

A history of Hoosier bolts out of blue

In sports and politics, a stunning decision can inextricably alter the landscape

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

NASHVILLE, Ind. – The shocker. The gut punch. The thunderbolt out of the blue.

That's what Hoosiers went through on Saturday night and into Sunday morning when Colts quarterback Andrew Luck announced he was retiring – at age 29. It came just after he was honored as "Comeback Player of the Year" in 2018 following a miserable three-year stretch that included wounded shoulders and lacerated kidneys.

In the world of competition, the sudden retirement be it by an athlete or a politician can be



Colts QB Andrew Luck announces his retirement at age 29 on Saturday; Sen. Evan Bayh stuns the political world in February 2010 by not seeking a third term.

a body blow to fans and supporters. In the sporting context, Hoosiers have had four such blows in modern times. In the political realm, since Howey Politics Indiana began publish-

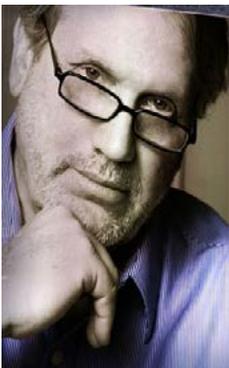
Continued on page 3

Do we accept massacres?

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

FRENCH LICK – U.S. Senators take this oath: "I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter: So help me God."

Following the Sept. 11 terror attacks, Congress and President George W. Bush took an array of security steps to defend Americans from foreign terrorists. The Department of Homeland Security was



"I'm open to any conversation that prevents – OK – let's talk about how we prevent harm with weapons. If you read the second part of the 2nd Amendment, it's to protect us from the government."

- U.S. Rep. Greg Pence, talking in Muncie on Monday.



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Jack E. Howey
 editor emeritus
 1926-2019

created, along with the Director of National Intelligence. We experience a number of security protocols every time we fly or go into a security-sensitive area. These measures have been largely successful, as terror attacks from foreign sources like al-Qaeda are exceptionally rare.

In 2019, Americans are facing a virtual guerrilla war from domestic sources, ranging from white supremacists to nihilists and anarchists. Attacks just this year have claimed 246 deaths and 979 wounded, culminating in that weekend earlier this month with massacres in Dayton and El Paso which took 30 lives and injured dozens of others. The gunman in Dayton killed nine people and injured 27 others with an assault rifle and high-capacity magazine in just 30 seconds before heroic cops took him out.

That's a total of 1,325 victims, about a third of the 9/11 total. There is now palpable panic. In this bloody wake, Americans are so insecure that they stampede at the sound of a motorcycle backfiring in Times Square or a mall sign falling.

How are Indiana congressional "leaders" responding?

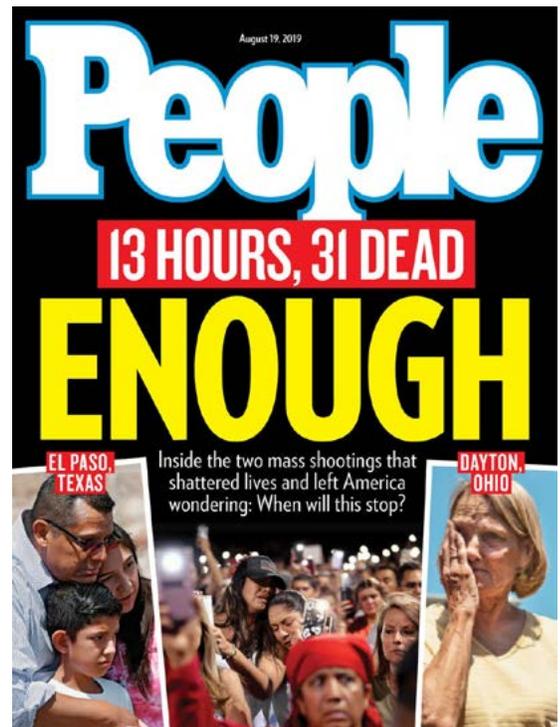
House Minority Whip Steve Scalise spoke at a fundraiser for U.S. Rep. Jim Banks in Columbia City, saying, "What I would like to see is us to continue to focus on making the existing laws actually work." This is fascinating because Scalise was critically wounded in an assault on the GOP congressional baseball team. "In many cases with mass shootings, we've seen people falling through the cracks that shouldn't have been able to legally buy a gun."

And Banks? "As Steve says, we need to enforce the laws that we have."

U.S. Rep. Larry Bucshon held a town hall in Terre Haute this week, and the Terre Haute Tribune-Star's Alex Modesitt reported Bucshon saying, "First of all, you cannot legally buy a firearm from any federally

licensed dealer without getting a background check. You can't buy one from a dealer on the internet or at a gun show without getting one. The only way you can legally purchase a gun without a background check is through a private sale... And to be clear, none of these shootings would have changed if the background checks were any different."

Bucshon added, with Modesitt reporting, "much to the chagrin of many in attendance," that nothing



short of repealing the 2nd Amendment and sending federal agents door-to-door to collect guns would be enough to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. "Everybody wants these shootings to stop," Bucshon said. "But look at the shooting we just had in Philadelphia where the guy who used an AR-15 had a 30-page-long rap sheet. He didn't go to the gun shop to buy that AR-15."

So, are we left just to throw our hands up in the air and accept this growing risk?

U.S. Sen. Mike Braun added, "We've got to do some common-sense stuff that prevents this in the future."

What might constitute "common-sense stuff?"

A Fox News Poll revealed 67% support a ban on "assault weapons." That's up from 60% in 2018. Most Democrats (88%) and Republicans (75%) favor "red flag" laws, as do voters in gun households (77%). Universal background checks are favored by Democrats at 92%, Republicans (89%), and gun households (93%). An NBC/Wall Street Journal Poll showed 75% support expanded background checks and a similar number back the "red flag" laws that allow police and courts to remove weapons from unstable people. But "red flag" laws have more of an impact preventing suicides than mass shootings.

U.S. Rep. Susan Brooks told me earlier this month, "I'd like to think we're at the tipping point because of the hundreds of mass shootings we've had this past year. Young people are demanding it, are demanding we change some of our laws relative to guns. I think there will be some changes."

Since Dayton and El Paso, more than two dozen people have been arrested nationally for threatening a mass shooting, including a Florida man in Indianapolis. Just this month three students have been arrested for bringing guns to school in Muncie and Indianapolis. So,

this is a persistent threat.

The survivors of the Parkland, Fla., school massacre and their organization, March for Our Lives, proposed "A Peace Plan for a Safer America." Key components: It would create a national licensing and gun registry; ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines; implement a mandatory gun buyback program; and install a "national director of gun violence prevention" who would report directly to the president; raise the gun purchase age from 18 to 21, and create a federal "multi-step" gun licensing system that would include in-person interviews and a 10-day wait before gun purchases are approved. The license would be renewed annually.

March for Our Lives has more than 100 chapters and has spent the past year registering new voters. And that's what really will have to happen if anything is to change.

President Trump and most Republicans in Congress appear to be willing to accept the status quo. Or voters can make a change and elect people who will confront these atrocities in a different way. ❖

Out of the blue, from page 1

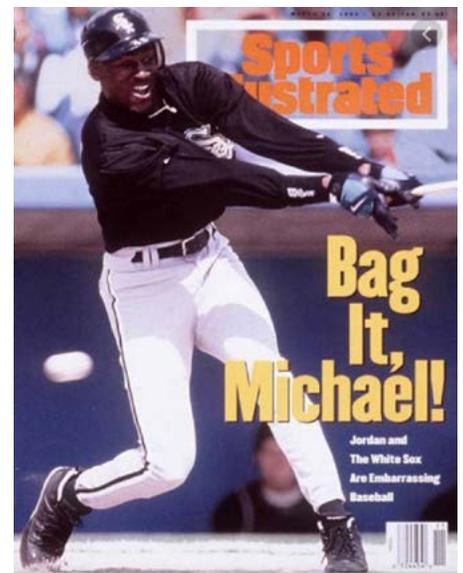
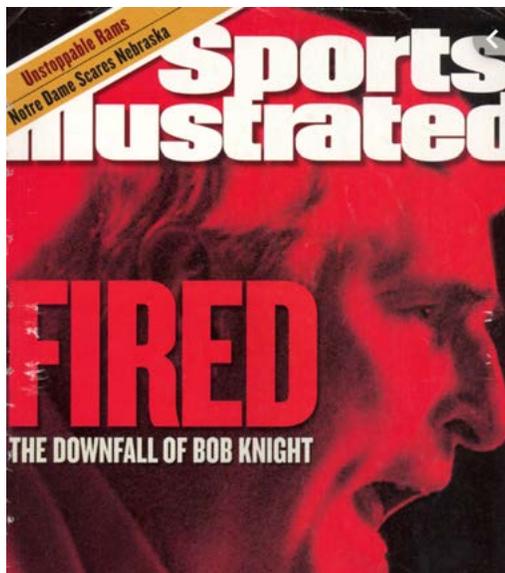
ing 25 years ago in August 1994, there have been a handful of stunning decisions made by Dan Coats, Joe Kernan, Evan Bayh and Mitch Daniels that rendered supporters speechless while dramatically altering the landscape.

There are similarities between sports and politics, ranging from the concept of self-preservation to whether the "fire in the belly" is still applicable.

