



## GOP delegation: To confront or govern?

Messer says Members should seek the ‘Indiana Way’

By **MARK SCHOEFF JR.**

WASHINGTON – Following a decisive victory in the mid-term elections, congressional Republicans have to make a decision about the approach they’ll take with their new Senate control and their strengthened House majority.

They can either use their power to govern or

they can spend their time confronting President Barack Obama.

This decision will be tested almost immediately, as President Obama will initiate his executive action on immigration later today, then formally present it in Las Vegas on Friday.

One of their newly elected



U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, (left) watches President Obama sign his Child Care and Development Block Grant Program bill in the Oval Office on Wednesday. The tone will be different after Obama’s immigration speech tonight.



leaders, Rep. Luke Messer, R-6th CD, said the party should look to Indiana for guidance, where the GOP has occupied the governor’s mansion since 2004 and has increased its control of the state House and Senate to super majorities.

“What we need more of in Washington is what we’ve seen in Indiana,” said Messer, who last week was elected chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee. “Republicans have proven that they’re a party that can

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## Peter Kassig & Jeff Ake

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The question from TIME magazine to Peter Kassig in 2012 was simple: Where do you see yourself in five years?

He responded, “I believe that if you are passionate

about something and you put the necessary effort into making it work that it is ultimately up to you how long you can keep it viable. The work speaks for itself to some extent I think. I certainly plan on continuing to try and serve those who are in need for as long as I live.”

We all recognize the irony of the response. Peter Kassig, the North Central HS grad who attended Butler University and



**“The power of the Congress is the power of the purse. If the President of the United States uses executive authority to overturn American law, Congress has the authority to block funding.”**

*- Gov. Mike Pence, to NBC on immigration*





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Hanover College, who served with the Army Rangers in Iraq, then went on to found the Special Emergency Response and Assistance humanitarian organization, could only continue his mission for another 18 months. We know he was captured by Syrian rogues in a terrible civil war, then handed over to the emerging Islamic State of Iraq and Syria as it began to perpetrate terror and inhumanity on a medieval scale. He converted to Islam and took the name Abdul Rahman.

On Sunday, as many of us prepared to watch NFL football, we were confronted with our worst fears, the beheading of Kassig. And it wasn't just Kassig. The ghastly video showed unmasked ISIS henchmen using serrated blades to saw through the necks of 16 captive soldiers. While the atrocities still fall far short of those of the Nazis, Soviets and Khmer Rogue, the potential is almost incomprehensible in a civilized context.

Yet, there's something to celebrate here. Hoosiers tend to extrapolate on our willingness to enter the battlefields, armed and equipped. We sent the most men per capita into the Civil War, and Indiana blood flowed from Gettysburg to Bastogne, from Iwo Jima to Hamburger Hill, Khe Sanh to Falluja and Marja. We gave the nation Ernie Pyle, the journalist who described the horror and humanity of war at the cost of his own life.

And then there are Hoosiers like Kassig, and Dr. Kent Brantly who went to West Africa to fight ebola, and LaPorte businessman Jeff Ake, who journeyed to Iraq in 2005 to bring clean drinking water to what he believed would be a rebuilding nation, was kidnapped and never seen again.

We like to name highways after lawmakers and cast statues of our fighters, but Kassig and Ake represent something conspicuously noble.

There was a cellphone call to his mother from Beirut several years ago, when Kassig explained he had



LaPorte businessman Jeff Ake went to Iraq in 2005 to provide clean water there, and was abducted by militants and never heard from again.

found his calling. "Yesterday my life was laid out on a table in front of me," Kassig recounted in an article published this week in The New Yorker. "With only hours left before my scheduled flight back to the United States, I watched people dying right in front of me. I had seen it before and I had walked away before.... I'm just not going to turn my back this time, it's as simple as that. My whole life has led me to this point in time."

Kassig conceptualized SERA, which he explained this way: "I designed Special Emergency Response and Assistance around a belief that there was a lot of room for improvement in terms of how humanitarian organizations interact with and cooperate with the populations that they serve. SERA is focused on the

distribution of aid materials to populations with an acute and immediate need. We administer aid in the form of food and cooking materials, medical supplies, and clothing. The idea is for SERA to supplement the efforts of larger organizations by focusing on delivering aid materials that can do the most good for the most people over the longest period of time possible. I believe that how and why we do what we do is equal in importance to what we do. It's about showing people that we care, that someone is looking out for those who might be overlooked or who have slipped through the cracks in the system for whatever reason."

Jeff Ake was compelled to follow the American armies into Iraq. On the JeffAke.com website, his friends explained the LaPorte businessman and his wife, "Jeff and Lilly were building a little piece of the American dream in LaPorte, Indiana, as their packaging equipment company, Equipment Express began to grow. Jeff was installing his company's equipment in an Iraqi water bottling plant

when armed gunmen came in and kidnapped him. A day later a video was shown of Jeff being held by hooded and heavily armed captors. In spite of much hard work by the FBI, military intelligence and other groups, there is no information about Jeff's current status."

The kidnapers made contact with Ake's family over the first month of his captivity, then vanished. "We had a lot of hope that things would be resolved relatively quickly since the terrorists who abducted him contacted the family," Dave Dlesk, who was Ake's high school friend, college roommate and best man at his wedding, told CNN in 2010. "I think the lack of closure just makes things more difficult." In 2010 Liliana Ake said in a statement, "We have waited hopefully for five years, but sadly there has been no word about Jeff. We are extremely grateful for the outpouring of support, prayers and help from our family, friends and many strangers during the past five years. We appreciate all the efforts that the different branches of the United States government have made in searching for Jeff."

Liliana Ake added, "He was in Iraq making certain that the Iraqi people have fresh, good water to drink" as the country was being rebuilt.

Think of that. Jeff Ake left his wife, four daughters and a growing company he had built, journeyed 10,000 miles away to try and provide fresh water for thirsty Iraqis, be they Sunni or Shia.

Dr. Brantly is an Indianapolis native like Kassig, who traveled across an ocean to take on a terrible foe, the ebola virus in West Africa. He is the servant here who survived.



**Peter Abdul Rahman Kassig preparing to deliver bread on behalf of SERA. A public memorial service at Butler University's Clowes Memorial Hall at 5 p.m. on Sunday.**

Ake and Kassig are gone. In their wake, American leaders and the people face excruciating choices. There is consensus that ISIS needs to be eradicated. But while Europeans rose up against a revived Napoleonic threat and crushed him at Waterloo two centuries ago, there is no consensus on how to destroy ISIS. We don't want to commit ground troops. NATO is not united. While the ISIS advances have stopped short of Baghdad and Jordan, the situation in Iraq and Syria looks like a lingering fever, that flares into bloody video clips that arouse our anger and fear, but not the call to action. The Ernie Pyles of our day, like NBC's Richard Engel, are now targets themselves, and the stories deep inside the war zones go mostly untold.

I wish I could have known Ake and Kassig, who went to high school with my two sons. They should be remembered, celebrated for the incredible depth of their humanity and compassion, and their causes should be supported.

What might have Kassig done with another five years of his life?

He told TIME in 2012, "The truth is sometimes I really think I would like to do something else, but at the end of the day this work is really the only thing that I have found that gives my life both meaning and direction. In five years, I certainly hope to have seen SERA grow into an international relief organization capable of helping hundreds of thousands of people around the world. I would also like to be able to say that I was able to give something back to everyone who helped along the way."

SERA's website (seramedic.org) shows a picture of Kassig reaching out for bags of bread. He traded his sword for ploughshares.

SERA states at this writing: "Due to the present security situation in Syria, SERA has temporarily ceased its operations. Thank you to all for your continued support."

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## **GOP Delegation, from page 1**

govern in Indiana. They're a party that is principled and delivers results. If what we do in Washington is follow the Indiana roadmap, we'll be just fine."

Washington Republicans may hit the first bump in the governance road this week, when Obama is expected to announce an executive order that would implement immigration reforms that Congress hasn't been able to pass.

Some conservatives are urging the GOP to retaliate against Obama by shutting down the government. It's unclear whether party leadership will go in that direction. Last week, Messer tried to thread the needle between governance and confrontation on immigration.

"His first problem is going to be with the American people, if he does administrative amnesty," Messer said of Obama. "And Congress in response to that groundswell will be standing up against him."

U.S. Sen. Dan Coats said on Wednesday of President Obama's pending plan to allow up to five million illegal immigrants stay, "President Obama's role is to faithfully execute the law, not alter or ignore it as he sees fit. If the president changes existing immigration law via executive order, he will exceed his Constitutional authority and ignore the wishes of the American people. Taking this action would be a disservice to everyone who followed the law to legally immigrate to the United States. I am working with my colleagues to explore all options – legislative and legal – to stop the president's blatant disregard for our nation's system of checks and balances."

The danger for Republicans is that if there is an uprising, a good part of it will come from immigrants and other advocates who are cheering Obama on, saying it is about time that he acted. These are the voters that Republicans will need in 2016 to cement their 2014 gains and add the White House to their column.

On another potential issue of confrontation, health care reform, Indiana Republicans are willing to chip away at the law rather than trash it.

"The whole repeal rhetoric is just politics," said Rep. Marlin Stutzman, R-3rd CD. "It's not realistic for what's going to happen. We shouldn't be focused on repealing it. We should be focused on fixing it."

That approach bodes well for a bill written by Rep. Todd Young, R-9th CD, that would define as a full-time employee requiring health benefits someone who works 40 hours a week. Under the health care law, employers must cover anyone who works 30 hours or more, a situa-

tion that critics say is leading companies to cut back work hours.

