



## President Obama's Indiana legacy

Auto industry saved and revived, but Hoosiers loathe Obamacare, and Democrats decimated

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – On Feb. 9, 2009, President Barack Obama came to Elkhart, a city where he had campaigned several times during his 2008 campaign. While he didn't carry Elkhart County, losing 55-44%, he won Indiana's 11 Electoral College votes. The jobless rate in Elkhart had gone from 4.7% in 2008 to 15% as the Great Recession took aim at the recreational vehicle and domestic auto industries.

Noting the 3.6 million jobs lost since September 2008, and 600,000 during the month he was sworn in, Obama said at Concord High School, "We're talking about people in the audience here today. We're talking about people who have lost their livelihood and don't know what will take its place. We're talking about parents who've lost their health care and lie awake at



Candidate Barack Obama at the American Legion Mall in Indianapolis in May 2008. (HPI Photo by A. Walker Shaw)

night, praying their kids don't get sick. We're talking about families who've lost the home that was the corner, their foundation for their American Dream.

"Those are the stories I heard when I came to Elkhart six months ago, and those are the stories that I carried with me to the White House. I have not forgotten them," Obama said. "And I promised you back then that if elected I'd do everything I could to help this community recover, and that's why I came back today, because I intend to keep

my promise. But you know, the work is going to be hard.

**Continued on page 3**

## A different kind of governor

By **CRAIG DUNN**

KOKOMO – When my text alert dinged on Election Day, at 11 a.m., I was surprised by the message, something to the effect of, "I will be at the Cone Palace at 12:30 if you want to join me. Invite our Howard County friends."



With that simple text, on the biggest day of his political life, Eric Holcomb signaled that he was going to be a different kind of governor.

On a day when most candidates would be preening and posturing for television cameras in a big media market, a casually dressed Eric and Janet Holcomb drove up to Kokomo to dine on Coney dogs



**"We're going to look for every possible way that we can to forge relationships that will advance the prosperity and peace and security of the American people and of the world."**

*- Vice President-elect Mike Pence, previewing the inaugural*



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and corn dogs with his friends. The food was great and the conversation was relaxed and decidedly unpolitical in nature. I just wish that I could have been as relaxed that day.

**Our new governor** has demonstrated all over the state of Indiana that he is a confident, personable and focused man. He piles up friends the way Indianapolis Colts' opponents pile up rushing yards. During Holcomb's entire political career he has been as interested in friend-raising as he has fundraising. He intuitively knows that money comes and goes, but friends are with you forever. That maxim has served our new governor very well.

I've been around a few governors in my 40-plus years of political involvement and I've made watching them sort of a hobby. For some, it was somewhat akin to watching guards playing for Bobby Knight at IU. When they went up for a jump shot, you had a feeling that they had one eye on the coach, seeking his approval. We all know that that doesn't work very well over the long run. The same is true for governors. It is hard to hit a jump shot when you have your eye on something else.

I've said on many an occasion and in a few Howey Politics columns that I just can't relate to a guy who wakes up in the morning, looks at himself in the mirror and sees the next congressman, senator, governor or president. It's not in my nature and hey, I've got a face for radio. Now, I can't say for sure that our new governor doesn't have "Hail to the Chief" on his IPOD and that he doesn't make Janet hum the tune when he steps out of the shower, but I've seen no indication at this point that Eric Holcomb is focused on anything but taking Indiana to the next level.

The best evidence of Gov. Holcomb's focus is in two of his initial actions as governor. His first execu-

tive order was to create the position of executive director for drug prevention, treatment and enforcement. While I don't pretend to know the full range of duties that this position will contain, I do know that this step has communicated to the people of Indiana that the drug scourge that is indiscriminately killing our citizens can no longer be addressed with hope, prayers and crossed fingers.

Drug czars have been around for quite a while, but most of the governmental emphasis has been on enforcement; it is heartening to see the word "treatment" in the new position's job title. It's good to know that Gov. Holcomb understands that drug-hazed families won't be served by locking



**Eric Holcomb at the Cone Palace in Kokomo on Election Day. (HPI Photo by Craig Dunn)**

them up and throwing away the key. Our local and state finances won't support it, and dramatically reducing the demand side of the drug equation is the only viable, long-term method of permanently getting drug abuse under control. Effective treatment will provide a much-needed boost to battling this threat to our society.

**The other major** step taken by Gov. Holcomb last week was one that may have been missed by most people. Unfortunately, a baby with developmental delays has no \$600-an-hour lobbyist camped out at the Statehouse ready to pounce on unsuspecting legislators, button-holing them for increased funding for early child-

hood programs. Consequently, our legislature spends a lot of time devoted to much sexier issues such as tax cuts, highway funding and naming a state pie.

Gov. Holcomb made a forceful statement when he included a 33% increase for First Steps in his proposed budget submitted to the Indiana Legislature. First Steps is a program designed to meet the developmental needs of infants and toddlers. The program, chronically limited by its budget, has had tremendous success with addressing developmental problems early in a child's life so that the developmental problems do not provide even larger problems during their school years and thereafter. In short, First Steps is a great investment in our children that reaps massive economic benefits over the long term.

**Holcomb's recognition** of the efficacy of supporting a program such as First Steps, that has neither the glaring spotlight of the press nor the lobbying prowess of the big boys, speaks volumes that he is going to be a dif-



Gov. Eric Holcomb in a selfie with students on Martin Luther King Day.

ferent sort of governor. It demonstrates that he is in touch with the common man, recognizes the difficulties of those who are less fortunate and knows a good governmental investment when he sees one. Not bad for the man occupying former Gov. Oliver Morton's seat!

**Make no mistake** about it. Eric Holcomb will get his chance to serve as a human piñata for the press and his opponents. All governors get whacked on at one time or another. I just suspect that Gov. Holcomb's good-natured and well-intentioned leadership will help him pass through those times very quickly.

We have a saying in Kokomo that you can tell a lot about a man by where he eats his Coney dogs. I learned a lot about Eric Holcomb at the Cone Palace on Election Day.



**Dunn is chairman of the Howard County Republican Party. He is stepping down from that position in March.**

## President Obama, from page 1

I don't want to lie to people – that's why we're having a town hall meeting – because the situation we face could not be more serious. We have inherited an economic crisis as deep and as dire as any since the Great Depression."

How did Obama do?

- In November 2016, the month Elkhart County and Indiana voted for Donald Trump, Indiana's jobless rate stood at 4.2%, while the non-seasonally adjusted rate was 3.9%, including 3.3% in Elkhart County and 4.1% in Howard County, home of the largest Chrysler/Fiat industrial complex.

- Nationally, the jobless rate stood at 7.8% when Obama took office and swelled to 10%. This month it is 4.7%.

- Gross domestic product was -5.4% when Obama took office, and 3.5% this month.

- Consumer confidence went from 37.4 to 113.7.

- The Dow Jones Industrial average went from 7,449.09 to 19,855.

- Americans without health

insurance declined from 49 million to 29.8 million and in Indiana, it went from 18% uninsured to 9%.

- Median household income went from \$54,988 to \$56,516.

- Americans below the poverty line went from 43.6 million to 43.1 million.

- Americans on food stamps went from 33 million to 46 million under President Obama.

- The federal budget deficit went from \$1.43 trillion in 2009 to \$438 billion in 2016.

- There were 140,149 U.S. troops in Iraq in January 2009 and 34,400 in Afghanistan, declining to 5,200 and 9,800 this month.

From an economic standpoint, Obama performed. Economist Robert J. Samuelson, writing in his Washington Post column, observed, "The administration's greatest achievement was, in its first year, stabilizing a collapsing economy and arguably avoiding a second Great Depression. Even now, only eight years after the event, many people forget the crash's



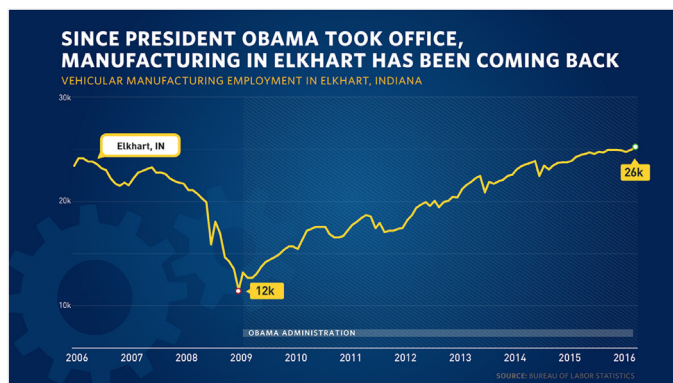
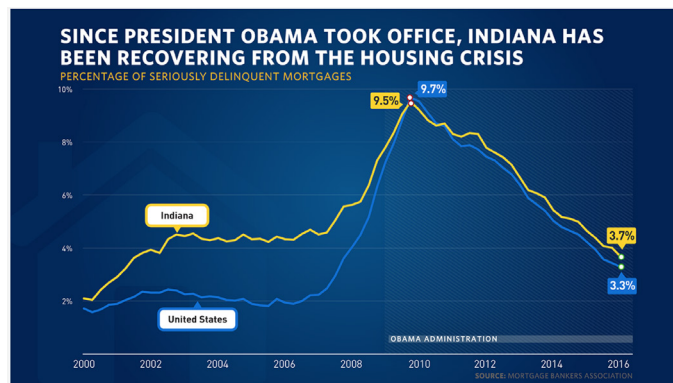
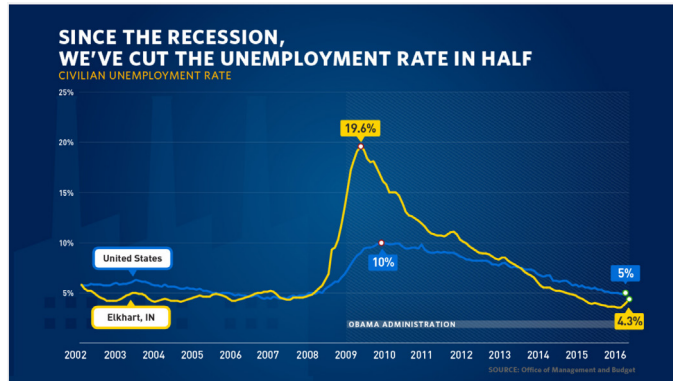
President Obama with Ed Neufeldt in Elkhart, February 2009. (HPI Photo by A. Walker Shaw)

horrific nature. Unemployment was increasing by roughly 700,000 to 800,000 job losses a month. No one knew when the downward spiral would stop. In this turbulence, Obama was a model of calm and confidence. The policies he embraced – various economic stimulus packages, support for the Federal Reserve, the rescue of the auto industry, the shoring up of the banking system – were what the economy needed, though they were not perfect in every detail. Although the subsequent recovery was disappointing, it's not clear that anyone else would have accomplished more."

