



Rogers sizes up Indy terror targets

Former House Intel chairman says U.S. in for a long slog vs. ISIS, China cyber attacks

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**
 And **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – On the February day President Obama spoke at Ivy Tech, a Bosnian man was arrested on the Ronald Reagan Parkway in Plainfield and detained on terror-related charges of funneling money and guns to ISIS fighters in the Middle East. Last weekend, ISIS allegedly hacked into several Indianapolis websites, prompting a Homeland Security investigation. And Internet hackers in China exposed the personal information of 80 million Americans when Anthem servers were encroached.

Mike Rogers, former U.S. House Intelligence Committee chairman, said in an exclusive interview with Howey Politics Indiana on Wednesday that Hoosiers are not immune to the war on terror and could, in fact, end up on the front lines. In a conversation at Loughmiller's Pub under the



Former House Intelligence Chairman Mike Rogers at Loughmiller's Pub with the famed "Kitchen Debate" photo featuring Nixon and Khrushchev. Rogers was in Indianapolis meeting with state and elected officials on terrorism in the U.S. and huddled with Gov. Mike Pence at the Statehouse. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

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Crunching school formula

By **LARRY DeBOER**

WEST LAFAYETTE – The good folks at the Indiana Department of Education sent me some school finance numbers to play with. School finance is a big topic in the Indiana General Assembly this year, so this is a good time to do some number crunching.

Here's number crunch one. In fiscal year 2015 – that's July 2014-June 2015 – the state will distribute almost \$6.6 billion to public school corporations and charter schools. State aid was \$6.2 billion in calendar year 2012 (it was switched to fiscal years in 2013), so that's an increase of 5.1 percent in two and a half years.

Consumer price index inflation was about 3.4 percent



“I’m really sad. I was really hoping it was a Republican.”

- Sydney Leathers, the Southern Indiana woman who outed State Rep. Justin Moed, exposing his sexual interests on TheDirty.com.



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during that period, so there's been a small increase in what state aid can buy. Inflation is expected to be about 2 percent per year during the next biennium. Will aid increase enough to match? The increase in state aid will be one of the most closely watched numbers in the debate over the next budget.

Now for number crunch two. There's quite a range in per pupil aid among the school districts. The 10 highest districts average \$7,940 per pupil; the 10 lowest districts average \$5,667. That's a difference of \$2,272. The range has narrowed though. Two and a half years ago the difference between the 10 highest and 10 lowest was \$2,494.

Of the \$6.6 billion total in 2015, \$4.6 billion is basic tuition support, \$1.2 billion is a complexity grant and the remaining \$830 million is distributed for honors, special education, vocational and full-day kindergarten grants. The school funding formula passed by the legislature in 2013 put basic tuition support for fiscal 2015 at \$4,587 per pupil. More than half of all districts get exactly that in basic aid.

The variations among districts are due mostly to the complexity grant. This formula tries to take account of the extra cost of educating children from less-advantaged families. Aid per pupil is scaled upward based on the number of kids whose families qualify for free textbooks.

That's the main reason why, for example, the Indianapolis, Cannelton and East Chicago school districts receive more state money per pupil, and the Carmel-Clay, Sunman-Dearborn and Lake Central districts receive less.

How much more will districts with many lower-income families receive per pupil? The answer is in the details of the formula. Increase the complexity grant relative to basic tuition support and the formula will tilt more toward lower-income districts. Increase tuition support and the formula will tilt less. Lately it's been tilting less, and the latest school formula

proposal this year continues in that direction. The range in state aid from top to bottom is smaller than it was. This is a tough issue for legislators. Once total aid is established, adding aid to one school district means subtracting aid from another. That can make for sharp debate.

And number crunch three. There are 289 public school districts and 76 charter schools on the Department of Education's list in 2015. The number of public school districts has decreased by two since 2012. Rockville and Turkey Run consolidated their finances into North Central Parke, and North Posey absorbed the New Harmony district. The number of charter schools has increased by 10 since 2012. Charter enrollment grew from 28,000 to 34,000. That's 3.5 percent of total enrollment of 988,000. Public school enrollment has fallen by about 10,000.

Charters also receive 3.5 percent of total state aid, and that amount is up from 3 percent in 2012, mostly because of the increase in charter enrollment. Measured this way, it appears that the share of charters in total state aid is growing slowly. Measured another way, the increase is more significant. Between 2012-2015, state aid increased by \$319 million. Of that amount, charters received \$47 million, which is 15 percent of the total increase. The allocation of funds among public and charter schools will be another contentious issue.

How much more money will the budget deliver to K-12 education?

How will it be distributed among rich and poor districts, growing and declining districts, and rural, suburban, and urban districts? How much of the state aid total will charter schools receive? By the end of April we'll have the answer, and more numbers to crunch! ❖

DeBoer is professor of agricultural economics at Purdue University.

Terror, from page 1

famed photo of Vice President Nixon debating Soviet leader Khrushchev, Rogers was asked if the Cold War now seemed like the good old days. "Now they can touch you with a keyboard from 5,000 miles away or call you on the phone and tell you to kill a guard at the Capitol building," the Michigan Republican said.

Aware of the ISIS website hacks in Indianapolis, Rogers observed, "They did one of the art websites. They are looking for opportunities. If something caught their eye on the Internet, they'll put it on their target list. Maybe there was an event, maybe something in the press, maybe something drew their eye, but something clearly allowed them to get there. Once they were there, they found an opportunity to get beyond their firewall and take over the site. That's a victory for them. They can strike in the Midwest, they can strike in New York, in Los Angeles. This is part of a true terror campaign. That's what makes them so dangerous."

Since leaving Congress in December, Rogers has formed the Americans for Peace, Prosperity and Security organization that will brief the 2016 Republican presidential candidates and voters designed to "educate and identify" issues related to national security. Just prior to HPI's interview, Rogers huddled with Gov. Mike Pence at the Statehouse. He described the Governor as a close personal friend who arrived in Congress the same year as he did. Rogers also met with state and local officials on Wednesday to discuss security issues.

"On Jan. 21 that new president is going to face a world of hurt," Rogers said. "No more is there a honeymoon of not dealing with foreign affairs in the first term. That's gone. It's going to be equally as bad and equally as complicated as it is today. They are going to have to deal with it. These candidates are saying 'I'm for Israel and Putin is bad and so is ISIS, thanks, now let's talk about another issue.' That's not enough; we're going to be in trouble if we do that. So we're going to have forums with the candidates and discussions on national security. This is all about national security."

Rogers was asked what message he wanted to convey to Hoosiers, "If you want to look and see what the world looks like without our engagement overseas, turn on your TV. The problems you see, and this happens with

both Republicans and Democrats, both parties are having this, 'Let's pull back from the world, it's too hard and complicated.' But because of that, nation states - Russian, China, Iran - are going to step in to fill the void. That's not good for economic prosperity at home and it's not good for our national security. When ISIS can attack an arts center cyberwise in Indianapolis, when the Chinese send a human spy here to steal Dow Agro secrets and send them back to China, Indianapolis should be as much engaged as the state of Indiana on national security issues as any other states. They are not immune here.

"If we don't get the national security posture right, then all the other stuff we'll never get right," he continued. "It's the peace-through-strength message. We're trying to get the engagement message through. It's not military adventurism."

Just blocks from Loughmiller's, a huge NCAA bracket adorns the eastern facade of the JW Marriott Hotel and the Final Four will be played two blocks away. There are two stadiums, critical fiber optic trunk lines, major interstate and rail lines, and Lilly's insulin manufacturing facility, all within a couple of square miles. For these reasons, Indiana officials must take seriously the terror threats from abroad. Is the chairman worried about loose nukes and biological weapons in the hands of ISIS death squads, or the proverbial lone wolf?

"The lone wolf is equally as bad," Rogers began. "This is when ISIS changed. Maybe it

was a year, a year and a half ago now. They had eight Australians who had self-radicalized, self-identified with each other, raised their own money, worked with an ISIS recruiter in Syria and said, 'Hey, we're ready to go.' This is where the game changed, I think. The recruiter called back and said 'We have enough people in Syria right now. What we want you to do, don't plan this, but randomly drive out, grab a civilian off the street, cut their head off, video tape it and send it to us. We'll use that for propaganda purposes.'

"The game changed," Rogers said. "They wanted to strike in the Westernized countries. Shortly thereafter came Ottawa. They've had arrests in New York, in Germany, Spain and France. So they've decided to have this disruptive activity. I worry as much about a lone wolf or two or three who decide they want to take something into their own hands as I do a big organized event that might



Nihad Rosic, a Bosnian, was detained in Plainfield on the day of President Obama's Ivy Tech speech in Indianapolis. He and five other Bosnians are facing federal charges for supplying weapons and money to ISIS in the Middle East.

hit in Indianapolis or New York. Now, we worry about those too. It's easier for them to try and coordinate and inspire these lone wolf attacks. Unfortunately, we've seen them happen."

Americans over the past year have watched the beheading of journalists and Indianapolis humanitarian aid worker Peter (Abdul Raman) Kassig, a Jordanian pilot burned alive, children shooting hostages, gays thrown from rooftops, and the mass executions of Christians. Less understood is the group's probing into places like Indianapolis. Is it happening in other parts of the U.S. as well?

