



How the Chamber evolved on LGBT

Chamber President Brinegar says gays can be fired for being gay

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – This was the blunt question HPI posed to Indiana Chamber of Commerce President Kevin Brinegar: Can a gay Hoosier citizen be fired for ... being gay?



Brinegar's answer was this: "That is my understanding."

With the civil rights expansion taking the omnipresent role in this session of the Indiana General Assembly, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce has played one of the bookend positions within the Republican universe, a counter weight to the evangelical and social conservatives who are fighting the proposals now poised in the Indiana Senate. It comes as Gov. Mike Pence laid down "markers" on the issue that, in the view of the up-



per strata of his Statehouse team were perceived as "clear," but were misinterpreted or reinterpreted on a wide scale in the wake of his televised speech last week.

HPI sat down with Brinegar in his office overlooking the Statehouse on Monday for an inside look at how the state's largest business organization broke four decades of opposing any civil rights

category expansion when its board of directors voted "overwhelmingly" last November to back the measures that will be debated this month.

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Rome City is burning

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – It is disheartening that when solutions are available to combat Indiana's methamphetamine crisis, as have been amply demonstrated in Oregon and Mississippi, Indiana lawmakers and the governor

look the other way. A U.S. map published by the Drug Enforcement Administration titled "2014 Meth Clandestine Laboratory Incidents" tells a stunning and revealing story.

Oregon went to a prescription rescheduling of pseudoephedrine in 2006 and meth lab busts plummeted from 192 in 2005 to seven in 2014. There was a similar 83% drop off in Mississippi, which the DEA



"This is something that Hoosiers really care about and we need to work on it. As a leader, we lead 6.5 million Hoosiers and on this topic Hoosiers are not content with where we are."

- Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann, to the NWI Times, on civil rights



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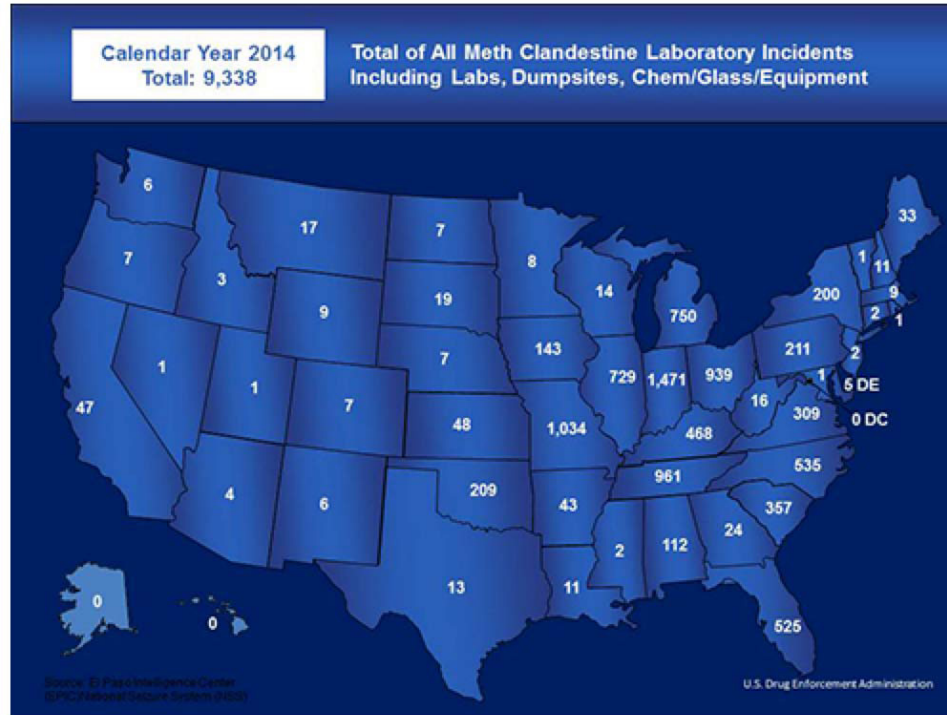
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shows reported two incidents in 2014. And Indiana? A disgusting 1,471 out of the 9,338 reported for the entire United States (see DEA map above).

Law enforcement officials in Indiana will tell you that only a fraction of the actual meth labs are discovered, shut down and prosecuted, the children rescued.

What made the impact in Oregon and Mississippi? The rescheduling of pseudoephedrine. Which made the announced decision last week of House Public Health Committee Chairwoman Cindy Kirchofer not to hear HB1390 by State Rep. Ben Smaltz one of neglectful proportions.

Indiana leads the nation in domestic methamphetamine production for the past three years. And at what cost?

According to the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council, since 2013 Indiana has dismantled 4,477 meth labs, and rescued 1,104 children living in meth lab environments. In the first nine months of 2015, there were 1,302 meth lab incidents involving 278 children. Over the corresponding time period, Indiana has seen a 32% increase in homicides, 26% increase in abuse and neglect reports to the Department of Child Services, a 90%

increase in misdemeanor theft filings in the first six months of 2015.

Worth repeating is something that Kendallville Police Chief Rob Wiley explained last November, which was that while 362 children have been removed from meth manufacturing homes the previous year, "There are about 10 times that many," meaning that another 3,600 kids or so are living in squalid, dangerous and lethal conditions that authorities haven't reached.

So how are Gov. Mike Pence and the Indiana General Assembly responding?

When I asked Gov. Pence about rescheduling PSE in December, he noted that he had created a drug task force, that it was working on a "comprehensive approach," and that he was implementing its recommendations. "Meth is part of the equation," Pence said. "But, frankly, heroin is the scourge that is tearing at the fabric of communities and families across the state. We have to confront it in new ways. I think in this session what you're going to see is our administration supporting efforts to make sure that we are incredibly tough on drug dealers."

Pence wouldn't address the

rescheduling solution, and neither would his Democratic opponent, John Gregg, though he told me that the current system "is not working."

The logic here is stunning: Let's not restrict the flow of meth ingredients, but, instead, let's throw the book at the drug dealers once they're done making the product.

Speaker Brian Bosma told me the same thing in November. "I am a fan of putting it on a prescription. I know that it's controversial with many folks, but I would more than pleased to have pseudoephedrine as a prescription drug because even with our sophisticated tracking system in place, they are getting multiple purchasers to travel from spot to spot," Bosma said. "It's not working."

Kirchhofer, R-Beech Grove told the Associated Press last week that there wasn't enough support in her committee to advance the legislation. "I would not look for anything on Wednesday to come out of the Health committee that has a prescription requirement on it," Kirchhofer said. "There are wide opinions and I just don't have the votes to move it in committee or on the House floor."

But that changed within the last 48 hours as Smaltz told HPI that HB1390 will now get a hearing, though a vote is not yet promised, at 9 a.m. Monday. The Auburn Republican has made changes, one of which would allow a "patient of record" to purchase PSE from a pharmacist. A person not a "patient of record" would only be allowed to by a small portion of tamper resistant PSE via a prescription.

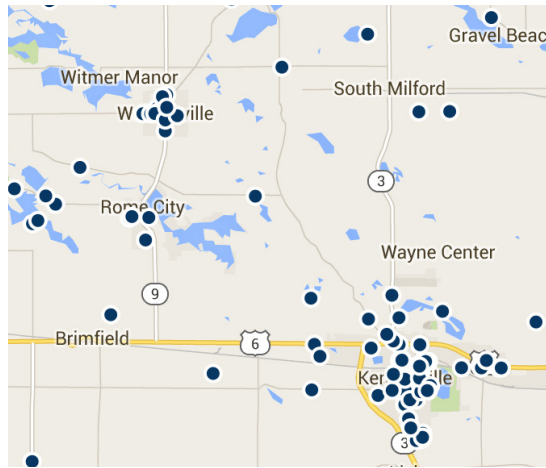
Asked what changed, Smaltz cited Speaker Bosma, saying this morning, "I am confident the speaker supports fighting meth labs. He wants all of the bills heard. He wants a solution, everything out of the box. I feel great support. I am certain my bill is alive because of his leadership."

Bosma, a probable gubernatorial candidate in 2020, told the Associated Press last week, "There are three or four options that have been introduced, all worthy of discussion. I've told the chairman I have expectations that they come out with something."

Without a solution like HB1390, everything else is

a half measure. The Indiana General Assembly loves half measures, because they prompt little leadership in the face of the various retail councils and consumer health product lobbyists who don't want anything to crimp sales of drugs like Sudafed. It is profits before public safety.

Those fighting the rescheduling say that 90% of the meth in Indiana comes from Mexico, something Smaltz vehemently disagrees with. "I have read Department of Justice reports going back to 2005 and nothing backs that up," Smaltz said. "Maybe the percentages are high in the U.S., but not in Indiana." Smaltz points to <http://www.in.gov/meth/2371.htm> which actually geographically reveals "meth lab addresses" in Indiana (see map to left).



In 2011, the

General Assembly opted for the NPLeX system to track PSE sales. It was supposed to block sales to consumers who had gone over a legal limit. In 2015, according to the Prosecuting Attorneys Council, Indiana has seen a 29.6% increase in meth lab incidents since the full implementation of NPLeX took place on Jan. 1, 2012.

In 2005, the General Assembly required PSE products to be kept behind the pharmacy counter, consumers would have to show a government ID, and all sales would be recorded. Under this system, Indiana saw a 70% increase in meth lab incidents between 2005 and 2015.

What Hoosiers need is leadership here. Political courage is required. They need Speaker Bosma and Senate President David Long to lean on their committee chairs to bring bills to their floors for discussion and debate. Hoosiers need committee chairs to develop consensus and get something that will work into law. Hoosiers need a governor who has been missing in action on the meth issue to take a stand, and use political capital to press for what is working in Oregon and Mississippi and get it implemented here.