But when President Obama leaves office at noon Friday, he does so as a widely loathed political figure here in Indiana. While he won the state in 2008 and resurrected General Motors and Chrysler the following year, he lost the state in 2012, though unlike 2008 when he opened dozens of field offices across the state, his Electoral College calculus didn't need Indiana and he lost to Mitt Romney 54.3 to 43.8%. Obama would lose Elkhart County 62-36% and Howard County 56-41%, Lawrence County (home to a GM plant) 65-42%, Gibson County (home to a Toyota plant) 64-33%, and Grant County (home to another GM plant) 60-38%.

While he was the first Democrat to win the state since 1964, the party is decimated in Indiana as his tenure ends. His decision to pursue health care reform in 2009 and 2010, and then concluding that he had to do it with not a single Republican vote essentially created what PBS's "Frontline" calls the "Divided States of America," a rebuke to his 2004 Democratic National Convention speech. The president signaled he was okay with calling the Affordable Care Act "Obamacare," and that became a lightning rod. Hoosier voters chafed at the ACA's individual mandate. Republicans despised the medical device tax that hit Zimmer, Biomet, DePuy, Cook Group and other companies.

It all gave rise to the Tea Party in 2010. This political movement bolstered the election of Scott Brown to U.S. Sen. Ted Kennedy's seat in January 2010, scaring U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh away from a reelection bid. Two years later, the Tea Party backed Treasurer Richard Mourdock,



who upset U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar. In a two-year span, the Bayh and Lugar Senate dynasties vanished. The Indiana Democratic Party was confined to Lake, Porter, St. Joseph counties, Indianapolis and the college towns. It saw its southern Indiana congressional and legislative seats vanish, along with city halls and county seats along its traditional river valley strongholds.

It's not all Obama's fault. He actually won Indiana in 2008, paring back big GOP pluralities in small towns as he opened up dozens of field offices. But the Indiana Democratic Party missed that lesson. Said former 6th CD Democratic nominee Melina Fox, "Since 2003, I have tried and tried to get the Democratic Party at every level to pay attention to rural voters. My friend, Matt Barron, and I prepared a social media strategy for rural Indiana to reach rural voters which fell on deaf ears in 2014."

Like Evan Bayh had done, Obama won Indiana and provided coattails. By 2016, the Tea

Party movement created the atmosphere for the rise Donald Trump, who would carry Indiana with a 19% plurality over Hillary Clinton.

### Saving the auto industry

When Obama announced the auto restructuring on March 30, 2009, he said, "We cannot, and must not, and we will not let our auto industry simply vanish. This industry is like no other – it's an emblem of the American spirit; a once and future symbol of America's success. It's what helped build the middle class and sustained it throughout the 20th century. It's a source of deep pride for the generations of American workers whose hard work and imagination led to some of the finest cars the world has ever known. It's a pillar of our economy that has held up the dreams of millions of our people. And we cannot continue to excuse poor decisions. We cannot make the survival of our auto industry dependent on an unending flow of taxpayer dollars. These companies – and this

industry – must ultimately stand on their own, not as wards of the state.”

Of the auto bailout funds, some \$29 billion were not repaid, though Chrysler did.

The Indiana Automotive Council would observe: Indiana’s automotive industry has raced ahead to second place nationally and is not letting off the gas. Automakers recently have made a string of major investments in the state, such as consolidating all global production of the Toyota Highlander in Princeton and making Civic hybrids in Honda’s five-year-old plant in Greensburg instead of Japan.

General Motors pumped hundreds of millions of dollars into its Fort Wayne Assembly Plant so it can make pickup trucks that chug less gas, and Chrysler is pouring \$1.6 billion into its Kokomo factories so they can crank out more fuel-efficient transmissions. Subaru plans to hire 900 more workers to start making the Impreza at its Lafayette facility.”

“There certainly has been significant new investment,” said Matt Conrad, director of the Indiana Automotive Council. Indiana’s automotive industry has swollen in size over the last decade. The state made 591,000 cars and light trucks in 2000, and produced more than 880,000 vehicles in 2011, according to the Automotive Communities Partnership.

In our analysis, HPI was not able to come up with figures on how much state and local taxes Chrysler and GM have paid since 2009, nor were we able to access worker income levels. If there is a historical comparison for some future scholar, look no further than the near collapse of the steel industry in the early 1980s and the fiscal havoc it created for Gov. Robert Orr, who was forced to call a special session in 1982 to raise taxes.

This was a state where the Republican establishment fought Obama on autos, health care and green technology. Gov. Mitch Daniels likened the domestic auto bailout to “good money after bad” and said he would only invest in Japanese companies like Subaru, Honda and Toyota. Indiana Treasurer Mourdock, with Daniels’ tacit imprimatur tried to thwart the Chrysler/Fiat merger. Republicans



President Obama and Vice President Biden at the Chrysler Transmission Plant II in Kokomo in November 2010. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

were livid that the United Auto Workers received a stake in the revamped company.

Then-U.S. Rep. Mike Pence was also critical. “I even opposed bailing out GM and Chrysler,” Pence said in a 2010 speech to the Detroit Economic Club. “I welcome the rebound of that company with an open heart, but I still think that most Americans know that it would have still been better for GM and for the country if GM had been allowed to go through normal bankruptcy proceedings.”

In voting against the bailout, Pence said, “The bailout proposed by the White House and Congressional Democrats is fundamentally

flawed. It exposes the American taxpayer to more debt, fails to reorganize the domestic auto manufacturers to ensure long-term success and does not fix the immediate credit crisis. Instead, the Democrat bill will prevent necessary changes and force us back into this same situation where taxpayers will be asked to bail out the industry again. In place of a short-term government bailout, our alternative taps private investment to finance the Detroit recovery. That is a solution that will protect our domestic auto industry and the American taxpayer.”

When Pence ran for governor in 2012, he used a red Chevy Sierra truck as his campaign “Big Red Truck” slogan and symbol.

Politifact gauged whether Obama should get credit for saving the domestic auto industry and keeping Indiana out of a full-fledged depression, with Brookings Institute noting that some 150,000 GM, Chrysler and auto parts company jobs were at stake in November 2008. Politifact noted that the Center for Automotive Research, an independent research group that gets some funding from automakers, predicted harsh outcomes if GM and Chrysler went belly up. Beyond the immediate jobs lost, there would be a partial collapse of the supplier industry that would lead to a 50% drop in production at Ford and the American-based foreign car plants. Imports would replace 70% of the lost GM and Chrysler production, the group predicted.

Ford’s CEO Alan Mulally said the bailouts were the right

**Table 5: Projected Major Automaker Employment in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and the United States in 2010, 2015 and 2020**

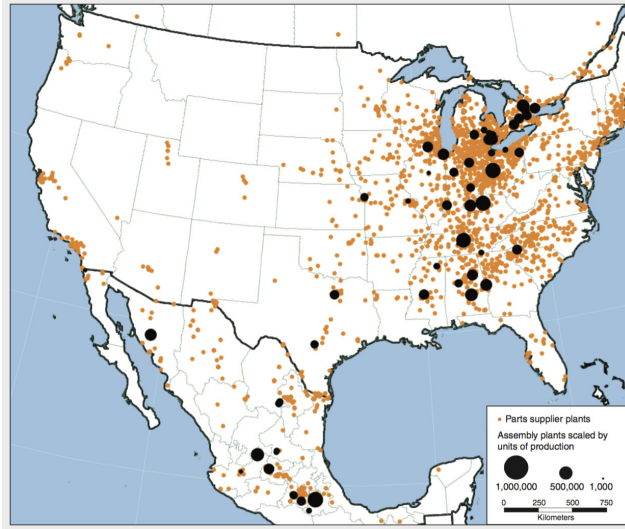
		2010	2015	2020
<b>Indiana</b>	Hourly	15,143	18,544	16,757
	Salaried	1,279	1,548	1,495
	Total	16,422	20,092	18,252
<b>Michigan</b>	Hourly	54,568	80,173	75,829
	Salaried	48,283	57,737	55,037
	Total	102,851	137,910	130,866
<b>Ohio</b>	Hourly	31,474	34,637	35,186
	Salaried	6,217	6,632	6,519
	Total	37,692	41,269	41,704
<b>Tri-State Region</b>	Hourly	101,186	133,354	127,771
	Salaried	55,779	65,917	63,051
	Total	156,965	199,271	190,822
<b>U.S. Total</b>	Hourly	144,917	179,982	170,450
	Salaried	79,268	91,262	87,938
	Total	224,185	271,245	258,388
<b>Tri-State as a Percent of U.S.</b>	Hourly	69.8%	74.1%	75.0%
	Salaried	70.4%	72.2%	71.7%
	Total	70.0%	73.5%	73.9%

Source: Center for Automotive Research

medicine for his company as well. Ford did not seek federal funds. "If GM and Chrysler would've gone into free-fall," Mulally said, "they could've taken the entire supply base into free-fall also, and taken the U.S. from a recession into a depression." And then-U.S. Rep. Joe Donnelly, whose district included Kokomo, observed, "You would have seen a depression here. It would have caused extraordinary damage to our state, not only for families but also for state tax revenues, city and county tax revenues."