"Oh, yeah," Rogers replied, "They are very aggressive. We found they were able to get into Twitter accounts of military spouses and then terrorize them: 'We know where your husband is, we know where you live. We know he's gone. We're going to come get you.' You can imagine how you're already worried about a loved one living in the military and get something like that on your social media. They are very aggressive and their sole purpose is to intimidate and terrorize. We've never seen an organization use social media the way they do. This is their version of Tokyo Rose and they are using it. They are not outlandishly sophisticated. They're not going to get into the bank and shut it down. But they crack into social media, which is very low security. They're that good."

A 25-year war?

Is the U.S. facing a generational war, with some believing it could last 25 years or more?

"Remember the Nazis?" Rogers asked. "At the beginning there was friction. ISIS rules and dominates and governs by fear. They will take your daughters into forced marriages or as sex slaves. Or cut your head off, cut your hand off, public executions. We are going to have a long process. We're going to have to deal with them. We have to do something about their structure in eastern Syria. We want to disrupt that structure. But the way we're currently doing it is not going to make a difference. We're going to have to have special capabilities down range. If we don't do a little bit now, versus big and ugly later, I'd rather do a little bit now. I still think we can have an impact on their eastern Syrian logistical hubs. We can't do that with just an air campaign. And right now, when ISIS uses their social media, we're thinking, 'Gosh, we're containing them.' We're not beating them. There's a big difference. And



Former congressman Rogers, who is advising 2016 GOP presidential contenders on intelligence issues, met with Gov. Pence at the Statehouse prior to his HPI interview. (HPI Photo by Matthew Butler)

they're telling people who believe in their philosophy that they're winning. Come and see."

As far as Western intelligence capabilities, Rogers describes our European NATO allies as overwhelmed, as the Muslim communities are mostly self-segregating, unlike much of the U.S. "Those European intelligence services are saying, 'Hey, we've got water coming over the bow. We can't keep up with all the leads coming out of these communities.' They can't follow them all. They can't surveil them all. They can't tap all of their phones. They don't have the manpower, money or resources to do it. That's when you start playing Russian roulette with the internationals. They're hoping they're on the right ones, but they may not be. That's a huge problem."

The Dzhokhar Tsarnaev Boston Marathon bombing trial is a case in point. The Tsarnaev brothers turned up on Russian intelligence radar, which was communicated to the FBI. "They were United States

citizens," Rogers said of the brothers. "So if a foreign intelligence service comes here and says, 'Hey, Mike Rogers is a bad guy,' that does not give the FBI permission to tap my phone, follow me around, do all those things. It gives them permission to start a preliminary investigation. The problem is the FBI did a preliminary investigation and found no derogatory information; nothing that would rise to the level of the legal standard to get a warrant or do more electronic surveillance. They (the brothers) had all the constitutional rights that you and I do."

He is concerned about FBI capacity. "When I was chairman I tried to give them more surveillance capability," Rogers said of the FBI. "I didn't think we had enough. But, again, this is about being smart with the resources. They don't have enough to follow every case, every lead that gets presented. They have to prioritize. MI5 in Britain has told us, 'We're maxed out.' Syria is a magnet for homegrown terrorists as well as people who show up to fight, get skills and then go home. They can get on an airplane and fly to the United States as a British citizen, no visa required. It's called a visa waiver."

China and Anthem

When it came to the attacks on Anthem in Indianapolis and Sony Pictures, Rogers describes another danger facing the U.S. "China has unfettered cyber attack capabilities," Rogers said. "Unfettered." There were hundreds of millions of dollars of damage and no conse-

quences. Essentially, 80 million Americans were attacked by hackers in China, where the government has security control over its Internet. We asked Rogers where he draws the line between criminal mischief, intellectual property theft with business concerns, and an act of war on American citizens.

"This is a very difficult issue," Rogers said. He said the Anthem attack was "the mother of all fishing campaigns."

"Now I know your Social Security number, your birth date, your personal information, and your medical records," Rogers said of the exposure of 80 million Americans. "I can craft an email. Let's say your doctor's name is Bob. It looks like it comes from Dr. Bob's office. It says, 'Here's the last four of your Social Security for verification. There's been a mislabeling of tests you had back in June' because they know you had tests back in June. So you go, 'Oh, that makes sense.' It will say 'click here to see if this is your test.' Click. They're in. There's something called the 'dark net' where they shop this information around. It's a bazaar of stolen identity information and stolen source code. You can buy almost anything you want on the black market.

"It's hitting home," Rogers said. "They are part of a foreign nation taking aggressive action against American businesses. If there was a server farm and they sent a submarine and launched a missile off the coast to blow that thing up, that's pretty egregious. With a cyber attack, that's exactly what they did."

And the Chinese government knew? "They control the Internet," Rogers confirmed. "They completely control it. I argue the next generation's prosperity is going to be impacted."

How should the U.S. respond? "Before you punch your neighbor in the nose, you better get strong," Rogers said. "We're not ready for what comes back at us. Eighty-five percent of networks in American are private sector. And contrary to popular belief, NSA is not monitoring private networks in the United States. Sometimes businesses are hit and our government has no idea. If a nation state wants to get into your network, I don't care who you are, they are going to get in your network. That's the problem."

Epilogue

Rogers enjoyed the irony of the "kitchen debate" photo between Nixon and Khrushchev hanging in Loughmiller's. At one emotional point during the Cold War, the Soviet chairman vowed, "We will bury you."

As we all know, that didn't happen. But out of the dormant embers of the Cold War come vastly more complex challenges and asymmetrical warfare that replaced mutually assured destruction. The danger for the West with foes like ISIS and China is a war where death comes by a thousand cuts. It won't necessarily happen in the cradle of civilization. The front lines could be taking shape in the American heartland. ❖

U.S. Senate race uncertainty as Coats weighs run, Dems mull

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – U.S. Sen. Dan Coats, should he seek reelection, will not run unopposed. With both Baron Hill and John Gregg focusing on a potential gubernatorial primary, the gaping 2016 hole for Indiana Democrats is the U.S. Senate race.

And Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr., says that if the void still exists after an expected mayoral primary win in May, he is prepared to jump in. "I don't think anyone should get a free pass," McDermott told Howey Politics Indiana on Tuesday just hours after Coats seemed conflicted about seeking a third full term. "Sen. Coats is not Sen. Lugar," McDermott said. "No offense to Sen. Coats, but he's not going to get a free pass. If that means I have to run, I will."

In 2006, then-U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar won reelection with only a Libertarian opponent. The move to not challenge Lugar was controversial within the Indiana Democratic Party that year, with the party opting to put resources into Indiana House races as three Congressional challenges. No Senate candidate filed for the primary, and the party took a pass on naming a nominee in June of that year. The gamble paid off as House Democrats retook a majority just two years into the tenure of Gov. Mitch Daniels, and Democrats Joe Donnelly, Brad Ellsworth and Hill won congressional seats, representing the last high-water mark for the party.

The lack of challenge to Lugar seemed to place him in an unprecedented sphere of "elder statesman" as few U.S. senators, particularly north of the Mason-Dixon line, rarely were re-elected without a major party opponent. The reality was the 2006 pass for Lugar allowed him to focus



Hammond Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. with John Gregg at the 2014 Jefferson-Jackson Dinner. McDermott will consider a U.S. Senate race if he wins his primary in May. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

on national and international issues while his state political organization went into atrophy, which was then exploited by Treasurer Richard Mourdock who upset the greatest vote-getter in Hoosier history six years hence. Donnelly went on to defeat Mourdock to reclaim the Senate seat lost by Democrats in 1976.

The U.S. Senate situation is unusual after Coats told the IndyStar that he had not made a final decision last weekend. It echoed similar sentiments Coats expressed to HPI in January. "It's not the challenge of running; it's more an issue related to 34 years of public service and the realities of age," the 72-year-old Coats explained. "This is a consuming job if you do it right. It's long days and schedules dictated by someone else. I really enjoy the job, but it all comes with personal sacrifice, and at some point you start thinking about your good health and your remaining years. There is always a new generation out there that has the energy, the same sense of where the country ought to go, and that believes in the things you do. At some point it is time to give the next generation a chance. For me, the question is, when is the right time to do that?"

Congressional Republican sources, speaking to HPI on background, were beginning to recalibrate the perception that Coats would seek a fourth full term. Many expected Coats to run after Republicans retook the Senate majority last November, and Coats moved to Senate Finance Committee and was named chair of the Joint Economic Committee. Coats also serves on the Senate Intelligence Committee, and the nexus of his current assignments place him in critical positions involving U.S. security and issues like tax reform, the topics that prompted Coats to come out of political retirement in 2010 to reclaim his old Senate seat.

While his comments over the weekend prompted a flurry of reassessing 2016 election plans for members of the Indiana delegation, not lost on the delegation was Coats quickly leaving Washington last Thursday to attend the Johnson County Lincoln Dinner on Friday, where Coats made the keynote address.

While McDermott presented himself as, perhaps, the Democrat who would step up if others don't, there are other names being mentioned in the Senate race context. McDermott identified State Rep. Terry Goodin of Crothersville, and State Sen. Karen Talian of Ogden Dunes as legislators expressing interest in running statewide in 2016. Jeff Harris of the AFL-CIO suggested State Rep. Christina Hale would make a good candidate. "She's made a great impression in her time at the Statehouse as being

someone who is serious and who gets things done," said Harris. "She has an impressive personal story and professional background. And, she's already developed quite a following amongst the Democratic base."

The context there is that the GOP legislative super majorities are prompting a number of Democrats to contemplate other offices. Another name that has surfaced is former Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson, who attended the IDEA confab in French Lick last summer but has kept a low political profile since.

