indiana GOP's strong bench

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – The fervent cry of “No mas” could recently be heard from Indiana Democrats as they held their uneventful and uninspired state convention.

In addition to nominating Marion County Clerk Beth White, who has difficulty opening her county polling places, to the ballot for secretary of state, Indiana Democrats went out of state to nominate someone named Mike for both auditor and treasurer. Mike One moved in from Florida just in time to run for auditor and Mike Two arrived in Indiana fresh from participating in the wrecking of the Illinois pension system.



The highlight of the Democrat State Convention seemed to be the hue and cry to elect a once-defeated mustache for governor in 2016. Wow, is that really the best Indiana Democrats can do?

Contrast the moribund Democrat convention with the robust Republican State Convention held in Fort Wayne. The Republicans nominated three superbly qualified and

experienced candidates to fill their ballot for November. In a continuation of the Republican Party's War on Women, Indiana Republicans selected three women to carry the party's standard in November.

Most interesting at the Fort Wayne convention was the buzz among delegates over who the likely candidates for governor and United States senator in 2018 might be. For Indiana Republicans, the potential list of candidates represents an embarrassment of riches. I can't imagine any state having such a talent pool. Of course, a long bench of talent coupled with ambition can set off some early jockeying for position. The big and very visible presence of potential candidates in Fort Wayne indicated that perhaps the jockeying has already begun.

Just imagine a game of musical chairs with 10 participants and nine chairs. Now, take away seven of the chairs and you can get some idea of what it may soon look like in the Republican Party as talented candidates vie for limited upward mobility. It could get ugly when the music stops. Right now, Gov. Mike Pence is controlling the music. His decision will ultimately decide whether the music stops and the scramble begins in 2016 or waits for the United States Senate race in 2018.

I thought it might be interesting to take an early look at who's who on the Republican bench and who may have an interest in seeking higher public office. Mind you, none of these people has contacted yours truly and asked

to be included.

First, let me say that when I get up in the morning and look in the mirror, I see a homely, stubble-bearded bedhead. Those who aspire to higher political office, and you know who you are, look in the mirror and see the next _____ (fill in the blank) looking back at them. It's what makes politicians different from you and me. I think my list consists of potential candidates who may see that image in the mirror.

Let's talk about the office of Indiana governor. Of course, Gov. Pence holds all the cards in this game of poker. His decision on whether to subject himself to the presidential campaign will ultimately decide whether or not a governor's slot opens up in 2016 or in 2020. There are three things which might reasonably happen to Mike Pence: One, he decides not to run for president. Two, he runs for president and goes all in. Three, he falls short of president and opts for vice president. Two of these three events set off a mad scramble for Republican gubernatorial candidates.

At this point, I see Speaker of the House Brian Bosma, Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann, Senate President Pro-Tem David Long and Sen. Jim Merritt as being the leading candidates to succeed Mike Pence.

You can give much of the credit for Indiana's great economic success and dramatic changes to statutes in labor law, education and taxation over the terms of former Gov. Mitch Daniels and Gov. Pence to the legislative team of Bosma and Long. Lt. Gov. Ellspermann will have her support and, as recent results have shown, being a Republican woman can't hurt. Sen. Merritt has been shown to be an effective legislator and hails from a bedrock of Republican voters in the Fishers area. I believe that Bosma's legislative record, financial prowess and army of Republican House members gives him the early Governor Sweepstakes edge.

With Sen. Dan Coats looking every bit engaged and vibrant, the first opportunity for a senatorial grunion run will be in 2018. Candidates will vie to lock horns with vanilla-colored, elevator-music Sen. Joe Donnelly. In the crystal ball at the 2018 United States Senate race I see a truly crowded field of contenders. This should be a real plum for the Republicans to snatch and there is no shortage of potential candidates.