His bill is part of an effort to "repeal portions of Obamacare that don't make sense and replace them with better provisions," Young said.

Another potential tweak to the health care law that would benefit Indiana is repeal of the medical device tax. That is among "the issues that enjoy bipartisan support and can set the tone for a productive and meaningful 114th Congress," Rep. Susan Brooks, R-5th CD, said in a statement.

As the health care law is whittled down with "common-sense fixes," Republicans will have to show voters that they have their own health reform ideas, Messer said.

"Any effort to repeal the law is going to have to include an effort to put forward a meaningful replacement," Messer said.

Working through the political process this way, Indiana congressional Republicans will be acting like the person who is perhaps the best Hoosier politician in Washington, Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts Jr.

When he had a chance to cast the fifth vote to declare health care reform unconstitutional, Roberts stepped back and recognized that

the law was passed by the political will of Congress acting on behalf of the American people that at the time put strong Democratic majorities on Capitol Hill.

Roberts didn't force a confrontation with the White House. He ensured that governance carried the day. It's a move that the lawmakers in the current Congress should emulate. That doesn't mean acquiescing to Obama. But it does mean working with him in a way that would give the GOP credibility from the public.

Young recognizes the party can't get everything it wants. "There's a mandate to advance our agenda," Young said. "We're also practical. We realize the limits to what can become law as long as President Obama is in the White House."

Hoosier Republicans also are quick to assert that Obama must work with a GOP-led Congress. "We're willing to sit and talk," Stutzman said. "He's got to be willing to sit down and negotiate."

For now, they're optimistic about the Washington political environment.

"I fervently hope that Republicans and Democrats come together for the good of the American people to get the economy moving faster and increase personal income," Young said. "That's been lacking for the last six years." ❖



**U.S. Rep. Luke Messer with Speaker Boehner after his election to the leadership team as conference policy chair.**

# Republicans break from tax cuts, focus on education

By MAUREEN HAYDEN  
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – After championing 14 tax cuts in 15 years, Republicans who control the Statehouse have backed off an ambitious plan to eliminate the tax on business equipment that brings \$1 billion to local governments and schools, and instead may support a more modest break for the state’s smallest businesses.



While backpedaling on major tax reform, GOP lawmakers are planning an aggressive approach toward education. That includes overhauling the state’s K-12 school funding formula and

stepping into the thorny issue of making the state schools superintendent a job appointed by the governor rather than elected by the people.

The latter two measures are supported by the influential Indiana Chamber of Commerce, which held a legislative preview luncheon Monday featuring the four caucus leaders in the state General Assembly.

The chamber still wants to end the business equipment tax – an idea championed by Republican Gov. Mike Pence in the last session – but GOP leaders say the timing isn’t right.

“We do need to catch our breath a little bit, if for nothing else to make sure we have the revenue to pay for the services we have to provide,” said Senate President David Long, R-Fort Wayne.

House Speaker Brian Bosma has called for a moratorium on tax reform for the session that begins in January. At the chamber event Monday, he said he would only consider proposals that don’t significantly harm local governments and schools, the major benefactors of the business-equipment tax revenue.

Instead of wiping out the business equipment tax, the Legislature may consider allowing

businesses to take a greater degree of depreciation on equipment and machinery. That would result in a loss of only \$7 million in revenue statewide, far from the \$1 billion loss if the tax was eliminated.

That legislation could also include a blanket exemption for about 150,000 small businesses that pay less than \$500 in business equipment taxes each year. If every county opted in, tax revenues would go down by \$13 million statewide.

The more surprising news from Monday’s event was the chamber’s call for the Legislature to eliminate the election of the superintendent of public instruction by making it a gubernatorial appointment.

If such a measure were passed to go into effect in 2016, it would mean the current state superintendent, Democrat Glenda Ritz, wouldn’t be allowed to run for reelection.

Both Long and Bosma support the notion but warned of the political optics of Republicans terminating the only the Democrat currently in statewide office. “To eliminate that now as an elected position would start a firestorm of protest,” Long said.

Still, he and Bosma said the current system isn’t working. Since Ritz was elected in 2012, she’s been locked in a battle with the state Board of Education, whose members are appointed by Pence.

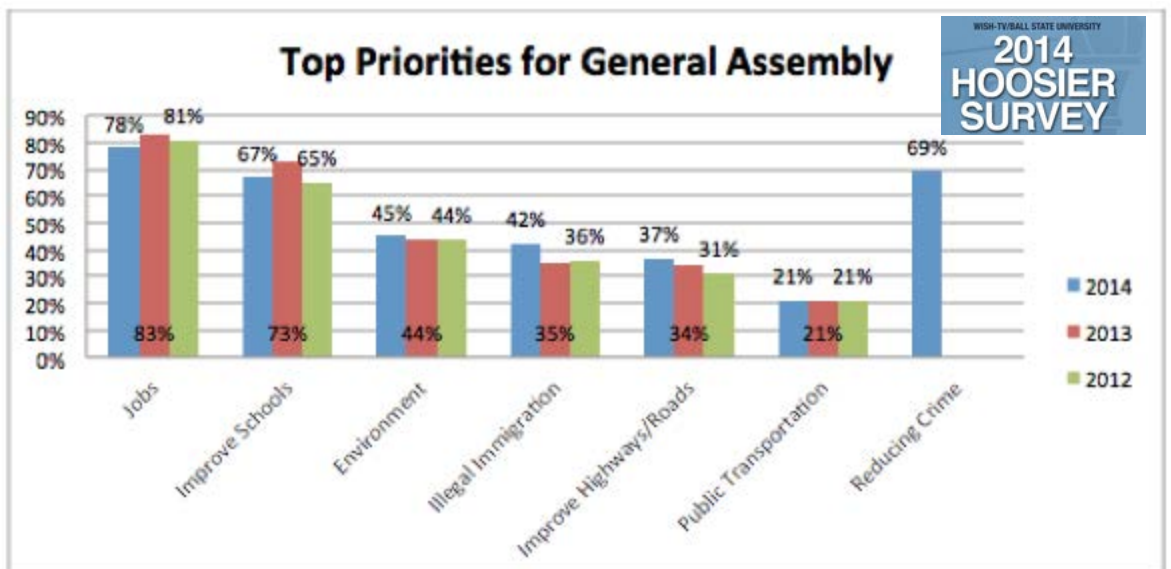
“We can’t go another two years like we had the last two years,” Long said.

Indiana is one of only 12 states that elects its state schools chief. The job elsewhere is filled by the governor or a state school board.

Bosma predicted the Legislature may move to minimize the authority of Ritz and the state school board, though he declined to be specific.

“The bickering on the front page of the paper has to stop or the General Assembly will take action and it’ll probably be action nobody will like,” he said.

Senate Minority Leader Tim Lanane, D-Anderson,



said he doubts that Indiana voters would support the idea. "On their list of burning issues, this is not very burning," he said.

**Bosma was more** specific about his intent to change the school funding formula, calling the disparity between better-funded urban schools and their lesser-funded suburban counterparts unfair. Schools with the highest percent of low-income students now get about \$5,000 more per pupil than schools in the state's wealthiest districts.

In addition to changing the formula, Bosma said he'll support measures that compel schools to spend more state dollars on classroom teaching and less on what he

called the "grand abyss" of administration.

Lanane predicted a contentious fight over school funding if legislation, as expected, results in less money for the state's poorest school districts, which are mostly represented by Democrats.

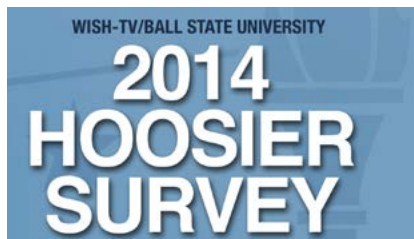
"I can tell you the schools that will take it on the chin," he said. "It's going to be in the urban areas, in districts that can least afford it." ❖

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

# Hoosiers say jobs, crime, schools top priorities in poll

By MAUREEN HAYDEN  
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS -- Jobs, crime and schools are the top concerns of Hoosiers, and they top the priorities that Hoosiers want lawmakers to focus on during the next legislative session.



Three of four people surveyed for the annual Hoosier Survey said job creation is

the most important task of the General Assembly when it convenes in January. That comes even as Indiana's unemployment rate, at 5.7 percent, continues to drop below the national average.

"Jobs always end up on the top of the list," said Ball State University political scientist Ray Scheele, who helped design the poll. "The economy is still the highest priority in the minds of Hoosiers."

The WISH-TV/Ball State University survey, now in its seventh year, also found that a majority wants lawmakers to do something to reduce violent crime, though the survey didn't specify what.

Pollsters did ask specific questions about education. They found a majority wants more money for local schools.

And more than 80 percent want to see the state fund pre-school for all 4-year-olds, which doesn't exist now, and end the

policy that makes parents pay for children's textbooks.

"Hoosiers like their public schools," said Ball State's Joe Losco. "But they're getting the message that schools might be getting starved for funds."

Survey results were released Monday, just a day before legislators gather at the Statehouse for their annual Organization Day. The 2015 session won't start until the first week of January.