First, let's examine the wide world of sports. In May 2000, Indiana University fired basketball coach Bob Knight after he had been put on double-secret probation by President Myles Brand for explosive and insensitive conduct unbecoming to the university. It began a three-decade estrangement that may only just beginning to soften this past year with Knight purchasing a home in Bloomington this summer.

There was Michael Jordan's abrupt retirement from the Chicago Bulls following three NBA titles when he decided to pursue a Major League Baseball career with the Chicago White Sox. He never made it out of the Sox farm system, returned to the Bulls in March 1995 in a game against the Pacers in Indianapolis, and then added three more titles in 1996, 1997 and (most painfully) in 1998 after a thrilling semi-final series against Larry Bird's Pacers.

In 2012, the Indianapolis Colts found themselves unsure about the health of legendary quarterback Peyton Manning after a series of neck surgeries, and that March they let him go. I found out about the decision based on "circumstances" while on stage with pollsters Fred Yang and Christine Matthews at DePauw University. It was the proverbial punch in the gut. In hindsight, it was a fateful



decision. The Colts cut Manning, receiving no compensation (imagine if they had picked up a handful of draft choices which could have been used to protect their next franchise QB), and allowing him to sign with the Denver Broncos, where he went to two Super Bowls in four years, winning one.

The Colts' decision came with the next generational quarterback, Andrew Luck, poised as the No. 1 draft pick. Past and present met in a Colts vs. Broncos game in 2015, with Luck prevailing over Manning 27-24. But it was the classic Pyrrhic victory, as Luck would suffer a lacerated kidney that contributed to his mounting history of medical malady that eventually wore him down.

Luck explained his decision Saturday night after the crowd found out about his retirement from a tweet from ESPN's Adam Shefter during a pre-season game at Lucas Oil Stadium against the Chicago Bears. Luck left the field with some in the crowd booing him.

"For the last four years or so, I've been in this cycle of injury, pain, rehab, injury, pain, rehab, and it's been unceasing, unrelenting, both in-season and off-season, and I felt stuck in it," Luck explained in an emotional post-game press conference. "The only way I see out is to no longer play football. I've come to the proverbial fork in the road, and I made a vow to myself that if I ever did again, I'd choose me, in a sense. It's very difficult; I love this team, I love my teammates, the folks in our building, the folks in this building, the fans. It's sad, but I have a lot of clarity in this."

There tends to be gloom and doom when the legendary figure passes from the scene. While Bob Knight's successor, Mike Davis, took the Hoosiers to an NCAA Finals game a couple years after the transition, it's been a barren three decades for a university that had won five NCAA titles in the previous four decades.

But teams can survive the passing of greatness. The Chicago White Sox won a World Series title in 2005 after one of its greatest players, Hall of Famer Frank Thomas, played just a couple of months early that summer before missing the rest of the season. And many forget that the Tennessee Volunteers won a NCAA football title in 1998, the season after Peyton Manning graduated and was drafted by the Colts.

In a political context, career decisions made by a powerful figure can reverberate for years. In the television age, the most explosive came on March 31, 1968, when President Lyndon B. Johnson announced he would not seek a second, full term due to the horrific Vietnam War. It continued to set in motion a decade of riots, anti-war protests, scandal and, along with economic and energy shocks, malaise. The nation didn't get back on an even keel until the 1980 election of President Ronald Reagan.

For Hoosiers, there have been at least five Luck-type decisions that were impactful:

Dan Coats in 1997

One of the biggest showdowns in Indiana U.S. Senate history loomed in 1998. There was Republican Sen. Dan Coats, preparing for his third election in a decade (he'd been selected by Gov. Robert Orr to finish Vice President Dan Quayle's term in 1988, won a special election in 1990 against Baron Hill and won once more in 1992, defeating Joe Hogsett). And there was freshly retired Gov. Evan Bayh, poised to reclaim the seat Rep. Dan Quayle had "taken" from his father, Sen. Birch Bayh, in 1980.

But in late 1997, Coats stunned the Hoosier establishment. He abruptly dropped out, saying that 18 years of constant fundraising had jaded him. He also was sensitive to the notion of term limits and said that 18 years were enough. Following that decision, Coats appeared at my NUVO office to go over the highlights of his congressional career. At the conclusion, he disappeared through the door, then returned moments later, saying, "I could have beat Evan Bayh."

Joe Kernan in 2002

In December 2002, popular Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan announced he would not seek the governorship in 2004. It was a decision that shocked the pundits and left his supporters incredulous. Modern LGs up to that point, from Robert Rock to Robert Orr to Frank O'Bannon always yearned to move to the top office. I will never forget the



A grim Lt. Gov. Joe Kernan shocked Hoosier Democrats when he announced in December 2002 he would not run for governor. (HPI Photo by Brian A. Howey)

look on the face of Kernan supporters like Kip Tew when that announcement came down.

Howey Politics reported in its Dec. 12, 2002, edition: The strange case of Joe Kernan took shape on Monday when he told the press and glum supporters that "it's just time." A day later, Kernan told another gathering of the press that he feared that in serving as LG and running for governor, he would do neither well. "If you've got two full-time jobs, you're not going to be able to do either well," he said. "And if I can't do something well, I'm not going to enjoy it."

Kernan also dismissed as speculation the idea that he feared running on the record of Gov. Frank O'Bannon, or that his relationship with the governor or governor's staff had soured. "They will say whatever they're gonna say," he said of critics. Credible sources had told HPI that Kernan became upset with Gov. O'Bannon after he named Peter Manous as Democratic chairman in blind-sided fashion earlier that year. Kernan believed that as the next nominee, he deserved to make that selection.

HPI reported further: In analyzing Kernan's bowing out statements, there is a major lack of logic. The "it's just time" statement was interpreted by one prominent Democrat as, "He just didn't have the fire in his belly."

Fate played a role in Kernan's future when Gov. O'Bannon died after a stroke in September 2003. Kernan re-entered the race in late 2003 following a donnybrook primary showdown between former Democratic National Chairman Joe Andrew and State Sen. Vi Simpson. But he had lost 18 months of organizing and fundraising, and former White House Budget Director Mitch Daniels conducted one of the best statewide campaigns in history, ending 16 consecutive years of Democratic gubernatorial rule, and beginning a 16-year era of GOP governors that could extend to 20 years if Gov. Eric Holcomb is reelected in 2020. The Kernan decision was one of two in the past 20 years that has helped relegate Indiana Democrats into super minority status.

Evan Bayh in 2006

Ever since Bayh arrived on the political scene in his own right in 1984 campaigning for Democratic gubernatorial nominee Wayne Townsend, he was viewed as a rising star with a national ceiling. In short order, Bayh won secretary of state and gubernatorial races in 1986 and 1988, was reelected by a landslide in 1992, and keynoted the Democratic National Convention in 1996. A presidential bid and a future address of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue or at the National Observatory seemed to be in the cards.

The 1996 keynote was illustrative of the bare-knuckled caliber of national politics. Bayh was expected to deliver his address in primetime. But behind the scenes, operatives of First Lady Hillary Clinton appeared to work to delay the address and were successful. Bayh wouldn't take the stage until after the 11 p.m. newscasts in the Eastern Time zone began, depriving him of the kind of primetime exposure that launched the national careers of Bill Clinton in 1988 and Barack Obama 20 years later.

After two terms of President George W. Bush, and two terms in the U.S. Senate, the year 2008 appeared to be Bayh's time. He declared for president in early December 2006, but on Dec. 16 came the shocker. With Hillary

Clinton and Sen. Barack Obama rising, along with Sen. John Edwards (the 2004 vice presidential nominee), Bayh didn't see a viable path to victory.

"After talking with family and friends over the past several days, I have decided that this is not the year for me to run for president," Bayh said in a statement that dropped jaws across Indiana. "The odds were always going to be very long for a relatively unknown candidate like myself, a little bit like David and Goliath. And whether there were too many Goliaths or whether I'm just not the right David ... the odds were longer than I felt I could responsibly pursue. This path – and these long odds – would have required me to be essentially absent from the Senate for the next year instead of working to help the people of my state and the nation."

Bayh remained on the national radar for another couple of years, making Barack Obama's veep short list, before the nominee opted for Sen. Joe Biden in August 2008. But the real closure to his presidential ambitions came in 2006.

Evan Bayh in 2010

The penultimate political act of Evan Bayh began in September 2009 seated in the Oval Office. "Are you 100% sure?" President Obama asked.

"I'm 98% sure," Sen. Evan Bayh responded. The news Bayh delivered to President Obama was that he probably wouldn't seek reelection in 2010. This had profound national and Indiana implications. Bayh's hold on the Senate seat once held by his father was seen as "safe" in his hands.

Still, the pending decision was a secret. It wouldn't be until President's Day, Feb. 15, 2010, that Bayh would drop his bombshell. It came just hours before Indiana's primary filing deadline. By then, former senator Dan Coats had opted out of retirement and into the race, setting up the showdown that many of us had expected in 1998.

Bayh had given only a tiny clue a few weeks before, ending a meeting with a group of Hoosier constituents on energy issues by saying, "Now I've got to go deal with a German ambassador." That would be Coats, who had been envoy to Germany. On Feb. 15, current GOP national committee-woman Anne Hathaway heard the report and called up Coats with the news. Coats responded, "Anne, welcome to the age of bloggers." When she called back 20 minutes later with an "It's true!" message, a pregnant pause followed before Coats said, "I can't believe it."

