



WTHR/Howey Poll: Senate tossup

Bayh leads Young 44-40%;
Gregg up 40-35% over Holcomb,
Trump/Pence ahead by 7%

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – The revamped Indiana gubernatorial and U.S. Senate races are up for grabs in the latest WTHR/Howey Politics Indiana Poll. Democrat John Gregg maintains a 40-35% lead over Republican Eric Holcomb in the race for governor, with Libertarian Rex Bell at 6%, while Democrat Evan Bayh’s lead over Republican Todd Young in the U.S. Senate race has dwindled to 44-40%.



Indiana Statewide

Key findings from a statewide survey of 600 likely voters in Indiana, conducted September 6-8, 2016.

decline from the initial April WTHR/Howey Poll that showed him trailing Gov. Mike Pence 49-45%. Pollster Gene Ulm of Public Opinion attributed Gregg’s decline to the unpopularity of Democratic presidential nominee Hill-



Democrat Evan Bayh is now in a dog fight with U.S. Rep. Todd Young in the latest WTHR/Howey Politics Poll. (HPI photos by Brian A. Howey and Mark Curry)

ary Clinton, who trails Republican Donald Trump 43-36%, with Libertarian Gary Johnson coming in a 11%. Another 20% in that race are either voting for someone else, not

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Will Republicans stay loyal?

By **CHRIS SAUTTER**

WASHINGTON – Just as surprising as Donald Trump’s nomination is the fact that many Republicans are embracing certain Trump positions that are antithetical to the party’s core beliefs. Some in the GOP, like Indiana’s Governor and Vice Presidential nominee Mike Pence, are bending over backwards to support statements by Trump that are way outside the party’s mainstream of thought — positions they couldn’t possibly share.



The most egregious example is the way some Republicans have defended Trump’s unflinching admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin, a tyrant and thug who Trump



“I think it’s inarguable that Vladimir Putin has been a stronger leader in his country than Barack Obama has been in this country. And that’s going to change the day Donald Trump becomes president.”

- Gov. Mike Pence



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seems to view as a leadership model. It was just four years ago that the GOP nominee, Mitt Romney, harshly criticized President Barack Obama for not taking the Putin threat seriously enough. Now the Russian menace seems to have evaporated in the eyes of Trump's surrogates.

The hypocrisy on this is palpable. Undoubtedly, Republicans would have characterized Obama as traitorous had he lavished similar praise on the Russian leader as Trump has on Putin.

Since Hillary Clinton's post-convention bounce that stretched her lead to close to double digits, there has been a slow erosion of support for her. The principle reason for the tightening of the race is that Republicans have been coming home to support Trump. Clinton enjoys support by over 90% of Democrats, while Trump's Republican support had been in the high 70s%, low 80% range. Now, according to the most recent polls, Trump is doing better with Republican voters than he was six weeks ago.

However, Trump's cozying up to Putin is likely to drive a deeper wedge within the party. The Bush crowd abandoned Trump long ago after he humiliated Jeb during the primaries. Other party faithful swore him off after he launched a personal, racially tinged attack against a Hoosier born Hispanic federal judge who is hearing a Trump University lawsuit. Still more jumped off the bandwagon when Trump went after Gold Star parents who spoke at the Democratic National Convention. Nonetheless, as Trump has become more focused the past couple of weeks, wayward Republicans have been returning to the fold.

But Trump's most recent incident of heaping praise on Putin during Wednesday's Commander-in-Chief forum following by his interview with Larry King on the English speaking Russian TV has Republicans again disavowing their standard bearer's remarks. House Speaker Paul Ryan and South Carolina Senator Lindsey

Graham were both quick to distance themselves. "Other than destroying every instrument of democracy in his own country, having opposition people killed, dismembering neighbors through military force, and being the benefactor of the butcher of Damascus, he's a good guy," cracked Graham.

The degree to which Republicans hold their noses and support the Trump candidacy will have enormous impact not just on the presidential race, but on the down ballot races as well, including in Indiana. A WTHR/Howey Politics Indiana poll released Friday shows Trump leading Clinton in Indiana by 7 points, 43% to 36%, with Gary Johnson at 11%. Trump is garnering the support of 94% of Re-



publican men and 84% of Republican women while Clinton is getting 89% of both Democratic men and women.

In the September 6-8 survey, Trump is also crushing Clinton among Independent men, 42%-18%, while nosing ahead of her with independent women 37% to 32%. Hoosier down ballot Democrats stand a much better chance of winning if Trump renews his tendency to alienate Republican and independent women away from him, reducing the overall margin of victory in Indiana to below 5%.

The U.S. Senate race provides a clearer example of what happens when Republicans come home. In a July 12-14 Garin-Hart-Yang poll conducted shortly after former Senator Evan Bayh entered the race, fully 20% of Republicans were supporting the Democrat over Congressman Todd Young. In the WTHR/Howey poll, Bayh's support among both Republican men and women is down to 11%

while his lead over Young is just 44% to 40%. His overall favorable rating is just 48%, though his unfavorable rating remains low at 28%.

The top of the ticket could have even more impact on the competitive 9th District congressional race between Democrat Shelli Yoder and Republican Trey Hollingsworth. A poll conducted shortly after the May 2nd primary showed Yoder and Hollingsworth tied at 41%. The Cook partisan rating is plus 9% Republican. However, Yoder is an experienced, attractive candidate running against a flawed out-of-stater, who moved to Indiana from Tennessee to buy the House seat. A big Trump win combined with strong 9th district numbers by Young could present problems for Yoder, though not insurmountable. In any event, as pointed out in an analysis in Politico, recent internal GOP polling confirms that the race between Yoder and Hollingsworth is currently a tossup.

I would offer a word of caution about jumping to conclusions about the races tested in WTHR/Howey poll. The sample indicates that Hoosier conservatives outnumber liberals almost two and a half to one (48%--20%) whereas that ratio in past presidential election years has been closer to 2-to-1 (40%--20%). If the Indiana electorate is more like the conservative/liberal ratio of past presidential election years, then Bayh's lead is more accurately

in the low double digits, though considerably tighter than the 21% lead in the Garin-Hart-Yang poll conducted in July.

All eyes are currently on the upcoming presidential debates. A CNN/ORC poll completed just before Wednesday's Commander-in-Chief forum indicated that 51% of voters believe Trump's approach to foreign policy would put the country at risk. Trump is also facing increased scrutiny over his foundation's contribution to a Super PAC supporting the Florida attorney general's re-election campaign before her office dropped its case against Trump University.

Trump will need to give satisfactory answers to these and other questions or his standing in the polls could drop to post-convention levels. Trump cannot win if a majority of voters believe he would put the country at risk. But if Hoosier Republicans, especially GOP women, remain loyal to the party in spite of Donald Trump's affinity for Putin, his controversial immigration proposals, and other outlandish ideas and statements, Hoosier Democrats might miss out what began as a promising year. ❖

Chris Sautter is a Washington-based Democratic political consultant with long ties to the Hoosier state.

WTHR/HPI Poll, from page 1

voting or undecided.

Pence is a fascinating element in both the presidential and gubernatorial races. He hasn't helped Trump in Indiana; in fact the presidential nominee's numbers have declined since the April WTHR/Howey poll. And because he is so polarizing, with a fav/unfav of 47/45%, Pence is of little help to Lt. Gov. Holcomb, whom he elevated to the post last March, then endorsed during the 12-day nomination sprint in July. Only \$1.2 million of Pence's war chest hended up with Holcomb.

The Senate race numbers represent an unprecedented challenge for former senator and governor Bayh, who hasn't experienced a close race since his first gubernatorial race in 1988. Bayh resurfaced in the Senate race in July when national Democrats forced nominee Baron Hill out of the race. He brought a \$10 million war chest he had hoarded since he bolted from a 2010 reelection bid, claiming an immediate money edge over

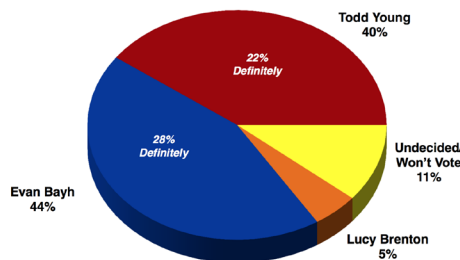
Young. But after some \$3.5 million spent and 8,000 TV ads running statewide, Young has mustered national PAC money and has now made this a race that could decide control of the U.S. Senate.

"Bayh just needs to disqualify Young," Ulm said. "Given him and his dad and their long history in the state, what can Evan Bayh say to inform voters about a new Evan Bayh? How can we break free from Hillary? That's his problem." Ulm said that Young "needs to make the race about Evan Bayh."

The poll, the first of three for WTHR/Howey Politics between now and the Nov. 8 election, was conducted of 600 likely voters Sept. 6-8, including 360 landline users and 240 cellphone users, with a margin of error of 4.0%. The sample consisted of 40% independents, 31% Republican and 28% Democrat, demographics Public Opinion Strategies pollster Gene Ulm said are consistent with the unpopularity of the major political parties and the two nominees. Ulm has polled in Indiana since 1996 for the Indiana Realtors.