I see the candidates for U. S. Senate in 2018 emerging from Indiana's wealth of Republican representatives in Congress. Todd Rokita, Todd Young, Marlin Stutzman, Larry Bucshon, Luke Messer and Susan Brooks all may be contenders for the Senate seat. These representatives are thoughtful legislators and they went to Washington, D.C., to work on our country's problems. The problem is that when you are up for re-election every two years, the job of a congressman is overwhelmed by the demands of raising money to fend off challengers. Thus, the job of senator and its six-year election cycle looks more appealing. There is a lot of ambition in the Indiana delegation and each has their own core group of support-

ers. I'd have to give the nod to Rokita as the early leader. He has won two statewide races and has a formidable Rolodex of political contacts around the state. Rokita may also be a leading candidate to succeed Mike Pence for those same reasons. Past administrative experience in the secretary of state's office will be another plus for Rokita.

It may either be very early or not so early to start handicapping the political horse races that are sure to

come. Only time and the actions of Gov. Pence will tell. But make no mistake about it, when the music stops and there are only two chairs for 10 candidates, the elbows will fly and the scramble will begin. ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republicans.

Lawson's lost speech

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – Connie Lawson had a speech ready for the state Republican party delegates who picked her as their secretary of state candidate, putting her at the top of an all-female ticket in November.

But she never got to deliver it at the recent state GOP convention in Fort Wayne. Instead, time was stolen by a fight over same-sex marriage, a contentious contest for the state treasurer's slot, and the headline-grabbing



remarks of outgoing Treasurer Richard Mourdock, who said the nation was going the way of Nazi Germany.

As the two-day convention ground to an end, exhausted delegates retreated for home. Rather than speaking to empty chairs, Lawson graciously said a brief thank you. "I didn't get to say what a good job our office has done," said a clearly disappointed Lawson.

Appointed as secretary of state two years ago, Lawson replaced her disgraced Republican predecessor, Charlie White, a nakedly ambitious politician removed from his post after being convicted of felony voter fraud.

So this is her first statewide run, but not her first rodeo. Lawson, a grandmother who rides cutting horses, spent two terms as Hendricks County clerk and 16 years in the state Senate. But coming from a Republican district, she's never really faced a tough campaign. Until now. Democrats are preparing to launch an aggressive campaign to recapture an office they haven't won since 1998.

When Lawson, 63, was put into office, she was generally welcomed by Democrats and Republicans. Never known as a partisan flame-thrower, Lawson had prided herself on being part of a group of hard-working female legislators who took up the causes of neglected children, disabled adults and the mentally ill. "It was my job to make sure people who didn't have a voice in the hallway were heard," said Lawson, referring to the influence-rich

lobbyists who pack the hallways during the legislative session.

Lawson's new task was to rid the office of her predecessor's taint and erase the image that it was just a stepping stone. Both Democrats and Republicans have used it as a launching pad for higher office. She promised to focus on her duties as the state's chief election officer, enforcer of state securities regulations, regulator of automobile dealerships, and manager of the state business services division. For that, she won her accolades. "They wanted to see somebody in that office who would worry about the services and not about the politics," she said.

But it is a political office, described as the second most powerful job in the executive branch of the state government. That's true in the 39 states that elect secretaries of state, because they're charged with most aspects of their state's elections. Lawson has wide-ranging responsibility for everything from maintaining voter rolls and sending out absentee ballots to counting votes.

Soon, she'll be launching a purge of the voter rolls, prompted by a lawsuit that claimed Indiana's voting rolls were filled with dead people and others long gone from the state. Democrats, including her opponent, the well-regarded Marion County Clerk Beth White, will be watching how she handles that.

Despite Lawson's best hopes, the race is likely to be a highly partisan and increasingly expensive battle over an elected position that many Indiana voters know little about. That's already happening in the key presidential battleground states of Ohio, Colorado, Iowa, and Nevada where there are fierce partisan battles over voting rights. Prompting the millions of dollars pouring into these races is the wave of controversial GOP-led voter identification legislation, challenged repeatedly in court by Democratic groups arguing that they are intended to disenfranchise poor and minority voters.