Bayh acknowledged he had procrastinated in revealing his decision, then began predicting a catastrophe for the Democratic Party in the wake of Scott Brown's Tea



Party-propelled capture of the late Sen. Ted Kennedy's Senate seat in Massachusetts. "If you lose Massachusetts, and that's not a wake-up call, there's no hope for waking up," Bayh told ABC News.

In Indiana, the Bayh dominoes began to fall, with U.S. Rep. Brad Ellsworth hurriedly shifting to the Senate race, State Rep. Trent Van Haaften transitioning to Ellsworth's 8th CD, and State Sen. Bob Dieg opting for the Van Haaften House seat. All would end up losing.



Coats taking Bayh's U.S. Senate seat helped the GOP take the majority. But more importantly, it signaled a shift in southern and rural Indiana. The 2010 cycle – followed by similarly devastating cycles in 2012, 2014 and 2016 – essentially routed Democrats out of congressional, General Assembly and county seats, as well as rural Indiana, where Republicans now hold 80% of county courthouse offices

and 89% of county commission seats. Counties like Clark, Floyd, and Posey have turned into GOP courthouse bastions. There are no Democratic state senators south of U.S. 50. It has bolstered three consecutive cycles of GOP super-majority rule in the Indiana General Assembly.

Bayh would try a Senate comeback in 2016, but the campaign of Republican Todd Young eviscerated his political brand in Indiana, and it's quite doubtful Evan Bayh will ever run again in Indiana, let alone nationally.

Mitch Daniels in 2011

While Sen. Evan Bayh's fateful 2010 decision inextricably altered the Indiana political landscape to the point where it's now close to being a one-party state, it was Gov. Mitch Daniels' May 2011 bombshell that may have had the greatest impact nationally.

Daniels flirted with a 2012 presidential run, but he did it in reverse. Most presidential-caliber politicians get the imprimatur of their family first, then seek outside political support. There had been a steady drumbeat for him to challenge President Obama. Daniels was successful in steering potential GOP presidential rival Rep. Mike Pence into the 2012 gubernatorial race. But then came

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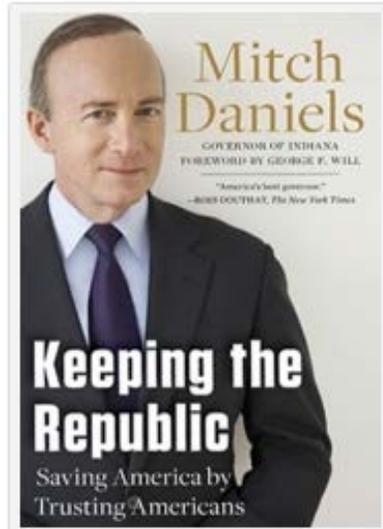
It all ended on a Sunday morning when he announced in the IndyStar he wasn't running. "Over the last year and a half, a large and diverse group of people have suggested to me an idea that I never otherwise would have considered, that I run for president," Daniels explained. "I've asked for time to think it over carefully, but these good people have been very patient and I owe them an answer. The answer is that I will not be a candidate. What could have been a complicated decision was in the end very simple: On matters affecting us all, our family constitution gives a veto to the women's caucus, and there is no override provision. Simply put, I find myself caught between two duties. I love my country; I love my family more."

Daniels believed he could have won the 2012 Republican nomination that eventually went to Mitt Romney. Daniels thrived in retail politics and connected with the common man, something Romney lacked. In retrospect, Daniels has told HPI on several occasions he wasn't sure he could have defeated Obama (something with which I disagree).

Obama won reelection with a number of economic telltales working against an incumbent president. What Obama did have was a state-of-the-art digital communications and fundraising network that allowed him to prevail.

There are profound hypotheticals to this: What if Gov. Daniels had defeated President Obama? It takes on vivid meaning in the context of today: Had there been a "President Daniels," would there have been a political opening to be exploited by Donald Trump in 2016?

You can make a case either way. A President Daniels certainly would have moved to solve the intractable entitlement quandaries that will explode into American politics in the coming decade. As Daniels predicted in his 2011 CPAC speech, there's the "red menace" of the debt crisis facing our nation. The looming insolvency of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are mathematical certainties; the political will of



Washington to address them in meaningful and timely ways is uncertain at best and not evident at all in recent presidential election cycles. Under President Trump and in a booming, pre-recession economy, the federal debt and deficits are mushrooming into multi-trillion dollar liabilities that will be shouldered by coming generations.

A few days after Daniels bowed out, he cautioned the nation. "I'm moved to say this: I wish folks would pay more attention to the second half of the statement as opposed to the first. What I decided means very little. What happens to me means nothing. What America decides and what happens to the nation in the next few years means everything. I would just urge everybody – now that you know the decision – to spend a little time if you would to reflect on the real reasons that motivated me to think about maybe doing it in the first place."

In the second part of his statement, Daniels had said, "I am deeply concerned, for the first time in my life, about the future of our Republic. In the next few years Americans will decide two basic sets of questions: Who's in charge here? Should the public sector protect and promote the private sector or dominate and direct it? Does the government work

for the people or vice versa? And, are we Americans still the kind of people who can successfully govern ourselves, discipline ourselves financially, put the future and our children's interests ahead of the present and our own? I am confident that the answers will reaffirm the liberty and vitality of our nation, and hope to play some small part in proving that view true."

Today, with President Trump waging a unilateral trade war with China that doesn't appear to be well thought out or competently waged, with mushrooming debt and an ever-growing income disparity, the emergence of job-sapping artificial intelligence, along with the twin evils of opioid and mass shooting epidemics, the questions Daniels raised in his book, "Keeping the Republic," are as vital as ever.

Little wonder that so many key Daniels supporters still quietly ponder the "what ifs" of a 2012 Daniels presidential run, and their desire to see him step back into the political game during what appears to be an unfolding crisis for both the Republican Party and the nation.

And that's the nature of the gut punch, the body blow, and the bolt out of the blue. ❖



Could ransomware attacks cripple the nation's election system?

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

INDIANAPOLIS – Twice this summer Indiana counties have faced cybersecurity assaults, with LaPorte County actually paying \$132,000 in ransom to sophisticated hackers. LaPorte County Commissioner Vidya Kora said the payment was made with the virtual currency Bitcoin after FBI experts weren't able to unlock the county's data.

In Vigo County, a ransomware attack targeted a software vulnerability in 129 of the county's 489 computers, according to Government Technology. By the end of the month, 95% of the county computers were running again.

GT reported: "The county's information technology personnel are now sending analytical information to the FBI to help it discover patterns in the ransomware attack, said Jeremy Snowden, director of the county's information technology department. '[The FBI] are putting together information in the back end to see if it relates to similar attacks of this nature,' Snowden said, adding it is standard protocol to contact the FBI and others, including the Indiana Secretary of State's office, after such an attack."



Secretary of State Connie Lawson at the 2018 Republican Convention in Evansville. (HPI Photo by Mark Curry)

But it begs the question, what if ransomware hit counties during an election? It is Russian President Putin's dream to disrupt and discredit a U.S. election. Targeting a handful of counties in several critical states could do that.

Howey Politics Indiana asked Secretary of State Connie Lawson's office about this potential vulnerability, particularly after 22 Texas municipalities were hacked for ransom this past week. Sophisticated hackers are targeting counties and cities, many operating on tight, shoestring budgets.

"Cybersecurity is something our office takes very seriously, and we are continuing to equip counties with updated security techniques and train staff in the latest cyber trends," said Ian Hauer, spokesman for Sec. Lawson. "The good news is that our election systems are not connected to the Internet or a county-wide network on Election Day, and therefore cannot be hacked remotely. Poll workers monitor machines closely, and e-pollbooks, which contain voter information, are working from a mirror system and are not connected to the Statewide Voter Registration System."

Hauer said that in the event of a power outage

or similar delay, "The e-pollbooks can restart and reset securely, usually in a matter of minutes. Electronic voting machines have their own failsafe, a paper record within the machine that can be audited in the event of an outage."

Hauer added, "Finally, Indiana has introduced risk-limiting audits to the voting process, which allows the non-partisan Voting System and Technical Oversight Program to verify the results of an election and check for any anomalies. We continue to work with our partners at every level of government to ensure the integrity of Hoosier elections."

On Monday, Reuters reported that the U.S. government plans to launch a program in roughly one month that narrowly focuses on protecting voter registration databases and systems ahead of the 2020 presidential election. These systems, which are widely used to validate the eligibility of voters before they cast ballots, were compromised in 2016 by Russian hackers seeking to collect information. Intelligence officials are concerned that foreign hackers in 2020 not only will target the databases but attempt to manipulate, disrupt or destroy the data, according to current and former U.S. officials.

"We assess these systems as high risk," said a senior U.S. official, because they are one of the few pieces of election technology regularly connected to the internet, according to Reuters. The Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency, or CISA, a division of the Homeland Security Department, fears the databases could be targeted by ransomware, a type of virus that has crippled city computer networks across the United States, including recently in Texas, Baltimore and Atlanta.

"Recent history has shown that state and county governments and those who support them are targets for ransomware attacks," Christopher Krebs, CISA's director, told Reuters. "That is why we are working alongside election officials and their private sector partners to help protect their databases and respond to possible ransomware attacks."