Obama spent \$57 billion to stabilize GM and Chrysler. The U.S. government retrieved \$70 billion of the \$80 billion it handed out under Obama and President George W. Bush.

National Public Radio went to Kokomo in the spring of 2016 with reporter Asma Khalid interviewing Chrysler worker Ted Kenworthy, who said, "A lot of guys ... want to say, well, if it wasn't for Obama, we wouldn't even have a job. And I go, bull. I don't believe that. We



This map shows the North American auto plants and parts supplier companies.

would have been better off had they let us go through the regular process of bankruptcy and come back and build our company back up instead of the government stepping in and bailing us out."

New York Times reporter Jackie Calmes, writing last June, interviewed former Republican Nappanee Mayor Larry Thompson, who observed, "Whether he gets the credit or not, people's home equity has gone back up, fuel prices are the best we've had in a long time, there's a lot of things that make this all go. But I think that maybe it's just some of the other things he's been involved with that people in our area," a

reference to social issues such as gay marriage.

Part of Obama's problem is that while he was a wunderkind on the campaign trail in 2008, his White House messaging operation didn't measure up. A classic case came in November 2010, a couple of weeks after U.S. and Indiana Democrats were "shellacked" in the mid-term

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elections. That year, Dan Coats reclaimed the Bayh Senate seat, Todd Young defeated U.S. Rep. Baron Hill, and Larry Bucshon won the 8th CD. After that carnage, President Obama and Vice President Joe Biden returned to Kokomo.

In announcing a \$843 million investment on top of \$300 million previously announced, Obama said at the Chrysler Indiana Transmission Plant II, "Today we know that was the right decision. This plant is now running at full capacity and that is why I am here today. Even as we continue to face serious challenges, what happened here at this plant and changes we are seeing at this plant in Kokomo ... you are showing us the way forward and living up to that spirit of optimism, determinism and grit. We're coming back; we're on the move. We decided to make a stand. We made the decision because we had confidence in the American worker."

### Impacts of Obamacare

Hoosiers loathe the Affordable Care Act. Gov. Pence refused to open a state exchange. The act never polled much above 40% approval. Republican members of Congress repeatedly heralded the more than 50 votes to repeal the ACA.

But as Obama leaves office, the state's uninsured rate has declined from 18% in 2010 to 9% in 2016.

It was the ACA that gave Gov. Pence his finest policy achievement when he negotiated an agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services for the evolution of the Healthy Indiana Plan

2.0. Since the Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services approved the Pence waiver in 2015, enrollment has gone from 193,573 in 2015 to 359,612 in 2016 and a projected 457,739 in fiscal year 2020. It lowered emergency room use by 7%, prompted 60% of its recipients to receive preventive care, while 96% are satisfied with their coverage and 93% make the \$8 to \$25 monthly contributions on time, and 98% would enroll again.

And HIP 2.0 is part of Obamacare.

According to HHS, 1,489,805 people in Indiana are covered by Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program, including 782,960 children and 133,444 seniors and people with disabilities covered by both Medicaid and Medicare. An estimated 224,000 Hoosiers have health insurance today because Indiana expanded Medicaid under the ACA. Coverage improves access to care, financial security, and health, resulting in an estimated 26,000 more Hoosiers getting all needed care, 31,800 fewer Hoosiers struggling to pay medical bills, and 270 avoided deaths each year.

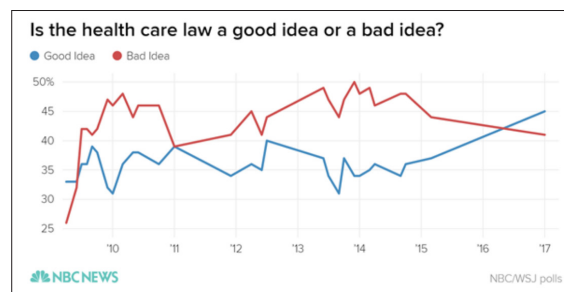
In the individual market, HHS says 168,884 people in Indiana have coverage through the ACA marketplace. Up to 2,796,375 people in Indiana have a pre-existing health condition. Before the ACA, these Hoosiers could

have been denied coverage or charged an exorbitant price if they needed individual market coverage. Now, health insurance companies cannot refuse coverage or charge people more because of pre-existing conditions. Before the ACA, only those with employer coverage generally got tax benefits to help pay for health insurance. Now, 139,437 moderate- and middle-income Hoosiers receive tax credits averaging \$259 per month to help them get covered through HealthCare.gov.

"As our nation debates changes to the health care system, it's important to take stock of where we are today compared to where we were before the Affordable Care Act," said HHS Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell in December 2016. "Whether Hoosiers get coverage through an employer, Medicaid, the individual market, or Medicare, they have better health coverage and care today as a result of the ACA. Millions of Americans with all types of coverage have a stake in the future of health reform. We need to build on our progress and continue to improve health care access, quality, and affordability, not move our system backward."

Republicans like U.S. Rep. Luke Messer have also claimed that Congressional Budget Office estimates cite the loss of millions of jobs. On the screen, it states,

"Congressional Budget Office estimates 2 million lost jobs due to Obamacare." Messer said in 2014, "According to the report, the president's health care law will reduce labor force compensation and push as many as 2.3 million people out of the workforce over the next seven years. That is unacceptable."



But FactCheck.org notes: "This has been a popular Republican talking point, but it's inaccurate. As we wrote on the day the report was released, the CBO said more than 2 million people will decide not to work, or will decide to work less, due to the law – not that they will 'lose their jobs.' The report estimated a reduction in full-time-equivalent employment of about 2.3 million by 2021. But the drop is 'almost entirely' due to a reduction in 'the amount of labor that workers choose to supply,' CBO said."

Former congressman and HPI columnist Mark Souder observes, "From a conservative point of view, we don't know how much of this would have occurred or what additional growth would have happened without his additional spending and increased regulatory policies including Obamacare. It is hard to estimate job losses related to U.S. regulations and business costs. I know that Obamacare definitely damaged Eli Lilly, but it's hard to sort out how much because the drug companies seem to be doing well overall, partly because of Medicare drug coverage which happened before he arrived."

With Congress poised to repeal Obamacare and no evident plan to replace from President-elect Trump and Congressional Republicans, it is unclear how this will evolve.

## The Obama stimulus

Another controversial area was the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, another Obama initiative bitterly opposed by Republicans in Congress. Indiana received \$4.5 billion, according to WTHR-TV's Bob Se-gall. According to INvest.in.gov, a state-operated website designed to track stimulus spending, about \$1 billion has been distributed to local school districts to retain teachers and provide specialized services; \$500 million has paid for highway construction projects; Indiana's Department of Workforce Development spent nearly \$40 million to fund participation in the Young Hoosier Conservation Corps. About 30% of the \$800 million stimulus went to tax cuts and Indiana was due to receive \$409 million in food stamp coverage, more than \$50 million in worker training, \$31.8 million in child care, \$100 million in state stabilization funds, \$1.44 billion in Medicaid, \$28.3 million in homeless prevention funds and \$1.2 million for retirees.

ARRA money helped augment the Indiana biennial budgets of 2009 and 2011, and helped set up the \$2 billion surplus Gov. Pence frequently heralded. Pence also praised the Hammond-Whiting Amtrak station in 2014, built with \$71.4 million in ARRA funds. "I say let's blow the horn, let's get the Gateway open and be on the way to a more prosperous Indiana," Pence proclaimed at the Hammond-Whiting Amtrak station. In 2009, Pence opposed the bill. "This bill won't work to put Americans back to work. It won't create jobs. The only thing it will stimulate is more government and more debt. It will probably do more harm than good."

## Indiana and the EPA

Another area where President Obama stoked great anger from Hoosiers came with Environmental Protection Agency regulations and mandates. The EPA's "Clean Power Plan" was denounced in scathing fashion from congressional Republicans and was even opposed by U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly. Gov. Pence said last year in a letter to President Obama, "If your administration proceeds to finalize the Clean Power Plan, and the final rule has not demonstrably and significantly improved from the proposed rule, Indiana will not comply. Our state will also reserve the right to use any legal means available to block the rule from being implemented." According to the Indiana Energy Association, "Higher electric bills are the likely outcome for Hoosiers if the Environmental Protection Agency's "Clean Power Plan" goes into effect."

The 2015 EPA plan would require Indiana to reduce carbon dioxide emission rates by 30-38%. The new regulation could cause an average annual electricity price increase of 16%, according to a study commissioned by the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity. The power sector is already successfully reducing emissions without costly federal regulations. As of the end of 2014, without the new EPA regulation, electric power sector carbon dioxide emissions nationwide had declined 15% from 2005 levels, according to the Edison Electric Institute.

## Obama coda

On June 1, 2016, Obama returned to Concord HS in Elkhart. "So what's happened since then?" he asked, referencing his 2009 appearance there. "Unemployment in Elkhart has fallen to around 4 percent. At the peak of the crisis, nearly one in 10 homeowners in the state of Indiana were either behind on their mortgages or in foreclosure; today, it's one in 30. Back then, only 75 percent of your kids graduated from high school; tomorrow, 90 percent of them will. The auto industry just had its best year ever. And the 'RV Capital of the World' is doing its part. The industry is set to ship nearly 400,000 RVs this year, which will be an all-time record. So that's progress.