To do otherwise, to fiddle, is to let Rome City burn. ❖

Chamber, from page 1

Brinegar has been an inside force on the dramatic issue. He was in Gov. Pence's office with then-Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard on March 26, a day after the governor signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act into law, only to watch a national social media firestorm overtake the Indiana Statehouse just as the NCAA Men's Final Four and a plethora of news media descended on Indianapolis.

Brinegar was there to inform the various committees and boards within the Chamber universe that RFRA had exposed a critical loophole in existing Indiana law that allowed discrimination against a class of Hoosiers. He played an integral role in developing the vast consensus within the GOP's influential business wing, which voted to support an expansion just hours before Gov. Pence welcomed the Chamber to the capital for its annual awards dinner last November.

Brinegar presides over one of the state's widest networks, with Chamber members in every House and Senate district. He possesses the levers to build the elusive consensus with that network on an issue he emphatically states must be resolved in this session.

Here, then, is an inside view of how RFRA morphed into one of the most controversial and unpredictable chapters in modern Indiana politics and public policy, one that has a potential to reshape careers, majorities and power over the next 10 months.

HPI: Walk me through how the Indiana Chamber decided to endorse the civil rights expansion.

Brinegar: You have the Civil Rights Act of 1964 at the federal level and the state followed suit sometime thereafter. At that time, we know what those protected categories are and for many, many years ... the Chamber's position was looking at it purely from an employment law perspective; people kind of forget that this ultimately has to do with who gets to sue who for what. Our long-standing position was to oppose an additional expansion of the categories of protected classes. Every time you expand the categories, you're giving more people authority to sue employers. But after the RFRA crisis, debacle, whatever you want to call it ...

HPI: I call it a debacle.

Brinegar: The blow-up last session, we were on the front line and ground zero of the RFRA fix. I was in the governor's office the day after he signed that law (March 25) with Mayor Ballard and Ryan Vaughn from Visit Indy and a few other folks, saying this is a problem and we need to fix it. I said, "There is still time in this session to enact another piece of legislation." Ballard and Pence go back and forth and Pence is saying, "In no way did I mean for this legislation to be used for discrimination purposes." Across the table, folks were saying, "That's the concern" and "that's what we're getting beat on nationally." The NCAA is grousing about it. GenCon is grousing about it even though they are headquartered in a RFRA state, which is kind of ironic. I listened for awhile and I said, "Look, there's still time left in this session. We can pass what the folks in the hallway call a trailer bill." It's a bill that follows the original bill that cleans it up. And so there was some agreement that that could be done. The next day I talked to Bosma and Long on the phone and found out that they were already thinking along those lines. So I urged them and encouraged them to go that way.

HPI: And then was it that Sunday that Gov. Pence

was on ABC's This Week?

Brinegar: Yes, on George Stephanopolous. And then on Monday the other business folks weighed in and I saw some language on Monday that the House staff had drafted and sent to us. As the week went on, the language got stronger and stronger, quite frankly, to what we ended up with. Coming out of the session, I had a conversation with our executive committee and said, "This issue is coming back." The Pro Tem even made a statement saying they would look into expanding the civil rights law, which was part of the overall discussion. It wasn't just RFRA. We've got a RFRA fix that says you can't use this statute



'I think we need to look at where we want the Chamber position to be. LGBT wasn't around 30 or 40 years ago. It's now the 21st Century and we ought to reconsider our position.'

to discriminate. What about our civil rights law in general? Should that be expanded as a number of other states have done? I could see this was coming back. I went to our executive committee and said, "I think we need to look at where we want the Chamber to be," and pointed out to them that our current position, going back 30 or 40 years, is that we oppose any expansion from purely an employment law perspective. LGBT wasn't around 30 or 40 years ago. It's now the 21st Century and

we ought to reconsider our position.

HPI: On the employment law, Indiana Competes has a radio ad saying if you're gay, you can be fired for being gay. Is that true?

Brinegar: That is my understanding.

HPI: So the Chamber has a fundamental problem with that? I think it's very important that when the Chamber has said it doesn't want to expand protected classes, don't want our employers to be sued any more ...

Brinegar: I felt like we needed to change and modernize that position and bring it into the 21st Century. But I don't unilaterally make policy at the Chamber of Commerce. That is for our policy committee and our board of directors. I suggested to the executive committee that this was both an employment law issue and an economic development issue. We have committees that handle both of those areas. We discussed updating and modernizing our policy. These committees comprise our member companies; they are the starting point for policy development at the Chamber. They met and had, at times, a spirited discussion, but they voted to adopt language to change our policy position to support expanding the civil rights law in June of 2015. We also wanted to clarify that if this was going to be expanded, we wanted it to occur under our existing civil rights law, where all the case laws

and rights are interpreted and would still be in effect. It is a three-step process to make policy. It's the policy committee, then to the executive committee ... at the September meeting. The executive committee voted overwhelmingly to take it to the full board of directors, which is the final step. At our fall board of directors, we presented this position ... and they voted overwhelmingly as well.

HPI: Overwhelmingly, but not unanimously?

Brinegar: Overwhelmingly but not unanimously. Very overwhelmingly. We had an electronic voting system that gave us percentage results. That's the position of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and that's the position we're carrying out and trying to get implemented. We're doing a full-blown effort to do everything we can to get this legislation passed this session so we can move on to other things. Our policy position, I describe it, is not saying we want this specific legislative language. It's more guardrails. The legislation has to include certain things, but there are variations that could be stipulated.

HPI: So at your fall awards dinner, you had the governor there, and this came right after your board of directors voted for the expansion.

Brinegar: The board voted that day. We had our awards dinner that night. The governor is always invited to make welcoming remarks, which he did. That happens almost every year, and then we had our Central Indiana Legislative Preview coming up as we always do the day before Organization Day and we wanted to keep the issues out there. We wanted to keep work share, ISTEP and other things separate, so we thought it best to make the announcement about civil rights position the very next day after the board meeting, and then hopefully that would have a news cycle. Then we could focus on our other issues and not have that issue dominate.

HPI: I've had several people who have attended the Coalition of Businesses, who have shared some of the conversations with the governor. Tell me about your exchanges with the governor on this issue. Obviously he is not where your board of directors hoped he would be. What's it been like dealing with him in these settings?

Brinegar: Thoughtful and reflective. I say that genuinely.

HPI: That is consistent with what Gov. Pence has told me. He said in December that a good leader listens to the people.

Brinegar: It's clear this is a terribly difficult issue for him, as it would be for you or me. I can tell it has torn at him.

HPI: I agree. He has his base, but he's the gover-

nor of all Hoosiers, even the transgender and gay Hoosiers.

Brinegar: What has been communicated to me in the last day or so after the reaction that we have made known is that we were hoping for a more definitive statement.

HPI: What we saw at the State of the State may have been political theater aimed at the base. We saw the Pastors Alliance at the Statehouse the next day. Do you sense there is still some give and take with the governor? Or is the door closed? Long and Bosma seem to think the door is ajar.

Brinegar: They even have different interpretations. Everybody has their own interpretation because the words weren't as clear as they could have been. My sense is from follow-up conversations with high ranking staff members is that they felt they were delivering a clearer message than others interpreted it to be. They really felt like they laid some markers down. They believe his position is clear, that we can look at a bill and accept that religious freedoms are indeed protected.

HPI: Have you had follow-up conversations with the governor?

Brinegar: I have not. We've invited him to visit with our executive committee and board of directors at their January meeting, which he's done in the past, as have other governors as well. We are checking schedules to see if that works out.

HPI: When I talked to Sen. Holdman on the night of the State of the State, and then Dave Bangert's column in the Lafayette Journal & Courier last weekend with Sen. Hershman, both seemed to believe they can, as Travis told me, thread the needle.

Brinegar: I think they are very optimistic. They are clearly trying very hard to do that. Hershman, Long and Holdman they are going to hear the bill later this month (Jan. 27). I give them all the credit in the world for attempting to do this.

HPI: Travis seemed very sincere.

Brinegar: I absolutely believe he is sincere. I believe Sen. Hershman has helped them draft this bill. It's my distinct understanding that SB100 was drafted out of whole cloth. They sat down with LSA and worked that all out. It's not some other state's template by any means. It's not set in stone, they've made that clear. But they are having a hard time.

HPI: So your people are on the ground taking head counts. Will the Chamber activate its grassroots network to make the case in House and Senate districts across the state?

Brinegar: We've got our own lobbying team and we've chosen to not be on any other coalition's letterhead and risk somebody else speak for us. But we're staying in communication with the others who support expansion and are trying to coordinate, not duplicate, or unknowingly



'It's clear this is a terribly difficult issue for him. As it would be for you or me. I can tell it has torn at him.'

work at odds with one another.

HPI: Do you think something can come out of this session?

Brinegar: I do. But it's going to be hard. It will be comparable to the difficulty in coming up with the RFRA fix last year. It's not my term, but I've heard this said from a friend in one of the Republican caucuses, and this was after the RFRA fix was enacted, there was a lot of bloodletting in the caucus room. I sensed that was the case, being over that Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and it was finally adopted that Thursday morning. Just because of how long the caucus took, I knew there were long and difficult and agonizing conversations taking place. I've sat in the Republican Senate Caucus room for nine years as a fiscal analyst. I know from my time on the Senate staff of how those dynamics work and on an issue like this, when they are in caucus for four hours, it's tough. It's tough.

HPI: Can you gauge the House at this point? Or does something have to clear the Senate first?

Brinegar: Given that there doesn't appear to be any bills that will move in the House, it will be the Senate bill that comes over. Overwhelmingly the focus is on the Senate.

HPI: What are the consequences if something doesn't get through this session? We keep hearing that after RFRA, other cities were calling the NCAA trying to entice them to move the headquarters. We've heard that GenCon will leave. What is at stake here?

Brinegar: I think the black eye continues. Let me say it a different way. I think the dark cloud over Indiana with respect to RFRA and civil rights protections for the LGBT community continues. There will be some consequences, whether it is a little manufacturing company losing a client because they don't want to do business with a state that continues to discriminate, to losing events like the Final Fours. I don't know if any big-business headquarters are going to pull up stakes.