Indiana Democrats have a roster of respected mayors, but most don't have much of an appetite for running for reelection and then jumping into a Senate race. "You would be sweeping up the confetti on election night and then jumping into another race," said Democratic Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight, who is not interested in a Senate bid.

McDermott is facing a reelection primary challenge from Hammond Councilman Homero "Chico" Hinojosa Jr. McDermott took himself out of a potential gubernatorial run after Hinojosa announced his challenge. The three-term Democrat is confident he will prevail in May. "I had a close race in 2007 and you could feel a close race in the streets," McDermott said. "I'm not feeling that this time."

With regard to the Senate race, McDermott said, "We'll have a great candidate." Asked if he would consider, McDermott said, "First things first. I have to win the primary. I wouldn't be excited

about running two years in a row, but nobody should get a free pass. If we can't find a quality candidate, I'll take a look at it."

Asked what role Sen. Donnelly might play in forming a 2016 ticket, McDermott said the titular head of the party will ardently back the party's nominee, but won't get involved in the primary process. "He doesn't want to alienate any faction of the party," McDermott said. "He's not playing favorites."

In late February, Hill told HPI that he is close to entering the governor's race. "I'm encouraged by what I'm hearing," Hill said. "If I had to make an announcement today, I'd probably be in. That's where my head is." Asked if he had been approached to opt for the Senate race, Hill said yes, but said he is focusing on the governor's race.

Gregg has been actively stumping for legislative and municipal candidates over the past two years, and tells HPI he is "doing all the things you should be doing" in preparing for a second gubernatorial run.

As for a Coats retirement scenario, two almost certain candidates would be U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, who finished second to Coats in the 2010 Senate primary,



Sophomore State Rep. Christina Hale, D-Indianapolis, is seen by some as a potential U.S. Senate candidate.

and U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, who served eight years as Indiana secretary of state, giving him a head start in statewide name ID. U.S. Reps. Luke Messer, Todd Young and Susan Brooks would also be expected to weigh a potential Senate bid, but all have top committee assignments and Messer was elected to the No. 5 leadership position last year.

Other potential Republican Senate candidates, according to GOP sources, include former state chairman Eric Holcomb and Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard, who is not seeking a third term this year.

Pence making party chair change

On Feb. 24, Indiana Republican Chairman Tim Berry gathered with Gov. Pence, Bill Smith and chief of staff Jim Atterholt in the governor's office in a meeting that appears to have paved the way for a change expected today at the Indiana Republican Central Committee. In a conference call, Pence is expected to announce that Berry will step down and Jeff Cardwell will take the chair. While the Central Committee is expected to back Pence's move, there are some concerns expressed by committee members that Pence's first choice of Berry wasn't a particularly good one, as well as Cardwell's ideological bearings. It is causing some to consider the role of the Central Committee. There are also concerns about various legislators in the General Assembly and the impact on the GOP "brand."

Mayoral races

Riecken blasts Winnecke state of city

State Rep. Gail Riecken is taking issue with Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke's recent state-of-the-city address "Great delivery and positive, you get the feeling everything is fine in River City," Riecken said in an Evansville Courier & Press op-ed article. "But from what I know,

the facts are at odds with the mayor's claims our city is 'fiscally strong.'"

Riecken said Winnecke's City Controller Russ Lloyd Jr. has reported that there are problems with city finances. Evansville Redevelopment Commissioner and fellow Republican Cheryl Musgrave

agrees, saying there are "real problems with the finances."

"And, despite the mayor's cheerful spin, Russ Lloyd Jr. says that the city's cash balances are declining," Riecken said. "Far from accepting the challenge to answer these concerns of a negative trend in our finances, the mayor continued in the last three years to overspend his operational funds every month. In 2012, the administration overspent operational funds by \$6.8 million. In 2013, they overspent by \$7.1 million. In 2014, the administration overspent operational funds by \$7.4 million (not yet official). How can the mayor claim the city finances are strong

when, under his leadership, our city's cash balances have declined while we've overspent so rapidly?"

Park claims Riecken using state resources

Rep. Riecken's challenge to unseat Winnecke is getting more organized and appears to have just recently begun a national search for a campaign manager. The Riecken for Mayor Committee placed a job listing with the well-known Washington, D.C., political career website 'Bradtraverse.com' on Sunday. The ad states the position needs to be filled by this Sunday. "The ideal candidate will have run a contentious mayoral or congressional campaign, and will possess significant skills in coordinating and facilitating decision making for such," the ad reads. It also requires previous experience working with local media and "meeting fundraising targets for large-scale campaigns." Other duties listed might suggest the campaign's infrastructure is in its infancy and Riecken needs someone to set up staff and vendors. The manager, according to the description, will also "Draft and implement campaign plan with oversight and partnership with consultants and committee." The position also needs to develop other several other key functions. Launched in early in January, Riecken's campaign already has a dedicated website and Facebook page (1,095 likes). She is also using her long-held Twitter handle @GailRiecken (1,694 followers). Riecken ran for mayor in 1999 unsuccessfully. Earlier this month she was accused of billing a March 7 forum with voters as both a legislative townhall meeting and a mayoral campaign event. Vanderburgh County Republican Chairman Wayne Parks told WFIE-TV, "It is clear that Riecken is using state resources to blatantly promote an event that is campaign related." Riecken admitted to the news station, "That's wrong. We'll take it down immediately." The ad was removed from her campaign website March 3. The two townhalls, reported 'TriStateHomepage.com,' drew "a packed house."

Neese endorsed by Italian/Americans

John Iavagnilio, president of the Italian American Relief Association (IARA) has announced the endorsement of former Indiana State Representative Tim Neese, who is running in the May Republican primary for mayor of Elkhart. Neese was previously a member of the Elkhart City Council. "As president of the IARA, I feel that Tim Neese's experience in problem solving, public service and his businesslike approach to city government makes him a well-qualified to be mayor of Elkhart," said Iavagnilio. The IARA started in 1926 at 401 Harrison Street with the area often referred to as "Little Italy." It was also the center for residential and social Italian life. It is now a civic and social club, continuing a strong Italian heritage with approximately 200 members. ❖



Nisly says campaign prepared him for first session

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – As the 119th Indiana General Assembly enters the second half of this budgetary session, after the bill crossover point, Howey Politics thought it would be interesting and revealing to sit down with some freshmen legislators and discuss their impressions so far.

First-term Republican Rep. Curt Nisly (R-Goshen) agreed to an interview in between his committee work on Wednesday. We asked about his legislative priorities and why he broke with his Republican colleagues on two major votes, repeal of the common construction wage and removing the superintendent of public instruction as the automatic chairperson of the State Board of Education (SBOE).

Nisly defeated Rebecca Kubacki (R-Syracuse) 65% to 35% in last May's Republican primary for HD22. Running to the right of the two-term incumbent, Nisly had support from family and church groups who were irate over her voting against 2014's same-sex marriage ban (HJR-3). No stranger to politics, Nisly had openly considered challenging U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski during the same primary and his wife, Mary, is chairwoman of the Elkhart County Republican Party.

Nisly says being on the campaign trail for roughly a year was excellent preparation for his new legislative role.

"As I look back to where I was a year ago, I just learned so much with that campaign," Nisly told HPI. "How to relate to people, listen to people, finding out what's important to people up in the district. That process was grueling, but it was good preparation. I discovered that a lot of things I was doing on the campaign trail, you still have to do here."

Legislative priorities and committee work

Nisly was assigned to his first two choices of committee, the Select Committee on Government Reduction and the Roads and Transportation Committee.

"That's been a lot of fun, I've really enjoyed that one," Nisly described his work on the latter. "There is a big diversity of stuff going on and I can relate to." He mentioned issues ranging from the Indiana Toll Road to allowing non-photo identification cards for the Amish.

With insufficient gas tax revenue, the pressing issue of how to diversify the revenue streams for the state's transportation infrastructure remains unresolved. We asked about possible solutions. "That's a great question and nobody has come up with a good answer I have heard," Nisly told HPI. "There is no silver bullet for this one."

One issue was quite close to home. Nisly was pleased to see reforms to the certification of midwives had advanced (HB 1548). All four of his children were born at home with such assistance. He spoke in support on the House floor and testified in its favor before the Senate Health and Provider Services Committee earlier this week. "People are going to have homebirths with or without certification from the state. If the state can get behind it and certify it, I think we'll all be better off," Nisly said.

An issue Nisly feels has not gotten enough attention this session is "2nd Amendment rights."

"Definitely, that's been pushed on the backburner," Nisly lamented. "I was somewhat disappointed we didn't hear a few of those bills, especially the constitutional [concealed] carry bill." One such bill he filed, HB 1633, would have stipulated that firearms and ammunition manufactured in the state and remaining entirely within the state would not be subject to federal law. It did not get a hearing.

Nisly added he was encouraged to see several bills circulating on "the nullification of federal law" within the state of Indiana.

Common construction wage

Known for his conservative bona fides, HPI noticed when Rep. Nisly voted against his Republican colleagues on two major issues this session, the repeal of the common construction wage and reforming how the State Board of Education selects its chairperson.

Nisly along with 11 fellow Republicans voted against HB 1019. Rep. Jerry Torr's repeal of the common wage passed, nonetheless, 55-41. Nisly told HPI that he knew the measure would pass and wanted his "no" vote to air his reservations over reforming local government contracts in such a targeted, if not piecemeal, manner.