"By almost every economic measure, America is better off than when I came here at the beginning of my presidency," Obama continued. "That's the truth. Over the past six years, our businesses have created more than 14 million new jobs. That's the longest stretch of consecutive private sector



job growth in our history. We've seen the first sustained manufacturing growth since the 1990s. We cut unemployment in half, years before a lot of economists thought we would. We've cut the oil that we buy from foreign countries by more than half, doubled the clean energy that we produce. For the first time ever, more than 90 percent of the country has health insurance."

Obama also noted disappointments. "Despite the drop in unemployment, wages are still growing too slowly, and that makes it harder to pay for college or save for retirement," he said in Elkhart. "Inequality is still too high. The gap between rich and poor is bigger now than it's been just about any time since the 1920s. The rise of global competition and automation of more and more jobs; the race of technology – all these trends have left many workers behind, and they've let a few at the top collect extraordinary wealth and influence like never before. And that kind of changes our politics. So all these trends make it easy for people to feel that somehow the system is rigged and that the American Dream is increasingly hard to reach for ordinary folks. And there are plenty of politicians that are preying on that frustration for headlines and for votes."

One other thought: For a politician from corrupt Chicago, the Obama presidency leaves the scene squeaky clean.

Souder observes: "While Republicans exaggerate the negatives and ignore the gains in Elkhart, Kokomo and important parts of the Fort Wayne economy (where would we be without GM where employment is up 2,400 to 4,000?) I believe that your article gives him too much credit and no accountability for his role in our comparative stagnation. At best, he had a net-net neutral impact overall." ❖



# Looking back on end of Clinton, Bush terms

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – In the 22 years that Howey Politics Indiana has been publishing, we’ve covered the end of two presidencies: Bill Clinton in 2001 and George W. Bush in 2009.

Now for just the second time in history, we are witnessing the third consecutive two-term president leave office with the departure of President Barack Hussein Obama, following Clinton and Bush43. It is the first time there have been three two-termers in a row since Presidents Thomas Jefferson in 1809, James Madison in 1817 and James Monroe in 1825.



Here is how HPI covered the departing Clinton and Bush43 administrations:

## Jan. 18, 2001: A retrospective on Clinton and Indiana: President left a fascinating wake

“Bill Clinton is the best politician I’ve ever heard, seen or dreamed of....” - L. Keith Bulen. The quote you just read came a few months before Keith Bulen’s death in January 1999. It came in response to a question I asked, almost an after-thought at the end of my last interview with Bulen: “What do you think of President Clinton?” What made Bulen’s quote so remarkable was that this was a guy who was a senior campaign official for the Great Communicator, President Ronald Reagan.

President Bill Clinton passes from the presidency at the end of this week and he will have left a deep shadow across the face of Indiana, despite the fact that this was a state that resoundingly rejected him twice. It was a state where the governing conservative Democrats never completely warmed up to him in the good times, and had their 10-foot poles ready during the worst. And even as Clinton leaves the White House, there is every indication that he won’t really pass at all. Bill Clinton is poised to become the consummate, behind-the-scenes player that may be more

akin to Mark Hanna or the ultimate kingmaker, the elder Chicago Mayor Richard Daley.

Clinton claimed two obvious Hoosier victims who bookended his presidency. The first was Vice President Dan Quayle, a foe to whom Bill Clinton dealt his first electoral defeat in 1992. Eight years later, the victim was Democratic National Chairman Joe Andrew, who would vigorously deny victimization even as word emerged that a party led by Al Gore in 2001 would prefer Andrew maintaining the helm. Instead, President Bill and U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton have essentially seized control of the Democratic National Committee by maneuvering Terry McAuliffe into command. This will likely have a huge historical impact on politics both nationally and here in Indiana. Just as Quayle would have been waiting in the presidential wings had he won in 1992, the emerging Clintonian coup has an unalterable impact on the presidential designs of Sen. Evan Bayh.

Back in 1991, most Hoosiers viewed Gov. Bill Clinton as a third-tier presidential contender who won the nomination almost by default after party stalwarts ranging from Mario Cuomo to Jay Rockefeller didn’t have the guts to take on President George H.W. Bush following his Gulf War victory. The state never warmed up to him, in part because of Quayle’s favorite son status, despite Clinton’s position as a “New Democrat” with the potential to be more harmless with the conservative brand practiced in the Bayh II era. Despite the post-convention Clinton-Gore feel-good bus foray across I-64 in Southern Indiana, the vanquished G.H.W. Bush carried the state by a 43 to 37 percent margin, with Ross Perot taking the 20 percent that would have given the elder Bush an outright landslide. In

fact, ’92 represented the first instance of Clinton drag here. Going into that year, Indiana Democrats held an 8-2 margin in CDs. U.S. Rep. Jim Jontz, running in a freshly carved 5th CD designed by Democrats in the Indiana General Assembly, lost to Steve Buyer by a 51-49 percent margin. Buyer ran a feisty campaign dressed in military fatigues to take advantage of the Gulf War and probably benefitted from Quayle on the ticket. But there was quiet revulsion to the frequent Clinton bimbo eruptions, his draft status, and his perceived inhaling fib. The Buyer victory served as only a premonition of disaster to overcome Democrats seeking federal office here. And yet, the so-called Clinton drag rarely moved beyond the 10 congressional

districts and ultimately bolstered the conservative wing of his party.

## Three days; three weeks

The Clinton comeback played out over three days in April 1995 and three weeks at the end of the year and each period had interesting Hoosier ties. On April 14, Clin-

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**THE HOWEY POLITICAL REPORT**

**A retrospective on Clinton and Indiana**  
President left a fascinating wake here

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By **BRIAN A. HOWEY** in Indianapolis

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**“QUOTE” OF THE WEEK**  
“The president is relevant....”  
- President Bill Clinton, April 15, 1995.

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Ticker Tape: Bayh and taxes p. 2  
Bob Lang: Clinton and Indiana p. 2  
Columnist: Broder on Clinton p. 8  
State of State: O’Bannon’s 8th p. 9

Covering the Golden Age of Indiana Politics

ton filed for reelection. A day later, President Clinton was at his low point, insisting to the press that, "The Constitution gives me relevance. The power of our ideas gives us relevance. The President is relevant." And then came April 16, 1995. As U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar prepared for his presidential kickoff at City Market in Indianapolis, word filtered through the crowd: The federal building in Oklahoma City had been bombed. The Commander-in-Chief became the the Empathizer-in-Chief and went a long way toward restoring his relevance. Clinton also took on conservative talk radio, saying it was a purveyor of "hate and paranoia."

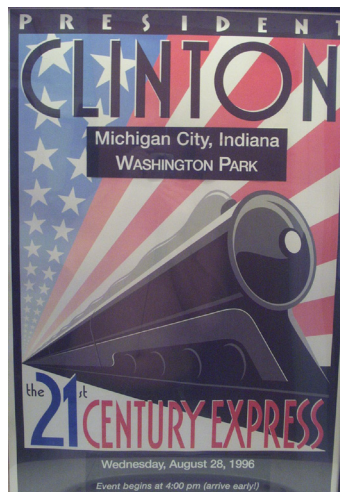
In the middle stood Mike Pence, whose Network Indiana state-wide radio show had raised him from a vanquished congressional candidate and conservative think tank president to a daily Hoosier commentator with Clintonism supplying much of the fodder. Pence resisted the hate, telling HPR in April 1995, "I think President Clinton is right in that vein. We have rights in America. And in tandem with those rights, we have responsibility. We are not interested in creating a forum for the conveyance of paranoid conspiracy theories at the state and federal level."



### Michigan City & new cops

President Clinton used Michigan City as his staging point for entry to the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago that August. He was at his best on the stump. With nearly 20,000 people jamming the lakefront Washington Park, Clinton acknowledged he was the first President since William McKinley to visit Michigan City. "All I've got to say is the rest of 'em didn't know what they were missing," he said, stroking the throng.

The Michigan City-Chicago sequence is important for three reasons. First, it poised then-Gov. Evan Bayh for the national stage with his convention keynote speech. "I appreciated what Gov. Bayh said about the relationship he and Susan have with Hillary and me," Clinton said. "It's way beyond politics and beyond the fact that we're from the same party or we served as governors together. They are our friends. I don't know what the future holds for them, but I wouldn't be surprised at all if some day Evan Bayh came back to Michigan City as President of the United States." But during the night of Bayh's keynote, the first strains of the post-Clinton world appeared. Hillary Clinton's speech preceding Bayh's kept pushing the keynote back.



A introductory video on Bayh was scrapped and the young governor barely got on before the 11 p.m. newscasts on the Eastern Seaboard. Some in the Bayh camp wondered if Mrs. Clinton had ulterior motives.

### Scumbags and impeachment

"I did not have sex with that woman, Miss Lewinsky," a defiant President Clinton said, shaking his finger at the nation in January 1998. A Democratic friend of mine watching Nightline with me as the epic scandal began unfolding, honked at the denial. "Haaa! It's true," he said as images of Monica Lewinsky crossed the TV screen. "That's Clinton's kind of woman."

While Indiana Republicans scoffed and weren't surprised, Hoosier Democrats were quick to dust off their 10-foot poles. U.S. Rep. Dan Burton had played a key and constant role in trying to pick through the Clinton/Gore '96 campaign irregularities. His own comment to the Indianapolis Star about

Clinton being a "scumbag" was a shot across the bow in 1998 on what was to become an ugly partisan showdown with the ramifications yet to be fully understood. As the Lewinsky scandal unfolded, Democrats were skeptical. At IDEA in August 1998, the Clinton jokes and black humor were in full force as the party pros, except for Chairman Joe Andrew, feared a '94 redux.