HPI: I've had people tell me they don't expect headquarters to leave, but when it comes time to expand, that might not happen here.

Brinegar: Those companies are going to continue to express real concerns about being able to attract talented people because of this dark cloud, and the attention it's brought. That's why our organization ... is going to push as hard as we can to get this issue resolved this session, so that we can put it in our rearview mirror. We don't want to have to charge up that hill again next year, or the year after. It needs to be resolved this year.

HPI: So you think there is still flexibility with the governor?

Brinegar: I do. I believe and hope that's the case. But I also know that if that's not the case, and they can get a bill to his desk, a simple majority can override his veto. So if you can pass a bill, a veto can be overridden. ❖

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Senate candidates talk up 3 strengths during first GOP debate

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

KOKOMO – Hoosier Republicans have a menu of choices for the U.S. Senate nomination. At the first debate here Saturday morning, U.S. Reps. Marlin Stutzman and Todd Young, along with former state chairman Eric Holcomb, gave GOP primary voters great options. Each had a different message.

For Young, it is “effective conservatism,” or a potential senator who goes beyond show votes and actually gets legislation to the president’s desk. “I actually come up with conservative solutions, persuade my colleagues of their merits, and I’m able to move them forward,” he said. “That’s the job of the United States Senate.” And Young repeatedly emphasized, to the point where it drew laughter from the more than 100 Republicans gathered, that he actually defeated presumptive Democratic nominee Baron Hill. “I beat him once and I can beat him again,” Young said, citing his 2010 upset of Hill in the 9th CD.

For Stutzman, the message was challenging the status quo in Washington, saying, “Washington is a broken city. Washington is a boomtown, Washington is growing because American is shrinking. The system is broke in Washington.” He emphasized that he was willing to challenge former Speaker John Boehner on legislation and actions that have been spurned by voters across the nation, fueling the presidential bid of Donald Trump.

And for Holcomb, it was his role with former Gov. Mitch Daniels in developing and executing innovative strategies such as Major Moves.

With many attendees driving the new U.S. 31 north and not having to stop in Carmel and Westfield was Exhibit A in how asset management actually resulted in concrete policy. “I had the good fortune to work with former Gov. Mitch Daniels for most of a decade, day in and day out,”

Holcomb said. “We put a team together, put a plan together. We built roads we drive on, and we paid for those roads. We built bridges over the Ohio River.” And, he said, he crisscrossed Indiana, appearing in union halls, helping to get Major Moves passed in the General Assembly by tiny margins in 2006 when he was Daniels’ deputy chief of staff.

While Young has a big fundraising lead with \$2.6 million in the bank, compared to about \$1 million for Stutzman and less than \$500,000 for Holcomb, there has been no public polling published to date, and the three campaigns acknowledge that at this point, there is a big pool of undecided voters. The next four and a half months will give Hoosier voters three different paths in deciding the nominee to replace retiring U.S. Sen. Dan Coats.

Foreign policy dominated the opening of the first Republican U.S. Senate debate Saturday morning. Young and Eric Holcomb highlighted their U.S. Naval and Marine Corps careers. U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman said he was “focused on our country being strong, safe and secure.” Young said, “I’m ready to kick down doors where they’re not open in Washington,” adding, “I’m running because of what I learned in Marine Corps. The world is a very dangerous place. We need a U.S. senator who understands that principle.” Holcomb noted he served in the U.S. Navy during Operation Desert Storm/Desert Shield.

Asked what is required for an effective anti-terror strategy, Young said there should be “no artificial constraints on ourselves. We need to establish objectives.” Young, who repeatedly compared his record to that of probable Democratic opponent Baron Hill, said that “we have to loosen up restrictions” on the use of air power.



The three Republican U.S. Senate candidates - U.S. Rep. Todd Young, U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman, and Eric Holcomb - prepare for Saturday’s first debate in Kokomo. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

And he said that “safe havens” have to be established in Syria “so the refugee crisis can be staunch.”

Stutzman said, “You don’t allow for a country like Iran to take our troops” and use video “propaganda around the world.” Stutzman said, “Our own commander-

in-chief is working against" the U.S. military, adding, "the sequester hit the military the hardest."

On Iran policy, Stutzman said that it "begins with the White House," but said that while President Obama was negotiating the Trans Pacific Trade Pact, he was also pushing the Iran deal. "Why would we want to allow Iran to have nuclear weapons." He noted that his youngest son, Preston, will be 25 years old when the Iran deal ends. "My son Preston is going to have to deal with them."

Young said that he has sponsored bills that, while opposing the Iran deal, would set up a select committee "so Congress oversees it." As for a potential Iranian nuclear weapons, Young added, "I have a specific plan to keep that from happening."

Holcomb said, "We need to declare war on ISIS." He added that Iran is reestablishing its empire. "They are not talking about it, they are acting on it," he said, "We are retreating and withdrawing and we do not enforce our imposed red lines."

The candidates tried to separate themselves for each other. Young, who brought up Baron Hill repeatedly, took a shot at Stutzman, who in 2014 advocated a government shut-down. "I didn't go to Washington to shut government down," Young said, "I went to there to get things done." Holcomb said, "Any one of us can beat Baron Hill. They couldn't have picked a worse candidate," saying Hill was an early endorser of Barack Obama in 2008 and then voted for Obamacare. All three candidates vowed to repeal Obamacare.

Stutzman consistently assailed Washington. On domestic surveillance, for instance, he said the National Security Agency "lacks accountability from the White House," adding, "every agency in Washington has run amok."

Young said that a six-year term will allow him to work on longer projects, mentioning several times he will work to repeal Obamacare.

On the question of what is a conservative, Stutzman said, "Margaret Thatcher used to say that conservatism needs no adjective. Conservatives care about people. We should be willing to help those not only in our own neighborhood, we need to work around the world." Stutzman noted that he had worked on missions in Guatemala, Haiti and Russia. "That is what has made America great for over 200 years."

Holcomb said, "The question is what is conservative? I am. The free enterprise system is relevant so you can keep the money you earn. I am pro life. We live out all

the principles that line by line are the founding principles of the Constitution."

Young cited the need to "defend lives, rights and property."

The debate heard the candidates discuss other issues. All three candidates vowed to repeal Obamacare. Young talked about establishing health savings accounts, insurance sales across stateliness and the formation of insurance pools for consumers. Holcomb cited his role in the creation of the Healthy Indiana Plan during the Daniels administration.

On immigration, Stutzman took a hard line, backing a wall on the Mexican border, saying, "There should be no illegal entry, which is one of the greatest threats to our national security. We have the ability to stop it if we want to." Holcomb said Americans are frustrated that Con-



U.S. Reps. Young and Stutzman work the room prior to their debate on Saturday in Kokomo. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

gress hasn't dealt with the issue, which is now morphing into one of national security while fueling the heroin and methamphetamine epidemics in Indiana. "Right now we can't even track who is in the country because the federal agencies aren't working together," Holcomb explained. "It's a national security issue because ISIS is looking to come into this country through Mexico and heroin is flowing into the country." Young advocated action by the U.S. Senate, saying, "Drones can play an important role. We need to invest in an electric fence and more patrols. We have to set the objective and provide the resources."

He supports the construction of a fence or wall along that border and said the administration of President Barack Obama is not addressing the problem. "We have to stop the bleeding," Stutzman said, "then deal with what is taking place in the United States." Holcomb said people in Indiana are frustrated that it seems nothing has been done about immigration problems for several years. "Right now we can't even track who is in the country because the federal agencies aren't working together," he said. "It's a national security issue because ISIS is looking to come

into this country through Mexico and heroin is flowing into the country." Holcomb said the U.S. should use modern tracking systems, including drones, additional people and a fence. Young said the problem requires action by the U.S. Senate, not through executive orders issued by Obama. "Drones can play an important role," he said. "We need to invest in an electric fence and more patrols. We have to set the objective and provide the resources."

On economic issues, Young stressed his call for tax reform, an idea he has pushed for the past three years. Holcomb advocated reducing the U.S. corporate tax rate from 35% to 10 or 20%, saying that it would help pay off the national debt that all three candidates said would be \$20 trillion by the time President Obama leaves office. Stutzman cited his bucking of Boehner on the omnibus spending bills and the sequester, which he said had harshly impacted the military. "I've worked hard in the House to rein in government regulation and to cut the budget," he said. "If we don't have growth, we won't have a strong economy."

The debate was not marked by barbs and pot shots aimed at each other. After Young mentioned for about the dozenth time that he had defeated Hill, Holcomb responded, "Here's the good news: Any one of us three will beat Baron Hill if in fact he is the nominee. (Democrats) could not have picked a worse-profiled candidate. He's been running for office in four different decades."

Young emphasized he can win tough races, defeating both former Congressman Mike Sodrel in the 2010 GOP primary and Hill in the 9th CD. "I was able to hold that seat," Young said, noting that he won 50% of the vote in liberal Monroe County. "We are entering a very important election," Young concluded, mixing in his military service with his ballot performance. "I would love to send in the Marines in Washington, D.C., and clean house," Young

said, "but you can send in one Marine."

Young qualifies for ballot

Rep. Young was the first of the three candidates to qualify for the May 3 primary ballot this morning.

Dickerson drops out of Dem race

Democrat John Dickerson has ended his long-shot Democratic campaign for U.S. Senate. Dickerson said in a statement on Wednesday, "After much consideration, I have decided to suspend my campaign for the United States Senate. Unfortunately, despite the hard work of my team and our supporters, we have not broken through with our fundraising efforts. As we all know, it is essential in any campaign to raise money. So, rather than continue to press on, asking our friends to do even more, I have decided to face reality."