"As I was talking to the contractors back in the district, the concern came up that the whole process in which we award these contracts should be addressed," he said. "Just taking one aspect of it but leaving the rest in place could have some devastating effects."

Nisly believes strictly awarding contracts to the lowest "responsible" bidder robs local units of government the ability to use their discretion as to the project's and local community's needs. Preference for local contractors is a major sticking point. Lowering or repealing the common wage could exacerbate this problem in Nisly's opinion. He



referred to two recent instances of large outside contractors failing to deliver on contracts in his district.

"My guess is that we'll be back here in a few years trying, whether it's local preference or something else, to fix whatever we want done," he remarked.

Reforming the SBOE

Nisly and eleven other Republicans broke from their caucus in voting against reforms to the governance of the SBOE (HB 1609). Rep. Jud McMillin's bill would remove the superintendent as the automatic chairperson and require that panel, which is appointed by the governor, to elect its own leader.

"There were good arguments on both sides," Nisly said in explaining his 'no' vote. "One, it could have waited until the end of her [Glenda Ritz's] elected term. And two, it just seems like it's putting more control, more power in that State Board of Education. The more power they have, the less local elected school boards are going to have. That was really a concern of mine."

Should the superintendent remain an elected position?

Nisly initially answered guardedly: "That's a good question. I think it's a good discussion to have; I don't have a strong opinion one way or the other."

He then added, "Although half our budget does go to education and so it does seem that is the one opportunity that the people have a chance to have a voice in education. I think overall I would probably favor keeping it elected. We did see what happened in the last election, when the current superintendent was elected, and the people of Indiana said they don't like the direction we're going in education. If that had been a strictly appointed position, the people wouldn't have had that opportunity."

Asked about the Senate reforms that would disperse appointments to the SBOE between the governor and the two legislative chambers, Nisly said, "That would be much better than the version that came before us."

Nisly also took issue with what he sees as the chaotic nature of education policy and reform. "Over the last number of years it seems like the legislature has kept changing education policy over and over and schools are getting whiplash from just trying to understand what is expected," Nisly told HPI. "So that's been a big concern especially with people back home, is how much we're changing all the time. So it's like, 'Can we just sit back and let it play out a little bit and in a year or two or three or four come back and see where we're at.'"

Asked about goals for the remainder of the session, Nisly quipped, "Survive!"

He's found staying in touch with constituents an instructive and steadying force. In recent weeks Nisly has held roughly a dozen various forums and town halls in his district. "I do appreciate when I hear from the constituents back home. Even if there is just one email or phone call that came in on a bill, I will take special note of that bill as it comes through," he explained. ❖

Horsemen seek to regain wagering system

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The term "expansion of gaming" gets tossed around at the Statehouse with considerable frequency. It's cropped up in legislation that would allow live dealers at racinos, when the reality of the bill is that table games would actually contract by half.

And then there's HB1270, that on the face of things would bring advance deposit wagering (ADW) to



Indiana. The reality is that the legislation sponsored by State Rep. Bob Cherry and State Sen. Luke Kenley would reinstate the procedure originally put in place with the 1993 riverboat gaming laws under the guidance of then

Senate Finance Chairman Larry Borst. But in 2005, the late State Sen. David Ford authored legislation that repealed the ADW in an enrolled act that prohibited Internet gaming.

The Indiana Horsemen Benevolent Protection Association is seeking to reinstall ADW, with HB1270 easily passing the House with 81 votes.

With Indiana's gaming industry under intense competition from new casinos in Michigan, Ohio and Illinois and revenue declining here, the concept of ADW is practiced in 30 states, even those without casinos, racinos or off-track betting. The concept allows bettors to fund a wagering account to place bets on in-state and out-of-state races. The wagers are secured and maintained through an existing pari-mutuel wagering operation. All losses and winnings are made to the bettor's account in accordance with the bettor's wagering activity.

The Indiana horsemen document that in 2010, an estimated \$1.7 billion, or 15.2% of all thoroughbred wagering, came via ADW websites nationally. By 2012, that increased to 20%. The problem for Hoosier horsemen is that when Indiana bettors make wagers, they are sending them to out-of-state sites. "The siphoning of Indiana race wagering dollars is taking much-needed revenues from Indiana's horse racing industry," according to a policy briefing by the IHBPA. Estimates are that state horsemen are losing between \$24 million and \$62 million annually.

"If approved by the Indiana General Assembly, ADW service providers would begin taking wagers from Indiana residents and paying fees back to Indiana's horse racing industry," the brief notes. It urges the Indiana Horse Racing Commission to allow the state's pari-mutuel racing operators to create an ADW website via a "white label" partnership. Such a site would allow a company to use the technology and software currently used by established ADW providers to create what the IHBPA calls a "uniquely branded website." ❖

Hundreds of bills die in the legislature

By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau

INDIANAPOLIS – Hundreds of bills are dead at the halfway mark of the legislative session, with none killed more vividly than a measure to legalize chemical cremation. State Rep. Jeff Thompson, R-Lizton, did his best to



convince colleagues that a process using lye to dissolve much of the human body is a cheaper, greener way to dispose of remains than setting them on fire or sinking them into the ground in a concrete vault.

The part about disposing of leftover liquid matter down the drain proved fatal. It only took one legislator, casket company owner Dick Hamm, R-Richmond, to liken the process to flushing a loved one to trigger a bipartisan wave of revulsion.

Chemical cremation went down last week, crashing with many other bills at the mid-session deadline for legislation to cross from one chamber to the other.

Dead, too, is an effort to end one of the last vestiges of Indiana's blue laws, the one that still bans sales of carryout alcohol on Sundays.

Despite a massive, well-funded effort by Sunday sales supporters, including Kroger and Wal-Mart, the legislation bogged down with language mandating new and costly restrictions. Among other things, it would have required the grocery and big-box stores that now sell alcohol six days a week to put their liquor behind a counter, cordon off beer and wine displays, and ban booze buyers from self-service check-out lanes. Rather than letting the bill get voted down, author Rep. Tom Dermody, R-LaPorte, pulled it from the line-up, knowing that it may need to age another year before returning to the Statehouse.

Sex, or maybe the fear of it, killed a bill aimed at increasing vaccination rates for human papillomavirus vaccine. The HPV vaccine protects teenage girls from cervical cancer, but it's controversial because HPV is sexually transmitted. The measure wouldn't have required teens to be vaccinated but instead set a goal to increase Indiana's immunization rate to 80 percent, which is four times the current rate. It went down to defeat with help from Gov. Mike Pence, who said that's a matter better left to parents. Also on the long list of late legislation is a bill to let commu-

nities adopt a food and beverage tax, like the one granted to Indianapolis and surrounding counties when the Colts wanted a new stadium.

Lawmakers remain gatekeepers of the tax, deciding one community at a time who can have it.

Gone, too, is a measure to put cameras on school buses to deter drivers from illegally passing. It was opposed as a case of government spying gone too far.

A Democratic bill calling for a raise in Indiana's \$7.25 minimum wage was gone much earlier, dead from the outset in the Republican-controlled General Assembly. A bill to kill the prevailing wage earned by construction workers on public projects marched ahead instead.

Finally, legislation to make Indiana students show that they know how government works also died. That bill, authored by Sen. Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn, would've required high school graduates to pass the same civics test given to aspiring U.S. citizens. It's just a one-hour test, but even that's too much in the recent din of controversy over the state's standardized test, ISTEP, which has grown in length. The Republican Senate, worried about test-fatigue, put that one to rest. ❖

ALTING SEES STRONG SUPPORT FOR CASINO BILL:

The fate of a proposal to allow Tropicana Evansville and the state's other riverboat casinos to move onto land is now in the hands of the Indiana Senate. And the leader of the committee set to vet the plan said he's happy with what came over from the House (Schneider, Evansville Courier & Press). State Sen. Ron Alting, a Lafayette Republican, pointed to the House's heavy support of the proposed gambling changes, which passed in a 75-18 vote last month. "The bill that came from the House was outstanding, and I think the votes demonstrated that. I've never seen a gaming bill come out of a chamber with that high of support ever," said Alting, who chairs the Senate Public Policy Committee, where the bill will be heard. Alting said the majority of the state's casinos and race-track casinos are in favor of the bill. Alting said he expects debate on the proposal to be across the board. Among the proposal's major tenants, Alting said he supports land-based casinos within a facility's current footprint, as well as the ability of the state's two race-track casinos, or

racinos, to have live dealers. "These are not new subjects here in the Indiana Senate," Alting said. Alting said there's wider support on the proposal because lawmakers are smarter to the competition Indiana's gambling industry faces from surrounding states. "I said as chairman of Public Policy four years ago, we've seen the writing on the wall in Ohio. (They) got legalized gaming and blueprints to build all the racinos and casinos, and we need to react." ❖

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Annexation legislation would crimp cities

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Legislation coursing through the Indiana General Assembly is poised to essentially starve the state’s cities and towns by empowering opponents of annexation.

It is legislation that, should it end up on the desk of Gov. Mike Pence, deserves to be vetoed.

Senate Bill 330 would make law that for an annexation to proceed, a municipality that initiates the process must file a petition with the court signed by at least: (1) 51% of the owners of land (that is not exempt from property taxes) in the territory; or (2) the owners of more than 75% in assessed valuation of land (that is not exempt from property taxes) in the territory.



Essentially this flips the process. Current law requires 65% of property owners to oppose any annexation, which then launches a legal process

where a judge makes a final ruling.