As a state senator, Lawson co-authored Indiana's voter ID law, one of the first in the nation, and pushed through other election-reform laws. That makes her vulnerable, though she's ready with a defense: "We made reforms to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat."

Lawson has never really relished a hyper-partisan fight, but the race may change that. "I want to run a positive campaign," she said, "but I'll stick up for myself if I need to." ❖

Lessons for Democrats after Cantor upset

By SHAW FRIEDMAN

LaPORTE – One of the lessons to be learned by upstart David Brat’s stunning upset of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor this past week is that a populist economics message of fundamental fairness works in conservative, red state areas as much as it does in the bluest of progressive regions.

Some of us have long maintained to our nervous, centrist Democratic friends running for office in Indiana that a populist message can resonate even in some of the most conservative regions of our state. Take a look at what happened in Virginia’s 7th Congressional District, said by many to be among the most Republican-leaning in all of Virginia.



While stories are legion about Cantor’s arrogance and aloofness helping detach him from Virginia voters, one of the little known narratives from this campaign is how successfully his opponent Dave Brat used a message bashing big business and “crony capitalism” to help him identify with average voters. Now I’m not vouching for any of the rest of the Tea Party conservative’s often loopy notions on foreign affairs or other policy items.

What I’m stressing is that his message ripping “crony capitalism” was highly effective and worked as a political strategy. Not only did Brat rip Cantor’s incumbency, but he made clear he was “running against Cantor because he does not represent the citizens of the 7th District, but rather large corporations seeking insider deals, crony bailouts and a constant supply of low-wage workers.”

Despite Cantor’s absurd claim he was running against a “liberal professor,” this was no liberal or progressive. Let’s face it, Brat actually ran to the right of Cantor on various issues like immigration. But it’s interesting to note that he ran as an anti-corporate conservative and that rhetoric soundly distinguished him from Cantor who was the darling of Wall Street and the K Street crowd, who eagerly fed Cantor’s campaigns with millions in contributions. Even Brat’s campaigning on immigration came with an anti-big business twist when he declared that Eric Cantor “doesn’t represent you, he represents large corporations seeking a never-ending supply of cheap foreign labor.”

Indeed, take a look at some of the harshest and obviously most effective criticisms leveled by Brat during the campaign and they had to do with Cantor’s coziness with big business. Cantor had nothing in common with

small business owners in Richmond; it was all about licking the boots of Wall Street financial firms. Take a look at what Dave Brat wrote for the Richmond Times-Dispatch in a pre-election article where he was clear when he wrote that “in my view, the greatest moral failure, which disqualifies Cantor for high public office, was his abuse of the public trust concerning the Stock Act, a bipartisan bill that was going through after the financial crisis.”

Wrote the college professor, “The Stock Act was intended to ban insider trading on congressional knowledge for congressmen and their families. CNN discovered that Cantor altered the language of the House version in order to allow family members and spouses to continue insider trading on congressional knowledge. In my view, this action was beneath the dignity of the office. Virginians deserve better and I pledge to treat everyone equally under the law.”

My fellow Hoosier Democrats, we need to listen carefully. I think we’ve found common ground with a Tea Party Republican on an issue of economic fairness and it’s an issue that is not only good policy but it’s effective politically. I think we need to understand that there are issues where the mainstream of the Indiana Democratic Party can reach out with a message of holding big business accountable that will appeal in the reddest portions of Indiana.

One need only look back to the late Jim Jontz – as populist a Democrat as you will find – who ran successfully in some of the reddest areas of Indiana both as a state senator and as a congressman. An environmentalist, he prided himself on homespun shoe leather campaigns and was passionate and eloquent on notions of economic fairness and insisting that big business pay its fair share of taxes.

Recent polling shows that Hoosier voters are ripe and receptive to a message that stresses populist economics. Indeed, a recent statewide poll shows strong majority support for a message of closing corporate loopholes to pay for items such as free textbooks. That same poll showed that the feature or quality independents in Indiana say is the most important thing that a political party should stand for is siding with average workers, not big banks or utilities.