Dickerson, who previously headed the Arc of Indiana, added, "These last nine months have been remarkable, getting to travel the state and meet so many amazing Hoosiers. We have a tremendous opportunity to give these people something better. I will still strive to do that, but I will do so without seeking public office. I cannot say thank you enough to those who believed in me and helped us get this far. I look forward to pursuing other endeavors that ensure opportunity for all. I hope you'll join me in working to get Democrats such as Baron Hill and John Gregg elected this year."

The remaining Democrat, Baron Hill, reacted, saying, "I want to thank John Dickerson for his service to our great state. For over 30 years, John has been a leading advocate for people with disabilities and their families. We need more people like John in our party and I hope he will continue to be active. I look forward to working with him to make Indiana and our country a better place for all." ❖

Bush, Clinton first to qualify for IN ballot

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – Republican Jeb Bush became the first presidential candidate to qualify for the Indiana ballot. The Indiana Secretary of State's office reported that Bush had filed enough signatures in Indiana's nine congressional districts to qualify for the May 3 presidential primary.



The Hillary for America campaign delivered her petitions to the Secretary of State's office on Wednesday afternoon. "Hundreds of volunteers across our state can take credit for making sure Secretary Clin-



ton has ballot access in our state so that Hoosiers can cast their vote for her on May 3," said Dan Parker, Hillary for America authorized campaign

representative and former Indiana Democratic Party state chair.

The three Democratic and more than a dozen Republican candidates face a Feb. 6 deadline to get the 4,500 signatures – 500 in each of Indiana's nine congressional districts – to qualify for the ballot.

Bush's qualification comes as he languishes deep

in national polling, as well as in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and even his home state of Florida. Donald Trump has a 20-point lead over his nearest Republican rival in New Hampshire, according to a CNN/WMUR poll released Wednesday. But that rival is now Ted Cruz, thought to be a more formidable contender in Iowa. Trump has 34 percent support (a 2 percent bump from December), followed by Cruz at 14 percent, Marco Rubio and Jeb Bush at 10 percent and Rand Paul, Chris Christie and John Kasich each tied at 6 percent.

Battle for the White House								
RCP Poll Averages								
National			Iowa			New Hampshire		
Trump	34.8	▲	Trump	28.8	▲	Trump	31.0	▲
Cruz	18.8	▼	Cruz	26.6	▲	Kasich	13.3	▲
Rubio	11.6	▼	Rubio	11.0	▲	Rubio	11.5	▼
Carson	8.8	▼	Carson	8.6	▲	Cruz	11.3	▲
Bush	4.8	▲	Christie	4.2	▲	Christie	8.3	▼
National			Iowa			New Hampshire		
Clinton	51.2	▲	Clinton	46.8	▲	Sanders	51.2	▲
Sanders	38.0	▼	Sanders	42.8	▲	Clinton	39.8	▼
O'Malley	2.2	▼	O'Malley	5.2	▲	O'Malley	3.0	▼

Speculation in Indiana is that the May 3 primary might actually be relevant in the determination of the Republican and Democratic presidential nominations, as it was in 2008 when Hillary Clinton defeated Barack Obama by less than 1%. During that primary battle, Obama and Hillary, Bill and Chelsea Clinton made dozens of appearances across the state, downed shots of whiskey and beers in bars and American Legion halls, played pickup basketball games and filled high school gyms.

While Clinton has a 51-38% national lead over U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders in the Real Clear Politics Polling composite, her composite lead in Iowa stood at 46-42%, while Sanders has emerged as a clear frontrunner in New Hampshire, where his composite lead over Clinton was 51-39%. In a stunning CNN/WMUR Poll released Tuesday, Sanders had a 60-33% lead over Clinton.

The New York Times reported earlier this week that the Clinton campaign is girding for a long primary battle, saying her showdown with Sanders could extend through the May 3 Indiana primary.

Conventional wisdom going into this cycle was that it would be the Republican presidential circus that could turn the Hoosier State into a three-ring circus. But Trump has the potential of winning Iowa; he leads U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz in the RCP Iowa composite 27.8 to 26.7%, as well as in New Hampshire 31 to 13.3% for Ohio Gov. John Kasich.

Governor

Gregg meets with LGBT group

John Gregg put himself in front of the public, one day after the governor's State of the State address (WISH-TV). The Democrat is running against Mike Pence for governor. Gregg accepted an invitation by the LGBT group, Indiana Stonewall Democrats, to speak at Tini, a gay-friendly cocktail bar on Mass Ave. He said change is desperately needed, and said the governor's State of the State address proved a lack of leadership. He said his campaign involves listening to wants of the people. "I meet with voters every

day all across Indiana, and one of the fun things to hear is what's on Hoosiers' minds. It's jobs, it's education, it's competency, it's common sense, it's inclusion," said Gregg.

Pence finalizes report

The Mike Pence for Indiana Campaign reported raising \$3,540,003.69 for the second half of 2015, ending the year with \$6,767,723.20 cash on hand. Coupled with fundraising activity reported for June 30th reporting period, the reelection effort collected \$5,147,070.51 for the year. MPFI received 4,520 contributions in 2015, with 3028 in the second half of 2015. Also, Hoosiers accounted for 91.9% of contributors for the 2nd half of 2015, and 91.6% for the calendar year.

Statewide

Ritz reports \$350,000

The campaign to re-elect Superintendent Glenda Ritz reported a total of \$350,353 raised for the first finance report since she announced re-election on August 7, 2015. "Supt. Ritz's message of putting our schools ahead of petty politics has received overwhelming support," said Annie Mansfield, Ritz4Education campaign manager. "This report shows a strong base of support for four more years of Superintendent Ritz's leadership for our schools." The tremendous amount of fundraising and grassroots momentum is evident in the numbers. Almost every contribution comes from Indiana, and 75% of contributions come from the education community, including current and retired teachers, support professionals, and administrators. "Additionally, almost every dollar was raised in just four months and the campaign has already matched the entire 2012 campaign's fundraising total," said Mansfield. "The campaign is confident that it will have the resources needed to get Superintendent Ritz's message out to Hoosier voters."

Yorktown Supt. McCormick eyes Ritz challenge

Republican sources are telling Howey Politics Indiana that Yorktown School Supt. Jennifer McCormick is preparing to run for Republican superintendent of public instruction. McCormick has worked at Yorktown schools for 11 years as a teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent. In 2010, she was appointed to the position of superintendent. Dr. McCormick was awarded her undergraduate degree from Purdue University. She was also awarded her advanced degrees from Ball State University and Indiana State University.



Congressional

5th CD: Democratic primary takes shape

The field of candidates seeking the Democratic Party nomination for the 5th Congressional District stands at two and is expected to grow before the close of filing on Feb. 5 (de la Bastide, Anderson Herald-Bulletin). Indianapolis-based veteran and veterinarian Angela Demaree officially filed her declaration of candidacy on Thursday. On the same day, Allen R. Davidson, a Fishers resident who works for the Indiana Department of Transportation, declared he was making a second run for the nomination. The winner of the May primary is expected to face two-term incumbent Republican Susan Brooks. Davidson finished third in the 2014 Democratic Party primary, getting 22% of the vote, to nominee Shawn Denney, who received 48% of the vote. Denney is expected to again seek the nomination in the primary. In 2014, Brooks defeated two other candidates in the May primary and defeated Denney in the November general election with 65% of the vote. "Seven years ago today I raised my right hand to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic as a military officer," Demaree said of her candidacy. "Today, I'm filing as a candidate for Congress in Indiana's 5th District, continuing my service to our country and state."

3rd CD: Roberson seeking Dem nomination

John Forrest Roberson of Fort Wayne has filed to run again for the Democratic nomination for the north-east Indiana seat in the U.S. House (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). Roberson sought the nomination in 2012, finishing last in a field of six candidates in the Democratic primary election in the heavily Republican 3rd Congressional District. Last year, he was disqualified from seeking the Democratic nomination for mayor of Fort Wayne because he had failed to obtain the party chairman's permission after having voted in the 2014 Republican primary election.

General Assembly

Fine v. Reardon rematch in HD12

Former Democratic legislator Maria Candelaria Reardon is seeking a rematch with State Rep. William Fine. Fine defeated Reardon 7,341 to 6,920 in 2014.

Henderson files for SD44

Bedford native Linda Henderson announced today that she is seeking the Democratic nomination for Indiana State Senate, District 44. Then-State Rep. Henderson, serving in HD65, was defeated in SD44 in 1994, losing to current State Sen. Brent Steele, who is retiring. "I am running for the state Senate because families in Indiana deserve someone who will help them break their personal glass ceiling," Henderson said. "Whether it's preschool for our kids, or finding new ways for adults to access post-

secondary education, greater opportunities for our families will lead to a stronger economy and stronger communities." Henderson also noted the drug epidemic, particularly the startling rise of heroin and its impact on rural communities, as a key issue that she plans to discuss in the campaign. "As I travel and work with people from all walks of life in this district, it is all too clear that the Indiana Legislature has failed to focus on the priority needs of families, schools, local communities and our region," said Henderson.

Cruz, Underly, Bohacek seeking SD8

Indiana State Sen. Jim Arnold's decision not to seek re-election this year so far has prompted three people to file their candidacy for the seat (Parrott, South Bend Tribune). The 71-year-old LaPorte County Democrat, appointed by precinct committee members in 2007 to fill a vacancy created by the death of Rep. Anita Bowser, has said he wants to spend more time with his family. Filing their candidacy this week for the District 8 seat have been Democrats Anthony "Tony" Underly and Dan Cruz, and Republican Mike Bohacek. Cruz will prioritize job creation and economic opportunities as a candidate and member of the Indiana Senate. Cruz said, "I am ready to take this insight to Indianapolis to fight for fairness, jobs, and economic opportunity." Cruz is the owner of several successful local businesses including DC Tire and Auto in South Bend. Underly, who lives near New Carlisle, is a 50-year-old union electrician who has run for public office at least four times but never been elected. In 1996 and 1998, he won a Democratic primary for the then-District 20 state House seat, but he lost in the general election to Republican incumbent Mary Kay Budak. Bohacek, 47, is a logistics consultant. He was a Republican town council member in Michiana Shores, then was elected as a Democratic LaPorte County commissioner in November 2006 and served a four-year term before losing his re-election bid to Willie Milsap in the 2010 Democratic primary. He ran again for commissioner in 2014, this time switching back to Republican, and beat Milsap in the general election.