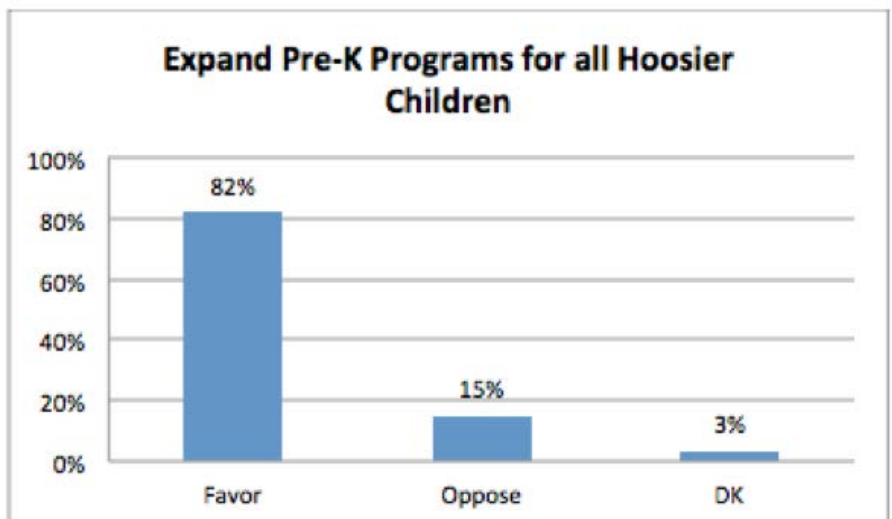
Other findings from the survey:

- Forty-five percent say protecting the environment should be a top focus for legislators, while 42 percent think immigration reform should be a priority.

- Two-thirds believe the state needs to strengthen ethics laws for elected officials.

- Just over one third say the state should hold onto its \$2 billion budget surplus, but almost as many say the state should spend some of the surplus to fund programs cut in recent years, including fire and police protection and road repair.

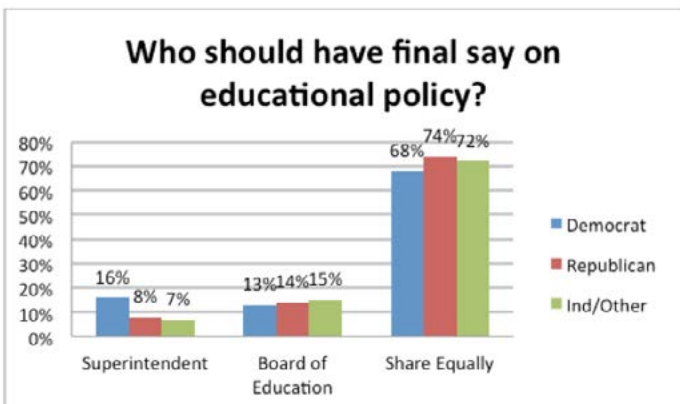
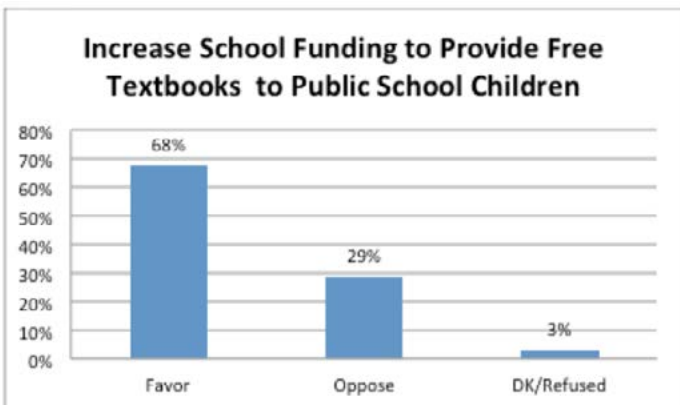
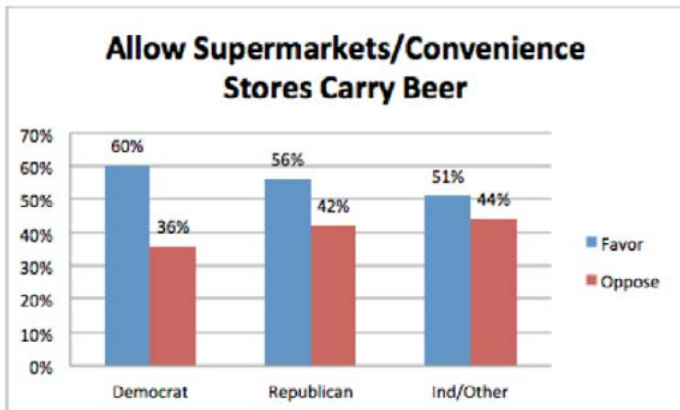
- Support for same-sex marriage, made legal in Indiana earlier this year, is holding steady at 47 percent. But there is wide variation by age and political party, with



younger Hoosiers and Democrats as the most supportive. A majority (56 percent) also believe that Indiana should recognize same-sex marriages performed in other states.

■ Hoosiers have significantly more trust in state government than they do in the federal government. Forty-five percent trust the state government to do what is right all or most of the time, while only 21 percent feel the same way about the national government. ❖

WISH-TV/BALL STATE UNIVERSITY  
**2014 HOOSIER SURVEY**



# The coming 2015 ‘education session’

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – After both the Chamber of Commerce Legislative Preview and Organization Day earlier this week, all indications suggest public education will be overwhelmingly the topic of debate and compromise for this upcoming budgetary session.

“I would like to see this is as an education session,” Senate President David Long told the media Tuesday. “There’s no more critical strategic investment for us this session of the General Assembly than K-12 education and K-12 education funding,” Speaker Brian Bosma said during his opening address.



The school funding formula is on the table as are school corporation consolidation and, indeed, the very future of the state superintendent of public instruction remaining an elected office. It’s unlikely these issues will be resolved along tidy party-line votes. It gives this session the potential, in spite of two Republican super majorities, to be more contentious (and exciting) than observers might otherwise predict.

## Teachers and classrooms

Both chambers’ respective leaders were on message Organization Day. If you paid attention, there was one word they both emphasized again and again: “Teachers.” Speaker Bosma invited the past decade’s Teacher of the Year recipients to attend in the gallery, acknowledged them individually during his address, said they would form an advisory roundtable for the House, and he mentioned his own strong familial connections to educators. The crux to any education solution, Bosma proclaimed, was “retaining and attracting the best and brightest to the profession of education. We have to fund students, and through those students, fund teachers rather than funding institutions. We have to treat teachers as professional faculty and free them from regulatory burdens and bureaucratic control to do the job that they desire so much to do.”

Across the Statehouse the same adulatory rhetoric and emphasis on teachers could be found. “We need to reach out and make sure not only that we are supporting our teachers effectively financially and with the support they need educationally,” Long said. “But we also try to make sure that young people who are considering the profession understand that we respect it, that we understand it’s a calling that requires great passion to do the job effectively, and we want them the best and brightest teaching

our kids.”

Asked about the conspicuous focus on educators Tuesday, Speaker Bosma doesn't see the rhetoric or the policies as a new departure. "We've been talking about teacher professionalism and recognizing them as the professionals they are for quite some time. It's been misinterpreted by some and some of the other reforms we've put together. They were emphasized in the electoral process and I think that caught some people's attention." Long also made similar points: During the last election cycle Republicans were being unfairly depicted as anti-teacher.

Democrats and teachers' unions were indeed hitting on these issues and argue it forced Republicans to make education a priority this past election and this upcoming session. "We noticed in the closing weeks of the election that the Republican Party was adopting our very verbiage on public education," House Minority Leader Scott Pelath remarked. "I think that's very interesting."

Many teachers might feel fairly or unfairly that the last several years have been punctuated by meddling from Indianapolis. If you ask them they might mention the flip flop on Common Core after preparing and training for years, the IT problems surrounding high-stakes testing, the controversy over the A-F school system, funding concerns due to vouchers, the high burnout rate among faculty at charter schools, the creation of a parallel education agency under the control of the governor, and the need to update the state's school funding formula. Tony Bennett's resounding defeat in 2012 while the state simultaneously elected Republican super majorities and a governor should indicate that education has been and can be an issue apart from typical political party loyalty. Supt. Glenda Ritz's victory hangs as a shadow over this entire pivot toward more emphasis on teachers and classrooms.

The crux of fixing the school funding formula is having dollars follow students with local conditions and needs in mind. Speaker Bosma says for every \$1 sent to local school corporations, only 57 cents makes it to the classroom. "Dollars to the classroom is really dollars to the classroom," Bosma emphasized during questions with the media.

Defining and lessening administrative costs is necessary but will prove difficult. Does "administration" include school counselors, guidance counselors, and other individual school's support staff? Moreover, do subjects like art, music, and physical education count as "classrooms?" "Dollars to the classroom" is going to be a phrase considered, defined, and debated in the coming months repeatedly. At the risk of verbal overuse, the idea could unfortunately

become a cliché by early spring that legislators use to talk past one another. Every Hoosier will be for it like sugar cream pie.

In an attempt to directly infuse the classroom with funding, the House Republicans are proposing a \$200 tax credit for public school teachers. (There is already a federal income tax \$250 educator expense deduction for eligible teachers.) What most educators and many informed parents would tell you is that the very idea teachers have to spend their own money on instructional materials and this is considered acceptable reveals how we fund schools

is both inadequate and malfunctioning. It will be appreciated, but the classroom materials tax credit is a Band-Aid. Democrats probably won't oppose the measure, but they will see it as a political sop by their opponents to teachers.

Attracting and retaining the "best and brightest" in teaching can build on recent accountability reforms and where the current rhetoric is moving, but we aren't there yet. Teachers should be treated like white-collar knowledge workers; they should not be considered interchangeable labor inputs and they should be held firmly accountable to at least some metrics. As any proponent of market-based solutions will tell you, you cannot attract

talent without adequate recompense. Making the base starting pay for Indiana teachers among the highest in the nation as well as making their merit-based pay cumulative would send a signal that Hoosiers want only the "best and brightest" educating their youth. Resting one's hopes on the highly motivated and passionate is not a very good human resource strategy, whether for business or public education.