It’s been traditional orthodoxy among Democrats running statewide campaigns that you have to tack “to the right” to somehow appeal in southern Indiana. Not so fast, my friend. That same poll shows that a message of “reducing the power of corporate interests, requiring the wealthiest and most profitable to pay their fair share” garners an unheard of support percentage of 64 percent in southern Indiana counties.

It’s time we Democrats understand that voters are looking for the real thing, for authenticity and for attention to the grassroots.

With the Multi-State Tax Commission saying that the biggest and wealthiest corporations are skipping out on a half billion every year in corporate income taxes that should be coming to Indiana coffers so that average

Hoosier taxpayers have to make up the difference, I would suggest that's an issue ripe for attack.

With cities, schools and counties across Indiana struggling to make ends meet and not able to meet the necessities of paving roads, paying for teachers, or even keeping cops on the beat, Hoosier voters sense the game is tilted. It's rigged for the largest and wealthiest among us and if Dave Brat showed us nothing else, it is that a populist economics message that rails against crony capitalism and government showering favors and special deals on Wall Street works. The best political campaigns know how to evoke feelings that are already there.

C'mon Hoosier Democrats. We're at historic lows

with our numbers in the legislature and state offices practically in the single digits. It's time we adjust our message. It's got to be about more than just "competence" and "hard work." It's got to be about leveling the playing field so that average working families have a reasonable shot in the face of all that money and influence exercised by wealthy and powerful interests. As MSNBC host Ed Schulz says, "Let's get to work!" ❖

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

The ups and downs of Indiana's economy

By **MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – You probably did not notice it last week. Perhaps the World Cup or the early summer weather absorbed your attention. Nonetheless, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis published the latest data about Indiana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).



Yes, just as there are quarterly GDP estimates of the value of all goods and services produced in the United States, so too we have annual GDP figures for Indiana. Those data, adjusted for inflation, indicate Indiana's economy grew faster than the nation in 2013 (2.1 percent compared to 1.8 percent). It's not a major triumph, but it is consistent with our improving employment situation.

The energy producing, smaller economies of North Dakota, Wyoming, West Virginia and Oklahoma led the nation in growth last year. Indiana's growth rate ranked 19th in the country.

What was moving the Hoosier economy forward last year? Indiana's private sector, growing by 2.5 percent, accounted for all of the growth and then some, as the public sector declined by 1.7 percent. While the private sector's share of the state's output grew, there was a corresponding decrease in Indiana's governmental output (federal, state and local). Is this the retrenchment earnestly sought by a large number of Hoosier politicians and voters?

The decline in Indiana's government services of 1.7 percent in 2013 was greater than the national 0.9 percent decrease. It was also four times greater than our own average annual decline from 2003 to 2013 (0.4 percent).

This shrinkage occurred while the nation recorded a 0.4 percent average annual increase in government services over the decade.

Within the private sector, where was the growth in Hoosier GDP last year? Nearly 59 percent of that growth occurred in manufacturing, but not in the steel mills, auto factories, or electric equipment plants we think of when manufacturing is mentioned. More than four/fifths of that 59 percent growth was in chemicals, plastic and rubber products, as well as food and other non-durable items.

In addition, professional and business services accounted for 18 percent of the total Indiana GDP growth while health care and social assistance added 12 percent to the total. Finance, insurance and real estate contributed another 9 percent of the Indiana total where nationally this sector equaled nearly 20 percent of the nation's GDP growth in 2013. Indiana also lagged the U.S. in retail and wholesale trade, transportation and information.

One final note: The data released last week included revised numbers for the compensation of workers. Although 2013 data are not yet available, we have fresh figures for 2012 and earlier years. Those data show Hoosier workers were paid \$51 of each \$100 of GDP in 2012 compared to \$55 in 2003. As such, our rank in the nation fell from 31st in '03 to 37th in '12. All states in the Great Lakes region, plus Kentucky, out-ranked Indiana.

What is it about business in Indiana that our workers contribute less to total output than the workers in our neighboring states? ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com.