Sen. Charbonneau seeking reelection

State Sen. Ed Charbonneau announced Tuesday he is seeking another term as state senator in District 5, which is composed of Pulaski County and portions of Jasper, LaPorte, Porter and Starke counties (Howey Politics Indiana). "When Hoosiers in Senate District 5 hired me to represent them for another term in the Indiana Senate in 2012, I promised to continue working hard every day to make Indiana a better place in which to live, work and raise a family and I have kept that promise," Charbonneau said. "Part of that promise included voting for record tax cuts and balanced budgets as well as sponsoring the Regional Cities legislation and securing \$180 million in economic development funds for Northwest Indiana."

Rep. Cook files for full term

Indiana Rep. Tony Cook, R-District 32, has officially declared his candidacy for election in 2016 (Kokomo Tribune). Cook will have served two full legislative sessions by the May primary. Cook was selected to replace Rep. Eric Turner in December 2014 after Turner resigned amid an ethics scandal. "It is Cook's continued goal that the state of Indiana maintains a balanced budget and an attractive business environment, and that the state return more control to local decision makers," said Cook's team in the release. "He hopes to lead the charge to replace ISTEP with a more reliable, valid, and shortened test that emphasizes student growth measures."

Primary for Rep. Davisson

State Rep. Steven Davisson will be facing a Republican primary challenge in HD73 from Michael Harkness.

Grimes to challenge Rep. Behning

Republican Jim Grimes is challenging State Rep. Robert Behning in the HD91 primary. Grimes has had many different types of jobs, including working as a forklift operator, manufacturing supervisor, purchasing manager, CEO of 10 real estate companies, deputy sheriff and a small business owner.

Wednesday and Thursday filings

Democrat: Hillary Clinton president, Ron Drake CD8, Sean Gorman SD36, Justin Noters HD25, Heidi Cade Sellers HD70, Brandon Lee Ferguson HD77.

Republican: U.S. Rep. Todd Young U.S. Senate, State Sen. Liz Brown CD3, U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks CD5, State Sen. Erin Houchin CD9, State Rep. Bruce Borders HD45, State Rep. Dan Leonard HD50, State Rep. David Ober HD82. ❖

Out-migration in Indiana

By MORTON MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS – I was wowed by Gov. Pence's State of the State talk; I had no idea everything was so wonderful in the Hoosier Holyland. Then, imagine my surprise when the news hit: Indiana suffers from more people moving out than moving in.

Out-migration is like hair loss. People don't like to talk about it. Certainly governors wouldn't recognize that, when people are free to move from state to state, certain states are less attractive to movers than other states. Hoosiers seem to live in one of those less attractive states. But don't tell anyone lest you be invited to leave yourself.



Of course, if you follow the reports of the U.S. Census Bureau, you know something like this has been going on for some time. Yet, what loyal Hoosier would believe anything coming from Washington, the center of malevolent statistical manipulation? Relax. These data come from a respected private sector source: Atlas Van Lines, the folks who transported furniture, appliances and stuff for 77,700 households across state lines in 2015. Note: these were households, not persons as stated by an internet source (rag?) called Business Insider. The number of persons involved is unknown.

My imagination tells me that people who use professional movers like Atlas are older and wealthier than the

foot-loose Millennials our cities want to attract with bike paths, trolley cars, quaint, if decayed, Victorian homes, and other amenities of a century ago. Hence, these data could be a vast understatement of the net out-bound migration.

Atlas' data tell us that Indiana ranked sixth in the nation with nearly 60 percent of its traffic flowing out of our state versus 40 percent in-bound. People are choosing better opportunities elsewhere or moving to those greener pastures where their children have already gone.

Die-hards will counter: "Let 'em go. We don't need 'em, we don't want 'em. They only make the streets more crowded if they stay." However, those who leave take with them their earning power, savings, pensions, purchasing power, and children. This weakens our state's economy and makes us poorer in the long run.

The ugly fact is: 39 of Indiana's counties in 2010 were below their peak populations of the last century. Lake County's population was 50,248 (nine percent) lower than its 1970 peak. Other major deficits, ranging from 10,000 to 14,000 persons, were in Grant, Delaware, Vermillion, Sullivan and Wayne counties. The sum of all 39 deficits was 205,400 persons.

With populations short of their historic peaks, the costs of infrastructure maintenance and repair are spread over fewer people and businesses. Often there are no advantages of smaller populations for schools, shops, hospitals, and other vital services.

Population decline, where over-crowding never existed, is not a graceful process; it stirs no pride, gives little joy and certainly erodes hope. Perhaps we could help the many refugees waiting with hope for a new start in life. ❖

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

As Trump rises, we fall

By PETE SEAT

INDIANAPOLIS – I’m a day late and a dollar short, but let me add to the chorus: Donald Trump cannot be the next president of the United States.

I write those words first and foremost as a concerned American. But I also write them as a Millennial who will, along with my generational cohorts, be forced to clean up a Trumpian mess if he is allowed to advance any further.



Call it whatever you want, but to me Trump’s rise is the last gasp of a generation trying hard to maintain an iron grip on the presidency through nativist exceptionalism that demeans and discriminates. It may help to drum up the populism to drive up the crowds, but the adverse effects are being felt around the world.

The British Parliament on Monday, despite having no authority to actually act on the matter, debated whether or not Trump should be banned from setting foot on their soil in response to an online petition demanding so.

That debate is proof, as Trump said standing center stage in North Charleston, S.C., flanked by six other candidates for the Republican nomination, that “we’re laughed at all over the world.” While the real estate mogul said those words in an attempt to make a point about the words, deeds and actions of others, in actuality, he was making a point about himself.

I was further east, in Delhi, India, also joined by six fellow Americans (none of whom is running for president), sitting in a floodlight-drenched open yard at dusk when a related comment was made weeks earlier. A speaker noted a statement uttered that day by Trump regarding his desire that Muslims be banned from entering the United States until further notice.

The speaker at the event, however, incorrectly attributed the comment to Secretary of State John Kerry. But unlike South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, the recently departed candidate for president, who said, “[Trump] does not represent us,” the Indian speaker covered up his flub by taking the opportunity to paint with a broad brush saying, “It doesn’t matter who said it, it was said by an American.”

While I wish Sen. Graham were correct; he is not. America remains extremely influential in the world and the voices of its citizens, even one out of 320 million, carries weight. What might seem comical and entertaining at home has an impact in the backyards of our friends and allies.

That moment in India helped me recall another

trip across the ocean, this one with then-President George W. Bush. I woke up on the morning of Jan. 9, 2008, in Jerusalem to find Hillary Clinton on television declaring victory in the New Hampshire primary. Walking around the Old City hours later, I overheard Israelis discussing the primary results and making predictions about who would win the next states on the voting calendar. I can’t help but think people overseas take our political process and our government more seriously than we do.

And Trump’s resilient popularity is the case in point. He’s making a mockery of our politics by appealing to our demons. And it’s clear that the way he conducts himself is of little concern as long as the polling continues in the right direction, regardless of what the British, the Indians, or even fellow Americans may say. Why?

Ask Trump and he will tell you. He is beholden to no one. No donor. No PAC. No special interest. No politician. No one. According to him, not a single person or entity can influence him. But, let’s be honest with ourselves, despite what Trump says he is beholden to someone he knows very, very well: Himself. Trump is beholden to his own ego and his presidential campaign is a direct reflection of a man whose love for himself comes first. He is only interested in the advancement of Donald Trump, not necessarily the advancement of the country he hopes to serve as president.

This is found in his inability to articulate coherent positions outside of his desire to charge Mexico to build a wall along our southern border or his wish to place a proverbial “America Is Closed” sign in front of Muslim visitors.

He’s been especially effective in the land of lowest common denominator politics, of which his Muslim comment is the purest example. In that land, Trump is crown prince. And with his demeaning and hateful rhetoric, he aims to be king. But the belligerent pronouncements of this egomaniac will weigh us down for generations to come.

The world will view us with an increasingly skeptical eye. Our allies will question our intentions and motives. Our enemies will likely be emboldened to act rashly, rather than warm up to diplomacy. We will find ourselves in a place where tensions that are simmering today are boiling tomorrow. All, I fear, as a result of a president who lacks a filter, lacks an understanding that his words reflect not only him and his beliefs, but those of an entire nation before the whole world.

As Mr. Spock so eloquently put it, “the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one.” But not for Donald Trump. As he rises, we fall. ❖

Pete Seat is senior project manager at the Indianapolis-based Hathaway Strategies. He was previously a spokesman for President George W. Bush, U.S. Sen. Dan Coats and the Indiana Republican Party. He joins Howey Politics Indiana as a regular columnist.

Soliday seeks to steer road funding into a new reality

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – The new, wider Panama Canal is set to open in the near future. We are less than half a decade away from 55 mpg cars hitting the market. And Hoosier automakers are finding less rail capacity than in the past.

All of these elements, which emphasize the true global economy that encompasses Indiana, are prompting

lawmakers to take a completely different view of how to fund the state's deteriorating road and bridge infrastructure. On Jan. 11, House Roads and Transportation Chairman Ed Soliday, Ways & Means Chairman Tim Brown and

Speaker Brian Bosma gave a mold-breaking, data-driven preview of what might be in store for Hoosier drivers and taxpayers.

The forming recommendations include a \$1-a-pack cigarette tax hike, the study of potential toll road status for I-69 and I-70, a registration tax for electric vehicles, local revenue matching of state funding, and a shift of gas tax revenue.