Integral to the House Republicans' program to decrease administrative overhead for school corporations is to encourage and facilitate consolidation. "We're looking at both the carrot and the stick approach," Bosma said Tuesday. "We're talking about some incentives to cut administrative costs and get more dollars to the classroom." That could include one-time financial assistance packages to consolidate corporations, restructure their debts, and shuffle administrative staff.

In some counties the need to consolidate extremely small corporations seems a no-brainer. However, it's potentially the third rail of local Hoosier politics. When HPI asked Pelath if his caucus would support such measures, he distanced himself immediately. "They can go through southern Indiana and make that pitch," he answered. "People like their local schools." If Democrats want to insert themselves into an area where Republicans are almost certainly going to differ, school consolidation would be a likely area this coming session.



**House Minority Leader Scott Pelath and Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown listen to Speaker Bosma's Organization Day speech. (HPI Photo by Matthew Butler)**



Tackling both school funding formula and school consolidation will not be resolved along clean party lines. Leadership is well aware. "Now I acknowledge that's not going to be an easy task," Bosma said Tuesday, "and it will be a parochial one, because it impacts each one of our school corporations, but it must be done."

### **An appointed superintendent?**

Conversely, the remaining education issue that will probably become the most partisan will be the future of the state superintendent of public instruction. Both state political parties have advocated in the past making the post a departmental appointee under the governor. However, with the superintendent being the only statewide elected office held by a Democrat, Bosma observed on Monday "it doesn't have a very good appearance to make that change right now." Long was perhaps less reticent to suggest a legislative fix might be in the offing unless the DOE and SBOE stop bickering and focus on policy. The not so implicit message sent this week was "Shape up, or else." A cynical observer might argue this gives even more incentive for those butting heads with the DOE to continue to the gridlock—the worse, the better.

If any issue might bring large crowds and outside groups to the Statehouse this coming session, it could be teachers rallying around Ritz. As their only high-profile official within the building, one can expect Democrats to use the issue to mobilize an integral component of their base (teachers) and, perhaps, attract more public school parents. If unsuccessful, a serious attempt to eliminate the elected position would probably help Ritz's reelection efforts and, perhaps, the 2016 Democratic gubernatorial candidate.

### **Religious liberty laws**

Last session was dominated by the socially divisive same-sex marriage ban amendment. Not since right-to-work had there been such a steady presence of crowds and media attention at the Statehouse on a daily basis. Now, coming off the double defeats of HJR-3 and the federal courts ordering same-sex marriage be allowed in Indiana, social conservatives will be backing legislation to mitigate the "damage," as they see it.

Their response will be religious liberty laws, which seek to shield churches and, most especially, those in the market place, like wedding cake bakers, from discrimination lawsuits if they refuse to serve a same-sex couples.

Curt Smith, president of Indiana Family Institute, told HPI in October that he had a conference call with several legislators and draft legislation was in the works. He is hoping to model something along the lines of the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act for the state; 19 states have some version of it on their books. HPI asked Advance America's Eric Miller if his group would be lobbying for any religious liberty laws this session. "We're looking at different bills," is all he would comment.

"No one has asked to speak with me about that," Bosma told HPI on Tuesday. "I've read discussions in the media about it. I just haven't heard anyone say they're going to introduce it." In the Senate it was the same story. "It's interesting, we haven't even talked about it," Long said. "I think there will be a religious liberty discussion because I think that's on people's minds. I'm not going to express an opinion one way or the other." The bill request deadlines are in mid-December. We'll know more then.

Evangelical groups have scheduled a Statehouse rally at 2 p.m. Saturday on the subject.

With stronger super majorities and some Republican seats replaced by more socially conservative members, a religious liberty law of some type seems more than viable. It might grab headlines and crowds during specific days of committee hearings and floor readings, but it's highly doubtful social legislation, like last year, will be a part of the wider narrative this session.

### **Caucus politics**

Last session both the House and Senate GOP caucuses had some internal strife, which led to much unwanted media attention. In the case of the former were Eric Turner's alleged conflict of interest issues and caucus members leaking details to the press. It led to a leadership reshuffle, most likely prompted Turner's resignation (after being reelected), and a strong bipartisan impetus for ethics reform. Speaker Bosma was asked Tuesday if there would be repercussions for members who spoke to the media regarding things said behind caucus doors. "No," he answered. "We've had all our family discussions on that issue."

A family rift from last session, however, appears to remain unhealed within the Senate Republicans. Sen. Mike Delph lost his leadership post and floor seating position after he angrily tweeted a caucus decision not to restore the second sentence to HJR-3 and held a press conference in which he was very critical of his Senate leadership.

On Organization Day Sen. Delph was absent which did not surprise observers. The official word: He was on vacation, had asked to be excused, and would be sworn in later without issue.

According to HPI sources, at a meeting of Senate Republicans following the election, Sens. Long and Brandt Hershman asked Delph to apologize for his actions over HJR-3. Delph reportedly refused and remains unwelcome in caucus meetings. Pressed on the subject Tuesday, Sen. Long answered, "I'm not going to talk about Sen. Delph, if you don't mind. We'll continue to have conversations with Sen. Delph and see where everything goes. I had lunch recently with Sen. Delph and we had a long talk about things and I'll just leave it at that."

Will Sen. Delph become a caucus of one? If so, will this encourage him to speak as a vocal conservative backbencher? ❖

# Clark declines, Merritt weighs bid; Buttigieg declares, Kruzan out

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Murray Clark will not seek the Republican Indianapolis mayoral nomination, Bloomington Mayor Mark Kruzan won't seek a fourth term and South

Bend Mayor Peter Buttigieg announced his reelection.

These were three developments as 2015 Indiana mayoral races began heating up this past week.

Kruzan told WFIU's "Ask the Mayor" program on Tuesday, "When I thought about

it, I realized only one other mayor has served more years than I have and there's a reason for that. You have a short shelf life for being mayor and for me, it's been 30 years in elected politics. I've just been blessed by this community."

Clark, the nephew of former Indianapolis Mayor Alex Clark, said in a statement Tuesday morning, "When Greg Ballard announced, to the disappointment of many including me, his decision not to seek a third term, my wife Janet and I began to consider whether I should run for mayor of Indianapolis."

But Clark, a former state senator, lieutenant governor nominee and Indiana Republican Chairman explained, "This is not our first time evaluating a campaign for mayor, and having looked at the opportunity, we know well the commitment that is required not only to run, but also to lead. However, despite my love for Indianapolis and its promising future, returning to public life is not the right decision for us and our family at this point in time. My work at Faegre Baker Daniels is interesting, challenging and enjoyable. Both Janet and I still greatly enjoy and find rewarding our volunteer work in the community, and we are blessed to have four young Clark adults entering very exciting times in their lives seemingly every day. This endeavor would require setting all of that aside for the next 12 to 60 months."

Indianapolis Republicans appear to be unnerved by what some sources say is a 25,000-voter edge by Democrats in Marion County, even though the City-County Council is evenly split between the two parties.

Clark said, "I greatly admire Mayor Ballard and his team for the extraordinary accomplishments they have achieved over the last seven years. I am so proud of them and the city that Indianapolis continues to become. I know Greg and Winnie will not sit idle for the next 13 months, but nevertheless, I want to extend today my heartfelt

thanks to them both for their exemplary public service. I care deeply for the future of this city and its people. I have spent my life here and share a strong optimism about the future of Indianapolis, our state and our country. I look forward to continuing my involvement in a meaningful way for many years to come and to working with others to ensure that my children and the generations that follow have a great city and state to call home."

Clark's decision narrows a potential Republican field. State Sen. Jim Merritt and former Councilman Jeff Cardwell are two other Republicans pondering the nomination. The winner would take on either Democrat State Rep. Ed DeLaney or Joe Hogsett. Other names mentioned include Higher Education Commissioner Teresa Lubbers and Public Safety Director Troy Riggs, and 2014 sheriff nominee Emmett Carney, who polled 40% of the vote with virtually no money to spend against incumbent John Lawton.

Here are how other mayoral races are beginning to shape up for 2015:

**Anderson:** Republican Mayor Kevin Smith regained the office he lost in 2007, defeating Democrat Mayor Kris Ockomon 6,030 to 5,626, and a rematch is likely. Ockomon faced a number of controversies but was



**Three-term Bloomington Mayor Mark Kruzan announced he will not seek reelection.**

cleared of any criminal violations.

**Angola:** Mayor Dick Hickman announced earlier this month he will seek another term in office in 2015.

**Bedford:** Independent Mayor Shawna Girgis will seek a third term. She is overseeing a \$19 million downtown revitalization project after Bedford was selected as a Stellar Community in 2013.

**Bloomington:** With Mayor Kruzan opting out of a reelection bid, this could open up a competitive Democratic primary. John Hamilton, nephew of former con-

gressman Lee Hamilton, ran unsuccessfully against Kruzan in the 2011 Democratic primary, losing 3,507 to 2361. "I haven't thought about that. It's a good time to digest this and thank him for his service," Hamilton told the Bloomington Herald-Times. "I'm proud to have run four years ago and talked about issues that are important to Bloomington, but I'm not thinking about that right now." Monroe County Councilman Rick Dietz told the Herald-Times, "Yes, I am giving it some consideration." Long-time friend and former colleague Matt Pierce, who took Kruzan's seat in the state Legislature when Kruzan left in 2002, also took his name out of the mix of possible candidates. "Being mayor is not on my bucket list," Pierce said. It's also not on Bloomington City Council member Tim Mayer's to-do list in 2015. "Even though the name fits, no," Mayer said when asked if he'd run for the office. Trent Deckard, current chairman of the Democratic Party, agreed that it's too soon to know what could happen in 2015. "It's definitely a tremendous loss," Deckard said. "I think politics sometimes can rush through these things, but I think we need to say thank you to him."