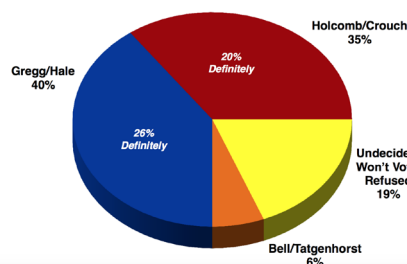
U.S. Senate Ballot

Thinking about the election for U.S. Senate, for whom would you vote between: Todd Young, Republican; Evan Bayh, Democrat; and Lucy Brenton, Libertarian?



Gubernatorial Ballot

If the election for Governor and Lt. Governor were being held today, for whom would you vote between: Eric Holcomb and Suzanne Crouch, Republican; John Gregg and Christina Hale, Democrat; and Rex Bell and Kari Tatgenhorst, Libertarian?



This is the first independent media polling in the two races that were altered when Donald Trump selected Gov. Mike Pence to be his presidential nominee in July, with Holcomb winning the GOP nomination.

It comes in the most volatile election cycle in modern Indiana history, with the exit of the polarizing Gov. Pence to the national ticket, the revamped tickets with the emergence of Holcomb and Bayh, and the historic negatives of the two major party presidential nominees.

The next key pivot points come on Sept. 26 with the first presidential debate, and Sept. 27 when the three gubernatorial candidates debate in Indianapolis. Should Johnson not make the presidential debate threshold, a defining factor for the final two months of this riveting cycle will be where Johnson voters migrate, as well as how independent females vote.

"It's going to be all about independent women," Ulm said. "Who they support will go a long way to who wins a lot of races, and not just in Indiana, but everywhere. So if we see movement after the debate, where Johnson voters go away or shrink, where they move with independent women will hold the fate of down-ballot candidates."

Here is a polling breakdown of the three major races:

Presidential: Pence has little impact

The Donald Trump/Mike Pence presidential ticket has a 43 to 36% lead over Hillary Clinton with Johnson coming in at 11%. Add in 3% who won't vote in the race, 1% who will support someone else and 6% undecided, that's an unprecedented 20% not yet in the column of the major party nominees.

"Why is he winning?" asked Ulm. "Hillary Clinton. That's the only thing. Voters

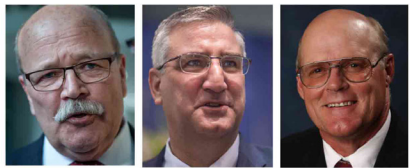


President



HPI Status: Leans Trump/Pence

Governor



HPI Status: Leans Gregg

U.S. Senate



HPI Status: Tossup

are saying, 'I don't like that guy, but I hate the other one.'" The April WTHR/Howey Politics Poll had Trump leading Clinton 47 to 39%. That survey did not include Johnson. But the fascinating statistic is that Trump's Indiana numbers have actually declined since Gov. Pence joined the ticket in mid-July.

Of Trump's 43% support, 33% of respondents said they were "definitely" voting for the billionaire, while 10% said they were "probably" supporting him. Clinton had 26% definite and 10% probable.

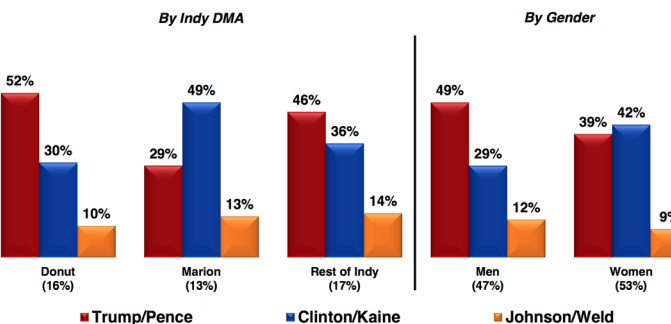
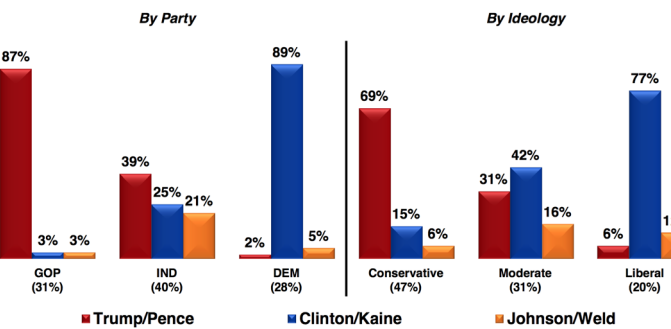
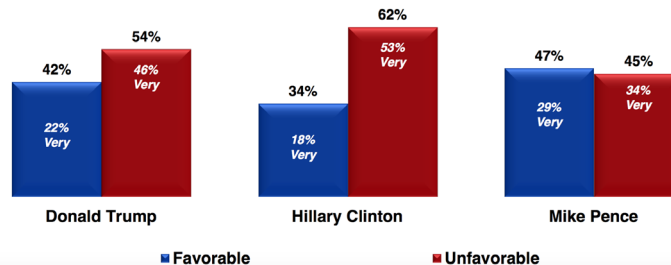
Pence has been of little help to Trump in Indiana and actually has more value nationally where he is seen as a lifeline to establishment Republicans. In Indiana, he is a lightning rod of controversy after episodes like the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Asked if Pence's inclusion on the ticket made Hoosiers more or less likely to vote for Trump, 41% said more likely and 38% said less likely. Those numbers mirror both the Indiana right/wrong

track numbers of 47/44% and Pence's fav/unfavs of 47/45%.

"He's largely irrelevant," Ulm said of Pence's impact on the Indiana presidential race. "He'll do better nationally than here. He's net neutral with intensity against him."

Trump is finding his best support at 52% in Southern Indiana, just 48% in the moderate Republican rich doughnut counties around Indianapolis, and 44% in the Fort Wayne area.

Ulm expects that Johnson will gradually fade if he doesn't make the pivotal Sept. 26 presidential debate, which requires him to poll at least 15% in five national polls. "Which way those Johnson numbers go will be pivotal," said Ulm, who said the Libertarian is cleaving more into Clinton's support. "So if we see movement after the debate, where Johnson voters go away or shrink, where they move with independent women, that will hold the fate



of down-ballot candidates.”

Trump’s favorable/unfavorable rating stands at 42-54%, but Hoosier voters dislike Clinton even more, 34-62%. When we asked whether the nominees have the right temperament to be president, 45% said Trump’s was “very poor” while 21% said he was either “very good” or “good.” Clinton’s very poor number stood at 30% and 35% rated her “good or very good.”

U.S. Senate race: Bayh and Hillary

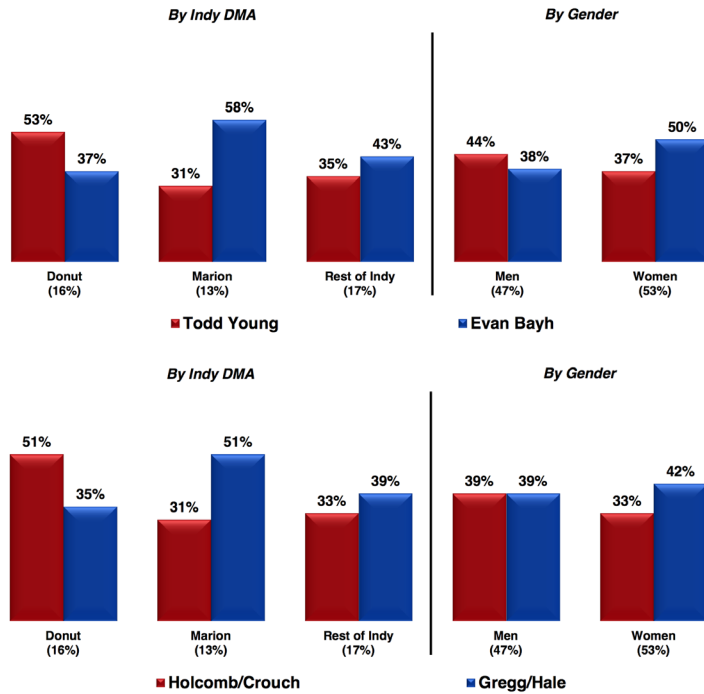
If Bayh thought he would be breezing to a third term after winning his first two Senate races with more than 60% of the vote, he now finds himself in a true dog fight against Young, the former Marine and Tea Party-supported 9th CD congressman. Young has already defeated two members of Congress, upending former congressman Mike Sodrel in the 2010 Republican primary before defeating U.S. Rep. Baron Hill in the general that year.

Bayh has the potential to be his crown jewel. Bayh’s fav/unfavs are good at 48/28%, compared to 30/22% for Young. Those unfavorables are likely to increase as Young takes Bayh to task for his deciding vote on Obamacare and Bayh notes that the Republican called the 2009 auto rescue that saved more than 100,000 Indiana jobs “a waste.” Those are themes of two ads in heavy rotation at this writing.

Many believed that when Bayh reentered politics with \$10 million in hand and a near 10-to-1 money advantage, the Senate would be an easy pickup for the Democrats. But Young is aggressive and has been able to attract millions of dollars of national PAC money and this race will likely eclipse the \$50 million spent in the 2012 race between Sen. Dick Lugar, Treasurer Richard Mourdock and current U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly.