The problem was, the Republicans had never recovered from the winter of '95-96 when they shut down the government. The message was muddled down the homestretch of the mid-term campaign. The Republicans overplayed their hand and scandal fatigue won out. Though there were no gains in Indiana, Democrats actually picked up seats nationally. At the Bulen Symposium in December '98, Mike Tackett of the Chicago Tribune gently ribbed his old IU journalism colleague, saying, "The only one talking about impeachment here today is Brian Howey." When the 228-206 House vote for impeachment came down three weeks later, no Hoosier demagoguery was to be found, though radio commentator Mike Pence was outraged by air attacks on Iraq on the eve of impeachment.

### Rube Goldberg presidency

At Purdue University each year, they have a Rube Goldberg Contest: Who can build the oddest, gaudiest contraption that carries off some mechanized task, be it relevant or inane. The Clinton presidency has been one big Rube Goldberg contraption, a synthesizing, complex, fascinating, bizarre, cunning and grotesque political drama of soap opera proportions. It has been the Great Gatsby Presidency along with the American Evita, with the Clintons using so many allies, and sacrificing so many friends and colleagues, leaving a wake of personal destruction, suicide, and towering legal bills. I winced watching the

PBS Frontline footage of Secretaries Madeline Albright and Donna Shalala unwittingly lie for Bill Clinton's sexcapades. Neither would resign because of the exploitation. But the nation prospered in a virtually unprecedented way. There was growing wealth and opportunity across the board. We are outraged by President Clinton, and yet we are in many ways better off than we were. And the undeniable truth is, Bill Clinton will still be with us and may, someday soon, take up residence once more at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.

### Dec. 18, 2008: Bush legacy: shock, awe & atrophy

I was drawn to my March 13, 2003, pre-Iraq War shock and awe analysis as I set out to write my first draft of history of President George W. Bush. The first four sentences read: "This is brinksmanship on an epic scale. Within the next month there could possibly be, as the rock band REM might say, the 'end of the world as we know it.' President George W. Bush is taking a huge, calculated gamble, leading the nation into a war a majority of Americans appear to believe is morally correct. The danger lies in its execution, the retribution of our enemies, and the impact on an economy that has been described as 'the dagger aimed at the heart' of the Bush administration."

But it was my seventh paragraph that in retrospect is fascinating: "There have been warnings of budget deficits topping \$300 billion, an acknowledgment from the Bush administration that his second round of tax cuts likely wouldn't have a near-term stimulus, and an ominous warning from Warren Buffett about derivatives becoming 'time bombs, both for the parties that deal in them and the economic system' and 'financial weapons of mass destruction, carrying dangers that, while now latent, are potentially lethal' to the banking system."

The seventh paragraph was prescient. Few Americans were worried about derivatives on the eve of the Iraq War. The Bush years became a nexus where the Oil Presidency, the loosened regulations on Wall Street, and the utter lack of an energy policy taking into account national security implications, became the perfect storm that howls as Bush and Cheney prepare their exits. There are now \$7.5 billion in funded and unfunded securities. The Washington greenback printing press is roaring. Because of a lack of an energy policy and a federal mandate for the Big 3 to produce more energy efficient cars and trucks, it is now threatening 20 percent of Indiana's economic sector, automobiles. That Bush said in his 2006 State of the Union speech that "America is addicted to oil" comes off in retrospect with virtual childlike naivete.

Here we stand today in the penultimate month of Bush's eight-year legacy. Despite Republican accusations hurled last fall that Barack Obama was a "socialist," we end the "conservative" Bush presiding over an American economy with essentially state-owned banks. Taxpayers might even end up themselves as owners of auto companies. In the irony of ironies, it may be Bush who extends a lifeline to the United Auto Workers. As China morphs into capitalism, the U.S. is morphing the other way. We have witnessed the greatest expansion of entitlements since the Great Society. The budget has gone from a \$431 billion surplus in January 2001 to at \$455 billion deficit on Oct. 15 (it would go to \$1.4 trillion in 2009).

In July 2005, Bush spoke at Indiana Black Expo, celebrating a rise in African-American home ownership. "That's good for America," Bush told 3,000 gathered at the RCA Dome. Embedded here, and certainly not constricted to any particular race, were the seeds of another disaster, the mortgage meltdown. This was Bush's "ownership society" that found a deregulated Wall Street and a snoozing Securities and Exchange Commission presiding over mortgages lent to people who couldn't afford them, then bundled and sold into what would become "toxic" debt that now requires a \$700 billion taxpayer bailout with

no guarantees. While the seeds of this deregulation were planted during the Clinton years, candidate Bush would observe at the Metro Church in Indianapolis in July 1999, "Prosperity must have a purpose. The dream is for you. No great calling is ever easy and no work of man is ever perfect. But we can, in our imperfect way, rise now and again to the example of St. Francis: Where there is hatred, sowing love; where there is darkness, shedding light. where there is despair, bringing hope."

Bush ironically brought about "hope" in the form of Barack Obama. His 32 percent disapproval rating created the door for Obama to win Indiana's 11 Electoral College votes this week. Exit polling would show that 60 percent of Hoosier voters saw the economy as the top issue (compared to the 17 percent in 2004's leading issue of "moral values" spurred by the Bush/Rove gay marriage ban wedge strategy) and 52 percent of them voted for Obama. Asked by ABC's Charlie Gibson if he helped Obama win, Bush blamed the Republican Party. "I think it was a repudiation of Republicans. And I'm sure some people voted for Barack Obama because of me. I think most people voted for Barack Obama because they decided they wanted him to be in their living room for the next four years explaining policy." The near collapse of American capitalism also led to an extraordinary and breathtaking reversal by Bush, who told CNN earlier this

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### Bush legacy: shock, awe & atrophy

*First drafts in history focus on war, energy, an economy on the brink*

By BRIAN A. HOWEY  
 INDIANAPOLIS - I was drawn to my March 13, 2003, pre-Iraq War shock and awe analysis as I set out to write my first draft of history of President George W. Bush. The first four sentences read: "This is brinksmanship on an epic scale. Within the next month there could possibly be, as the rock band REM might say, the 'end of the world as we know it.' President George W. Bush is taking a huge, calculated gamble, leading the nation into a war a majority of Americans appear to believe is morally correct. The danger lies in its execution, the retribution of our enemies, and the impact on an economy that has been described as 'the dagger aimed at the heart' of the Bush administration."

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week, "I've abandoned free-market principles to save the free-market system."

Sen. Dick Lugar told students at the University of Indianapolis last Saturday, "It's too early to tell whether it is of the same magnitude of the Great Depression of 1929 and '30. This is a crisis because it is very huge, but at this point it's not of proportions of many we have seen before. . . . Rather than be consumed by the crisis of fear, we need to really be exhibiting more confidence."

Americans are scared; their fear having incubated for the past few years. When Howey/Gauge began polling in February of 2008, the fear expressed by respondents, well before \$4 a gallon gas and the Wall Street and Detroit collapses, was already palpable. Thus, a legacy of the second Bush presidency is the direct opposite of Franklin Roosevelt's most enduring quote: "The only thing we have to fear is ... fear itself." The Bush presidency was all about fear: Iraqi drones spraying U.S. cities with anthrax. "We don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud." Or gay marriage. "Saddam Hussein is a homicidal dictator who is addicted to weapons of mass destruction."

The Iraq War represents Bush's greatest gamble and, perhaps, his best chance of improving his standing among our 43 presidents. There was no WMD in Iraq, as weapons inspector Scott Ritter warned at the time. The White House induced "group think" and a passive press (which is now facing its own era of atrophy and bankruptcy) helped pave the catastrophic route. The idea of preemptive war became a facade for a president's personal vendetta against a dictator who once tried to kill his father. Great American presidents ranging from Lincoln to FDR endured bad military leadership and stunning defeats before the Grants, Shermans, Eisenhowers and Pattons emerged. Bush has his David Petraeus, but not until he goaded the insurgency as Lincoln and Roosevelt never did: "My answer is, bring 'em on," he said as the Iraq insurgency gathered over the July 4 weekend in 2003. Or "Dead or alive." Mission accomplished. Sophomores in power.

Hoosiers heard the warnings of Sen. Dick Lugar, who became a man firmly outside the circle of power. It was alarming when Newsweek reported in July 2003 that Lugar was worried about the American people being blindsided by the true costs of blood and treasure. "This idea that we will be in Iraq just as long as we need and not a day more is rubbish!" Lugar was quoted in 2003. "We're going to be there a long time. Where does the money come from? How is it to be disbursed and by whom?"

Once again, in the last few weeks, Bush has blamed the tragic miscues in Iraq to "intelligence failure" even though authors like Bob Woodward, Michael Gordon and Thomas E. Ricks (along with former Bush communica-



President George W. Bush at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in 2003. He coined the phrase "My Man Mitch" at this rally. (HPI Photo by Ellen Jackson)

tions director Scott McClelland) documented the hyped intelligence that sold the war. Vice President Cheney would say in Nashville in 2002, "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us. Time is not on our side. The risks of inaction are far greater than the risks of action." In his book "Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq," Ricks noted that retired Marine

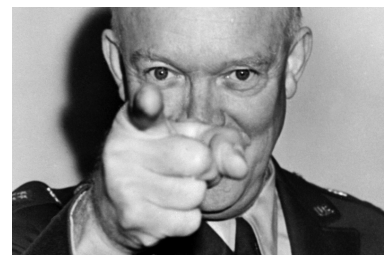
Gen. Anthony Zinni "nearly fell off his chair" when he heard Cheney speak. "In my time at Centcom, I watched the intelligence and never – not once – did it say, '(Saddam) has WMD.' It was never there, never there."