The Indiana House Roads and Transportation Committee passed HB 1001 by a vote of 8 to 5 on Wednesday. The four committee Democrats and State Rep. Curt Nisly, R-Goshen voted "no." It goes to the House Ways & Means Committee. It increases the gasoline tax by 5 cents, hikes the cigarette tax \$1 a pack which would free up money now spent on Medicaid for roads. It places 7% of the state sales tax on gas to roads.

When HB1001 was introduced earlier this month, Soliday told HPI, "What we tried to do is have a stable, sustainable funding source for the intermediate and long term to take care of what we have," Soliday said. "(There's) enough money in this bill, through multiple sources, to stop the decline of Indiana's roads."

Speaker Brian Bosma explained, "I have long felt the primary goal of leadership is to define and recognize problems, define a vision, bring the best people together, set solutions and then bring solutions to reality." Bosma and Ways & Means Chairman Brown both said they bring "street cred" to the table, having spent the past two decades cutting and eliminating some 20 taxes. Brown said that the plan will mean sticking debt "to our children

and grandchildren." And both said they have continued a conversation with Gov. Mike Pence, who in the past has said he will not support a tax increase.

But the next day, Pence seemed to ignore the House GOP plan, saying in his State of the State address, "I think when you have money in the bank and the best credit rating in America, the last place you should look to pay for roads and bridges is the wallets and pocketbooks of hardworking Hoosiers. Let's invest in our roads and maintain the Crossroads of America, and let's do it without raising taxes."

Pence has signed Tea Party's Grover Norquist's no-new-tax pledge, and any type of revenue enhancement would collide with the governor's key reelection message that he has spent his first term cutting taxes and regulation.

Following the Pence speech, Bosma noted that he had informed the governor of the House plan on Jan. 6, a subtle contrast to the governor surprising the speaker about a \$42 million Regional Cities expansion. Bosma observed that Pence's reaction was "thoughtful" and "polite." Soliday said he was "a little surprised" by how strongly Pence spoke out against the House GOP's rival roads plan during Tuesday's State of the State address. In turn, Soliday saw the bonding in Pence's plan as a "gamble."

Pence's 21st Century Crossroads plan would use \$241 million from reserves, \$450 million in new spending over the next three years, borrow \$240 million through bonding, and would use \$50 million in interest from the Next Generation Trust Fund. "The infrastructure of the state has contributed to the widening prosperity of the people of the state of Indiana," Pence said in announcing the plan last October. "This administration knows roads mean jobs."

While Pence has his own plan and backs the Senate plan to infuse more than \$400 million into local roads, the reality is that much can happen between now and sine die on March 15. Indiana Chamber of Commerce President Kevin Brinegar told HPI on Monday, "I think the most likely and what I hope happens is there is sort of a melding of ideas between the House and Senate and governor's office. We hope that includes some long-term funding. There've been some pretty strong markers laid down by the governor and the Senate. We'll see if we get there. If not, I would hope at least there would be some amendments made to address the bigger, long-term challenges in the next long session."

Brinegar called the Soliday/Brown proposal "very data-driven, very thoughtful," adding, "They ask what is it really going to take to have resources available? This will get us, no pun intended, quite a ways down the road. The other two proposals are really four years at most. That's not unimportant. That will buy us time to



have the big boy discussion about permanent funding, but we think there's enough information presented from INDOT that we can make those decisions now."

Soliday, R-Valparaiso, embarked on a joint study committee infrastructure push that began in 2011. The committee enlisted Cambridge Analytics as well as Purdue University. When the findings came in over the past year, Soliday and other lawmakers discovered some jaw-dropping data, or as Soliday put it, they were both "enlightening and startling."

For instance, the typical Hoosier pays only about \$108 annually in gas taxes. In 2021, with the advent of an entire new fleet of 55 mpg cars and trucks, gas tax revenues are going to "fall like a rock." And Indiana's road funding mechanisms, including the 18-cent-a-gallon gas tax that was last increased in 2002 and the diesel tax of 16 cents last hiked in 1988, won't keep up.

The new Panama Canal will bring huge increases in ocean-traveled freight to the two primary ports in Norfolk and Long Beach on the east and west coasts. That means a massive amount of traffic will be flowing along I-80, I-90 and I-70 through the "Crossroads of America." And there is the rail shortage, which has prompted Toyota in Princeton to ship about 50% of its 400,000 assembled vehicles over the highways. In the past, most had been shipped via rail. And Toyota operates on a supply chain with about 90 minutes of margin. If the highways shut down for three or four hours, "they shut down."

Soliday said that former INDOT commissioner Karl Browning made a presentation to his Joint Study Committee and to the Ways & Means committees, "And what he basically said was that somewhere between \$250 million and \$300 million was needed this year alone to stop the decline of bridges and roads. We are right in that 6- to 8-% in poor condition. They are not unsafe, but much less predictable. Generally, we like to be 3%. We never get to zero." Without more revenue, "That 3% will be at 15% pretty quickly."

Soliday and House Republicans are preparing some pretty radical departures from current funding. They include:

1. End the automatic \$50 rebate to taxpayers. "We've moved the trigger for that to 11.5% of operating balance and everything goes to roads and bridges," Soliday said. That frees up \$100 million, which will be used for matching funds for city, town and county governments. The local governments would have to apply for the funds, matching the revenue, something Soliday calls having "skin in the game." Municipalities will have to have an asset management plan managed by the Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP). "There was always tension between INDOT and counties and cities," Soliday explained. "This takes the data out of INDOT's hands."

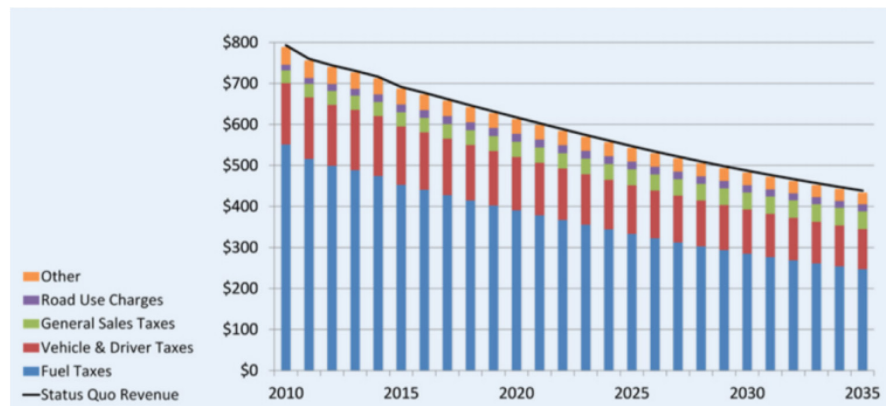
2. The sales tax on gas is moved to roads and

bridges, or 5 of the 7%.

3. The \$1-a-pack cigarette tax increase will go to fund Medicaid, which will free up funds for roads and bridges. "I don't want to moralize here, but people who don't smoke shouldn't have to foot the entire hospital bill," Soliday said. "The money that frees up will go over to roads and bridges. It's fiscally responsible and it's the theory of where the user of the cigarettes pays for medical costs, and the user of roads goes to road costs."

4. Indexing of the gas and diesel taxes. The House GOP plan won't specify an amount, but would have the Indiana Department of Revenue to make adjustments for inflation. "It directs the Department of Revenue to study the right formula to index," Soliday said. "It directs them to make a recommendation to the legislature next year."

5. Tolling: Soliday says that most Hoosiers would



oppose tolling on I-70 and I-65. But a large percentage of user of those interstates, as well as I-80 and I-90, the Indiana Toll Road, are from out of state. "Should Hoosiers pay the full freight?" Soliday asks. "It would be irresponsible not to study this. He notes that in the case of I-70, many local drivers would opt for the parallel U.S. 40, and he wants recommendations on improving that highway to accommodate local traffic. He said the proposed tolling rate would likely be the same as the Indiana Toll Road.

5. Electric cars: Those owners would pay a \$100 registration fee. Soliday says the average Hoosier drives 11,966 miles per car a year and pays \$108 in gas tax.

6. Local options: The plan would ask the 34 cities bigger than 20,000 population to raise their own wheel tax. Currently, cities rely on county wheel taxes. In uses his home county of Porter as an example. The mayors of Portage, Valparaiso and the Porter County Council must all sign off on wheel tax increases. The county councils balk. "They won't vote for it," Soliday said.

Brinegar favors the House GOP plan, but is open to Pence's plan and is encouraged that Senate Republicans are poised to steer money into local roads. He is not bothered by the governor's bonding proposal. "We've got some bonds coming off the rolls so that capacity gets freed up. Then they're saying the percentage we need in reserves isn't as high as where we currently stand." ❖

The strange plight of Ibrahim Parlak

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – File this one under “Go Figure” or “Ultimate Ironies” or “WTF.” At a time when we have nearly 20 million undocumented illegal aliens being given sanctuary in the United States by the Obama Administration and at a time when our President is trying to force us the acceptance of thousands of Syrian refugees, the United States Department of Homeland Security is using every tool at their disposal to deport a law-abiding, legal resident of Harbert, Mich., back to Turkey where he will most likely be tortured and/or murdered. Such is the strange, amazing and inspirational plight of Ibrahim Parlak.



My wife and I like to frequently visit a wonderful Kurdish restaurant in Harbert, a small town in southwest Michigan along the Red Arrow Highway. The hummus and baba ganoush are worth the trip. The restaurant is well-run, spotlessly clean and carefully managed by its owner, Ibrahim Parlak.

By all appearances, the only thing that would belie Mr.

Parlak’s heritage are the numerous photos of his homeland. Little did we suspect when we first started patronizing Mr. Parlak’s restaurant, Café Gulistan, that we were dining at ground zero in a titanic struggle between a man trying to live the American dream and the faceless bureaucratic might of the United States.