“I’ve seen other polls in the last week” on the Indiana Senate race, Ulm said, calling Bayh a “fixed point” with Young closing. “Every survey is showing it closer and closer.” The key question is whether Young can effectively tie Bayh to Hillary Clinton, or whether he can wiggle away.

Another factor is that Bayh hasn’t been on an Indiana ballot for 12 years. He once feasted on Republican voters, but polls only 11% with both Republican men and women. “We’re in a much more polarized environment,” Ulm said. “It’s an environment where political experience and awareness is equity that is worthless. That’s why we



have Trump. Between now and election day, Bayh’s future depends on his ability to separate himself from Hillary Clinton. If he’s able to do that, put some distance there, he may stop this race from closing.”

Because of this poll, the HPI Horse Race is moving this race from “Leans Bayh” to “Tossup.”

Gubernatorial race: Holcomb’s blank slate

Eric Holcomb becomes the “blank slate” that John Gregg was in our April survey. Some 44% of respondents have “never heard” of the new lieutenant governor, compared to 31% for Gregg. Holcomb’s fav/unfavs stand at an anemic 17/14%, compared to 33/19%

for Gregg.

“He needs to fill in the blanks and tell what kind of governor he will be before John Gregg does,” Ulm said. “He’s largely undefined. He’s completely dependent on current environment. If he doesn’t put that out there, he’s in trouble.”

Like Bayh, Ulm said that Gregg “has to break free from the top of the ticket, show that he’s different, how he’ll be his own guy, be independent.”

Several cross tabulation numbers jump out. Holcomb is polling just 51% in the Indianapolis doughnut counties. That compared to 59% supporting Gov. Pence there in our April survey. A Republican gubernatorial candidate should be in the 60th percentile.

Gregg is using TV ads to link Holcomb to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act that was a political disaster for Pence, from which he never really recovered. Holcomb has straddled that issue, saying minutes after he received the nomination in July that he would consider any legislation that balanced religious freedom and civil rights that might reach his desk. Like Pence, Holcomb faces a dilemma by alienating evangelical voters if he commits to LGBT civil rights expansion, but not doing so will cost him with female voters, moderates and Gary Johnson voters.

Holcomb is polling 39% with men and 33% with women, compared to Gregg’s 39% with men and 42% with women. In 2012, Pence started out with a 13% lead among female voters in September, but lost that category by 5% in the election, part of that nosedive attributed to Richard Mourdock’s controversial debate comments on rape and abortion. Holcomb faces a similar gender gap.

Like Bayh, Gregg’s big problem right now is Hill-

ary Clinton. He is down 7% from our April survey, which did not include Libertarian Rex Bell, who had not received the nomination at that point and is now drawing 6%. "This is a function of the national political environment," Ulm said. "As Hillary sinks, he sinks with her." This race could easily move into the tossup zone by our next poll in early October. We'll be watching Holcomb's money, the Gregg/Clinton element and how the first debate goes. **HPI Horse Race Status:** Leans Gregg.

Epilogue

A fascinating element with this data set is that in a normal environment, the ceiling for a down-ballot candidate out-polling the top of the ticket is in the 7% range.

Evan Bayh is there now, while Holcomb is falling considerably short of Trump.

The real unusual factor is that 20% in the presidential race not aligning with Clinton or Trump. How that part of the electorate breaks could determine down-ballot races.

Could Clinton win Indiana? "I don't believe so," Ulm said, "even if she reclaims a significant percentage of Johnson voters. She's not going to win in a state with such a low national right/wrong track number," Ulm said of that stat that showed just 27% seeing the United States on the right track, and 69% on the wrong track. "But given a perfect storm, she can get pretty close." ❖

A major shift for Young

By **MARK SOUDER**

FORT WAYNE – The major shift in the WTHR/Howey Politics Indiana poll taken this week from earlier polls is crystal clear: Todd Young has closed the wide margin that Evan Bayh once had in the Senate race. The Gregg-Holcomb race for governor remains extremely close. Donald Trump, as other polls have shown, has a large lead in Indiana.



Two months ago, when Evan Bayh first announced that he was going to run for the Senate, the first poll had him up 54-33%. Since that time he has been under heavy criticism for his Washington D.C. residency and lobbying ties in all forms of media. A Monmouth poll had Bayh's margin down to 48-41%. The Howey Politics-WTHR poll shows it has now fallen to 44-40%. However, the underneath

numbers suggest more serious problems ahead for Bayh.

This poll surveyed 600 Indiana voters. Trying to get an appropriate mix to have an accurate poll and have even somewhat meaningful breakouts is difficult to do. Among the goals are reasonably accurate mixes based upon geography, age, party affiliation, race, sex, and education.

Furthermore, the balances such as race and sex can dramatically make regional numbers worthless. For example, the breakout for the Fort Wayne metro area says that Gregg and Bayh will win our region, with Young doing slightly better than Holcomb. I doubt either will win in northeast Indiana.

Having read many polls for my own campaigns, those of Dan Coats and Dan Quayle, and many other candidates it is my opinion that this poll has all the categories fairly distributed with one exception. The education variable

has become important because of the Trump phenomenon. This poll again shows how dramatically Trump support declines as education increases. It is my opinion that the pollsters, in part to test this, over-sampled those with college degrees dramatically.

I also know from past business polling I have been involved with that this variable has the greatest "lying" factor by those who take the polls: They exaggerate the amount of education they have. It is a classic problem. It is also always been assumed that those with more education will vote in greater numbers, an assumption that has increasingly been challenged. This poll included 28% with no more than a high school diploma. Official stats show that while Hoosiers have made gains in education, 44.7% of residents have not attended any college. Furthermore, it was closer among those with some college (27% of poll, 22% actual) than for those with college degrees (45% of the poll, 33.3% of the actual). ("Actual" is from the 2010 census data.)

In other words, since Donald Trump does best among the less educated, his 43-36-11 lead over Hillary Clinton in this poll may be understated. The Monmouth poll last month had Trump ahead by 47-36%. In other words, the Trump-Clinton race may be frozen at this point. 6% of the Presidential voters claim to be undecided. If they are still undecided in this race, it is my opinion that those are likely non-voters.

This becomes a critical assumption. Ten percent of those called were undecided in the race for governor, and 16% of the voters are undecided in the decision for governor. The way I used to break this out in analyzing my own polls, which when adjusted proved to be astoundingly accurate in spite of the Democrats and my primary claiming otherwise, is to look at the hard numbers as well as the percentages. When one also does this with the cross-tabs, usually multiple key variables become clarified.

In this case there are several. One important variable is that more Clinton voters are decided on the Senate and gubernatorial races than Trump and Johnson vot-

ers. This makes sense because Young and Holcomb are less well known to voters. But just because a point seems obvious, doesn't always mean it is always true. This poll establishes that the logic holds true in these races.

One would assume that this means that both Young and Holcomb have more to gain in the next two months than do Bayh and Gregg. While the raw numbers are way, way too small to make definitive conclusions based upon the breakout data, they do wave some major caution flags for Republicans.

One can only speculate why (I have some theories but they can't be proven by this data) but the numbers state that Bayh and Gregg both lead among the least educated. This could be good news for them since this poll under-sampled those voters. However, they both had much bigger leads among those with graduate degrees, who were over-sampled in even greater numbers. In other words, it is a probable wash.

It does, however, illustrate where the battleground will be because across the board, more of the less educated voters appear to be undecided on the other races and make up a larger percentage of the undecided voters.

Here are some other comments from this Howey Politics-WTHR poll:

1. This poll dramatically shows that across the board that more libertarian votes are coming from Democrats, not Republican voters. This has certainly been

hinted at by the national polling that shows Clinton doing better when she is one-on-one with Trump. This is counter to Republican assumptions.

2. The right-direction-wrong direction polling, especially for Indiana, has some small nuances that are interesting. Holcomb gains among voters who think Indiana is doing well. Young does better than Holcomb among those who think things are bad. The core question there is: do some voters blame Bayh more than they do Gregg?

3. The surmised unfavorable (as in close to "detesting") ratings for Hillary among all those not solid Democrats is clearly overwhelming the unfavorability ratings of Trump.

As a final conclusion, when I went through the raw data breakouts, if I had to use this poll (which was a "moment in time" poll) as the predictor of what is to come, I would put Senate race (forcing the undecideds) at Bayh 48.6%, Young 46%, and 5.4% for the Libertarian. The gubernatorial race would be separated by less than 1%.

In other words, Republicans should be thrilled with these results given the well known Democrats running against comparatively unknown Republicans. Young and Holcomb also appear to have more room to grow their numbers. ❖

Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.

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Pence goes nationwide

By BRIAN A. HOWEY

INDIANAPOLIS – Let me make one thing perfectly clear: Gov. Mike Pence is still being paid by Indiana's hard-working taxpayers even while on his excellent, vice presidential adventure. But Mike Pence is no longer acting like an Indiana governor. Since he was officially selected by Donald Trump on July 16, he's gone national.



He's come back to Indiana to ride his motorcycle with ABATE, he opened the Indiana State Fair, he's had several cabinet meetings, campaigned with Eric Holcomb in Columbus, opened a Trump campaign office in Carmel and hosted Trump fundraisers in Evansville and Indianapolis. At none of these events was

he willing to field media questions.