## 88 Hoosiers paid the ultimate price

Eighty-eight Hoosiers – from Richard Blakely, 34, to Nick Idalski, 23, to Zachariah Gonzalez, 23 – would pay the ultimate price. It is Iraq, however, that could salvage part of the Bush legacy. If Barack Obama and Defense Secretary Robert Gates can orchestrate an orderly draw-down, and Iraq becomes a stable democracy and prolific oil producer, Bush's standing in history will certainly improve from today's brutal first drafts.

## Postscript: They didn't like Ike

I was born in 1956 under President Eisenhower, whose own first drafts of history had consigned him to the ranks of the mediocre bottom third. Like Bush, he often mangled syntax and wasn't seen as an extraordinary or creative chief executive. As he left office, he faced a contrast with the Camelot presidency of John F. Kennedy.



Since the first Eisenhower historical drafts, he has ascended into many historians top 10 lists as one of our country's best presidents. Eisenhower kept the nation out of four wars, ended the Korean conflict,

built the interstate highway system and started the space program. As historians finally accessed his papers, they found a probing, intellectual chief who in retrospect made many wise decisions. Thus, beware of these first drafts of history, for time will certainly alter perspectives, supply clues to mysteries and answer the most elusive questions we have today. The ash of crisis can alter perspective. When there is no access to the presidential papers, it's like a political poll: A snapshot in time that can burnish subject and author as either a prescient seer beyond the horizon ... or a fool with a keyboard. ❖

# In defense of boring

By MARK SOUDER

FORT WAYNE – When I proposed to Diane back in 1974, I told her that life with me would not be boring. That it was not. (I also said I wouldn't run for political office but I failed in a few other things as well.)

When Mitch Daniels first discussed with me that he was going to run for governor, I raised some political concerns about his big city slicker and corporate background. His response was that he was going to "out small town me." You know, he said, I come from a small town too. I asked how big. He said something over 10,000 people. I snorted, "That's a big city." Of course, Mitch (the populist first name), went RV'ing to every burg in the state, lost all his suits and ties, and even used populist green as his color as opposed to the ubiquitous Republican red, white and blue. I was impressed.



My hometown of Grabill had under 500 residents and couldn't grow much because it was surrounded by Old Order Amish farms (not the liberal Amish with a top on their buggy). A friend unfairly described the church I grew up in as being founded by a group of men who gathered together, made a list of everything fun in life, wrote "NO" across the top, and then said "now we have the foundation for our church."

When Mitch Daniels was elected governor, Indiana government was rather antiquated. License bureau jokes have disappeared from our lexicons. His "selling the toll road" hurt Indiana Republicans in 2006, but without a doubt will go down as one of the more remarkable deals of any state government.

**I had supported multiple** road requests, including one that the previous governor promised me. Our new regional highway director Bob Alderman received permission from Gov. Daniels to open the files related to our district. It was appalling; all sorts of promises to all sorts of people with absolutely no way to pay for hardly anything. The personal note to me with the road commitment was even in the file.

For eight years Daniels challenged institutions in this state. Businessmen came in to run divisions like a business. When hearing that very popular expression people often forget that businesses don't always succeed. However, successful businessmen don't quit. They learn from their errors and re-structure, trying new ways to improve the ineffective status quo. Generally they quit, after learning that the public sector doesn't work like a real market, but if they stay around long enough or get replaced with similar folks (as happened under Daniels),

quality change can occur.

Life under Gov. Daniels wasn't boring. It was tumultuous. But the state advanced more, in my opinion, than any other Hoosier governor.

There are some worthy rivals to Daniels, including the next governor, Mike Pence. When Mitch left the governor's office and decided to reform higher education, a much harder effort than changing a state, incoming Gov. Pence seemed more likely to be a friendly, smiley sort of fellow. One's first impression, and last, of Mitch Daniels is that he is intense. That is not true of Mike Pence, though depending upon the issue, the last impression might be that he is grimly determined.

**While to the media, Pence's** defense of a private business owner's right to practice their personal religious beliefs is the defining moment of his career, it was not what impacted most Hoosiers. It was the obsession of the few who blasted Indiana nationally because they, as individuals, did not agree.

Quite frankly, I had some disagreements with the legislation. However, the opposition picked non-representative examples, distorted potential impacts, and yet pretended to be providing "news" and "fact." For four years the media-created ruckus made the political life of Indiana "not boring."

As for actual substantive change, Gov. Pence's health care and education legislation impacted more people and are an enduring legacy. Because he developed specific proposals to be implemented, as opposed to purist ideological rhetoric, Mike was whacked up the side of the head and blasted by right-wing and left-wing critics.

Thanks to the accidental occupant of the position of superintendent of public instruction behaving like a spoiled child, the education policy changes never actually received the substantive debate they should have. People got tired of the drama. In the Trump Administration both the Pence approaches to health and education are likely to be highlighted nationally. The controversy won't be boring.

Our new Gov. Eric Holcomb now faces remnants of the 12 years of his non-boring predecessors' issues including roads, education, health care adjustments, and drug abuse. Eric worked with both Daniels and Pence, so is well-equipped to understand the diverse legacy approaches.

**Gov. Holcomb is another** small-town enthusiast, proud of his state. His eyes light up when he spots a basketball hoop or a small-town diner. But overall, he is pretty boring. His ideas tend to be functional, not controversial.

But people don't stay, come back or move into Indiana for excitement. While we have plenty of it in our cities, arguably too much, even Indy is not New York or Chicago, for which we are thankful. There is nothing wrong with being kind of boring. We also needed a break from governmental tumult, a period to consolidate.

Washington, however, needs a shake-up; actually, a total makeover. Donald Trump is too much of "not

boring” for my preference but Washington needs a jolt, though it is handy to have a vice president who can piece together some of the broken pieces to make sure there is not a collapse of core functions in the process.

We wander Indiana. If we want extra excitement, as long as our roads and airports are decent, we have easy access to greater tumult and turmoil. What is nice

is to watch the Washington chaos in the news, or Entertainment Tonight, from solid, steady, somewhat boring Indiana. ❖

**Souder is a former Republican congressman from Indiana.**

## The General Assembly study of drugs

**By MORTON MARCUS**

INDIANAPOLIS – The Indiana General Assembly has a wonderfully easy-to-use site for the citizen who wants to know about bills introduced by subject or author. I don’t know who is responsible for this site, but hats off to him, her, and them.

Today I found 43 bills on the subject of drugs.

There may be many others if I searched more diligently. Imagine that: Indiana, A State in Denial, is concerned about drugs, a well-known scourge, and the primary cause of many safety, economic, education, and health problems.

State Sen. Jim Merritt has authored 14 of the 43 bills. Naturally, I find the most compelling to be SB 244, which mandates a fiscal impact study of drugs and drug addiction.



Normally, a fiscal impact study concerns the revenues and expenditures of government. But SB 244 goes further. It calls for an economic impact study which includes work force concerns and private expenditures on prevention and remediation.

Drug (and alcohol) use among those seeking employment or holding a job could be the most serious short-term economic issue in Indiana. Long-term, that use causes children to be born and raised under conditions which retard all aspects of their lives. Drugs, as we have enforced our laws, require larger jails, more judges, and more police and probation officers.

**The consequences of drug** (and alcohol) usage are well known. But, as a state and a nation, we have not been willing to put the necessary resources into prevention and remediation. If we knew the costs of drugs, we could be as serious in our efforts to reduce their use by the rich and well-educated as we are to deplore them when used by the poor and poorly educated.

Recently at a Rotary Club meeting in

Portland (Jay County), drugs were identified by leading citizens as a critical factor in poverty, health problems, unemployment, low levels of educational attainment, welfare dependency, and many other public and personal woes. Where do the organizations in Jay County committed to prevention and remediation get the money to tackle drug problems?

**Federal funding is uncertain.** State funding is minimal. Private foundations are loath to choose one of society’s ills over the many that persist. Yet, if drugs (and alcohol) are at the root of many social issues, destroying individuals and the communities in which they live, perhaps we do need to focus. Maybe expenditures on social welfare in its many aspects would be reduced if drug (and alcohol) problems were brought under control.

Prohibition and criminalization of addictions have not been solutions. Now is the time for a broad campaign, with major expenditures by governments and the private sector to find, implement, and maintain programs that significantly reduce drug (and alcohol) use in our society.

As with other problems, solutions probably are known and used in many places. What impedes making that knowledge available, affordable, and acceptable throughout Indiana? ❖

**Mr. Marcus is an economist, writer, and speaker who may be reached at [mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com](mailto:mortonjmarcus@yahoo.com).**

### ANTELOPE CLUB

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>> Lunch & dinner 6 days a week

>> Cigar lounge

>> Beautiful view of Downtown from our 2nd floor patio

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

# Gov. Holcomb invokes Lincoln in his address

By **THOMAS CURRY**  
and **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Gov. Eric Holcomb relied on an old hand to move Hoosiers into their third century during his first State of the State address Tuesday night.

Enter, President Abraham Lincoln, who moved into Indiana at the birth of statehood in December, 1816, and finds its 51st governor a seasoned scholar on his life and legacy. “I will continue to reach out to everyone with ideas that can lift all Hoosiers, including those who

may not always agree on everything but are willing to find opportunities to solve problems and move our state forward,” Holcomb said in his address. “I will leave you with two quotes from one of the greatest Hoosiers and greatest Americans who ever was, Abraham Lincoln, a man I have studied for many years and who is one of my true heroes.”

“It was Lincoln who said, ‘The best way to predict your future is to create it,’” Holcomb said at the end of his speech. “As we lead Indiana into our third century, even as we sustain those many things we’re doing well, let’s not be afraid to think big, be bold, and act with courage.”