Colwell's political quiz

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Quiz time. Remember, my quiz answers aren't always what may seem most likely.

First person to email all the correct answers to jcolwell@comcast.net will receive a box of Kraft Macaroni & Cheese. Not just any mac and cheese, but a souvenir box, a collector's item, from either the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago or the 2000 Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, winner chooses which.

If nobody gets 'em all correct, the prize goes to the person with the highest grade, first received breaking any tie.

The quiz:



1. In the 2012 elections, the candidates of which party received the most votes for the U.S. House of Representatives?

- a. Tea Party
- b. Republican Party
- c. Democratic Party
- d. Bull Moose Party

2. Schuyler Colfax:

- a. Played basketball for Notre

Dame

- b. Was vice president during Lincoln's first term
- c. Was speaker of the House
- d. Was named after a South Bend street

3. Gerrymandering, the drawing of weird-shaped districts for political advantage in elections, is a technique named after:

- a. One of the Founding Fathers
- b. A Civil War general
- c. Chicago Mayor Gerald Mander

4. Which is NOT a candidate for Congress in Indiana's 2nd District?

- a. Jackie Walorski
- b. Marlin Stutzman
- c. Jeff Petermann
- d. Joe Bock

5. Which Hoosier was elected to Congress in a district in which he didn't reside?

- a. Evan Bayh
- b. Bob Kern
- c. Chris Chocola

6. In the latest Gallup poll on honesty and ethics of various professions, which finished dead last?

- a. Members of Congress
- b. Lobbyists
- c. Car salespeople

7. Which ranked highest among these three in the poll on honesty and ethics?

- a. TV reporters
- b. Newspaper reporters
- c. Serial killers

8. Highest rated again in honesty and ethics, as in every annual Gallup poll on this since 1999?

- a. Doctors
- b. Clergy
- c. Nurses

9. Voters once sent a Crook to Congress. Who?

- a. Shephard Crook
- b. Ima Crook
- c. J. Crook Hickey
- d. Thurman Crook

10. A member of Congress from Northern Indiana once drew national attention by saying: "Don't confuse me with the facts. I've got a closed mind." He was denying truth about:

- a. Nixon guilt in Watergate
- b. Astronauts landing on the moon
- c. Global warming
- d. Obama's birth certificate

11. The mayor of which city is a Navy Reserve officer elected at age 28 in 2011?

- a. Kokomo
- b. LaPorte
- c. Elkhart
- d. South Bend

12. A study by Annenberg Public Policy Center found whose viewers were best informed on political financing:

- a. Bill O'Reilly
- b. Brian Williams
- c. Stephen Colbert
- d. Maureen McFadden

13. Who said: "You can put it on the board . . . Yes!"?

- a. Hawk Harrelson after a White Sox home run
- b. Karl Rove, thinking that Romney won Ohio
- c. Roger Parent in resigning from the South Bend School Board

14. When a runner from the United States won the Boston Marathon, beating usual winners from Kenya, who said: "It's only fair since a Kenyan has been president for the last six (years)"?

- a. Rush Limbaugh
- b. Sarah Palin
- c. Glenn Beck
- d. Barack Obama ❖

Mark Souder, Indianapolis Business Journal:

Is America drifting toward a Nazi-style takeover? Could what happened there, happen here? Richard Mourdock stated what has frighteningly become standard pablum in increasingly wide circles. He heightened it with a beginning relating the threat to D-Day landing (by implication comparing heroic soldiers to those fighting spending) and finishing with a flourish about manning the boats (this is what they died for, being the implication), and he did give it in an address to the statewide Republican convention. This used to be the standard fare of extremists. Hollywood leftists kept saying that Reagan, Bush 41 and Bush 43 were leading America toward Hitler and Nazi Germany. Nuts on the right were similar. They used to be, however, confined to the same late night shows as those who claimed to have been visited by aliens. It is disturbing that some Republicans who attended the state convention are still trying to defend the speech. This mass hysteria has spread to some intelligent, fairly reasonable people. We do potentially face severe inflation, or contraction. This has happened multiple times in America history before, and the solutions were painful and unfair. But it wasn't Nazi Germany. Other nations have faced such problems, and socialist policies advanced. But it is far less dramatic to say that we could become France, England or Canada. Or even Argentina or Brazil. Why? Because they didn't send the Jews to the ovens or cause a world war. It is the only reason to use Hitler and the Nazis as the example. It is so less dramatic to say: these policies could make us become France. The hyper-inflation was NOT the cause of the rise of Hitler. It wasn't intrusive government. It was a losing a war, getting stiff reparations, then re-instituting the gold standard (which worked elsewhere but tightened money to tightly combined with reparations demands, which led to hyper-inflation and a persecution complex (somewhat justified) which led to needing people to blame (parasites such as the Jews). It is a completely false, irrelevant analogy. This type of over-the-top panic usually reserved for the extremes (e.g. "our National Security Agency is like the Gestapo" is very much in the old "black helicopter" mode of thinking). It could lead to things like a Constitutional Convention that could result in exactly what they claim to fear. It is far, far – far – more likely that a Constitutional Convention would limit or destroy freedoms than balance the budget. Get real folks. Of course, getting "real" is precisely the problem right now. We will not win the elections necessary with false, exaggerated rhetoric that most people realize is false, exaggerated and a bit nutty. ❖



Lesley Weidenbener, Statehouse File: A preliminary meeting meant to plan for a constitutional convention wrapped up Friday at the Indiana Statehouse with plans for another gathering in December and a convention as soon as 2015 (Weidenbener, Louisville Courier-Journal).

Leaders acknowledged there are still plenty of details to work out before the states could come together to propose one or more constitutional amendments — which would likely be aimed at a balanced federal budget or other fiscal issues. Many of those details are logistical. But a few are crucial — including whether Democrats are involved in the process. More than 50 delegates from about 30 states joined last week's meeting, which organizers dubbed the Mount Vernon Assembly. But of those who attended, only about a half dozen were Democrats. Republicans insisted that wasn't intentional. They say they don't believe the issues in question are partisan. Still, the political breakdown is not particularly surprising. Concern about the nation's deficit prompted Indiana Senate President Pro Tem David Long of Fort Wayne to organize the event. And most of the states that participated also have legislative chambers controlled by Republicans, for whom deficit issues are particularly important. Also, the GOP currently controls the majority of legislative chambers. Across the nation, 29 state House chambers are controlled by Republicans, 20 by Democrats and one — Nebraska — is nonpartisan.

According to Ballotpedia, about 52 percent of all House members in states are Republicans. The breakdown is similar in state Senates. Republicans control 28 chambers, Democrats have 20 and one is split. About 52 percent of senators are also Republicans, according to Ballotpedia. And in 23 states, Republicans control both chambers and the governor's office, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. It takes two-thirds of states — 34 — to actually call a convention to propose amendments. And then three-fourths, or 38 states, to ratify an amendment. So Republicans are going to have to get some states that are either controlled by Democrats or have split legislatures on board just to propose an amendment. ❖

John Krull, Statehouse File: Richard Mourdock was just flat wrong. The German people never chose Adolf Hitler and the Nazis in a free election. The Nazis won pluralities in two German elections in 1932, but they never gained a majority of the vote. Hitler came to power because he made a corrupt bargain with the aging German president, Paul von Hindenburg, to have himself appointed chancellor under Hindenburg. As chancellor, Hitler was able to consolidate power, begin his persecution of Germany's Jews and others and, once Hindenburg died, establish himself as führer. In short, Hitler established his reign of horrors not through the democratic process, but by circumventing and thwarting it. Those are facts — and easily verifiable ones at that. Richard Mourdock loves to present himself as a student of history. If so, he's a poor one — a student who forces the facts to fit what he wants to believe rather than adapting what he believes to the facts. ❖