He hasn't taken live questions from the media since the vice presidential speculation was growing in early July, with the exception of one interview with WTHR-TV's Kevin Rader where a seat on his jet cost thousands of dollars. On the public policy front, it's been June since he took questions.

Pence didn't meet with the press when he accepted his second gubernatorial nomination in early June. During the Republican National Convention, Pence didn't have time to stop by the Hoosier delegation's hotel in Cleveland to rub shoulders with the faithful. On the day after his acceptance speech, he spent about 20 minutes with the delegation at a country club, and then he was gone.

When a politician "goes nationwide," there's a tendency for point of departure. His Indiana stepping stone had served its purpose. Instead of dealing with roads and bridges or budgets, he's now talking about Hillary Clinton's state department, military spending and translating to us where Trump actually is on immigration and mass deportations (telling us that his new boss has been "completely consistent" on the topic).

Communicating with the governor has devolved into something akin to unsubscribing from an internet scam or a porn site. The remnants of the Pence reelection campaign won't respond to phone calls, texts and emails. The governor's Statehouse office refers reporters to the campaign.

Meanwhile, messy life goes on in the Great Hoosier State. And there are an array of issues that the governor should be discussing. Since Gov. Pence can't find the 30 to 45 minutes to answer questions, let's do it in this conspicuous fashion, here in a public forum.

Governor, how would you respond to the . . . :

East Chicago lead poisoning crisis: There are

some 1,000 East Chicago residents who have been forced out of their homes at the West Calumet Housing Complex, the site of a former Anaconda Lead Products smelting plant. This was the scene where children were experiencing head and stomach aches and vomiting. The EPA originally said the site would be cleaned up at no cost to them, but residents later saw it bulldozed after Mayor Anthony Coleman came to the conclusion the place couldn't be cleaned up without further exposure to nearby residents. "This is a potential catastrophe that could be approaching the same level as Flint, Michigan," observed State Sen. Lonnie Randolph. The Pence administration has been a no-show.

Southeast Indiana carfentanil/heroin epidemic: Cincinnati and southeastern Indiana are now in the midst of a new, sinister chapter in a horrific heroin epidemic. An elephant tranquilizing drug carfentanil has arrived, a new four-state research project by the drug cartels. There were 78 reported overdoses in the Cincinnati area in just two days, and during the same time span, another 15 in Indiana counties. Like the Scott County HIV/opioid epidemic of 2015, this is expected to ripple across southern Indiana. Gov. Pence has not addressed this issue.

I-69 construction meltdown in Bloomington:

On Saturday, IU and Ball State football fans will get to experience Indiana's latest road construction snafu. The I-69 Section 5 interstate project has ground to a halt. A "notice of non-performance" has been issued by the Indiana Finance Authority after several subcontractors haven't received payment from Isolux Corsan. Bloomington Mayor John Hamilton said on Wednesday, "My first job as mayor is public safety. The seemingly ever-delayed nature of this construction and the danger it poses to travelers are unacceptable." Hello, Gov. Pence?



Lease of the state's communications infrastructure: On Tuesday, the Pence administration announced a 25-year leasing of its statewide communication system to Ohio-based Agile Networks. The state is

expected to make \$260 million from the deal, which it says will expand broadband services to rural areas. While these are worthy goals, this one popped up out of nowhere. Is it a good deal? No one knows. Contrast this with 2005, when Gov. Mitch Daniels announced his Major Moves program, which leased the Indiana Toll Road and brought it \$3.8 billion. But Daniels and key members of his administration were on hand for the announcement, commencing a process of more than six months where it was extensively deliberated by the Indiana General Assembly, passing by small margins. Gov. Pence announced this with a press release and has discussed none of it. Asked about the deal, AT&T President Bill Soards told me he had "no clue" on the impact of the program.

Governing a state is a tough endeavor. It requires hands-on work and communication skills, even when you're running for vice president. ❖

An unprecedented and tumultuous cycle

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

CRAWFORDSVILLE, Ind. – In an unprecedented and tumultuous election cycle in the midst of their bi-centennial celebration, Hoosier voters have witnessed a lieutenant governor resignation, a presidential candidate clinch a nomination with the embrace of Bobby Knight, a vice presidential nominee, a Democratic U.S. Senate nominee swap out, and 22 obscure committee members choosing a new Republican gubernatorial ticket that largely played out in Ohio. Heading into a nine-week homestretch, President Reagan might have coined the apt phrase: “You ain’t seen nuthin’ yet.”



Indiana voters will also be selecting a new attorney general, two new members of Congress and make a decision on whether controversial Education Supt. Glenda Ritz serves a second term.

It all comes in an earthquake landscape that saw Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann resign in March to take the helm of troubled Ivy Tech, Donald Trump clinch the Republican presidential nomination with the May 3 primary, Gov. Mike Pence exit to join the Trump ticket, and a new Holcomb/Suzanne Crouch ticket that had about 100 days to find millions of dollars denied by the Pence reelection campaign. Republicans have controlled the governor’s office for three consecutive terms, following a four-term run by the Democrats. Gregg has been a much more focused candidate, and funded this campaign as he prepared for what everyone believed would be a rematch he could win against the ideologically polarizing Pence.

Holcomb has raised \$3.6 million in large donations, with \$2.3 million coming from the Republican Governors Association that includes \$850,000 in in-kind TV ads.

The Washington, D.C.-based organization has contributed \$2.3 million to Holcomb, including nearly \$844,000 in in-kind television advertising and polling. “About \$3.6 million has come from Pence or the RGA, which means he has really only raised about \$500,000,” Jeff Harris, a spokesman for Gregg’s campaign told the IndyStar.

The Democratic Governors Association has put \$800,000 into the Gregg campaign, including \$300,000 earlier this month.

With Pence’s ascension to the

national ticket, he has emerged as a force of moderation, attempting to burnish Donald Trump as an epic deal maker who will transform Washington while he cleans up the many rhetorical messes left by the Manhattan billionaire. Indiana establishment Republicans were initially cool to Trump, with the Republican National Committee delegate dominated by Ted Cruz and John Kasich supporters. But with Pence’s elevation, Hoosier Republicans are now firmly stationed in the Trump camp.

Two new national polls reveal a volatile race, with Trump pulling ahead of Clinton 45-43% in a new CNN/ORC survey, with Libertarian Gary Johnson at 7%. In a parallel NBC/Survey Monkey Tracking Poll, Clinton maintained a 41-37% lead over Trump with Johnson at 12%. While the national polls have tightened, Clinton still leads in six out of seven battleground states in Real Clear Politics polling averages and she appears to have an extensive get-out-the-vote apparatus in swing states, while Trump has Twitter.

Bayh is also navigating unprecedented territory. Sitting on close to \$10 million for more than half a decade after he bolted the 2010 Senate race, Bayh reemerged in early July with powerful Senate Democrats and Hillary Clinton forcing nominee Baron Hill from the race, and in six weeks has posted \$3.5 million worth of TV ads that have run more than 8,000 times statewide. Young was seen as a commanding favorite against Hill, but over night found himself trailing in internal partisan polls as well as in the money race.

Following the 2012 Senate race that saw \$50 million spent by or on behalf of Sen. Dick Lugar, Republican nominee Richard Mourdock and Democrat Joe Donnelly, the Bayh-Young race could easily eclipse that record and could determine control of the upper chamber.

All of this political turmoil comes in a state that has been buffeted by dual heroin and methamphetamine outbreaks, and AIDS epidemic, and an economic recovery that many perceive as favoring Wall Street over Main Street. In an election cycle filled with twists and turns, the next nine weeks promise a script few would have found plausible just months ago, with the final conclusion a riveting mystery.

Congress

GOP sources cite close 2nd, 9th CD polling

Republicans say the Donald Trump down ballot drag could even extend to state legislative races (Politico). One closely watched state Senate race is taking place in the Columbia, South Carolina, suburbs, where an internal Republican survey conducted last



2nd CD



HPI Status: Leans Walorski (R)

8th CD



HPI Status: Likely Bucshon (R)

9th CD



HPI Status: Leans Hollingsworth (R)

month found the GOP candidate, Susan Brill, narrowly trailing her Democratic rival. Trump may be taking a toll: The survey also tested the presidential race in the Senate district and found the GOP nominee losing by 22 points. "My biggest concern is for otherwise relatively safe, though competitive, Republicans in suburban districts," said Chris Wilson, a Republican pollster who advises a number of candidates in conservative areas. "They're going to face the perfect storm of well-educated Republican and conservative independent voters who are turned off by Trump, active courting of those voters by Clinton to make it OK to vote Democrat or just to stay home, and a total lack of national data or assistance in identifying and turning those voters out."

In some states, such as Indiana, Republicans believe a lack of enthusiasm among their voters could prove costly. Party operatives have polled in two conservative, GOP-held congressional districts in the state — one held by Rep. Jackie Walorski and the other by Rep. Todd Young — and found both races are surprisingly close. One prominent Republican pollster said the party was grappling with how to generate excitement from a GOP base that's far less passionate about Trump than it was about Mitt Romney in 2012.