**Carmel:** Republican Mayor James Brainard will seek a record sixth term. "I'd like to see the development and the good things that have happened here continue, and we've got a lot of people in Carmel who like the direction the city's headed in," Brainard said when he announced last July. There is talk of a potential primary opponent, but no candidate has emerged to date.

**Columbia City:** First term Republican Mayor Ryan Daniel will seek reelection. A challenger has not announced. Daniel had backed State Rep. Kathy Heuer in her primary loss to Christopher Judy.

**Columbus:** City Council member Jim Lienhoop announced his primary challenge to Mayor Kristen Brown. More than 200 people packed into the large theater at YES Cinema to hear Lienhoop state his case for the Republican nomination for mayor (Columbus Republic). Lienhoop (pictured right) outlined his plans for Columbus on Saturday morning in a short speech punctuated by laughter, applause and two standing ovations from a crowd filled with community leaders, top officials with Bartholomew County's Republican Party and fellow city councilmen. Lienhoop said Columbus can and must do better, and it needs to do so with a spirit of cooperation. Disagreements over Brown's demotion of former Parks Director Ben Wagner led several parks board members to leave their posts, a trend that Lienhoop wants to change. "I think we're also interested in trying to stem the flow of talent from city hall, we've seen an awful lot of people



leave the last several years, and decades worth of institutional knowledge that's walked out the door, and I think we can stem that tide," Lienhoop said. Lienhoop said he also has plans to improve the city's economy by attracting new business and being more fiscally responsible.

**Crown Point:** Two-term Mayor Dave Uran is expected to seek reelection and no Republicans are lining up at this point.

**East Chicago:** Democratic Mayor Anthony Copeland is expected to seek a second term but will face a primary challenge from City Clerk Mary Morris Leonard.

**Elkhart:** Two-term Democrat Mayor Dick Moore announced in 2013 he would seek a third term. He is expected to face State Rep. Tim Neese, a former member of the city council. Moore defeated Republican David Ashe 3,195 to 1,960 in 2011.

**Evansville:** Republican Mayor Lloyd Winnecke will seek a second term. Democrats don't appear to have a front line candidate, as 2011 nominee Rick Davis died and former congressman and sheriff Brad Ellsworth has declined to run. City Councilman John Friend is a possibility, but a recent drunken boating record and accounting associates investigated for fraud, he will carry a lot of baggage. Winnecke defeated Davis in heavily Democratic Evansville in 2011 by a 11,664-to-10,009 tally as party divisions hurt Davis.

**Fort Wayne:** Two-term Democratic Mayor Tom Henry is expected to seek reelection, and so far only Councilman Mitch Harper is actively pursuing the Republican nomination.

**Frankfort:** First-term Republican Mayor Chris McBarnes is seeking reelection. He has no challenger to date.

**Fishers:** Scott Fadness won the first Republican primary in May, will take office in January and will then file for a full term in February. At this point, no potential Republican primary opponent has surfaced.

**Garrett:** A longtime Garrett firefighter and former Common Council member has thrown his hat in the 2015 Garrett mayoral race (KPC News). Ted Christensen, 44, a Republican, announced on Facebook last week he would be entering the primary race in May for the November 2015 general election.

**Greencastle:** Mayor Sue Murray has been adamant about serving only two terms, leaving the mayor's office up for grabs (Greencastle Banner-Graphic). Thus far, no one has announced his or her intent to run although Republican Chairman Jerry Ensor has hinted he has a competent hopeful in the wings as the GOP hopes to regain the mayor's office. It's been 28 consecutive years of Democratic rule at City Hall, two terms of Mike Harmless, followed by a record three terms of Nancy Michael and two terms of Sue Murray.

**Greenwood:** First term Mayor Mark Myers is expected to seek a second term. The Republican upset

incumbent Mayor Charles Henderson in 2011.

**Goshen:** Democratic City Councilman Jeremy Stutsman is expected to run after incumbent Allan Kauffman decided to retire. A Republican candidate has yet to surface.

**Hammond:** Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. will seek a fourth term, putting to the side a potential 2016 gubernatorial run. He faces a Democratic primary challenge from City Councilman Homero "Chico" Hinojosa. McDermott is unconvinced. McDermott said he's "fired up" about all the great things Hammond is doing and enjoys overcoming obstacles to get projects done, telling the NWI Times in August, "I've been mayor 11 years and I understand the city and how it runs. After 11 years of me being their mayor, I think people trust me. They know I'm going to tell them the truth and sometimes I get in trouble for that. It's been my success. If I ever did run for higher office I wouldn't change a thing." As for Hinojosa, McDermott said, "I think Chico comes out at the last minute and files for 6th District councilman and runs for reelection. That's my prediction." Hinojosa told the NWI Times "I already launched my Hinojosa for Mayor website. I have a fundraiser set and I'll be moving forward."

**Huntington:** Republican Mayor Brooks Fetters has not announced his plans for 2015. He could face a primary challenge from Huntington County Commissioner Larry Buzzard, sources tell HPI.

**Indianapolis:** With Murray Clark out, all eyes are on State Sen. Jim Merritt, who told WIBC that he is going over 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 election returns to determine whether he would have a chance at defeating Democrat Joe Hogsett or State Rep. Ed DeLaney. While names like former councilman Jeff Cardwell and Public Safety Director Troy Riggs are also being mentioned, HPI is hearing that should Merritt pass, a Republican from the business community is being approached.

**Jasper:** Republican Terry Seitz won a decisive victory in this traditionally Democratic city over John Burger, 3,328 to 1,577, and has announced plans to seek a second term. He told the DuBois County Free Press in July, "Unfinished business. I understand the natural flow of government is at a very tempered pace especially anything involving major policy shifts, ordinances, public projects or funding. In less than three years we have accomplished so much, including significant public projects as well as many day-to-day ones improving processes."



All eyes are on Republican State Sen. Jim Merritt when it comes to the Indianapolis mayoral race after Murray Clark took a pass. (HPI Photo by Blair Englehart)

**Jeffersonville:** Republican Mayor Mike Moore will be challenged by Democratic City Councilman Dennis Julius. Another Democrat could also enter the race. Moore upset Mayor Tom Galligan 5,396 to 4,675 in 2011. Moore said in his reelection kickoff in July, "We're two-and-a-half years in and we've seen a lot of progress over those years. We just want to continue with what we've set forth as our goals." Galligan, who currently heads Clark County's Democratic Party, told the Louisville Courier-Journal he doesn't have any plan at this point to run for mayor again "unless something drastic changes." He added he plans to support Julius' candidacy.

**Kokomo:** Jack Dodd, a Republican former human resources director in the McKillip administration, will challenge two-term Mayor Greg Goodnight. After McKillip's tenure came to an end, the Kokomo Tribune reported that Dodd took a job as human resource director in Yuma, a city of around 93,000 people and 1,300 city employees. "I believe Kokomo needs to refocus and re-prioritize," Dodd said. "Working on building and strengthening our foundation is a must as we move into the future." Dodd also highlighted his mission to tackle public safety through both increased police and fire protection and supporting all areas of the city as its downtown continues to thrive. "It is time to make the streets of Kokomo safe and not business friendly for the bad guys," he said. "Securing our streets and the safety of our citizens should be a top priority. "Give credit where credit is due: Downtown Kokomo never looked better, but Kokomo is bigger than downtown," he added.

**Lafayette:** Two-term Mayor Tony Roswarski ran unopposed in 2011 and is expected to seek reelection. There is no announced challenger.

**LaPorte:** First term Republican Mayor Blair Milo is expected to seek reelection, though she has not announced.

**Logansport:** Republican Mayor Ted Franklin upset incumbent Mike Fincher 2,023 to 1,338 in 2011. Since taking office, Franklin has had several spates of bad publicity ranging from legal troubles for family members to where he parked his car. The local sentiment is that Franklin is extremely vulnerable. Dave Kitchell, former Pharos-Tribune editor and current HPI columnist, is weighing a run as a Democrat.

**Lawrence:** Republican Councilman Steve Collier announced this past week.

**Marion:** Three-term Republican Mayor Wayne Seybold appears to be leaning toward a reelection bid. He was an unsuccessful candidate for state treasurer, losing to Kelly Mitchell in last June's Republican State Convention

**Madison:** Republican Mayor Damon Welch told HPI in October he plans a seek reelection.

**Michigan City:** First-term Democrat Ron Meer told the LaPorte CountyLife.com website that he will "absolutely" seek reelection in 2015 and faces a challenge from Republican Thomas Fickert. "One of the things (about being mayor) is that things don't move as fast as you'd like," said Meer.

**Muncie:** First-term Democrat Mayor Dennis Tyler is expected to run. Former Republican mayor Sharon McShurley has moved to Syracuse and there is no obvious GOP opponent at this writing.

**New Albany:** First term Democratic Mayor Jeff Gahan will face a challenge from Republican businessman David White, who announced in September. "My candidacy is not about me, it is all about you," White said at the press conference. "I want to build three high-rise buildings in a 28-square block that will generate that revenue in many different bases with people and jobs to work, play and spend," White said. Gahan easily won a first term in 2011 by defeating Republican Dale Bagshaw by more than 2,500 votes.