"Our thought is we don't want the states to have to be in that situation," said a Homeland Security official. "We're focused on preventing it from happening."

That attack, dubbed "NotPetya," went on to damage global corporations, including FedEx and Maersk, which had offices in Ukraine where the malware first spread. The threat is concerning because of its potential impact on voting results, experts say.

"A pre-election undetected attack could tamper with voter lists, creating huge confusion and delays, disenfranchisement, and at large enough scale could compromise the validity of the election," John Sebes, chief technology officer of the ESET Institute, an election technology policy think tank, told Reuters. ❖

Steve Braun tries again in 5th CD primary

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

FRENCH LICK – Steve Braun is back on the congressional stage, this time in the 5th CD where he actually lives. The former legislator and brother of U.S. Sen.



Mike Braun ran in the neighboring 4th CD in 2018, was considered a favorite with a significant money advantage as a self-funder, but was upset by State Rep. Jim Baird.

Braun filed his FEC paperwork this week, joining Republican

Micah Beckwith in the race, though Indiana Treasurer Kelly Mitchell, businessman Terry Henderson, former senator Mike Delph and State Sen. John Ruckelshaus are currently weighing bids.

Braun raised \$1,241,320 for his 2018 race, which included an \$830,000 loan from himself. But the frontrunner made two mistakes. His campaign sent out the “arm and a leg” direct mail piece that was controversial because Baird had lost an arm while fighting in the Vietnam War. He also underestimated Baird’s support in the 4th CD farm community, which the farmer quietly worked.

Baird had less than half the funds Braun did – \$564,244, of which \$250,000 came from a loan from himself – but used a grassroots campaign to clip Braun by a little under 6,000 votes, or by 36.6% to 29.5%.

Beckwith kicked off his campaign on Aug. 15. “By God’s grace, America is still the shining city on a hill,” Beckwith said at his kickoff rally in Noblesville. “But let us not become complacent, let us not fall asleep. For the future of liberty and the future of American values rest solely in our hands to protect, to preserve and to pass on to our children and our children’s children. We come together to unite around a common cause. A cause that is just and noble. A cause that demands good men and women rise up. We come together to unite around Freedom. I am ready to boldly stand for those freedoms that you and your family hold dear. I am Micah Beckwith and I am running for Congress!”

In a Good Citizen Podcast, Beckwith talked about being a Millennial pastor. The Hillsdale, Mich., native said he studied constitutional issues at Hillsdale College as well as Huntington University. He grew up in an evangelical family and played in a Christian rock band. “They were very, very intent on the church and morality being the center of our nation,” Beckwith said of the constitutional framers. He said supporters have been telling him, “The

Lord is opening a door in public life for you.”

On the Democratic side, 2018 nominee Dee Thornton, Jennifer Christie, former legislator Christina Hale and Andrew Jacobs III, son of the late Rep. Andrew Jacobs Jr., have all filed.

Christie filed in June. “It’s time for new leadership and it’s time for a change,” Christie said. “We’re in it for the issues. There are issues we must deal with now,” mentioning climate change and health care.

This past week, Christie reacted to the wildfires devouring the Amazon forests in Brazil. “My husband and I spent years traveling throughout the Amazon region. The richness of the Amazon is profound in every way; the Earth is precious and unique,” she posted on Facebook. “The abundant diversity that has evolved over billions of years is burning before our eyes. Once gone, it can never be replaced. I cannot think of anything sadder than a species that would destroy themselves and the entire world for greed. That is us burning.”

Thornton was at the IDEA convention in French



Steve Braun is now running in the 5th CD after an unsuccessful run in the 4th CD in 2018.

Lick over the weekend and told HPI, “We kicked off our campaign in July, we had a great turnout and we’re organizing and mobilizing and getting read.” She noted that her 2018 campaign didn’t kick off until January of that year. “After the primary we only had about five or six months to get ready, so we’re starting early this time.”

She raised only about \$75,000 in her campaign against Rep. Susan Brooks while drawing 44% of the vote, but said it is a “daily activity” this cycle. “I feel real good about it in terms of where we are this year.” She

did not say how much she has raised.

Is the 5th a purple district? “I have lived in Hamilton County for 28 years and I’ve seen drastic change. It’s happening throughout the 5th District. It’s absolutely winnable. My campaign demonstrates a Democrat can get traction. But at the end of the day, it’s about voter turnout. We have to make sure that women vote.”

Governor

Myers recalls the Ryan White saga

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Woody Myers recalled his role in the Ryan White case when he was Indiana health commissioner under Gov. Robert Orr. In an email to supporters, Myers explained, “Courage. It’s a trait every leader must have and is what I saw in a boy I had the privilege to know when I was Indiana State Health Commissioner. His story is still relevant today and

helped shape the man and leader I am." He recalled how White was diagnosed as HIV positive after a blood transfusion. After his illness became public, the Western School Corporation in Howard County sought to keep him from attending class after 117 parents and 50 teachers signed a petition. Myers was asked to weigh in.

"My answer was 'yes,'" Myers explained. "I spoke with the local county health officer at the time, a physician, who knew our public health assessment that Ryan was not a threat to his classmates or teachers was correct. But he told me he did not want to go against those whose fear overshadowed science and some of the families opposed were his patients, so he would not approve." Myers continued: "We did not play politics, rather at the State Board of Health we embraced Ryan, physically and publicly, and we used all avenues of communication to make sure everyone who would listen to the evidence knew that Ryan White was not the threat. The real threat was ignorance, and it was fear."

He said when mother Jeanne White moved the family to a neighboring county, "Our team educated the teachers, the parents, and the public. Ryan's new school system did the right thing; they welcomed him with open arms." Ryan White died of his disease on April

8, 1990. "Later this month, exactly 22 years after Ryan was accepted and supported by Hamilton Heights High School, a commemorative historical marker will be dedicated in Arcadia, Indiana, a ceremony Jeanne White and I will attend," Myers said. "What I knew then and still believe today is that so many of our public health problems, problems with education, and with helping families that struggle could be solved if we had leaders with the courage to speak out, speak truth to power, run for political office, and serve the public instead of the political extremes."

Holcomb reacts to lower test scores

Gov. Eric Holcomb reacted to the low test scores on the first ILearn testing regime that replaced ISTEP. Supt. Jennifer McCormick has indicated the test scores will be much lower than ISTEP. "The results of the 2018-19 ILearn proficiency test are scheduled to be released next week. The results will show a decrease compared to the previously administered ISTEP+ test," Holcomb said. "Since this is the first year of the ILearn assessment, I will ask Superintendent McCormick to support my request that the General Assembly take action to hold schools harmless so the test scores do not have an adverse impact on teacher evaluations and schools' letter grades for the 2018-19

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Bryan Kaegi

Senior Vice President of Government Relations
Acadia Healthcare



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school year. This action will ease the transition to ILearn, which is a student assessment that allows Indiana to comply with federal ESSA requirements." Holcomb added, "I appreciate the dedicated work of Hoosier educators. Bringing consistency and continuity to how we measure student progress and preparing students for post-secondary success is a shared and important goal."

Statewides

Sen. Tallian to run for AG

State Sen. Karen Tallian said Wednesday she will seek the Democratic attorney general nomination. "Curtis Hill has not been an advocate for Indiana citizens, and he has not brought integrity and reason to this office," Tallian said. "While I have been proud to serve in the State Senate, a decade of Republican supermajority across three branches of government has made Indiana a state of extreme politics." The attorney general has faced sexual harassment allegations, has ignored Gov. Eric Holcomb's call that he resign, and faces a Supreme Court ethics review. Republican Zionsville attorney John Westercamp announced he will challenge Hill in the June 2020 GOP convention, and former congressman Todd Rokita is exploring a potential challenge. Tallian mounted a brief campaign for governor in 2015.



Congress

2nd CD: Hackett to launch campaign

Notre Dame adjunct law professor Pat Hackett is holding her formal campaign launch on her candidacy for the Democratic against Rep. Jackie Walorski. The event will take place Wednesday evening, August 28th at 6pm at the South Bend Civic Theatre. The event is free and the public is encouraged to attend.

"I am running to reclaim the people's voice in Congress and to help restore this nation's core commitment to dignity and justice for all, not the few. This district deserves an actual representative whose purpose is to serve the constituents and not outside financial special interests. I look forward to engaging voters throughout the district and addressing the many serious concerns they have on issues such as our economy, health care, the corrupting influence of money in politics, climate change, gun violence prevention, immigration reform, and more. I am honored by the tremendous early support for our grassroots campaign and encourage people to join us and help restore real representation to the people of this district."

Mayors

Fort Wayne: Firefighters endorse Smith

The Fort Wayne Professional Firefighters, IAFF Local 124 Political Action Committee will on Thursday endorse Republican Tim Smith in the upcoming mayoral election (Fort Wayne Journal Gazette). It's the first time the union PAC has endorsed a mayoral candidate in 16 years. "As we have gotten to know Tim Smith over the course of this past year, we have come to appreciate his openness and honesty," the PAC said in a news release. "We look forward to the opportunity to work with and for him in the near future." Specifically, the union PAC believes Smith "will be a visionary for public safety, the community" and will be an effective city leader.