Mayors and former officials believe that such a law would make it almost impossible for cities to grow via annexation. The dilemma is that many experts say that it will be Indiana’s cities that keep its economy growing as more and more of the population moves away from rural areas and small towns.

“If the annexation laws were like these proposed back when I was mayor, we probably wouldn’t have annexed anybody,” said former Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke, who in the early 1990s annexed large portions of suburban areas to the southwest and north sides, growing the city from 170,000 to 260,000 people. “You either grow or you decline,” Helmke explained. “Being able to grow is being able to change artificial boundary lines to reflect economic activity. Cities are the economic engines of growth. Young people want to move in.”

This goes well beyond the Fort Waynes, South Bends and Evansvilles in the state. Regional economic engines that draw workers from more rural commuter counties include cities like Jasper, Elkhart, Warsaw, and Columbus. If you look at the so-called 21 “contributor” counties where taxpayers actually pay for services in more rural areas, these include the doughnut counties around Indianapolis as well as the capital city, the collar counties around Louisville, and counties like Elkhart, Porter, Kosciusko, Bartholomew, Dearborne, Tippecanoe, Vanderburgh and Dubois that are home to the cities where jobs are being created.

Helmke looked at the current legislation and observed that as it stands today, not only would it empower residents or “free riders” on city fringes to determine whether a city can grow, it would also eliminate sewer waivers. Current law allows cities to extend sewer services to those living outside cities if the owners sign a waiver saying they won’t oppose future annexation efforts.

Thus, the legislation actually works against the 40,000 or 50,000 people already living in places like Columbus, Elkhart or Kokomo. It would favor the several hundred land owners living on city fringes who aren’t paying for things like snow removal and the conveniences of having city amenities nearby. It will severely restrict a city to grow and expand its tax base. These are the same cities where companies seek tax abatements and infrastructure extensions in order to provide jobs.

According to the Indiana Business Research Center at Indiana University’s Kelley School of Business, of Indiana’s 6.57 million residents, 66.1% live in places that were legally incorporated. Indiana’s cities and towns have accounted for 79.2% of the state’s total population growth from 2010 to 2013. So this legislation works against a majority of Hoosiers already living in cities and towns. IU’s Public Policy Institute states that of Indiana projected population growth between 2010 and 2014, 33% will come in the Indianapolis metro area, 16% in regional metro areas, 14% in Indianapolis and just 1% in rural Indiana. Metro areas of Indiana are home to 81% of jobs and 83% of wages.

Democrat Kokomo Mayor Greg Goodnight, like the Republican Helmke, launched an annexation effort in recent years. “Kokomo had not annexed anything since 1985,” Goodnight explained. “We had all these subdivisions pop up on the fringes. Over 70% were on city sewers and over 70% were getting fire protection from the city via the township trustee.”

Like Helmke, Goodnight believes that the pending legislation will make it almost impossible to annex in the future if Gov. Pence signs the bill. “It probably would not happen if this passes,” Goodnight said. “It’s not easy now. While we had the majority of people who had signed waivers committing to allow themselves to be annexed, to receive sewer services immediately, we had some groups that did not want to honor the contract.”

In filing similar legislation in 2013, Sen. Jim Buck, R-Kokomo, explained to the Kokomo Tribune, “I want to level the playing field, make it fair for everyone. Cities look to annex to retain class status to receive more matching funds or for more cash.”

It prompted the Lafayette Journal & Courier to editorialize: What makes Buck’s comment odd is how it seems to pull back on past pressure to get local governments to consolidate their operations, to come together rather than put up barriers in battles over turf and responsibilities.

Helmke added that without his expansion efforts, “There’s no way that Fort Wayne could be doing what it’s doing now, expanding downtown, investing in

infrastructure challenges, making our rivers friends and not enemies, keeping taxes lower, putting people on more environmentally friendly systems. There's no way we could have done it. If Fort Wayne hadn't changed boundaries, instead of the 170,000 we had then, we'd probably be down to 150,000 or so. It sends all of the wrong messages and it will choke our cities."

Gov. Pence has not taken a stance on any of the anti-annexation bills still alive this session. For a governor whose top priority has been job creation, this legislation puts a significant barrier to the health of our cities. ❖



Repurposing excess industrial buildings

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – Many of Indiana's counties are awash in excess industrial, commercial and residential property. In my county alone, about a quarter of all factories and store spaces and perhaps one in eight homes are vacant. Most



of this property will never again be used for its original purpose. More than half of Hoosier counties can tell a similar story.

The homes and commercial property will be leveled and the land repurposed, but industrial property is another matter. The types of structures comprising early 20th century factories are less simply repurposed. Three-foot concrete pads, hundreds of tons of brick and steel, and

persistent environmental remediation needs plague these properties. Without radical thinking, these former factories will stand as ugly, gated monuments to technological change.

Many of these places lie in amenity-starved regions, so the highest use of this excess property will often be in crafting public places that will attract and retain households. The failure to do this is, after all, one reason

that these regional economies lag today. There are many types of things that could be done. For the sake of illustration, I offer one example, a sports facility.

A large industrial facility will often have several key ingredients of a multi-purpose sports facility; land for parking and fields, utilities and floor structures capable of supporting the heaviest of facilities, such as a swimming pool or hockey rink. The vast space within many of these places would be sufficient to support a wide variety of others activities.

To be clear, the cost of refurbishing these facilities is still significant. It will never be less than several million dollars to transform a vacant factory into a usable swimming pool with gym space, bleachers, commercial areas and parking. Still, the idea has some merit, and one need travel no farther than the rapidly growing towns in North Carolina to see attractive alternative uses for redundant tobacco warehouses.

Over the past decade Indiana's economy has fared better than much of the nation. Still, only a dozen or so counties have grown faster than the nation as a whole. The remaining 80 or so are in decline, and for most places in the state this is a 50-year trend.

The transformation Indiana must undertake in the coming decades is large. These types of proposals will require honest appraisal from local governments, as well as some risk. It is happening in some places. Recently Muncie forgave \$20,000 in back taxes owed on an industrial site so it could be transformed into an urban farming and compost facility.

Reversing the excess property issue will require thoughtful private investment and public investment that doesn't displace more fundamental public services. Indiana communities must focus on attracting people, knowing the jobs will come with them. We ought to embrace our past; it has largely been a good one. The factories that fueled that past can animate the future. A Borg-Warner or Chrysler Natatorium would be much welcomed additions to amenity-starved cities and towns across our state. ❖

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.



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Netanyahu and Israel's survival

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – As I recently passed my sixty-first birthday, I took the time to ponder whether there were any second chances or do-overs that I would like to experience. Looking back at college, I would have gone to class more often. There had to be some knowledge hidden somewhere.

I would not have purchased the Ford Pinto, no matter how zoomy it looked at the time. I'd like to think that if given a do-over that I would have enlisted in the military. I collected beer money by betting unsuspecting fellow revelers that I could eat a light bulb at the bar. In



retrospect, that seems like a rather foolhardy endeavor.

When I think back there are lots of things I said that would remain unsaid, and many unspoken words that I would have said. Regardless of the many garden variety things that I would do over or request a second chance at, I am proud to say that in no instance am I longing for a second chance because my first chance got me

vaporized.

One of the great things about living in the United States is that my children have never lived under the fear of nuclear devastation. I would venture to guess that none of my four children has ever given one single thought to being nuked out of existence. Of course, for those of us who spent time beneath our school desks, practicing our best survival moves in the event of a nuclear attack, all we can say is, "Thank God they didn't drop the big one on us and wow there's a lot of gum under here!"

Yes, my generation lived with nuclear-induced fear, but as time passes it is obvious that much of our fear was misplaced. You see, we lived in fear of the Soviet Union. They looked nasty and they talked nasty. They had leaders who came to the United Nations, beat their shoe on the podium and threatened to destroy us. What we know now is that even murderous thugs like Nikita Khrushchev had a softer side. They loved their children and liked to bounce grandchildren on their knees while watching the sunset over the Black Sea. They liked their vodka straight, their women loose and all the creature comforts that came with "making it" in the Motherland.

The primary reason that no Soviet oligarch ever launched nuclear bombers and missiles is because they and their comrades had something to lose. Life to Boris Betanoff and Natasha looked too good to gamble on a nuclear war where your own demise was guaranteed by

the concept of mutually assured destruction. No matter how many statistical calculations your supercomputers conducted, the outcome was always the same; everyone loses. In the atheistic world of the Communist Soviet Union, there would be no afterlife with harps and pearly gates in the event of nuclear war; only dachas today, dead tomorrow!

This brings us to the prickly issue of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel.

The history of the Jewish people and of the Israeli nation is far different from the experiences of the Dunn family and, I bet, far different from your family's experience. I've actually heard Democrat politicians tell Israel and Jewish people to "Get over it!" The "it" they refer to is the Holocaust. I'm sorry, but if your parents, grandparents and siblings were loaded onto cattle cars and sent hundreds of miles to be exterminated like vermin by genocidal maniacs, you wouldn't just get over it.

I've heard Democrat politicians tell Israel to just ignore the rants of Iranian ayatollahs, Hezbollah, Hamas and every other Islamic terrorist group that threatens to annihilate Israel and all the Jews. Sorry again, if you've fought three wars of national survival, endured SCUD missile attacks, experienced regular terrorist bombings and had your children suffer under rocket attacks, you would never just ignore it.