Holcomb, who spent his bachelor party at Lincoln historical sites in Springfield, Ill., continued, “Lincoln also said, ‘Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality.’”

**And the** new governor’s final pitch: “Colleagues, you have long shown your commitment to the state we all love. To you, and my fellow Hoosiers, I pledge my full commitment to the work of transforming these promises into reality, and taking Indiana to the next level.”

Holcomb also renewed his call for long-term

road funding, lauded front line public servants combating the drug epidemic tormenting his state, and made an appeal for the revival of Indiana’s embattled coal industry.

Holcomb has joined forces with House Speaker Brian Bosma and Senate President David Long for a road and infrastructure funding package, which at this point is centered on a 10-cent per gallon gasoline tax hike. Noting his “five pillar” agenda, Holcomb said, “My second pillar is a sustainable plan to fund our roads and bridges for the next 20 years. We’re able to drive the goods we produce and grow to 80 percent of the nation’s population within 24 hours. For Indiana, the Crossroads of America is more than a motto. It’s a mission.

**“I will work with you to** establish a plan that preserves what we have, finishes commitments we have made, and invests in the new projects for the future that ensures Indiana remains the Crossroads of America. These include projects in every quadrant of our state: Upgrades of U.S. 30 from Fort Wayne to Valparaiso, and 31 to South Bend, additional lanes on I-70 and I-65 from Jeffersonville to Crown Point, and completing I-69 from Evansville to Fort Wayne. When it comes to paying for these projects, I’m open to a menu of options. The fact

is, existing sources of revenue are just not keeping up.”

Holcomb vowed to be careful with taxpayer dollars. “I’m a believer that every time you ask a taxpayer for a dollar, you better be darn sure you need it and are going to use it effectively for its intended purpose,” the governor said. “And here’s a case that if we ask Hoosiers to invest a little more, to meet the need, the return is going to be well worth it – for them, for our communities, and for our economy.”

Holcomb outlined other infrastructure needs. “We must invest in other infrastructure projects that will further separate us from our competition,” he said. “This includes double-tracking the South Shore Line to improve access for Hoosiers who travel between North-



west Indiana and Chicago, and incentives for more direct flights to better connect Hoosiers to national and international markets. It also includes adding a fourth water port in Southeastern Indiana, which will help accelerate economic development and play to our strength in that beautiful part of our state."

**On the drug epidemic,** Holcomb cited a Fayette County nurse who runs a needle change program. He has called for a statewide needle exchange strategy. "In typical Hoosier fashion, we have heroes on the front lines saving lives every day," Holcomb said. "They include the public health nurses who run syringe exchange programs in nine Indiana counties. Paula Maupin from Fayette County is here with us tonight. Thank you, Paula, for your unwavering service to those who are battling addiction. And that's why we will give county officials authority to establish syringe exchange programs, to ensure that the people making decisions are those closest to the problem."

Holcomb added, "We need to do more, much more. So we're going to attack this problem on all fronts: Prevention, treatment and enforcement. Earlier this month, I announced the creation of a senior executive reporting directly to me to oversee our efforts to deal with this epidemic and I'm pleased that Jim McClelland, the former long-time CEO of Goodwill Industries, has agreed to join our team. I can't think of anyone who has a better mix of skills and experience to fill this critical role."

And Holcomb said, "We also plan to limit the amount of controlled substances, prescriptions and refills, enhance penalties for those who commit pharmacy robberies, and upgrade the Indiana State Police labs to fight the drug epidemic. This is a fight we can and we must win if we're going to take Indiana to the next level."

Holcomb renewed his call for appointing an education secretary over electing a superintendent of public instruction. "I propose that the superintendent of public instruction become a position appointed by the governor, beginning in 2021," Holcomb said. "Education is a key to our state's future. And I've long been committed to the notion that, as the state's chief executive, the

Governor should set education priorities and be held accountable for the results. I have great respect for our new superintendent, Dr. Jennifer McCormick, and look forward to working with her closely over the next four years. But, regardless of party, the Governor should be able to choose his or her key education partner."

On energy, Holcomb said, "Indiana runs on coal. Let's apply technology and innovation to find new ways to unleash this abundant source of power by burning coal cleanly while keeping Hoosiers employed and factories humming. At the same time, we'll grow our 21st century economy by investing in and nurturing entrepreneurship, innovation and technology pursuits."

He is just beginning the discussion on a infrastructure plan. "HB1002 may not be the perfect recipe so we hope to create a dialogue. There are many cooks in this building so we are all gathering around the pot and are going to work together," Holcomb said.

**Legislative leaders reacted** to the initial Holcomb address with bipartisan praise. "Little to argue with," said Senate President Long. "I felt he did a nice job and will continue to grow as a leader."

House Minority Leader Scott Pelath, D-Michigan City, said, "Congratulations to the governor. I think it was a credible effort for his first go at it."

On the road plan, Pelath observed, "It is going to take a strong executive to sell the road plan. It seems to me that he is going to let Speaker Bosma do the heavy lifting on this. Citizens haven't been able to grasp this plan yet and they deserve a chance to understand it." ❖





# Mayor Buttigieg's shot at the DNC chair

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Are the odds great or small that South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg will become the Democratic national chairman? Let's consider some questions about that.



**Q.** Is Buttigieg almost sure to be Demo chair, as some politicians already jockeying to replace him as mayor seem to think?

**A.** No. Nothing is certain. It's not even certain that the candidate with the most votes will win. There's nothing like the Electoral College to trump the candidate with the most votes in this contest. But there could be multiple ballots of the 447 Democratic

National Committee members in late February. If the top vote getter on the initial ballot doesn't have a clear majority, that person could lose out in maneuvering in additional balloting.

**Q.** But does Pete have a chance?

**A.** Yes. He

wouldn't be a candidate if he had no chance of being competitive. He is, however, not regarded as a frontrunner.

**Q.** Didn't he say at one point when he was first being mentioned that he was not a candidate to lead the party?

**A.** Yes. He said that in a mid-December "letter from flyover country" in which he urged Democrats to focus on views and needs of people in middle America, not just on "The Show" in Washington. He was being cautious. Like many potential candidates, whether for public office or party chair, Buttigieg was sending up a trial balloon, talking about goals but not announcing he would seek to be the one to implement them.

**Q.** What if the balloon never got off the ground?

**A.** Then he would not be a candidate. But the balloon floated. He was taken seriously. He announced, with national publications and TV networks describing him in

terms such as "rising Democratic Party star," not laughing him off as just some mayor of some middle-sized city in the Rust Belt."

**Q.** How could Buttigieg win?

**A.** By coming up through the middle, between the two candidates now regarded as frontrunners, one endorsed by Bernie Sanders and the progressive wing of the party, the other backed by some long-time supporters of Hillary Clinton and to some extent by the White House. Many DNC members, however, don't want to keep fighting the last presidential primary battles. They might turn to another choice rather than to U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison, who battled for Sanders, or Labor Secretary Tom Perez, choice of many Clinton supporters.

**Q.** Could Buttigieg be that compromise choice, somebody from outside Washington and in the crucial middle ground that Democrats lost as they won big on both coasts?

**A.** Maybe. Maybe not. There are four regional forums at which the candidates make presentations, one this weekend in Phoenix. They could cement the chances of one of the frontrunners or produce an eventual compromise winner, Buttigieg or somebody else.

**Q.** How does this quest for chairman fit in with Pete's long-range game plan for his political future?

**A.** It doesn't. If he had some detailed game plan in the past of what to run for when, it certainly didn't include running for DNC chair in 2017. Buttigieg has always said he has no game plan for quickly moving up the political ladder. He cites faulty speculation that he wouldn't



complete his first term as mayor before moving on. He stayed and won a second term. He would resign now as mayor if named chair. But if not, he could even be around to seek a third term in a job he clearly enjoys and that now gives him a national platform.

**Q.** Would a loss for chair hurt Buttigieg politically?

**A.** No. Not now. If his trial balloon had been shot down amid

laughter about a mayor of South Bend thinking he could do the job, that would have been bad. The balloon floats, successfully, with uncertain political currents to determine whether it travels all the way from "flyover country" to the DNC. ❖

**Colwell has been covering Indiana politics over five decades for the South Bend Tribune**

# Weiser, Repay, Prince eye Lake Dem chair

By RICH JAMES

GARY – The annual Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast in Gary is more than just a tribute to the great civil rights leader. It also is one of the biggest political events held in the Steel City. For Gary politicians, the breakfast is an opportunity shore up support within the city.



For the outsiders, it is an opportunity to reach out for the backing of Gary's heavily Democratic vote. Some of those attending the Jan. 14 event said it may have been the first time they have seen long-time suburban Democrat James L. Wieser in attendance.

Wieser is a Schererville attorney. He has worn a number of political hats during his 40-

year political career in Lake County. He has served on the Highland Town Council and the county council.

He also has lost races for county commissioner and in 2014 was crushed by state Rep. Hal Slager in a bid to go the General Assembly. He has served as Democratic attorney to the county election board for a number of years. He also has been a high-profile attorney on a number of public projects.

Perhaps the biggest was his representation for those wanting to build the Hickory Hills land-fill in south Lake County. Although it was close to winning approval, the project was defeated by the Lake County Solid Waste Management District. And now, Wieser wants to be chairman of the Lake County Democratic Party. Chairman John Buncich, who is under federal indictment, isn't expected to seek reelection in

March. But Wieser, who is pushing 70, isn't alone.

Also campaigning for the job is County Commissioner Mike Repay of Hammond, who was elected to a second term last year. Repay, who was first elected while in his mid-30s, may be the youngest Democrat elected to the job, although former Commissioner (and state representative) Peter Katic thinks he may hold that honor.