Merritt calls for 'holistic' infrastructure

Republican Indianapolis mayoral nominee Jim Merritt called for a "holistic" approach to infrastructure. "It's August and there are still hundreds of unfilled potholes throughout our neighborhoods," Merritt said. "You see work that is being done, like the Red Line; however, it has been poorly planned and is choking traffic and frustrating our drivers. You see bridges that have been closed for months or years. You see road building, not road maintenance. All of these things demonstrate that our infrastructure is deteriorating, not improving." According to Merritt, the reason for these problems is that the mayor is more concerned with short-term political gain than long-term care for our city. "Mayor Hogsett has failed in managing our streets. He has failed in communication, both to our citizens and to stakeholders. He has failed in managing repairs and maintenance to protect and improve our roads. He has simply failed in leadership," Merritt said. Merritt proposed a "holistic approach" to addressing these problems that includes three key components, transparency, sustainable funding, and long-term strategy.

Presidential

Trump poll disapproval at 62%

About 6 in 10 Americans disapprove of President Donald Trump's overall job performance, according to a new poll released Thursday by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, which finds some support for the president's handling of the U.S. economy but gives him weak marks on other major issues. Just 36% of Americans approve of the way Trump is handling his job as president; 62% disapprove. The numbers may be ugly for a first-term president facing reelection in 14 months, but they are remarkably consistent. Trump's approval rating has never dipped below 32% or risen above 42% in AP-NORC polls since he took office. No other president has stayed within so narrow a band. Since Gallup began measuring presidential approval, Trump is the only president whose rating has never been above 50%. Still, several —

Harry Truman, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush — logged ratings worse than Trump’s lowest rating so far at some point during their time in office.

Walsh to challenge Trump

Joe Walsh, the ex-suburban Chicago GOP House member turned conservative talk show host who once backed President Donald Trump, on Sunday said he will challenge Trump in the GOP primary (Chicago Sun-Times). “I’m going to run for president. I’m going to challenge this guy,” Walsh told ABC “This Week” host George Stephanopoulos. His slogan in his very longshot 2020 bid is “Be Brave,” Walsh said. “We’ve got a guy in the White House who is unfit, completely unfit to be president and it stuns me that nobody stepped up,” Walsh said. Walsh, no stranger to controversy and incendiary comments, said he knows he is “opening up my life” by taking on Trump, running from the right and making the moral argument that Trump is unfit for office. “I’m going to pound Trump every single day.”

Buttigieg draws white crowd in Chicago

South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg held a self-described grassroots campaign rally in Bronzeville on Tuesday night, but the overwhelmingly white audience he drew to the event in a historic black neighborhood reinforced the difficulty the Democratic presidential hopeful has had in connecting with African-American voters (Chicago Tribune). Buttigieg did not acknowledge the makeup of the audience in his remarks or in answering questions from the 1,000 people at the sold-out event, but did touch on it briefly as he closed the hourlong rally with a plea for his supporters. ‘Find the people who don’t look like most of you in this room and let them know they have the chance, not just to support this campaign, but to shape it,’ Buttigieg said.

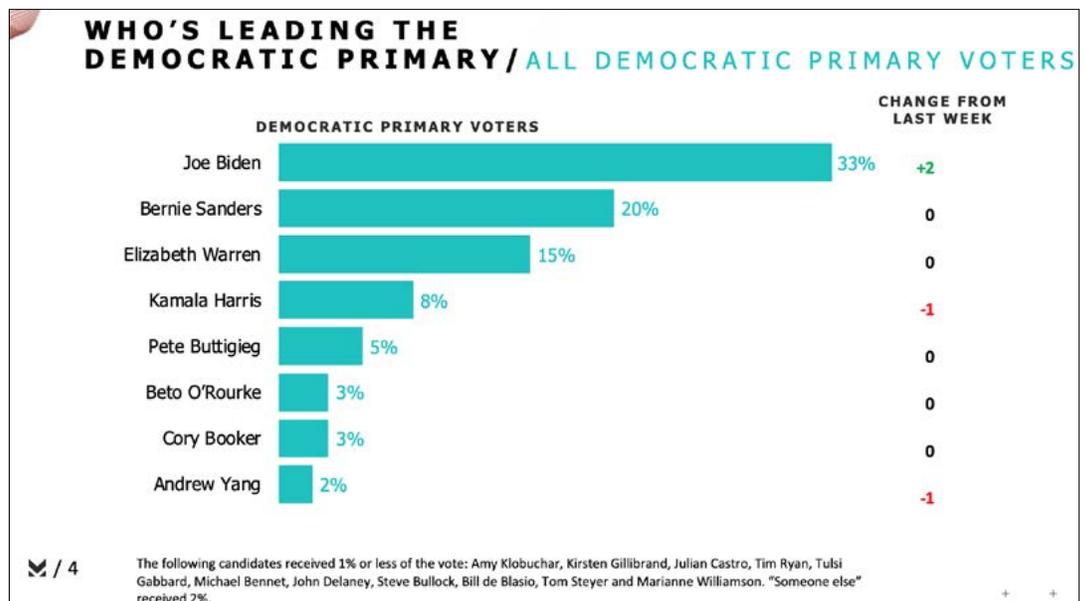
Buttigieg unveils opioid plan

Buttigieg laid out his vision to improve mental health care and battle the opioid and addiction crisis across the country, saying his comprehensive plan makes a true commitment to treating the mental health care crisis with the urgency it deserves, and offers a new approach to meeting our national challenge with community-based solutions. “For years, politicians in Washington

have claimed to prioritize mental health care while slashing funding for treatment and ignoring America’s growing addiction and mental health crisis,” said Buttigieg. “That neglect must end. Our plan breaks down the barriers around mental health and builds up a sense of belonging that will help millions of suffering Americans heal.” Pete’s plan will result in: Preventing 1 million deaths of despair (to drugs, alcohol, and suicide) by 2028. Ensuring least 75% of people who need mental health or addiction services receive the care that they need, an increase of more than 10 million in Pete’s first term. Decreasing the number of people incarcerated due to mental illness or substance use by 75% by the end of his first term.

Pence, Haley rivalry taking shape

When top Republicans convened at the St. Regis resort in Aspen, Colo., last month for an exclusive donor retreat, several attendees said there was palpable tension in the room as the gathering’s two headliners prepared to speak: Vice President Mike Pence and former United Nations ambassador Nikki Haley (Politico). The assembled group of governors, high-dollar donors, and operatives were well aware that the two have big ambitions; to some it seemed as if Pence and Haley, who spoke on back-to-back days, were vying for their attention. Some in the audience found themselves parsing and comparing the two



speeches and buzzed they were getting a sneak preview of a 2024 Republican primary. Others recalled something peculiar: Neither Pence nor Haley acknowledged each other in their presentations, even though they gave shout-outs to others attending the retreat. The Pence team has recently asked senior Republicans for updates on Haley’s outreach to donors. And with Haley embarking on a national fund-raising tour, top Pence advisers blame her for persistent rumors that she will replace him on the Trump’s ticket in 2020. Tensions flared after Haley chose not to publicly repudiate a Wall Street Journal column in June urging Trump

to put her on the ticket.

Trump approval sags in battlegrounds

President Trump's net approval rating has plunged in every battleground state since taking office in January 2017, according to Morning Consult's tracking poll (Axios).

"If this economy falters, then I think he's a goner," a top Republican operative with access to well-funded polling and focus groups told Axios' Jonathan Swan. "And I think the Senate will be in trouble." "We have a growing issue in the suburbs," the operative continued. "We're doing miserably in the suburbs, for Senate races and Republicans. And Trump is doing even worse." One opening: The operative said that a good number of the suburban voters say they feel positively about Obamacare, but don't like what they're hearing in the Democratic debates about abolishing private health insurance.

Trump approval +5 in Indiana

According to Morning Consult, President Trump has a +5 approval in Indiana. But that's down significantly from his 19% plurality in the 2016 election.

Both parties seek to flip states

Both parties are already zeroing in on non-obvious



battlegrounds they hope to flip, Axios' Alayna Treene reports (Axios). The Trump campaign has its sights set on four states the president lost in 2016: Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire and New Mexico. "We are trying to actively expand the map — aggressively," one official said. "These four states in particular are all areas [Trump campaign manager Brad] Parscale is set on winning." The official added that the campaign, which is planning to beef up its communications and rapid response team with additional hires before the end of the year, will soon be flooding these states with stories that don't get a lot of attention at the national level — such as Trump's work on opioids and the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade deal.

Dems hope to pick up Florida, North Carolina, Arizona, Texas and Georgia, campaign aides and Democratic strategists say. "The midterms were a strong indicator of the Dem energy in these states, particularly in Arizona, Florida and Texas, and set the groundwork for us to flip them," one Democratic strategist said. A Trump campaign adviser conceded that Arizona, in particular, will be tough for Trump to hold onto.

HPI's take on Presidential 2020

Think about what has occurred this past week. Last Wednesday, President Trump talked of his unilateral trade war with China and said, "I am the chosen one," before turning and looking up toward the heavens. He later said he was being "sarcastic." Later at a Louisville AMVET appearance, President Trump awarded a Medal of Honor to veteran Woody Williams, then said, "Nothing like the Medal of Honor. I wanted one, but they told me I don't qualify, Woody. I said, 'Can I give it to myself anyway?' They said, 'I don't think that's a good idea.'" He hasn't been able to hold a policy position on gun reform and taxes.