You see, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Israel understand that when it comes to the survival of their country and of its people, there are no second chances nor do-overs. You must get it right every single time. Making just a single mistake might lead to the destruction of absolutely everything that you hold dear. Acting under the cloud of nuclear destruction will certainly give you a different point of view from the one held by the Community Organizer in Chief.

Does anyone reading this doubt for a single minute that if Adolph Hitler had possessed a nuclear weapon during WWII that he would have used it? Any psycho with no children, grandchildren, friends or future prospects, willing to have his wife poison herself and then shoot herself in the head, would not have the least compunction about using a nuclear weapon. Heck, the United States used two nuclear bombs at the end of World War II. Boys will be boys and bombs will be used.

Does anyone reading this doubt for a single minute that if the animalistic Islamic terrorists lining up prisoners in Syria, Libya, Nigeria, Iraq and Afghanistan and beheading them in front of their children and the cameras possessed the ultimate weapon of destruction, they wouldn't use it against Israel and the United States?

Against terrorists such as ISIS and their ilk, threats made like those by Presidential Emissary Richard Armitage during the early post-9/11 days against Pakistan to, "bomb them back to the stone age" just don't work against peoples who think of the Stone Age as the good old days.

What scares Israel and Prime Minister Netanyahu is that men who hold a passionate religious belief that

they will find their ultimate reward in the afterlife and that their lives mean nothing here on Earth are very dangerous men. A man willing to drive a car bomb into a building, fly an airplane into the World Trade Center or strap an explosive vest on his young child, would certainly be willing to fire a nuclear-tipped missile into Israel. What's a few million dead Jews when you are waging a 2,000-year war of jihad?

The specious argument that the current government of Iran would not use nuclear weapons against their neighbors just doesn't hold water. In the Middle East, today's semi-reasonable government may be replaced with raving mad men tomorrow. History has proven this, time after time after time. Why would we be naïve enough to think that it won't happen again? Why would the people of Israel put the fate of their children and grandchildren at

risk solely because of the delusional appeasement mentality of our gutless President and his feckless foreign policy?

We've all made a bad decision or two during our lives but few of us have made decisions that have cost people their lives. While I could atone for my witless decision to buy the Ford Pinto by trading it in for another car, some decisions offer no do-overs or easy fixes. Prime Minister Netanyahu put forth an excellent case against a nuclear-armed Iran when he spoke before Congress. His argument was cogent and powerful. I appreciate the Republican-led Congress for giving him the opportunity to plead his case before the American people. When it comes to Iran, we all must make the right decision the first time.

❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

Finding a cure for voter apathy

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – Lake County election officials are stepping out to find a cure for voter apathy. It's something they have been doing at least once a year for more than a decade. Yet, the problem, they say, isn't getting any better. Election officials said the state-wide turnout for the 2014 primary was 13 percent.



In Lake and Porter counties, the election folks said the turnout was a paltry 11 percent of the registered voters. The numbers, however, are deceiving. The election officials know that but won't admit it.

In Lake County, for instance, voter registration officials say there are 350,000 registered voters in the county. Given that the county has fewer than 500,000 residents, there can't be 350,000 registered voters, unless the voting age has been lowered considerably.

The problem is that it is difficult by law to purge the voter registration rolls. And, because it is rarely done, there are thousands of names on the rolls of people who are dead or have moved to other counties or states. There may be as many as 100,000 names on the Lake County registration rolls of people who no longer live in the county.

As a result, the announced voter turnout following an election is skewed. If election officials say the turnout is 15 percent, it actually may be 25 percent when a true

registered voter figure is used.

Regardless, the Lake County election officials are setting out to improve voter turnout for the May 5 primary election. Besides a desire to extend the hours for early voting, the Lake officials, in conjunction with the county's numerous library systems, are emphatic about educating the public.

Beginning Saturday and continuing a couple days a week until April 20, Lake County election officials will host voter seminars at 14 library branches around the county.

The intent is to present an overview of the primary and general elections, including what offices are on the ballot, the candidates, voting sites and new technologies.

And, making the job of election officials more difficult is that only town and city offices are on the ballot this year.

In theory, it seems to be a wonderful idea.

But in reality, I suspect the vast majority of those who attend one of the sessions will vote on May 5 anyway. Anyone who likely won't vote in the primary, won't take time to attend a seminar. That's simply human nature. Lake and Porter county election officials also said pending legislation to prohibit straight party voting would work against increasing voter turnout.

It was pointed out that ballots on the electronic voting machines are becoming increasingly long, and requiring people to vote for every office could result in long voting lines.

And the possibility of moving municipal elections to an even-numbered year would make the ballots even longer. ❖

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.

AARP seeks to improve caregivers

By **MATTHEW BUTLER**

INDIANAPOLIS – Four weeks ago it appeared both of Indiana AARP’s two legislative priorities for the 2015 session risked not clearing committee. One aimed at improving Indiana’s retirement savings rate whereas the other hoped to improve the situation of family caregivers. As the legislature entered its last week before the cross-over point, the former was a dead letter whereas the latter (HB 1265), after revisions, had passed committee unanimously and the full House 92-1.

The caregiver legislation is part of a wider effort to address a recognized problem. According to a scorecard released in June 2014 by the SCAN Foundation, The Commonwealth Fund, and AARP, Indiana ranks 47th out of all states and the District of Columbia in terms of services and support for those needing long-term care.

Not only is Indiana considered one of the worst states in which to be disabled or grow old and frail, but also it ranked the very worst (51st) in terms of support for caregivers. The indicators influencing this last-place ranking were assessments of the legal protections for caregivers (ranked 44th), such as state employment laws, assessments of caregiver wellbeing (42nd), and whether the state allowed nurses to delegate health maintenance tasks to non-family members such as in-home aides (47th). The scorecard also penalized Indiana for not having a caregiver assessment mechanism, which the state is now developing.

As Indiana’s population grays and the bulk of Baby Boomers are on the cusp of retirement, the entire health care system will face greater burdens and strains. Between 2005 and 2040 Indiana will see a 90% increase in the number of Hoosiers aged 65 and older.

When we covered these scorecard rankings in our



Aug. 21, 2014 edition, Indiana AARP’s communications director Katie Moreau told Howey Politics: “It’s quite honestly the way we see it. We are not devastated and we’re not overly concerned. It’s not the best ranking by any means, but we see room for improvement.”

“We are starting to do better in terms of helping people age independently at home,” Indiana AARP Director June Lyle told HPI in February.

As Lyle explains, caregivers are “the backbone of Indiana’s long-term care system.” There are 1.3 million Hoosier caregivers who provide annually 877 million hours of unpaid care. The estimated economic value of which is \$9.4 billion per year. The average Hoosier caregiver is female, 49 years old, provides care over a five-year span, and all the while maintains a fulltime job.

“Family caregivers help people live at home and independently,” Lyle told lawmakers. “This is critical for two reasons: One, this where people want to be. They want to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible; Secondly, it reduces the pressure on Indiana’s Medicaid budget by avoiding or delaying that time they have to go into a nursing facility.”

But Indiana AARP says caregivers desperately need help; 69 percent of family caregivers must perform medical tasks themselves without the assistance of in-home health experts. That type of help is simply beyond most Hoosiers’ finances; in-home care costs on average 87% of the median household income for those over 65 years old.

Prioritizing Hoosier Caregivers

AARP Indiana’s legislative agenda the past several sessions prioritized caregivers. Unsuccessfully, the group advocated for family caregiver tax credits the past two sessions. Even sympathetic lawmakers think those are rife with the potential for fraud and elder abuse. However, the organization was able to secure a study resolution for caregiving last year and the Indiana Division of Aging’s latest plan through 2018 now includes “a statewide focus on the needs of family caregivers.”

The scorecard did rank Indiana’s aging and resource center functions, that is the Division of Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging, as fourth best in the nation.



AARP sees them as an important platform to implement reforms.

For the 2015 session, AARP Indiana named passage of the Caregiver Advise, Record and Enable, or CARE Act, as their top legislative goal. In general terms, the act requires by law that hospitals designate a caregiver for a patient upon admission, they notify said caregiver before transferring or discharging the patient, and they provide instruction to the caregiver on in-home tasks, such as diet, medications, and wound care.

Last year New Jersey and Oklahoma enacted versions of the CARE Act with the former generally considered the stronger, the latter the weaker. Indiana AARP hopes to eventually secure something somewhere in the middle.

Rep. Dennis Zent (R-Angola) filed the legislation, HB 1265 with Public Health Chairman Ed Clere (R-New Albany) as the coauthor.

"I've also worn another hat," Zent, an endodontist by profession, explained his bill to colleagues. "My father suffered a stroke and spent 18-and-half years in a wheelchair. With his deterioration over time, I personally saw how it affected my mother's health and all of us, quite truthfully, who tried to provide that health care. We're going to address an obvious need here."

Caregiver advocacy this session

As a non-partisan advocacy group that does not give campaign contributions nor endorse candidates, Indiana AARP must depend upon grassroots mobilization and raising awareness.

The organization marshaled its sizable statewide membership, numbering some 820,000 Hoosiers, to advocate for the CARE Act the last few months. The group circulated petitions, mailers, held local town halls, and used social media. It had constituents call and email relevant committee members. It found endorsements from other stakeholders, such as the American Heart Association of Indiana and Eli Lilly.

Indiana AARP also deployed a volunteer legislative team to work the Statehouse hallways every other week this session. HPI attended one of their meetings in early February before the group worked the hallways. They discussed the details of the bill, the concerns of undecided lawmakers, and talking points.