The GOP's prospects are worse in Indiana's Senate race, where polling has shown Todd Young trailing. In July, former Democratic Sen. Evan Bayh, a mainstay of the state's political scene, announced he was waging a comeback bid — a coup for his party.

Hill, Arredondo seek fame

**By MAUREEN HAYDEN
CNHI Statehouse Bureau**

INDIANAPOLIS — The men running for attorney general face a tough challenge in a political season dominated by higher-profile races. Republican Curtis Hill and Democrat Lorenzo Arredondo spend much of their time explaining the job and trying to inspire people to care. "It feels a little like 'Horton Hears a Who,'" joked Hill, referring to the Dr. Seuss book about an elephant who discovers a tiny, overlooked planet. "It's like we're shouting, 'We are here. We are here. We are here.'"

With most of the politi-

cal oxygen sucked up by heated races for president, U.S. Senate and governor, Arredondo said he also finds himself educating voters. "Most people think we're the lawyer for the governor," he said. "That's not it at all."

Defining the job is enough of a concern that both candidates, each of whom brings deep legal experience to the race, have posted explanations of what the attorney general does on their campaign websites. The attorney general is, indeed, the state's chief legal officer who advises agencies, defends laws challenged in court and prosecutes on behalf of the state. The person also oversees a team of 160 lawyers involved in duties related to consumer protection, from medical licensing to policing telemarketers. As current Attorney General Greg Zoeller explains, the job is to help "protect the rights, freedoms and safety" of Hoosiers. Now in his second term, Zoeller has opted not to seek reelection

Arredondo and Hill have been working to make their cases to the voters since being selected by their respective party's delegates this spring. And each has the potential to make state history. Hill, if elected, would be the first black Republican in the office and only the third African-American in the job. He is a four-term prosecutor from Elkhart County. Arredondo, who spent 34 years as

a trial judge in Lake County before retiring in 2010, would be the first Latino to be state attorney general.

Neither claim those identities as reason to vote for them. But their experience and biographies, they say, do inform their views.

Hill, the father of five, was raised in Elkhart at a time when segregation was slowly slipping away. When his father tried to build a home in the then-white part of town, neighbors told him he wasn't welcome and offered him a payoff to leave. Their family home was later bombed. For Hill, a remarkable part of the story was that his father would become deeply involved in efforts to repair the city's damaged race relations. He became active in both the NAACP and the local Jaycees. "With a father like that, I couldn't go wrong," he said.

As a prosecutor, he's built a reputation as tough on crimes involving drugs and violence. In 2010, he pursued murder charges against



Attorney General



HPI Status: Leans Hill (R)

Superintendent



HPI Status: Leans Ritz (D)

four teenagers whose friend was killed during a botched burglary. The five had broken into an Elkhart home to steal money for marijuana. The homeowner fatally shot one teenager. The other four were convicted of murder and sentenced to spend decades in prison. The Indiana Supreme Court later overturned the convictions, saying the teens' actions didn't cause their friend's death.

Hill said he is unapologetic for his efforts to combat crime in his community. But, as attorney general, he said a priority will be advocacy for public and private programs that aim to strengthen families and intervene with troubled teens before they turn to crime. "We can't prosecute our way out the problems of crime," he said.

For Arredondo, his tenure on the bench as the longest serving Latino judge in the country informs his views. He grew up the 10th child of an immigrant father who went to work in the steel mills of northwest Indiana. His father's death, when Arredondo was 14, convinced him to seek another line of work. He labored in a steel mill for a year after high school to pay for college, where he earned a teaching degree.



He later went to law school in a program aimed at attracting minorities to the legal profession. After work as a deputy prosecutor and in private practice, he was elected judge in his hometown of East Chicago.

As a judge, Arredondo helped usher in changes to the Lake County court system. Those included more access to translators for non-English speaking litigants, and the creation of a "children's room" to reduce stress for kids whose parents were in court.

If elected, Arredondo said he'll continue to be a role model for the Latino community, but he will also work to increase access for every Hoosier to the attorney general's role as consumer protector.

Among his ideas is sending staff lawyers to meet with the elderly and other potential fraud victims around the state. "The attorney general is really the people's lawyer," he said. "One of the most important things we can do is to bring the attorney general's office to the people." ❖

Maureen Hayden covers the Indiana Statehouse for CNHI's newspapers and websites. Reach her at mhayden@cnhi.com.

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Walorski, Coleman debate on debates

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – The spring edition of debates over debates is history, distinguished by deliberations over such issues as the size of Donald Trump’s hands, whether to discuss “your damn emails” and which candidates would have to sit at the children’s table rather than be in the big event. Now come debates over debates, fall edition.



Locally, there’s the question of whether Congresswoman Jackie Walorski will consent to debate her Democratic opponent, Lynn Coleman, somewhere, anywhere, in a televised format or any format resembling a debate.

Nationally, there’s speculation over whether Trump really will appear at all three of

the scheduled presidential debates. He already has complained about the timing. And he’s sure to raise questions about whether the events are “rigged.” The vice presidential nominees will debate once, even though most of the nation isn’t paying attention to either of them.

There will be three statewide debates in Indiana involving the Democratic, Republican and Libertarian nominees for governor. In what looks like a close race between Republican Eric Holcomb and Democrat John Gregg, a really good performance or terrible gaffe could be important.

Speaking of a terrible gaffe, will there be one in the two expected televised debates featuring the U.S. Senate contenders, Democrat Evan Bayh and Republican Todd Young? You know, a fatal stumble like the way Republican Richard Mourdock destroyed his chances in the last Senate debate with Joe Donnelly? You never know, but both Bayh and Young are candidates far superior to the “unusual” Mourdock.

In the 2nd Congressional District race, Coleman is pushing for debates and already accepting proposals by debate sponsors. Walorski, following her pattern of reluctance to debate, except in her first congressional race in which she was an underdog challenger, has put off deciding on any debate. No surprise on either side.

Coleman, now the underdog challenger striving to catch up to the better known incumbent in a Republican-flavored district, would welcome debating Walorski as often as possible and with live television. It would give him a better chance to get known throughout the sprawling 10-county district and to hit at Walorski’s role in Congress, an institu-

tion not high in popularity.

Walorski, like any incumbent who is better known, better funded and regarded as with the better chance to win, would just as soon avoid debates. When she finally agrees to something – and she surely will agree to at least one event – it’s not likely to be any televised debate. Maybe separate interviews on television that involve no real face-to-face debating. Politically, Walorski now has nothing to gain by debating. If polls suddenly showed she had fallen behind, then she would want to debate, counting on greater familiarity with issues as a member of Congress.

The Coleman campaign criticizes Walorski’s reluctance to debate, saying district voters “deserve an opportunity to hear how both candidates” discuss vital issues. The Walorski campaign responds that she already is going around the district discussing issues. And she has a lot more funding to send out her message in TV ads.

With the presidential debates, we don’t know what to expect. Will Trump insist on his own rules and complain about formats, panelists, moderators and days of the events, threatening not to appear if he doesn’t get his way? If he doesn’t do well in the first debate, will he refuse to participate in additional “rigged” events? But maybe he will do quite well. He’s a proven TV performer.

How will Clinton do? Will viewers find her dull if she sticks to issues or find her foolish if she tries to out-Trump Trump? And which Trump will appear? Insulting Donald of spring debates? A new Donald seeking to seem presidential?

Debates don’t often decide elections. After all, one of the most devastating lines was when Dan Quayle was put down with the jab that “you’re no Jack Kennedy.” No. But he was elected vice president. ❖

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?

Truth becomes pravda in '16 presidential race

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – As someone who wrote and edited for the Elkhart Truth for 11 years, I can recall a time when there was a premium on accuracy. Who wanted to be reporting for The Truth and be called out as a liar? And it was a quite different experience working for The Truth in the great American Midwest, as opposed to Pravda in the old Soviet Union, where the concept of "truth" was completely different.



Today, we are in the midst of the first full-fledged "post-truth politics" modern national election. When it comes to presidential politics, there seems to be more Moscow than Elkhart. "Post-truth politics" is a term coined by blogger David Roberts way back in 2010 for Grist. But now it is a defining factor in a presidential race playing out in 140 character bits on Twitter and running streams of thought on Facebook. Post-truth politics is where issues and debates are framed by appeals to emotion, dislodged from fact, and then recycled into talking points. Rebuttals are irrelevant.

In 1974, a Republican congressman from Indiana, Earl Landgrebe of Northern Indiana's old 2nd CD, made mocking national headlines when as President Nixon's impeachment loomed, he blurted in frustration, "Don't confuse me with the facts." The day before Nixon resigned in disgrace, Landgrebe said, "I'm going to stick with my president even if he and I have to be taken out of this building and shot."

In 2016, the facts, when it comes to Republican nominee Donald Trump and Democrat nominee Hillary Clinton, are pesky things that get in the way of a narrative that is increasingly little more than propaganda, just like the Soviets used to do it. Many American voters don't prescribe to the way President Harry Truman did things, at one time saying, "I never did give them hell. I just told the truth, and they thought it was hell."