This past weekend, he began the G7 weekend threatening China and U.S. corporations who do business there "ordering" them to come home, called President Xi an "enemy" before saying he had "second thoughts," and ended in by claiming a phantom phone call saying President Xi wants a deal (psst, Mr. President, Xi can wait you out). Meanwhile, the Chinese are matching tariff for tariff, paid for by American consumers.

He skipped an environmental meeting on the burning Amazon rainforest crisis. Trump pushed to include Russia in the next G7, this after President Putin has invaded two counties prompting his G8 expulsion, and continues to assault U.S. elections (see Page 8). At a bizarre 68 minute press conference, Trump praised Putin and Kim Jong-Un.

This emerging dynamic is cautionary after a 2016 blue wave ended up in the Trump election miracle. But at this point, given the whiplash policy, a president who appears unstable, and a reelect based on racial exploitation, this is a landslide in the making if ... IF ... Democrats can nominate a coherent and credible nominee. ❖

Recasting the James Carville mantra

By CRAIG DUNN

KOKOMO — There are few Democrat strategists that I admire, but I do give former Bill Clinton campaign manager, James Carville, grudging respect for his insight. I attribute Carville's insight to his closeness to the real world of Joe Sixpack. His finger on the pulse of Joe Sixpack led him in 1992 to tack the three issues up on the campaign walls of Clinton's election headquarters. The three issues were: Change vs. more of the same. Economy, stupid. Don't forget health care. History has focused like a laser beam on the second mantra, "economy, stupid." This has been morphed by politicians and journalists over the years to, "It's the economy, stupid."



James Carville knew that campaigns can get lost wandering off into the weeds and that they need to keep the message simple, limited and constant. A simplistic Democrat message coupled with a recession in 1992 took President George H. W. Bush from a 90% job approval rate in 1991, on the heels of the Iraq War victory, to an approval rate of 36%. In short, Bush was blamed for the economic downturn and Bill Clinton started looking for interns.

Fast forward to 2018. If I was a conspiracy theorist, I might believe that the Democrat Party, national media and the usual illuminati of the left had held a powwow and decided that if natural economic downturns could take down a sitting president, why couldn't an economy be "talked down" and achieve the same results. In other words, there was no Russian collusion, there was no obstruction, time for Plan B.

In 2018, in the midst of an amazing renaissance for the American economy, we periodically witnessed what appeared to be a premeditated talking down of the economy. It was as if the average worker would be deliberately and willfully thrown on the fire of a burning economy if it led to the demise of President Donald Trump. Every stock market downturn, tiff with our trading partners or employment number that varied slightly from the "expert" forecast was a green light for liberal pundits to predict a coming recession and economic chaos. The more dire the prediction the better.

Occasionally, an unsophisticated political pundit or celebrity will slip up and be just a little too honest and let the Democrat strategy out of the bag. One such moment was in June of 2018 when comedian-turned-Democrat-tool Bill Maher stated the following on his television

program: "I'm hoping for a crashing economy so we can get rid of Trump. Bring on the recession!"

The hopes expressed by Maher are different from Carville's desire to take advantage of a bad economy by keeping the reality of a recession on the voter's mind. Maher and those like him in the press were actively hoping that very bad things would happen to very good people. Maher and crew want to see American workers lose their jobs and suffer the resulting economic pain all in the simple quest to see Donald Trump taken down. I'm sorry, but this is sick and twisted and only slightly better than those who delighted in seeing body bags returning from Iraq and Afghanistan during George W. Bush's administration. It is nothing but political ambulance-chasing. It is one sick strategy to chase the ambulance but far sicker to help cause the accident in the first place. Is this really what we have come to politically?

This "talking down the economy" strategy worked briefly in late 2018 when the media and Democrats tried to tie the trade war with China to dire predictions for economic collapse. Unfortunately for the bad guys but good news for Joe Sixpack, the experts were wrong and the economy kept chugging along, creating millions of new jobs, increasing real wages and reducing unemployment to record lows for blacks and Hispanics. Oh well, forget the economy strategy for now. Let's beat the drum daily about the upcoming Mueller Report.

When Special Prosecutor Robert Mueller failed to give the Trump-haters what they wanted, Democrats once more pivoted to a different strategy. They brought back the old saw of a failing economy, with recession on the horizon and laid it all at the feet of the president. Interest rates began a precipitous collapse, a sure sign of tough economic times ahead, and media idiots who don't know the difference between an inverted yield curve and a baseball pitch started parroting the same mantra, "Awwwwk, inverted yield curve. Something bad is happening. Trade war is bad. Trump is evil!"

The illustrious Bill Maher reappeared with a reprise of his 2018 hopes in a recent television program. After a rant about how much he wanted the economy to tank so that they could get rid of Trump, Maher was reminded that in economic downturns "people lose their jobs and their homes." The heartless but cluelessly transparent Maher stated in reply, "I know, but it is worth it!"

Never let this simple truth be forgotten: Many leading Democrats, media celebrities, social media gurus and pundits are willing to see you lose your job and your home so that they can obtain their desired political result. They are sick, twisted people and they should be presented with political Armageddon for their duplicity.

What do I perceive to be the truth about the economy and what are my bona fides? I earned my securities license in the summer of 1982. I believe that the Dow 30 Industrial Average was 796 the week that I started on the job of being a financial consultant. For 37 years now I have witnessed every bad and good outcome on the stock

and bond markets. I've seen a few of the 60-some forecasted recessions and none of the three depressions that I've seen predicted. More importantly, I've seen presidents come and go along with their economic teams with minimal financial disruption.

What have I learned? No one, not one single person, knows what is going to happen 10 minutes from now, let alone 10 months down the road. Anyone who claims to know the economic future is probably a snake oil salesman. The stock and bond markets will go up and down, sometimes for no good reason other than fear or greed. Anyone who tries to read the short-term movement of the stock market and extrapolate some conclusion is on a fool's mission.

The stock market is driven over the long haul by corporate profits, pure and simple. If corporate profits

grow over time, stock prices will follow suit in the long run. You have nothing more to gain from analyzing short-term market movements than you do in trying to analyze the deductive reasoning of a pirate ship. Markets and pirate ships have much in common.

The very sad truth is that James Carville's trilogy of campaign focus from 1992 has now been replaced by the new Democrat presidential campaign strategy: Free stuff, free stuff, free stuff. Forget Obamacare, Remember Medicare for all.

It's the economy stupid, only if the economy goes bad. Otherwise, it's the Russians, stupid. ❖

Dunn is the former Howard County Republican chairman

We should be focused on the 2019 election

By MORTON MARCUS

INDIANAPOLIS — Sadly, America is already immersed in the 2020 national election. It would be better for our nation, our state, and our communities, if we could focus on the elections of November 2019.

We are neglecting the Indiana municipal elections upcoming in November 2019. Those elected this year, as mayors and council members, will be in office in 2021-22 when new election districts will be formed on the basis of the 2020 Census.

Want to stop gerrymandering? Want to end unwarranted one-party rule? Then pay attention to the 2019 election in your city/town/county. Insist candidates pledge to oppose the corrupt gerrymandering



practices of the past.

With inordinate attention to the 2020 campaigns, vital local public services are ignored. Our education problems are local and cannot be resolved by "free" tuition at all levels. The quantity of education certificates and degrees will rise, but what will happen to the quality of K-12 education? We must insist that rigor replace the current rigor mortis.

Similarly, "free" health care, on the model of Medicare, will go a long way to increase the demand for health practitioners and support services. But without adequate funding for health care, the quality of service at the

local level is endangered.

"Free" is one of those four-letter f-words, like "fair," which should be used with great caution. Normally, conservatives remind us resources are not "free." Liberals focus on the benefits and the beneficiaries. Both parties make little reference to the costs and what we must forego to reap the rewards of their programs.

Both ideological groups talk glibly about the dollar costs of worthwhile objectives. They fail to spell out who must give up what to achieve their goals. How many fewer submarines, if the military budget is to be cut? How many trips to the nail parlor will be lost, if consumer obsessions with finger and toe adornments are to be taxed? Do we shut down the assembly lines for SUVs while diverting resources to fix the roads on which they drive?

Most people do not understand price tags in the billions of dollars; we think of things and activities. Vacations in Maine, cruises to the Caribbean, 80-inch TVs, another pair of shoes, or a large jar of peanut butter are things all of us can understand. Not every sacrifice need be a luxury.

What if fees were charged explicitly everywhere we park our cars? "Free" parking would disappear. More of us would walk, ride a bike, take a bus, and not go to as many places.

I used the "free" valet service at my doctor's office last week. "Free?" I thought. "But the cost will be included in the taxes my neighbor pays for my Medicare and I will pay for his freebies."

That is the way of an integrated economy. May Uber Lyft us all. ❖

Mr. Marcus is an economist. Reach him at mortonj-marcus@yahoo.com. Follow his views and those of John Guy on "Who gets what?" wherever podcasts are available or at mortonjohn.libsyn.com.

How does Mueller run when he's already 'won?'

By JACK COLWELL

SOUTH BEND – Mayor Pete won't be on the ballot in South Bend this fall. James Mueller will be there as the Democratic nominee for mayor. And Mueller has a problem.

How does he run for mayor after he's already won the election?

Mueller, who frequently is asked just that, says he will campaign door-to-door extensively, paying special attention to the two districts in South Bend where he lost in the Democratic primary in May. He trailed significantly in the 2nd and 6th districts on the city's West Side but won decisively citywide with pluralities in the other four districts.