Among their ranks was a 16-year legislative veteran, former Ways & Means Vice Chairman Ralph Ayres (R-Chesterton). For the last four years he has been coming to the statehouse for Indiana AARP. Seeing themselves as "citizen advocates," Ayres stressed how important it is for their advocacy efforts to be "strictly issue-based" and non-partisan.

Asked if the average legislator knows about the challenges the state will face with an aging population, Ayres responded, "I think they do. Many of the legislators I've talked to have the same types of issues in their own families."

"What we try to do is stand for key issues, like

retirement security and caregiving, and any legislators or elected officials who are willing to work with us on those issues, we really embrace that," Lyle explained to HPI. "We try to do what we can to sort of thank those legislators for their support."

The group does show its gratitude in public ways. Four Indiana lawmakers were awarded AARP's inaugural 'Family Caregiver Awards' last year: Sens. Vaneta Becker and Pat Miller and Reps. Ed Charbonneau and Clere. It also placed full-page advertisements thanking Reps. Clere and Zent for carrying the CARE Act in their local newspapers.

Reconciling hospitals and advocates

In mid-February Chairman Clere's committee heard testimony on HB 1265 but postponed a vote. The Indiana Hospital Association and some committee members, particularly Rep. Ron Bacon (R-Chandler), had concerns over specific details and "out-of-touch," or dated, terminology. Bacon is a respiratory therapist and home medical equipment expert. A major hang up was mandating live demonstrations on in-home care to caregivers before a patient's discharge. It was felt not all patients and their caregivers required that extra step.

Moreover, hospitals argued they already provided comprehensive discharge assistance to patients and their caregivers.

"We're trying to find some common ground. We are working on language," Clere told the committee that week.

When New Jersey and Oklahoma considered their respective CARE Acts last year, their respective hospital groups worried there could be delays in discharging patients and there might be legal liability if caregivers did not provide proper in-home care. After revisions to the draft language, both groups withdrew their opposition, citing a desire to help caregivers, reduce readmission rates, and improve their Medicaid-Medicare reimbursement rates.

Since 2012, hospital reimbursement rates are tied to readmission rates. According to State Legislatures magazine, one in five Medicare patients is readmitted to the hospital within 30 days of discharge. The result is \$17.5 billion in additional hospital costs. It something everyone wants to avoid.

By Feb. 18 consensus was forged. The Hospital Association removed its opposition and committee members were satisfied with amended language. HB 1265 passed committee unanimously.

"At several places in the bill it gives hospital personnel greater discretion than there was in the original," Lyle told HPI. "We think we hit a good balance there. We think this is a modest first step but an important one."

"Even though it may be a great idea, it takes a lot of work to make these things come to fruition," Zent remarked. He characterized the revisions as delineating and phrasing best practices, something that takes collaboration and time.

"There was a lot of effort from AARP and the hospitals. I appreciate all the interested parties coming from multiple directions. It speaks volumes for Indiana," Zent added. "If we can limit the number of readmissions, it's good all the way around."

Hoosier caregiving's future

As a chairman and coauthor this was not Clere's first foray into caregiving and aging-in-place issues. Last year his HEA 1391 expanded the state's \$40-million CHOICE program, which assists those who are disabled or at-risk of entering a nursing facility stay within their homes. Clere's law created a pilot program that expanded eligibility further and tries to forestall seniors needing intensive home or even facility care.

"This is another piece of the puzzle," Clere told HPI after the CARE Act advanced to the full House. "It's no easy thing to take on the role of caregiver. It keeps the household structure intact and it reduces demands on the paid-caregiver system, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and nursing homes. It's a benefit to everyone in the system."

The CARE Act proceeded to third reading by consent and was passed by the House 92-1. The bill has been assigned to Sen. Pat Miller's Health and Provider Services Committee and she is a sponsor. A hearing is all but certain. AARP, however, is not sitting still. Its legislative team volunteers were working the hallways outside the Senate chamber on Monday. ❖

Gov. Hamlet weighs 'to be or not to be'

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Indiana's Gov. Hamlet still is on stage pondering the presidential question, to run or not to run. Most indicators now are that Gov. Mike Pence, like the Hoosier governor in the Hamlet role before him, will say it is not to be.



Just four years ago, Gov. Mitch Daniels was pondering the question of whether to seek the Republican nomination for president. Daniels wanted to run, was preparing to run. But his family decided it was not to be.

Now it's Pence who would like to run. There is uncertainty, however, over whether he is preparing for a presidential bid or concentrating really on seeking reelection as governor. If it is not to be for Pence in the presidential race, the

decision won't involve any family veto. It will be because his chances in the presidential race are not solid enough to forsake a much more solid chance for reelection.

Pence has been running for president with travels, nationally and abroad, with political speeches on national issues and with meetings with big contributors. It's like saying: "Here I am on stage. Like my performance? Should I stop pondering and announce for president?"

Some applause. No standing ovation. But since Pence would like to be president some day, if not on inauguration day in 2017, it makes sense for him to keep his name out there and get better known nationally.

Deciding to run officially? To enter contests in Iowa and New Hampshire, to raise big money, to build a national organization and to relinquish any chance of reelection as governor?

The political analysts now concluding that Pence won't pursue a presidential bid cite a number of indicators. They note that Pence hasn't started raising funds for a presidential campaign, while other potential Republican nominees raise large amounts and win commitments from big donors. They point out that Pence hasn't put together a presidential campaign organization, while those other contenders line up skilled political organizers.

They see that Pence, while out there on stage, hasn't won widespread audience acclaim, at least not in terms of getting much mention in the polls. The governor attracting the most attention now is Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker. The National Journal concluded that "there are few outward signs that Pence is doing anything but keeping his name in the presidential conversation."

The Journal noted that Pence has \$3.5 million in funds that can be used for reelection as governor and that he raised almost nothing in a PAC for national campaign purposes.

Brian Howey of Howey Politics Indiana long has advised to watch the money in figuring out which race Pence would choose. So far, the money says "governor." But in these days when a billionaire could suddenly change the presidential nomination picture, it's advisable to keep watching a little longer.

Strange things can happen to candidates in presidential nomination battles. That uncertainty could keep Pence from announcing any final decision now on leaving the stage. Why leave prematurely? Others, including so-called frontrunners, could be knocked out of contention by some blunder or exploding issue. Also, by staying longer in the spotlight, Pence could attract attention for selection later as a nominee for vice president.

Would he accept a vice presidential nomination?

It's hard to turn down an offer to be on the presidential ticket. And it's the presidency that is his ultimate goal. Pence left a prominent role in Congress – maybe he would be speaker today if he had stayed – to get executive experience as governor as a qualification for chief executive in Washington.

This Gov. Hamlet, unlike the prior Indiana gover-

nor in that role, has a different choice. If it's not to be for a presidential nomination, he hasn't reached the two-term limit for governor and can seek to keep that office. ❖

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



Citizen responsibility

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – Solving problems in our democracy requires bringing different points of view together, talking face to face with others who may differ with you, and learning that these differences can exist without personal animosity.

The question usually comes toward the end of a public meeting. Some knotty problem is being discussed, and someone in the audience will raise his or her hand and ask, "Okay, so what can I do about it?"

I love that question. Not because I've ever answered it to my satisfaction, but because it bespeaks such a constructive outlook. Democracy is no spectator sport and citizens are not passive consumers. I'm always invigorated by running into people who understand this. But that doesn't make answering the question any easier.



The usual advice that politicians give is to vote, work for a candidate, let your elected officials know what you think,

join an organization of like-minded citizens, and participate in community life. This is good counsel — but only as far as it goes. With a little more time now to answer the question, I'd add a few points.

First, it's important that citizens appreciate how hard it is to solve problems in a representative democracy. Every issue, even a stop sign at a corner, is more complex than it appears. The best way to learn this is to become an expert on a single topic. You can't study every issue, but you can pick one and dig in, whether it's a big problem like climate change or a smaller one, such as how to get food delivered to shut-ins in your community.

Understanding and appreciating all aspects of the issue is the best way to see how and where you can make progress. It also makes you more patient with others, including elected officials, who are trying to resolve other thorny challenges.

It's also vital to learn that solving problems means working together with all kinds of people. It requires bring-

ing different points of view together, developing connections to key players in your community, talking face to face with others who may not agree with you, and communicating your ideas effectively, including to the media. This is the surest way I know to understand differences, and to learn that these differences can exist without personal animosity. That, in turn, is a key step toward recognizing the common ground on which you can build agreement.

Many of the people I know who answered the call of citizenship did so to resolve a specific issue: Getting the railroad signal at a crossing to work; improving food labeling so diabetics could know how much sugar packaged food contains; improving a watershed to help a community manage its water supply. Sometimes, people want to address a situation they don't like: What they consider to be over-spending, or a politician whose priorities they disagree with. Sometimes they just want to contribute to the direction and success of their community.

There is a key lesson that comes from trying to solve a particular problem: It tends to make you less ideological and more pragmatic. It forces you to examine the options in front of you and the resources at hand to help you pursue them. You have to judge whether a given option can gather sufficient support in the community to go forward, and realize that you can't solve everything; sometimes you have to put particular problems aside and come back to them another day, when circumstances have shifted.

There are plenty of people who find all this frustrating and give up. Many others devote their lives to it, whether as community participants, engaged activists, or public servants. Politics is not a game for everyone, and there are many other ways to be involved in community life. Regardless of the avenue they choose, it's the people who step forward who refresh this country and make it stronger.