**New Castle:** Democrat Mayor Greg York is seeking reelection and is expected to face Republican Tom Nipp.

**Noblesville:** Incumbent Republican John Ditslear is expected to seek reelection, as evidenced by his campaign Facebook page.

**Plymouth:** Republican incumbent Mark Senter will seek a second term.

**Portage:** Realtor Leo Hatch Jr., a Democrat, announced in August that he's running mayor in Portage. He will seek to challenge Republican Mayor James Snyder, who is under an FBI investigation. In July Snyder told the NWI Times, "I have been advised that government agents have asked to review my campaign finance records. These records are now, and have always been, available to the public on the Internet. In fact, to my knowledge, I was the first public official in Porter County to post such records in a public forum. My campaign has done nothing wrong, and we look forward to this matter being wrapped up as expeditiously as possible."

**Richmond:** Republican Diana Pappin has declared for the office that will be vacated by retiring three-term Democratic Mayor Sally Hutton. Pappin filed paperwork in October. "I am ea-

ger to lead the city of Richmond," Pappin said. "I will work with city employees and our citizens to make Richmond a place where new business is sought and welcomed, where growth in employment is expected, where education is valued and where people want to live, work and play." Pappin worked 27 years at Ivy Tech Community College in a variety of positions and was executive director of resource development when she retired in July. She also served on Richmond Common Council from 2004-11, including two years as president. Former Wayne County Sheriff Matthew Strittmatter and David Snow, a local radio personality, are also weighing a run. A new political action committee of local businessmen and industrialists have formed and are interviewing potential candidates.

**Rochester:** Republican incumbent Mark Smiley is seeking reelection.

**South Bend:** Mayor Pete Buttigieg announced on Tuesday he will seek a second term. "Now it's time to make sure our neighborhoods, our economy, and our administration keep heading in the right direction," the Democrat said. "We've announced almost 2,000 jobs created in our city and tens of millions of dollars in new business investment. We are more than halfway toward our goal of fixing or removing 1,000 vacant houses to strengthen our neighborhoods. Public safety has continued to improve, and our finances remain among the strongest in the state. Our use of technology has been transformed, and the new 311 system has simplified city services."

**Terre Haute:** Mayor Duke Bennett is expected to seek an unprecedented third term for a Republican in a city that has had a penchant for upsetting incumbents. City Councilman John Mullican is said to be considering a challenge, but is not talking about his candidacy to date, local sources tell HPI. Local sources describe Vigo County Democrats as in "disarray" and the city party was embarrassed by Bennett's resounding reelection victory over Democrat Fred Nation in 2011. Bennett is now president of the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns and will take a leading role on issues such as the impact of the constitutional property tax caps and repealing the business personal property tax.

**Valparaiso:** Local observers and Republican sources believe Republican Mayor Jon Costas will seek a fourth term in 2011. A challenger has yet to emerge.

**Wabash:** Democrat Wabash Fire chief Bob Mullet announced his candidacy. Long-time retiring Mayor Bob Vanlandingham was by Mullet's



Terre Haute Mayor Duke Bennett also heads the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns.

side when he announced. Republican Scott Long was the first to declare a week ago.

**Warsaw:** Republican Mayor Joe Thallemer outlined six strategic goals in 2013 and he is expected to seek a second term next year. There is continued speculation that Monica Boyer's Tea Party cell may attempt to run a primary challenger.

**Westfield:** Republican incumbent Andy Cook is expected to seek reelection.

**West Lafayette:** Republican Mayor John Dennis won a decisive victory over former Republican legislative candidate John Polles in 2011 by 1,500 votes. Dennis will be favored for reelection in 2015.

## Candidates for Turner, Braun House seats

Neither State Rep. Eric Turner or Steve Braun have resigned yet. But candidates are emerging when they do.

**For Turner's HD32 seat:** Former Hamilton Heights School Supt. Tony Cook; Parvin Gillim, who lost in the primary to Turner.

**For Braun's HD24 seat:** Zionsville Councilwoman Susana Suarez; former Hamilton County GOP treasurer Donna Schatbley, lawyer Keith Griffin, businesswoman Elise Nieshalla, language pathologist Raju Chinthala. ❖

# Dems need a lift and the Chamber delivers

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – Just when the state's beleaguered Democrats needed a lift, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce delivered.

When the chamber announced this week that its legislative priority will be making the superintendent of public instruction an appointed rather than elected position, Democrats were aghast.

While they likely won't admit it, Democrats also were smiling. The Republican-dominated chamber had just given Democrats a solid campaign issue for 2016 when Hoosiers will pick a new governor and all 100 members of the House.

But the chamber proposal put Republican lawmakers in a precarious position.

The question is whether Republicans want to anger Hoosier voters or the state chamber. Neither is a good proposition. Republicans are still seething over the ouster of Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett by Democrat Glenda Ritz in 2012.

**Ritz, who is the only** Democratic state official, intends to seek re-election in 2016. Republicans probably won't say it, but they know it will be difficult to defeat Ritz. If the Chamber is successful, the superintendent's office won't be on the ballot in 2016 and the person elected governor will appoint the next school chief.

If Pence signed a bill that ultimately would eliminate Ritz as superintendent, one has to think he would be

targeted for defeat by the state's education community. After all, when Bennett took most of the clout away from teacher unions, educators quietly had him ousted.

**Chamber President Kevin** Brinegar said his organization wants the change because of the friction between Ritz and Gov. Mike Pence.

I suspect the chamber also wants the change because Ritz fights the expansion of charter schools, which is a priority for Republicans.

The chamber proposal also puts Pence in a tough spot. Pence would love to get rid of Ritz, but at what expense? If Pence signed a bill to make the superintendent an appointed position, he would put his own re-election in jeopardy. But that much power might be too much for him to pass up.

And what happens to the Republican House members who supported the Chamber bill?

Will they be making their own re-election more difficult? After all, opposition to President Obama won't be an issue in 2016 as it was two weeks ago.

And anyone who votes to ultimately eliminate Ritz will have a target on his or her back. And teachers – who make up the largest union in Indiana – won't be taking prisoners.

**With Republicans controlling** virtually everything in Indiana other than Ritz's office, what does it say to the rest of the state if the GOP goes after her.

And just think. If the Legislature approves the chamber bill and Pence signs, there's a good chance the next governor will be a Democrat named John Gregg. And I suspect he would appoint Ritz. ❖

**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.**



# Gov. Pence is walking for president in 2016

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Indiana Gov. Mike Pence is walking for president.

Walking. Too early for potential 2016 candidates to say they're running for president. But Pence is walking as fast as he can. He goes to the right places, even Germany, to talk foreign policy, and seeks to impress influential Republicans and the types of conservative voters with the clout in early nomination contests in Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina.



Walking fast toward a chance for the White House is why Pence walked away from \$80 million in federal funding for pre-kindergarten learning for Hoosier kids.

His last-minute decision not to apply for the funding startled and disappointed advocates of early childhood learning. It surprised Republican leaders of the General Assembly. They had been citing the need for Indiana to catch up with efforts to reach kids at risk of going on to add to the state's dismal drop-out rate.

Making it more startling: The governor had recognized this need and pushed successfully for state legislative passage of a \$10 million preschool pilot program.

With this small step, involving only 1,000 kids in just five counties, Indiana will join 41 other states already providing preschool learning for low-income kids, the ones most at risk.

The Pence administration worked on the application for the additional \$80 million in federal funds. Then, despite bipartisan support and likelihood of federal approval, Pence wouldn't sign it.

**He has come under** harsh criticism in Indiana from educators and in newspaper editorials. Polls show overwhelming support in Indiana for early childhood learning programs.

So did he make a mistake?

Not in terms of the way he's walking.

Negative reaction in Indiana on his decision isn't that much of a concern for Pence; no concern at all if he is more interested now in winning favor with caucus conservatives

in Iowa who might regard "federal funds" as "dirty money" and deplore applying for anything from that Obama administration.

**Pence said his last minute** decision involved fear of federal strings being attached.

Indianapolis Star columnist Matthew Tully, who wrote critically about the decision, said Pence sought in a call to explain his reasons. Tully wrote: "Even after 30 minutes on the phone, Pence did not offer one specific problem with the federal grant program, or one specific instance of what he had called concerns about 'federal intrusion.'"

There always are some strings attached to federal money. There ought to be. A state shouldn't be able to put some childhood learning funds in a political slush fund or spend federal highway dollars only with favored high-bid contractors.

Even if the governor could cite no specific problem, no intrusion, he won praise from some conservative groups that assumed there would just have to be problems with a federal program, especially one aimed at helping low-income kids.

The Associated Press quoted one Tea Party activist who described activating a network of religious conservative groups to contact the governor to denounce the grant proposal just before his decision. Victory for them.

If polls show such support for efforts to reach at-risk kids early, did the decision bring more negative than favorable reaction to Pence in Indiana?

Yes. But that's no concern now for Pence if he really wants a warm welcome in the cold of Iowa next caucus time.

**This is not to** suggest that Pence doesn't care about Indiana or Indiana voters.

If he doesn't win a long-shot bid for the presidential nomination or the vice presidential nomination, his fall-back position will be running for re-election as

governor. There is no reason, however, for Pence to worry now about re-election in a state where the Democratic opposition proved on Nov. 4 to be so weak. He can deal with a Democratic nominee for governor later.

Right now, he walks fast toward another goal. And rejecting the \$80 million is more of a political plus than an obstacle along that trek.