"Some people think I'm mayor already," Mueller says.

At some of the doors where he already has knocked, Mueller hears things like: "What are you doing here? You don't have to sweat it."

That's because the election that determines who will be mayor of South Bend long has been the Democratic primary. No Republican has been elected mayor since 1967. No Republican has even provided a serious challenge since 1987.

Sean Haas, the Republican nominee, hopes to offer a serious challenge this time. Haas and Mueller are contemporaries. In grade school, they played on the same basketball team at St. Anthony School. They're on rival teams now, pro-Pete vs. anti-Pete.

Although Mayor Pete Buttigieg, now a presidential candidate, isn't on the city election ballot, in a way he really is.

Mueller is the hand-picked choice of Mayor Pete to be the next mayor and to carry on what Buttigieg hails nationally as South Bend's recovery finally from doldrums of Studebaker demise and a decades-long can't-do, defeatist attitude.

Haas has a "No Re-Pete" theme on his Facebook postings and disputes that South Bend really has prospered during the two Buttigieg terms. He points particularly to shootings in the city and accuses the mayor of failing to support the police. Haas also accuses Buttigieg of responding inadequately to problems at the South Bend Housing Authority, where the FBI conducted a raid.

Democratic rivals for the presidential nomination, Republicans nationally with concern about him

as a rising star and the national news media all will keep an eye on the South Bend election. They will watch to see if Mayor Pete's hand-picked choice wins impressively, with city voters in effect delivering another win for Pete, a vote of confidence in him and the direction he has led the city. They will watch also for signs of just the opposite, a Republican doing surprisingly well in such a Democratic-leaning city, a sign of dissatisfaction with Buttigieg, repudiation.

They will watch particularly the voting in those two districts where Mueller lost big in May – 2nd and 6th, both with heavy concentrations of African American voters. If the mayor's choice as successor does poorly in predominately black precincts, it will be interpreted as a sign that Buttigieg, needing to win over black voters in key primary states, isn't really that popular with those voters in his own home town.

Mueller, with proposals of his own and aware of racial discord, is concerned about governing. If he is to become a mayor with a mandate – as Buttigieg did in landslides, first term with 74%, reelection with 80.4% – then he needs to win support all around the town. Not 80%, but sizeable.

So, has Mueller won the election? Yes. The Democratic primary election. That doesn't mean he already is mayor. Almost. But nothing is official until the votes are counted.

The perception of inevitability hurts both nominees. It's a two-edged sword. Makes it harder for Mueller to convince Democrats to go to the polls. Makes it harder for Haas to convince Republicans to provide support and votes.

Those who do vote will pick the next mayor and offer an evaluation of the mayor whose name isn't on the ballot. ❖

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

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Why so many are now questioning democracy

By **LEE HAMILTON**

BLOOMINGTON – Democracy’s premise is that ordinary citizens can make solid decisions on complex issues. But this basic principle and the structure of laws and practices erected over the centuries to safeguard it are being questioned as rarely before.



It’s not just that political leaders in various western democracies seem to have little regard for the norms and procedures they inherited. It’s that public discourse is filled these days with warnings about democracy’s collapse. As the writer James Traub put it not long ago, “You’d have to go back more than a century, to the 15 years before World War I, to find another moment when so many leading thinkers ... questioned democracy’s future.”

Certainly, there’s reason to worry. Participating productively in our democracy has always been a serious challenge. But because of the intensely polarized environment and the enormous amount of information, both true and false, that surrounds us, making discriminating judgments has become harder. It’s not just that we face the challenge as citizens of trying to choose the best path forward in these circumstances. We now also have to discern what information is true and what’s false as we do so.

Moreover, as citizens we have to be more alert than ever to demagogues and authoritarians, to those who degrade and diminish democracy, and to those who want to exclude our fellow citizens from participating. These traits can be subtle. Plenty of officials argue, “Trust us, we know best” on national security, public finance, and other issues. Too often, the veil of special expertise is used to hide abuses of power or efforts to restrict the freedom of others.

Yet if we ask, with Lincoln, whether this nation “so conceived and so dedicated can long endure,” we don’t see a democracy in its death throes. Yes, it is under stress. It needs fixing. It cannot be taken for granted. It struggles with corruption, complacency, ineffectiveness, and slowness. But its strengths lie where they always have, in a population that embraces democratic values.

As voters we have to look for candidates and leaders who are committed to making the political institutions of democracy stronger: A Congress that works, a judiciary that is independent of political pressure, an executive branch that’s transparent and accountable, a noisy and robust free press, the rule of law, a sturdy civil society. And

we need to practice democracy as individuals; getting involved, making ourselves heard, voting, improving our corner of the world. It’s no exaggeration to say the future of our country depends on citizens stepping forward.

But we also have to go beyond our actions by committing ourselves to democracy’s fundamental values. As others have noted, democracy is not just a political system and a set of rules. It’s also a culture — it’s the way we live: Respect for the rule of law, fairness to all, tolerance of differences, equal political rights, and equal opportunity. These are the fundamental values that undergird our country. It is a culture that encourages each of us to become the best we can, and to build a better neighborhood, community, state, nation, or world.

Democracy’s gift is that we strengthen it by practicing it, by getting involved, making ourselves heard, and engaging with our communities. This means that we also strengthen democracy by pushing to expand the vote, not depress it, and by taking to heart the simple notion that we have a government of, by, and for the people — not just certain kinds of people.

In the end, we’re all bound together in the same society, attached to these shared values and practices. It’s why I don’t think the authoritarian models of China or Russia or one-man rule hold any attraction for Americans. We’re not going to go down those paths.

Democracy may not solve all problems, and it often frustrates us, but it provides us with the best way humankind has found to search for remedies and solutions that benefit the many. Its future is an educated guess. None of us really knows what will happen. What we do know, however, is that the important question has nothing to do with whether we’re optimistic or pessimistic. It’s what do we have to do to strengthen it? ❖

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Lessons from an economic debacle

By **MICHAEL HICKS**

MUNCIE — Last weekend's column criticized three economic development deals. By Tuesday, the city cancelled the project that so enraged Muncie residents. This was good news, of course, but the project was bad economic development policy from the very beginning. The Muncie Redevelopment Commission should never have brought this plan to city officials. There is a lesson here for every Indiana community.

At first blush, the deal to bring a recycling firm to Muncie might seem a good idea. The city has several million square feet of excess industrial property, including one behemoth factory site that used to house the Borg Warner plant. The plant would employ 90 or so workers and recycle metallic materials into usable products. Like most early 20th century industrial sites, the Borg Warner site is not usable for most activities. This might seem to be a good place for both tax incentives and a recycling plant.



Unfortunately, it never was a good idea. Fortunately, public outrage stopped the project. This happened following revelations that the company submitted permits to release stunning levels of mercury and

lead into the air. There is much community outrage at the company, Waelz Sustainable Products, but I am convinced that the Muncie Redevelopment Commission was aware of this permit.

Few successful companies would be naïve enough to hide this sort of information. The Muncie Redevelopment Commission (MRC) has demonstrated few limits on naiveté. I am sure it is just sloppy recordkeeping, but all of this could be cleared up if the MRC can locate the missing economic development agreement made earlier this year.

The proposal never should have made it to the city council because the project was always the wrong type of project for Muncie. Many communities make this mistake, so let me recount why this was bad and what made it so.

To begin, I want to reiterate, I'm a free market economist and welcome employers and jobs into any community. I think communities really only need to ask two things of companies. First, are you damaging health or property values through pollution or some other disamenity, and second, are you going to pay your own way? The answers to both questions were always wrong for this community and any economic developer with a lick of

common sense would have known that.

The project was always going to be a disamenity. Even if the factory didn't emit toxins, a new factory within site and smell of Muncie would simply reduce the attractiveness of a struggling city. Manufacturing is a critical industry, but modern factories with emissions don't belong near populated places. That much should've been clear to local economic developers and members of the Muncie Redevelopment Commission.

The 90 new jobs were to pay \$45,000 each, which sounds great, but is about 20% lower than this industry averages across the state. No doubt the MRC knew that when they proposed more than \$15 million of tax incentives, and asked the state for a further \$4 million. In this deal, the MRC asked taxpayers to pony up more than \$170,000 per job for an employer that operates in 45 states and makes hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue each year. I am frankly challenged to describe accurately this sort of rationale in a family-friendly column.

I should also note that many who spoke about this plant acknowledged a need for more jobs in Muncie. That, folks, is nonsense. Muncie currently has over 5,000 more jobs than it has workers. The city has to import 5,000 people each day who work, but choose not to live in Muncie. The problem isn't housing—Muncie has 5,000 excess homes and high rental vacancies. The problem isn't the weather, or taxes, or the absence of mountains or seashore. Muncie cannot attract people because the quality of public services is dismal. The schools are in receivership, while fewer than a third of kids pass their standardized tests. Muncie's streets are cratered, public buildings are in disrepair and the Redevelopment Commission is unaware of all this as they mindlessly divert more tax dollars to economic development schemes.

I'd like to say this was an uncommon problem in Indiana; it is not, though Muncie is surely a negative outlier. When asked whether or not the public outrage surrounding this deal would hurt Muncie's economic development prospects, one city official said that it would. She is wholly mistaken. The absolute best thing for this community, and for many others around the state, is to stop doing stupid economic development deals.