Our Constitution's preamble begins, "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union...." At heart, that's what getting involved means: Shouldering the challenges, sharing responsibilities and opportunities that democracy thrusts upon us as we pursue a more perfect union. That's what I want to say to the people who ask, "What can I do about it?" The journey is hard and complicated, but it's immensely satisfying. Few rewards can match your satisfaction when your fellow citizens thank you for a job well done. ❖

Hunter Schwartz, Washington Post: Sydney Leathers is back. The woman at the center of former congressman Anthony Weiner's (D-N.Y.) 2013 sexting scandal is at the center of another, this time with an Indiana state lawmaker. State Rep. Justin Moed, a Democrat, said in a statement to the Indianapolis Star he was sorry for his "poor judgement." Moed had responded to an ad Leathers placed, and he sexted and sent her gifts including shoes, lingerie, and a leash and collar, according to reports from the New York Post and TheDirty.com. He thought he did so anonymously, but his name appeared on an Amazon.com receipt Leathers received. TheDirty.com published photos of the Amazon receipt with Moed's name. In the history of modern political sex scandals, we've never seen anyone like Leathers; her story is so thoroughly a product of its time. She's been at the center of not one but two scandals, both with men she never actually met in person and only sexted with, and she's capitalized on her notoriety. She's filmed porn, on her Twitter account she calls herself a "political scandal expert," and she made money from Moed, who sent her anonymous payments through PayPal. For her, the latest scandal is good for business. According to Google Trends, interest in Leathers is now higher than it's been since 2013. She has also spent the day retweeting links to stories on the scandal. For Moed, it's been less pleasant. He was engaged to be married in September and asked for the situation to be treated as a private matter. One of the big takeaways for politicians is don't sext Sydney Leathers. But, as Leathers said to the New York Post, "Apparently only politicians can pick up on my pheromones." ❖



William Nangle, NWI Times: Flags flying at half-staff were suitable recognition for Sue Landske. She gave most of her life to public service, including 30 years at the Statehouse. She was not one to attract attention. She seldom argued on the floor of the Indiana Senate. She had a quiet but determined way of making her point and scoring many a legislative victory. Her longtime friend, Senior Judge T. Edward Page, captured it best saying, "Inside that velvet glove was a steel fist, a Lake County steel fist." Her passing came as no surprise. That, too, she dealt with in a quiet but determined manner. I saw Sue on several occasions after she left the Senate to wage her battle with cancer. Each time I could detect she was getting weaker. Even so, she talked of the future in a positive manner. I first met Sue during the early 1970s when she was working in the clerk's office at the Cedar Lake Town Hall. It was the early days of government formation in the lakeside community. There were many arguments over how best to run the town. Sue's voice was always that of moderation and compromise. Her quiet type leadership was evident during her time as Center Township assessor, and so when the call came to run for the state Senate, she was ready. Only once do I remember being at odds with Sue. A car-

toon depicting Sue in a less than flattering manner for her position on a legislative proposal ran in The Times. The day after I faced Sue in a hallway at the Statehouse. Her glare said it all. I was dead meat. ❖

Charles Hurt, Washington Times: No, Madam Secretary, we do NOT want to know about your yoga habits! Hillary Clinton's press performance Tuesday afternoon was, truly, everything Americans could have hoped for from our former First Lady, Modern Joan of Arc, Lady Macbeth, Senate carpetbagger and eternal public Woman Scorned. She was everything she has ever been, always was and ever will be. We are fast approaching the 25th anniversary of our first date with the Clintons. Bill Clinton has always been a one-man traveling variety show where everybody laughs a little, gets their pockets picked and — if you are the right dimensions — a private soiree. Hillary, on the other hand, has but one note, one act, one trick. She is a legal automaton. A disemboweled scandal-disposal robot. She is Franken-Secretary, the unkillable Political Zombie! America, are you ready for 10 — TEN! — more years of political Hurt Locker? Because that is exactly what we are about to get. Ten more YEARS of deafening shock, trauma, stifled talk-show screams, political slow motion, scandal, faraway voices, incomprehensible movements. ❖

Matt Getts, Albion New Era: Glenda Ritz is going to get the last laugh. Pundits are speculating on whether Indiana Gov. Mike Pence will seek the Republican nomination for president. Four years ago, he was a congressman who carried some weight in the U.S. House of Representatives. A staunch conservative, he was often called upon by national media outlets to speak on behalf of his party. Then, Pence ran for governor. It's not an uncommon move for a political up-and-comer. Build a name for yourself as a legislator and then to run for governor so you can add "executive branch" to your resume. Unfortunately, his first term in office hasn't helped his resume any. To be sure, Pence remains a staunch conservative. That plays well in Albion, Auburn, Angola and Kendallville. But to become president of the United States? To do that, a candidate would need moderate/centrist votes. And that's where Pence's confrontation with Indiana's Secretary of Education will come back to haunt him. The lone Democrat in the Statehouse, Ritz secured more votes than Pence himself. From the beginning of her term, she has become a lightning rod for controversy. Pence's chosen Republican State Board of Education has done, seemingly, everything it can to undermine the power of the lone Democrat in state office. The Indiana General Assembly has piled on, pushing to have Ritz removed as chair of the State Board of Education. Pence would not be painted as a do-nothing governor if he were to enter the national stage. He would be painted as a politician who cannot work with others. ❖

Berry reported out as chair

INDIANAPOLIS — Gov. Mike Pence is scheduled to announce Tim Berry's departure as Republican Party chairman on a conference call with party leaders Thursday afternoon (LoBianco, IndyStar).

Republicans with knowledge of the call confirmed the details Wednesday on condition of anonymity because Berry's departure has not been announced publicly.

An email sent to members of the Republican Party Central Committee said that Pence will talk with them at 3 p.m. Thursday. A call to Berry for comment was not immediately returned Wednesday afternoon. Pence's reelection campaign declined to comment. Berry's exit comes as Pence is gearing up for a reelection bid and the party is eyeing ways to hold onto strong gains it's made in the Statehouse and Washington in the past five years or so. Concerns about the Republican Party's fundraising have swirled since former Gov. Mitch Daniels left office in January 2013 and his party chairman, Eric Holcomb, departed six months later. But a Berry departure also opens the way for a Pence confidant to run the party. Jeff Cardwell, director of Pence's office of faith-based initiatives and a Pence friend, has been floated as a likely pick for party chairman.

Toll road leasing to Aussie firm

CROWN POINT — An Australian consortium claims it has won the bidding war for control of the bankrupt Indiana Toll Road (Dolan, NWI Times). That would spell doom for the proposed Lake County and LaPorte County's public-private Partnership with Wall Street to acquire the highway in a deal that promised \$5 million a year in fees to county government and millions more in surplus revenues

over the next 66 years. IFM Investors issued a press statement early Wednesday stating, "IFM Investors, on behalf of IFM Global Infrastructure Fund, has entered into a definitive purchase and sale agreement to acquire ITR Concession Company LLC ... "IFM Investors has agreed to pay \$5.725 billion for (the Indiana Toll Road concession). The closing

of the transaction is subject to obtaining necessary third-party and government authorizations and approvals, including the approval of the Indiana Finance Authority."

The Indiana Finance Authority, which oversees the highway lease, said in a news release it has reviewed the bid and is satisfied IFM can meet the responsibilities of leasing the 157-mile-long highway, according to the Associated Press. The announcement caught local officials by surprise Wednesday morning. Lake County Commissioner Mike Repay, D-Hammond, said he was surprised to hear of the deal since county consultants had earlier said there would be no decision until later this month.

LaPorte critical of IFA decision

LaPORTE — The LaPorte County Council voted 6 to 1 to approve the Interlocal Agreement and related resolution regarding the lease of the Indiana Toll Road. County counsel Shaw Friedman said, "It's our judgment that we were treated in a fairer fashion in this process by UBS and the Special Creditors' Committee than by our own Indiana Finance Authority which has been unremittably hostile to the notion of a public bid from the outset. The outrageous written questions IFA generated last week to the County Consortium were further evidence of that and the fact the agency issued a press release rubber-stamping the IFM deal within hours of the announcement today without seeking to leverage their approval for any benefits to the state

or our counties is further evidence of their bias, predisposition and hopeless incompetence. I hope that members of the press will contact IFA director Jim McGoff and counsel Robert Grand and inquire why the agency did not choose to use any leverage it had to gain any concessions from IFM for the state of Indiana, the Toll Road corridor counties or the long-suffering motorists who use the Indiana Toll Road."

Ritz critical of ISTEP testing cost

INDIANAPOLIS — The state is recommending that a new company administer the ISTEP exam, with Pearson named as the successful applicant to run the standardized test beginning in the 2015-16 school year, according to documents released Wednesday (Associated Press). Pearson is among the vendors named for a wide range of tests for Hoosier students, which total almost \$134 million in cost and are a product of a process the state began last year to find companies for a revamped standardized testing program. Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz said on Wednesday the costs were "astronomical" and that her administration learned of the dollar amounts after the process was complete.

Donnelly sponsors manu/housing bill

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly is taking another shot at easing credit for manufactured housing, and this time around he says he likes his odds better (Elkhart Truth). Donnelly co-authored a bill, introduced on Tuesday, that would raise those thresholds to \$75,000 and 10 percent, respectively. It also would clarify that manufactured housing retailers are not loan originators and should be allowed to give prospective buyers more help in obtaining lending, after the new restrictions placed new limits on what they can do in that regard.