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



Gov. Pence greets constituents in a Madison, Ind., cafe in October. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

# Failing the war on poverty

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – Imagine your college alma mater losing 600 games in a row and keeping the coach. Imagine it raining for 18,250 days in a row and not going out to buy an umbrella. Imagine a thief breaking into your home every night for 50 years and not buying a burglar alarm or a gun. Imagine going to the same dry cleaner every day for 50 years and being told that your laundry would be done



tomorrow.

Unless your alma mater is Indiana University, it's hard to imagine any of these things. And yet, in another amazing string of metaphors, these things pale in comparison to our attitudes about the 50-year-old war on poverty.

It's time to hoist the white flag, lay down our weapons and begin making the long hike back to Baghdad. We have

irretrievably lost the war on poverty and it's time to admit it and start all over. We have met the enemy and he is us! We have consistently dropped nukes on ourselves in our quest to win the unwinnable war and have jeopardized the economic futures of our children and grandchildren in the process.

This is not a Republican nor Democrat issue. Republicans don't like to see poverty any more than the most squishy liberal do-gooder does. Republicans love children and their parents and want to see them fed. Republicans love the elderly and we do not sit around and discuss ways to push granny off the cliff in her wheel chair. Republicans believe in education. Republicans believe in public health and adequate housing.

There, I said it. Republicans are people too!

**However, there is** a significant difference in the approach to the problem of poverty that make Republicans and Democrats diverge at the proverbial fork in the road. Republicans believe in equal opportunity. Democrats believe in equal outcomes. The Democrat road over the past 50 years has become well-rutted with entrenched failed social programs that throw trillions at problems that just won't go away. In the process, we have found ourselves on a poverty treadmill that has cost us over \$20 trillion to operate. Republicans advocate, in the words of poet Robert Frost, the road less traveled. We believe in taking a different path that emphasizes personal responsibility, incentives for discipline and work and making the American dream attainable by any person. We don't advocate giving anything to anyone. We believe in creating the economic,

educational and social environment where people may earn their version of the American dream.

While serving as a Republican county chairman, I was once asked to address a class at an alternative school. For those who may not be familiar with the term alternative school, these are schools that serve children who have found it difficult to fit into a normal school environment. The students are generally square pegs who have failed to fit into the round holes of the public schools. They have attendance and behavior problems and have been given this last chance to salvage an education.

**The principal of the** school asked both the Democrat Party chairman and myself to talk to the students about our parties and the political process. Unfortunately, we did this on separate occasions. Perhaps my lucid and powerful arguments might have converted the poor chap to the Republican way of thinking.

I asked the students if they wanted me to tell them what they wanted to hear or did they want to be forced to think. To a person, they said that they wanted to think. I asked how many of their families received government assistance of some type. All hands were raised. I then asked how many of their grandparents received government assistance. Most hands were raised. I finally asked how many had great grandparents who received government assistance and four out of 30 hands were raised. With this prelude I then asked the salient bonus round question of how many thought that their own children would receive government assistance. Once again, every hand went up.

This was starting to look like a depressing exercise in futility when it dawned on me that I should ask one last question. "Do you want to be on government assistance or do you want to be self-sufficient?" All hands shot into the air and the room erupted with instant discussion about how each of them wanted to make it on their own in this world and have nothing given to them. It was refreshing and restored my faith in our younger people. Frankly, after making my point about Republicans wanting to provide a society of equal opportunity and not equal outcomes, I just sat back and listened to these high school children. That afternoon, I was the one who received the education.

One girl, a pregnant 16-year-old with one child, already receiving welfare and the next soon to arrive, stated it pretty succinctly, "I have made some mistakes but I want my children to have the chance to make it on their own. I want them to get a good education, wait until after school to have their own children and get a good job. I want them to be proud." And therein lies the worst outcome of our failed war on poverty; we have robbed people of their pride and dignity.

**In the next few weeks** I'll be taking a closer look at the many failures of the war on poverty and on some of the possible strategies for dealing with a systemic problem. We'll look at the less worn path to dealing with our social ills, the Republican way. And that will make all the difference! ❖



# Thank you, Dr. Gruber

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Gruber is a well-regarded health economist who created a micro-simulation model used for health care policy.

It should come as no surprise that many economics professors are called upon to help with the development of public policy. After all, despite its elegance and rigor, economics is a practical discipline and economic



models offer a great deal of insight into almost any policy.

The process typically involves using a mathematical model to better understand the effects of a proposed policy proposal. One example of such a model is a micro-simulation. These are often used to explain the effects of a tax change on different groups such as households of different ages, sizes

and incomes. A fairly simple example can be found on my Center's website ([www.cberdata.org](http://www.cberdata.org)).

Over the years, I have done a fair bit of this myself, including work for three Democratic and four Republican state governors. In no instance was I asked to help hide an effect of the law or to deceive voters. That brings us to the sad case of Professor Jonathan Gruber.

Dr. Gruber is a well-regarded health economist who created a micro-simulation model that has been used to craft health care policy (aka Obamacare). But, unlike most micro-simulation models that do something novel to explain policy, Dr. Gruber's model is highly sought after because it replicates the version used by the U.S. Congressional Budget Office. Thus it can be used to outwit that organization's candid assessment of the effects of a policy proposal.

**We know this because** Professor Gruber has been explaining the value of his model to do just that. Over the past years at several events he described how the law was written in a "tortured way" to deceive CBO estimates because of the "stupidity of the American voter." It is not clear from his comments whether he thinks this is a good approach or is merely lamenting the experience. That clarification is his alone to make.

Once the messiah of Obamacare, Dr. Gruber has been extensively denied by disciples of policy obfuscation. A man who frequented the White House and who was cited at length by Mr. Obama, Ms. Pelosi, Mr. Reid and others, now finds himself carefully unremembered by all of the above. That is to be expected because his truthiness is gravely damaging to the legacy of Obamacare. Without

Obamacare, there is nothing to show for the past six years but public debt.

Disdain of the voting public is nothing new, and there is no better example than the passage of the Obamacare legislation. Recall it was rushed to a vote before a newly elected Massachusetts senator, who opposed the law, could be seated. It isn't what Dr. Gruber said, but what Congress did, that has provoked such fury.

**In the end, contempt** for the will of voters is an unhelpful sentiment. If the public does not understand your ideas, the blame is not theirs. Moreover frustrations with Obamacare are not due to stupidity, but rather because voters judged its architects to be untrustworthy. Dr. Gruber has done us all a great service by confirming the good judgment of voters. ❖

**Michael J. Hicks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Business and Economic Research and the George and Frances Ball distinguished professor of economics in the Miller College of Business at Ball State University.**

## Governors don't like shutdown

BOCA RATON, Fla. — Republican governors are steamed about President Barack Obama's proposed executive action to change immigration enforcement, but they're not clamoring to shut down the government over it (Politico). New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said talk of a potential shutdown amounts to "hysteria" and "people looking to make news."

The outgoing RGA chairman said it is "incumbent upon everyone in Washington, D.C., to do their job." Other GOP chief state executives were largely with him. Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, a former member of the House, endorsed using the "power of the purse" to stop Obama's plan to unilaterally change the enforcement of immigration laws. But that shouldn't happen until 2015, Pence said, when his party controls both chambers of Congress. "Should the president decide to exercise executive authority and overturn American immigration law," Pence said in an interview, then Republicans should use the budget process to "prevent the implementation of policies that are inconsistent with the priorities that were embraced by the vast majority of the country."

Pence said Obama is making a profound mistake. "The American people sent a deafening message to Washington, D.C., that they want a change on Capitol Hill," said the Indiana governor, who's been mentioned as a potential 2016 presidential candidate. "I think the president has an opportunity now to work with the Congress after it convenes in January and to find a piece-by-piece approach dealing with the issue of immigration reform." ❖

# What makes a strong lobbyist

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – Lobbyists are not all-powerful. They don't win every battle. But they do win most of them.

Because of its power to influence public affairs, the press has long been known as the Fourth Estate. But I think the media may have been displaced. These days, it's lobbyists who seem to carry the most clout in Washington.



Here's a case in point. When Congress closed at the beginning of August for its end-of-summer recess, it faced wide-scale derision for having accomplished next to nothing during the year. In fact, the Pew Center ranked the session as the least productive in two decades.

But it wasn't entirely unproductive. Just before they left town, members of Congress did manage to get three things done: They passed a Veterans Administration reform package; they increased aid to Israel; and they kept highway construction projects around the country from losing funding.

Why did these three measures find success when so many others did not? There's a two-word answer: Powerful lobbyists. Veterans, supporters of Israel, and the combined weight of highway construction interests and state and local governments are among the most influential forces in Washington.

Last year, some 12,000 active lobbyists spent \$3.24 billion on trying to influence the federal government, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. I don't know of any other country where lobbyists have those kinds of numbers, spend that kind of money, or get the kinds of results they're able to achieve here — in Congress, in the executive branch and, increasingly, in statehouses around the country.

**But even among** all those lobbyists, some stand out for their effectiveness. The National Rifle Association (NRA), the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), veterans' groups, the AARP, all are very good at obtaining laws and policies in their interests and blocking laws and policies they consider harmful.

I don't mean by this that they're all-powerful. They don't win every battle. But they do win most of them.

How do they do this?

To start, lawmakers have to get elected. Good lobbyists don't just provide large amounts of money for campaigns, they provide early money and expert help.

They donate, they introduce you to other donors, and they help you establish connections that can help during your campaign and later on. Early money in politics is better than late money. Candidates remember that sort of thing. They also remember that if you oppose these organizations' views, they'll come at you hard.