Far too much public spending on economic development is done with no meaningful analysis. In far too many places, economic development is simply the process of closing whatever prospect comes to town. It is all tactics and no strategy, and everyone needs to ask more of their elected officials and economic development teams. It's time to study that great strategist Sun Tzu, who said that tactics without strategy is nothing but the noise before defeat. ❖

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Leigh Morris, NWI Times: The other day, I was driving down a road that was recently repaved but had not yet had striping to designate traffic lanes. It occurred to me that the signs cautioning drivers could well apply to voters as well: As a political centrist, I'm beginning to think of myself as a part of an endangered species. It seems to me that the political center — the middle of the political road — has been shrinking rapidly, allowing the far left and the far right to increasingly dominate the political scene. Nowhere is that more evident than in the U.S. Congress where there's been such deterioration in the capacity to carry out its important role in dealing with scores of major issues. No Labels, a group that advocates rising above partisanship, has evaluated our current political climate this way: The far right and far left are holding America hostage — becoming ever more strident, uncompromising and making governance impossible. Former New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman feels that one of the reasons that extremists are dominating so much of the political process is that the major political parties have become more ideological and fewer and fewer people are voting. She observed that political parties "used to be like umbrellas, where you had a central handle, which was the shared core beliefs, and then you had all the spokes that held up the canopy, and those were different ways of interpreting those beliefs. But you could still have that central core." I'm a student of history, and I've been looking increasingly at the presidency of Dwight Eisenhower. Ike was a centrist. He called his political philosophy "The Middle Way." He referred to the political spectrum as a bowling alley and the extremes as the "gutters." ❖



Gary Truitt, Hoosier Ag Today: This was not the commentary I was going to write this week. I had one all planned. It was a light-hearted look at the smells of the Indiana State Fair. Some smells make people happy, while others make people retch; some smells make people hungry, while some foster feelings of nostalgia. But I scrapped all that as a situation that smells much worse made the headlines. Over my nearly 40 years as a journalist, I have seen a lot of political leaders say some really stupid things. This past week, however, may have been a new low. Most of the time I let these incidents roll by without comment; but, when it involves disrespecting the American farmer, it really gets my dander up. First President Trump, who is in the White House in no small part because of the support of farmers, made fun of wheat producers and belittled wheat exports to Japan, "They send thousands and thousands — millions — of cars. We send them wheat. Wheat. That's not a good deal. And they don't even want our wheat." Mr. Trump went on to say, "They do it because they want us to at least feel that we're okay. You know, they do it to make us feel good." Like most Americans, I have become accustomed to his outlandish quotes and bold statements, but this one is just indefensible. While

Trump administration policies have done many good things for agriculture, to throw farmers under the bus especially during a time of low prices and falling farm income is inexcusable. Undersecretary for Trade at USDA Ted McKinney has made several trips to Japan trying to work on a trade agreement that would boost U.S.-Japanese trade. Perhaps Mr. Trump thought he was putting pressure on Japan by saber-rattling on autos, but to do so by bashing farmers was insensitive and in extremely poor taste. Speaking of poor taste, Ag Secretary Perdue showed some poor judgement when he told a joke at a farm meeting in Minnesota that referred to farmers as "whiners." This on the heels of a USDA report that many growers feel is grossly inaccurate and responsible for pushing market prices even lower. Most in agriculture understand that our leaders and elected officials are out of touch with the reality of running a farm. We really don't expect them to know a lot, but you would think they might try to look informed and at least caring. Indiana Sen. Braun, a member of the Senate Ag Committee, admitted to a group of corn and soybean farmers this week that he had not seen nor was even aware of the August crop report and its impact on the market or implications for farm income. This year has been challenging enough without this kind of twaddle from elected officials. ❖

Michael Rosenberg, Sports Illustrated: There are two things you need to understand about Andrew Luck today. One is that he is not like other players. He is an unapologetic geek who started a book club and has never defined his self-worth by his salary or celebrity. In the weeks leading up to the 2011 Orange Bowl, when he was a junior at Stanford, people understood that his impending NFL decision was not much of a decision at all. He loved school, his teammates, and his girlfriend. Why would he leave? The other thing you need to understand about Andrew Luck is that he is like every other football player. A bad day at the office ends with an injury; a good day merely ends with pain. Most people who watch football every week don't really understand the level of violence involved. We see the nastiest collisions and dirtiest hits and we wince, but if you stand on the sideline for a few plays, you realize quickly: They are all dirty hits. They may be legal. The technique might be proper. But if most of us got hit like that once, we would remember it for the rest of our lives — unless, of course, we didn't remember it at all. Now put those two things together, and ask this, about Andrew Luck: Why would he stay? He didn't need the NFL eight years ago and he doesn't need it today. The fans in Indy booed him as he left the field Saturday night because they need him — not to survive, obviously, but probably to win the Super Bowl. (To be fair to Indy fans: they were shocked and disappointed. Give it two days and put Luck on Meridian Street, and I bet people line up to thank him.) ❖

Holcomb seeks to nullify ILearn test scores after results

INDIANAPOLIS – With the results of student ILearn testing to be made public next week, Indiana officials are calling on lawmakers to place a delay on the impact of this year’s standardized test scores (Lanich, [NWI Times](#)). Gov. Eric Holcomb led the charge Monday morning in a statement saying schools and their educators should not be held responsible for the expected decrease in performance results as compared to those of last year’s ISTEP+ exam.



Superintendent of Public Instruction Jennifer McCormick confirmed Monday the return of low scores in this year’s English/language arts and mathematics assessments. She echoed the governor’s calls to hold educators harmless, saying the Indiana Department of Education plans to propose legislative action addressing the negative effect educators and their districts could feel as a result of this year’s exam performance. “The combination of the rigors associated with this newly aligned college and career readiness assessment, national normative data, and the defined established performance cuts all contributed to the lower performance levels,” McCormick said in a prepared statement. “While frustrating, performance dips at some level were expected, as previously experience in 2014-2015 with the onset of the then newly implemented ISTEP+.”

Over the last two weeks, districts across the state have received embargoed scores for the 2018-2019 ILearn exam administered between April 22 and May 17. Scores will be released to the public at the Indiana State Board of Education’s Sept. 4 meeting. A number of state Republican leaders — including House Speaker Brian Bosma, R-Indianapolis; Senate President Pro Tem Rodric Bray,

R-Martinsville; and Sen. Jeff Raatz, R-Richmond — released statements supportive of delaying the impacts of ILEARN scoring. “This is certainly not reflective of the hardworking school staff or the efforts of students in the learning process,” said Raatz, who chairs the Senate education committee. “In the coming months, we will look to provide relief from the effects of the new ILEARN assessment for school districts for one year so schools, teachers and students can adjust to the new exam.”

Landske murder trial underway

CROWN POINT — Defense attorney Scott King said Monday that William Landske “snapped” and shot a longtime friend to death over tax preparation delays, but predicted jurors would not find enough evidence to convict the 83-year-old of murder (Reese, [NWI Times](#)). Lake County Supervisory Deputy Prosecutor Michael Toth urged the jury to return a guilty verdict, saying Landske intentionally drew in prominent local attorney T. Edward Page to make sure he could “put that bullet in his chest.” Landske’s trial began Monday before Special Judge Rex W. Kepner, who was appointed to hear the case by the Indiana Supreme Court. Page, former deputy prosecutor, public defender and special judge, had many friends among local court officials. Landske was charged with murder days after he fatally shot Page on Aug. 15, 2018, outside Page’s home in the 1200 block of West Fourth Street in Hobart. Months after Landske’s wife, State Sen. Sue Landske, died in February 2015, William Landske and daughter Cheryl Lynn Boisson took the couple’s tax documents to Page, who for many years had volunteered to prepare the couple’s taxes, Boisson said. Page and Sue Landske became friends while she served in the state Senate, attending Republican National Conventions together. Page eulogized her at her funeral.

Pence sees ‘slippery slope’ on guns

MUNCIE — As Congress wraps up an August recess and gets ready for a debate on gun safety, U.S. Rep. Greg Pence (R-District 6) says he’s worried about a “slippery slope” for gun owners (Indiana Public Media). Pence calls himself a “staunch Second Amendment defendant,” but says he’s open to compromise. “I’m open to any conversation that prevents – okay – let’s talk about how we prevent harm with weapons.” The Republican spoke in Muncie, several blocks from the city’s high school, where a 15-year-old student was arrested across the street with a loaded handgun earlier this month. Pence mentioned some Democratic presidential candidates have suggested people “turn in weapons,” which he says is a “terrible idea.” “If you read the second part of the Second Amendment, it’s to protect us from the government.”

Hill gets access to groping records

INDIANAPOLIS — Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill’s lawyers have won their fight for records of the state inspector general’s investigation into allegations that Hill drunkenly groped four women (AP). Hill’s attorneys sought the records as they defend him in attorney disciplinary proceedings he faces that could lead to his disbarment as a lawyer. Former state Supreme Court Justice Myra Selby is the hearing officer for Hill’s case. She ruled that Hill’s lawyers had shown they couldn’t obtain from another source the information contained in the inspector general’s report. Inspector General Lori Torres had argued against the release, but said she accepted the ruling. The [inspector general’s report](#) cited eyewitnesses who called Hill’s behavior at an Indianapolis bar inappropriate and “creepy” but said he didn’t break state ethics rules. Hill has denied wrongdoing.