**Repay is selling his youth** and energy as he goes about trying to win the chairmanship. Wieser is selling his experience. The party is aging and needs an infusion of youth. Some think Repay can recruit and invigorate the party. And Repay has secured the backing of Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson. There is another potential candidate, although he hasn't said he wants to or will seek the job.

Jerome Prince is a rising star in county Democratic politics. Prince, who is in his 40s, recently was elected chairman of the Gary Democratic Precinct Organization. He was elected Lake County assessor in 2014 and is a virtual lock to keep the office in 2018.

Prince, who is black, has been talked about as a compromise candidate if neither Repay nor Wieser catches fire. ❖

**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.**

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**Gary Varvel, Indystar:** "I've decided to run for Congress," a smiling Mike Pence said as we sat in a Downtown Indy restaurant in the late 1990s. Slightly stunned, I said, "I thought you told me your wife would kill you if you ran for Congress again." "Well, the Lord must have changed her mind," he said. At that moment, I had no way of knowing that I was looking at a future congressman, governor and vice president. But what I did know was that our friendship, which began in 1995, would become very distant. Now that he is the No. 2 to a man who tends to tweet his anger, I hope that some of Pence will rub off on Trump. In full disclosure, I still like Mike, but I have had no contact with the vice president-elect and I don't expect to. But if I did, I imagine our conversation would be reminiscent of that lunch so many years ago. After I told him, "Just don't mess up." He told me, "Pray that my yes, will be yes and my no, no." He was quoting Matthew 5:37, and I knew what he meant. He didn't want to be a typical politician who makes promises he doesn't intend to keep. He wanted to be a man of his word. So for his sake and that of our country, that is my prayer for my unfriended old friend. ❖



**Larry Sabato, Sabato's Crystal Ball:** Tomorrow marks the start of the brave new world of President Donald J. Trump. But today marks the end of the Obama-to-Trump transition. They, and we, survived the interregnum, more or less -- and it was not guaranteed and is worth celebrating. Truly, has there ever been as dramatic a contrast between outgoing and incoming chief executives as Barack Obama and Donald Trump? Actually, yes: the refined John Quincy Adams and the rough-hewn populist Andrew Jackson despised each other. Jackson believed he had been cheated out of the White House by a corrupt bargain during 1824's House of Representatives "run-off" that installed Adams as president. Other jarring transfers of power surely include the ones between the timid, indecisive James Buchanan, doing nothing while seven states left the Union, and Abraham Lincoln, who saved the Union in a bloody civil war (1861); the scholarly, erudite Woodrow Wilson and the tawdry, careless Warren G. Harding (1921); Herbert Hoover, a great humanitarian but hapless president, and Franklin D. Roosevelt, who gave people hope and sustenance through the depths of the Great Depression (1933); and Jimmy Carter, tortured by a bad economy and the Iranian hostage crisis that persisted to the moment of Ronald Reagan's oath-taking in 1981. For those who think Obama and Trump's minimal level of comity is assured, a few historical reminders are in order. John Adams was so contemptuous of Thomas Jefferson that he left the White House in the middle of the night on March 4, 1801, refusing to attend the inaugural ceremony of the man who had vanquished him. ❖

**Ross Douthat, New York Times:** If you had

set out to assess Barack Obama's legacy four years ago, when he won reelection convincingly over Mitt Romney, the assessment might have gone like this. On foreign policy, reasonably high marks: Osama bin Laden dead, disengagement from Iraq without disaster, no major wars or catastrophic blunders. In electoral politics, likewise: a successful re-election that seemed to betoken a sustained realignment for the Democrats. On the economy, lower grades: a depression averted, but record deficits, stagnant growth and stubborn elevated unemployment. On Obamacare, his signature achievement, a grade of incomplete, awaiting its implementation. What's interesting is that four years later, as the president leaves the White House, several of those assessments could be essentially reversed. His economic stewardship looks more impressive than it did in 2012: The United States hasn't escaped the stagnation trap entirely, but unemployment has fallen well below the levels that even Romney promised to deliver. His foreign policy record, on the other hand, looks worse: The Iraq withdrawal paved a path for the Islamic State, Vladimir Putin repeatedly seemed to outmaneuver the Obamanauts, and globally the Pax Americana is at its wobbliest since the Cold War. And in electoral politics, instead of the great Obama realignment, we have a Democratic Party reduced to rubble and the staggering ascent of Trump. ❖

**Jon Webb, Evansville Courier & Press:** "Presuming a reservoir of goodness in other people, that can be a risk. There will be times when the process disappoints you." It's easy to think President Barack Obama was talking about himself when he spoke that line during his farewell address in Chicago Tuesday night. Because the process sure has disappointed him. He spent eight frustrating years in the White House staring into the amphibious face of Mitch McConnell -- the Kentucky senator determined to stymie everything Obama attempted. McConnell and others built their entire careers around stopping the president, to the point where they had no real platform without him. McConnell wasn't the only one. Back in December, Politico reported that in the immediate aftermath of Obama's first election, tucked in a rich-man's resort in the bowels of Virginia, Mike Pence inspired his fellow congressmen by playing the opening monologue from "Patton." "We're not just going to shoot the (expletives)," George C. Scott says during the six-minute speech. "We're going to cut out their living guts and use them to grease the treads of our tanks." Harsh words for an incoming president. The kind of thing that either gets you thrown in federal prison or elected governor of Indiana. The legislative tantrum made no sense whatsoever. And it worked. The national GOP and its sycophantic media possessed an impressive ability to grab hold of their followers' feelings and twist. They transformed Obama -- a thoughtful centrist -- into a menacing figure who was simultaneously incompetent and unstoppably sinister. ❖

## Pence rejected East Chicago aid

EAST CHICAGO — Prior to leaving office, Gov. Mike Pence rejected the mayor's request for an emergency declaration over lead contamination, saying, in part, the state of Indiana has provided adequate assistance to the financially strapped city since news first



broke last summer that Calumet and West Calumet residents were living on highly contaminated soil (Cross, NWI Times). Residents pushed the mayor late last year to request a declaration for the USS Lead Superfund site, saying it would bring additional dollars to East Chicago to deal with the ongoing lead and arsenic crisis and pave a path for additional federal resources, including Medicare for life for residents exposed to environmental toxins. "Given the level of coordination among federal, state and local agencies, the state resources provided to date, and the resources available under the federal Superfund program, the issues described within your letter are being addressed without the need for a disaster emergency declaration," the letter states. City Attorney Carla Morgan on Wednesday released a copy of the letter following a records request from The Times. The letter from Pence is dated Dec. 14, but residents were not informed by the city of Pence's decision until a meeting last Friday. Morgan said Wednesday that Copeland is drafting a similar request to Gov. Eric Holcomb.

## Tomes protest bill finds resistance

INDIANAPOLIS — Black Lives Matter members and others gathered at the Statehouse Wednesday to voice their disapproval of a bill written by local Republican Senator James Tomes (Lange, Evansville Courier & Press). Senate Bill 285 would require public

officials to clear blocked roadways of protesters within 15 minutes using "any means necessary." Tomes suggested that the definition of "necessary means" would be left up to authorities. "If (demonstrators) want to apply for a permit like everybody else does, they can do that, and then authorities know that these streets will be closed and emergency personnel can reroute and everything is OK," Tomes said. "But this idea of the spontaneous, getting out in the streets and bringing things to a halt, that just doesn't cut it."

## Pence sees Trump as transformational

WASHINGTON — Vice President-elect Mike Pence believes Donald Trump is a transformational leader akin to Ronald Reagan who will be able to overcome conflicts within his own party and opposition from Democrats to get things accomplished through sheer force of personality. "I actually think, while there may be differences from time to time on particular policies, that you're going to see a high degree of unity," Pence said in an interview with IndyStar on Wednesday. Trump said the goal of his replacement is to insure everyone. Republicans have talked about universal access to insurance, not universal coverage. Trump accused the pharmaceutical industry of "getting away with murder" by overcharging for their products and said the federal government needs to negotiate with drug makers for lower prices. Asked whether price negotiation will be part of the incoming administration's replacement plan, Pence was noncommittal. "We'll see. We'll see," he said. "At the end of the day, we're going to come forward with a plan, I would expect in the early weeks of the administration, that we take to Capitol Hill, and take to the American people." The goal is to have the repeal and replacement bills moving through Congress simultaneously.

## Rokita calls for inaugural respect

LAFAYETTE — Todd Rokita is calling on Americans to be respectful at Friday's inauguration (WLFI-TV). Rokita said a peaceful transition of power is something you don't have in every nation and he wants that to continue in the United States. "This idea that you're going to call someone not a legitimate president, that you're going to blame the state of Michigan, you're going to blame the Russians, and who knows, by the end of this you're going to blame aliens from outer space," he said.

## Bucshon eyes health saving accounts

INDIANAPOLIS — U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon says flexibility and the expansion of health savings accounts are keys to keeping health insurance premium costs down as Republicans work to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (Greninger, Terre Haute Tribune-Star). "I think flexibility is always a good thing, with market competition and having different options for individuals to choose. For young healthy people, a health savings account and maybe a catastrophic health plan is what they would choose. If older and sicker, that is not the thing for you," he said. "You might need an HSA... and need a health insurance plan with a low deductible. I think trying to create a system with only uniform options for all of our citizens is not working."

## Justice Rucker to retire in March

INDIANAPOLIS — Justice Robert Rucker, a Gary native who has served on the Indiana Supreme Court since 1999, will close the books later this year on a legal career spanning five decades. Indiana Chief Justice Loretta Rush announced Wednesday in her annual State of the Judiciary address.