Stutzman hopes for 2nd ballot

WASHINGTON - Candidates for House Republican leadership made their final pitches Wednesday morning, pressing for unity while leading their factions into what will be a divisive Thursday vote to decide the future of the conference (Roll Call). Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy of California retained his position as a lock to become majority leader, although Rep. Raúl R. Labrador of Idaho is mounting an upstart challenge, driven by a simmering dissatisfaction with leadership. But the race to replace McCarthy remains fluid. The whip race is expected to go down to the wire. Rep. Marlin Stutzman of Indiana is presenting an insurgent challenge to both Reps. Peter Roskam and Steve Scalise, syphoning off votes from both camps with a base of support in his massive class of members who came to power in 2010.

If Stutzman cannot wrest at least a third of the conference — 78 votes — he will have to bow out of the contest and his supporters would have to choose between one of the other two men; many members believe that is the most likely outcome. Stutzman, told reporters that he believes he has tapped into a frustration with both top-billed candidates, and hopes to ride that to what would be a surprise victory. “We have broad support,” he said, ticking off a list of his followers. “We’re going after everyone. ... There is a lot of frustration in the conference.” The core of Stutzman’s constituency comes from the 2010 class, said Rep. Tom Reed of New York, a classmate who has been helping whip for the Indiana congressman’s candidacy and who knows Stutzman and his family well. “I think it’s time for our class to start to come together and exert more influence around here,” Reed said. “In 2010, we were sent here to change the status quo of

Washington, and I think there’s now an opportunity to really be at the table influencing the direction of the conference.” will be key to who wins the race.

Toll road operators struggling



MUNSTER - The Indiana Finance Authority continues to monitor the financial difficulties of the Indiana Toll Road, where operators who hold the 75-year lease are struggling to meet a June debt payment (NWI Times). Indiana Toll Road Oversight Director James McGoff said the IFA had inquired of the Toll Road’s operators following news reports last year they were struggling to meet a December interest payment. The Toll Road Oversight Board has now inquired about the June payment. “The answer is the same, they are trying to negotiate more favorable terms with their lenders,” McGoff said. Cintra, a Spanish firm, and Macquarie Group, of Australia, paid the state of Indiana \$3.8 billion in 2006 in exchange for the right to operate the 157-mile road and collect all tolls for 75 years. But traffic on the road has never lived up to expectations, taking a direct hit almost immediately from the recession that started at the end of 2007. The most recent report of the Toll Road’s financial travails came from Dow Jones News Service, which reported the its private operators had retained Moelis & Co. as an adviser in negotiations with creditors as it faces a late June payment it cannot afford to make. Earlier this spring, the Wall Street Journal reported distressed investment firms had bought up Indiana Toll Road debt and were moving to exert more control.

Voucher program cost \$15 million

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana’s

voucher program that provides public funds to send students to private schools cost the state more than \$15 million to operate this school year, according to a report by the Indiana Department of Education (Schneider, Evansville Courier & Press). The cost, made public this week, follows two years where the voucher program saved the state between \$4 million to \$5 million per year and comes at a time when the program’s enrollment is steadily climbing. Nearly 20,000 children received vouchers to attend private schools during the 2013-2014 school year, marking an approximately 117 percent increase in the program from the previous year. The number of students living within the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corp. receiving vouchers more than doubled compared to the previous year, according to education department figures. A calculation by the education department shows that was \$15.8 million more than the state would have spent if the voucher program didn’t exist. Indiana Department of Education spokesman Daniel Altman said on Wednesday the updated report reflects the growth in the voucher program in recent years. “The department is committed to the transparent accounting of taxpayer dollars,” Altman said.

Supremes suspend blogger for 30 days

INDIANAPOLIS - Indianapolis attorney and blogger Paul Ogden has been suspended for 30 days by the Indiana Supreme Court based on comments he made regarding a judge who presided over an estate case involving Ogden’s client (Indianapolis Business Journal). The Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission brought two counts against Ogden in March 2013. Count I stems from comments he made regarding Hendricks Superior Judge David H. Coleman, who was appointed special judge in an unsupervised estate case.