So Donald Trump can claim that hundreds if not thousands of Muslims in New Jersey cheered the collapse of the World Trade Center towers on Sept. 11, 2001, when no audio or video evidence exists. Hillary Clinton

can repeatedly claim that she never mishandled classified information in her private server when she was secretary of state, despite voluminous evidence to the contrary. Indiana Gov. Mike Pence can say on Meet the Press that Trump has been "completely consistent" on immigration even as the nominee roamed through an array of stances, leaving "Point A" and eventually ending up at "Point A."

Politifact is a Pulitzer Prize-winning organization that has been fact checking since 2007, taking on more than 950 assertions by major party presidential nominees. The emerging verdict of the 2016 election is one of Landgrebeian proportions. "We dug into that data to compare the major party nominees for the last three election cycles – 2016, 2012 and 2008," the organization reported. "The following analysis looked at statements made only during the campaign (for example, excluding fact-checks from the time Hillary Clinton was serving as secretary of state or while President Barack Obama wasn't campaigning for office). So what does the data show? That 2008 was a much more honest election than we're seeing in 2016. Obama in 2008 earned more True ratings than Obama in 2012, and so did John McCain in 2008. Hillary Clinton in 2016 is even farther behind. And Donald Trump has been the most inaccurate of them all."

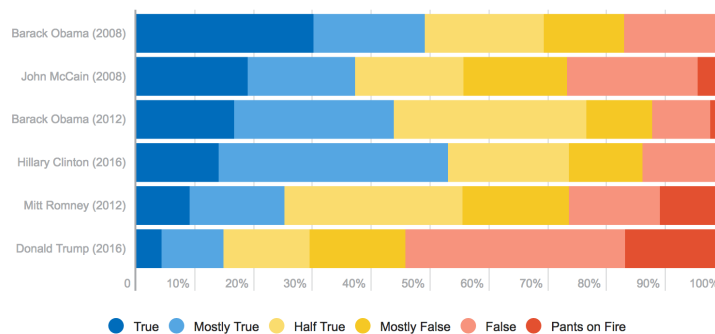
A frequent assertion by Trumpets is that Clinton is a "liar." But Clinton rates over 50% of statements her statements as "true" or "mostly true" and if you factor in her "half true" statements, she is north of 70%. About 15% of her statements are either untrue or "pants on fire" false.

As for Trump, 37% of his statements are false, 16.8% are "pants on fire" lies, 16% are rated "mostly false" and 14% are "half true." That leaves just 14% of Trump statements as "true" or "mostly true." Or as Politifact puts it, "Trump's inaccurate statements dwarf those of Clinton. He's been four times more likely to receive a False or Pants on Fire rating."

Trump liked to refer to U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz as "Lyn' Ted" during the GOP primary battles, but the Texas Republican had a "true" or "mostly true" rating in the 27% range, and was at 37% or so when you included the "half true" designation. The most truthful Republican this cycle was Jeb Bush, who was at the 40% threshold for "true" or "mostly true" and at 70% when Politifact included "half true" statements.

So American truth has devolved into Soviet style pravda, with President Truman rendering an observation we may lament in the future: "Fame is a vapor, popularity is an accident, riches take wings, those who cheer today may curse tomorrow and only one thing endures – character." ❖

Fact-checking the 2008, 2012 and 2016 major party presidential nominees



Cut the tax cut debate, spend money wisely

By MICHAEL HICKS

MUNCIE – Indiana’s business personal property tax remains a hot topic across much of the state. Tax abatements, TIF and an outright repeal are getting more of the attention they deserve.



There is reason for optimism in this debate; however, the most critical issues are persistently ignored.

In Fort Wayne, the city council will vote on a proposal to eliminate the business personal property tax. The proponents of this make two arguments. First, a lower tax will make the region more enticing to business investment. Second, that the city approves tax abatements and

TIFs so often that new businesses receive huge windfalls while existing businesses bear higher taxes, or reduced services, because of the TIF or abatement.

Both of these arguments have the benefit of being factually true; however, both entirely miss the real issues about tax policy and economic development. Let me explain.

There’s no way around it, business taxes in Indiana are modest. Overall, Indiana ranks in the top 10 states on any national ranking of taxes and has done so for a number of years. Still, recent changes make the situation more favorable for businesses. Anyone who thinks Indiana’s state or local tax rates act as a meaningful impediment to business location or expansion is simply mistaken.

It is also true that the repeal of the business personal property tax, along with the repeal of every TIF and every tax abatement, favors one business at the expense of everyone else. Ironically, this truth was admitted by the opponents of the Fort Wayne proposal, when they reviewed the fiscal impact of the tax elimination. To be clear, eliminating the business personal property tax has the same effect on everyone else as does granting all new businesses an abatement. It either raises everyone else’s tax rates, or reduces the available public services, or both.

The debate over the impact of abatements and TIF is long overdue, but we can’t afford to neglect the more fundamental issues involved. Again there are two issues that matter deeply to this debate that are routinely ignored.

Firstly, we should ask the simple question: Why is it we want to favor capital investment over workers? Workers face much higher taxes and regulatory costs than does capital, both at the state and federal level. By further reducing the relative cost of capital investment, we are unwittingly facilitating the substitution of more machines for fewer workers. The right mix of workers and equipment is inherently the decision of a business owner. These are things we should let markets, not city councils figure out.

Second, the problem with taxes isn’t how much is collected, but rather how they are spent. Fort Wayne is a classic example. For nearly half a century the city effectively ignored its deepest challenges of urban blight and poor schools. The economy suffered, and people and businesses moved to places with better schools, cleaner cities, and paradoxically in most every case, higher taxes. A little more than a decade ago that changed. The city began to focus on making itself a better place to live. As a result, the greater Fort Wayne area is the only part of Indiana outside of Indianapolis that is forecast to grow over the next generation.

The lesson here is pretty clear. Instead of trying to second guess the optimal mix of capital investment and labor for a company, or slashing already low taxes for new business at the expense of all the other taxpayers, city councils ought to focus on the basics of making a city attractive to people. That’s pretty much what Hoosier cities did a century ago when they were the successful wonder of the world. ❖

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



and even Republicans seem to concede that he's ahead, just not by the double-digit margins some polls indicate. Meanwhile, some Republicans have been underwhelmed by Cole's campaign, although they are hopeful that Trump will carry Cole over the finish line, and they have a lot of ammunition to use against Justice, including his history of late payments (or non-payment) of taxes.

While Republicans still have a very good chance to recover here, we're forced to push this race from Leans Republican to Toss-up, and Justice probably is better than 50-50 to win. Nevertheless, recent history in that part of the country makes us cautious about overrating Justice's edge.

We now see Vermont as a Toss-up, instead of Leans Democratic. In a mirror opposite of West Virginia, we can see a Republican running far ahead of his party's presidential candidate here. Lt. Gov. Phil Scott (R) is personally popular and is probably leading at the moment thanks to his proven electoral track record; he won by seven points in his initial election in 2010 and by large margins in 2012 and 2014. The Republican Governors Association has been running positive ads on his behalf, while Democrats believe they can attack Scott for being out of step with a liberal electorate on climate change and social issues. Like Justice in West Virginia, Scott is better-known than his opponent, former Transportation Secretary Sue Minter (D). But like Cole in West Virginia, Minter has the better party label for her state. If Minter ends up winning, she'll be the first Democratic governor to directly succeed another Democrat in the history of the state.

Most of this year's competitive gubernatorial races are open seats. Vermont and West Virginia do not feature an incumbent. Neither do Indiana, Missouri, and New Hampshire. North Carolina does feature an incumbent, but he'll test the power of incumbency in gubernatorial races.

Incumbent governors, like most incumbents, are far more likely to win than lose. In presidential cycles in the post-World War II era, about four out of five gubernatorial incumbents have won reelection in November. But going back to 1992, 34 of 37 have won general election contests (92%) in presidential years. This would seem to augur well for Gov. Pat McCrory (R) of North Carolina, who is locked in a tight reelection battle with state Attorney General Roy Cooper (D). But as things stand, Cooper leads in both major polling averages by about four points. Not only that, but both aggregators find the Democrat running ahead of his presidential standard bearer by a couple of points. While the gubernatorial race is certainly close, because Cooper may be in a stronger position than Clinton suggests that a Democratic pickup could be on the cards in the Tar Heel State. McCrory has almost certainly been damaged by his decision to sign the controversial HB2 into law, which overturned anti-discrimination protections for LGBT rights, most notably a Charlotte ordinance addressing transgender access to public restrooms. Tellingly, Monmouth University's recent survey pegged approval/disapproval for HB2 at a woeful 36%/55%. Of those who

approve of the law, 74% say they're backing McCrory, while Cooper gets the support of 72% of those who disapprove of HB2. Unusually for a challenger, Cooper has also outraced the incumbent McCrory, holding a \$12.7 million to \$8.7 million edge as of the end of the second quarter (June 30). In light of these developments in North Carolina, we're shifting its rating from Toss-up to Leans Democratic.