Ibrahim Parlak came to the United States legally in 1991, a victim of political oppression in Turkey. Parlak is Kurdish and lived in the extreme southeast corner of Turkey, an area where the dominant Kurdish population clamored for independence. Parlak’s parents were educated and advocated that their son learn to read and write. Therein lies the root of the problem. In an effort to obliterate the Kurdish identity, writing in the Kurdish language or even possessing books written in the Kurdish language are considered crimes by Turkey. Door-to-door searches for contraband books and public Kurdish textbook burnings were frequently conducted by the Turkish military. As a young man, Parlak joined ERNK, a political organization with close ties to the PKK, an organization working for the independence of the Kurdish people.

Parlak moved to Western Europe and made his living by staging Kurdish cultural shows featuring food, costumes and dance. He returned to Turkey in 1988 and was arrested for violating the Turkish Penal Code for separatist activities. He was held for three weeks and tortured by military authorities before being convicted and sen-

tenced to 16 months in prison.

Upon his release from prison, Parlak immigrated to the United States in 1991 where he was given asylum as a victim of political oppression. He received his green card in 1992. Arriving in Michigan in 1991, he started Café Gulistan, Kurdish for paradise, in 1994, and has lived a quiet life in pursuit of the American Dream.

Parlak’s epic battle with the United States Department of Homeland Security began in 2004 when he applied for United States citizenship. In reviewing his citizenship application, the State Department saw on his application for permanent residency that he had claimed membership with an organization affiliated with the PPK. In 1992, the United States did not recognize the PPK as a terrorist organization. It was only later, in a time when the United States was looking for significant support from the Turkish government in its ongoing struggles with Iraq, that the PPK was deemed to be a terrorist organization.

Parlak was arrested and socked into the Calhoun County jail in Battle Creek, Mich., while awaiting deportation to Turkey. While detained in the jail, a DHS spokesman told the Associated Press that, “We think that if most people knew the details about Parlak, they would see him as someone they wouldn’t want living in their community.”

But here is where this story takes an interesting turn. Parlak’s neighbors and patrons in the Harbert area, many weekend residents from Chicago, rallied to his cause. They printed signs demanding that Parlak be freed. They raised funds for legal defense. They held rallies and protests. The amazing thing about Ibrahim’s supporters is that they cover the political, religious and social spectrum. Jews, Catholics, Protestants and Muslims joined together to call for justice and Parlak’s freedom. A Chicago-based television movie critic, the late Roger Ebert, took up the cause and lent a journalist voice on Ibrahim’s behalf. U. S. District Judge Avern Cohn, a Reagan appointee, ordered Parlak’s release from jail and declared in his order, “He has lived an exemplary life in the United States. He has been a model immigrant vigorously asserting his right to remain in the United States. He is not a threat to anyone nor a risk of flight.”

This is where this tale should have ended, but it didn’t. Every year since his release from jail, Parlak has been harassed by DHS in its relentless, expensive and fruitless campaign to mollify our friends in Turkey’s government. In 2007, Turkey terminated Parlak’s citizenship and effectively rendered him a man without a country. You can’t deport someone if you can’t get travel papers allowing the person admittance to the receiving country. And this is the foreign affairs paradox that Ibrahim Parlak has found himself in for the last eight years, until recently.

On Nov. 3, Parlak received orders from DHS to report to Detroit. It seems that Turkey had a change of heart and was now willing to issue travel papers for Parlak’s return to his homeland. Ibrahim Parlak was now facing imminent deportation to a country that he left 24 years ago, a country looking forward to subjecting him to its own

very special brand of justice. However, the old coalition of friends and neighbors once again rallied to the cause. A bill blocking the deportation of Parlak was introduced in the United States Senate by Democrat Sen. Carl Levin in 2014 and a similar bill was introduced in the House of Representatives by Michigan U.S. Rep. Fred Upton a Republican. These bills moved DHS to give Parlak a 90-day stay of his deportation. The news was received of the stay, and a celebratory candlelight vigil staged by his supporters on Christmas Eve.

Parlak is under no illusions as to his fate should he be returned to Turkey. Government allied newspapers have headlined, "No Matter Where You Go, We Will Get You," along with Parlak's photograph. Ibrahim assumes that deportation will be tantamount to a death sentence.

Recently, Geoffrey Stone, the dean of the law school at the University of Chicago wrote, "It is time for President Obama to issue a presidential pardon to Ibrahim

and let this good and decent man who has lived a peaceful and lovely life in our nation for more than 20 years live, finally, in peace." Parlak was asked by a New Yorker Magazine reporter if he had faith that the system would ultimately treat him fairly. He replied, "One of the things is that we want to believe in our justice system. America is a country of justice. But, if you look at my case, you cannot help but think, "Really?""

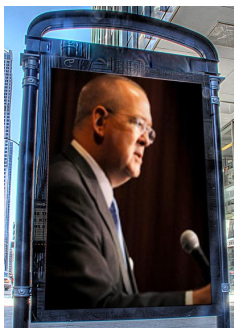
Call me a naïve ninny, but I still believe in those words on the Statue of Liberty, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free." I look forward to sitting down with Ibrahim Parlak next summer, sharing a glass of Turkish wine and a serving of hummus and talking about a life of freedom here in the United States. He deserves his slice of the American Dream. ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republicans.

End of a bubble

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE – World financial and commodity markets are now poised for a fourth week of spasmodic turbulence. In constant dollar terms oil is nearly as cheap as it has ever been, while China faces the slowest economic growth of modern times. Here in the US, December retail sales



growth was actually negative, marking an awful season. Then, stocks waited until the first trading day in January to plummet, fueling fury about stock manipulation in every conspiracy theorist and Bernie Sanders supporter.

On the face of it, this has many of the hallmarks of a recession. And it may be, but what if instead of a recession, what we see now are markets of all types returning to where they are supposed to be? That is the interesting question.

American labor markets are fairly strong in the limited sense that those who wish to work can find a job. Still, job growth and the productivity of American workers has been sufficiently slow to keep growth of the overall economy very modest. While the American economy is a bright spot in the world, our real economic growth is far too weak to support the rapid stock market gains of the past few years.

The doubling of the major American stock indices since 2009 would imply rapid and optimistic GDP growth. That has not been the experience of the U.S. economy. Thus the best value measures of our stocks suggest they remain heavily overvalued, even after the past few weeks. This suggests that the current stock market

declines reflect a movement to reality, not recession.

The crash of commodities, including oil is mostly natural. A slowing economy needs fewer precious metals, steel and petroleum. But, not all these commodities are driven wholly by markets. Saudi Arabia and several other OPEC countries face an existential threat from Iran. OPEC's continued interest in low oil prices is not about weakening American shale production, which is a minor profitability nuisance. It is all about crashing the Iranian economy and weakening its influence.

China's economy faces a permanent slowing. Almost all growth in China over the past half century has come from moving peasants from subsistence farms to late 19th century factories. The country is running out of peasants, slowing even its unreliable official growth numbers. China remains a Marxist-Leninist nation, with poor economic prospects. Chinese citizens will be lucky to have the 2000 American standard of living in 2100, even if they peacefully abandon communism.

So what about the current economy? We should expect US equities to drop and commodities to remain low. This will continue to evaporate wealth, which will in turn slow major sectors of the economy such as retail sales, auto production and home construction. This is the unavoidable deflation of a bubble. The silver lining on appropriately priced stocks and much lower GDP growth may be that the US can once again pay attention to fundamentals; education, distortionary taxes and federal programs that disincentivize labor and investment. That is the economic debate of 2016. ❖

Michael J. Hicks, PhD, is 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.

Where will the Obama presidency rank?

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – With President Obama staking his claim to a positive legacy in his final State of the Union address, we focus on how his presidency will rank. Very high? Really low? Somewhere in between?

Two things are certain: Poll approval or disapproval now will have little effect on the later evaluations of historians and presidential scholars. And, whether the next president is a Republican or a Democrat will have significant impact on those future evaluations.



In the first extended Gallup poll of the new year, conducted Jan. 4-10, Obama's approval rating was 47 percent. That's about where it has been hovering. It is pushed up by 84 percent approval of Democrats, dragged down by only 10 percent approval among Republicans. It reflects the harsh political division in the nation.

Lack of a really high approval rating in a final presidential year doesn't necessarily mean a diminished place in history. Harry Truman, also strongly disliked by Republicans as they longed for the end of his final year as president, had only a 22 percent approval rating. Now, many presidential scholars put Truman in the top 10 of presidents. Republican as well as Democratic politicians quote him, praise him. Ronald Reagan began his final year in office with 49 percent approval, not much higher than Obama. Polls now find Reagan ranked high as Americans rate their presidents.

Also, those ranked high as they leave office don't always win such high places in history. John F. Kennedy is the only president since Gallup polling of presidential approval began in the 1930s never to drop below 50 percent. His low was 56 percent. In the aftermath of his assassination, Kennedy was rated in polls as one of the greatest, right up there with Washington and Lincoln. Historians, now looking past the emotion of that time and at what Kennedy actually accomplished in his brief presidency, don't accord him a ranking anywhere near that high.

A former president once placed far down the list is George H.W. Bush, who left office in defeat, with terrible poll numbers on the economy. Now, the first President Bush is looking better, moving up in presidential rankings. The reasons are presented persuasively in the recently pub-

lished biography, "The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush," by Pulitzer-prize-winning author Jon Meacham.

We know now that the economy was improving quickly in the final six months of Bush's term. Also, there is greater appreciation of how, as Meacham writes: "He brought the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion, successfully managing the fall of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany and the end of the Soviet Union without provoking violence from Communist bitter-enders."