**Good lobbyists and their** organizations also provide information in easily digestible form. They'll assign particular staffers to develop relationships with members of Congress — people who can write a speech or testimony or legislative language quickly. They and their colleagues are sophisticated observers of public affairs who know whether, when, and how to approach government policy makers, along with the particular policy maker who can help them best.

They are deeply knowledgeable about the process of government and have a wide network of friends on Capitol Hill, in the agencies, and in members' districts — often, their most effective voices aren't Washington lobbyists, but the grassroots networks they've built back home. They understand that at heart, lobbying is about establishing relationships long before any particular issue affecting them comes up, so that when they go to talk about a bill, they're going in to see a friend.

They build relationships in several ways. There are all kinds of approaches to members — the annual policy conferences to which members of Congress flock, the sponsored trips and meetings in out-of-the-way resorts where a lobbyist can get a few days of a member's undivided attention. But the best lobbyists are also friendly, approachable people who know how to talk to members and policy-makers of both parties.

**The best lobbying groups** also have a lot of money and resources not just to woo policy makers, but to shape public discourse. They make good information available to their advocates, and make sure that the advocates who speak for them on television, online, and in newspapers are well informed. They know that part of the battle is to shape public dialogue.

The best lobbyists are masters at making the system work for them. My guess is that their influence over policy surpasses the media's clout, and they have now become the fourth branch of government. ❖

**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.**

**Matt Tully, IndyStar:** After all these years I still don't understand politics. It's been a daily part of my life, and the majority of my professional life, since I stumbled out of college nearly a quarter-century ago. I've covered it all, from local to state to national, from issues both history making to inconsequential. I couldn't possibly guess how many politicians I've interviewed or political pieces I've written. But I still don't get it. Or, at least, I don't get what drives the political mind. That reality hit me again this week when Joe Hogsett announced he would be running for mayor. The Democrat kicked off his campaign with a plea for unity, making his announcement at the park where Bobby Kennedy in 1968 spoke so eloquently after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. That speech is partly credited for the peace that defined our city that night, as other cities burned. Whatever you think of Hogsett, it was a nice message: "Rekindling the spirit that was present in this park on that night in 1968, when Indianapolis stood as one city. United." So here's what I don't get. The Marion County Republican Party responded to Hogsett's announcement with typical partisan garbage: "Joe Hogsett has been rejected by voters three times and next year will be the fourth; either in May or November." He is, the statement said, relying on the most overused cliché in politics, "wrong for Indianapolis." First, this guarantee that Hogsett will lose is a rather bold statement from a party that currently doesn't even have a candidate for mayor, and that lost last week's local elections in landslide fashion. Those facts aside, all I could think when I saw the overheated statement was: "Why?" It's a year out from the election. Is this really the tone to set in a campaign for mayor at a time when the city faces challenges that require big ideas, bold thinkers and camaraderie across party lines? Why not show some class? ❖



**Tom Friedman, New York Times:** Ever since the Arab awakening in late 2010, America has lurched from one policy response to another. We tried decapitation without invasion in Libya; it failed. We tried abdication in Syria; it failed. We tried democratization in Egypt, endorsing the election of the Muslim Brotherhood; it failed. We tried invasion, occupation, abdication and now re-intervention in Iraq and, although the jury is still out, only a fool would be optimistic. Maybe the beginning of wisdom is admitting that we don't know what we're doing out here and, more important, we don't have the will to invest overwhelming force for the time it would take to reshape any of these places — and, even if we did, it is not clear it would work. So if the Middle East is a region we can neither fix nor ignore, what's left? I'm for "containment" and "amplification." How so? Where there is disorder — Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya — collaborate with regional forces to contain it, which is basically what we're doing today. I just hope we don't get in more deeply. Where there is imposed order — Egypt, Algeria — work quietly with the govern-

ment to try to make that order more decent, just, inclusive and legitimate. Where there is already order and decency — Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, Kurdistan and the United Arab Emirates — do everything to amplify it, so it becomes more consensual and sustainable. And where there is order, decency and democracy — Tunisia — give it as much money as they ask for, (which we haven't done). But never forget: We can only amplify what they do. ❖

**Dan Carpenter, IBJ:** I guess you can call this a decent interval. Give Glenda Ritz two years of pounding in the job she and the voters were cheeky enough to wrest from Tony Bennett, see if she melts down or looks beatable in 2016, then call the dogs on her if she and her support remain strong. As we remember, talk of making Indiana superintendent of public instruction an appointed rather than elected office surfaced in the Statehouse as soon as the Democrat outran the GOP ticket in 2012. The talk cooled, replaced by phony peace offerings and blatant sabotage by the State Board of Education and Gov. Mike Pence, the latter of whom formed his own palace education department with a raft of six-figure salaries foisted on the taxpayer. Neither shame nor satisfaction having resulted, the call now is being sounded by the hiring hall of GOP legislators, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, to end this distressing dysfunctionality, not by respecting the voters, but by getting rid of them. So much for the education "reform" movement and its paeans to parents and other people-to-be-empowered. My bet is that the super majorities will follow orders and further disgrace the state on behalf of those who are bent on removing the "public" from Glenda's title, and her with it. But boy, to have a nice oak board of education to lay across some fat pin-striped rumps! ❖

**Greg Sargent, Washington Post:** It's on: President Obama is set to address the nation tonight at 8:00 p.m. on his expected plans to shield millions from deportations and fix the immigration system in whatever other ways he unilaterally can. And right one cue comes a new NBC/WSJ poll finding that only 38 percent of Americans support the pending executive action, while 48 percent oppose it. The poll's question wording calls this an "executive order," and describes this action as an alternative to Congress passing immigration reform. Similarly, yesterday's USA Today poll, which found the public more closely divided on executive action, also leaned hard into the idea that Congress acting was a legitimate possibility. Of course, House Republicans have had a year and a half to act on the Senate's comprehensive immigration reform bill, but they haven't voted on that proposal — or even on their own proposals — and there's no reason to assume Republicans will act anytime soon. One wonders how Americans would react if pollsters presented them with a choice between executive action and no action at all. ❖

## Obama signs Rokita bill

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, chairman of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, saw a chief priority, the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant

Program (CCDBG), signed into law by the President Wednesday. "The reauthorization of this welfare-to-work program gives moms and dads child care choices while they work to eliminate long-term dependency on welfare programs. This assistance provides an opportunity to improve the lives of both current and future generations," said Rokita, chairman of the subcommittee that oversees the program. Rokita shepherded passage of the bi-partisan reauthorization of the CCDBG program, which will break families away from the long-term dependency of federal welfare programs by ensuring them the dignity of work or training for a career as a requirement for program participation. The reauthorization modernizes the CCDBG program by implementing necessary safety standards for child care providers. "This is an example of the leadership necessary to reduce the power of the regulatory state and restore the law-making process to the proper branch of government," said Rokita. During the bill signing, the President vowed to abandon his proposed child care regulations due to passage of this bill.



## Owen official misspends \$340k

GOSPORT — State police investigators have searched the home of a central Indiana county official for hundreds of items she's suspected of

buying for herself with county credit cards. A state police detective says in court documents it appears Angie Lawson misspent more than \$340,000 on personal purchases during a five-year period while the Republican was the Owen County auditor and then a county council member. The Herald-Times reports the affidavit lists purchases from Wal-Mart stores including diamond rings, televisions, computers, generators, hundreds of DVDs and patio furniture. Special prosecutor Bob Cline says investigators were still doing an inventory of items taken from Lawson's home near Gosport on Tuesday. No charges have been filed against Lawson. She doesn't have a listed telephone number to be called for comment.

## Lake joins toll road consortium

CROWN POINT — Lake County has signed on to join the county consortium lead by LaPorte County officials that plans to submit a bid Thursday for control of the bankrupt Indiana Toll Road (Post-Tribune). The Board of Commissioners authorized a resolution Wednesday entering into the multicounty consortium that would enable the participants to gain control of the remainder of the 75-year Toll Road lease and any excess revenues it may make. Commission President Michael Repay, D-Hammond, said he is in support of the plan and recognized LaPorte County officials for getting the ball rolling so the deadline can be met. "It seems to be a very good proposal," he said. Porter and Elkhart county officials voted against the joining the consortium Tuesday. St. Joseph County is undecided and LaGrange and Steuben counties are not interested.

## Ritz says takeover law coming

GARY — State school chief Glenda Ritz said Wednesday she

expects a bill in the General Assembly this session that would sanction a state takeover of failing school districts (Post-Tribune). "Currently, Gary is the only F district in the state. It doesn't take any kind of imagination to know where they're headed," Ritz told the school board at its work session. Ritz said such a measure was first embraced by her predecessor, Tony Bennett, and she believes the legislation will be resurrected. With a GOP-dominated House and Senate, such a bill could gain traction.

## Winnecke open to residency law

EVANSVILLE — Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke said he hasn't seen a specific proposal yet from the City Council requiring city residency for appointees to government boards, but if such an ordinance passes the council, he'll follow it. "It's not a bad concept. We certainly believe there's a strong talent pool both inside and outside the city limits," the mayor said Wednesday.

## Redistricting coalition forms

INDIANAPOLIS - As the General Assembly gathers for legislative Organization Day, Common Cause Indiana and the League of Women Voters of Indiana announced the formation of the Indiana Coalition for Independent Redistricting, a diverse and growing coalition of groups working to pass legislation to create an independent citizen-controlled commission to draw Congressional and state legislative districts. Amy Olson Miller, President of the League of Women Voters of Indiana said, "The impact of gerrymandering is evident in the lack of competitive districts at both the state and federal level and Hoosier voters have responded – by staying home. It is sobering that our state had the lowest voter turnout in the country two weeks ago."