Meanwhile, Indiana features a gubernatorial contest that once had an incumbent but now is an open-seat race. When Gov. Mike Pence (R) exited stage right to become Trump's vice presidential nominee, it left the competitive Hoosier State tilt in flux. Multiple Republicans cast their hats into the ring to replace Pence on the ballot, but at the end of the day the state party central committee selected Lt. Gov. Eric Holcomb to become the GOP's new gubernatorial standard bearer. Holcomb has taken a curious path to reach this point. A former adviser to popular ex-Gov. Mitch Daniels (R), Holcomb initially sought the Republican nomination for the state's open 2016 Senate contest. But it soon became clear that he was unlikely to beat Reps. Todd Young or Marlin Stutzman for the Senate nod (Young went on to win). But another opportunity arose for Holcomb. In February, he exited the Senate race, and a month later he took over the lieutenant governorship following Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann's (R) resignation. Then just about three-and-a-half months later, Holcomb was picked to replace Pence as the party's gubernatorial nominee. Suffice to say, 2016 has been a wild ride for him.

But now Holcomb faces a tough fight with former state Speaker of the House John Gregg (D), who narrowly lost to Pence in 2012. The only public poll so far found the two in a neck-and-neck race. There's a lot of uncertainty surrounding this race, even more than there was previously when it was a Pence-Gregg rematch. Gregg is already trying to tie Holcomb to the controversy surrounding aspects of Pence's tenure in Indianapolis. Plus, Gregg starts with a name-identification and fundraising edge, in part because of complications regarding the transfer of money from Pence's campaign account to Holcomb's. But the new GOP nominee could conceivably benefit from his relative anonymity as a Republican at the top of the ticket in a red state that is likely to back Trump-Pence, and the Republican Governors Association is almost certain to use its vast resources to help Holcomb level the financial playing field. (Republicans are confident Holcomb will have all the money he needs.)

It's also worth considering that it may be hard for two down-ticket Democrats to win while Trump has the edge at the top, and as things stand the Senate race in Indiana is more likely to go Democratic than the gubernatorial contest. But all in all, the Gregg-Holcomb race seems uncertain and too close to favor one side at this point, so we're moving it from Leans Republican to Toss-up. ❖

Earl Landgrebe on the eve of U.S. bankruptcy

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO – I hereby dedicate this column to former Indiana 2nd District U.S. Rep. Earl Landgrebe. Congressman Landgrebe immortalized the comment, “Don’t confuse me with the facts” during the Watergate hearings in 1974. His eloquent and timely use of this statement has been subliminally picked up and adopted by both major



political parties as they go on their merry way to the bankrupting of our nation.

Of course, I could have dedicated this column just as easily to one of the great philosophers of my youth, Alfred E. Neuman. His monthly mantra, “What Me Worry?” closely reflects the fiscal discipline so ably practiced by our Congress and presidents for at least the last 50 years.

Our United States government is totally devoid of a single scintilla of synergy. We elect intelligent representatives and senators, put them in the same building and crank out more toxic waste than you’d find in the Love Canal. The root cause of this legislative morass is the giant sausage-making machine that we fondly refer to as democracy. The sum of our legislative parts just doesn’t add up to a positive number.

Please don’t get me wrong, I strongly believe that we have some brilliant, intensely dedicated public servants representing us in Washington, D.C. They know the issues perfectly well and could just as easily write this column. Even Democrat elected officials know a few simple truths and will admit to them when you get them away from the bright lights of the television news crews. In fact, just about anyone with a brain larger than an amoeba’s knows the mathematical fact that the United States, and the world for that matter, is swimming in a sea of debt that will destroy all that we hold dear, if nothing is done to change the trajectory of its growth.

As we quickly approach the end of another fiscal year for the United States, it might be enlightening to take a quick look at the budgetary highlights.

We are now looking at a national debt of \$19.51 trillion. Even with record federal tax collections over the past 11 months, our 2016 fiscal year deficit is currently \$580 billion and growing. According to The Kiplinger Letter, the federal budget deficit will amount to 3.2% of GDP for 2016, up from 2.5% last year. The total of publicly held debt as a percentage of GDP is at 76.6% this year and will grow unabated to at least 86% over the next 10 years. The national debt has grown from approximately \$10 tril-

lion to \$19.5 trillion under President Obama. It previously doubled under President George W. Bush.

These numbers, as ugly as they are, belie the true depths of the debt problem. It may seem quite manageable for the United States to live with a \$19 trillion debt when 10-year treasury notes yield 1.55% and 30-year treasury bonds yield 2.24%. In effect, we are almost financing our entire national debt with negative interest rates, when you factor in inflation. However, for those of you who weren’t alive or who weren’t awake during the late 1970s and early 1980s, let me take you for a short ride down memory lane.

In 1982, when I began my career as a financial consultant, treasury rates averaged 14.5%! Let me state that again, 14.5! Shorter term treasury rates skyrocketed even higher. No one in government anticipated that interest rates would explode to those levels, the same lack of foresight that missed the movement of current rates to their historically low levels.

Picture a federal government that has nearly \$20 trillion in debt, that sees Congress fighting bitter budget battles over a billion here or a billion there, dealing with the effects of increasing interest rates in the future. Here’s a little mathematical factoid to help you understand the potential problem: For every rise of 1% in interest rates, the cost of interest payments on our national debt rises \$200 billion per year. How will the United States pay for that increase in interest? By cutting spending? By increasing taxes? Come on and get real. Uncle Sam will just go back to the well and print up another \$200 billion in paper currency and let the consequences fall to the economy and the American people.

We are now less than 60 days to Election Day and neither major party candidate for president is discussing the looming debt crisis. In fact, both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump lean toward increasing our budget deficits in a Keynesian scheme to stimulate the moribund economy. They point to increased economic growth as providing the new tax revenues that will help close the burgeoning budget deficit. Good luck with that! Remember the \$800 billion Obama stimulus? Cue Tennessee Ernie Ford, “800 billion and what did you get? Another year older and deeper in debt!”

I would like to see an honest discussion of our debt problem take center stage during this election season. The first presidential debate should begin with these questions in this order:

Do you agree that the growth of our national debt will eventually destroy our economy? If not, why not?

At what level of debt will our country go beyond the tipping point? What specific plans do you have to depress the trajectory of the growth of the national debt?

Do you plan on spending increases of any kind during your administration? Do you plan on increasing or decreasing taxes during your administration?

What will you tell your grandchildren about why their future has been destroyed by the deficit spending

done by your generation?

I'm no political fool. I know that these questions won't be asked and if they were, they wouldn't be answered. And yet, only a focused honest discussion of this issue will ever lead to any meaningful solution. And therein lies the rub. It is my opinion that no one really wants to have an honest discussion on our debt problems.

Everyone knows that the only way to deal with debt is either to increase your income or cut your expenses. In governmental terms, increasing income means increasing taxes, and cutting expenses means spending less on federal programs. Both options send shivers up the spines of politicians of all persuasions. Discussing the solution to our budget deficits is political suicide, plain and simple.

You know and I know that this spending spree

on our grandchildren's credit card cannot go on forever. A mighty day of reckoning will arrive sooner than we might expect. The choice is ours about whether we will proactively work on the problem or whether we will be forced to reactively address the issue. What's your bet?

We'll see finger-pointing, name-calling and wild accusations thrown around during the presidential debates. We'll see some entertaining political mud-wrestling to be sure, but I don't expect to see any serious discussion about our debt. It's like telling your spouse that you are going to cut up the family credit card right as you sit down for Thanksgiving dinner. Everyone gets a case of indigestion. ❖

Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republican Party.

The divorce of Griffith and Gary

By RICH JAMES

MERRILLVILLE – It is becoming increasingly clear that Griffith doesn't want anything to do with Gary. Even though the two Lake County municipalities abut each other, Griffith seemingly wants to build one of those walls Donald Trump wants to erect along the Mexican border.



First it was Planned Parenthood. When the agency was about to lose its facility in Gary, it located property in Griffith for its new headquarters. But Griffith Councilman Rick Ryfa led the charge and blocked Planned Parenthood from moving into his town.

And then Ryfa and the rest of the town council, which is controlled by Republicans, launched a move to have Griffith pull out of Calumet Township.

The Griffith officials said they were tired of paying for public assistance to help the poor people in Gary. Calumet Township is made up of Gary, Griffith and unincorporated Calumet Township. With 39 percent of Gary residents below the poverty line, most of the township assistance money is going to Gary. Griffith residents at one point were paying about \$3 million a year for public assistance. That now is down to about \$1 million annually.

When Kimberly Robinson was elected township trustee in 2014, she inherited a financial mess. She set out

to cut the budget and has been quite successful. But that hasn't satisfied Ryfa and the other councilmen. Thanks to a law approved by the 2013 Legislature, Griffith residents will vote on a referendum Dec. 20 on whether to pull out of Calumet Township and join either St. John, North or Ross township. The three adjoin Griffith.

Although Ryfa contends "the township does nothing for us," Robinson disagrees. Robinson said her office provides "tens of thousands of dollars" in assistance to Griffith residents. She said she will enlist those who received help to assist her in fighting the referendum. In fact, Robinson is vowing a fight to the finish, including the possibility of going to court to have the law to allow Griffith to secede declared unconstitutional.

Since people often vote their pocketbooks, chances are the referendum to allow Griffith to leave Calumet Township will be successful. Wouldn't it make more sense for the state to take over payment of public assistance? It seems immensely unfair to put the financial burden on the backs of township residents because the residents of the township require a substantial amount of assistance.