As historians later evaluate Obama's presidency, they will be influenced by what remains of the legacy to which he now points with pride. That's where the next president will play an important role. Expanded health care coverage, what he as well as critics call "Obamacare," is an important legacy item. Republican presidential candidates all say they would repeal it. A Democratic president would defend and seek to improve it.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, ranked near the top of the list of presidents, probably wouldn't be there if he had been replaced after two terms by a Republican president who brought repeal of Social Security. Will there next be a Democratic president to build on or a Republican president to pull back from what Obama has done in the nuclear agreement with Iran, relations with Cuba, climate change, immigration and gun control?

Obama's place in history will be diminished if his initiatives are repealed, or if they survive and prove ineffective. He will look best when compared to the second President Bush, George W., from whom he inherited an economy on the brink of depression. The nation moved steadily from the brink, but slowly. Whether too slowly or very successfully will be evaluated as well in decades to come. ❖

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

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YOUR FRIENDS ALL HANG OUT HERE... DO YOU?

Nate Silver, FiveThirtyEight: Several recent stories, like one from the Washington Post's Philip Rucker and Robert Costa, report that influential Republicans have become increasingly resigned to the prospect of Donald Trump as their nominee. One theme in these stories is that the GOP "donor class" seems to have persuaded itself that Trump might not be such a bad general election candidate. On that point, the donor class is probably wrong. It's hard to say exactly how well (or poorly) Trump might fare as the Republican nominee. Partisanship is strong enough in the U.S. that even some of his most ardent detractors in the GOP would come around to support him were he the Republican candidate. Trump has some cunning political instincts, and might not hesitate to shift back to the center if he won the GOP nomination. A recession or a terror attack later this year could work in his favor. But Trump would start at a disadvantage: Most Americans just really don't like the guy. Contra Rupert Murdoch's assertion about Trump having crossover appeal, Trump is extraordinarily unpopular with independent voters and Democrats. Gallup polling conducted over the past six weeks found Trump with a -27-percentage-point net favorability rating among independent voters, and a -70-point net rating among Democrats; both marks are easily the worst in the GOP field. (Trump also has less-than-spectacular favorable ratings among his fellow Republicans.) We've got an unpopular set of presidential candidates this year—Bernie Sanders is the only candidate in either party with a net-positive favorability rating — but Trump is the most unpopular of all. His favorability rating is 33 percent, as compared with an unfavorable rating of 58 percent, for a net rating of -25 percentage points. By comparison Hillary Clinton, whose favorability ratings are notoriously poor, has a 42 percent favorable rating against a 50 percent unfavorable rating, for a net of -8 points. Those are bad numbers, but nowhere near as bad as Trump's. ❖



John Krull, Statehouse File: Just before President Barack Obama and Indiana Gov. Mike Pence delivered the State of the Union and the State of the State speeches, four former leaders in Congress floated an intriguing idea. Among them was former U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Indiana. The others were Lugar's old colleagues in the Senate — Democrat Carl Levin from Michigan, Republican Trent Lott from Mississippi and Democrats Tom Daschle from South Dakota. In a column that appeared in Politico, this foursome with more than 125 years of legislative experience suggested a summit between the president and the leaders of the Democratic and Republican caucuses in the Senate and the House of Representatives always should precede the State of the Union. Lugar, Levin, Lott and Daschle said such a meeting might reduce the partisanship that has accompanied State of the Union addresses for at least the past four presidencies. It also could ease some of the gridlock that plagues the federal government.

It's an idea worth exploring — and not just for the valid reasons the four former senators lay out. One reason our government at the federal and state levels has become so ineffective and mean-spirited is that too many citizens have ill-informed notions of how government works. That often means they have unrealistic expectations about what our leaders — particularly our presidents and our governors — can accomplish. Here in Indiana, the State of the State address made that point. For months, Hoosiers waited to find out what our governor's position would be on adding protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens to the state's civil rights laws. Pence pledged he would make his views on the subject known during the State of the State. The moment came and fizzled. The governor said during the speech that he wanted Hoosiers to be nice to each other and at the same time honor the state's constitution. The response to this bit of Pence puffery was harsh. But an argument can be made that he didn't have many other options. In Indiana, any governor's ability to influence the lawmaking process is limited. ❖

Doug Ross, NWI Times: Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann is in a tough spot. She wants to be Ivy Tech Community College's next president, but her No. 2 choice would be to remain in her current position. That says a lot about the state of Indiana politics. Across the electorate, people are unsettled. They want change, even if they aren't sure how to bring that about. We're seeing that in the presidential campaigns, which everyone is talking about, but that sentiment seeps down to other levels of government, too. Ellspermann is waiting to see how things play out at Ivy Tech. She has Gov. Mike Pence's blessing to seek the position, but it's ultimately up to Ivy Tech's board to determine which candidate is best for the job. As I drove across Northwest Indiana last weekend, I couldn't help noticing the "Fire Mike Pence" signs. It's shaping up to be a close election, and moving to Ivy Tech might be a better move for Ellspermann than running for reelection. When Ellspermann met with The Times Editorial Board on Monday, we of course broached the subject of trying to balance civil rights protection for LGBT Hoosiers with religious freedom for others. In a session that so far has paid attention to road funding, as it should, and education issues, as it should, the LGBT issue is a sword of Damocles over the heads of legislators and Pence. Ellspermann is in an awkward position on this issue, too, with Pence trying to walk the tightrope while activists on either side of that issue shake the rope as hard as they can. "This is something that Hoosiers really care about, and we need to work on it," Ellspermann said. "We need to see if we can. It's a tall order. We can tell that already by the versions that have been offered," she said. "As a leader, we lead 6.5 million Hoosiers, and on this topic Hoosiers are not content with where we are. So it's very right and appropriate that the General Assembly is trying to find that right path." ❖

Putin implicated in UK murder

LONDON — Russian President Vladimir Putin was likely personally responsible for approving the fatal poisoning at a posh London hotel of a former KGB operative-turned-U.K. intelligence agent, according to the findings of a highly anticipated British inquiry released Thursday (Washington Post). The conclusion, which comes nearly a decade after Alexander Litvinenko succumbed to the effects of polonium slipped into a cup of green tea at London's Millennium Hotel, is sure to raise tensions between London and Moscow. The inquiry found that two men deliberately poisoned Litvinenko, and were almost certainly working on behalf of the Russian intelligence agency FSB. The two named assassins, Andrei Lugovoi and Dimitry Kovtun, remain in Russia, and the Russian government has rebuffed British attempts to secure their extradition. Lugovoi, a former KGB officer, is now a member of the Russian parliament.

Bill would allow staff to pack

INDIANAPOLIS — Legislative employees would get special permission to carry firearms in the Indiana Statehouse and adjacent state buildings under a bill passed by a Senate committee Wednesday (Kelly, Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). But the public and many other state employees would still be banned. Sen. Jim Tomes, R-Wadesville, authored Senate Bill 259 allowing professional, full-time staff of the Indiana House and Senate to carry a handgun at the state Capitol complex. It passed committee 6-3 with no one testifying for or against the legislation. Sen. Brent Steele, R-Bedford, said when he first came to the legislature in 1994, it was common practice for attorneys, legislative as-

sistants and others to carry handguns — with proper permits. The Indiana Department of Administration passed rules in 2007 — under then-Gov. Mitch Daniels — banning firearms and other deadly weapons from the government center campus, including visitors and state employees.

Cherry had surgery, missing session

GREENFIELD — A lawmaker from central Indiana is missing the opening weeks of the state legislative session after undergoing surgery. Republican Rep. Bob Cherry of Greenfield says he recently had surgery following a health emergency. Cherry didn't provide details about the surgery to the Greenfield Daily Reporter and asked for privacy and prayers as he recovers at home. He expects to miss the next few weeks of the legislative session that's expected to end in mid-March.

Sunday sales bill returns

INDIANAPOLIS — After several unsuccessful attempts in the past, lawmakers are once again hearing a bill allowing Sunday alcohol sales, which proponents call convenient and opponents call dangerous (Osowski, Evansville Courier & Press). House Bill 1399, authored by Rep. Tom Dermody, R-LaPorte, was heard by the House Public Policy Committee on Wednesday. The bill is the latest effort by lawmakers to allow Hoosiers to buy alcohol on Sunday at stores. Dermody proposed a similar bill last year but it never got to a full House vote. This year's bill is similar, but has some changes, the biggest being that hard liquor would be allowed to stay on shelves instead of behind a counter in a grocery store. Despite the clear battle lines between liquor stores, who oppose the bill, and grocery stores, who favor it, Dermody said his legislation isn't a compromise. "We're just

trying to allow Hoosiers to do seven days a week what they currently do six days a week," Dermody said. Patrick Tamm, president and CEO of the Indiana Association of Beverage Retailers, said alcohol is dangerous and allowing more opportunities for people to purchase it is irresponsible. The bill will be voted on by the public policy committee next week.

Sen. Merritt loses job with railroad

INDIANAPOLIS - For five years, Sen. James Merritt chaired the Senate Utilities Committee while serving as an executive of a small railroad that hauled millions of tons of coal to Indiana power plants, raising cries about a potential conflict of interest from consumer and watchdog groups (Russell, IBJ). Now, as the General Assembly gets under way with its new session, Merritt will no longer face those questions. He confirmed this week that the Indiana Rail Road Co. terminated him and eliminated his position as vice president for corporate affairs. He said he is searching for a new full-time job. He said he left the company on Sept. 9, shortly after the Indianapolis-based company was purchased by rail giant CSX Transportation. "New CEO comes from CSX, eliminates my job," Merritt told the IBJ in an email. "To my knowledge, no other employee was let go."

Tallian marijuana bills snuffed

INDIANAPOLIS - The Senate has snuffed out another attempt to open the door to medical marijuana in Indiana. Sen. Karen Tallian (D-Portage) has authored bills in past years to decriminalize pot or allow medical marijuana. This time, she tried instead to allow people with valid prescriptions from other states to use that as a defense against a possession charge. The Senate rejected the proposal on a voice vote. A second voice vote killed a Tallian amendment to allow marijuana research in Indiana.