Gary didn't create most of its problems. The blame should go to the loss of steel jobs, white flight and the exodus of money from the city. Griffith should have focused its energies in getting the state to take over responsibility for public assistance, just as it did with welfare a few years back. ❖

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

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

Doug Ross, NWI Times: You've heard about Russian hackers breaking into voter databases, The New York Times and other computer systems. Chances are good that you've been warned that hackers have seen sensitive information about you at some point. Ted Koppel, the former host of ABC's Nightline program, takes this scenario one step further, and it's terrifying. I spoke with Koppel about his new book, "Lights Out: A Cyberattack, A Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath," prior to his appearance at the Sinai Forum on, appropriately enough, the 15th anniversary of the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Koppel noticed President Barack Obama's passing references to the likelihood of a possible cyberattack that could cripple a large portion of the nation. A speech by Leon Panetta, former CIA director and former defense secretary, warned of a cyber Pearl Harbor. Think about what hackers shutting down the power grid could mean. "We really only have three major grids in this country. You could be talking about tens of millions of people," Koppel said. "There never has been anything that comes that close to that kind of devastating attack." After Panetta's speech, Koppel began calling federal agencies, the American Red Cross and others to see how they have planned for this possibility. "Being a journalist of many, many years, I've sort of developed a cynicism gland which led to questions about whether the government has done anything" to prepare for a possible attack, he said. "The first thing I discovered is you can't get through, even when there's no crisis going on," Koppel said. When he finally did get through to a human, he would be told to set aside enough food, water and essential prescription drugs for two or three days, and keep fresh batteries for a radio. When he pressed for how the federal government or Red Cross would respond, he got the same answer. "There really is no plan," he concluded. ❖



John Krull, Statehouse File: Competition seems to agree with Todd Young. Until last month, Young seemed to be on a glide path to victory. He'd prevailed over Tea Party darling and fellow U.S. Rep. Marlin Stutzman in a rugged primary and was running against former U.S. Rep. Baron Hill, D-Indiana, in the general election. Young already had faced and defeated Hill once in a congressional race, and Hill was struggling to raise money for the Senate race. But then Hill dropped out and Evan Bayh — a former governor, a former U.S. senator — stepped in. Bayh had huge name recognition and nearly \$10 million in leftover campaign contributions at his disposal. With that, Young went from being an overwhelming favorite to a slight underdog. I ask if Young saw the change coming. He says he had no inkling Bayh was going to get into the race, but he was ready nonetheless. "When I originally contemplated running for this seat, there are a number of different contingencies that you bake into a decision like this, right?" Young says. "I'm a planner. And I thought it is

possible that Evan Bayh, who's been living in Washington and sitting on roughly \$10 million in campaign cash for a decade as he works out there lobbying, that he might at some point re-enter the fray and might in fact run for this race." Young's response shows how the competition has sharpened his reflexes. He takes a simple question, "Did you see this coming?" and, with a couple of deft phrases, uses the response to hit Bayh in a couple of tender spots, the fact that he's been lobbying and has spent quite a bit of time away from Indiana. That's the way it goes for the hour we talk. I ask him several times about controversial Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, who has public approval ratings that are lower than some natural disasters. Young responds by saying he supports "the Republican nominee" and then, each time, pivots to attack Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. At no time does Trump's name ever cross Young's lips. ❖

Randall Shepard, IBJ Forefront: As we enter the finale of this astounding election cycle, we should pause to consider one of its most unsavory characteristics, a baseness in tone and language. To be sure, political campaigns of days gone by often featured tough exchanges and sharp characterizations of opponents. Politics in the 19th century was not a game for the thin-skinned. And in the 20th century, sharp-elbowed material ran from Lyndon Johnson's commercial suggesting that little girls would die when Barry Goldwater set off nuclear war, to George H.W. Bush's work tying brutal killer Willie Horton to Michael Dukakis. Still, what passes for debate in this election seems to represent a new low in the annals of public dialogue. I suggest Indiana has the capacity to go through the next three months without doing damage to our civic fabric. In analyzing modern campaigns, we should separate out what we see on television in the form of commercials and what we see individual candidates or their surrogates actually say and do. Most commercials these days are planned and paid for by somebody other than the candidates. This was not always true. Until the 1974 amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act, most campaign cash was raised and spent by committees associated with the individual candidates. Federal legislation in recent decades has sought to keep money away from candidates, thus funneling massive sums to independent committees and PACs. This detachment has meant candidates have relatively little control over paid ads. That's why commercials like the recent ones by the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee roughing up Todd Young or those by the Republican Governors Association painting a negative image of John Gregg have come to seem like standard fare. Though they might be less effective than they used to be, consultants still tell clients that it's worth their money to run such stuff. But the reason 2016 seems so much worse is a shift in what the candidates themselves and their surrogates are willing to say about each other. ❖

Former Rep. Deckard dies

MOUNT VERNON — Joel Deckard, who represented Indiana's 8th District in Congress from 1979-83, saw his political career derailed by a drunken driving crash and later became a "human smuggler" who helped undocumented Brazilian families get into Canada, has died. He was 74 (Evansville Courier & Press). Schneider Funeral Home in Mount Vernon is handling arrangements. Deckard, a Republican, was an Indiana legislator for eight years before being elected to Congress. In fall 1983, while running for his third term, Deckard crashed his car into a tree in Posey County. He refused a breath exam and was charged with DWI. Democrat Frank McCloskey won the election, and the political career of Deckard, then 40, was done. He finished a degree at the University of Evansville and worked a variety of local jobs before moving to Jacksonville, Florida, in 1989 to seek a fresh start. He ran for the U.S. Senate in Florida in 2000 on the Reform Party ticket. He worked as a computer specialist and at a call center before starting his own transportation company, ferrying people around the Jacksonville area in a fleet of Ford hybrid SUVs. That is the job that led him to become a "coyote," which is how human smugglers are referred to in illegal immigration parlance. In a 2010 interview with the Bloomington Herald-Times, Deckard said that between December 2007 and March 2008, he made eight trips into Canada, taking 30 Brazilian men, women and children to new lives in Toronto.

Hoosier neighbors rarely see Bayh

INDIANAPOLIS — Evan Bayh, the former Indiana senator who surprised many in July by deciding

to run for his old Senate seat, is a mystery to his own neighbors. Bayh has been portrayed by Republicans as a Washington insider, and questions have swirled about whether or not he actually lives in Indiana. The Indianapolis Star took that question to Bayh's supposed neighbors on the north side of Indianapolis. "I have not seen him around here recently," said George Landis, one neighbor who said he used to see Bayh come and go. "He probably still has the ownership of the condo." Another neighbor, Patrice Rogers, was visibly shocked when told that Bayh lives in the same community. "Evan Bayh lives next door? Are you serious? I never knew that, I didn't, I'm sorry. I've been over here three years and never knew he lived over here," she said.



Good polling news for 3 GOP senators

WASHINGTON — A set of new Senate race polls from Quinnipiac University contain good news for Republicans, with GOP Sens. Rob Portman, Richard Burr and Marco Rubio all leading their Democratic opponents (Politico). In Pennsylvania, Republican Sen. Pat Toomey is in a very tight race with Democrat Katie McGinty, taking 46 percent to her 45 percent in the survey. But other Republican senators enjoy wider advantages: Portman leads Democrat Ted Strickland in Ohio, 51 percent to 40 percent. Rubio has an edge over Rep. Patrick Murphy in Florida, 50 percent to 43 percent. And North Carolina's Burr tops Democrat Deborah Ross, 49 percent to 43 percent.

Congress passes 9/11 lawsuit bill

WASHINGTON — Congress on Friday sent President Obama a bill that would allow families of the victims of the 9/11 attacks to sue Saudi Arabia over its alleged ties to terrorism, but advocates of the legisla-

tion worry it could be defeated by a presidential veto (Washington Post). The House passed the legislation by voice vote, with leaders calling it a "moral imperative" to allow victims' families to seek justice for the deaths of loved ones as the country marks the 15th anniversary of the attacks that brought down the World Trade Center towers and damaged the Pentagon. But bill supporters are bracing for a veto fight with the White House, which argues the bill could harm the United States' relationship with Saudi Arabia and establish a legal precedent that jeopardizes American officials overseas. Advocates for the legislation are also warily eyeing the congressional calendar over fears the administration may try to pocket-veto the legislation if lawmakers leave Washington soon to focus on the election.

GOP voter registration is up

WASHINGTON — For all the attention on battleground polls giving Hillary Clinton the edge, Donald Trump enjoys at least one electoral advantage in his uphill climb to the White House: Republicans are outpacing Democrats in registering new voters in key states (Fox News). A review of registration figures shows that in the swing states that sign up voters by party, Republicans are seeing a significantly bigger boost since 2012. In states like Florida and Pennsylvania, the party has added tens of thousands of voters to the rolls at a time when Democrats have seen their base shrink. "The numbers [in those states] ... are a huge shift from what we've seen in 2012," Republican National Committee spokeswoman Lindsay Walters said. The surge doesn't change the fact that Clinton leads, if only by a thin margin, in most battleground state polls, which presumably reflect the current voter make-up.

Fox News ratings show Clinton maintains the advantage in the Electoral College, while a Washington Post survey this week of registered voters in all 50 states reflects a similar dynamic.